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The Critical Responses to John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*:

An Annotated Bibliography

Introduction

East of Eden (1952) is John Steinbeck's most controversial novel, and the critical responses to it in the last six decades have been dynamically and favorably changing. Most reviewers severely excoriated the book immediately after its publication, although it quickly achieved best-seller status with the reading public. After twenty years of critical neglect from academia, *East of Eden* gradually started attracting critics and scholars since the 1970s, and now it is acknowledged as one of Steinbeck's best books.

Most of the contemporary reviews of *East of Eden* were captious and censorious, although Steinbeck himself thought it was his best and most ambitious novel, considering it his only book for which all the others were mere rehearsals: "I have written each book as an exercise, as practice for the one to come. And [*East of Eden*] is the one to come. There is nothing beyond this book—nothing follows it. It must contain all in the world I know and it must have everything in it of which I am capable."¹ Orville Prescott writes in *The New York Times*, the newspaper that had previously applauded almost all

of Steinbeck's works, that it is clumsy in structure and too melodramatic and sensational, though he admits that it has achieved a considerable philosophy. Similarly, Anthony West, *The New Yorker's* critic, states that it is the equivalent of "nineteenth-century melodramas." Leo Gurko comments in the *Nation* that this novel marks a major decline in Steinbeck's talent. Although Mark Schorer praises *East of Eden* as Steinbeck's "best" novel in *New York Times Book Review*, he later completely reverses his opinion and regrets ever having published the review at all. R.W.B. Lewis even calls the novel "a literary disaster." Only initially did *East of Eden* face these negative reviews and criticism, and almost no essays on the novel were written in the 1950s and 1960s. The criticisms toward it during these years were made in the general introductory books of Steinbeck.

In the 1970s, the dark ages for the novel were finally terminated by Tetsumaro Hayashi, who founded *Steinbeck Quarterly* (1968-1993) and *Steinbeck Monograph Series* (1971-1991) that compiled numerous essays on *East of Eden*. Critical applause of *East of Eden* gradually began at the time. In 1972, the first critical essay on *East of Eden* was finally published in *Steinbeck Quarterly*, twenty years after the publication of the novel: "Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*: A Discussion of Timshel" by John Gribben. In 1974, the critic John R. Milton boldly proclaimed to the Western History Association Conference in Oklahoma that *East of Eden* would one day be seen as one of the major Western novels. Drastic re-evaluation of the novel started with John Ditsky's influential revisionist treatises in Steinbeck Monograph Series, *Essays on "East of Eden"* (1977), in which he analyzes the novel in detail and proves that *East of Eden*

is not a mere “melodrama.” Following these treatises, there was an explosive increase of criticism.

The 1980s started with Daniel Buerger’s announcement that critics were “on the verge of a complete reevaluation of [*East of Eden*].”² Also, Robert DeMott commented in 1981, “During the past three decades, critical appraisal of the novel, except in rare instances, have been so clouded by misconceptions and superficial readings that it has been virtually impossible to evaluate the book as art.”³ Numerous articles on *East of Eden* were written in this era. Two of the most popular themes of criticism on the novel have always been Christianity and feminism, and many articles focus on Steinbeck’s intriguing characters—Lee, Samuel Hamilton, and, in particular, the most controversial figure in Steinbeck’s creation, Cathy Ames. Still, there were some negative views against the novel; for example, in his introduction to *John Steinbeck* (1987), Harold Bloom claims that *East of Eden* does not even merit rereading.

In the 1990s, critics came to support the opinion that *East of Eden* was one of Steinbeck’s *magna opera*. Lewis Owens admitted in 1990, “*East of Eden* is a more subtle and complex construction than we are at first prepared to believe.”⁴ In the same year, in his keynote address in Salinas, Roy Simmonds predicted that the critical and scholarly “limelight will slowly but surely shift from *The Grapes of Wrath* toward *East of Eden*.”⁵

Since the 2000s, the critical popularity of *East of Eden* has not yet faded away and research papers have been constantly published. Also, it had once again attracted the reading public after Oprah Winfrey featured the book as her “Oprah’s Book Club” selection in June, 2003. By July, it reached number one status on *The New York Times* best-seller list and remained in the top

position for five weeks. Although *East of Eden* was largely ignored by critics at first, after almost sixty years of critical history, it has surely now been recognized as one of Steinbeck's greatest novels.

This annotated bibliography consists of all the available critical reviews and analyses on John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* since 1952, from the year of its publication to the present. The entries have been collected from *MLAIB*, *DAI*, *Humanities Abstracts*, *ProQuest*, *WorldCat*, *Amazon.com*, *Questia*, and bibliographies of Steinbeck's works—mainly from “‘One Book To A Man’: Charting a Bibliographical Preface to *East of Eden*” (1997) by Robert DeMott.

This bibliography has two sections: “Contemporary Reviews” and “Critical Analysis.” Basically, academic articles, which seem to be significant for the critical history of the novel, are given longer annotations than brief reviews, and the length of annotations for each item is uneven. Annotations are not provided for items that were not available during the project. This bibliography contains contemporary reviews, but those that were written only for commercial purposes and have little critical value are omitted. It includes essays written in English or translated into English from the original text. Items are listed chronologically so that readers can recognize the change of the critical history of *East of Eden*. The index of critics is provided in the appendix.

As the bibliography by Robert DeMott has no annotations and there are no other annotated bibliographies that especially focus on *East of Eden*, this is the first bibliography on the novel with sufficient annotations. Therefore, this annotated bibliography should serve those who are studying or planning to explore John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*.

Notes

¹ John Steinbeck, *Journal of a Novel: The East of Eden Letters* (1969; New York: Penguin, 1990) 8.

² Daniel Buerger, "'History' and Fiction in *East of Eden*," *Steinbeck Quarterly* 14 (1981): 10.

³ Robert DeMott, "Mapping *East of Eden*," *Steinbeck Quarterly* 14 (1981): 4.

⁴ Louis Owens, "The Mirror and the Vamp: Invention, Reflection, and Bad, Bad Cathy Trask in *East of Eden*," *Writing the American Classics*, ed. James Barbour and Tom Quirk (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1990) 256.

⁵ Robert DeMott, "'One Book to a Man': Charting a Bibliographical Preface to *East of Eden*," *Steinbeck's Typewriter: Essays on His Art* (Troy, NY: Whitston, 1997) 220.

Contemporary Reviews (1952-1953)

- 1. Bloomfield, Paul. Rev. of *East of Eden*, by John Steinbeck. *Manchester Guardian* 5 Dec. 1952: 4. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 400-1.**

Bloomfield reviews *East of Eden*, saying that the theme of good and evil is a compelling one, but “this long book sheds no light” on the theme, and it falls short of a carefully designed classic. He also notes that Steinbeck is obsessed about the special devilishness of tender, slender, fair girls.

- 2. Brunn, Robert R. Rev. of *East of Eden*, by John Steinbeck. *Christian Science Monitor* 25 Sep. 1952: 15. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 396-97.**

Brunn states that it is a hopeful sign of the times for Steinbeck to wrestle with a moral theme in the novel for the first time in his career, but his obsession with naked animality, brute violence, and the dark wickedness of the human mind remains so overriding that what there is of beauty and understanding is subordinated and almost extinguished. For Brunn, *East of Eden* is “a chamber of horrors,” and reading it can be “a punishing experience.” He claims that Steinbeck’s translation of *timshel* (thou mayest overcome evil or sin), which means man has a private mind and freedom to choose between good and evil, can be wrong. Because, Brunn

insists, according to Standard Revised Version of the Bible, it is translated as “you *must* master it” and the implication of the word “must” denies man the choice between good and evil.

- 3. Charques, R. D. “Fiction.” *Spectator* [England] 189 (1952): 744. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 400.**

Charques reviews *East of Eden*, saying that it is “a quite shockingly crude, meretricious and trumped-up piece of work.” In spite of the unmistakably serious purpose of Steinbeck’s conjuration of episodes of his family-history in northern California, almost the only thing to be said in favor of the whole rich and absurd novel is that one does go on turning the pages in order to find out what happens next.

- 4. Engle, Paul. “John Steinbeck's Theme Is Struggle of Good and Evil.” *Chicago Sunday Tribune Magazine of Books*. 21 Sep. 1952: 3. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 390-91.**

Engle remarks that the theme of *East of Eden* is the struggle of the good in some men against the evil in others, and the struggle of the good in each man against the evil in himself. In the end, the good triumphs, but

only after appalling loss and pain. The grief that pure evil causes shatters lives, but the delight that pure good causes mends them. Engle thinks there is a great deal of solemn talk in the novel and it is its weakest part, because its characters' language is stilted and unreal. Also, there are too many trite phrases such as "the fruit of his loins," "an idol was crashing in Mary's temple," and Samuel is described as "beautiful as dawn with a fancy like a swallow's flight."

- 5. Gordon, W. Max. "Steinbeck's New Book, *East of Eden*, Tells of 'His People' in Our Valley." *Salinas Californian* 14 Sep. 1952: 4. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 383.**

Gordon favorably reviews *East of Eden* and says that this Steinbeck's book is about "his people," who include members of his own family, the workmen, the ranchers, the ranch hands, the mechanics, and even the prostitutes in Monterey County. Gordon thinks the theme of the book as follows; "There is nothing truly evil except what is within us, and it is man's own decision whether or not he shall rule over sin."

- 6. Gurko, Leo. "Steinbeck's Later Fiction." *Nation* 20 Sep. 1952: 235-36. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 385-86.**

Gurko negatively reviews *East of Eden*, saying that this big novel yields only meager results. The characters divide into symbols of good and evil, keeping readers from accepting them as individuals. Various elements in the novel fail to relate or cohere. Gurko claims that "The vitality, passion, and folk-communion that made *Tortilla Flat*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Grapes of Wrath* a permanent part of our literature are painfully absent in *East of Eden*, as they have been in Steinbeck's fiction since the 1930's came to an end."

- 7. Hughes, Riley. Rev. of *East of Eden*, by John Steinbeck. *Catholic World* 176 (1952): 150-51. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 399.**

Hughes criticizes *East of Eden* because the impact and impress of the book are on the side of evil, of exploitation of a mad, inhuman lust and cruelty that lacerates and degrades. Hughes asserts that there have always been at least two Steinbecks—one who writes feelingly of old men and young boys and natural beauty; the other, a strident and fatuous theorist, who has control in *East of Eden*. In the novel, Steinbeck embraces the cause of free will and, according to Hughes, it sharply

demonstrates the baleful consequences of an anti-Thomistic concept of evil.

- 8. "It Started in a Garden." *Time* 22 Sep. 1952: 110. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 395-96.**

This article savages *East of Eden* because it is "too blundering and ill-defined to make its story point." Although it says that Steinbeck has done some of his best writing in this novel and individual scenes and yarns are frequently turned with great skill, it is a huge grab bag in which pointless and preposterous melodrama pop up as frequently as good storytelling and plausible conduct. Cathy's story, which is "gamy, lurid, and told at tedious length," is all but meaningless. Almost as tiresome is the figure of Lee, "whose warmed-over Oriental wisdom and too gentle heart give the whole California story an overdose of stickiness."

9. Krutch, Joseph Wood. "John Steinbeck's Dramatic Tale of Three Generations." *New York Herald Tribune Weekly Book Review* 21 Sep. 1952: 1. Rpt. in *Steinbeck and His Critics: A Record of Twenty-Five Years*. Ed. E. W. Tedlock and C. V. Wicker. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1957. 302-5. Rpt. in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Documentary Series, An Illustrated Guide*. Vol. 2. Ed. Margaret A. Van Antwert. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1982. 314-17. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 45. Ed. Daniel G. Marowski, et al. Detroit: Gale, 1987. 370-71. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 393-95.

