



Pedagogická
fakulta
Faculty
of Education

Jihočeská univerzita
v Českých Budějovicích
University of South Bohemia
in České Budějovice

Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích
Pedagogická fakulta
Katedra
anglistiky

Diplomová práce

John Steinbeck through the Perspective of
Ecocritical Reading
John Steinbeck v perspektivě ekokritického
čtení

Vypracovala: Bc. Lucie Benešová, Čjn-Ajn, 2. ročník
Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Alice Sukdolová, Ph.D.

České Budějovice 2016

Prohlašuji, že jsem svoji diplomovou práci na téma John Steinbeck v perspektivě ekokritického čtení vypracovala samostatně pouze s použitím pramenů a literatury uvedených v seznamu citované literatury.

Prohlašuji, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. v platném znění souhlasím se zveřejněním své diplomové práce, a to v nezkrácené podobě - v úpravě vzniklé vypuštěním vyznačených částí archivovaných pedagogickou fakultou elektronickou cestou ve veřejně přístupné části databáze STAG provozované Jihočeskou univerzitou v Českých Budějovicích na jejích internetových stránkách, a to se zachováním mého autorského práva k odevzdanému textu této kvalifikační práce. Souhlasím dále s tím, aby toutéž elektronickou cestou byly v souladu s uvedeným ustanovením zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. zveřejněny posudky školitele a oponentů práce i záznam o průběhu a výsledku obhajoby kvalifikační práce. Rovněž souhlasím s porovnáním textu mé kvalifikační práce s databází kvalifikačních prací Theses.cz provozovanou Národním registrem vysokoškolských kvalifikačních prací a systémem na odhalování plagiátů.

V Českých Budějovicích dne 29.4. 2016

Podpis studentky: _____ Lucie Benešová

Poděkování

Ráda bych poděkovala paní PhDr. Alici Sukdolové, Ph.D. za její připomínky, rady a podporu.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank to PhDr. Alice Sukdlová, Ph.D. for her comments, advice and support.

Abstract

The diploma thesis deals with the perspective of ecocritical reading of John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* and the short works (*To a God Unknown*, *The Pastures of Heaven* and *Burning Bright*). The introduction of the thesis focuses theoretically on the ecocritical issues as a relatively new literary approach. The thesis also refers to the important biographical facts of John Steinbeck's life that introduces his relation to nature. The main aim of the diploma thesis consists in application of the ecocritical theoretical bases on John Steinbeck's works, primarily on his perception of space, nature and landscape. The thesis includes a part dealing with Steinbeck's philosophy of life and his attitude to environment that is bound to his literary work.

Anotace

Diplomová práce se bude zabývat románem Johna Steinbecka *Hrozny hněvu* a jeho drobnými prózami (*Neznámemu bohu*, *Nebeské pastviny* a *Plameny zářivé*) z perspektivy ekokritického čtení. Úvodní část práce se teoreticky zaměří na problematiku ekokritiky jako poměrně nového literárního přístupu. Práce se zmíní o důležitých meznících v životě Johna Steinbecka a představí jeho vztah k přírodě. Hlavní cíl diplomové práce bude spočívat v aplikaci ekokritických teoretických východisek na tvorbu Johna Steinbecka, především na jeho vnímání prostoru, přírody a krajiny. Součástí práce bude kapitola o životní filozofii Johna Steinbecka a jeho přístupu k prostředí, se kterým je jeho tvorba spjata.

Contents

Introduction	1
1. Beginnings of environmental literary studies	2
2. The origin of ecocriticism	4
3. Ecocriticism	6
4. Principles of ecocriticism.....	8
5. Nature writing in relation to ecocriticism	10
5.1. History of the Californian environment	10
6. John Steinbeck's biography.....	13
7. Steinbeck's perspective on nature.....	15
8. An ecocritical view of <i>To a God Unknown</i>	17
9. Ecocriticism in <i>The Pastures of Heaven</i>	20
10. Ecocritical analysis of <i>Burning Bright</i>	24
11. <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	26
12. Ecocritical insight into <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	29
12.1. Ecology in <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	29
12.2. Ethics	36
12.3. Language	44
12.4. Criticism.....	48
Conclusion.....	56
Resumé.....	58
Bibliography	60

Introduction

Ecocriticism constitutes a relatively new literary approach that is applied by ecocritics to explore and evaluate various literary texts. However, the theoretical approaches have not been fixed yet thus ecocritics only possess the same subject matter that can be represented by the relationship between human and natural world.

Ecocritics prioritize to study texts that deal with nature writing. Regarding a rich history of American literature there are many authors who focused on nature writing, however, in my opinion John Steinbeck represents the most important figure among American authors owing to his intense and lifelong relationship to nature that he depicted in his literary work.

The diploma thesis introduces the associations that deal with American environmental literature. It focuses on the roots of ecocriticism and its two developmental stages. The thesis outlines the origin and definition of the term and it introduces various methodologies that are used by ecocritics to study literary texts. The diploma thesis refers to four essential disciplines (ecology, ethics, language and criticism) that are applied to explore and evaluate chiefly *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck's best known novel, and the short works: *To a God Unknown*, *The Pastures of Heaven* and *Burning Bright*. The thesis outlines history and environment of California as a Steinbeck's beloved homeland and a setting of his works. It also refers to the important biographical facts of John Steinbeck's life that are essential to understand his perspective on nature and landscape. The main aim of the diploma thesis consists in application ecocritical theoretical bases on *The Grapes of Wrath*.

1. Beginnings of environmental literary studies

In 1970s there were studies which dealt with sociology, philosophy, history, religion but literary studies concerning environment did not occur. Cheryl Glotfelty claims individual literary and cultural scholars have been developing ecologically informed criticism and theory since the seventies. However, they did not organize themselves into an identifiable group; their various efforts were not recognized as belonging to a distinct critical school or movement. (Glotfelty, Fromm, 1996)

Several special sessions on nature writing or environmental literature began to appear on the programs of annual literary conferences, perhaps most notably the 1991 *Modern Language Association (MLA)* special session organized by Harold Fromm, entitled "*Ecocriticism: The Greening of Literary Studies.*" In 1992 a new Association *for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE)* was formed. *ASLE's* aim was "to promote the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to literature that considers the relationship between human beings and the natural world" and to encourage "new nature writing, traditional and innovative scholarly approaches to environmental literature, and interdisciplinary environmental research." In 1993 *ASLE* began to publish its own journal called *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE)*. *ISLE* has determined the way and themes regarding ecocritical research up to the present day. (Glotfelty, Fromm, 1996)

Garrard states that many early works of *ecocriticism* were characterised by an exclusive interest in Romantic poetry, wilderness narrative and nature writing, but in the last few years *ASLE* has turned towards a more general cultural ecocriticism, with studies of popular scientific writing, film, TV, art, architecture and other cultural artefacts such as theme parks, zoos and shopping malls. Ecocritics' attention is increasingly given to the broad range of cultural processes and products in which, and through which, the complex negotiations of nature and culture take place. (Garrard, 2004)

Buell claims that ISLE still prints articles on nature writing, Wordsworthian poetry, and pastoral theory. But the last and only number to feature a special section on Henry David Thoreau was in fact the very first (spring 1993); and the past few years we have seen essays on British and American film, Australian place-making, Latin American environmental justice poetry, immigrant autobiography, and a revisionist interpretation of animal encounters in medieval lives of St. Francis. (Buell, 2005)

2. The origin of ecocriticism

Roots of *ecocriticism* reach back into 1960s when a wave of *environmentalism* blew across the United States. It was caused by Rachel Carson's book called *Silent Spring* (1962). Rachel Carson captured natural beauty and the 'harmony' of humanity and nature that once existed. However, the rural idyll was interrupted with the ecocatastrophe. Birds, the cattle and sheep died due to mysterious maladies. The title *Silent Spring* comes to function not only to loss of birdsong, but also as a synecdoche for a more general environmental apocalypse. The rhetorical strategies, use of pastoral and apocalyptic imagery and literary allusions with which Carson shapes her scientific material may well be amenable to a more 'literary' or 'cultural' analysis. Such analysis is what we will call '*ecocriticism*'. (Garrard, 2004)

However, not only Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, but also other authors and their works influenced the roots of *ecocriticism*. Norman Foerster's *Nature in American Literature* was published earlier than *Silent Spring*, in 1923. Leo Marx's *The Machine and the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in American Culture* appeared in 1964. These works represent American Studies. Raymond Williams introduced *The Country and the City* into British Studies in 1973. It has been praised as a masterpiece of *ecocriticism* before the term was featured in 1978. William's book prepossessed Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology* which came out in 1991. According to Buell the work today considered the starting point for American *ecocriticism* proper, Joseph Meeker's *The Comedy of Survival* (1972, revd. 1997). (Buell, 2005)

Glen A. Love claims Meeker's book offered the first genuinely new reading of literature from an ecological viewpoint. He wrote: „Human beings are the earth's only literary creatures (...).“ According to Love if the creation of literature is an important characteristic of the human species, it should be examined carefully and honestly to discover its influence upon human behavior and the natural environment - to determine what role, if any, it plays in the welfare and survival of mankind and what insight it offers into human relationships with other species and with the world around us. (Glotfelty, Fromm, 1996)

Lawrence Buell converses about two waves of *ecocriticism*. He claims that for first-wave *ecocriticism*, “environment” effectively meant “natural environment”, he supplies first-wave projects tended to reconnect humans with the natural world. Buell quotes Howarth’s thought: „The paradigmatic first-wave ecocritic appraised “the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action”.¹ Buell cites the idea of Michael Elder: „In the process, the ecocritic might seek to redefine the concept of culture itself in organicist terms with a view to envisioning a “philosophy of organism” that would break down “the hierarchical separations between human beings and other elements of the natural world.”²

According to Buell second-wave of *ecocriticism* has tended to question organicist models of conceiving both *environment* and *environmentalism*. He cites Bennet who believes that „literature-and-environment studies must develop a “social ecocriticism” that takes urban and degraded landscapes just as seriously as “natural” landscapes.”³

Buell states *ecocriticism* is increasingly worldwide and from the bottom to top within academia, from graduate studies in major university literature to courses in entrylevel composition, and it is wide open to alliances with environmental writers, environmental activists, and extra-academic environmental educators. (Buell, 2005)

¹ BUELL, Lawrence. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. p. 21

² BUELL, Lawrence. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. p. 21 and 22

³ BUELL, Lawrence. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. p. 22

3. Ecocriticism

William Rueckert introduced the term *ecocriticism* into literary community in his essay *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*, 1978. „By *ecocriticism* Rueckert meant “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature.”⁴ Rueckert believes that in ecology, man’s tragic flaw is his anthropocentric (as opposed to biocentric) vision, and his compulsion to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate, and exploit every natural thing. (Glotfelty, Fromm, 1996)

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. It takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies. Cheryl Glotfelty states *ecocriticism* takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature. *Ecocriticism* can be further characterized by distinguishing it from other critical approaches. Literary theory, in general, examines the relations between writers, texts and the world. In most literary theory “the world” is synonymous with society – the social sphere. (Glotfelty, Fromm, 1996)

According to Glotfelty ecocritics and theorists ask questions such as: „How is nature represented in this sonnet? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this novel? How has the concept of wilderness changed over time? How is science itself open to literary analysis? What cross-fertilization is possible between literary studies and environmental discourse in related disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, art history, and ethics?“⁵ Their aim lies in answering these questions. (Glotfelty, Fromm, 1996)

Many ecocritics prioritize to study texts fulfilling four criteria according to Lawrence Buell, the professor of Harvard University. These criteria are found in the Buell’s early ecocritical text *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (1995):

⁴ GLOTFELTY, C., FROMM, H. (eds.), *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996. Introduction, p. xx

⁵ GLOTFELTY, C., FROMM, H. (eds.), *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Introduction, p. xix

- „1. The nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history.
2. The human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest.
3. Human accountability to the environment is part of the text’s ethical orientation.
4. Some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text.

