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**FACULTY OF ARTS AND PHILOSOPHY**

**The Bible as a Literary Intertext in *East of Eden***

**Michaela Vondráčková**

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### Zásady pro vypracování:

Firstly the specific definition of intertextuality that the author of the BP will use in her work should be outlined in the opening chapter; other theories can be also briefly described for perspective. Next should come a short historical summary of how specific chapters and verses from the Bible have been used in major works of American literature; particular examples from important texts from various periods should be highlighted. Then a short overview of the main themes and events in the biblical book of Genesis, especially chapter 4, should be included. A short biography of Steinbeck should be included along with a short outline of his most important works and themes; the end of this section should discuss how the Bible is used in other works by Steinbeck. Finally the longest and most important part of the BP should be an analysis of how biblical themes are used in EAST OF EDEN, specifically what is the function of specific characters and events in the novel.

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3. Ditsky, John. Essays on East of Eden. John Steinbeck Society of America, English Dept., Ball State University, 1977
4. Allen, Graham. Intertextuality (New Critical Idiom). Routledge, 2000
5. Kristeva, Julia. Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. Columbia University Press, 1980

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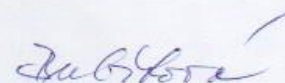
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děkan

L.S.



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vedoucí katedry

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Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně.

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## **Annotation**

This bachelor thesis focuses on the usage of intertextuality in John Steinbeck's book *East of Eden*, which is based mainly on the fourth chapter of Genesis, the First Murder. The analysis of the storyline is based on Julia Kristeva's definition of two axes within a text, horizontal and vertical. It focuses on the study of intertext within the characters, where it searches for the similarities mainly in the character's traits, and on the research of intertext within the story with the focus on the incorporation of the main events of the fourth chapter of Genesis.

## **Keywords**

intertextuality, Bible, John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*

## **Anotace**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá využitím intertextuality v knize *Na východ od ráje* Johna Steinbecka, která převážně vychází ze čtvrté kapitoly o První vraždě knihy Genesis. Analýza děje je založena na definici intertextuality Julie Kristevy, která se skládá ze dvou os, horizontální a vertikální. Analýza především zkoumá využití intertextu v postavách, kde se zabývá především podobnostmi ve vlastnostech postav, a také zkoumá intertextualitu v příběhu, kde se soustředí na podobnost mezi příběhem a událostmi ve čtvrté kapitole Genesis.

## **Klíčová slova**

intertextualita, Bible, John Steinbeck, *Na východ od ráje*

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## Introduction

John Steinbeck, a Pulitzer and Nobel prizes winner, intended for *East of Eden* to be his magnum opus. He spent almost thirteen years researching and preparing the book and eventually turning it into a family saga. And even though *The Grapes of Wrath* remains one of the most popular books till nowadays, *East of Eden* gained a great popularity among its readers. It is a vivid creation that is a mesmerizing piece of literature, which appreciates and uses Bible as its main inspiration and as its centerpiece, which is further analyzed and adapted in the book with the undeniable respect for the core material used. Steinbeck combines topics from family through prostitution to history and myth, creating an epic chronicle of the Trask family whose faith is conditioned by the fact that they are Cain's descendants. He explains the Hebrew word "Timshel" and includes it into the story, giving it and the characters a deeper dimension. Steinbeck plays with the biblical story about Cain and Abel and incorporates its features into his characters and storyline creating a complex story, which researches motives and relationships of individual characters. This aspect sheds a new light on the biblical story of the First Murder. To do so, Steinbeck uses the intertextuality, a post-modern approach which studies the relationship of two texts where the new one is based on a prior text. The theory of intertextuality was defined for the first time by Bulgarian-French theorist Julia Kristeva her book *Le mot, le dialogue et le roman* in the 1960s, which was published seventeen years later than the *East of Eden*.

This thesis aims to show the way in which Steinbeck uses the Kristeva's definition of intertextuality in particular storylines and in the features and behavior of characters, and how it affects and develops the storyline of *East of Eden*.

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first one focuses on the definition of intertextuality as it was presented by Julie Kristeva for the first time. The next section presents the biblical chapters of Genesis used by Steinbeck. It briefly describes the Creation of the world, the First Sin and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, and especially the First Murder on which most of the storyline of *East of Eden* is based. The third chapter consists of a brief summary of the works of American literature based on Bible. Firstly, a selection of the books written by Puritans are presented, followed by the American Renaissance and books based on Bible written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The fifth chapter is divided into two sub-chapters.



The first one presents Steinbeck's biography since his childhood to his death, it points out the events and circumstances that influenced his writing. The second sub-chapter presents John Steinbeck as an author; it briefly describes the majority of his books which he wrote during his career. The following chapter discusses the usage of Bible in other Steinbeck books, respectively in *To a God Unknown*, *Of Mice and Men* and especially in his masterpiece *The Grapes of Wrath* based on a variousl themes of both the Old and New Testaments. The following chapter focuses on the analyses of the intertextuality in *East of Eden* and how it is specifically used by Steinbeck. The chapter is divided into two main sub-sections. The first one searches for intertextuality within the characters and the second one seeks to find the intertext within the storyline.

## 1. Intertextuality

*The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines intertextuality basically as:

“the various relationships that a given text may have with other texts... In the literary theories of structuralism and post-structuralism, texts are seen to refer to other texts, for a text thus drawn upon, and for the relationship between both.” (BALDICK 2008: 171)

Post-modern theorists state that we can no longer see any original writing because everything has already been said before. Therefore artists, whether they are writers, painters or songwriters, must use ideas of existing artwork (GRAHAM 2000).

A specific example of intentional intertextuality is Steinbeck’s *East of Eden* which is largely based on the biblical *Genesis*. Intertextuality is a key tool helping readers to understand and interpret the given text. The book is also a proof that intertextuality was used years before the official term and the definition were coined.

The term intertextuality was first presented by Bulgarian-French literary theorist Julia Kristeva in the late 1960s. She based her theory on works of Ferdinand de Saussure’s theory of structural linguistics and Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin’s dialogism, which she summarizes in her *Le mot, le dialogue et le roman* (1969). (GRAHAM 2000).

In this book, she defines three dimensions of text space – the writing subject, the addressee and outer texts. The dynamic literary word is defined as the horizontal dimension, where the word in the text belongs to the writing subject and to the addressee and the vertical dimension, where the word in the text belongs to previous or synchronic literary texts. She assigns those two dimensions to the intertextual discourse (KRISTEVA 1980).

“the horizontal axis (subject–addressee) and vertical axis (text–context) coincide, bringing to light an important fact: each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read. In Bakhtin’s work, these two axes, which he calls dialogue and ambivalence, are not clearly distinguished. Yet, what appears as a lack of rigour is in fact an insight first introduced into literary theory by Bakhtin: any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of

intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double.” (KRISTEVA 1980: 66)

Kristeva’s definition of intertextuality was followed by many other theorists like Roland Barthes, Gérard Genette, and Harold Bloom.

## **2. Overview of the Major Themes and Events in the Book of Genesis**

In *East of Eden* John Steinbeck uses mainly the intertext of the chapter about Cain and Abel, but supports it with the chapters about Creation, which he uses in an introduction of the book, and the First Sin along with the Garden of Eden, especially in connection to the *East of Eden* character Adam. This chapter will focus on describing those verses of Bible in a greater detail.

The Jewish Scriptures are called the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) because it was originally written in Hebrew. It is composed of a three-part structure – Law, Prophets and Writings – which gave the Hebrew Bible another name – The Tanakh. The first section is the Torah which is a Hebrew word for “law.” A Greek word for Torah is Pentateuch (the five scrolls) and it is used in the Christian Old Testament’s anthology. The Torah composes of five books - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. According to Jewish tradition those five books were written by Moses gaining Torah another title – the Books of Moses (GEOGHEGAN, HOMAN 2003).