Krutch regards *East of Eden* as being not only the story of certain families and the story of a frontier, but also the story of mankind. It illustrates and typifies certain phrases in the cultural development of America. According to Krutch, what is most likely to disturb a reader is the tendency of the characters to turn suddenly at certain moments into obviously symbolic figures like the dramatis personae in a moral play, but this awkwardness becomes less and less noticeable as the story proceeds.

10. "Larger than Life." *Times Literary Supplement* [London] 5 Dec. 1952: 789. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 401.

This article insists that although the total effect of *East of Eden* is not boring because there are charming descriptions of scenery and shrewd estimates of personality, Steinbeck has tried to say too many things at once and his message is hidden under superfluous decoration. Each incident is possible and even plausible in itself, but the continual piling up of eccentric characters and arbitrary disasters eventually surfeits the reader.

11. Magny, Claude-Edmonde. "Magny on Steinbeck." *Perspective USA* 5 (1953): 146-52.

Magny reviews *East of Eden*, comparing it with Steinbeck's other works as well as other American literature. According to Magny, *East of Eden* is a myth or parable and "not in the least novelistic." Steinbeck's "eternal persistence of myth" or his taking "refuge in Innocence as their shield and alibi" are not peculiar to him. She insists that this cast of mind is also true to Faulkner, Dos Passos, and Hemingway. This is a sign of the unstable position of American novelists, and "they have no recourse but to lose themselves in Legend."

12. Mizener, Arthur. "In the Land of Nod." *New Republic* 127 (1952): 22-23. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 397-99.

Mizener compares *East of Eden* and Steinbeck's earlier novels, claiming that latter is far better; he notes "one of the worst things about a bad book is the way it infects your recollection of the author's good work." He points out, quoting Edmund Wilson, that Steinbeck has a tendency to present life in animal terms and his characters do not quite exist seriously for him as people; it is as if human sentiments and speeches had been assigned to a flock of lemmings on their way to throw themselves into the sea.

13. "New Fiction." *London Times* 26 Sep. 1952: 10. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 399-400.

This article regards *East of Eden* as a kind of "Domestic Cacophony," scored mainly for percussion and wind, yet constantly breaking into piquant and observant detail. It claims that this enormous book has to engulf some 40 years of time and stretch from Connecticut to California in order to inflate a series of anecdotes about some very elementary people to the proportions of a novel.

- 14. Phillips, William. "Male-ism and Moralism: Hemingway and Steinbeck." *American Mercury* 75 (1952): 93-98.**

Phillips compares Hemingway and Steinbeck, who published their *The Old Man and the Sea* and *East of Eden* at the same time. Phillips claims that Hemingway and Steinbeck represent two distinct strains in current fiction that some of their qualities are connected with the fate of American writing as a whole. Phillips thinks these two writers seem to point up each other's weaknesses. In the size of his story and grandiosity of his theme Steinbeck is more impressive, but he never comes close to Hemingway's artistry. Steinbeck is more concerned with the generalities of social and moral truth than with the play and intensity that make for exciting fiction: he cannot let his theme and his characters explode. On the other hand, Hemingway is handicapped by a narrow, somewhat immature sense of the world, and he had never been interested in or capable of understanding many of the larger aspects of the human predicament.

- 15. Prescott, Orville. "Books of the Times." *New York Times* 19 Sep. 1952: 21. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 383-85.**

Prescott reviews *East of Eden*, which is "Clumsy in structure and defaced by excessive melodramatics and much cheap sensationalism" but "a serious and on the whole successful effort to grapple with a major

theme.” Prescott thinks it has achieved a considered philosophy and it is a fine and generous one. Men and women are no longer weak and contemptible animals as they were in *Cannery Row* and *The Wayward Bus*. They are strong and weak, wise and stupid, sometimes vicious; but their lives are made meaningful by “the glory of choice.” Prescott also notes that *East of Eden* is ruined by Cathy’s unreal presence and by the disgusting details of her career. Also, it is somewhat damaged by its elaborate balancing of symbolical characters and Steinbeck’s interruptions of his story to deliver little lectures on Western history, the roles of the railroads, the church, and the brothel.

16. Rolo, Charles. “Cain and Abel.” *Atlantic* 190 (1952): 94.

Rolo thinks that *East of Eden* is a highly disappointing novel although it has most of the ingredients that make for popular success. According to Rolo, as the novel goes along, “The improbabilities grow more flagrant, the sentimentality thicker, the intellectual naïveté more exasperating,” and Cathy and Lee are “preposterous creations” for him.

17. Schorer, Mark. “A Dark and Violent Steinbeck Novel.” *New York Times Book Review* 21 Sep. 1952: 1, 22. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 391-93.

Schorer considers *East of Eden* to be “a strange and original work of art”

and “the best of John Steinbeck’s novels,” although there are some defects like being melodramatic and its sentimentalism. Schorer points out that Steinbeck has always been fascinated by depravities that he seems helpless to account for; hence the melodrama. Inversely, he has always accepted certain noble abstractions about human nature that his melodrama is hardly designed to demonstrate; hence the gap between the speculative statement and novelistic presentation; or sentimentalism.

- 18. Scott, J. D. “New Novels.” *New Statesman and Nation* [England] 44 (1952): 698-99. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 401-2.**

Scott remarks that *East of Eden* is competently told, readable, and occasionally forceful, inoffensive as a commercial venture, but has only the most tenuous and accidental connection with literature. Scott insists that this book is not “the American Story.”

- 19. Smith, Eleanor T. Rev. of *East of Eden*, by John Steinbeck. *Library Journal* 77 (1952): 1303.**

Smith states that *East of Eden* is a major novel in almost every respect although some readers may object to the brothel scenes and the realistic dialogue. Steinbeck is dealing philosophically with the effects of inherited traits upon the individual’s destiny, and with the individual’s

responsibility to overcome his heredity. Thanks to a great wealth of fascinating detail of Salinas woven through the plot, readers are given a complete and unforgettable picture of country and small town life in the past.

- 20. Webster, Harvey Curtis. "Out of the New-born Sun." *Saturday Review* 20 Sep. 1952: 11-12. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 386-87.**

Webster favorably reviews *East of Eden* and remarks that it can be taken as a long parable expertly told. The novel marks a definite advance in Steinbeck's thinking. In the earlier novels, men approach the condition of animals with a uniformity that sometimes becomes monotonous, but in *East of Eden*, the animality is still there but it is joined to a sense of human dignity and what it may achieve. Webster thinks that the novel is the best book Steinbeck has written since *The Grapes of Wrath*, although *East of Eden* may not be a great novel "according to the strict conventions of formal purity so widely accepted today."

21. West, Anthony. "California Moonshine." *New Yorker* 20 Sep. 1952: 121-122, 125. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. Ed. Joseph R. McElath Jr., Jesse S. Crisler, and Susan Shillinglaw. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 387-89.

West claims that Steinbeck has written the precise equivalent of those nineteenth-century melodramas and that Steinbeck's language is too baroque in the novel. West gives an example by saying that, when Steinbeck informs readers that a person nearly dies of pleural pneumonia, he chooses to say that the person "went down and down, until the wing tips of the angels brushed my eyes." According to West, the novel is a puerile discussion of good and evil conducted in naïve terms.

Critical Analysis

— 1957 —

22. Frohock, W. M. "John Steinbeck—The Utility of Wrath." *The Novel of Violence in America*. 2nd. ed. 1957. Boston: Beacon P, 1964. 124-43.

Frohock contends that *East of Eden* is an example of the inadequacy of Steinbeck's tolerant interest in people to provide the kind of driving force which moves the action along. He suspects that Steinbeck's commitment to the individual subjects of many units dominates his

interest and commitment to the novel as a whole. He comments that “*East of Eden* repays the reading, but does so for incidental pleasures. Steinbeck writes well, as always, of the California land, of the task of working it, of the people . . . whatever can be sketched is sketched beautifully; what is lacking is a central object which, for the length of a book, can stand contemplation.”

— 1958 —

- 23. Fuller, Edmund. “The Revival of Total Depravity.” *Man in Modern Fiction*. New York: Random House, 1958. 20-31.**

Fuller insists that Cathy in *East of Eden* is Steinbeck’s revival of a Calvinist doctrine—total depravity. She is “a faulty thread, a weakness of concept and character grasp, seriously marring what is, in some respects, one of his most substantial and thoughtful books.” The effect of Steinbeck’s “monster thesis” is to render meaningless the elaborately drawn lifelong portrait of Cathy. She can have no moral significance or identification value if she is a random mutant or a moral freak.

- 24. Geismer, Maxwell. “Further Decline of the Moderns.” *American Moderns: From Rebellion to Conformity*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1958. 151-167.**

Geismer savages *East of Eden*, claiming that it was written for the

Hollywood picture, which was later produced, and the audience for popular romances. Yet there are curious and discordant undertones in this novel, which make it of more than passing interest, because the theme of sibling rivalry in the novel is the subject to many levels of interpretation from the moral, ethical, or social import to the deepest levels of psychology. Even so, according to Geismer, *East of Eden* is “a tricky and meaningless parable.”

25. Lisca, Peter. “*East of Eden*.” *The Wide World of John Steinbeck*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1958. 261-75.

Lisca excoriates *East of Eden*, showing its flaws. He says that the Trasks and the Hamiltons in the novel pursue separate courses, and there is not the organic relationship between them and nothing results from their juxtaposition. He questions the existence of “I,” mentioning that “I” comes up so infrequently and so briefly that “no permanent association with the story is created” and “Each time it appears it effects a momentary shock of intrusion. The novel is in no sense dominated or given form by its narrator, and the narrator is in no sense defined by the novel.” Lisca points out the failure of language in *East of Eden*; unlike Steinbeck’s earlier works, it has baroque language and “The scrambled syntax and awkward expression are evident everywhere.” Also, the moral philosophy of the narrator is no more convincing and Steinbeck is truly confused on the question of free will. Lisca further comments that “The generally favorable reception of *East*

of Eden is an amazing phenomenon in Steinbeck criticism, because whereas commentators had gone to ridiculous extremes in finding highly technical faults with his earlier well-made novels, they now bent over backward to celebrate the excellence of his latest book by avoiding all technical considerations and exulting over its great moral theme.”

— 1959 —

26. **Gardiner, Harold C. “Novelist to Philosopher?” *In All Conscience: Reflections on Books and Culture*. Garden City, NY: Hanover House, 1959. 136-38.**

Gardiner thinks that *East of Eden* is “a mishmash of sensitive appreciation of nature, admiration for the pioneering spirit, biographies of the author’s own family, sincere but often phony philosophizing, melodrama, crudity, and tenderness.” Gardiner states that by writing *East of Eden* Steinbeck has changed into a philosopher, which is to be praised, although he still has a long philosophical and religious way to go before he comes to the fundamental truth.

27. Lewis, R. W. B. "John Steinbeck: The Fitful Daemon." *The Young Rebel in American Literature*. Ed. Carl Bode. London: William Heinemann, 1959. 121-41. Rpt. in *Steinbeck: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Robert Murray Davis. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972. 163-75.

— 1962 —

28. Watt, F. W. "The Later Steinbeck." *Steinbeck*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962. 76-105.

Watt introduces the plot of *East of Eden*, and explains its characters. Watt states that although *East of Eden* is the summation of Steinbeck's quarter-century's literary endeavors and the best fruit of his maturity, it can only be seen as an anti-climax: "a large, sprawling, discordant narrative, mixing realism, melodrama, semi-abstract philosophizing, and personal testament." But it contains several memorable characters and a number of passages as fine as any Steinbeck has written. Thus, according to Watt, *East of Eden* is "the kind of failure that captures interest and deserves respect and sympathy."