(Buell 1995: 7–8)⁶

Most ecocritical work shares a common motivation: the troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet's basic life support systems. (Garrard, 2004) We face the age of environmental crisis. „Each approach understands environmental crisis in its own way, emphasising aspects that are either amenable to solution in terms that it supplies or threatening to values it holds most dear, thus suggesting a range of political possibilities. Each one, moreover, might provide the basis for a distinct ecocritical approach with specific literary or cultural affinities and aversions.“⁷

Ecocriticism is found in a stage of development. Ecocritics use multiple methodologies and they are interconnected with subject matter rather than theoretical approaches. Scott Slovic, a former chairman of ASLE, claims ecocriticism has no central, dominant doctrine or theoretical apparatus, it is being re-defined daily by the actual practise of thousands of literary scholars around the world. (Coupe, 2000) According to Timothy Clark a broad archive is building up, tracing different conceptions of nature and their effects throughout the history and cultures of the world. (Clark, 2011)

⁶ GARRARD, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. First published. New York: the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004. p. 53

⁷ GARRARD, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. p.16

4. Principles of ecocriticism

Eco and *critic* are both derived from Greek, *oikos* and *kritis*, and in tandem they mean "house judge." William Howarth suggested the meaning as following: it is "a person who judges the merits and faults of writings that depict the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action."⁸ According to Howarth all writers and their critics are stuck with language, and although we cast nature and culture as opposites, in fact they constantly mingle, like water and soil in a flowing stream. (Glotfelty, Fromm, 1996)

Ecocritics distinguish four disciplines that are essential for ecocriticism: *ecology*, *ethics*, *language* and *criticism*. These disciplines are used to explore environmental literature with various theories and methods. „As an interdisciplinary science, ecology describes the relations between nature and culture. The applied philosophy of ethics offers ways to mediate historic social conflicts. Language theory examines how words represent human and nonhuman life. Criticism judges the quality and integrity of works and promotes their dissemination. Each discipline stresses the relations of nature and literature as shifting, moving shapes.“⁹

Howarth states we know nature through images and words, a process that makes the question of truth in science or literature inescapable, and whether we find validity through data or metaphor, the two modes of analysis are parallel. (Glotfelty, Fromm, 1996) „Ecocriticism, instead of taxing science for its use of language to represent (mimesis), examines its ability to point (deixis). More developed in Asian than European languages (Liu), deixis locates entities in space, time, and social context. Through deixis, meaning develops from what is said or signed relative to physical

⁸ GLOTFELTY, Cheryl a Harold FROMM. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. First. Athens, Georgia: the University of Georgia Press, 1996. p. 69

⁹ GLOTFELTY, Cheryl a Harold FROMM. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. p. 71

space: I-you, here-there, this-that. Common as air or water, deixis expresses relative direction and orientation, the cognitive basis for description (Jarvella)."¹⁰

Howarth claims that *ecocriticism* is evolving loosely because its authors share no sense of canon and they often use similar rubrics, such as Landscape, Place, Region, Urban, Rural, Nature, and Environment, but since disciplinary biases remain strong, these studies rarely cross-fertilize. (Glotfelty, Fromm, 1996)

¹⁰ GLOTFELTY, Cheryl a Harold FROMM. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. p. 80

5. Nature writing in relation to ecocriticism

Timothy Clark suggests *nature writing* is a term which describes a kind of creative non – fiction associated with natural landscapes and wildlife. This term was substituted by *the environment*. There is no nature as such left on the planet but there are various ‘*environments*’, some more pristine than others. Clark supplies *nature* has long been a crucial and perhaps definitive term of western traditions of thought, perhaps the ‘most complex word in the (English) language’. According to his thought *ecocriticism* usually reads literary and environmental texts with these competing cultural conceptions of *nature* to the fore. Clark claims a definitive feature of the most challenging work is that it does not take the human cultural sphere as its sole point of reference and context. (Clark, 2011) „Today, "environment" has come to mean man's surroundings - flora, fauna, and physical habitat with particular emphasis on how man has damaged that environment and how he must now set about putting it right.“¹¹

5.1. History of the Californian environment

Within the boundaries of what is now the state of California, Indians once lived. Carle claims that the native Californians were specialists in detailed knowledge of their local homelands. Spanish million builders and rancheros, found a landscape and diversity of soils that met their varied expectations and needs. Many cities began as trade center villages serving the surrounding farm and ranch lands. Carle adds that the concept of owning land arrived with the Spanish and, later, Mexican governments, which distributed massive land grants to a relatively small number of rancheros. California became a state in 1850.

The gold rush burst out there from 1848. California represented a Golden State. The practice of hydraulic mining began during the 1860s. Bits of gold hiding in the earth were sought by hydraulic miners. The harm of the landscape’s fauna and flora was fatal. Hydraulic mining caused floods that damaged valley towns. The soil was

¹¹ BEEGEL, Susan F, Susan SHILLINGLAW a Wesley N TIFFNEY. *Steinbeck and the Environment: Interdisciplinary Approaches*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, c1997. p. 3

destabilized by human activities. (Carle, 2010) The new state impersonated the promised land or Earth's paradise for many people who set off through the continent to find gold and good fortune.

„The Pacific Railway Act of July 1, 1862, granted title to alternating sections of public land for 10 miles on either side of the track right-of-way to the railroad companies. That land wealth bought potent political power for the railroads, particularly Central Pacific Railroad Company, which later became Southern Pacific (SP), the sole rail provider to the state from 1869 to 1887. Railroad companies set out to profit from their holdings by enticing settlers, who would grow crops to be shipped east by railroad, and by encouraging tourism to “the Golden State.”¹²

Beginnings of the environmental protection in California dated back to 1890 when the first Californian national parks (Yosemite and Sequoia) were established and Sierra Club arose one of the biggest environmental organization in the world two years later. American colonists travelled to the west. According to them wild Californian nature meant a barrier that was necessary to eliminate. The colonists reached the Pacific Coast and realized that natural resources were limited. At that point they began to systematically protect these resources.¹³

American society was heading to California because of sunny beaches and favourable climate. Californian chamber of commerce contributed to its advertising. However, Hollywood had bigger influence on Americans with its movie pictures from the beginning of the 20th century. Furthermore American society became movable owing to development of the car industry. According to statistics every second man owned a car in 1929. Thus it made a contribution to rapid population growth. Agriculture production and elemental growth of the urban agglomeration led to radical change of Californian landscape. The urbanization was not regulated what symbolized one of the accompanying phenomena of the economic growth. California turned into

¹² CARLE, David. *Introduction to Earth, Soil, and Land in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, California Natural History Guides, No. 101, c2010. p. 89

¹³ KOPECKÝ, Petr. *Robinson Jeffers a John Steinbeck: Vzdálení i blízcí*. 1. vyd. Brno: Host, 2012. p. 44 and 45 (my translation)

the most populous state of the Union in 1964. Population explosion had a harmful effect on natural environment. Pollution of air and contamination of water reached alarming figures. The wave of environmentalism culminated in California in the late sixties after Rachel Carson published the book *Silent Spring*. Americans became aware of ecological degradation which was caused by economic expansion of the state coupled with formentioned influences.¹⁴

Americans perceived California as an unexplored region full of possibilities. New travelogues of the discoverers and the conquerors of this region, such as John Charles Frémont, Clarence King etc., quickly became popular and sparked Americans' curiousness. Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Ambrose Bierce or Joaquin Miller depicted California in the spirit of literary regionalism in the second half of the nineteenth century. Californian wild nature that was not affected by a human has always held an important position in American literature. Monumental and uncivilised local landscape represented an irresistible creative impulse for authors.¹⁵ John Steinbeck was counted among the aforementioned authors. In his works, John Steinbeck pictured not only Californian nature, but also its internal spirit. „All of his life, except for the disastrous year in New York City during his mid-twenties, had been spent in California, particularly central and northern California. He had been labeled a western writer, since almost everything he wrote took place in California.“¹⁶

¹⁴ KOPECKÝ, Petr. *Robinson Jeffers a John Steinbeck: Vzdálení i blízcí*. 1. vyd. Brno: Host, 2012. p. 46 (my translation)

¹⁵ KOPECKÝ, Petr. *Robinson Jeffers a John Steinbeck: Vzdálení i blízcí*. 1. vyd. Brno: Host, 2012. p. 40 and 41 (my translation)

¹⁶ SCHULTZ, Jeffrey D a Luchen LI. *Critical Companion to John Steinbeck: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*. New York: Facts On File, c2005. p. 8

6. John Steinbeck's biography

John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California. His parents were second-generation Americans and Californians. Samuel Hamilton, Steinbeck's maternal grandfather, came from Ireland. He sought his fortune in the Far West so he joined his sister in San José, California and the Hamiltons lived there for almost twenty years. In 1871 the family moved to Salinas and they began a homestead a ranch near King City, California about 60 miles south of Salinas. The ranch grew from 160 to 1,600 acres, as the family accrued land for each family member. Unfortunately, the soil was so poor that it was not particularly productive. (Schultz, Li, 2005) Hence ranching originated in the genus of the Steinbeck's family.

John Adolph Grossteinbeck, Steinbeck's paternal grandfather, immigrated to the United States in the 1860s from Germany. Grossteinbeck, his brother, their sister and brother-in-law, a Lutheran minister, set off a religious mission to Jerusalem where John A. G. met and married Almira Dickinson whose New England family had traveled to the Middle East to convert Jews to Christianity. They lived in New England and then moved to California where John Adolph purchased a small plot of land near Salinas and established a dairy farm. The family converted the acreage into a fruit farm and set up a successful flour mill. (Schultz, Li, 2005)

„Throughout his life, Steinbeck returned to the idea of a human need for a romantic quest to seek one's fortune and to achieve personal goals, inspired often by unrealizable dreams, but always in one to move forward and onward. His grandparents personally represented this vision for the author.“¹⁷

Steinbeck's father served most of his life as treasurer for Monterey County. He then invested his life savings in a feed and grain store, but the store went into bankruptcy. John Ernst Steinbeck never felt completely at home in an office setting and preferred being outdoors, whether working in his vegetable garden or riding his horse around

¹⁷ SCHULTZ, Jeffrey D a Luchen LI. *Critical Companion to John Steinbeck: A literary Reference to His Life and Work*. New York: Facts On File, c2005. p. 4

the county. He passed this love for nature and the soil to his son and made certain that John spent at least part of every summer working at the Hamilton ranch.

Olive Hamilton, Steinbeck's mother, had an important impact on her son. She was first who introduced John to the myths and legends of Western literature and who encouraged him to explore the sensuousness and profundities of language. (Schultz, Li, 2005)

John Steinbeck met and developed a deep and abiding friendship with Edward Ricketts, a marine biologist in Monterey, California. Ricketts influenced Steinbeck's philosophic and literary outlook and he also stimulated John's interest in biology and science. (Schultz, Li, 2005) They met in 1930, when Steinbeck moved to his parents' summer home in Pacific Grove, California. Edward Ricketts studied at *the University of Chicago* and John Steinbeck attended *Stanford* classes and worked at *the Hopkins Marine Laboratory*. By this time *ecology* was a well-established and well-respected discipline. W. N. Tiffney, Jr., Susan Shillinglaw, and Susan F. Beegel claim that by the late 1930s, the emphasis of ecological thought and research was on the relationship between organisms and the physical *environment*, following the early motto of the *American Ecological Society*: "All forms of life in relation to *environment*." The authors add neither Ricketts nor Steinbeck would recognize the terms "*environment*," "*environmentalist*," or "*environmental scientist*" as they are used today. According to the team of authors to John Steinbeck and Edward Ricketts "*the environment*" meant the physical surroundings of living plants and animals-air, water, weather, salinity, and temperature. (Beegel, Shillinglaw, Tiffney, Jr., 1997)

Steinbeck and Ricketts made a six-week marine expedition to the Gulf of California to investigate invertebrate sea life along the Baja peninsula. John Steinbeck later chronicled the experiences on the trip in a book called *Sea of Cortez*, coauthored with Ricketts. Steinbeck finished a completion of the book that was very different from Steinbeck's previously published works, a nonfiction journal with a wholly scientific section. (Schultz, Li, 2005)

7. Steinbeck's perspective on nature

Richard E. Hart states „the early Steinbeck was a writer of the land and its natural inhabitants, morally disposed to the preservation of nature's integrity. He was, in his thinking and work, both a functional part of nature and a student of nature.“¹⁸ According to Susan Shillinglaw John Steinbeck was a man closely connected with Monterey County, the landscape of his childhood, it was in his blood. (Shillinglaw, 2006) It is not surprising, that she reached this conclusion, based on quoted Steinbeck's own thought:

„It seems to be one of those pregnant places from which come wonders... I was born to it and my father was. Our bodies came from this soil—our bones came... from the limestone of our own mountains and our blood is distilled from the juices of this earth. I tell you now that my country — a hundred miles long and about fifty wide—is unique in the world.“¹⁹

Steinbeck had absorbed surroundings of his birthplace where the traditional family farms had to withdraw before industrial agriculture that led to human's estrangement from the land. The farmers enforced an exploiting access not only to natural resources, but also to human beings. Steinbeck, as an adolescent, perceived these circumstances very intensively.²⁰ The local people felt closely united with their land because it provided them with livelihood and home. Figuratively speaking their existence arose from the land. Susan Shillinglaw presents Steinbeck's idea of human interaction with nature that he declared in a notebook while writing *To a God unknown* (Shillinglaw, 2006):

¹⁸ BEEGEL, Susan F, Susan SHILLINGLAW a Wesley N TIFFNEY. *Steinbeck and the Environment: Interdisciplinary Approaches*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, c1997. p. 45

¹⁹ SHILLINGLAW, Susan. *A Journey into Steinbeck's California*. Roaring Forties Press, Berkeley, California, c2006. p. 4

²⁰ KOPECKÝ, Petr. *Robinson Jeffers a John Steinbeck: Vzdálení i blízcí*. 1. vyd. Brno: Host, 2012. p. 27 (my translation)

„Each figure is a population, and the stones, the trees, the muscled mountains are the world—but not the world apart from man—the world *and* man—the one inseparable unit man and his environment. Why they should ever have been understood as being separate I do not know.”²¹

Shillinglaw claims John Steinbeck raptly observes the external world and for him, surface texture encompasses the names of things, human eccentricities, and the physicality of a place. She adds that he asks readers to see with precision. Steinbeck pictured the Salinas Valley that not only became a template for human struggles, but also portrayed an image of the land he saw, the land full of contrasts. (Shillinglaw, 2006)

²¹ SHILLINGLAW, Susan. *A Journey into Steinbeck's California*. Roaring Forties Press, Berkeley, California, c2006. p. 6

8. An ecocritical view of *To a God Unknown*

Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., Jesse S. Crisler and Susan Shillinglaw collected several reviews evaluating *To a God Unknown*, Steinbeck's novel, that represents a story dealing with a man's relation to the earth. They presented a review published in *Christian Century*, September 1933.