### **2.1 The Creation**

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” (GENESIS 1:1)

Those are the very first words of the Genesis. The first chapter describes the creation of life. It is said that during the first three days God formed the cosmos. In the day one, he created light, in the day two he forms the sky and the sea and on day three he made dry land and plants. During the next three days he fills those. In the day four he created the sun, the moon, and stars. In the day five it was birds and fish, and in the day six he created other animals and finally humans (GENESIS 1:2 – 31).

The Creation presents God’s order and his sense for purpose. And the creation of human life has a meaning, too. According to Christian’s beliefs God created humans on the sixth day – as a peak of his masterpiece. They bear the physical image and character qualities of God. This suggests the idea that all people are equal (GEOGHEGAN, HOMAN 2003).

## **2.2 Adam and Eve**

In the Bible, the chapter about Adam and Eve follows the Creation. It is said that the first man was formed out of the dirt of the ground and was named Adam, which is the Hebrew word for man (GEOGHEGAN, HOMAN 2003). The first woman – Eve - came from the man's side. After this creation, God witnessed the first wedding and let them live in the Garden of Eden naked and unashamed (GENESIS 2:7 – 25). The Garden of Eden has two symbolic trees – the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In Genesis 2:17 God forbids Adam to eat from the Tree of Knowledge because that action could lead to a certain death.

This leads to the First Sin when Eve, seduced by a serpent, disobeyed God and took a bite of the forbidden fruit and also gave some to her husband. Adam and Eve were both suddenly ashamed of their nudity. When Adam admits to God he ate from the Tree of Knowledge; he blames it on Eve who blames it on the snake. (GENESIS 3:1 – 13)

All three of them experienced consequences. The snake was cursed to have no legs and crawl on his belly and eat the dirt of the ground. Eve's punishment was the pain while giving birth to children. Adam was cursed with increased pain when cultivating the land. God said that the ground will cause the final kind of pain – death. Finally, God banned Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden to prevent them to eat from the Tree of Life which would have given them immortality. (GENESIS 3:14 – 24)

## **2.3 Cain and Abel**

This chapter, on which Steinbeck built his most famous novel, has only sixteen lines, but an analysis of it could be expanded into a whole book. The storyline following the lives of Adam and Charles, and the lives of Adam's sons Aron and Caleb is inspired by Cain and Abel's story.

Cain and Abel were sons of Adam and Eve born shortly after their departure of the Garden. They were both supposed to give a gift to God. Cain, as a farmer, gives him a product of the land and Abel, as a shepherd, gives him a firstborn of his flock. God accepts Abel's gift but not Cain's. This makes Cain angry and jealous, and it leads him to kill his brother. Because of this act God curses Cain to wander the earth and puts a mark on him so no one

could take his life. At the end of the story, it is said that Cain left to the land of Nod, east of Eden. This phrase inspired the title of Steinbeck's book (GENESIS 4).

### 3. The Bible in American literature

#### 3.1 The Puritan's God

John Steinbeck was famous for using biblical references in his work, but the Bible had its place in American literature since the time of colonization.

The first written literature in the New World was produced by the first settlers. Especially the Puritans compared their journey to different scenes of the Bible (mainly to Genesis and Exodus). This reflected in many diaries and other records. Well known from this period is William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1651) describing the community of Pilgrims, the journey including the settlement in Holland, crossing the ocean on Mayflower and the foundation of Plymouth colony of which he was elected the second governor (HIGH 1986).

“These few things, therefore, and the same in few words, I do earnestly commend unto your care and conscience, joining therewith my daily incessant prayers unto the Lord, that He who hath made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all rivers of waters, and whose providence is over all His work, especially over all His dear children for good, would so guide and guard you in your ways, as inwardly by His Spirit, so outwardly by the hand of His power as that both you and we also, for and with you, may have after matter of praising His name all the days of your and our lives.” (BRADFORD 1952: 370)

John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, also interprets every event as a sign of God. He kept a diary, as many Puritans did, which was later published as *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649* (HIGH 1986: 8).

The mythical concept of the eternal clash between the good and evil was a common feature in books written by Puritans. The captivity tale is a good example of that matter. *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* by Mary Rowlandson gained huge popularity. She compared her experience to many biblical stories, such as Jonah and the Whale or stories from the Book of Job (HIGH 1986).

“The water run out of my eye, and carried the dirt with it, that by the morning I recovered my sight again. Yet upon this, and the like occasions, I hope it is not too

much to say with Job, ‘Have pity upon me, O ye my Friends, for the Hand of the Lord has touched me.’ (ROWLANDSON 2007: 30)

### 3.2 The American Renaissance

The focus of American literature had shifted over the one hundred years that passed, and American writers were mostly imitating the English ones. This was the consequence of the lack of a long-time history and traditions, and creating the original piece of literature became crucially important. This was enabled by the Enlightenment movement, which mainly focused on reason as opposed to a history and traditions (HIGH 1986).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century brought, apart from the revival of religious literature, many changes. The Romantic period shifted the focus from reason to the inner-self. The importance of “self” gained a positive meaning. The Transcendentalist movement earned a great importance being constructed on the thought of the belief into the world’s union and trust in God. The Romantic period brought a lot of new ideas into American literature (HIGH 1986). Nathaniel Hawthorne set many of his stories into the Puritan colonization of New England. His most famous novel from this period is without any doubt *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) which bares writing techniques similar to the Puritan ones (KAZIN 1998). The book is also full of allegories. The storyline about Adam and Eve’s expulsion of the Garden of Eden and the consequences is incorporated in the story of Hester and Dimmesdale, one of the main characters of *The Scarlet Letter*. The story works with sin and punishment. There is also a quite visible sense of knowledge especially in Hester’s case (HAWTHORNE 2010). Steinbeck also uses the intertext of the Adam and Eve storyline, but in a different way (see chapter 6.1.2.).

Hester was also marked for her “crimes” with a scarlet letter “A” originally meaning “adulterer”. Later her daughter Pearl became even more visible mark of her actions (HAWTHORNE 2010). This could also symbolize the mark of Cain.

“When the young woman – the mother of this child – stood fully revealed before the crowd, it seemed to be her first impulse to clasp the infant closely to her bosom; not so much by an impulse of motherly affection, as that she might thereby conceal a certain token, which was wrought or fastened into her dress. In a moment,



however, wisely judging that one token of her shame would but poorly serve to hide another; she took the baby on her arm..." (HAWTHORNE 2010: 34)

Possibly one of the best American novels is Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, a story about the struggle between man and nature, the dark and the light side. Some references to the Bible are easily visible from the beginning. The book's opening line is: "Call me Ishmael." (KAZIN 1998) In Genesis, Ishmael is a son of Abram (Abraham) and brother of Isaac, who is sent into wilderness and saved by God's mercy (GENESIS 21:1 - 20). In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael is the narrator and the only person who survives at the end.

In the book, Ahab is warned by the of Gabriel's prophetic visions not to kill the white whale (MELVILLE 2002). The biblical Ahab, the king of Israel (1 KINGS 16:29), had four encounters with prophets (1 KINGS 17:1, 20:22, 21:17 – 29). The last one, Micaiah, predicts his death (1 KINGS 22:12 – 37). Gabriel's character has its own equivalent in the Bible. The angel Gabriel is the God's messenger (DANIEL 8:15 – 27).

But there is no need to overly search for references. Genesis 1:21 says: "And God created great whales..." Therefore, the white whale symbolizes God's creation, as long as the sea does. When Ahab loses his inner battle and inclines to the dark side, he is overpowered by nature, by God (MELVILLE 2002). Steinbeck uses a similar thought in *East of Eden* in the passage where Charles wrestles with a big rock and causes himself a forehead injury, which symbolizes the mark of Cain. This scene also symbolizes man defeated by nature (DITSKY 1994).

### 3.3 The 20<sup>th</sup> Century

At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, another prominent writer was born. William Faulkner also incorporated religious symbols into his literary pieces (KAZIN 1998). In 1936 he wrote *Absalom, Absalom!*, its title is a biblical reference to the Old Testament, or more specifically to 2 Samuel. Absalom was a son of David, a brother to Tamar and a half-brother to Amnon who was in love with his half-sister. When Absalom learns about this, he plans to murder Amnon, and two years later he does (2 SAMUEL 13:1 - 33).