— 1963 —

29. Fontenrose, Joseph. "*East of Eden and After.*" *John Steinbeck: An Introduction and Interpretation*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1963. 118-38.

Fontenrose claims that Steinbeck was clearly turning his principal interest from biology and sociology to individual ethics in the forties, and he completes the transition by writing *East of Eden*. Although morality has nearly eclipsed biology as a formative principle in the novel, his biological knowledge still makes an occasional appearance and remains an important source of metaphor and simile; the vicious Cathy was a psychic monster, produced by "a twisted gene or a malformed egg," for example. But the group organism, prominent in his earlier novels such as *The Grapes of Wrath*, has almost disappeared from view. Instead, he highly praises individuality in *East of Eden*. Also, Fontenrose points out that there is no healthy or lusty sexual intercourse and sex is always sordid, joyless, depraved, or mercenary in the novel notwithstanding that old Steinbeck celebrated sexuality. He criticizes the novel because Steinbeck's interpretation of *timshel* (Fontenrose claims it is *timshol*, in fact) is wrong, and the relation of good and evil is presented in inconsistent ways. He concludes by saying that a reader can enjoy *East of Eden* for its many fine passages of description and many pages of skillful narrative, but the moral is imposed upon the story and it is not a recreated myth but merely a moralized tale.

— 1969 —

30. Marks, Lester J. *Thematic Design in The Novels of John Steinbeck*. The Hague, Neth.: Mouton, 1969. 114-31. Rpt. as “*East of Eden: ‘Thou Mayest.’*” in *Steinbeck Quarterly* 4 (1971): 3-18.

— 1970 —

31. Covici, Pascal, Jr. “From Commitment to Choice: Double Vision and the Problem of Vitality for John Steinbeck.” *The Fifties: Fiction, Poetry, Drama*. Ed. Warren French. Deland, FL: Everett Edwards, 1970. 63-72.

Covici contends that individual choice, rather than universal commitment, becomes the issue around which Steinbeck’s fiction of the 1950s revolves. *East of Eden* marks a deliberate shift of philosophical vision because it explicitly celebrates man as individuals not as a group unlike his earlier creations through and beyond 1930s. For example, in *East of Eden* people have freedom to choose between good and evil, make their own fate, and the responsibility is their own. On the contrary, *The Grapes of Wrath* comes back again and again to impersonal “conditions,” and Preacher Jim Casy (who has the same initials as Jesus Christ) insists that “There’s just stuff people do” and there are no “right and wrong” or “sin and virtue.” Covici comments that although the forces in *East of Eden* lie within individuals rather than outside of

them unlike his earlier works, this shift does not signal a loss of social interest on the author's part as a growing commitment to individual men as opposed to a generalized "Manself." According to Covici, Steinbeck turned "to the creation of deliberate choosers in a morally weighted world rather than of mystically integrated seers in a unified and amoral ecology."

32. O'Connor, Richard. *John Steinbeck*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970. 106-8.

O'Connor claims that when Steinbeck was writing *East of Eden* his feeling for the Salinas Valley was sapped by the fact that he wrote it in New York instead of in California. Looking back across time, across the continent, his people lost the edge of reality and became literary characters. Despite Steinbeck's careful research in creating the novel, he does not succeed in pulling together the parallel experiences of the Trask and Hamilton families. However, O'Connor adds, *East of Eden* is Steinbeck's mountainous achievement and is not a failure.

33. Pratt, John Clark. *John Steinbeck: A Critical Essay*. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1970. 24-32.

— 1971 —

34. Ditsky, John. "Music from a Dark Cave: Organic Form in Steinbeck's Fiction." *Journal of Narrative Technique* 1 (1971): 59-66.

— 1972 —

35. Gribben, John. "Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*: A Discussion of Timshel." *Steinbeck Quarterly* 5 (1972): 35-43. Rpt. in *Steinbeck's Literary Dimension: A Guide to Comparative Studies*. Ed. Tetsumaro Hayashi. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow P, 1973. 94-104.

— 1973 —

36. Jones, Lawrence William. *John Steinbeck as Fabulist*. Ed. Marston LaFrance. Muncie, IN: Steinbeck Society of America/Ball State U, 1973. 25-28.

Jones considers *East of Eden* a romance because the conventions of this novel can be found within the framework of the open parable. According to Jones, two of the criteria principally endow *East of Eden* with its peculiar nature as romance are the pervading archetypal pattern as structure and its definite time-span in the past which is recalled by reverie and not by chronological records. He adds that Steinbeck's use

of the themes and techniques of romance in this parable remains experimental, as is made clear throughout *Journal of a Novel—The East of Eden Letters*.

— 1974 —

37. Levant, Howard. “Lapsed Allegory—*East of Eden*.” *The Novels of John Steinbeck: A Critical Study*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1974. 234-58.

38. Milton, John R. “The Novel in the American West.” *Western Writing*. Ed. Gerald W. Haslam. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1974. 69-89.

Milton studies western writers and claims that John Steinbeck must be considered seriously and *The Grapes of Wrath* and *East of Eden* must be read in relation to the westward movement. He thinks that even though the contemporary critic-professors seem to have resented his Nobel Prize, *East of Eden* will one day be seen as a major western novel.

— 1975 —

39. Beatty, Sandra. "A Study of Female Characterization in Steinbeck's Fiction." *Steinbeck Quarterly* 8 (1975): 50-56 [under the name Sandra Falkenberg]. Rpt. in *Steinbeck's Women: Essays in Criticism*. Ed. Tetsumaro Hayashi. Muncie, IN: Steinbeck Society of America/Ball State U, 1979. 1-6.

Beatty analyzes women in Steinbeck's fiction including *East of Eden*. The most significant quality with which Steinbeck's women are endowed is knowledge of men generally and it is often women who come closest to an understanding of the intricacies of human nature and the profundities of life in general. Beatty indicates that Steinbeck has reduced the multiplicity of female roles to basically two, that of wife and that of mother. Liza Hamilton in *East of Eden*, for example, typically exemplifies Steinbeck's strong and unshakeable wife. Also, in Steinbeck's novels, whores provide their clients with companionship and conversation rather than merely fulfilling their sexual needs and desires. The madam of a Salinas whorehouse in *East of Eden*, Faye, is essentially carrying out the role of mother, in a professional capacity, not only for the girls in her house but for her clients as well. Steinbeck's women often become closely allied to the earth and part of the cycle of Nature itself. The extension of this theme is, according to Beatty, Steinbeck's view of the earth in general, and California in particular, as woman. This oneness with Nature endows women with a wholeness, a fulfillment, and understanding which Steinbeck's men rarely attain.

40. **Benson, Jackson J. "John Steinbeck: Novelist as Scientist." *Steinbeck and the Sea*. Ed. Richard Astro and Joel Hedgpeth. Corvallis: Oregon State U Sea Grant College Program, 1974. 15-28. Rpt. in *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 10 (1977): 248-64. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism* Vol. 9. Detroit: Gale, 1978. 517-20. Rpt. in *John Steinbeck* Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1987. 103-23.**

Benson studies Steinbeck as a scientist who "has had an abiding interest in natural science and brought that interest to his writing." Steinbeck's fiction has a special appeal to the scientist, but his scientific outlook creates many problems for him as an artist and contributes significantly to a generally negative response to much of his work by literary critics who "did not understand what he was doing." Further, his use of ideas associated with science brings him into conflict with the novel form and its traditions, leading him into difficulties with characterization, plot, and point of view which he was only partially able to overcome. While the modern novel as a whole has tended to drift back toward the poetic and mythic, Steinbeck's fiction, particularly during those years when he was most heavily influenced by his marine biologist friend, Edward F. Ricketts, was often infused with large doses of naturalistic philosophy. However, Steinbeck's use of scientific attitudes and methods took him beyond the tradition of naturalism-realism into an achievement purely his own. Benson argues that the final scene in *East of Eden* manages to bring the basic romantic-realistic duality of fiction into a new stage of evolution in setting up the antithesis between action and perception.

— 1976 —

41. Morsberger, Robert E. "Steinbeck's Happy Hookers." *Steinbeck Quarterly* 9 (1976): 101-15. Rpt. in *Steinbeck's Women: Essays in Criticism*. Ed. Tetsumaro Hayashi. Muncie, IN: Steinbeck Society of America/Ball State U, 1979. 36-48.

Morsberger discusses the prostitution in Steinbeck's works, including *East of Eden*, which is "Steinbeck's most detailed and serious study of prostitution." Steinbeck juxtaposes the church with the whorehouse because they are just different facets of the same thing; both the churches and the brothels take a man out of his bleakness for a time. Steinbeck observes the evangelical churches indulging in riotous orgies of worship "prancing and farting like brewery horses in bock-beer time," while houses of prostitution had to maintain an appearance of sobriety and were "quiet, orderly, and circumspect." He describes an old man who remembers turn-of-the-century brothels with lyric nostalgia. Faye's place is "the cinnamon-scented kitchen of one's grandmother." However, according to Morsberger, the result of prostitution in Steinbeck's fiction is always loneliness. Steinbeck's men build up a peak of frustration and then go berserk in brothels, after which they are subdued and shamed until the next outburst. Tom Hamilton, who is shy, poetic, and lonely, goes on periodic debauches that afterwards make him feel all the more unworthy. Charles Trask, who is also shy and silent, can be merry with a whore and even brutal to her, because he has been paid for her in advance and she has become a commodity.

— 1977 —

42. **Ditsky, John. “The ‘East’ in *East of Eden*.” *Essays on East of Eden*. Muncie, IN: Steinbeck Society of America/Ball State U, 1977. 41-50.**

Ditsky regards *East of Eden* as the novel of modern America standing on its western shore, asking the questions that Whitman asked in “Facing West from California’s Shores”: “Now I face home again, very pleas’d and joyous. (But where is what I started for so long ago? And why is it yet unfound?).” Ditsky thinks Cain is the archetypal American who wanders longing for good farm land and a place to belong to. Also, Ditsky points out, Chinese and Japanese writings confirm the fundamentally mystical quality of Steinbeck’s usage of Nature. The most tentative yet important presence in the novel is Lee—the Chinese servant, philosopher, and amateur psychologist. In addition, Ditsky studies the naming of *East of Eden*, saying that we must resist the temptation to categorize the characters in the novel according to simple formulaic listings of “A” and “C” traits. He notes that “B” in Abra Bacon, who loves both Aron and Cal, suggests a bridge between “A” and “C”.

43. **Ditsky, John. “Outside of Paradise: Men and the Land in *East of Eden*” *Essays on East of Eden*. Muncie, IN: Steinbeck Society of America/Ball State U, 1977. 15-40.**

44. Ditsky, John. "Toward a National Self." *Essays on East of Eden*. Muncie, IN: Steinbeck Society of America/Ball State U, 1977. 1-14.
45. Satyanarayana, M. R. *John Steinbeck: A Study of the Theme of Compassion*. Hyderabad, India: Osmania UP, 1977. 112-24.

— 1978 —

46. Hopkins, Karen J. "Steinbeck's *East of Eden*: A Defense." *Essays on California Writers*. Ed. Charles L. Crow. Bowling Green: Bowling Green UP, 1978. 63-78.
47. Lisca, Peter. "*Burning Bright, East of Eden, and The Winter of Our Discontent*: Essays in Christianity." *John Steinbeck: Nature and Myth*. New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1978. 161-76.

