

Summary

Using Old Testament Themes and their Original Interpretation in the works of John Steinbeck 5 The issue of my thesis is the reflection of biblical themes and narratives in secular literature. In the concrete, I am focusing on the specific interpretation of Old Testament themes in the works of an American author of the 1st half of the 20 th Century, John Steinbeck. From his novels, I have chosen three for the analysis – *To a God Unknown*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *East of Eden*. I approached the novels with criticism, yet I did not strive to give the stories a meaning different from the intention of the author. I am focusing especially on biblical symbolism used in the novels and on parallelisms between biblical and Steinbeck's narratives. Both the symbolism and the parallelisms are traced in each novel separately, yet I try to point to the motives which are used in all of the novels chosen, e.g. settling the "promised land". Steinbeck starts with simple symbols and then he passes to more complicated and elaborated ones. The symbolism of first names is a good example for this. Steinbeck starts with simple symbolism in the novel *To a God Unknown*, a symbolism I called direct symbolism where a character bears the same name as his/her biblical pattern. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck elaborates what I called indirect symbolism. That means that what a character shares with his/her biblical pattern are the initials. In this novel he also developed an association symbolism where the characters only remind to some biblical patterns. In *East of Eden*, Steinbeck elaborates the indirect symbolism even more creating a series of A-characters who resemble Abel, and of C-characters who resemble Cain. In the 3rd chapter of my thesis, I am interpreting the novel *East of Eden* as Steinbeck's own interpretation of Gn 4,1-16. This chapter includes my own exegesis of the passage and a comparison with the interpretation given by Steinbeck as well as notes from selected biblical commentaries.