Faulkner elaborates on this story and sets it into Jefferson, Mississippi in 1833. The character of Henry Sutpen represents Absalom, and his friend Charles Bon, whom he meets at

the University, is Amnon. Charles meets Henry's family and gets engaged with his sister Judith. Henry's father admits that Charles is also his son, and later on states that Charles' mother was partially black. That proclamation upsets him, and he shoots Charles dead in front of the gates of the family mansion (FAULKNER 1991).

*Absalom, Absalom!* is only one of many biblical references in Faulkner's writing. *Go Down, Moses* is a collection of seven interrelated short stories dealing with slavery among others (KAZIN 1998). The title refers to the American Negro spiritual song (BROOKS, SPOTTSWOOD 2004: 481) which tells a story about Moses and his brother Aaron travelling into Egypt to set the Israelites free (EXODUS 7).

The writers of the Lost Generation often expressed the loss of religious faith. Still, Ernest Hemingway inspired himself in the Bible when he named one of his masterpieces *The Sun Also Rises* (ECCLESIASTES 1:5).

## **4. John Steinbeck – biographical information and discussion of important works**

### **4.1 John Steinbeck, Personal Life**

John Steinbeck was born on February 27, 1902, in Salinas, California to John Ernst Steinbeck, a treasurer of Monterey County, and Olive Hamilton Steinbeck, a teacher. Steinbeck based many characters of his novels and short stories on his parents. In *East of Eden* the relationship between Cal and Adam reflected Steinbeck's own relationship to his father. (BENSON 1990).

John was the only son of four children. He was often described as spoiled and problematic. Olive Hamilton Steinbeck was the one responsible for his interest in literature. She greatly encouraged all of her children to read and to visit a library. John took interest in Romances, but also in mythology, legends and the Bible. His high school teacher Miss Cupp supported him and gave him the confidence that made him decide to become a writer. He was accepted to Stanford, and since he was actively writing during high school, naturally, he chose to major in English. He focused mainly on creative writing and journalism. He studied there for six years though he never got a degree. However, he managed to take the courses that would be useful for his writing. He used his college experiences in describing Aron's own studies in *East of Eden*.

Other valuable experiences that shaped him as a writer were all the jobs he had taken during his college breaks, such as a tour guide or a caretaker at fish hatchery. Those gained him perspective, depth and maturity very appreciated in his stories (BENSON 1990).

Steinbeck was married three times. His first wife was Carol Henning, whom he married in 1930. They divorced thirteen years later. He then immediately married Gwendolyn Conger, who was almost eighteen years younger, and they had two sons, Thom (1944) and John (1946). His last wife, Elaine Anderson Scott, stayed with him until his death. (BENSON 1990).

On October 25, 1962 Steinbeck won the Nobel Prize which came as a surprise because he had been on the list for several years and accepted that he would never get the award. It was his last big accomplishment. John Steinbeck died on December 20, 1968 of a heart

disease, which caused him problems with breathing. He was 66 years old (BENSON 1990).

#### **4.2 John Steinbeck, the Author**

Steinbeck's first novel was *Cup of Gold* (1930), which reflects his fascination with legends, mythology and folklore. Unfortunately, thanks to its unused potential, the story is the least popular of all Steinbeck's books despite the fact that at first it sold quite well. But critics much more appreciated his next three books *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932), collection of short stories, *The Red Pony* (1933) based loosely on Steinbeck's personal memories and *To a God Unknown* (1933) which is one of his many rural stories where the presence of mystical mythology, which can also find in *East of Eden*, can be seen. Despite the pleasant criticism those books did not sell as well as *Cup of Gold*. The big break for him was *Tortilla Flat* (1935), a little book about friends from the Mexican-American community moving into one house and living according to the Arthurian rules of the Round Table (BENSON 1990).

In 1936 Steinbeck published *In Dubious Battle*, with a title inspired by John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. It has features of communist ideology, though this is not specifically stated in the story, and describes an apple pickers strike. There have been many discussions on whether it is based on actual events. *Of Mice and Men* (1937) was another significant book. The story is set in California during the Great Depression and tells a story about two men George and Lennie. Lennie suffers from mental illness. While dreaming to have their own farm one day, they start to work on a ranch where a series of unfortunate events leads them to a tragic end. The novella was followed one year later by the collection of short stories called *The Long Valley* (1938), but it was outshined by Steinbeck's next book – *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). It was his biggest achievement so far because it won him the Pulitzer Prize. It's one of his most famous books focused on a poor family traveling from Oklahoma to California during the Great Depression (BENSON 1990). The book's greatness often outshines *East of Eden* which Steinbeck saw as his masterpiece.

Steinbeck's novels often include biological determinism (BENSON 1990). Michael Rosenberg's definition of this is: "Human beings are what they are and behave as they do because of their biological inheritance alone." (ROSENBERG 1983: 144) This was very distinct in *The Grapes of Wrath* and Steinbeck himself said about this topic:

“The human like any other life form will tolerate an unhealthful condition for some time, and then will either die or will overcome the condition either by mutation or by destroying the unhealthful condition.” (BENSON 1990: 386 – 387)

In 1940s he continued in his writing. He published *The Forgotten Village* (1941), another novel featuring a life in a Mexican village, *Sea of Cortez* (also 1941), a book on which he was working with his good friend, a marine biologist, Ed Ricketts who also inspired the character of Doc in *Cannery Row*, *The Moon Is Down* (1942), a novel about a fictive Northern European country invaded by an enemy, and *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team* (1942), a non-fiction book about US Air Forces (BENSON 1990).

Right after his second wedding, he returned to New York and immediately applied for the job of war correspondent in *The Herald Tribune*. The collection of articles he sent back was published in 1958 under the name *Once There Was a War*. Steinbeck provided to its readers another perspective of the conflict. He wrote about usual days of common soldiers and the absurdity of the war. After this deep experience he was in a bad emotional shape, so he started to focus on his next novel – *The Cannery Row* (1945). Even though it is set in the times of the Great Depression, the reflection of his war experiences is visible. Two years later he finished *The Wayward Bus* (1947), which was very successful back then (BENSON 1990).

In 1947 he visited U.S.S.R. with his friend and photojournalist Robert Capa. He wanted to see how it had changed since his last visit during the World War II. His reportages along with many of Capa’s photos were published in 1948 under the name *A Russian Journal*. *Burning Bright* (1950) was sort of a drama play, even though it was not written in the classical format, it had its features. It could still be read as a regular story but also be transformed into a stage act. The year 1952 was a very important year for John Steinbeck because the novel on which he had been working for years was finally published. He, himself, stated that this book was the most difficult work that he has ever done (BENSON 1990). It was of course *East of Eden*, his milestone, and a book that brought him the biggest amount of fame. Finishing *East of Eden* threw him into depressions. Suddenly, he did not know what to do next with his life and his writing. On this account none of his post-*East of Eden* novels reached the same fame. *Sweet Thursday* (1954) was a sequel to *Cannery Row*, and presented the characters in post-war time. *The Short Reign of Pippin IV* (1957) was a political satire inspired by his stay in France. *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961) was his last novel and according to Mimi Reisel Gladstein the concept of family in this book very much resembles

the one in *East of Eden* (GLADSTEIN 2006). *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962) was a book about his road trip throughout the United States (BENSON 1990).

## 5. The Bible in other works by Steinbeck

John Steinbeck had taken a great interest in the Bible and religious stories, such as John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, since childhood, so naturally he would focus more on this topic in his work. But the truth is that *East of Eden* is still the only book written by him that has a distinctive biblical theme within. Steinbeck focused more on biological determinism and the affection of belief on characters psychic. But biblical topics and thoughts in his books still can be found (BENSON 1990).

In the novella *To a God Unknown*, Steinbeck combines the spiritual pagan belief in higher power of nature with belief in God. The main character is Joseph Wayne who believes that the ghost of his dead father entered the oak next to his house. Then his brother cuts down the tree on purpose because he is a Christian and his brother's actions and beliefs are against his. Thanks to this the land dies and to save it, Joseph sacrifices his own life (STEINBECK 2001).

