

American Jeremiads: *The Winter of Our Discontent* and *Into the Woods*

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John Steinbeck's fiction earned him the Nobel Prize in Literature, though more than that his writings reached a vast audience through filmed versions of his most read novels, including *The Grapes of Wrath* and *East of Eden*. Among Steinbeck's influences was Oswald Spengler, whose *Decline of the West* filters through Steinbeck and into other media, secondarily into the theatre. This piece examines one of Steinbeck's later novels, *The Winter of Our Discontent* in light of the influences of Spengler, and compares it with the Stephen Sondheim/James Lapine play, *Into the Woods* with the inference that Sondheim's play about the ills of materialism bears the traits of Steinbeck's influence. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2010 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

KEYWORDS: Steinbeck, Sondheim, Lapine, Materialism, Dysfunctional family, Spengler, *The Decline of The West*, Jeremiad.

Stephen Sondheim's career in musical theater began decades after John Steinbeck published his first novel. Nonetheless, a close examination of

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