The authors of the review claim that „the novelist has dealt imaginatively with the mystery of man's relation to the earth and the animals, and with those instinctive and irrational practices by which man has tried to give expression to his consciousness of that relation and to influence his earth-bound destiny.“²²

Joseph Wayne, the chief character of the novel, is a man who feels strong passion for the earth. John Wayne, Joseph's father, passes his love for the earth, a kind of heritage, on Joseph. He moves out west to California to settle down, in *the Valley of Nuestra Señora*, and establish a new homestead just as his father did and his grandfather as well. According to Susan Shillinglaw in Steinbeck's hands, this is contested land emblematic of California's early history. (Shillinglaw, 2006)

„A mission, an Indian village, and a white homestead each has a claim on the heart of this valley, and the book's central thrust is concerned with land use—be it for profit, consecration, mystery, or enjoyment.“²³

V. S. Pritchett also reviewed Steinbeck's novel in the article entitled „*Fiction*“ that was published in *Spectator (England)*, April 1935. He assessed Joseph's relation to the land as follows:

„His chief character, Joseph, loves the land. He feels a deep, mystical kinship with it. He worships its increase, he *feels* it as part of himself and as part of his patriarchal father whose momentous nature he inherits; he loves with the land and suffers with it.“²⁴

²² MCEL RATH, Joseph R, Jesse S CRISLER a Susan SHILLINGLAW. *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. p. 23

²³ SHILLINGLAW, Susan. *A Journey into Steinbeck's California*. Roaring Forties Press, Berkeley, California, c2006.p. 46

Many Americans moved to California to farm a new promised land and seek a livelihood there as the previous generations. Natural history of California goes hand in hand with American history. The reference to Mexicans and Indians can be found in Steinbeck's second novel. The local people celebrate New Year's fiesta that indicate a Mexican feast day and the Wayne's celebrate Thanksgiving that remind them how Indians lived in harmony with nature.

On the one hand California possesses the land to farm and live, on the other hand wildlife is situated there. They represent two completely different environments. Joseph, his three brothers and their wives, who join him and set up homesteads adjacent to Joseph's, are enthralled not only by the land's beauty and fertility, but also by the wildlife's mystery and extraordinariness. Newcomers get to know the two environments. The new farmers are grateful for fertility of the soil and animal's reproduction. However, they are also aware of natural disasters that could afflict their land and cattle. The Wayne's fear for recurrence of the dry season that came in the 1880s. That is the reason why they pray for the rain.

Many of the family members rely on their faith that is pagan or Christian. Burton, Joseph's elder brother, is not tolerant of Joseph's pagan belief. Christianity represents ordinary religious so Joseph's paganism is in contradiction to it. Regarding nature paganism is definitely more in accordance with it than Christianity. Concerning religion that is portrayed in the novel, small animals are sacrificed to reinsure rain. From an ecological point of view their killing is not considered as right behaviour. Animals should be protected just as environment. They should not be misused owing to religious rites.

Steinbeck's work represents other signs of the ecological attitude to the environment. Joseph strives to protect the earth because he believes in it. He also protects the tree not to be injured owing to his belief that the spirit of Joseph's dead father is hidden in the tree. Burton violates the ecological principle and cuts the tree down to express his disagreement with Joseph's faith. Nowadays cutting down forests

²⁴ MCEL RATH, Joseph R, Jesse S CRISLER a Susan SHILLINGLAW. *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. p. 27

especially primeval forests means another ecological problem which humans ought to face and solve.

Another attribute of ecology can be seen in Joseph's protection of the stream flowing from the rock in a wild pine glade. He makes the ultimate sacrifice to save his beloved earth. On the basis of the biocentric vision human is located at the same level as other living creatures thus sacrifice of animals is comparable with sacrifice of humans.

The *anthropocentric vision* contrary to *biocentric* considers human and his needs as the most important subject. Human uses the environment as a source of livelihood and as space for living. Joseph Wayne represents a leading man who does his duty and uses the environment to fulfil needs of the family. According to this vision Joseph's interest is to maintain living and bloodline. Whereas animal and human reproduction can be regarded as identical on the basis of the aforementioned biocentric vision. Elizabeth, Joseph's wife, gives birth to a boy and the cattle reproduce as well.

Life of the family is harmed owing to natural disaster. Aridity, sterility, disease and famine come so the Waynes leave apart from Joseph who does not want to forsake earth. In this case it is not human who devastates the earth but it is nature itself. The physical setting of the novel plays the most important role in the end when John Steinbeck masterly pictured a pine glade where Joseph sacrifices his life to save earth and all people from death.

9. Ecocriticism in The Pastures of Heaven

Anita Moffett, the author of the review entitled "A Sheltered Valley", published in *New York Times Book*, November 1932, describes the origin of the name of the short story cycle's setting as follows:

"*Las Pasturas del Cielo*"—"The Pastures of Heaven"—was the name given by the Spanish corporal to the sheltered valley "floored with green pasturage, on which a herd of deer browsed," when he caught sight of it from the top of a neighboring ridge."²⁵

John Steinbeck based the plot of the short story cycle on an actual place called *the Corral de Tierra* that he knew in his youth. According to Susan Shillinglaw Steinbeck's aunt Mollie lived on a farm there, where most farmers raised chickens or grew tomatoes to sell to Monterey canneries. (Shillinglaw, 2006) The author informed readers of the places's historical background in the prologue. The natural history mingles with American history as in *To a God Unknown*. The land used to belong to Native Americans who became slaves of the European settlers. The Spanish corporal fell in love with a beautiful valley and wanted to come back one day and continue bloodline there just as Joseph Wayne in *the Valley of Nuestra Señora*, however, it did not happen.

The valley represents a place where humans do not want to conquer, domesticate, violate, humanize and exploit every natural thing as was stated by William Rueckert in the third chapter of the diploma thesis above mentioned. People desire to live there in a peace and happiness, they farm the land and do not harm it with industrial machinery, they live in accordance with nature that provides them home and livelihood. Physical setting plays a secondary role in the novel, the author primarily pictured the fortunes of the local people.

Wild nature is captured in the novel merely concerning Tularecito, a mentally ill boy, and Franklin Gomez, a Mexican Indian, who finds him in a sage bush and takes

²⁵ MCEL RATH, Joseph R, Jesse S CRISLER a Susan SHILLINGLAW. *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. p.15

care of him. The boy's appearance resembles a frog owing to his thick, short arms and long, dangling legs. From the local people's view Tularecito behaves peculiarly. They do not understand his illness and do not know how to treat him. The "frog-child" devastates an orchard (the environment) by digging holes in an effort to find gnomes, mystical creatures, which the boy comes to know via reading fairy tales in school. The orchard belongs to a main character of the short story cycle, Bert Munroe who is attacked by Tularecito. Franklin obeys Bert and put the child into an asylum. The local society protects their land and lives by excluding the poor child out of it. Comparably to the animal world the weakest member is left at the mercy of fate.

Another example of wild behaviour is represented in the character of Junius Maltby. He works as a clerk in San Francisco, an industrial city. Afterwards Junius moves to the Pastures because of the poor health. Poluted air in the city had a bad impact on his health. Industrial production caused pollution of air in San Francisco. Junius believes that clean air in the valley could heal his breathing problems. This young man and also other inhabitants can enjoy healthy environment. Junius cannot farm a land because he grew up and lived in the city for a long time so he is not tied to the land as other farmers. Junius is interested in reading books that reminds him Greek and Roman history. His thinking is influenced by foreign cultures. He learns how to farm a land. He raises Robbie, his son, after his wife's death in absolute accordance with the environment. Junius passes on him his love not only to reading philosophical works but also to nature. Father and his son get along without expensive clothes, cutting hair and Robbie's education. The local society condemn Junius's upbringing because it is in contradiction to their rules. Junius and Robbie live in an easy manner thus they are similar to animals that want to survive but they differ from the animal world due to humans' ability to think and philosophize about life.

Lopez sisters Rosa and Maria, descendants of the general, do not farm a land as the rest of the inhabitants. They try their fortune by opening a restaurant. Despite the fact that sisters are believers they provide delicate service to sell as much meals as possible to male guests. Nobody in the hotel's environment follow the rules of morality. Rosa and Maria feel a temptation to listen to animal instincts because of

gain. According to the *anthropocentric vision*, women would like to satisfy their needs which means to possess a prospering restaurant and not to be poor never more. Although they do not misuse nature or devastate it but the sisters misuse their bodies in spite of morality and ethics. Rosa and Maria leave to San Francisco because they damaged their reputation thus they cannot live in the Pastures.

Miss Molly Morgan is a purposeful young woman who lives in a poor environment thus she decides to leave it and moves to the Pastures to become a teacher. She does not possess money to afford to pay for studies thus she is employed as a charwoman in the Whitesides' house to earn money. She stays in a hospitable environment in their house. Fortunately, Molly did not inherit her father's character. He is an irresponsible man who left his daughter who had to live in poverty. His duty lay in fulfilling Moly's needs. It is comparable to the animal world. Male animal has to provide his young animals everything they need such as food, protection against danger and place to stay. However, Moly's father did not fulfill them. Contrary to Moly's father Edward Wicks represents an exemplary father who does not want his daughter Alice to meet boys. He protects her purity to ensure his daughter good reputation in the Pastures. Edward Wicks pretends to be a rich man but he possesses financial difficulties. He does not want the local people to condemn him. Nevertheless many inhabitants of the Pastures are in an awkward situation just as Wicks.

Pat Humbert is a farmer who lives in the Pastures with his old parents. The environment of the house scares him after his parents' death but farming provides Pat relief from his fear. The farm means the most important thing for him that remains in his life. The house merges with the nature because it is overgrown with ivy. Pat is tied to the place, to the land thus he does not leave it although he does not want to live in the house that is haunted.

Raymond Banks, another farmer of the Pastures who keeps poultry, is interested in executions of the criminals. He visits a prison to see the executions. Raymond does not mind if human is killed. However the scene of killing a man and a chicken appears to be equal to Bert Munroe, Raymond's neighbour, because it reminds him dreadful

experience from his childhood. Regarding the killing scene John Steinbeck stays on top of things as a biologist. It is necessary for the inhabitants to kill poultry to satisfy their hunger. Majority of the inhabitants are worried about financial stringency. This fact is apparent in many Steinbeck's works mainly in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Margaret Cheney Dawson, the author of the review entitled *In a Peaceful Valley* published in *New York Herald Tribune* in October 1932, appreciated Steinbeck's depiction of the valley as is apparent from the following quotation:

„As Mr. Steinbeck pictures it, still before the "development" which he suggests will one day be its fate—it holds in its gentle grip something almost unique in California, indeed in America, today: peace. (...) Whether the spell is cast by nature's beauty or the author's charming serenity of style the reader will probably neither know nor care, but he will feel it and believe in it.“²⁶

The Pastures represent a place where the inhabitants can live in accordance with beautiful nature. The local people do not harm nature and misuse it for fulfilling their needs. They farm a fertile soil without industrial machinery that is used in urban areas. In *The Pastures of Heaven*, John Steinbeck depicted landscape which is not damaged with machinery contrary to his most successful novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. However, all inhabitants of *the Pastures* are not tied firmly to the land just as in Steinbeck's most impressive novel.

