



## John Steinbeck and His Contemporaries

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In March of 2006, scholars from around the world gathered in Sun Valley, Idaho for a conference devoted to not only John Steinbeck but also to the authors whose work influenced, informs, or illuminates his writings. This volume represents the many unique papers delivered at that conference by scholars from around the world. This collection includes studies on authors who influenced Steinbeck's work, discussions of writers whose work is in dialogue with Steinbeck, and examinations of Steinbeck's contemporaries, whose individual works invite comparisons with those of the Nobel-prize winning author.

Revealing Steinbeck's penchant for culling "all old books," the first section focuses on Steinbeck's European forebears, particularly Sir Thomas Malory's retelling of the legend of King Arthur, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, and Henry Fielding's novel *Tom Jones*. This section also includes articles on his American forebears: Walt Whitman and Sarah Orne Jewett. The second part, "Steinbeck, Hemingway, Faulkner, and Cather" includes a personal reminiscence by Ernest Hemingway's daughter-in-law, Valerie, as well as comparisons of Steinbeck with other great American authors of the 20th century. The third section includes an essay by National Book Award winner Charles Johnson (*Middle Passage*), as well as articles that compare Steinbeck's work with Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, and Toni Morrison. Further articles are concerned with Steinbeck's moral philosophy and strong sense of social justice, eliciting comparisons with Sinclair Lewis, Tom Kristensen, and Charles Johnson. The fourth section, "Steinbeck, the Arts, and the World" includes articles on the film adaptation of *The Moon Is Down*, on Steinbeck and Mexican Modernism, on the American experience as portrayed in *The Grapes of Wrath* and Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*, and on Steinbeck and ecocriticism. The book fittingly concludes with John Ditsky's keynote address, "In Search of a Language: Steinbeck and Others," which was delivered

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