

or *The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*" (*New Left Review*, 1984) would have fitted well into the general concept of this study. Established authorities on the history of the period, like Peter Gay, are also absent in the notes. These idiosyncracies make the reading, for the most part, painful; and the frustrated reader is left with many valuable insights, penetrating questions, and analyses that do not, for some of the aforementioned reasons, come fully into their own.

John H. Timmerman

JOHN STEINBECK'S FICTION: THE AESTHETICS OF THE ROAD TAKEN

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986. Pp. 314,
\$22.50

Reviewed by John Ditsky

Steinbeck studies are currently enjoying a bit of a boom, with the resurgence of interest in the writer and his works not only having largely swept aside old critical misperceptions, but also making it no longer necessary for each new critical survey to make its doggedly methodical way through the entire canon with a careful eye to "balanced," proportional coverage of every item. In taking advantage of this option to reflect one's pet interests in discussing more or less the whole of Steinbeck's fiction—at a time when the nonfiction is beginning to get increasing attention—Calvin College Professor John H. Timmerman has created a novel, sometimes quirkily fascinating, account of the values he finds (or fails to find) in the novels, with some additional (if sometimes sketchy) coverage of the short stories as well. Timmerman seems most interested in Steinbeck's lifelong preoccupation with moral concerns and issues, a religious dimension surprisingly profound in so confessedly agnostic a writer.

This concern with the moral on the parts of both Steinbeck and Timmerman culminates in an inventive application of Miltonic conceptions of personal freedom to Steinbeck's late and ambitious work *East of Eden*. Timmerman's insights make for a genuine contribution to the further understanding of this formerly much-maligned book. But though Steinbeck's moralistic concerns are for Timmerman a great reason for the achievements of *East of Eden*, they are also part of the cause of what Timmerman sees as the failure of the writer's final novel, *The Winter of Our Discontent*. This reviewer would be one of those who might quarrel with Timmerman's assessment of *Winter's* central figure as being of insufficient stature to bear the weight of so heavy a moral freight; yet Ethan Allen Hawley's self-consciousness, his awareness of himself as a role-player in a moral drama, can be said to some extent to cast him as an artist-hero finally caught in the toils of his own inventiveness in interfering in the lives of "his" characters. To suggest as much is also to credit Timmerman for being provocative in his assertions and assessments; and to his further credit, he brings to bear upon *Winter* the force of a comparison with Melville's notions of tragic heroism, the latter author usually mentioned in connection with Steinbeck only as a clue to the structural ambitions of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Though Timmerman makes ample use of Jackson J. Benson's presumably definitive biography of Steinbeck, he, for the most part, relies on earlier critical assessments of the major work, and does not seem fully attuned—perhaps the right word is "receptive"—to more recent trends in Steinbeck criticism. Not always discriminating between the reliable and the merely pragmatically useful (or seemingly useful) among his secondary sources, Timmerman may not even think of himself as a particularly "revisionist" critic. But there are sections of his coverage which strike the reader as venturing upon scarcely trodden ground; and when he is riding his own hobby horses he is quite the interesting act to watch. *Cup of Gold*, for instance, was Steinbeck's first novel and therefore of some interest as an adumbration of what would come; but it is also a potboiler of a historical adventure yarn that few have seen much inherent value in. Timmerman gives it perhaps the fullest coverage it has received to date,

and in the process provides a model for elucidating the figure of the future serious novelist from the presumably corrupt evidence of his most patently "popular" writings. The University of Oklahoma Press has carefully edited and printed this text, which is outfitted with a (perhaps) necessarily selective, incomplete, bibliography. Though some readers may be annoyed on the occasions when Timmerman seems to be only going through the motions of full survey coverage (to satisfy the demands of his editors?), all should enjoy the rethinking of Steinbeck's fiction this volume will enforce upon them.

Doris Y. Kadish

*THE LITERATURE OF IMAGES: NARRATIVE LANDSCAPE
FROM Julie TO Jane Eyre*

New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers's University Press,
1987. Pp. 211

Reviewed by Terence Dawson

This study argues for a revision of current semiotic methods. It contends that descriptions of landscape have a more crucial function in the novel than has been realized hitherto. Doris Kadish proposes that one must approach such passages by way of what she defines as a "relational reading." Landscape, she maintains, "cannot be fully understood or appreciated independently of its relations to narrative point of view, to other parallel or contrasting descriptive passages, and finally to the novel's social and political outlook" (p. 8). Her examples are Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie*, Chateaubriand's *Atala*, Ann Radcliff's *Mysteries of Udolpho*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, *Les Chouans* and *Le Lys dans la vallée* by Balzac, *Salammbô* and *L'Éducation sentimentale* by Flaubert, and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

It is a broad range of texts, and much of what Doris Kadish has to say is illuminating. She is at her best when discussing the ideological foundations of a work—for example, Republican idealism in *Paul et Virginie*, or Monarchism in *Atala*. But there is a perturbing tendency to tailor quotations to her purpose. In her analysis of a description of falling water in the former work, she maintains that it represents "social upheaval" (p. 68). But she bases her point on a translation which offers no English equivalent for "heureux"; in the French original, the inhabitants who live nearby are "heureux habitants" (happy or fortunate). Moreover, the sentence following her quotation indicates that the water serves to give the air freshness, which would be very welcome in the torrid heat of Mauritius. Her argument, which is otherwise convincing, is considerably weakened by the omission of words and sentences that would have underlined her point.

Not surprisingly, the best sections are those which have appeared previously as articles: one on *Atala*, and two on Balzac. She is less successful with the English women novelists. For example, in her discussion of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *Frankenstein*, she states that valleys are identified with women, and mountains with men. She then argues convincingly that the relationships between the women and men in these novels have a political aspect. Finally, she concludes that "Valleys and beautiful nature of course have political implications, just as mountains and sublime nature do" (p. 100). This is tantamount to saying that because A is associated with B, and B with C, then A indicates C. It might do, but this would have to be demonstrated, not "relationally" but separately. To maintain that valleys and mountains have such implications in themselves is to take analysis into precisely the kind of psychological and symbolic realms from which Kadish is trying to distance herself.

There is much to be learned from this study, but it has several major weaknesses. The analyses of the texts examined do not do previous criticism justice. For example, there is no reference to I. Kisluk's "Le symbolisme du jardin et l'imagination créatrice chez Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre et Chateaubriand" (*Studies on Voltaire*, 185 [1980] 297-418), a recent study which discusses the psychological aspect of landscape in these authors. In view of such omissions, and they are many, the claim that a relational reading provides "a more complete