²⁶ MCEL RATH, Joseph R, Jesse S CRISLER a Susan SHILLINGLAW. *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. p.13

10. Ecocritical analysis of *Burning Bright*

Burning Bright represents the “playnovelette” that consists of different environments: the circus, the farm and the sea. These environments are portrayed in three acts of the same name. The four main characters go through each of them in the mentioned order. Joe Soul, Mordeen, Victor and Ed alternate with three different roles. According to Harrison Smith, the author of the review *A New Form of Literature* published in *Washington Post* in October 1950, the four characters in the first act are circus people, three men and a woman, who are seen in the dressing room tent of Joe Saul and his beautiful young wife, Mordeen; in the second act the same characters are farmers in a Midwestern farmhouse and in the last act they represent sailors. They are in the captain's cabin of a cargo ship docked in New York Harbor. (McElrath, Jr., Crisler, Shillinglaw, 1996)

The environment of the circus appears to be a little bit competitive considering the presence of two men, Joe Soul and Victor, who love one woman, Mordeen. It is comparable to the animal world where two male animals court a female. Victor does not show his affection towards Mordeen although he is aware of his youth, strength, health and fertility contrary to Joe. However, Victor does not misuse the opportunity to tell Joe Soul that he is the father of the unborn baby. Human does not conquer nature the first act, nor in the second and third act. Nevertheless humans conquer animals in the circus and that could be considered as an interference in natural order. The circus' environment does not meet the requirements of the acrobats thus they move to a Midwestern farmhouse to satisfy their needs. Married couple with friends farm the land and would like to live there happily. The environment of the farm plays the role of home. The farmers do not harm the land with machinery just as in *The Pastures of Heaven*.

The environment of the sea could be influenced by Steinbeck's marine expedition that he made with Edward Ricketts. However, scientific view of the sea is missing. The cabin of the cargo ship represents the place where Ed fights with Victor, a Joe

Soul's rival. Victor, a biological father of Mordeen's baby, is killed and Joe Soul becomes a father of the newborn.

John Steinbeck is concerned with the philosophical theme of life's continuation and paternity in *Burning Bright*. According to aforementioned Lawrence Buell's four criteria Joe Soul, the main character of the work, understands the interest that consists in reproducing as the most important in his life. It means the only interest thus it is in contrast to Buell's second criterion. There are certain differences to be found in *To a God Unknown*, *The Pastures of Heaven* and *Burning Bright*. The two in comparison with the last work include information about natural and cultural history according to the first criterion. Regarding the third criterion Joe Soul and other characters are not as accountable to the environment as the characters in *To a God Unknown*. Concerning the last criterion the environment as a process is pictured to a large extent only in *To a God Unknown*. John Steinbeck depicted the environment as a constant in *Burning Bright* and in *The Pastures of Heaven*. The environment plays a minor role because he mainly focuses on people's fortunes.

11. The Grapes of Wrath

The *Grapes of Wrath* represents John Steinbeck's still most famous and popular novel that was conceived and written during the height of the Great Depression. It became the best-selling book of 1939 and garnered the Pulitzer Prize shortly thereafter. (Bloom, 2005) The novel was judged differently by critics. Harold Bloom says critics such as Kenneth Burke, Edmund Wilson, Frederic J. Hoffman thought the novel dishonest and the work was criticized as well for its lack of organization and its unrealistic dialogue. Bloom himself claims that the chronicle lacks invention, and its characters are not persuasive representations of human inwardness. He adds much more negative aspects of the work. According to Bloom Steinbeck suffers from a comparison to Hemingway. From Bloom's point of view Steinbeck's aesthetic problem was Hemingway, whose shadow always hovered too near. (Bloom, 2007)

Harold Bloom collected several critical interpretations in which authors evaluated John Steinbeck's novel such as Howard Levant, Peter Lisca, Warren Motley etc. Levant, the author of the text entitled *The Fully Matured Art: The Grapes of Wrath*, distinguishes two critical trends, negative and positive. First of them asserts *The Grapes of Wrath's* materials are local and temporary, not universal and permanent; the conception of life is overly simple; the characters are superficial types, the language is folksy or strained by turns; the incoherent structure is the weakest point. According to this trend there are editorializing interchapters that force unearned general conclusions, and the ending is inconclusive as well as overwrought and sentimental. On the other hand the positive trend claims materials of the work are properly universalized in specific detail; the conception is philosophical, the characters are warmly felt and deeply created; the language is functional varied, and superb on the whole; and the structure is an almost perfect combination of the dramatic and the panoramic in sufficient harmony with the materials.

Levant says on the basis of the two opposites *The Grapes of Wrath* is either a classic of our literature or a formless pandering to sentimental popular taste. Finally Howarth admits in all critical justice, *The Grapes of Wrath* must stand or fall as a serious

and important work of art. (Bloom, 2007) The readers and also the critics should support definitely the positive critical trend.

According to Peter Lisca *The Grapes of Wrath* is unquestionably John Steinbeck's finest achievement, a work of literary genius. Lisca appreciates Steinbeck's nonparticipation in the organized efforts of writers, critics, and scholars to promote leftist or Communist theory as fulfillment of their responsibility to society. Lisca adds Steinbeck's intimate knowledge of his materials contribute greatly to the novel's realism and hence to its authority. John Steinbeck experienced living and working with laborers. Lisca claims the truth of his observation has long been substantiated by historians, sociologists, and political scientists; the truth of the novel's vision of humanity has been proven again and again in the hearts of its readers. (Bloom, 2007)

The authors who reviewed *The Grapes of Wrath* promptly in 1939 were much more lenient to Steinbeck's novel. For instance according to Clifton Fadiman, the author of the review entitled *Books* and published in *New Yorker* in April 1939, the power and importance of the novel do not lie in its political insight but in its intense humanity, its grasp of the spirit of an entire people traversing a wilderness, its kindness, its humor, and its bitter indignation. From Fadiman's point of view *The Grapes of Wrath* was the American novel of the season, probably the year, possibly the decade.... George Stevens, the author of the review called *Steinbeck's Uncovered Wagon* that was published in *Saturday Review* in April 1939, expresses his opinion on the language used by the characters. In his opinion all the dialogue is necessary and right. Stevens considers Steinbeck's ear to be perfect and he appreciates that Steinbeck lets the Joads talk with uninhibited coarseness. (McElrath, Jr., Crisler, Shillinglaw, 1996) The novel has aroused diverse responses to it. The work is worthy of reading and evaluating.

Regarding the topic of the novel Steinbeck's inspiration originated in working for George West, an editor of the *San Francisco News*, who asked him to write a series of pieces about the migrant farmers in California. John Steinbeck started to work with officials of the government's *Resettlement Administration*, and spent a good deal of time in the San Joaquin Valley with regional director Eric H. Thomsen, who wanted to

show him the difference between migrants' quality of life in government camps and on their own. John Steinbeck observed the destitution of the migrant families in these government camps and Hoovervilles that arose spontaneously. The seven pieces for the *San Francisco news* were titled *The Harvest Gypsies* published in 1936.

According to Harold Bloom in Maryville Steinbeck encountered Tom Collins, the manager of of "Weedpatch," the government Sanitary Camp at Arvin. It was one of the first Resettlement Administration "demonstration camps," designed to be used as blueprints for growers and local government. (Bloom, 2007) Jeffrey Schultz and Luchen Li wrote Collins provided Steinbeck with detailed and poignant examples of the "OKIE" refugee phenomenon. (Schultz, Li, 2005) Bloom states Tom Collins inspired Steinbeck so profoundly that *The Grapes of Wrath* was dedicated in part "To Tom, who lived it." (Bloom, 2007)

On the basis of the Clifton Fadiman's review it could be said that John Steinbeck did not create only one family, the Joads, but he also makes them typify a whole culture on the move. He gives us the migrant culture itself at the same time. (McElrath, Jr., Crisler, Shillinglaw, 1996) The Joads and thousands of people are dispossessed of their land in the Oklahoma Dust Bowl. Their houses are destroyed so the farmers are forced to set off a journey to California that represents a promised state where they could find work. They have to stand a journey full of hardships. All the people go west on Route 66 full of hope and expectations. Family members hold together and support each other. The Joads meet other hopeless families on the road. All of them have to overcome not only nature's elements (dust, heat and floods in the end of the novel) but also man's inhumanity. They are exposed to harsh treatment of sheriffs and landed proprietors. The *Okies* either cannot find work or they get such a low wage that is not sufficient to buy food for the whole family. They are gradually starving to death and wrath is ripening.

12. Ecocritical insight into The Grapes of Wrath

John Steinbeck became a marine biologist due to long-lasting friendship with Edward Ricketts. The two men were knit by the biological and philosophical ideas. Steinbeck composed a letter to his uncle Joe Hamilton in which he emphasized necessity to include not only human, but also other species into his new work (Shillinglaw, 2014):

„The new work must jump to include other species beside the human. That is why my interest in biology and ecology have become so sharpened... The bio – ecological pattern, having at its conception base and immeasurably lengthened time semence, does not admit the emphasis of such crises as human unemployment, except insofar as they vitally threaten the existence of the species.“²⁷

Glotfelty and Fromm introduced four disciplines that are essential for the ecocritical evaluation of the literary work. These disciplines consist of *ecology*, *ethics*, *language* and *criticism*. Each discipline is reflected in the novel.

12.1. Ecology in The Grapes of Wrath

Ecology represents a discipline that deals with mutual relation between organisms and the environment. John Steinbeck pictured the environment that is as hospitable as hostile towards the farmers. It provides them a fertile land to farm. The farmers are tied to the land and treat it with love. However, dust and lack of rain caused poor crop thus they must cope with it.

„The narrator’s eye rises from the ground, as wind kicks dust from the earth and the sharecroppers cower inside their small houses, fearing for the land that is their lifeblood.“²⁸

²⁷ Shillinglaw , *On Reading The Grapes of Wrath*, PENGUIN BOOKS, 2014, Chapter 4: SCIENTIST AND WRITER

²⁸ BLOOM, Harold. *Bloom’s Guides: John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath*. Chelsea House Publishers, United States of America, c2005. p. 23

Joel Garreau presented the theory of *bioregionalism*. From his point of view specific natural characteristics of the United States' West Coast form a cohesive *bioregion*. Supporters of the *bioregionalistic* movement believe that socially and ecologically accountable life is based on deep knowledge of the place that human inhabits. American authors such as Robinson Jeffers, John Steinbeck or Gary Snyder were influenced by *bioregionalism*. White inhabitants pushed Indians out of the area. The inhabitants did not know local life. Steinbeck and other authors made an intimate relationship with the place and tried to renew human's respect for land via literature. They made an effort to find balance between human and nature. John Steinbeck's most popular novel demonstrates how the farmers „embed the roots“ in their land.²⁹ However, their „roots are pulled out of the land“ by the bank, the „monster“. Not only grandfather but also a lot of other farmers are not able to cope with the situation. They do not manage to leave their land. Grandfather dies during the journey due to sorrow.

The farmer's are dispossessed of their land that is cultivated with tractors. It signifies not only devastation of the land but also the farmer's lives:

„Tractors come over the roads and into the fields like insects; one man drives a tractor straight through a family's home, on his way to the fields beyond.“³⁰

The farmers speculate about the question if a tractor represents a bad thing. The problem is not based on agricultural mechanization that substituted unsatisfactory human labour but it lies in ownership of the land. The farmers are dispossessed of the land that used to be theirs. It belongs to the land company now. The extract from the fourteenth chapter illustrates their speculating:

²⁹ KOPECKÝ, Petr. *Robinson Jeffers a John Steinbeck: Vzdálení i blízcí*. 1. vyd. Brno: Host, 2012. p. 66 (my translation)

³⁰ BLOOM, Harold. *Bloom's Guides: John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath*. Chelsea House Publishers, United States of America, c2005. p. 25

„Is a tractor bad? Is the power that turns the long furrows wrong? If this tractor were ours it would be good (...). If our tractor turned the long furrows of our land, it would be good. (...) We could love that tractor then as we have loved this land when it was ours. But this tractor does two things – it turns the land and turns us off the land.”³¹

Harold Bloom summarizes the fifth interchapter in which juxtaposition is established between the love and respect the tenant farmers feel for the land that's sustained them and the disregard of the landowners, who describe the bank as a living, breathing monster that must be fed. (Bloom, 2005)

The farmers breed animals for their personal use such as pigs, chickens, rabbits and horses. Some of them represent their pets such as dogs and cats. Pigs serve as stockpile and the Joads manage a strenuous journey to California with it. The animals stay in the Oklahoma farm after their masters left involuntarily and the animals become wild. Some families take their pets with them but they could not afford to feed them just as the Joads.

John Steinbeck included several metaphors into the novel. The author managed to compare people with animals. Animals such as horses were used for work on the field since a long time ago. People took care of them and feed them. The reference to horses is found in the novel. Poor people work hard but they starve owing to financial stringency.