Lisca explores Christianity in *East of Eden*, but the most part of this essay is his criticism on the novel's flaws. He thinks that despite the excessive and obvious parallels to Genesis, and because of its discussion by all the major characters as well as the author himself, the novel's theme is somewhat blurred. Good is presented at various times as diametrically opposed to evil, as a necessary complement, as merely a different aspect, and as the resultant product of evil. Also, he claims,

although the main drift in *East of Eden* is toward asserting belief in man's free will, both author and "spokesman" characters sometimes deny that belief at important points. According to Lisca, *Journal of a Novel: The East of Eden Letters* is "the painful record of a man seeing the sources of his artistic life drying up, hanging on in desperation to any straw that can provide the illusion of continued vitality, immersing himself in the very physical process of writing as if *that* might rekindle the vital flame, knowing that without that flame the rest was not worthwhile, thinking much of death."

48. Yano, Shigeharu. *The Current of Steinbeck's World*. Tokyo: Seibido, 1978. 148-64.

Yano elucidate the themes of love/hatred and good/evil in *East of Eden*, and argues that the novel reveals Steinbeck's theory of life: "no end of pleasure, hope and courage." According to Yano, those who belong to the category of evil are Cathy, Adam, and Aron because Cathy is innately and completely evil and Adam and Aron do not know what evil is, whereas those who are good are Samuel, Lee, Abra, and Cal because all of whom admit the co-existence of good and evil. Yano insists that Cathy and Adam turn into good at the end of the novel by realizing both good and evil.

— 1979 —

- 49. Brown, Joyce C. “Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*.” *Explicator* 38 (1979): 11-12.**

Brown points out the feline nature in Steinbeck’s portrayal of Cathy although other critics have seen her as a serpent figure of evil whose malevolent nature corrupts the Eden of Adam Trask. The acrostic nature of Cathy Ames Trask’s full initials, C. A. T., as well as her occupation as madam of a “cat house,” a term Steinbeck frequently used in other works, clearly indicates her feline rather than serpentine character. Adam meets Cathy when Charles opens the door expecting to find an annoying noisy cat, and Charles warns Adam of her saying, “She is no more a wife than an alley cat.” Later, when dispirited Adam visits her brothel, she refers to him as Mr. Mouse. Brown comments that Cathy is the most frightening animal anomaly found in Steinbeck’s fiction.

- 50. DeMott, Robert. “The Interior Distances of John Steinbeck.” *Steinbeck Quarterly* 12 (1979): 86-99.**

51. Jain, Sunita. "*East of Eden.*" *Steinbeck's Concept of Man*. New Delhi, India: New Statesman Publishing Company, 1979. 82-88. Rpt. as "Steinbeck's Celebration of the Human Soul." in *Indian Response to Steinbeck: Essays Presented to Warren French*. Ed. R. K. Sharma. Jaipur, India: Rachana Prakashan, 1984. 271-76.

Jain studies the moral problem of man's relationship to God and relationship between good and evil in *East of Eden*. He thinks that *East of Eden* has flaws like its heavy reliance on the letters A and C for names and other blatant symbolism, but compared to its achievement, these flaws are insignificant and this novel is, and will remain, one of the most powerful books that Steinbeck has written. The book's power and appeal rests in the author's celebration of the human soul in the face of ugliness and evil that people have to face and that people carry within themselves even. Jain explains the difference between *The Grapes of Wrath* and *East of Eden* as follows: in *The Grapes of Wrath* Steinbeck records the suffering and endless toil that the human body endures in its effort to impose an order on the chaos without and the wilderness within while in *East of Eden* Steinbeck goes back to the time this toil began, and analyzes the cultural reservoir of the human soul in its struggle to survive in a world made hostile by evil that confronts all of us. He also points out that Samuel Hamilton is the powerful manifestation of Merlin, the God-like man, in the legends of King Arthur. Like Merlin, Samuel Hamilton is known for the cadence in his voice, ever-willing to receive and comfort people, and immortal for he lives on in Lee after his death. Samuel Hamilton also lives in a place where an ordinary man would have

perished.

52. Peterson, Richard F. "Steinbeck's *East of Eden* (1952)." *A Study Guide to Steinbeck*. Ed. Tetsumaro Hayashi. Vol. 2. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1979. 63-86.

— 1980 —

53. Bedford, Richard C. "Steinbeck's Use of the Oriental." *Steinbeck Quarterly* 13 (1979): 5-19.

Bedford explores Steinbeck's uses of the Oriental in his fiction including *East of Eden*. Bedford points out that although Steinbeck is interested in mysticism, mythology, symbolism, and esoterica, and seems to be attracted to the Oriental, in most of his works he shares the tendency to see the Oriental as cartoonist's comic stereotype and shows his racial prejudice. However, the only exception is his *East of Eden*. One of the central characters in the novel, Lee, is an Oriental for the first and last time. The picture of Lee again seems a caricature of a Chinese; he has "long black glossy braided queue," and whenever he could "he hid his hands in his sleeves." But, in fact, it is all a disguise, Bedford explains, since "paradoxically, Steinbeck has over-Orientalized Lee because Lee is not an Oriental at all." Lee is born in the United States, attends the University of California, is rejected as a "foreign

devil” when he visits China. Later, he is presented as a representative of the United States; “he has traded his Oriental disguise for an Uncle Sam costume.” Thus, Bedford thinks that Steinbeck equates the Oriental and the American in *East of Eden*.

54. McCarthy, Paul. “Postwar Allegory, Realism, and Romance.” *John Steinbeck*. New York: F. Ungar, 1980. 106-124.

55. Sale, Roger. “Stubborn Steinbeck.” *New York Review of Books* 28 (1980): 10-12.

Sale reviews *The Intricate Music: A Biography of John Steinbeck* by Thomas Kiernan, *The Wayward Bus* and *East of Eden*, which are republished by Penguin, and fiercely excoriates them all. He thinks *The Intricate Music* is “an absurd title, since Kiernan tries to locate no such thing in Steinbeck’s work, and finds none in his life, although he might have tried.” Sale thinks stubbornness is Steinbeck’s most important quality of character, but “he could seldom write about stubbornness and persistence without sentimentalizing them as a version of the Round Table, a community to which he could never belong.” He regards Steinbeck as “a minor writer,” and *East of Eden* as “a bloated, pretentious, and uncertain book.”

56. Sreenivasan, K. "*East of Eden: Steinbeck's Testament of Faith.*" *John Steinbeck: A Study of His Novels*. Trivandrum, India: College Book House, 1980. 144-58. Rpt. in *Indian Response to Steinbeck: Essays Presented to Warren French*. Ed. R. K. Sharma. Jaipur, India: Rachana Prakashan, 1984. 258-70.

— 1981 —

57. Buerger, Daniel. "'History' and Fiction in *East of Eden*." *Steinbeck Quarterly* 14 (1981): 6-14.

Buerger provides a brief history of the critical responses to *East of Eden*. He thinks that most Steinbeck scholars have failed to examine the man's works of art as art. They have attempted to discover the man behind the author to recover the socio-economic philosophy exhibited, and to uncover the world-view revealed in the writings. Although the general response to *East of Eden* had been negative since its publication in 1952, Buerger notes that Steinbeck's critics are on the verge of a complete re-evaluation of the novel.

58. Cox, Martha Heasley. "Steinbeck's Family Portraits: The Hamiltons." *Steinbeck Quarterly* 14 (1981): 23-32.

Cox insists that Steinbeck needed the Hamiltons in *East of Eden* because they were essential to him in his role as a father; as a message purveyor;

and as a novelist or a craftsman. According to Cox, the inclusion of the Hamiltons as counterpoint for his fictional Trask family provided him the opportunity to write a parallel biography as he wove the anecdotes of his maternal family into “the story of my country and the story of me.” As a father, Steinbeck concerned about their sons, who were living with their mother after their parents’ divorce. He needed to write a story of his own family to tell them “who their grandfather and his sons and daughters and his wife were and how they lived.” or “what their blood is.” Members of the Hamilton family express and elucidate Steinbeck’s optimistic, thematic message, and his avowal of the potential of the human spirit. Also, Steinbeck needed them as a craftsman; knowing that a book of the length and scope of *East of Eden* must have variety in style and structure as well as content, he told the family stories to change mood, tone, pace, color, and time.

59. DeMott, Robert. “Cathy Ames and Lady Godiva: A Contribution to *East of Eden*’s Background.” *Steinbeck Quarterly* 14 (1981): 72-83.

DeMott argues that Steinbeck’s creation of Cathy in *East of Eden* is greatly influenced by Raoul Faure’s novel *Lady Godiva and Master Tom* (1948), that Steinbeck read in the year it was published and mentioned that it was “a really blistering study of a woman.” Faure’s *Lady Godiva* is far from being noble and altruistic, but bored, willful, capricious, and treacherous. Physically, Cathy shares some features with Godiva; both are fair-skinned and blond, and their bodies are thin with small breasts.

In both cases, physical attractiveness and sexual desirability mask their deceptive natures. They are marked by scars, which signify their irrevocable isolation from common humanity. Steinbeck's frequent attribution of animal imagery to Cathy has a parallel in Godiva's "intense, broad animal face," and both are capable of violent bestiality and inhuman cruelty. By seeking refuge in fantasy as children, they developed psychological defenses to perpetuate their withdrawal from life. Cathy and Lady Godiva are defined according to their deficiencies, and by the degree to which they lack traditional human qualities.

60. DeMott, Robert. "‘Culling All Books’: Steinbeck’s Reading and *East of Eden*." *Steinbeck Quarterly* 14 (1981): 40-51.

DeMott explores the effects of books, which "provided Steinbeck with a repository of resonant ideas, forms, and information he drew upon for inspiration and for verification about the nature of the world's experience." DeMott claims that literary allusions and references clarify Steinbeck's method of characterization in *East of Eden* and offer commentary on the direction and meaning of its plot. The three books which figured prominently in matters of characterization, theme, and contemporary detail, are Raoul Faure's *Lady Godiva and Master Tom*, Erich Fromm's *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, and John Gunn's *New Family Physician*. Also, according to DeMott, Steinbeck's literary technique has been drawn from his reading *Don Quixote*, *Tristram Shandy*, *Moby-Dick*, and Herodotus' *History*.

61. DeMott, Robert. “‘A Great Black Book’: *East of Eden* and *Gunn’s New Family Physician*.” *American Studies* 22.2 (1981): 41-57. Rpt. as “Steinbeck’s *East of Eden* and *Gunn’s New Family Physician*.” in *Book Club of California Quarterly News-Letter* 51 (1986): 31-48. Rev. and rpt. as “Creative Reading/Creative Writing: The Presence of Dr. Gunn’s *New Family Physician* in Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*.” in *Rediscovering Steinbeck: Revisionist Views of His Art, Politics and Intellect*. Ed. Cliff Lewis and Carroll Britch. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen P, 1989. 35-57. Rpt. in *Steinbeck’s Typewriter: Essays on His Art*. Troy, NY: Whitston, 1997. 55-74.

62. DeMott, Robert. “Mapping *East of Eden*.” *Steinbeck Quarterly* 14 (1981): 4-5.

DeMott views *East of Eden* as an ecological act for Steinbeck, a means of surviving under the demanding regime of a new literary vision and a way of preserving and perpetuating both the external and internal landscapes of his beloved Salinas Valley. DeMott thinks that critical appraisal of the novel has been so clouded by misconceptions and superficial readings during the past three decades that it has been virtually impossible to evaluate the book as art. He thinks *East of Eden* is a far better novel, and a more carefully crafted one than has generally been acknowledged.

63. Govoni, Mark W. “‘Symbols for the Wordlessness’: The Original Manuscript of *East of Eden*.” *Steinbeck Quarterly* 14 (1981): 14-23.
64. McDaniel, Barbara. “Alienation in *East of Eden*: The ‘Chart of the Soul.’” *Steinbeck Quarterly* 14 (1981): 32-39. Rpt. in *Novels for Students*. Vol. 19. Ed. Jennifer Smith. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2004. 151-55.