Steinbeck combined both beliefs working with the idea of God being something incomprehensible. Joseph's brother and the priest refusing to help salvage the land are both symbols of the corruption of Church caring only about the human soul (STEINBECK 2001) and forgetting that the nature is God's creation too (GENESIS 1).

John Steinbeck's fascination by the fourth chapter about Cain and Abel from Genesis can be traced in *Of Mice and Men*, even though it was not used as literary as in *East of Eden*. George and Lennie are close as brothers, and despite the fact that George kills his best friend for his own good, the act still has the same consequences – George is destined to wander alone to the end of his days not finding peace and carrying the Cain's mark (GOODMAN 1984: 15).

*The Grapes of Wrath* probably consists of the widest scale of biblical themes out of all Steinbeck's novels, although none of them are specific, it is more likely a mixture of setting, characters and events. The twelve members of the Joad family (just like the twelve Israeli tribes) are traveling to their Promised Land with Tom Joad, the main character, as their leader "Moses" who even has a younger brother Al with the same qualities as the biblical Aaron has. Tom experiences some of the same incidents as Moses did (he was convicted of murder), but unlike him, Tom reaches his destination alive. Also Steinbeck indicates that the Joad family

bears resemblance to the myth about Noah and his ark. Their arrival to California is a parallel to Noah's landing on Mount Ararat (BLOOM 2005: 57 - 59).

The character of Jim Casy is regarded as a link between the old life and new life, the Old Testament and New Testament. Where the Joads are viewed as the representation of the old traditions, Jim Casy is considered to be a messiah. From an outsider that he was at the beginning, he becomes a valuable member and a spiritual leader of the group (BLOOM 2005: 59 – 60).

When the Joad family is settled in California their journey comes to its end creating a triple parallel California/Mount Ararat/Bethlehem erasing the time order of the biblical texts and creating one big symbol of regeneration (BLOOM 2005: 61).



## **6. References to biblical themes in *East of Eden***

Steinbeck intentionally based *East of Eden* on the fourth chapter of *Genesis* even though he was not aware of the term intertextuality because it was not until the 1960s when Julie Kristeva coined it. He set the story of Cain and Abel into Salinas, California turning it into a chronicle of the Trask family. The book begins at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in the times of Civil War following the storyline of two families – the Trasks and the Hamiltons (STEINBECK 2000). Adam Trask is the main character, Abel in reference to the Bible, who marries an evil woman called Cathy. Cathy gives birth to twins who are in fact Charles' sons. Adam raises them with the help of the Chinese man Lee. Throughout the book both brothers struggle with the destiny of Cain and Abel. The concept of the fourth chapter of *Genesis* repeats itself twice. Once it is represented with Adam's generation and the next time with his sons Aron and Caleb. The twins bear more resemblance to the biblical story (KORDICH 2008).

Cain and Abel's story is the main biblical theme in *East of Eden* without any doubt, but there is slightly suggested another thought. Steinbeck also includes the storyline of the First Sin or more accurately, the impact of parents' sinful behavior on their children. This can be clearly seen in Caleb's struggle after he meets his mother Cathy (DITSKY 1977).

### **6.1 Intertextuality within the Characters**

Kristeva's theory of the vertical axis can be seen clearly within the character. Despite the fact that the prior text is quite short and does not offer any deeper description of the characters, Steinbeck who is the subject, employs his imagination, and he builds quite complicated characters based on the rather brief chapter of *Genesis*. He deliberately gives the new text more power. As a result the complex story has a greater emotional impact on its readers (KRISTEVA 1980).

### **6.1.1. Adam and Charles**

Cyrus Trask's sons, Adam and Charles bear resemblance to Cain and Abel. Even though Adam is the older brother, Charles always behaved as his protector. But over time Charles starts to be jealous of his brother which escalates into Charles's almost killing Adam. After this event, with their mother dead, father away and Adam in the army, Charles ends up alone at the edge of the society. And he is a farmer, as was Cain, taking care of the land. (DIANA 2006).

“There was a long torn welt on his forehead from hairline to a point between his eyebrows.” (STEINBECK 2000: 49)

The injury which Charles suffered on his forehead, symbolizes the mark of Cain. The scar darkened and Charles started to feel ashamed of it so much that he stopped going to the town entirely (STEINBECK 2000). He had caused the injury himself while trying to wrench a big rock on his land. This symbolizes the struggle of man against nature, and man was defeated once again (DITSKY 1977: 21).

The intertext in Adam's story can be seen in his fulfilling Abel's destiny (DIANA 2006). He survived his brother, but it is indicated that his sons were not his own but Charles's. Abel died childless, and Adam never re-married again which meant that he died without offspring too. And as the book progresses, Adam learns that Charles died and left him and Cathy his fortune. Adam shows Charles's portrait to Lee who asks him if his brother liked him. Adam replies that he did a little too much, but once tried to kill him. When Lee looks at the portrait again, he notices that there is love and murder written on his face (STEINBECK 2000).

### **6.1.2. Cathy Ames**

Cathy Ames is a very interesting character because she is a depiction of concentrated evil. Steinbeck wrote that she is: “a monster – don't think they don't exist. If one can be born with a twisted and deformed face or body, one can surely come into the world with a malformed soul.” (STEINBECK 1977: 41)

Heidi Ann Marshall claims that Cathy is another version of biblical Cain which is quite often hidden by the obvious similarity of the brothers – Adam/Charles, Aron/Caleb – to

Cain and Abel (MARSHALL 2008). This would suggest that Steinbeck used yet another vertical axis and presented the pure evilness of Cain which was transformed it into Cathy's character traits. This idea could be supported with her meeting Charles. They sense the evil within each other. They both have a facial scar symbolizing Cain's sign (STEINBECK 2000). Cathy had Charles shared a mutual understanding. This can be demonstrated by a small part of conversation between them when Charles says: "I think you're a devil." Cathy laughs and says: "That makes two of us." (STEINBECK 2000: 119)

Cathy sins against her own family by lying, calculation, deception, fornication and even with a murder of her own parents and attempt to miscarriage. Her true nature reveals itself while giving birth to her sons (DITSKY 1977). It is described that she looked like a pure evil, and when she bit Samuel, he told her that "humans are more poisonous than snakes" as a reference to the Garden of Eden (STEINBECK 2000: 194). As a result of the bite, he spent three days in bed with high fever dreaming about demons (STEINBECK 2000).

Cathy's delivery is inhumanly easy. She gives birth to the twins in a dark room, quickly as a cat gives birth to kittens, with no care for her children at all (DITSKY 1977). She manipulates Adam to gain his trust and love while betraying him right after. He was naïve and innocent while building the Garden of Eden for Cathy and not seeing that she despises it. Adam lives oblivious to her true nature. In the moment she tries to kill him, he wakes up. Cathy's departure changed Adam's life and since then he was never quite the same (DITSKY 1977). Cathy's every single act shows her inability to grasp the concept of Timshel (KORDICH 2008). Her character traits are not very flattering. She is so bad and corrupted that she cannot comprehend a simple act of selflessness (STEINBECK 2000). Adam meets Cathy when he goes to tell her that Charles left her half of his fortune. She is able to hold her power over others but not to understand that he has no ulterior motives (DITSKY 1977). When they part their ways, Adam says to her:

"You know about the ugliness in people. ... You don't believe that I brought you the letter because I don't want your money. You don't believe I love you. ... You see only one side, and you think – more than that, you're sure – that's all there is. ... I think you are only a part of a human. I can't do anything about it. But I wonder whether you ever feel that something invisible is all around you. It would be horrible if you knew it was there and couldn't see it or feel it. That would be horrible." (STEINBECK 2000: 385 - 386).

Adam's speech perfectly describes Cathy's character. The meeting finally set Adam free and allowed him to leave her influence and return into his Garden (DITSKY 1977).