The author compares people to horses that are feed to be able to work however, people cannot afford to buy food that they need badly. Humans work dutifully just as animals such as ants. Not only the Joads, but also other migrant farmers could be compared to ants that build dwellings. The migrant people carry all things from place to place just as the ants. Ants are subordinate to a queen ant and the Joads listen to the mother as well. All migrant farmers follow the highway as beetles as it is mentioned in the story. They would like to satisfy bodily needs, hunger in the first place, thus they travel to the promised state just as animals for the purpose of filling

³¹ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Harlow: Pearson Education, 2001. Penguin readers. p. 138

this need. Men such as Al, Tom and Casy, an ex-preacher, would like to fulfill sexual instinct too. However, they suppress the instinct.

Concerning the comparison of the nonhuman with the human world some of the migrant workers such as Tom Joad are forced to hide in shrubs to avoid threat. He is in danger due to the fight between him and the sheriff. Tom has no other option than to hide in shrubs to protect himself and the family. Some animals hide in shrubs as well to avoid danger.

Brian E. Railsback, a critic, claims that the epic novel demonstrates the range of Darwin's theory, including the essential aspects of evolution: the struggle for existence and the process of natural selection. From his point of view the migrant workers move across the land as a species, uprooted from one niche and forced to gain a foothold in another. (Railsback, 1995) This statement could refer to an above mentioned moment when the migrant workers follow the highway as beetles. Railsback suggests humans are merely a small part of the picture here, and the land turtle is the most extensive metaphor for the migrant worker, undefeatable, even with a nick on the shell, and bound west at all costs. The turtle heads southwest as the first migrant. The critic adds the migrant worker's struggle is intensified by capitalism's perversion of natural competition, but this only makes the survivors that much tougher. (Railsback, 1995)

„Because of their inability to see the whole picture, the bankers and members of the Farmers Association diminish themselves by their oppressive tactics while the surviving migrant workers become increasingly tougher, more resourceful, and more sympathetic.“³²

According to Railsback a new race was created with strong blood. This race can adapt and fight in a way the old one could not. (Railsback, 1995) The Joads are able to keep going onwards led by Mother Joad who believes that the family is strong enough to survive and overcome all hardships.

³² BLOOM, Harold. *Bloom's Guides: John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath*. Chelsea House Publishers, United States of America, c2005. p. 50

John Steinbeck knew Charles Darwin's work very well and he admired him. Apart from the struggle for survival, Steinbeck found out that Darwin discovered the principle of intraspecific cooperation as driving power of evolution. Steinbeck was interested in that principle of cooperation within individual species. He was also captivated by work of Emerson Ritter, an American biologist and the author of the concept of *superorganism*.³³

Contemporary science uses a term *ecosystem* instead of *superorganism*. Steinbeck was inspired by Ritter's concept of *superorganism*. According to Steinbeck's thoughts human who is composed of cells is not „*the final unit*“, however, it organizes into larger units that are entitled *phalanx*. The novel's interchapters represent variations of *phalanx*'s subject.³⁴ The following extract illustrates the theory:

„For here 'I lost my land' is changed; a cell is split and from the splitting grows the thing you hate - 'We lost *our* land.' The danger is here, for two men are not as lonely and perplexed as one. And from this first 'we' there grows a still more dangerous thing: 'I have a little food' plus 'I have none.' (...) the sum is 'We have a little food,' (...) The baby has a cold. Here, take this blanket. (...) This is the beginning – from 'I' to 'we'.“³⁵

Regarding the environment at the beginning Tom Joad, an ex-preacher Jim Casy and Muley Graves, a farmer who cannot leave the place because of all memories, are forced to sleep in a cave in an effort to avoid a superintendent. He looks for Muley because nobody can stay in the area. During the journey to California the migrant farmers pitch their tents near the roads in nature and then they settle down in Hoovervilles. These camps represent a densely populated area. People sleep there, they build fire to cook poor meals and park their cars there so the environment of the camps is messy. On the other hand government camps represent a place that provides them more comfort thus people do not stay in nature.

³³ KOPECKÝ, Petr. *Robinson Jeffers a John Steinbeck: Vzdálení i blízcí*. 1. vyd. Brno: Host, 2012. p. 78 (my translation)

³⁴ KOPECKÝ, Petr. *Robinson Jeffers a John Steinbeck: Vzdálení i blízcí*. p. 79 (my translation)

³⁵ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Harlow: Pearson Education, c2001. Penguin readers. p. 138, 139

On the basis of Lawrence Buell's first criterion human history mingles with natural history. Americans recall not only the events relating to the Great Depression that affected all American states but also a devastating dust storm and floods. Harold Bloom uses the idea of Stephen Railton, the author of *Pilgrims' Politics: Steinbeck's Art of Conversion*. According to Railton from the start Steinbeck identifies his vision of human history with organic, biological processes. (Bloom, 2007)

Historical climatic patterns decreed that "bad years" for rainfall were the norm for the Plains, a fact that made tenant farmers a poor investment. For banks, it became a matter of short-term profit at any cost. Years of drought and over-reliance on nutrient-draining cash crops had left the land ecologically devastated.³⁶

John Steinbeck depicted appalling living conditions and hardships that the migrant farmers had to overcome rather than the natural environment. However, the nonhuman environment provides them refuge that they seek to have a rest and recover their strengths.

Buell claims that the human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest. At first the farmers take care of their land, afterwards they pick fruit and cotton somebody else's to earn money. Their only interest is to work to keep them alive. It does not comply with the second criterion that was set by Lawrence Buell. The migrant workers are driven by not only a physical hunger but also by "a hunger in a single soul, hunger for joy and some security."³⁷

The migrant people are accountable to their own environment and take care of it with love. They would like to own just a part of the land in California, however, they are not let to farm the land there. They could be accountable to the new environment but they are banned from farming the land because they do not own it. This point will be mentioned later on in connection with the ethical orientation of the text. Regarding the third criterion the environment is seen as a process in the novel. It changes for worse contrary to expectations of the migrant people.

³⁶ BLOOM, Harold. *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: The Grapes of Wrath*. Infobase Publishing, c2007. p. 137

³⁷ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Harlow: Pearson Education, c2001. Penguin readers. p.137

They are deceived by a Hollywood film in which California is portrayed as a beautiful environment full of green vegetation, fruit orchards and vineyards. The first impression is based on truth, nevertheless their dream about gaining better living conditions in California will not come true.

Ecocritics examine the texts by asking questions such as: How is nature represented in the novel? John Steinbeck is a master of nature's depiction. Several descriptive passages are found in *The Grapes of Wrath* such as the following scene from the beginning of the work:

To the red country and part of the gray country of Oklahoma, the last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth. The plows crossed and recrossed the rivulet marks. The last rains lifted the corn quickly and scattered weed colonies and grass along the sides of the roads so that the gray country and the dark red country began to disappear under a green cover. (...) The sun flared down on the growing corn day after day until a line of brown spread along the edge of each green bayonet. (...) The surface of the earth crusted, a thin hard crust, and as the sky became pale, so the earth became pale, pink in the red country and white in the gray country. ³⁸

Harold Bloom mentions the interchapters that John Steinbeck uses to address both the setting and circumstance of the novel in a poetic, philosophical tone. According to Bloom these are panoramic, descriptive chapters, in which the narrator functions almost as a Greek chorus, delivering information about the sharecroppers' reactions to losing their land or the evolution of the land itself. (Bloom, 2005)

John Steinbeck and other American authors such as Robinson Jeffers, an American poet, tried to think about causes of human action that led to pitiful nature's state. They created some kind of philosophical movement that contemporary humanities call *ecological ethics*. *Anthropocentrism* represents a key concept and a category of *ecological ethics*. It expresses the thought that human is considered to be the most important subject of the world who determines things' value. Human only respects

³⁸ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Harlow: Pearson Education, c2001. Penguin readers. p. 5

nature if it brings benefit to him. Nature acts as an instrument that is used by human.³⁹ Considering *anthropocentrism* the growers and large landowners use it to grow fruit and earn as much money as possible, however, they do not respect the land. The growers take care of orchards and vineyards only because they possess the yield of it. They also grow cotton on the fields to benefit from the yield but it is harmful to the land. On the other hand the owners let some of the fields lie fallow and they do not permit the starving migrant workers own and farm the land which is hard to understand.

Ecological ethics gives a definition of *biocentrism* which is connected with the idea of life's and nature's holiness. Nature is the main subject and it possess spiritual dimension.⁴⁰ An ex-preacher Jim Casy, one of the main characters of *The Grapes of Wrath*, possesses *biocentric vision* as is evident from the following quotation:

„Casy's sojourn brings him to an understanding of “deep ecology,” an egalitarian, biocentric, nonsectarian view in which all living things are related and equally valued: “There was the hills, an' there was me, an' we wasn't separate no more. *We was one thing*. An' that one thing was holy,” he tells Tom Joad.”⁴¹

12.2. Ethics

Ethics represents the second essential discipline for the ecocritical evaluation of the John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. According to Glotfelty and Fromm *ethics* offer ways to mediate social conflicts. Social conflict between the farmers and the capitalists is mediated through the plot of the novel. First of all the bank, the „monster“, appropriates the land that used to belong to the farmers. The bank's aim is to profit from the land but it is impossible owing to crop failure. The farmers are driven out of their homes just as the Joads. They are made migrant workers and they

³⁹ KOPECKÝ, Petr. *Robinson Jeffers a John Steinbeck: Vzdálení i blízcí*. 1. vyd. Brno: Host, 2012. p. 93 (my translation)

⁴⁰ KOPECKÝ, Petr. *Robinson Jeffers a John Steinbeck: Vzdálení i blízcí*. p. 94 (my translation)

⁴¹ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath; Introduction and Notes by Robert DeMott*. Penguin Group, New York, c2006. p. xix

do not farm the land of their own any more. Robert DeMott, the author of the *Introduction to The Grapes of Wrath*, quotes Steinbeck's wish that he confided to *San Francisco News* columnist John Barry in July 1938:

„Every effort I can bring to bear is and has been at the call of the common working people to the end that they may eat what they raise, use what they produce, and in every way and in completeness share in the works of their hands and heads.“⁴²

Secondly the large landowners and the corporation farmers, who are counted among *Associated Farmers*, lure them in California with handbills that announce a demand for fruit pickers thus they are headed west. Families possess second-hand trucks that are piled high with everything they own. The trucks become their homes just as the tents where they live provisionally. The migrant workers encounter people such as the employees of petrol stations and restaurants along the road who are distrustful of them. These people consider the migrant workers to be non-payers which is humiliating for them. Americans dealt with economic crisis thus everybody protected his job and property. Some people such as dealers try to profit by selling cars of very bad condition to poor migrants who wonder if it is possible to manage a long journey to California.

The Joads function as one *unit* or one *organism* (it refers to Steinbeck's theory of *phalanx*) during the journey in spite of the fact that the family consists of eleven members plus an ex-preacher who accompanies them. It is very difficult to maintain a large family during the journey owing to financial difficulties. John Steinbeck portrayed three generations who do their duty in accordance with different social roles. Grandmother and grandfather only want to spend rest of their lives in the Oklahoma farm near Sallisaw. Regrettably both of them die on the way because they are uprooted of their land. Tom Joad senior, their son, appears to be head of the family on the basis of his social role, however, his wife proves to be the person who leads the family. According to Harold Bloom an old Tom Joad is forced to rely on

⁴² STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath; Introduction and Notes by Robert DeMott*. Penguin Group, New York, c2006. p. xxviii

Ma Joad to steer the family and to take a hard line, and this reversal of gender roles frustrates him. (Bloom, 2005) Mr. and Mrs. Joad possess six children. Tom Joad junior, Noah and Al represent young men full of life who hope for better future without hunger and poverty. They are able to survive dreadful living and working conditions because of their youth, strength and energy.

Ruthie and Winfield are two credible children who see the world just as it is. John Steinbeck as a scientist tried to write about things as they are and he did not write how they could be. According to Susan Shillinglaw Steinbeck captures a child's lucid vision in the novel. She adds children have the clear fine judgement contrary to adults. (Shillinglaw, 2014) Adults hope for better life in California in favour of children's future.

Unfortunately not only adults but also lots of children die due to starving. The migrant people are obliged to report family member's death to the authority. Regarding the social law the bereaved are obliged to bury the dead during a funeral service. Nevertheless, people do not possess money to arrange a funeral thus they bury the dead themselves into the land in nature. Tom Joad senior buries his father just as his father did. There is an evident reference to human and natural history that meet again as in the previous generations. However, grandfather is not buried into his beloved land in Oklahoma Dust Bowl in which he became deeply rooted.

Rose of Sharon and Connie Rivers, a married couple, and their unborn baby create a new family among the Joads. It represents a smaller *unit* at heart of the bigger one (unit). They focus on future instead of retrospectively the past. Rose of Sharon and Connie are not as rooted in the native land as Rose's parents and grandparents. They represent younger and more adaptable people (or species). According to Harold Bloom Rose of Sharon dreams about a middle-class life with her husband and baby. He adds Rose becomes paranoid and disillusioned when her husband leaves because Connie promised her comfort, cleanliness, and adequate healthcare for their newborn. (Bloom, 2005) In their opinion education just as a well – paid job are provided in a city.