McDaniel compares *East of Eden* with its journal and declares that the theme of the novel is alienation—feelings of unwanted separation. In the section Steinbeck talks about Samuel leads Adam out of long depression that followed Adam’s rejection by Cathy, Samuel gives him some final advice. Samuel, a father figure, frees his “son” from alienation, and for the first time in his life Adam can live independent of the control of another. Adam also repeats the errors of his own rejecting father, Cyrus, but he finally gives the word “*Timshel!*” to Cal and sets him free to conquer evil. Thus, according to McDaniel, in the novel Steinbeck wanted to show that fathers visit sins upon their sons by denying them free choice, but give freedom as a gift of love.

— 1982 —

65. **Burningham, Bradd.** “Relation, Vision, and Tracking the Welsh Rats in *East of Eden* and *The Winter of Our Discontent*.” *Steinbeck Quarterly* 15 (1982): 77-90.
66. **Shimomura, Noboru.** “Christianity and Eastern Philosophy in *East of Eden*.” *A Study of John Steinbeck: Mysticism in His Novels*. Tokyo: Hokuseido P, 1982. 152-85.

— 1983 —

67. **Hecker, David Alan.** “John Steinbeck: America’s Isaiah.” Diss. Washington State U, 1983. *DAI* 44.11 (1984): 3422A.

Hecker states that in *The Wayward Bus*, *East of Eden*, and *The Winter of Our Discontent*, Steinbeck continues his attack on the technological society with its commercialization and resultant mass society, but he alters his position from advocating the individual within the group to an affirmation of the self. Steinbeck believes that the mass culture submerged the individual and resulted in immorality and alienation. This change in Steinbeck’s viewpoint demonstrates not only a response to contemporary literary emphasis on the self but also marks his return full circle from agrarianism to some modern scientific ideas and finally

back to a reaffirmation of traditional cultural values.

68. **Martin, Stoddard.** *California Writers: Jack London, John Steinbeck, The Tough Guys.* London: Macmillan, 1983. 110-17.

— 1985 —

69. **Owens, Louis.** “*East of Eden: The ‘New Eye.’*” *John Steinbeck's Re-vision of America.* Athens: U of Georgia P, 1985. 140-155.

Owens studies the setting and characters in *East of Eden*. According to Owens, setting is an active and determinant force in *East of Eden*; in tracing Adam's path from Connecticut to the Salinas Valley, Steinbeck is tracing the symbolic westward trek of “the American Adam” toward the Eden which had eluded him throughout the country's history. Also, Samuel, who resides in the eastern hills at Salinas Valley, is above the illusions fostered by the rich promise of the valley and accepts the fact of the Fall, while Adam, in contrast, clings to the Eden myth and seeks an unfallen garden in the fallen world. Adam Trask is the most unmistakable Adam in American literature, an Adam who destroys or damages his own life and the lives of others through his blind refusal to see evil. Cathy, on the other hand, represents the dark side of the American consciousness, the Puritan certainty of evil as a palpable absolute. Thus, Cal and Aron are the products of a marriage between

good and evil, and the implication in these characters is that all men contain both good and evil and must accept this reality in order to survive in a fallen world. Although Aron perishes in the end, Cal, committed to full knowledge plans to return to the valley land and to farm the land, freed of the illusion of Eden that destroyed his father and his father's dream-garden.

- 70. Yarmus, Marcia D. "John Steinbeck's Hispanic Onomastic Interests in *The Log From the Sea of Cortez* and *East of Eden*." *Literary Onomastics Studies* 12 (1985): 195-207.**

Yarmus discusses Steinbeck's interest in the Hispanic names, in particular, place-names in *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* and *East of Eden*. Steinbeck's exploring place-names at the beginning of *East of Eden* shows his continuous interest in the Hispanic heritage of his native California.

— 1986 —

- 71. Ditsky, John. "'I' in *Eden*: The Narrational Voice in Steinbeck." *Kyushu American Literature* 27 (1986): 57-69.**

- 72. Farrell, Keith. *John Steinbeck: The Voice of the Land*. New York: M. Evans, 1986. 145-57.**

Farrell presents the biographical information of Steinbeck's process of writing *East of Eden* and its reception by both critics and the public. Although "reviewers pointed out in supercilious tones, [*East of Eden*] was hardly a novel at all," publishers and the public adored the novel and "it climbed steadily to the top of all best-seller lists." Farrell explains that "critics lived only in the books that they read and to which their curious and precious profession forced them to feel superior." He also notes that Steinbeck was more respected as an artist by the French than by Americans, and when Steinbeck visited Paris shortly after the publication of *East of Eden* he enjoyed the lionization he received as a result of his work.

- 73. Gladstein, Mimi Reisel. *The Indestructible Woman in Faulkner, Hemingway, and Steinbeck*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research P, 1986. 75-100. Rev. and rpt. as "Abra: The Indestructible Woman in *East of Eden*." in *John Steinbeck* Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1987. 151-53.**

Gladstein evaluates the character of Abra in *East of Eden* as "the strong female principle of good" and "yet realistically human." The narrator pictures her as "straight, strong, fine-breasted," and in another instance her "strength and goodness" and "warmth" are specified. She is womanly, but is it a womanliness of "bold muscular strength." Abra

does not shrink from her womanly role. She rejects Aron's desire to idealize her, to turn her into a "Goddess-Virgin." She does not want to be an ethereal being, the angel woman of Aron's fantasies. She wants to be a sexual being, a biological mother in a relationship with a man who sees her as a flesh and blood human being rather than one who has created his own vision of her. Gladstein also points out that in Steinbeck's description of Abra, he makes observations about women's ability to focus on the larger picture, the eternal rather than temporal view.

- 74. Meyer, Michael J. "Darkness Visible: The Moral Dilemma of Americans as Portrayed in the Early Short Fiction and Later Novels of John Steinbeck (Duality, Morality, Religious Influence)." Diss. Loyola U of Chicago, 1986. DAI 47.1 (1986): 179A.**

Meyer studies the progression of moral ambiguity as a theme in the early short fiction and late novels of Steinbeck, works which have been largely ignored or misunderstood by critics. He examines *The Pastures of Heaven*, *The Pearl*, *The Long Valley*, *East of Eden*, and *Winter of Our Discontent* by close textual analysis to delineate the pervasive influence of moral ambiguity in Steinbeck's canon.

75. **Simmonds, Roy S.** “Cathy Ames and Rhoda Penmark: Two Child Monsters.” *Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Culture* 39 (1986): 91-101. Rpt. in *Steinbeck’s Literary Dimension: A Guide to Comparative Studies*. Vol. 2. Ed. Tetsumaro Hayashi. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow P, 1991. 102-13.

Simmonds studies two child monsters in American literature: Cathy in *East of Eden* and Rhoda Penmark in William March’s *The Bad Seed*. The similarities between Cathy and Rhoda are clear. They are strikingly pretty children, possessing a patina of false innocence. They are the offspring of respectable, middle-class parents. Both use fire on one occasion as a method of killing their victims, and are directly responsible for a suicide. Cathy engineers the deaths of her parents; Rhoda brings about the death of her mother. Both children provoke an ambivalent sort of reaction from adults. Simmonds notes that both Steinbeck and March were endeavoring to warn us that such monsters as Cathy and Rhoda do live among us, and that we should be continually on our guard against the false face of innocence, the treacherously beguiling smile, and the convincing lies—not only in our purely personal relationships but also in the wider context of the national and the international political scenes.

76. **Timmerman, John H.** “Harvest of the Earth: *East of Eden*.” *John Steinbeck’s Fiction: The Aesthetics of the Road Taken*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1986. 210-47.

77. **Wyatt, David.** “Steinbeck’s Lost Gardens.” *The Fall into Eden: Landscape and Imagination in California*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1986. 124-57.

Wyatt studies Edenic themes in Steinbeck’s fiction, including *East of Eden*. The Edenic theme in the novel is explicit as Adam Trask says that he wants to make a garden of his own land. Since Eve/Cathy’s sexuality is something Adam Trask neither wants nor understands, the novel becomes a story about an Adam who refuses to fall. After losing his Eve, the novel proceeds to deal with the aftermath of this attenuated fall and attention shifts from the “Garden of Eden” to the story of Adam’s sons, “Cain and Abel.” Wyatt thinks that *East of Eden* is disappointing because Steinbeck has attempted a massive evasion of its promised theme in it.

— 1988 —

78. **Bradbury, Malcolm.** “Realism and Surrealism: The 1930s.” *The Modern American Novel*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988. 96-125.

Bradbury remarks that Steinbeck’s *East of Eden* reverts to his old theme, of the American West as Eden, the virgin land where the classic dreams and struggles of man are re-experienced. Steinbeck’s politics had changed by the time he wrote *East of Eden*, and his theme points not toward the making of an ideal human collective but to ideas of Jeffersonian independence cursed by man’s fallen nature. Obvious

weaknesses of *East of Eden* that Bradbury indicates are Steinbeck's sentimentalism that cannot register the complexity of the evil he senses in man and his ruralism that cannot grasp the nature of industrialism.

79. Everest, Beth, and Judy Wedeles. "The Neglected Rib: Women in *East of Eden*." *Steinbeck Quarterly* 21 (1988): 13-23.

Everest dissents from the traditional criticism on Steinbeck's portrayal of women—which claims that they are generally classified as mothers or whores—and insists that Steinbeck's female characters are well-rounded and essential. Steinbeck's female characters move beyond the stereotype to join seemingly disconnected story lines and to act as foils and counterparts to the more dominant male characters. Women in *East of Eden* draw their strength from their intuitive wisdom to dominate men. The men are vulnerable and easily manipulated because the women sense men's thoughts and emotions. The men feel insignificant and are often frightened and left in awe of women who sense weaknesses of men and use them for their own benefit. Also, religion is what gives women their strength, and, in fact, Steinbeck presents many women—such as the first Mrs. Trask, Liza Hamilton, and Olive Hamilton—as religion itself.

— 1989 —

80. Owens, Louis. "The Story of a Writing: Narrative Structure in *East of Eden*." *Rediscovering Steinbeck: Revisionist Views of His Art, Politics and Intellectuals*. Ed. Cliff Lewis and Carrol Britch. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen P, 1989. 60-76.

81. Turner, Frederick. "The Valley of the World: John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*." *Spirit of Place: The Making of an American Landscape*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1989. 249-82.

Turner explores the relationship between Salinas and Steinbeck's works—especially *East of Eden* which, Turner thinks, is Steinbeck's best and most ambitious novel. Salinas was Steinbeck's home and the valley below was his chosen literary terrain. It was the place he imaginatively returned to again and again, although he had long been in exile from the pacific. Turner thinks that in his powerful narrative Steinbeck has effectively merged the history of his valley and town, and a panoramic view of the valley in the first chapter is one of the most poetic things he ever wrote. Turner points out that what Steinbeck crucially fails in *East of Eden* is his attempt to combine mid-twentieth-century realism with allegory and the character of Cathy, whose monstrous portrayal demands some psychological plausibility and depth of being.

— 1990 —

- 82. Atkinson, Rebecca L. "Steinbeck's *East of Eden*." *Explicator* 48 (1990): 216-17.**

Atkinson notes the coming of a new messiah figure in the chapters dealing with the arrival of Adam's new Ford. Although the messianic overtones and biblical language of the arrival of the new car are lost in the comedy of the episode, the consequences of the coming of the Ford to the Salinas Valley, and by extension, the coming of mass production to America, are far from funny to Steinbeck. Atkinson states that coming of the Ford, which is described like a god, does mark a new age for mankind, but Steinbeck leaves us wondering if the new god is worth the sacrifice; the slow-paced life tied to the land was gone and replaced by mobility, and people must exchange self-reliance for dependency on specialists. She points out that it is no accident that the color of the new car is green, the color of money, and nor is it surprising that the hood is "as long as a coffin."

