# The Winter of Our Discontent

By John Steinbeck



# Life

- Born February 27, 1902 in Salinas California
- Parents Olive Hamilton and John Ernest Steinbeck
- Wrote for his high school newspaper and knew by age 14
  he wanted to be a writer
- 1919 Enrolled at Stanford University and became interested in Biology
- 1925 Left Stanford after 6 years with no degree and moved to NY City to take a job a laborer and journalist
- 1929 Moved back to California and settled in Lake Tahoe.

# Life

- 1943 served as a World War II war correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune
- 1947- made the first of many trips to the Soviet Union
- December 20, 1968, died in New York City on of heart disease.

#### Works

- 1929 First book Cup of Gold
- 1935 First commercial and critical success with Tortilla Flat.
- 1936- 1939 Wrote 3 novels devoted to labor issues
   In Dubois Battle Of Mice and Men
   The Grapes of Wrath
- **1943 1945** Writing focus turns to the war

# The Moon Is Down

#### **Cannery Row**

- 1945-1951 Several of his novels are turned into screen plays
- 1966 Final novel The Winter of Our Discontent

# Major works

- 16 novels, collection of short stories, 4 screen plays, 3 travel narratives, a translation and 2 published journals
- Focused on group behavior earlier and then focused on individual moral responsibility to one's self and community
- Believed that characters must be seen in relation to their environment
- Opened people's eyes to the harsh realities of life in rural America
- Wrote two War novels to encourage patriotism

# Major works

- ☐ "In Dubious Battle"
- ☐ "Of Mice and Men"
- ☐ "The Grapes of Wrath"
- ☐ "East of Eden"
- ☐ "Travels with Charley"

### **Awards**

- National Book Award, "The Grapes of Wrath" (1940)
- Pulitzer Prize for fiction, "The Grapes of Wrath" (1940)
  - King Haakon VII Liberty Cross (1946)
- Member of American Academy of Arts and Letters (1948)
- Nobel Prize for Literature for his realistic and imaginative writing, combining as it does sympathetic humor and keen social perception; (1962)
  - Trustee of the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library (1964)
    - United States Medal of Freedom (1964)
      - Press Medal of Freedom (1964)
    - Member of the National Arts Council (1966)
      - California Hall of Fame (2007)

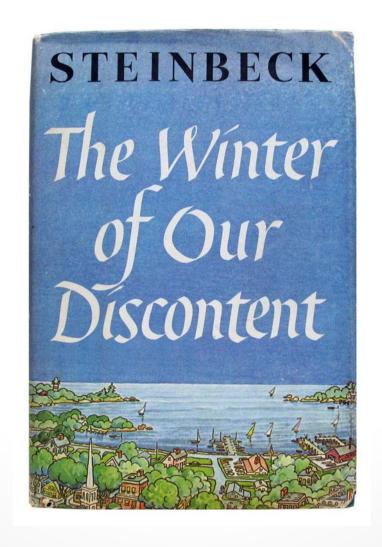
# Characters of the works

#### Steinbeck - a poet of the dispossessed

• victims of the elements, selfishness, environment and property

defective, physically and mentally inferior characters

# The Winter of Our Discontent



# Type of narration

omniscient narrator (Chapter 11part);

• Free Indirect Discourse from multiple points of view (Chapters 1,2,11,12);

• and first person narrative from a single point of view (the rest of the book).

# Main characters

- Ethan Allen Hawley a grocery clerk (the story's protago nist)
- Mary Hawley Ethan's wife
- Allen and Ellen Hawley his adolescent children
- Danny Taylor Ethan's childhood friend and town drunk
- Joey Morphy bank teller and town playboy
- Margie Young-Hunt middle- aged seductress
- Mr. Baker town accountant, owner of the town's bank
- Alfio Marullo Italian immigrant owner of grocery store

# The central conflict

= the internal conflict experienced by Ethan Allen Hawley, the protagonist of this novel, as he seeks to be successful in a world where seemingly the only way of gaining that success is to engage in illegal acts.

### The Title

"... now is the winter of our discontent made glorious by the sun of York"

Richard III (William Shakespeare)

# Style peculiarities

- It only develops one character(narrator) to the full extent and shows us the world around him.
- The other characters in the story are drawn very lightly, offering a limited view of their feelings.
- One of the main stylistic features of the novel is immense reference to Shakespeare.
- The net of symbols helps the author highlight different peculiarities of characters and scenes:

MATTIE'S RED SCARF AND RED RIBBON

# Genre peculiarities

"The winter of our discontent" is ...

... an **ironic novel** with complex moral and **psychological problems**.

... a **response** to the growing atmosphere of **social**, **spiritual and moral**degradation

# Major themes

Importance of Family

Integrity

Defining the American

Dream

# "We can shoot rockets into space but we can't cure anger or discontent"

-- John Steinbeck The Winter of Our Discontent