But this situation continues later in the book. When Cal confronts his mother for the first time, she tries to discover what he thinks about his father. Cal, who cherishes Adam very much, tells her the truth, but she does not stop. Cathy tries to find flaws in Adam's character asking Cal if Adam has women over or if he told his sons about Cathy. But Adam being the image of Abel is too pure for that (STEINBECK 2000).

### **6.1.3. Aron and Caleb**

The Kristeva's concept of vertical axis applies the most to the characters of Adam's sons, Aron and Caleb. Steinbeck develops the prior text more deeply in their storyline than he did in Adam and Charles's. They follow the lives of the Genesis brothers in an almost full extent. When Adam, Lee and Samuel name them, they choose from the Bible. The debate leads to an interesting thing: after suggesting to name the twins Cain and Abel, Adam resolutely refuses to tempt the fate and to determine his sons to the same destiny not knowing that it will happen either way and that his sons will re-live his own history with a greater burden (STEINBECK 2000).

One of the boys is named Caleb after one of two men who safely arrived into the Promised Land, and the second one is named Aron. Biblical Aaron was an older brother of Moses who was a priest (EXODUS 4) - Aron eventually decides to become a priest. When Adam loses all his money to an unsuccessful business, Abra, Aron's girlfriend, suggests that they could farm at Adam's ranch. Aron immediately rejects this idea rationalizing that he is no farmer – exactly as Abel who was not a farmer either. (STEINBECK 2000).

The first indication of the difference between the twins is given in the naming chapter. But it is more developed a decade later when Samuel visits the Trasks and Lee tells him: "And they're very different. You can't imagine how different. [...] They're like two sides of a medal. Cal is sharp and dark and watchful, and his brother – well, he's a boy you like before he speaks and like more afterwards." (STEINBECK 2000: 296)

Caleb never gets a visible scar or mark as Cain or Charles, but he differs with his appearance. Aron is described as a blond boy with light skin and angelic look, and Caleb is

the exact opposite, he has dark hair and skin, looking dangerous (STEINBECK 2000). This description of Caleb is his Cain's mark. His appearance in combination with behavior makes him an outcast in the society and in his father's eyes.

The biblical storyline about Cain and Abel consists of only sixteen lines, therefore it is hard to say what kind of personality traits both brothers had (GENESIS 4). Steinbeck uses the intertextuality of the main story to re-tell it but he colors the actions with motives. Steinbeck rooted the attributes equally trying not to put the Abel's figure on the pedestal. But their traits are important because they help derive the motivation and behavior behind the actions. Aron is described as a lovely, nice and sensitive boy who often cries, but this leads to his aggressiveness. Cal says that when he gets angry and cries then he is dangerous. This means that Aron is not defenseless even though he does not like fights. Cal loves and respects his father and Lee, and he has a love-hate relationship with his brother. He is calculating, smart and in search for his brother's weaknesses so that he can later use it against him (BURKHEAD 2002).

In chapter twenty-seven of *East of Eden* Cal mentions to Aron that their mother Cathy is still alive, even though Adam and Lee are saying otherwise. Aron does not believe him and gets mad. In this section, Cal makes a mental note to himself to use this information against his brother when he will need it. Cal also often uses blackmailing when he wants Aron to do something. One event in the book revolves around Adam's new car. The twins are forbidden to play with it and Cal makes Aron to break the ban by blackmailing him into it. He tells Aron that he will tell their father that Aron stole Adam's knife. When Aron replies that it is not true, Cal says that it will be true the next day. Aron immediately understands what is happening which indicates that it happened before. But Aron is not as naïve as his brother thinks and he confronts him about that, which makes Cal uncomfortable and ashamed. This elaboration of the twins' character helps readers to understand the motivation behind their actions (STEINBECK 2000). The story of Cain and Abel does not offer such an explanation, and that is why the story has the black and white feel.

Growing up Cal was restless. With Aron spending his time with Abra, Cal became lonely and there was something dark around him all the time, while the only thing he ever wanted was to be loved. The oppression and rejection of this need had a rising tendency which culminated into a series of unfortunate events. (STEINBECK 2000).

“Cal very naturally competed for attention and affection in the only way he knew – by trying to imitate Aron. And what was charming in the blond ingenuousness of Aron became suspicious and unpleasant in the dark-faced, slit-eyed Cal. And since he was pretending, his performance was not convincing. Where Aron was received, Cal was rebuffed for doing or saying exactly the same thing.” (STEINBECK 2000: 442)

Cal’s character has a unique trait which distinguishes him from other characters in the book. Throughout the whole book he seeks truth. That is what makes him special because it sets him free (DITSKY 1977). An interesting revelation came with Cal’s discovering the truth about his mother Cathy. His traits allow him to handle the situation quite well, but it awakens a different kind of fear in him. Cal starts to hate his mother for everything she has done, especially for what she has done to Adam, and knowing himself, he fears that he is just like her. He confides himself to Lee who believes that everyone is the master of their destiny, and he strongly persuades Cal not to think this way. Cal is trying not to, but in the moment of weakness he lets it reach his heart and that causes his poor judgment which makes him look even worse in people’s eyes (STEINBECK 2000). However this experience shows his capability to deserve the *timshel* unlike Cathy.

When Cal has a conversation with Cathy, she realizes that Cal reminds her of Charles. She calls him by his uncle’s/father’s name. Cathy also wants to learn more about Aron, and Cal tells her that he resembles her, but his personality is not the same. This makes Cathy claim that Cal, who seeks understanding, is exactly like her. Cal seizes a chance and asks her about her childhood and about the feeling of missing something, being the only one who did not know a secret that everybody else knew. Cathy’s behavior gives her away. But then she gets angry and Cal suddenly sees that he is his own person, that her actions and behavior do not define his own (STEINBECK 2000). This shows how two persons based on the character of Cain can differ, and it is yet another proof for Cal’s deserving to be saved and his capability of free will.

#### **6.1.4. Lee and Samuel**

The characters of Lee and Samuel are important for the philosophical aspect of the story. They represent God-like characters. Samuel is the one who clearly sees through Cathy’s

mask, who is not deceived by her looks and demeanor. He is scared and surprised by her true face and the evilness (STEINBECK 2000). In the biblical way, Samuel Hamilton represents Nature. He is the one who helped his wife to give birth to their children, the one who helped Cathy to deliver the twins, and he is also skillful in the animal birth. He is balanced a person, living by God's rules, not chasing after money and success. He lived his whole life on infertile soil, but he has not once complained about that, accepting and loving the ground he owned. Samuel is sensitive to his surroundings and nature warns him the first time he meets Cathy. He sees pure evil in her eyes (DITSKY 1977).

Lee gets more space in the book. He functions as the voice of reason. He is the role model for the twins, he knows them and their actions, and he understands them. Lee is the only one who sees through Cal's lies; he easily recognizes his intentions and motives of Cal's deeds (STEINBECK 2000).

#### **6.1.5. The Importance of Names**

The intertextuality can be seen within some of the characters names because a lot of them have names starting with either A or C. The ones with the letter A represent some of Abel's character traits. Apart from Adam and Aron, there is Adam's step-mother Alice who is described as a quiet, inconspicuous person who complains about nothing. The gifts Adam leaves for her are seemingly her only joy. And then there is Abra Bacon who is a counterpart to Cathy's evilness. Abra has light in herself, she is compassionate and emphatic. When Aron leaves to the college, he puts her on a pedestal and ascribes her pure and angelic traits which caught her surprised because she knows it is not true. Abra is considered to be a sort of bridge between both brothers, and when Aron decides to be a priest, she finds her way to Cal. They share the feeling of inherited sins of their parents (DITSKY 1977).

The C characters are ascribed to Cain, and apart from Charles and Cal, it is Adam's father Cyrus and Adam's wife Cathy. Cyrus was a soldier in the Civil War, but his whole experience is based on lies. He fabricated astonishing war stories which made him a hero in his own eyes. He lies so long and so convincingly that he himself believes that those stories are true. This leads to a conclusion that his relationship to his sons is based on lies. Even his behavior bears the track of dishonesty because of the belief that every man should be in army

to shape his character. Cyrus himself was injured in the first moments of war and discharged after his recovery (STEINBECK 2000).