- 83. Chadha, Rajni. "Religion and Philosophy." *Social Realism in the Novels of John Steinbeck*. New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 1990. 147-181.**

- 84. Ouderkirk, Bruce J. "Children in Steinbeck: Barometers of the Social Condition." Diss. U of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1990. DAI 51.6 (1990): 2020A.**

Ouderkirk examines the children in Steinbeck's fiction to demonstrate how these characters contribute to his assessment of the social condition. Throughout his work, Steinbeck envisions the ideal society as one that fosters both individual integrity and interdependence with others. As he affirms in *East of Eden*, Steinbeck believes that the future of humanity depends on its nurturing children to become responsible as individuals and as group members.

- 85. Owens, Louis. "A Garden of My Land: Landscape and Dreamscape in John Steinbeck's Fiction." *Steinbeck Quarterly* 23 (1990): 78-88.**

- 86. Owens, Louis. "The Mirror and the Vamp: Invention, Reflection, and Bad, Bad Cathy Trask in *East of Eden*." *Writing the American Classics*. Ed. James Barbour and Tom Quirk. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1990. 235-57.**

— 1991 —

- 87. Anderson, Karen Margareta. “The American Family in John Steinbeck’s Novels.” MA thesis. San Jose State U, 1991. MAI 29.4 (1991): 549.**

Anderson concentrates on Steinbeck’s five novels, including *East of Eden*, and his non-fictional work, *America and Americans*, to trace his portrayal of the American family. In his novels, Steinbeck consistently breaks the stereotype of the typical American family as he writes about weak, ineffective patriarchs and strong, knowledgeable wives, and about the subsequent destruction of the family. As a microcosm of the entire American social structure, his fictional families represent factions within society, and the issues of the family represent those larger issues facing America. Steinbeck portrays the destruction of all his families to show his fear that the American society is collapsing. However, he provides a metamorphosis in the form of a new philosophy, or even a new family, to show his hope that it is not too late for reform.

- 88. Gladstein, Mimi Reisel. “The Strong Female Principle of Good—or Evil: The Women of *East of Eden*.” *Steinbeck Quarterly* 24 (1991): 30-40.**

Gladstein examines women in *East of Eden*, especially Cathy and Abra. Cathy’s evil character suggests a venting of Steinbeck’s animosity toward his divorced second wife, Gwyn. Cathy also embodies Steinbeck

himself and people in general: Steinbeck writes in his journal that “I am a monster like Cathy” because of his apartness and his feelings of dissociation from the rest of his fellows, and that “while [Cathy] is a monster, she is a little piece of the monster in all of us.” Since she is the monster who is Steinbeck, and the monster in all of us, Gladstein insists that Cathy is both man and woman. Abra, on the contrary, is an idealistic figure in the novel. She is a realistic heroine, who is strong, courageous, and honest, but also complete with a healthy sexual side—unlike Steinbeck’s other female characters. Abra is the personification of Steinbeck’s moral solution, “timshel” incarnate. Also, as Steinbeck strongly identifies himself with Cal, she is the woman Steinbeck created for himself: at the end of the novel, Cal and Abra are ready to begin a new life like Steinbeck himself and Elaine, his new wife.

- 89. Quinones, Ricardo J. “The New American Cain: *East of Eden* and Other Works of Post-World War II America.” *The Changes of Cain*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991. 134-44.**

— 1992 —

90. DeMott, Robert. “*East of Eden: A Bibliographical Checklist.*” *Steinbeck Quarterly* 25 (1992): 14-28. Rev. and rpt. as “Charting *East of Eden: A Bibliographical Survey.*” in *After the Grapes of Wrath: Essays on John Steinbeck in Honor of Tetsumaro Hayashi*. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1995. 148-71. Rev. and rpt. as “‘One Book to a Man’: Charting a Bibliographical Preface to *East of Eden.*” in *Steinbeck’s Typewriter: Essays on His Art*. Troy, NY: Whitston, 1997. 206-32.

DeMott compiled the selected bibliography of primary and secondary sources related to *East of Eden*. In his preface, he explores the critical history toward the novel, and states in “*East of Eden: A Bibliographical Checklist*” that “Even though four decades have passed since *East of Eden*’s publication, the frontiers of critical exploration are just beginning to open up.” Similarly, five years later in “‘One Book To A Man’: Charting a Bibliographical Preface to *East of Eden*,” he mentions that “although recent analysis of *East of Eden* has become responsible and responsive, the definitive word on many topics is yet to be written.”

91. DeMott, Robert. “‘Of Ink and Heart’s Blood’: Adventures in Reading *East of Eden.*” *Connecticut Review* 14.1 (1992): 9-21. Rpt. as “‘Of Ink and Heart’s Blood’: Adventures in Reading Steinbeck” in *Steinbeck’s Typewriter: Essays on His Art*. Troy, NY: Whitston, 1997. 265-86.

92. Ditsky, John. "Rowing from Eden: Closure in the Later Steinbeck Fiction." *North Dakota Quarterly* 60 (1992): 87-100.

93. Hayashi, Tetsumaro. "'The Chinese Servant' in *East of Eden*." *San Jose Studies* 18 (1992): 52-60. Rpt. in *Sino-American Relations: An International Quarterly* 19.2 (1993): 29-42.

Hayashi analyzes the character of Lee in *East of Eden*, and remarks that Lee "represents Steinbeck's universal, prophetic, moral vision—the vision of both the East and the West and the author's synthesis of Cain and Abel." Belonging to no society, to no organization or group, Lee represents more objectivity, freedom, transcendence, and independence than any other character. Lee also maintains a delicate balance between his occupation as a humble servant and his second role as a dynamic leader in Trask family, and later, he serves as a surrogate parent, nursing protecting, and loving both Adam and his motherless children. Hayashi regards Lee as a Christ figure who turns human conflicts into harmony and peace and teaches the brotherhood of mankind.

94. Kawata, Ikuko. “‘*Timshel*’: Steinbeck’s Message through the Hebrew Original.” *John Steinbeck: Asian Perspective*. Ed. Kiyoshi Nakayama, Scott Pugh, and Shigeharu Yano. Osaka, Jpn: Osaka Kyoiku Tosho, 1992. 73-87.

Kawata studies the word *timshol* (misinformed Steinbeck spelled the word “*timshel*” in *East of Eden*). After exploring its original meaning in Hebrew, she collects fifty-eight versions of the translated text of Genesis 4:7, and intensively studies it. Although only *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* translates it as “thou mayest” as Steinbeck did in his work to emphasize man’s free will to choose, many biblical scholars, like Julian Morgenstern, states on Genesis; “Man is endowed by God with the power to choose between good and evil.” Steinbeck’s friend, Pat Covici, suggested the term “thou canst” to Steinbeck as the translation for the word, and Steinbeck hesitated in deciding whether he should use “thou mayest” or “thou canst” in his work. Kawata claims that Steinbeck finally used the word “mayest” to retain the ambiguous quality of the original Hebrew term or he may have taken care not to be clear but tried to be pregnant in significance as a literary writer.

95. Mulder, Steven. “The Reader’s Story: *East of Eden* as Postmodernist Metafiction.” *Steinbeck Quarterly* 25 (1992): 109-18.

96. Nakayama Kiyoshi. "Steinbeck's Creative Development of an Ending: *East of Eden*." *John Steinbeck: Asian Perspective*. Ed. Kiyoshi Nakayama, Scott Pugh, and Shigeharu Yano. Osaka, Jpn: Osaka Kyoiku Tosho, 1992. 193-98.

Nakayama compares the manuscripts, the typescripts, and the printed version of *East of Eden*. In the original manuscript, Steinbeck ends with the probable implication of Cal's starting a new life with Abra, while Adam whispers "*Timshel!*," which conveys readers the central theme of the novel in the published version. Also, the last word of Adam is not "*Timshel!*" but "Adam" in the typescript (though it was crossed off by Steinbeck himself). Nakayama thinks "Adam" sounds stronger "because the father has given the son a new identification by calling him 'Adam,'" while "*Timshel!*" implies only forgiveness, choice, and free will.

97. Simmonds, Roy S. "'And Still the Box Is Not Full': Steinbeck's *East of Eden*" *San Jose Studies* 18 (1992): 56-71.

Simmonds investigates the importance of Steinbeck's first draft of *East of Eden* and *Journal of a Novel*. Steinbeck's short letter to Pascal Covici that appears in the preliminaries to the novel, which says "And still the box is not full," may have been his way of admitting that he had not achieved all he had set out to do because of editors and publishers. Simmonds insists that examining Steinbeck's first draft, which was radically altered during the process of revision, is more profitable than just reading the published text of *East of Eden*. Also, Simmonds says

that “no valid assessment or criticism of *East of Eden* can be made without reference to both the original draft and *Journal of a Novel*.”

— 1993 —

98. Etheridge, Charles L., Jr. “Changing Attitudes toward Steinbeck’s Naturalism and the Changing Reputation of *East of Eden*: A Survey of Criticism since 1974.” *The Steinbeck Question: New Essays in Criticism*. Troy, NY: Whitston, 1993. 250-59.

Etheridge surveys how the perception of Steinbeck’s naturalism has changed since the early 1970s, when scholars began to reevaluate Steinbeck’s post-World War II fiction, and to speculate on how these changes have affected the reevaluation of *East of Eden*. Although *East of Eden* was considered a disaster upon its initial publication, now some scholars call it Steinbeck’s finest work. Etheridge mentions that until recently, Steinbeck’s literary reputation depended upon how critics perceived his naturalism; as long as he wrote in what was perceived as a naturalistic vein, he received high prize, and when his work became less overly naturalistic, his reputation declined drastically. This pattern of criticism has changed since the early 1970s as critics have begun to question whether or not Steinbeck was a naturalist. During the 80s, the view that Steinbeck never was a naturalist gathered momentum; Robert DeMott, for example, states that “we have misread Steinbeck, who is “primarily a Romantic ironist.” Jackson J. Benson, the authoritative

biographer of Steinbeck, does not view *East of Eden* as a “departure” or an “abandonment” of naturalism but an “outgrowth” of Steinbeck’s naturalism, a further formulation or refinement of an idea he had worked out in his previous novels. Etheridge concludes by saying that Steinbeck critics have abandoned the “cookie cutter” attitudes toward his naturalism, and new and more productive studies are examining the wealth of the Steinbeck canon, with the result that “*East of Eden* is finally being given a close reading and judged on its own merits.”

99. Heavilin, Barbara A. “Steinbeck’s Exploration of Good and Evil: Structural and Thematic Unity in *East of Eden*.” *Steinbeck Quarterly* 26 (1993): 90-100.

100. Meyer, Michael J. “Finding a New Jerusalem: The Edenic Myth of John Steinbeck.” *Literature and the Bible*. Ed. David Bevan. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993. 95-117.

101. Owens, Louis. “Steinbeck’s *East of Eden* (1952).” *A New Study Guide to Steinbeck’s Major Works, with Critical Explications*. Ed. Tetsumaro Hayashi. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow P, 1993. 66-89.