However, the Joads' family, the unit, starts to disintegrate. We observe evolution of the migrants' personal qualities and character. They are exposed to its testing in different situations. Noah leaves the family to live on his own. He prefers to stay in nature, nevertheless his mother wonders if he could survive because he is mentally handicapped. Connie Rivers has deserted despite the fact that he ought to take care of his wife and child and protect them. Tom is forced to hide in shrubs not to endanger security of the family because he is hot-tempered thus he wants to avoid coming into conflict with the sheriffs. Uncle John is tempted to drink alcohol in order to cope with guilty conscience. He fails the test only once.

Ma Joad, as she is called in the novel's plot, manages to keep the family together thanks to her strength of will. Rose of Sharon fears for her unborn baby from the beginning up to childbirth, however she proves to be enormously courageous after death of her baby.

The migrant families who stay at first in Hoovervilles and then in the government camp become united as well in order to overcome hardships and pass their own experience on others who use them to be able to survive. In Stephen Railton's opinion if owning separates, dispossession becomes the basis for a new unity. (Railton, 1990) The migrants respect own laws and make own decisions to protect themselves against injustice. Fortunately for the migrants they are not left at the mercy of starving and suffering in the government camp.

Harold Bloom collected several critical views that deal with different themes in *The Grapes of Wrath*. The author presents the critical view entitled *Malcolm Cowley on Steinbeck's "fight against intolerable wrongs"*. Bloom introduces Cowley's statement:

„Instead of being just people, as they were at home, they hear themselves called *Okies*—“and that means you're scum,” they tell each other bewilderedly. “Don't mean nothing itself, it's the way they say it.”⁴³

⁴³ BLOOM, Harold. *Bloom's Guides: John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath*. Chelsea House Publishers, United States of America, c2005. p. 54

Okie was a name for people who came from Oklahoma but Californian inhabitants misused it and they added a pejorative sense to the name. The *Okies* from Dust Bowl, Oklahoma, typify almost endangered species who are hunted by sheriffs just as game beasts. They are not let to stay outside a paid camp in order not to violate the law aimed at wanderers so they move from one place to another. Californian inhabitants are intolerant towards the *Okies* because they consider them to be parasites who are able to steal their land just as it is obvious from the following passage from the novel:

„Gonna be deputy sheriffs, an' they'll push you aroun'. You camp on the roadside, an' they'll move you on. You gonna see in people's face how they hate you. (...) They hate you 'cause they're scairt. (...) They know that fallow lan's a sin an' somebody's gonna take it.“⁴⁴

Animosity towards the migrant people does not only lie in people's fear of stealing the land, but also in protecting the system of the state against propagandists and Communists who could endanger it. The prejudices led to inhumane treatment with the migrants who are arrested and even killed by the sheriffs just as Jim Casy. However, the migrants do not count among neither propagandists nor Communists. Furthermore the migrant workers are exposed to economic exploitation by oppressors in California. The large landowners abuse them to get the crops but they are interested neither in their living conditions nor financial stringency. Huge growers would like to gain more and more money contrary to the migrant workers who possess a subsistence wage. Moreover, there are thousands and thousands of nomadic people who apply for the same work thus the wage is very low and it is still decreasing. All of the migrants become more and more desperate thus they become more united.

The unification of the migrants illustrates a following proverb: „*Birds of a feather flock together.*“ Although the sheriffs and the large landowners are humans as well as the migrant workers they do not treat them in a humane way.

⁴⁴ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Harlow: Pearson Education, c2001. Penguin readers. p. 188

Apart from the fact that *The Grapes of Wrath* deals with the themes related to *ecology, ethics and ecological ethics*, there is a layer including *religion and philosophy of life*. Jim Casy is an ex-preacher who lost religious faith thus he does not lead a herd of believers. He becomes a wanderer and accompanies the Joads on the journey to California. Casy is a support to the migrant workers. He embodies an extraordinary man who listens to the migrant's life stories thus he eases them of a burden, however, he does not give a remission of sins.

The ex-preacher encounters people who committed sins including three men of the Joads who carry the burden of guilty. In spite of the fact that Tom's father and uncle did not commit sins deliberately they are hunted by twinges of conscience. Tom Joad senior is regretful about Noah's disability that was caused by his wrong aid during childbirth thus Noah could be counted among "protected species" figuratively speaking. Uncle John blames himself for wife's death. From his point of view he could foresee seriousness of abdominal pain. John believes he brings bad luck to the Joads thus he has an intention of leaving the family, however they persuade him to stay. It represents a different kind of belief. Tom does not consider killing a man in self-defence as a sin. He did his term in the McAlester's prison thus he does not feel guilty. Casy confides to Tom that his life is as sinful as others'. Although he feels a temptation to meet women he resists the biological instinct owing to strong will.

The ex-preacher turns his attention to the migrant workers to whom he would like to help. Casy could not understand why the migrants are forced to withstand suffering in a form of starving, poverty and humiliation. He could have expected vagaries of weather as well as the nomadic people, however, they should have not been prepared for things like that. It is no wonder that the migrant workers could lose religious faith during the sojourn in California. They were brought up as believers who follow ethical rules and treat others as humans thus they did not expect humiliation from Californian sheriffs, landowners and inhabitants.

Jim Casy makes an effort to find other parts of his soul to complete one big soul. It refers to the idea of American *transcendentalism*, however, it could also represent another reference to Steinbeck's theory of *phalanx*. At the end of the novel Tom Joad is recalling:

"Casy went out in the wilderness to find his own soul, and he found he didn't have no soul that was his'n. Says he foun' he jus' got a little piece of a great big soul. Says a wilderness ain't no good 'cause his little piece of a soul wasn't no good 'less it was with the rest, an' was whole."⁴⁵

Every human ought to trust instincts that he shares with all men though it is in contradiction to the teachings of ortodox religion and of existing society. (Bloom, 2005) The instincts could be considered biological. Considering *religion* the Joads meet *Jehovites* while they are having a rest by a river before getting across the desert to reach California. Grandma is delirious and Mrs. Joad sists beside her. A Jehovite woman offers to hold a prayer meeting in the Joads' tent but Mrs. Joad rejects thus the woman holds a meeting in another tent. (Bloom, 2005) The *Jehovites* resemble beasts because of making such sounds during the prayer meeting:

„Male and female voices had been one tone, but now in the middle of a response one woman's voice went up in a wailing cry, wild and fierce, like the cry of a beast; (...) and a man's voice travelled up the scale in the howl of a wolf."⁴⁶

Another reference to fanaticized believers is found in chapter twenty two. Rose of Sharon speaks with an older woman who warns her away committing sins just as others do in the government camp. The woman threatens Rose of Sharon with stories about young women who had a miscarriage due to their sinful behaviour (dancing, hugging, clutching), however, it is no wonder that the women lost their unborn babies owing to inadequate medical care, lack of food and mainly exhausting work. Rose of Sharon puts hopes in her unborn baby. Unfortunately the Joads' bloodline will not continue

⁴⁵ BLOOM, Harold. *Bloom's Guides: John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath*. Chelsea House Publishers, United States of America, c2005. p. 56

⁴⁶ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Harlow: Pearson Education, c2001. Penguin readers. p. 194

thanks to her because the baby is born dead. It is worth mentioning that there is no reference to fate in the novel. There are passages about deaths, however, they are caused by old age (in grandmother's and grandfather's case), failure to give first aid (in uncle John's case) and deficiency in medical care during Rose of Sharon's pregnancy and childbirth. From scientific point of view every thing in the world possesses causes and effects thus scientists do not believe in fate contrary to believers.

Regarding so-called *philosophy of life*, the characters of *The Grapes of Wrath* differ in their attitude to truth. The Joads need some spare part to repair the car thus they stop to buy it in a second-hand car garage. Tom Joad Jr. considers an one-eyed employee to be a hopeless case because the man is not able to change his opinion. The man possess his own truth. He is confident that he cannot be attractive to women because of his handicap. Furthermore the man finds himself unable to leave because he fears that he will not find work anywhere. Tom makes an effort to encourage him even though he knows that the man will not change his mind.

The Joads try to be optimistic even though the journey is strenuous and stressful. The family do not know what to expect because their future appears to be uncertain. In a camp the Joads encounter a man who has already been to California. He tells Tom, Casy and other men he came back because his family have experienced starvation and his wife and children are dead. A man dressed in ragged clothes said:

„I'm comin' back. I been there. (...) I'm goin' back to starve. (...) Somepin it took me a year to find out. Took two kids dead, took my wife dead to show me. But I can't tell you. I should of knew that. Nobody couldn't tell me, neither.“⁴⁷

Nevertheless, the Joads want to believe that it is not truth for them. They are dispossessed of the land and home thus they have no other option than keep going to California.

The landowners persuade as many migrants as possible to work in orchards, vineyards and cotton plantations. They attracted them by untruthful handbills in order to get the crop but they do not tell the migrants true number of the workers who they

⁴⁷ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Harlow: Pearson Education, c2001. Penguin readers. p. 173, 175

need as it is obvious from the following passage. The man in ragged clothes continues in his speech:

„This fella wants eight hundred men. So he prints up five thousand of them things an' maybe twenty thousan' people sees 'em. An' maybe two-three thousan' folk gets movin' account a this here han'bill. (...) The more fellas he can get, an' the hungier, less he's gonna pay.“⁴⁸

The landowners do not confirm true amount of money in written form. The migrant workers do not know that wage is derived from the number of workers. In spite of the fact that the migrant workers find out the truth that the landowners will pay them subsistence wage they are willing to work because their families need food to survive. Tom, Casy and Tom's father are talking about conversation with the ragged man:

„Pa said: 'S'pose he's tellin' the truth – that fella? The preacher answered: 'He's tellin' the truth, awright. The truth for him. He wasn't makin' nothin' up.' 'How about us?' Tom demanded. 'Is that the truth for us?' 'I don't know,' said Casy. 'I don't know,' said Pa.“⁴⁹

It is very difficult to get an answer to Tom's question. Truth is a relative concept and it depends on every human's point of view.

12.3. Language

Regarding *language The Grapes of Wrath*, the novel that was one of the fastest-selling titles in American publishing history, was barred by some American libraries in 1939 because of vulgar words that were used by the characters of the novel thus it was considered “obscene”. (Bloom, 2005)

It seems probable that John Steinbeck intended to depict folk speech and slang that was used by the migrant workers of the 1930s. The most frequent vulgar word of *The Grapes of Wrath* is represented by “a son-of-a-bitch”. According to Merriam-

⁴⁸ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Harlow: Pearson Education, c2001. Penguin readers. p. 174

⁴⁹ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. p.176

Webster's Dictionary the word means „a person (especially a man) who you strongly dislike or hate“⁵⁰; it also means „something that is very difficult or unpleasant“⁵¹.

“A *son-of-a-bitch*” is „sometimes used interjectionally to express surprise or disappointment“.⁵² The word occurs several times in the novel, it is mentioned by different characters such as Tom Joad Jr., Jim Casy, an one-eyed man and Mr. Hines; and it possesses different meanings. Tom injures his hand while he is repairing the car: “Bleedin’ like a son-of-a-bitch,” he said. “Well, I can stop that.”⁵³ The word means an unpleasant situation owing to Tom’s injury. An one-eyed man is speaking with Tom Joad, Jr. and he is complaining about his employer: „You say it’s all me, but, by God, he’s a son-of-a-bitch.“⁵⁴ It refers to a man whom an one-eyed man hates. The Joads are forced to cross over the desert to reach California. Tom Joad Jr. says: “Got the desert yet,” said Tom. “An’ I hear she’s a son-of-a-bitch.”⁵⁵ The word possesses the meaning of very difficult situation for the Joads. Jim Casy and uncle John are talking about sins and Casy tells him:

„Sure I got sins. Ever’body got sins. A sin is somepin you ain’t sure about. Them people that’s sure about ever’thing an’ ain’t got no sin—well, with that kind a son-of-a-bitch, if I was God I’d kick their ass right outa heaven! I couldn’ stand ’em!”⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. *Merriam-Webster [online]*. [cit. 2016-04-02]. Available at: <http://www.merriam-webster.com>

⁵¹ Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. *Merriam-Webster [online]*. [cit. 2016-04-02]. Available at: <http://www.merriam-webster.com>

⁵² Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. *Merriam-Webster [online]*. [cit. 2016-04-02]. Available at: <http://www.merriam-webster.com>

⁵³ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath; Introduction and Notes by Robert DeMott*. Penguin Group, New York, c2006. p. 172

⁵⁴ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath; Introduction and Notes by Robert DeMott*. p. 181

⁵⁵ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath; Introduction and Notes by Robert DeMott*. p.203

⁵⁶ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath; Introduction and Notes by Robert DeMott*. p. 224

Aforementioned passage of the novel illustrates Casy's indignation of people whom he strongly dislikes. This quotation expresses the same meaning. Mr. Hines, an employer who provides Tom Joad Jr. work, is explaining who is a Red:

„A red is any son-of-a-bitch that wants thirty cents an hour when we're payin' twenty-five!“⁵⁷ This quotation expresses the same meaning as the previous statement.

