Finding Steinbeck's Utopia in Cannery Row and Tortilla Flat

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Abstract
My thesis will explore the idea of utopia that John Steinbeck intimates through the two novels Tortilla Flat and Cannery Row, and how he crafts his utopia in concordant Marxist, social, and ecological frameworks. These two novels possess striking commentaries regarding Steinbeck's views on social status, materialism, and freedom all in conjunction with his larger socio-ecological confines. It is in this symbiotic social interaction that Steinbeck crafts his utopia along with the physical landscape that constitutes Monterey. Written a decade apart, the two novels' structural similarities suggest that Steinbeck maintained a consistent social vision, and that these two novels function as incubators for Steinbeck's idea of a utopic society. Steinbeck's romanticization of his childhood home reflects his left-leaning politics and social theories. The Salinas Valley that he creates is comparable to other utopic fabrications such as El Dorado or Milton's Eden than the town that physically rests in California.

Acknowledgments
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Text
In "Tortilla Flat," Steinbeck takes us to a town inhabited by paesanos, locals with mixed Mexican, Native American, and Caucasian heritage. In the years after World War I, a group of men come back with little purpose in life except to sit in the sun and drink wine, and occasionally take a breather in the local jail. A difference is the lovable mugs in [Cannery Row] were sensitive about hurting others, and tried to be harmless. The group in this one are charming rogues, but for me their one-for-all and all-for-one insularity left me uncomfortable and a bit resentful that Steinbeck uses his wizardry to exalt them. He doesn't seem like the kind of guy to thumb his nose at us, but throughout he seems to be saying, see, I can make you love even these reprobates. In Cannery Row (1945) Mack and the boys drove Lee Chong's old truck to the Carmel Valley on their famous frog-hunting expedition. The valley is now a residential and recreational area noted for its galleries and gift shops. Corral de Tierra. Monterey is the setting for some of Steinbeck's best writing Tortilla Flat (1935), Cannery Row (1945), Sweet Thursday (1954). Mentioned in Travels with Charley (1962) and The Log from the Sea of Cortez (1951), Pacific Grove. In 1903, Steinbeck's father built a three room summer cottage on 11th Street in Pacific Grove. Steinbeck lived in this cottage with Carol from 1903–6, and returned here intermittently in the 1940s. Tortilla Flat. Item Preview. remove-circle. Share or Embed This Item. EMBED. Tortilla Flat. by. John Steinbeck. Publication date. 1935. Cannery row. The wayward bus. The pearl. John steinbeck. Tortilla flat. This low-priced Bantam Book has been completely reset in a type face. TORTILLA FLAT. A Bantam Book / published by. arrangement with The Viking Press, Inc. PRINTING HISTORY. Tortilla Flat (1935) is an early John Steinbeck novel set in Monterey, California. The novel was the author's first clear critical and commercial success. The book portrays a group of paisanos—literally, countrymen—a small band of errant friends enjoying life and wine in the days after the end of World War I. Tortilla Flat was made into a film in 1942. Steinbeck later returned to some of the panhandling locals of Monterey (though not the Mexican paesanos of the Flat) in his novel Cannery Row (1945).