Owens provides the background, a plot synopsis, and critical explication of *East of Eden*. In its critical explication, he mainly explores “the

overarching allegory of light and dark, good and evil, that dominates the surface structure of *East of Eden*.” Owens explains that Steinbeck’s uncomplicated message in the novel is that people must all be like Ishmael in Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*, the “balanced man” who perceives good as well as evil. The one who accepts the fallen state—the Ishmael who embraces full knowledge—has the potential to survive in the world and to grow to greatness. In *East of Eden*, Samuel is such a man, and Cal is becoming one. Owens also states that a way of profitably approaching the novel is to see the characters of Cathy and Samuel as two poles around which the novel revolves and takes form. Both Cathy and Samuel evolve within the course of the novel, and their paired evolutions may serve as indices to the evolving consciousness of the author who is both creator and participant in the dynamics of the text. While Steinbeck’s biographer, Jackson J. Benson, explains that Steinbeck tries “to use a strong plot, as in *East of Eden*, the novel becomes very labored and one has the feeling constantly that he is following a plot reluctantly,” Owens argues that “the labored feeling may exist only for those of us who insist on reading *East of Eden* as a conventional novel, while ignoring the more exciting dimension of the author’s involvement in the novel.” Owens thinks that *East of Eden* may be the most misunderstood of all of Steinbeck’s creations. It is, in fact, a work that illustrates the author’s desire and courage, at the apex of his career, to explore newer territory, to make his real subject the creative consciousness that had led him already through a stunningly successful career of fiction-making.

— 1994 —

102. Dathorne, O. R. "Steinbeck's European Audience." *In Europe's Image: The Need for American Multiculturalism*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1994. 161-72.

— 1995 —

103. George, Stephen K. "Of Vice and Men: A Virtue Ethics Study of Steinbeck's *The Pearl*, *East of Eden*, and *The Winter of Our Discontent*." Diss. Ball State U, 1995. *DAI* 56.7 (1996): 2716A-2617A.
- George applies an interdisciplinary approach to three of Steinbeck's later novels—*The Pearl*, *East of Eden*, and *The Winter of Our Discontent*—in order to assess the quality of his later fiction and to discover what he has to say concerning ethics and human nature, particularly the irrational emotions and vices. He insists that there was no dramatic falling off of quality in Steinbeck's writing, but rather a deliberate change in emphasis from social criticism to morality and from the group to the individual.

— 1996 —

- 104. Carrillo, Ricardo. “Elements of the Biblical Story of Cain and Abel in the Novels of John Steinbeck.” MA thesis. Texas A&M U, Kingsville, 1996. *MAI* 35.2 (1997): 410.**

Carrillo investigates elements of the Biblical story of Cain and Abel in Steinbeck’s significant works: *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *East of Eden*, and *The Winter of Our Discontent*. Carrillo notes that Steinbeck uses the aspects of this Biblical story in most of his early works, although it is not until *East of Eden* when he writes a true parallel of the story.

- 105. Hess, Natalie. “Code Switching and Style Shifting as Markers of Liminality in Literature.” *Language and Literature: Journal of the Poetics and Linguistics Association* 5.1 (1996): 5-18.**

- 106. Tagaya, Satoru. “Is *East of Eden* a ‘Postmodern Metafiction’?” *Steinbeck Studies* 19 (1996): 14-20.**

— 1997 —

107. Barnes, Rebecca. "Steinbeck's *East of Eden*." *Explicator* 55 (1997): 159-60.

Barnes finds the allegory of Pandora's box from Greek mythology in *East of Eden*. Boxes appear throughout the novel, frequently associated with Cathy and Abra. Cathy's likeness to Pandora is obvious: the broken box appears when she brings disaster to her family and town; the struggle over the oak box brings Cathy to Adam and Adam to despair; and by opening the box containing the will, Cathy begins to bring depravity to the formerly "respectable" whorehouse. If Cathy is the "evil" Pandora, then Abra is her antithesis. By refusing to open Aron's box, Abra breaks free of the myth, or rather, Steinbeck allows her to exercise her free will and break free of the myth. One more box appears in the novel; Steinbeck had carved a wooden box for his editor, Pat Covici, in which he presented to him the final copy of the manuscript, and at the very beginning of the book in the dedication to Covici he mentions that "Well, here is your box. Nearly everything I have is in it, and still it is not full." Barnes concludes by saying, "What Covici loosed by opening the box remains for readers for decide."

108. DeMott, Robert. “‘Working at the Impossible’: Moby-Dick’s Presence in *East of Eden*.” *Steinbeck’s Typewriter: Essays on His Art*. Troy, NY: Whitston, 1997. 75-106. Rev. and rpt. in *Steinbeck and the Environment: Interdisciplinary Approaches*. Ed. Susan F. Beegel, Susan Shillinglaw, and Wesley N. Tiffney, Jr. Tuscaloosa, AL: U of Alabama P, 1997. 211-28.

109. Ditsky, John. “‘I Kind of Like Caleb’: Naming in *East of Eden*.” *Steinbeck Newsletter* 10.1 (1997): 7-9.

Ditsky studies the name of Cal/Caleb, which is taken from biblical Caleb, one of the two persons allowed to enter the Promised Land. Ditsky says that although *East of Eden* attracted often-negative critical attention with its naming pattern involving A and C initials immediately upon its 1952 publication, it is a necessary fictive device. C characters produce A and C progeny while A types are infertile because “Cain lived and had children, and Abel lives only in the story.” The discussion that accompanies the naming scene brings forth Steinbeck’s salient reasons for conducting his novel in terms of naming. The biblical Aaron, heroic as he may have been, did not reach the Promised Land. It is Caleb, who dared express the will of his God to his hearers, who was rewarded by being able to do so. One characteristic of Caleb that Steinbeck wished to use is that he got *home*, and not to Eden that was no longer accessible to human beings, but to the Promised Land that had supplanted Eden. Ditsky also noted that except for his initial, the rest of Caleb’s name is

an anagram for “Abel.”

- 110. Lore, Craig M. “Abracadabra in Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*.” *Steinbeck Newsletter* 10.1 (1997): 11.**

Lore argues that the word “abracadabra” is a whimsical source for Steinbeck’s naming of Abra and, thus, the name of her absent evil sister must be “Cadabra,” which completes the “A” (Abel/virtue) and “C” (Cain/vice) naming pattern of the novel. He also says that Cadabra’s existence is suppressed within Abra herself, who admits that she carries the “bad” blood of her father, a thief. Unlike Aron who perishes because he cannot accept the fact that good and evil coexist, both Abra and Caleb survive because they acknowledge evil within. They find love because they conquer the limitations of self.

— 1998 —

- 111. Wright, Terence R. “*East of Eden* as Western Midrash: Steinbeck’s Re-Marking of Cain.” *Religion and the Arts* 2.4 (1998): 488-518.**

— 2000 —

112. Heavilin, Barbara A. “Judge, Observer, Prophet: The American Cain and Steinbeck’s Shifting Perspective.” *The Critical Response to John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath*. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 2000. 233-46.
113. Meyer, Michael J., ed. *The Betrayal of Brotherhood in the Works of John Steinbeck*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen P, 2000.
114. Simmonds, Roy S. *A Biographical and Critical Introduction of John Steinbeck*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen P, 2000. 158-66.

Simmonds doubts Steinbeck’s envisagement of *East of Eden* as the crowning culmination of his literary career, because in the process of the radical revision that the text underwent before publication, the whole concept of the work has changed. *East of Eden* had been conceived and initially composed as an intensely personal work, couched in the form of a series of letters to his two young sons. However, as “the first draft of *East of Eden* was in any way a publishable novel,” Steinbeck was almost forced into the path his publishers preferred and was dissuaded from retaining the intensely personal element in the work he had originally planned. Ninety thousand words were discarded from the original text and several new chapters and linking passages were added, and the

epistolary structure of the book has been abandoned. Simmonds thinks that if he accept that *East of Eden* ultimately may not be the “big” book and the crowning achievement Steinbeck intended it to be, it does not deserve most of the adverse criticism it has received from some quarters in the years since its publication, because it contains some of Steinbeck’s best prose and many lovingly descriptive passages of nature and landscape.

— 2001 —

- 115. Aguiar, Sarah Appleton. “The Castrating Bitch.” *The Bitch Is Back: Wicked Women in Literature*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2001. 50-56.**

Aguiar analyzes wicked women in literature including Cathy in *East of Eden*. She claims, quoting Delores Barracano Schmidt, that many of the canonized male writers of the twentieth century—such authors as Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald—created “The Great American Bitch Archetype.” Cathy in *East of Eden* is “the castrating bitch,” who chews men up and leaves them bereft of their manhood. However, even with her power, she will find no victory in male-authored literature; her rewards will be at best an unrelenting existential loneliness and at worst death. Steinbeck often suggests that Cathy “lacks” something. Aguiar explains that what she lacks are the crucial ingredients necessary for “womanliness”; bereft of motherly impulses and equally unwilling to

acquiescence to a socially prescribed role, she possesses qualities associated with the masculine. She is an astute businessperson, for example. Cathy's animus-possession is highly stressed; when she shoots Adam, she has castrated him in order to steal his potency, to possess the phallus for herself.

— 2002 —

- 116. Ariki, Kyoko. "Cathy in *East of Eden*: Indispensable to the Thematic Design." *Beyond Boundaries: Rereading John Steinbeck*. Ed. Susan Shillinglaw, and Kevin Hearle. Tuscaloosa, AL: U of Alabama P, 2002. 230-39.**

Ariki argues that *East of Eden* should be read as a tripartite division of stories—those of the Trasks, of the Hamiltons, and of Cathy, although most Steinbeck critics have considered the novel as simply the saga of The Trasks and the Hamiltons. She says that Cathy is a pivotal figure in the structure of the novel and plays three major roles: Cathy connects the two families, serves as catalyst for change in the Trasks, and contributes greatly to the negative presentation of the theme of *timshel* just as Caleb contributes positively. Ariki emphasizes the significance of love in *East of Eden*, referring Erich Fromm's *The Art of Loving*. Love is what Cathy lacks and cannot understand. She feels scared of the people who have what she does not. This is why Cathy destroys her Latin teacher, her parents, Edward, Adam, and Faye, all of whom offer love to her. Cathy is

doomed to extinction because of lack of love, whereas Cal is offered blessing because of his earnest craving for love.

117. Burkhead, Cynthia. "East of Eden." *Students Companion to John Steinbeck*. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 2002. 117-40.

Burkhead provides a summary of *East of Eden* and analyses its themes, symbols, and characters. She also provides readers the archetypal reading of *East of Eden*. She claims that it lends itself particularly well to archetypal criticism because of the specific myths, archetypal patterns, and individual archetypes included in the novel that present fundamental meanings of human experience and evoke a universal response by the reader. It also allows the reader to go a further step in analysis and identify where Steinbeck subverts the myth in his efforts to create a new mythology for America. Adam's ranch in California perfectly fits the characteristics of the archetypal garden, which is green, fertile, and abundant, and it also becomes a place of sin, the location of the fall. The motif of initiation is exemplified by both Adam and Cal. Adam makes steps toward spiritual maturity throughout the novel, many with the help of Samuel Hamilton. The ordeals Cal experiences bring him to an understanding that he may make the choice to sin or not, which is his moral rebirth, his coming of age that is initiation. As for its character's archetypal images that reinforce the mythic quality of *East of Eden*, Cyrus and Cathy are both the sinister shadow figures. Cathy also represents the archetypes of the terrible mother, the sorceress, the witch,

and the siren. Samuel Hamilton and Lee are the archetypal wise old men, who help the hero navigate the quest or avoid the snares set by the shadow or the terrible mother with their knowledge and wisdom.