Jessie Strasbaugh, the author of the article entitled *The Grapes of Wrath and the language of the Dust Bowl*, gives an examples that many characters of the novel involve aggressive verbs in their speech such as „'kick' and 'sock', as in to 'kick up a howl' (whine or show regret), to 'kick around' (treat someone unfairly), and to 'sock it to 'em' (deal a blow to someone).“⁵⁸ The migrant farmers were disposed of their land and humiliated thus it is no wonder that wrath ripened in them and they used such vulgar words.

It seems probable that John Steinbeck intended to depict *folk speech* and *slang* that was used by the migrant workers of the 1930s. The author managed to describe this kind of speech owing to his experiences with observation of the migrant families in the government camps and Hoovervilles. George Stevens published the critical review of *The Grapes of Wrath* entitled *Steinbeck's Uncovered Wagon* in April 1939. He assumed that the Joads' language would displease conservative readers because of its uninhibited coarseness. (McElrath, Jr., Crisler, Shillinglaw, 1996) You cannot but agree that Stevens was right about it. Other readers appreciated the language and considered it convenient just as George Stevens. Current as well as future readers could become supporters of John Steinbeck's language or they could reject it just as the former readers. It is based on readers' education, political and social awareness and fundamental knowledge of American history and literature.

⁵⁷ STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath; Introduction and Notes by Robert DeMott*. Penguin Group, New York, c2006. p. 298

⁵⁸ STRASBAUGH Jessie. *The Grapes of Wrath and the language of the Dust Bowl* [online]. Oxford University Press [cit. 2016-04-02]. Available at: <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2013/04/the-grapes-of-wrath-and-the-language-of-the-dust-bowl/>

The language of the novel is rich in slang words e.g. *stinko*, *boyden*, *stew bums* etc.; abbreviations, non-standard words, informal words and set phrases e.g. *gonna*, *dunno*, *ya* etc. that are distinct from current American English. Abbreviations of the Joads' appellations are found in the novel such as *Ma*, *Pa*, *Granma*, *Grampa*. Not only verb forms but also conjunctions and other word classes are abbreviated as well e.g. *tryin'* (trying), *an'* (and), *ol'* (old) etc. The abbreviations are involved only in dialogues, the author's narration is written according to habitual and standard American English of that time.

John Steinbeck was a brilliant observer and writer who managed to use the language skilfully to depict not only Californian physical setting (ecocritics call it *environment* which is necessary to ecocritical analysis), but also the migrant workers' way of life, their thinking, behaviour, manner of speech, relationships among family members of the Joads, relationships with other migrant families etc. The author succeeded in a description of the places, the environment, the people's appearance and character, the migrant workers' activities etc. Steinbeck made an effort to involve not only *folk speech* but also *deixis* into the novel. We can guess that his aim was to point at people and reality by *deictic expressions* for instance aforementioned personal pronouns *I-we* (*I* can refer to one person or one family and *we* can refer to all people or all families) or *I-you* (*I* can refer to one migrant farmer or worker and *you* can refer to another person in the same situation); *they-we* (*they* can point at the landowners and the growers, *we* can point at the migrant workers); demonstrative pronouns *this-that* e.g. *this* man and *that* man, *this* family and *that* families; adverbs such as *here-there* (*here* can point at Oklahoma and *there* can point at California or vice versa, it depends on perspective of the migrant farmers'). *Deixis* represents only one of the various methods that ecocritics apply during the ecocritical analysis of the literary work.

12.4. Criticism

Criticism represents the very last of four aforementioned ecocritical disciplines, according to Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, that judges the quality and integrity of literary works and promotes their dissemination. Concerning *criticism* *The Grapes of Wrath* represents a highly sophisticated literary work. It represents the longest novel that John Steinbeck wrote consisting of fourteen narrative chapters and sixteen reflective interchapters. Some ecocritics and readers could come to an agreement on distraction of their focusing on the plot because of the novel's structure. The reflective chapters shift readers' and also ecocritics' concentration on the plot because they are forced to reflect on different layers of the literary work. We can guess that John Steinbeck's aim lied in writing an elaborated novel that would make a contribution to people's awareness of economic, social and historical situations and events in The United States of America.

Each interchapter deals with different theme. The opening chapter concerns with the depiction of the parched landscape and unpleasant dust that was omnipresent and afflicted the farmer's crop. John Steinbeck was a brilliant observer who was able to depict the landscape grippingly and in detail. The author managed to portray farmers' mental strain in consequence of natural disaster. The third chapter includes symbolism of the turtle that sets off the journey south-west and struggles for survival just as the migrant farmers. Symbolism of the turtle did not escape many critics' notice. Harold Bloom, Professor of the Humanities at Yale University, collected several critical views that deals with different themes of *The Grapes of Wrath* including the critical view entitled *Stuart L. Burns on the symbol of the turtle* that focus on symbolism of the turtle in the novel.

The fifth chapter deals with the farmers' dispossession of the land. Steinbeck was able to outline the farmers' resignation and hopelessness in spite of the fact that he managed to keep on top of things just as a scientist. John Steinbeck identified with the migrant farmers even if he did not experience their situation personally. The reference to American history that mingles with natural (environmental) history

can be found in the fifth intercalary chapter. The tenant farmers defend their land which used to belong to their antecedents who fought against Indians. Indians were no strangers to the environment and they knew how to treat it contrary to the white newcomers. Consequently they managed to learn specifics about the land thus they became deeply rooted in it. However, the time has come to pull their roots out of the land and set off the journey to California. The tenant farmers are forced to make concessions to the bank, the "monster". The bank yearns for yield of the land. Furthermore, the tractors cultivate the land in spite of the fact that they are not (much) environment-friendly. John Steinbeck possessed a creative capacity to provoke readers' sympathy with the migrant farmers.

The seventh chapter concerns with the theme of dishonest business dealing between dealers of the second-hand cars and the migrants. John Steinbeck describes dealers' cheats that they use to overcharge the migrant families who want to reach California as soon as possible. Steinbeck endowed the dealers' character with an observational skill that facilitate them to cheat the migrants. The author also utilizes automotive technical terms for a description of repairing the Joads' car to endure the journey to promised California. All men make an effort to survive during the Great Depression thus they are willing to act contrary to moral and ethics. Their action could be illustrated by the following proverb: *"The end justifies the means."*

In the ninth chapter readers and critics meet with the question about the farmers' relation to their property. The farmers do not possess many things, however, they are attached to them. They do not personify materialists because the things evoke memories of the past. The farmers believe that they will not be the people who they used to be without their things, their past. The families are forced to sell some things off to get a little sum of money that is vital to survive the strenuous journey to west. In the eleventh chapter John Steinbeck portrayed skillfully the atmosphere after the farmers' leaving. The farmhouses are empty and animals become wild.

In the twelfth chapter John Steinbeck introduced the theme of humanity and mutual help among the migrant families. The description of their way across many American cities can be found in the chapter. At first the “nomadic people” go on the side roads and then continue to the West on well-known Route 66. The author managed to express the migrant families’ fear that the cars could break down and they will not reach California as they wish. Steinbeck distinguished male and female social roles among the migrant family. They fulfil their duty in accordance with their gender. A man listens attentively to motor’s sound, repairs the car if it is necessary and seeks after work and refuge for the family. A woman takes care of all family members, especially children. She does not only cook, do the washing and the dishes but she is also a support to her family and her biggest aim lies in holding the family together just as Ma Joad’s in *The Grapes of Wrath*. However, her social role changes and Ma Joad appears to be head of the family.

The theme of the fourteenth chapter has been already mentioned above. Concerning difficulties of agricultural mechanization by tractors that replaced human labour the tenant farmers have regrets about ownership of the land. Their perspective on farming with use of the tractor (the machine) would change if they owned the land. John Steinbeck has already outlined, in the fifth chapter, a concise description of the relation between the tenant farmers and the bank. The “monster” represents a chief owner of the land. The fourteenth chapter also brings aforementioned theory of *phalanx* that deals with the migrants’ unification, cooperation and humanity. The fifteenth chapter is not as essential as other intercalary chapters. However, the description of the restaurant that is situated along the Route 66 and a waitress’ bad behaviour towards the poor migrants complete the whole picture of their way to California.

The seventeenth chapter appears to be extraordinary because John Steinbeck used a brilliant metaphor to depict the migrant families’ “world” consisting of the migrants’ tents that constitutes a provisional camp. The migrant families evolve into a well coordinated unity that build and pull down the “world” afterwards. The migrants pass own experience on others to help them survive the journey. They talk about their past,

about their home, land and all the migrants share anxiety of future. The “world”, a provisional camp, represents whole society with its social organization; laws and punishments etc. and it moves forward to reach a promised state. John Steinbeck provided a description of the physical setting (or environment) that the migrants choose to build a provisional camp e.g. in close proximity to water (bank of the river, pond, spring etc.) and flat ground that is suitable for pitching the tents etc. The description of the environment represents an appropriate subject-matter for ecocritics to evaluate a literary work. John Steinbeck managed to depict not only a static picture of the environment, but he also captured the environment as a process that is influenced by the dust storm at the beginning of *The Grapes of Wrath* and by floods in the last scene of the novel.

Ecocritics’ aim consist in studying and evaluating texts that proceed from aforementioned Lawrence Buell’s four criteria. Buell’s first criterion refers to the theme of the nineteenth intercalary chapter of *The Grapes of Wrath*:

„1. The nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history.“⁵⁹

The nineteenth chapter focus on Californian history that mingles with its natural history. California used to belong to Mexico, afterwards, ravenous Americans dashed into California and robbed Mexicans of the land. They coveted the land even more than Mexicans. The author managed to capture how Americans’ relation to own land and the environment evolved from personal into impersonal relation. It does not refer to the farmers who are forced to leave Oklahoma but it applies to the landowners, the materialists, who use the land to capitalize on it. Agriculture mechanization affects not only aspect of the landscape but it also can have a harmful impact on its nature. The materialists are not tied to the land, they do not know how to cultivate it properly in accordance with its character, their memories and past is not bound to the land as

⁵⁹ GARRARD, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. First published. New York: the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004. p. 53

the farmers'. John Steinbeck outlined a social hierarchy in the nineteenth interchapter of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

The landowners, rich Americans, who represent the upper class in contrast to the migrant workers, the poor people, who are members of the lower class. Steinbeck did not focus his mind only on a social hierarchy of the 1930s but also on Californian inhabitants' social discrimination against the migrant workers. The *Okies* are strong and they are starving contrary to Californian inhabitants who are full, satisfied and they do not lack anything. The migrants hunger for two things only and these are food and ownership of the land. Firstly, Californian inhabitants are anxious for increases in capital. Secondly, they yearn for having success in the society. Thirdly, the inhabitants of California desire luxury and entertainment. The *Okies* are not treated unequally in comparison to Californian inhabitants regardless of the same nationality and manhood.

John Steinbeck depicted living conditions of the migrant workers not only in Hoovervilles but also in the government camp. The two environments are compared by the Joads who are grateful for ordinary things e.g. a place to stay, hot water in a shower room, bathroom and a laundry room. Steinbeck portrayed huge difference between upper and lower class.

In the twenty first chapter John Steinbeck concerned with the theme of the landowners' unequal wage politics and he provided readers an intelligible explanation of the problem via a man who passes his experience with working in California on the Joads' men. Steinbeck showed readers how the migrant workers get lower wage rate owing to over hundreds of job seekers who apply for the same work. The author managed to depict the migrant workers' despair.

The evidence that the migrant workers long for entertainment to forget about suffering can be found in the twenty third chapter. Steinbeck illustrated it with the examples of telling jokes, stories; playing the musical instruments, singing etc. The migrants wish they could live normally at least for a while.

John Steinbeck was full of praise for a beautiful Californian landscape as it is obvious from the twenty fifth chapter. He depicted a variety of fruit that are grown in California owing to its climate e.g. oranges, grapes, peaches, apples, pears, cherries etc. The migrant workers pick peaches and cotton during the novel. The landowners wish they would benefit from fruit picking as much as possible, however lots of fruit decompose thus they profit from canned fruit. Regrettably the migrant workers are not allowed to eat a surplus of fruit thus they starve more and more. Steinbeck did not frankly express regret about the starving migrant workers, however he expressed it between the lines. We can guess that he made an effort not to show personal feelings and judgements because Steinbeck was not only a writer but also a scientist who stayed on top of things.