Cathy's maiden name was Catherine Ames which combines both the letters C and A. Looking at her character there is no doubt she would fit the C pattern. So what does the letter A symbolize for her? It is simply her appearance "As though nature concealed a trap." (STEINBECK 2000: 75) She is described as having a child-like figure with small hands; she turned into a pretty woman. And even though people felt some foreign aura around her, they were strangely attracted to her. And those are exactly the qualities of the A-letter pattern. Throughout the book Cathy more or less keeps her appearance but the wickedness shows on her hands and feet because she gets gout (STEINBECK 2000).

## **6.2 Intertextuality within the Story**

The first indication of the biblical theme comes with the first pages of *East of Eden*. The first chapter gives a detailed description of the Salinas Valley. Steinbeck uses the intertextuality of the prior text to design the first chapter according to the myth of Creation of the world. As God creates the light and divides it from the darkness (GENESIS 1:3 – 4). Steinbeck talks about Gabilan Mountains which were on the east side of valley full of light as opposed to the mountains Santa Lucias, on the west, side which were dark and dangerous symbolizing the biblical darkness (KORDICH 2008).

"The morning came over the peaks of the Gabilans and the night drifted back from the ridges of Santa Lucias." (STEINBECK 2000: 7)

Genesis 1:7 deals with the creation of waters. Steinbeck incorporates this into the description of streams and rivers in Salinas Valley. He describes the fullness of riverbeds in winter and the way they dry out in summer. He continues in the same tone describing the land, the grass and meadows and hummocks (STEINBECK 2000).

"And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good." (GENESIS 1:12)

The author describes the trees and plants growing in the valley, the lupines and poppies which make the valley floor bright with color. The chapter ends here but the rest of



the days when God fills are not important for the description. The land is already filled with plants, animals and people, and the sky with stars and the sun. The story directly moves to the presentation of the Hamiltons family (STEINBECK 2000).

Another reference is in the passage where Adam leaves a surprise gifts for his stepmother Alice in the garden. He simply wants to see her secret smile. Alice is an Eden-like character. She is pure in her own kind of nakedness. Little Adam, never admitting that it is him who is giving her the gifts, does not know that his good deed will stand no chance in face to the true knowledge. When Alice dies, she indicates that she thought the whole time that the gifts were Charles's doing. Adam does not prove her wrong, but the knowledge crashes his illusions (DITSKY 1977).

Meanwhile the story develops the Genesis storyline. It uses the intertext to retell the part of the chapter where Cain and Abel present their gifts to God. Adam and Charles's father Cyrus celebrate his birthday. Charles gives his father a German knife while Adam gives him a strayed puppy that Cyrus accepts gratefully. Other events similar to the one described make Charles believe that the father favors Adam more than him and so he attempts to kill his brother. (STEINBECK 2000). Adam barely escapes, and that is where the events differ. The murder is not presented, but Charles is driven by the same emotions as Cain was (KORDICH 2008).

### **6.2.1. Tempting Fate**

In the twenty-second chapter of *East of Eden*, Steinbeck presents to its readers an interesting passage. While naming the twins, Samuel, Adam and Lee stumble on the story of Cain and Abel. The whole chapter is transcribed in the book with occasional comments from the characters. They are fascinated by the First Murder and its proper punishment. The whole chapter about Cain and Abel is transcribed in the book (STEINBECK 2000).

Adam says: "I remember being a little outraged at God. Both Cain and Abel gave what they had, and God accepted Abel and rejected Cain. I never thought that was just a thing. I never understood it." (STEINBECK 2000: 270) This statement is paradox because Steinbeck's intertext of the "event of biblical sacrifice" puts Adam into the position of God.

Therefore when Adam's sons present him with gifts, or more likely actions, the interpretation of this scene unfolds itself according to the biblical script and Adam accepts Aron's gift but despises Caleb's (GLADSTEIN 2006). But there still is a reminiscence of Abel's character in the new Adam. When Samuel comes to visit him on his farm, which he bought mainly for Cathy, he notifies Adam that his land was not cultivated for years and Adam replies that he has no reason to do so (STEINBECK 2000: 297). This is one of the last symbols and one of the last intertexts in the Adam-Charles parallel. The land has no value for Adam who is the "shepherd" (STEINBECK 2000).

The initial reason for the First Murder was jealousy. Steinbeck incorporated this aspect into both Adam/Charles' and Aron/Caleb's stories putting Cyrus and Adam themselves into God's position. Steinbeck did not create God-like characters, but simply made figures with authority which the boys could admire. Cyrus' preferring Adam over Charles built a strong mixture of jealousy, betrayal and hatred in Charles which led him to almost killing his brother (GLADSTEIN 2006).

With Adam's sons the readers can trace the tension from the beginning throughout the rest of the book. Adam has the same opinion about the twins as Lee does, but unlike him, he is not able to accept them for their differences. Even though he tries to love them equally, subconsciously he favors Aron rather than Caleb which can be seen throughout his actions (STEINBECK 2000).

When Samuel sees the twins, Aron tells him about his Belgian hares, on this account Samuel asks Caleb if he likes gardening. This question meets with a disapproval reaction from Lee because he still believes that it would be tempting fate. However, the more important thing is that Caleb answers that Adam "is going to let me have an acre in the flat" (p. 301) proving yet another reference to the biblical story (GLADSTEIN 2006).

### **6.2.2. Timshel**

*East of Eden* presents a very interesting thought that occurs in the fourth chapter of *Genesis* where God expresses mercy by not killing Cain. The section in the King James Bible is:

“And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.” (GENESIS 4:6,7)

The ‘and thou shalt rule over him’ is in the American standard *Bible* expressed as an imperative. In the original Hebrew text, the word used for this statement is ‘timshel’ which was throughout the years translated in many different ways. The most accurate translation is ‘Thou mayest’ – that gives a choice (STEINBECK 2000: 303). This last proclamation means that God gives Cain a choice to overpower the sin.

Lee says about “Thou mayest”:

“Why, that makes a man great, that gives him stature with the gods, for in his weakness and his filth and his murder of his brother he has still the great choice. He can choose his course and fight it through and win.” (STEINBECK 2000: 305)

‘Timshel’ has become one of the greatest symbols in *East of Eden* controlling character’s actions throughout half of the book. As when Samuel decides to tell Adam about Cathy living in Salinas, knowing that it could throw him back into that dark place he was in the first year after she had left. But he decides that it is his choice to make, and that it will be him who will live with the consequences of that decision. But the concept of “Timshel” and the essence of Lee’s proclamation are very important to the end of the book for the aftermath of Caleb’s decision (GLADSTEIN 2006). For that purpose, it is reminded in an inconspicuous scene few chapters before the end, where Adam deals with the weight of his decisions and responsibilities as a member of the draft board, and so he remembers it. Lee reminds him of the word and its meaning which serves as a reminder to Adam in the future (STEINBECK 2000).

### **6.2.3. The First Murder**

The First Murder is in the Bible expressed in one sentence: “and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.” (GENESIS 4:8). But Steinbeck searches for motives to deepen the emotional impact. He shows the usage of both Kristeva’s axis connecting the prior text with his own and reaching to the readers on

the emotional level. In the storyline of Charles and Adam, the motives are clear but stated on few pages (STEINBECK 2000). The author researches the next generation in a greater detail. Every single event, speech and thought is very important. It provides readers the desired understanding of Cal's acts; his actions are justified by many reasons.

It all starts with the offering. The Bible does not enable to develop the story in terms of time. Steinbeck's approach is different in Aron and Cal's generation. The offering is a perfect word because, especially in Aron's case, Adam does not get a gift or a sacrifice. Aron graduates early in order to apply to Stanford. This makes Adam very proud. He constantly talks and brags about it and as a surprise he lets make a golden watch for Aron as a gift. But Aron could not care less about what his father thinks because he did it for himself. In this way, Aron manages to win a favor of his father effortlessly. Cal's actions are much more complicated. He suggests Aron to move back to their ranch and earn money for Adam who lost most of his wealth in a misfortunate business. The aftereffect tarnished the family's reputation and Aron wants to persuade his dreams of leaving Salinas and to never return again. He declines Cal's offer to return to the ranch. Adam wants an academic education for both of his sons, but Cal wants to persuade his dream of being a farmer. On this account, Cal approaches Will Hamilton, one of the Samuel's sons, to ask him a piece of advice on how to make a lot of money. The Great War is about to break, and so they together start growing beans for the army. Cal and Will's plan is very daring and it is elaborated into a great detail (STEINBECK 2000).