- 118. Cederstrom, Lorelei. "Beyond the Boundaries of Sexism: The Archetypal Feminine versus Anima Women in Steinbeck's Novels." *Beyond Boundaries: Rereading John Steinbeck*. Ed. Susan Shillinglaw, and Kevin Hearle. Tuscaloosa, AL: U of Alabama P, 2002. 189-204.**

Cederstrom sees Steinbeck's women as complex figures although Steinbeck has been criticized for the one-dimensional quality and limited range of his female characters. According to Cederstrom, Cathy in *East of Eden* is the carrier of the anima projections of the men who encounter her, and because the projected qualities arise from the unconscious, Cathy is perceived as both divine and demonic. Adam is a complete victim of the projections, and when Cathy leaves him he is bereft of all the positive qualities he projected onto her. Cederstrom claims that the female characters in Steinbeck's novels, although often depicted as anima figures, sketched in sexist terms that reflect the male characters' projections onto the feminine, nonetheless force a new focus upon characters like Adam, who must learn to accept the female as a power and value equal to their own. Thus, the superficial and seemingly sexist characteristics of the women in Steinbeck's novels are much less at issue than the attitudes of the male characters toward them. Through the depth of his social and psychological vision, Steinbeck has become a

Shaman, showing readers the limitations of their current attitudes toward the feminine in both the natural world and in life. Steinbeck's novels reveal his deep respect for the balance between masculine and feminine upon which not only every man/woman relationship but also the health of the earth itself depends.

- 119. Dew, Jason Michael. "In Search of 'higher groun' away from American Cold War Intra-imperialism: John Steinbeck's Self-authored Journey toward Rose of Sharon's Breast." Diss. Indiana U of Pennsylvania, 2002. *DAI* 63.1 (2002): 186A.**

Dew investigates four Steinbeck's works, *A Russian Journal*, *East of Eden*, *The Winter of Our Discontent*, and *Travels With Charley*, and he thinks they are significant for their role in navigating American Cold War Intra-imperialism, which is Dew's term for America's self-imposed false consciousness. He concludes that, contrary to many critics' opinions, Steinbeck did not shift from his characteristic constructions of phalanxes or the "group-man" to contexts of "I", and, rather, he authored himself as that "I" as a result of intra-imperialism in order to continue his epic romantic theme of communalism outside of formal political camps.

120. George, Stephen K. "The Philosophical Mind of John Steinbeck: Virtue Ethics and His Later Fiction." *Beyond Boundaries: Rereading John Steinbeck*. Ed. Susan Shillinglaw, and Kevin Hearle. Tuscaloosa, AL: U of Alabama P, 2002. 266-76.

121. Hansen, Carol L. "Beyond Evil: Cathy and Cal in *East of Eden*." *Beyond Boundaries: Rereading John Steinbeck*. Ed. Susan Shillinglaw, and Kevin Hearle. Tuscaloosa, AL: U of Alabama P, 2002. 221-29.

Hansen insists that Cathy is beyond evil; she is a monster to those of conventional morals and mores, but, from her perspective, those who judge her are monsters. Cathy questions the binary opposition between good and evil; she exists outside the norm of the biblical symbolism which structures the novel. In her phantasmagoria, she lives as an alien who refuses to fit into the conventional code of the good woman. But in her perversity she remains eerily fascinating, an enigma who cannot be contained. Cathy defies classification in a male-dominated world. From her view point, she is an observer of the true monsters of masculine control as seen in Mr. Ames, her father; Mr. Edwards, her master; and Adam, her husband. Therefore, she is beyond the boundaries of conventional family life as exemplified by the roles of daughter, wife, and mother. Instead she emerges as a force beyond good and evil, a force of perverse freedom. Also, Cal is perhaps not Adam's son and his genetic roots lie with Cathy and Charles and hence the question of choosing good over evil becomes more problematic. However, when he finds his

mother he rejects her by saying, “I’m my own. I don’t have to be you.”

— 2003 —

- 122. Heusden, Barend Van.** “The Symbol Story of the Human Soul: Cain and Abel in Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*.” *Eve’s Children: The Biblical Stories Retold and Interpreted in Jewish and Christian Traditions*. Ed. Gerard P. Luttikhuisen. Boston: Brill, 2003, 155-73.

— 2004 —

- 123. Shillinglaw, Susan.** “‘The Book That Brought Oprah’s Book Club Back’: *East of Eden*.” *Steinbeck Studies* 15.1 (2004): 137-140.

Shillinglaw covers the background and effects of Oprah Winfrey’s choosing *East of Eden* as her “Oprah’s Book Club” selection on June, 2003. Within a day of the announcement, *East of Eden* jumped to number 2 on Amazon.com, just below the forthcoming Harry Potter and above Hilary Clinton’s memoir. By July it was number one on the *New York Times* best-sellers list and remaining in the top spot for five weeks. After the show aired, each week “*East of Eden* website” received thousands of emails posing questions on the novel, and the producer mentioned that “People were really reading it and thinking about the book.” Shillinglaw comments that “the Steinbeck fever, running high during the Centennial

Year of 2002, spiking in the summer of 2003, will again subside. But undoubtedly John Steinbeck, like the ghost of Tom Joad, will always be ‘there.’”

— 2005 —

- 124. Aguiar, Sarah Appleton. ““No Sanctuary’: Reconsidering the Evil of Cathy Ames Trask.” *The Moral Philosophy of John Steinbeck*. Ed. Stephen K. George. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow P, 2005. 145-53.**

Aguiar reconsiders Cathy in *East of Eden* and remarks that she is a pre-fallen Eve—she has failed to learn the knowledge of both evil and good and she must necessarily remain in a prelapsarian state, unable to distinguish a pervasive and uncompromising morality and only displays strong instincts for self-preservation. Most importantly, she is denied access to the most powerful principle of the novel: *timshel*. Without the basic ability to discern between good and evil, she is barred from evoking free will: she lacks the power to choose. Thus, although Cathy’s actions appear to have the hallmarks of free will and choice, she is behaving instinctually rather than logically or morally; that is, her deeds are dictated by survival and not by higher faculties that measure actions by freely considered values. Cathy loves Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* and associates with Alice because, like Alice, Cathy is certain that she knows the truth. Cathy views her own world as one of hypocrisy, adamant in her assessment that humanity is comprised of liars.

Aguiar concludes by saying that in Cathy's conception of herself, she is the most moral character of all, and in examining her society as she perceives it, she believes herself to be pure. Her justification centers on her needs for self-preservation in a world of hypocrisy. Yet the irony remains that although Cathy has attempted to protect herself, in the end she finds no sanctuary.

- 125. George, Stephen K. "The Emotional Content of Cruelty: An Analysis of Kate in *East of Eden*." *The Moral Philosophy of John Steinbeck*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow P, 2005. 131-44.**

George examines the passion for cruelty in Cathy, who is the "most evil and perhaps the most cruel character ever depicted in literature, a sexual sadist who could make even an Iago blush." George explains that Cathy's power over others, an essential aspect of her cruelty, is likely a way of coping with or denying her own fear, for cruelty becomes the ultimate salve to a fragile psyche. Cathy seems to have an inferiority complex that can be appeased only by an exertion of power, specifically when she entices men to perform degrading sexual acts in order to prove their innate depravity and her higher value. George argues that at the heart of her cruelty and her desire to denigrate a man's sexuality and destroy the male ego seems to be a virulent form of gender hatred. But the power that comes with cruelty only temporarily relieves the driving fear because the underlying terrors remain unresolved. At the end of *East of Eden*, Cathy becomes an example of this insufficiency within the

power dynamics of cruelty. Having lost her beauty, and hence much of her sexual power, she can no longer personally tempt men into her web of depravity.

- 126. Schultz, Jeffrey, and Luchen Li. “*East of Eden* (1952).” *Critical Companion to John Steinbeck: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*. New York: Facts on File, 2005. 61-83.**

Schultz and Li compile the encyclopedia of Steinbeck’s works and life, in which synopsis, characters and settings, and critical overview of *East of Eden* are introduced. They explains that considering the events surrounding its creation, such as the death of Steinbeck’s closest friend and an acrimonious divorce from his second wife, *East of Eden* is his attempt to regain his equilibrium through the therapeutic task of writing a novel about his origins in the Salinas Valley. It is the story of Adam Trask, who continually faces adversity and moral quandaries throughout his life and acts and reacts with human fallibility, thus, according to Schultz and Li, Adam Trask represents Steinbeck’s alter ego.

— 2006 —

- 127. Gladstein, Mimi Reisel. “Steinbeck’s Dysfunctional Families: A Coast-to-Coast Dilemma.” *Steinbeck Review* 3.1 (2006): 35-52.**

— 2007 —

- 128. Brooks, Tiffany Yecke. “Ready-made Stories: The Rhetorical Function of Myths and Lore Cycles as Agents of Social Commentary.” Diss. Florida State U, 2007.**

Brooks examines the various ways that English and American cultures reclaim particular stories or images for the sake of social, political or economic commentary. She explores the manner in which maturing societies create transitional rhetoric by reforming earlier myths and how specific stories, images, or icons function as carriers of cultural themes, crucial values, memories, ideals, and anxieties. In the section entitled “The Genesis Complex,” she cites three specific myths from Genesis that modern authors purposefully refigured to shape issues in the current cultural context and studies *East of Eden* as an example.

- 129. Graulich, Melody. “The Salinas Valley: Autobiographical, Critical, and Environmental Musings on John Steinbeck and Louis Owens.” *Steinbeck Review* 4.1 (2007): 33-46.**

— 2008 —

- 130. Brannon, Brian. “‘A Tiny Volume Bound in Leather’: Influences of *The Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius on John Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*. MA thesis. California State U, Dominguez Hills, 2008.**

Brannon studies philosophical parallels between *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* and *East of Eden*, which demonstrate an ethical kinship between the Roman emperor and American author. In addition to discussing and quoting passages from *The Meditations* in *East of Eden*, Steinbeck’s use of narrative ethics throughout the novel further strengthens the case that he internalized the moral lessons Marcus presented in his epigrams.

- 131. Knapp, Shoshana Milgram. “‘Nothing good was ever created by two men’: Parallel Passages in Ayn Rand’s *The Fountainhead* and John Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*.” *John Steinbeck’s Global Dimensions*. Ed. Kyoko Ariki, Luchen Li, and Scott Pugh. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow P, 2008. 25-38.**

- 132. Marshall, Heidi Ann. “Family Dynamics in American Literature: Genesis and Beyond.” Diss. Florida State U, 2008.**

Marshall explores the Genesis lore cycle in American literature, including *East of Eden*, as an emblem of changing family dynamics in

the past two centuries. The fall, fratricide, and implied incest evident in Genesis appear in American literature amid new families who fail to mirror the utopian nuclear family set forth in the initial Edenic creation. These new American families maintain the lore cycle and combat the connotation that American families fit the Genesis first family mod. Marshall's study incorporates findings from other disciplines, including history, sociology, and psychology.

- 133. Pugh, Scott. "Horrorifying Conclusions: Making Sense of Endings in Steinbeck's Fiction." *John Steinbeck's Global Dimensions*. Ed. Kyoko Ariki, Luchen Li, and Scott Pugh. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow P, 2008. 105-14.**

— 2009 —

- 134. Cerce, Danica. "Art for Politics: The Political Dimension of Steinbeck's Works in Eastern Europe." *A John Steinbeck Reader*. Ed. Barbara A. Heavilin. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow P, 2009. 97-104.**
- 135. Gladstein, Mimi Reisel. "Through the Eyes of a Child: A Steinbeck Forte." *A John Steinbeck Reader*. Ed. Barbara A. Heavilin. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow P, 2009. 53-67.**

136. Li, Luchen. "John Steinbeck's Cultural Frontiers." *A John Steinbeck Reader*. Ed. Barbara A. Heavilin. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow P, 2009. 121-132.

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