The theme of the unequal wage politics occurs again in the twenty seventh chapter. John Steinbeck depicted how the migrant workers are attracted by the orange handbills that proclaim job vacancies, however, it gives them false hope. The migrants finally do not starve for a while nevertheless, the work is temporary because the crop of cotton picking is not big enough to provide the migrants a long-term work.

The author of the novel captured how the migrant family is able to unite in case of financial stringency. Every member of the family including women and children pick cotton not to starve again, regardless of young age, bad health condition or pregnancy.

John Steinbeck pictured the migrants' abilities that help them survive e.g. mental and physical strength, courage, resistance to stress, strong will; the social ability to cooperate among the family and with other families; the migrants' adaptability to various situations and environments etc. The migrant farmers, the underestimated Okies, evolved into tougher, stronger, more courageous and more united humans who covered a large distance to California and overcame all the difficulties.

The opening chapter of *The Grapes of Wrath* brought a dust storm that grieved the farmers. First of all the tenant farmers were disconcerted by crop failure. Shortly afterwards the farmers were dispossessed of the land that they considered as own. In the last of the sixteen interchapters John Steinbeck pictured heavy rain that caused flood and it grieved the migrant families just as the dust storm at the beginning

of the novel. It should be noted that John Steinbeck pictured two different situations and environments. At the start the farmers are hungry, however they still own the land and dwell in the familiar environment. Nevertheless, the Joads just as the other migrant families are confronted not only by flood but also by dreadful living conditions in the end of the novel. The migrants feel the lack of work, food, clothes, security and hope in an unknown environment of the former wagon that serves as a shelter from rain. In *The Grapes of Wrath* John Steinbeck's criticism of American legislation and government is hidden between the lines. It does not enable the migrant workers to get the government relief thus they are forced to beg for food in the town and what is more humiliating to steal something to eat. In spite of the fact that the Joads evolved into tougher humans they are on the brink of madness owing to a desperate situation when the accumulated water from the fields floods the cars and the shelter afterwards. *The Grapes of Wrath* culminates when Rose of Sharon gives a dying man breast milk to save his life. We can speculate if John Steinbeck intended to emphasize the largest display of humanity in the last scene of the novel or if the author made an effort to highlight an absolute failure of the government.

Regarding *criticism* *The Grapes of Wrath* represents an elaborated and coherent literary work. The intercalary chapters complete appropriately the central themes of the novel. The content of the chapters consists of crucial pieces of information that give readers and critics an idea of the following narrative chapter. A narrator cannot be found in the novel that is why the story of the migrant farmers is told from an universal point of view. John Steinbeck did not try to impose neither his personal point of view nor political opinions or dogmas on readers and critics. Regarding the integrity of *The Grapes of Wrath* it should be noted that Steinbeck was criticized because he let the Joads' story opened. It is possible to deal with the end of the novel not only via *criticism* but also via science. From the scientific point of view the evolution of the chief characters was completed.

Rose of Sharon, the most self-interested member of the Joads, is willing to provide help to another human being. Furthermore, the reference to reversed human evolution can be found in the end of *The Grapes of Wrath*. The migrant farmers set off from the dry land to reach California that became a flooded area. The evolution including the cycle of life and death was finished contrary to the story itself.

Conclusion

The theoretical part of the diploma thesis outlined the ecocritical subject matter and it introduced methodologies that were used to practical exploration of the assigned literary works: *The Grapes of Wrath*, *To a God Unknown*, *The Pastures of Heaven* and *Burning Bright*.

Regarding the short work *To a God Unknown* represented the most appropriate work to explore through a perspective of ecocritical reading owing to its natural setting and the main character's strong relation to the land. In *The Pastures of Heaven* the main emphasis is put on a satisfying life in the beautiful Pastures, however, several features of ecocriticism occurred in the short work. The ecocritical exploration of *Burning Bright* represented the most exacting task. The difficulty consisted in the fact that the play-novelette offers a few depictive passages of natural setting. In my opinion the subject matter of *Burning Bright* is represented by philosophy of life that deals with keeping the humans' bloodline.

The main aim of the diploma thesis consisted in exploration of *The Grapes of Wrath* through the perspective of ecocritical reading. Firstly, the thesis provided the critics' evaluation of the novel. Secondly, *The Grapes of Wrath* was explored progressively on the basis of *ecology*, *ethics*, *language* and *criticism* that represent the essential disciplines for the ecocritical evaluation of the text.

Concerning *ecology* the theories of *bioregionalism*, *superorganism* and *phalanx* were explicated and illustrated with examples from the novel. The diploma thesis introduced *anthropocentrism* and *biocentrism* that were defined within the *ecological ethics*. The examples of both concepts are illustrated with the passages from *The Grapes of Wrath*. Regarding *ethics* the social conflict between the capitalists and the tenant farmers was outlined. The thesis introduced the relationships among the Joads, the main characters of the novel, and their treatment by the Californian inhabitants who called the migrant farmers from the Oklahoma Dust Bowl by a name with a pejorative tone. The themes of religion and philosophy of life were discussed via the character of the ex-preacher Jim Casy.

Concerning *language of The Grapes of Wrath* the thesis dealt with slang and vulgar words and deictic expressions. Regarding *criticism* the thesis focused individually on the sixteen interchapters of the novel.

Despite the fact that John Steinbeck's masterpiece was harshly criticized it represents a highly sophisticated literary work that should be meant not only for the ecocritical exploration but also for additional analysis through another perspective.

Resumé

Hlavním cílem diplomové práce byl rozbor románu *Hrozny hněvu* a tří drobných próz *Neznámému bohu*, *Nebeské Pastviny* a *Plameny zářivé* amerického spisovatele Johna Steinbecka z perspektivy ekokritického čtení. Úvodní část práce představila poměrně nový literární přístup zvaný ekokritika, nastínila jeho vznik a předmět zkoumání. Byla představena některá teoretická východiska, která kritici užívají ke studiu a rozboru literárních textů. Mezi nezbytné disciplíny, jejichž prostřednictvím ekokritici zkoumají a hodnotí literární text, patří ekologie, etika, jazyk a kritika; dále práce uvedla čtyři kritéria, která ekokritici užívají ke studiu textů. Autorem těchto kritérií je Lawrence Buell, profesor působící na Harvardské univerzitě. Tato kritéria jsou obsažena ve formativním textu rané ekokritiky nazvaném *Enviromentální imaginace* (1995). V další části práce byla nastíněna historie Steinbeckovy rodné Kalifornie, která se stala dějištěm jeho děl. Práce poskytla důležitá fakta ze života Johna Steinbecka, která odhalila rodinnou tradici farmářství a také zrod důležitého přátelství a spolupráce mezi Johnem Steinbeckem a Edwardem Rickettsem, mořským biologem, který podněcoval a formoval Steinbeckův zájem o biologii a vědu. Byl to právě Edward Ricketts, díky kterému John Steinbeck nahlížel na svá díla z pohledu vědce.

Prvním dílem, na které bylo nahlíženo z perspektivy ekokritického čtení, byl román *Neznámému bohu*. Pozornost byla soustředěna na těsné sepjetí člověka s půdou a na jeho lásku k ní. Pozornost byla věnována prvkům ekologie, které se v románu vyskytly. Dále byly nastíněny teorie *antropocentrismu* a *biocentrismu*.

Další část práce se věnovala ekokritickému čtení souboru povídek *Nebeské pastviny*. Důraz byl kladen na představení postav, které žijí v prostředí Nebeských pastvin, na jejich vztah k tomuto prostředí a k přírodě, která pastviny obklopuje. Rozbor tohoto díla byl náročnější vzhledem k tomu, že autor se věnoval spíše nešťastným osudům postav, které byly nuceny Nebeské pastviny opustit.

Diplomová práce se v *Plamenech zářivých* zabývala rozdílností tří různých prostředí. Jednalo se o prostředí cirkusu, farmy a moře. Bylo velice obtížné nahlížet na toto dílo z perspektivy ekokritického čtení, neboť hlavním tématem díla bylo zachování lidského rodu a téma otcovství.

Hlavním cílem diplomové práce byl rozbor románu *Hrozny hněvu*. Práce nejdříve představila vesměs negativní názory kritiků na Steinbeckovo vrcholné dílo. Byly představeny čtyři disciplíny (*ekologie, etika, jazyk a kritika*), na jejichž základě byl rozbor *Hroznů hněvu* rozdělen do čtyř podkapitol. V podkapitole zvané *Ekologie v Hroznech hněvu* byla věnována pozornost teorii *bioregionalismu* a *superorganismu*, avšak nejdůležitější byla teorie zvaná *phalanx*. V románu se vyskytlo několik odkazů na tuto teorii, které byly doloženy příklady úryvků z textu románu. V následující podkapitole diplomové práce nazvané *Etika* byl nastíněn sociální konflikt mezi vlastníky půdy a nájemníky (farmáři), kteří museli svoji půdu nedobrovolně opustit. Dále byly představeni členové rodiny Joadových, hlavních hrdinové románu *Hrozny hněvu*. Předětem této podkapitoly byl dále nenávistný vztah obyvatel Kalifornie k farmářům z Oklahomy a také témata náboženství a filozofie života, na které bylo pohlíženo prostřednictvím postavy bývalého kazatele Jima Casyho. Podkapitola s názvem *Jazyk* se věnovala specifickému jazyku hlavních postav románu, který obsahoval vulgární a slangová slova. Příklady těchto slov byly následně doplněny o úryvky z *Hroznů hněvu*. Závěrečná část diplomové práce představila podkapitolu s názvem *Kritika*, jejíž pozornost byla postupně věnována šestnácti mezikapitolám románu. Tato podkapitola nastínila nejen stručný obsah mezikapitol, ale i celkovou integritu díla.

Bibliography

Primary sources

STEINBECK, John. *Novels and Stories 1932-1937*. 6th print. New York, NY: Library of America, 2008. Library of America (Library of America). ISBN 978-1-883011-01-7.

STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Harlow: Pearson Education, c2001. Penguin readers. ISBN 058243467X.

STEINBECK, John. *The Grapes of Wrath; Introduction and Notes by Robert DeMott*. Penguin Group, New York, c2006. ISBN: 1-4362-4148-0.

STEINBECK, John. *Travels with Charley and Later Novels 1947-1962*. 1st print. New York, N.Y.: Library of America, c2007. Library of America (Library of America). ISBN 978-1-59853-004-9.

Secondary sources

BEEGEL, Susan F, Susan SHILLINGLAW a Wesley N TIFFNEY.
Steinbeck and the Environment: Interdisciplinary Approaches.
Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, c1997. ISBN 0817308466.

BLOOM, Harold. *Bloom's Guides: John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath*.
Chelsea House Publishers, United States of America, c2005. ISBN 0-7910-8239-3.

BLOOM, Harold. *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: The Grapes of Wrath*.
Infobase Publishing, c2007. ISBN 0-7910-9305-0.

BUELL, Lawrence. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. ISBN 978-1-4051-2475-1.

CARLE, David. *Introduction to Earth, Soil, and Land in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, c2010. California Natural History Guides, No. 101

GARRARD, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. First published. New York: the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004. ISBN 0-415-19692-2.

GLOTFELTY, C., FROMM, H. (eds.), *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996. ISBN 0-8203-1780-2.

KOPECKÝ, Petr. *Robinson Jeffers a John Steinbeck: Vzdálení i blízcí*. 1. vyd. Brno: Host, 2012. ISBN 978-80-7294-898-7.

MCEL RATH, Joseph R, Jesse S CRISLER a Susan SHILLINGLAW. *John Steinbeck: The Contemporary Reviews*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. ISBN 052141038X.

Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. *Merriam-Webster [online]*. [cit. 2016-04-02]. Available at: <http://www.merriam-webster.com>

RAILSBACK, Brian. *Parallel Expeditions: Charles Darwin and the Art of John Steinbeck*. The University of Idaho Press, c1995.

RAILTON, Stephen. *Pilgrims' Politics: Steinbeck's Art of Conversion New Essays on The Grapes of Wrath*. Cambridge University Press, c1990.

SCHULTZ, Jeffrey D a Luchen LI. *Critical Companion to John Steinbeck: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*. New York: Facts On File, c2005. ISBN 0816043000.

SHILLINGLAW, Susan. *A Journey into Steinbeck's California*. Roaring Forties Press, Berkeley, California, c2006. ISBN 978-0976670629.

SHILLINGLAW, Susan. *On Reading the Grapes of Wrath*. PENGUIN BOOKS, c2014. ISBN 9780143125501.

STRASBAUGH Jessie. *The Grapes of Wrath and the language of the Dust Bowl* [online]. Oxford University Press [cit. 2016-04-02]. Available at: <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2013/04/the-grapes-of-wrath-and-the-language-of-the-dust-bowl/>