Aron comes home for Thanksgiving Day determined to tell his father that he is about to quit the college. But Cal chose this day to give his father money, 15 000 \$, which he earned for him. He plans it for weeks making it "Cal's day". When he hears about Aron's plan to tell Adam the news, he is once again time conflicted, and at the end of arguing with himself. He generously decides to let Aron be the center of attention and to give Adam the money. Cal tries to act casually and not to worry about Adam's reaction, but as it is stated:

"Adam touched the new bills so that their edges came together, folded the tissue over them and turned the ends up. He looked helplessly at Lee. Cal caught a feeling – a feeling of calamity, of destruction in the air, and a weight of sickness overwhelmed him." (STEINBECK 2000: 542)

Adam says that he does not want money which came as benefits from the horror of war. He refuses Cal's gift. In this moment, he is in the position of his own father Cyrus who

accepted Adam's puppy but refused Charles' knife. Steinbeck uses the vertical axis of this part. Both Cyrus and Adam are in the situation of God when they decline offering of the brother who represents Cain (GLADSTEIN 2006). In all of the scenes, this situation leads to the First Murder, even though Charles did not kill Adam, he had every intention to do it. The Cain's character is driven by jealousy. But Cal is capable of admitting to himself that he is jealous of his brother. His character is the most conflicted one. He is not driven by a simple impulse; the decision that will indirectly cost his brother's life is caused by years of certain oppression (KORDICH 2008).

Since his childhood, people got the impression of Cal's hostility. He never found any real friends and his whole life he fought with doubting himself and his jealousy towards Aron and his natural behavior. He had a great respect for Lee, but who he appreciated and loved the most was his father. He realized those emotions right after discovering the truth about his mother. He promised himself to always protect Adam from all the bad. Cal treasures the moment of realization that he and Adam were both in a prison; he sees the common thing as a bridge between him and his father which makes the feeling of rejection even more bitter. It leads them to an interesting conversation. When Adam asks Cal about Aron, Cal is indecisive not knowing what to say. Later Adam asks him if he hates Aron and Cal admits that he used to, but that all the hatred is suddenly gone and never coming back. Cal's attitude towards his brother changes throughout the novel, which depicts the inner battle he is fighting (STEINBECK 2000). But his feelings towards his father do not change. To him Adam is a fixed point in his life and Cal tries to gratify his father. Seeing Aron's success and how proud Adam is of him, Cal tries a different approach - to buy Adam with the money. But Adam is oblivious to his son's affections and his plan backfires (DITSKY 1977). He is more than devastated and something inside him breaks. Lee tries to justify Adam by saying that this is him and that he had no other choice but to refuse the money. Lee also tries to persuade Cal that he can choose, but he, who represents Cain, makes a bad choice. The process of evil poisoning his mind is described as follows:

“After a time his breathing steadied and he watched his brain go to work slyly, quietly. He fought the quiet hateful brain down and it slipped aside and went about its work. He fought it more weakly, for hate was seeping all through his body, poisoning every nerve. He could feel himself losing control.” (STEINBECK 2000: 543)

His father's rejection woke up a cold evil in Cal which was aimed towards his brother. He burns the money and decides to hurt Aron in the worst way he could imagine – by letting him know the truth about their mother (STEINBECK 2000).

While Aron is in Stratford, Abra talks to Lee about him and his imagination of her as someone who is absolutely pure. She also states an interesting thought; Aron needed his mother while growing up and not having her forced him to create an image of her; image of purity, honor and holiness (GLADSTEIN 2006). As a contrast to this is a scene in a church between Aron and father Rolf who says that he believes in a higher church - treating sinners and common people the same. He gives an example of a woman who visits services and is an owner of “a house of ill fame” (STEINBECK 2000: 488). Aron cannot make peace with that kind of information. He is not capable of accepting this kind of sin. Aron's imagination distorts the reality and it is described in the following excerpt:

“The house next to Reynaud's Bakery became warm and dear, Lee the epitome of friend and counselor, his father the cool, dependable figure of godhead, his brother clever and delightful, and Abra – well, of Abra he made his immaculate dream and, having created her, fell in love with her.” (STEINBECK 2000: 522 – 523)

The image of purity was one of the reasons why Cal's revelation had such a huge impact on him, and Cal knew it would. He realized that for the first time when they were about ten years old, and he saved this information in his brain for a later use. Cal even says to Adam that there is not enough evil in Aron to bear it. He also promises him that Aron will never know about this. But after the rejection, Cal's judgment vanishes. With a cold logic he searches for his brother and then takes him to Cathy's brothel to see for himself. Aron recognizes Cathy from the church; she is the lady who Mr. Rolf said to be an owner of a brothel. Readers observe the scene from Cathy's point of view. She sees Aron astonished by shock and then Cal smiling with a satisfied cruelty in his eyes. On this account, Cathy commits suicide and leaves all her money to Aron (STEINBECK 2000). Steinbeck uses the vertical axis of the prior story featuring the First Murder in this scene.

#### **6.2.4. My Brother's Keeper**

When Cain kills Abel, he is approached by God who asks him: “Where is Abel thy brother?” And Cain answers: “I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?” (GENESIS 4:9)

Steinbeck uses the intertext of this scene in *East of Eden*. When the sheriff announces Adam that Cathy is dead and that she left her legacy to Aron, Adam starts to seek him, and so he asks Cal whether he knows where his brother is. Cal replies: “How do I know? Am I supposed to look after him?” (STEINBECK 2000: 563) Both Cain and Caleb know where they brothers are. Cain knows that he killed his brother and God knows it too (“the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground”) (GENESIS 4:10). Adam learns about Aron’s fate soon enough but not right away. Cal soon becomes conscious of his mistake; he bothers himself with bad conscience and no feeling of relief whatsoever. During the self-realization of his mistakes, Cal experiences great worries about Aron (GLADSTEIN 2006). He is partially redeemed by the voice of reason which comes from Lee who comes to check on him. Lee as well as Adam also represents a kind of a God-like character, he suspects what Cal did, but he does not tell Cal, he simply tells him why he did it. Cal always seems to open up to him and asks for Lee’s help. Lee tells him that he only feels sorry for himself and asks him if he would take delight in knowing that he murdered his brother. When he sees the relief in Cal’s face, he tells him that every person has some kind of violence in them (STEINBECK 2000).

Cal’s revelation had major consequences on Aron’s psyche. He decided to join the Army and was sent to Europe to fight Germans. Few months later a message comes that Aron was killed. The news leads to Adam’s stroke. The Bible’s intertext is presented by Cal’s indirectly killing his brother and Aron’s fulfilling Abel’s destiny. He died because of his brother and without any children. But Adam’s stroke was also the consequence of Cal’s decision, and even though Adam does not die in the book, it is suggested that his bad health will lead to death. The result would be that both “Abels” were killed by Cain (KORDICH 2008).

On Adam’s deathbed, Cal admits everything. Adam is badly paralyzed and cannot speak, but Cal sees the blame for his brother’s death in his eyes. Cal confides his feelings to Abra who disagrees with him and makes him go home to see his father. Lee drags them to his bed and tells Adam: “He (Caleb) did a thing in anger, Adam, because he thought you had rejected him. The result of his anger is that his brother and your son is dead.” (STEINBECK 2000: 601) Cal tries to stop him, but Lee, making the speech his choice, continues. He asks for Adam’s blessing for Cal, for his forgiveness to set Cal free. Lee tries to penetrate into Adam’s head, to communicate a message that would get into his brain (DITSKY 1977). And with enormous difficulties, Adam says a single word – Timshel. In this scene Steinbeck uses

again both vertical and horizontal axis. The vertical one can be seen in Adam's paraphrasing God who said to Cain that he may overcome his sins. The horizontal axis can be seen in the impact on the readers since it is one of the most emotional scenes in the whole book. Adam says the very same thing to Cal, making it his choice whether he will stay the same or change and become a better man (GLADSTEIN 2006). Adam does it because the need to do the right thing is in his nature. He recognizes himself in Cal, and so he blesses him.

The author ends the book here, so the readers can only guess whether Cal reached his redemption. There is a hidden hint to this problem that goes back to the first part of the book, to the Adam-Cyrus-Charles triangle. Charles loved Cyrus, who had a faith in him, but Cyrus loved Adam more. Adam did not share the same feelings, but he had a faith in his father. The circle was broken with Cyrus's death and it was this event that set his sons free. It can be applied to Cal's situation too, so it is possible that he will gain his redemption after Adam's death (DITSKY 1977).



## Conclusion

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to discover the usage of Bible's intertext in John Steinbeck's book *East of Eden* and to see how this tool develops the book's storyline. To do so, I used the definition of intertextuality as it was coined by Julia Kristeva in 1966. Steinbeck uses the story of Cain and Abel as a prior text to his work transforming the story into an epic tale of the Trask family. He uses the chapters of the Creation and the First Sin as supporting stories. To Steinbeck *East of Eden* was very important because it was partially a biography of his own family. He even incorporated his childhood-self into the story turning the book into an extremely personal matter. John Steinbeck used intertext in his previous works, especially in his masterpiece *The Grapes of Wrath*.

The opening chapter of *East of Eden*, where he describes the Salinas Valley, is intertext of the first verses of the Bible's Creation. As this chapter marks the beginning of the world and the long story after it, the first chapter of *East of Eden* illustrates the dusk of the family saga. The first half of the story revolves around two brothers, Charles and Adam. Both of them have the attributes of the biblical brothers. Their father Cyrus is put into the position of God. The same book is inherited by Adam in the second part of *East of Eden* where he judges the gifts of his sons, Aron and Caleb. The majority of characters are based either on Cain's or on Abel's character traits. Steinbeck plays with the first names of those characters using the initials "A" or "C" to indicate the inclination of the characters to their biblical embodiments.

Steinbeck takes the well-known biblical story and turns it into a complex psychological drama where his characters cleverly intertwine with their biblical models. Steinbeck turns the simple Genesis characters into complicated individuals driven by their own motives, desires and emotions, especially jealousy, but who stays true to the nature of the characters from the original text.

John Steinbeck combines both horizontal and vertical axes of intertextuality. The horizontal axis can be seen in the repetition of the events in the fourth chapter of Genesis used across the whole book. Steinbeck builds the second part of the book on a rising tension where the readers may witness Aron and Caleb growing up to become more and more similar to Abel and Cain. The book greatly deals with the scenes of offering and the rejection of it by father's figures that are put into God's position. The story stays true to the Bible when Abel-like characters are interested in animals while Cain-like characters like farming. The book

reaches its climax with the scene of offering after which Caleb is indirectly responsible for his brother's and also father's death. When Caleb, for the first time, confronts his father who asks him about Aron's whereabouts, Caleb replies: "Am I my brother's keeper?" which corresponds to Cain's reply to God. But later, Caleb starts to feel anxious and his remorse is a derivation of his biblical embodiment. Also the ending of Caleb's story is quite different from the prior text. Lee takes Caleb, who drowns in regret and shame, to Adam's deathbed. Lee asks Adam to forgive Caleb and set him free. Adam says "Timshel", which is the exact replica that God said to Cain. In the spirit of the Hebrew word, Adam gives his son a choice whether or not he wants to overpower his sin.

The vertical axis is visible in the style of writing, his ability to delineate vivid characters and to send the reader into a whirlwind of emotions. The emotional impact is a great usage of the vertical axis of intertextuality.

## Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce analyzuje využití intertextuality v knize Johna Steinbecka *Na východ od ráje*. Tato práce si klade za cíl najít prvky intertextuality biblické knihy Genesis v knize *Na východ od ráje* a zjistit jak tuto skutečnost Steinbeck využívá pro prohloubení vlastního příběhu. První kapitola se zabývá pojmem „intertextualita“, který byl poprvé definován francouzsko-bulharskou lingvistickou teoretičkou Julii Kristevou, která definuje intertextualitu pomocí dvou os, vertikální a horizontální. Vertikální osa propojuje text, který využívá intertextualitu předchozího textu. Horizontální osa je propojení autora s širším okruhem veřejnosti.

Druhá kapitola se zabývá popisem tří kapitol Genesis, respektive Stvoření světa, První hřích a První vražda. Steinbeck využívá intertext těchto příběhů v knize *Na východ od ráje*, kterou vystavuje nejvíce na mýtu o synech Adama a Evy. Kain je rolník a Hospodinovi nabídne dar z plodů země. Ábel je farmář a jeho dar je nejlepší zvíře jeho stáda. Bůh přijme Ábelův dar a odmítne Kainův, který ze žárlivosti bratra zabije. Když Hospodin shání Ábela, Kain o osudu svého bratra lže. Hospodin Kaina obviní z bratrovraždy a prokleje jeho půdu, vloží na něj znamení a odsoudí ho k věčnému bloudění po zemi. Kain odejde do země Nód, na východ od ráje. Steinbeck se při vybírání názvu své knihy nechal inspirovat právě tímto slovním spojením.

Třetí kapitola se zabývá významnými díly americké literatury, které jsou založené na Bibli. Prvním stěžejním bodem jsou díla psaná Puritány, zvláště pak *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1651) Williama Bradforda, který popisuje komunitu poutníků od jejich opuštění Holandska přes zaoceánskou plavbu až po jejich usídlení. Bradford tuto pouť přirovnává k výjevům z Bible. Z puritánského období jsou dále stručně popsány díla Johna Winthropa a Mary Rowlandsonové. Kapitola se dále věnuje období Americké renesance, obzvláště pak *Šarlatovému písmu* (1850) Nathaniela Hawthorna, který mimo jiné využívá biblického intertextu příběhu Adama a Evy. Dále je rozebírána kniha *Bílá velryba* (1851) jejímž autorem je Herman Melville. Hlavním tématem této knihy je souboj člověka s přírodou. Zástupcem literatury s biblickou tematikou ve 20. století je William Faulkner a jeho *Absolone, Absolone!* (1936), který využívá biblický intertext příběhu o Absolonovi z 2. knihy Samuelovy.

Čtvrtá kapitola popisuje život a dílo Johna Steinbecka, který vyrůstal s rodiči a třemi sestrami v okrese Monterey v Kalifornii. Jeho matka Olive vedla Steinbecka k četbě, a díky této skutečnosti už si jako malý oblíbil biblické a mýtické příběhy. Aktivně psal už během

svých školních let, ale své schopnosti zdokonalil až na vysoké škole Stanford, kterou nedokončil, ale kde se zabýval hlavně literárními předměty, které mu pomohly rozvíjet jeho spisovatelský talent. Steinbeckova díla též ovlivnil jeho nevyvážený vztah s otcem a různé pracovní činnosti, kterými si přivydělával při psaní. Steinbeck je díky svým dílům držitelem Pulitzerovy a Nobelovy ceny za literaturu. John Steinbeck je autorem mnoha známých knih, především z doby Velké hospodářské krize jako jsou například *Hrozny hněvu* (1939), *O myších a lidech* (1937) nebo *Na Plechárně* (1945). Steinbeck byl za druhé světové války válečným dopisovatelem a soubor jeho článků vyšel pod názvem *Byla kdysi válka* (1958).

Pátá kapitola se věnuje knihám, které jsou také zčásti či úplně založeny na biblickém intertextu. Práce se v této kapitole věnuje především knihám *Neznámému bohu* (1933), *O myších a lidech* (1937), ale především *Hroznům hněvu* (1939), kde se skloubí tematika jak Starého tak Nového zákona.

Analýza bakalářské práce se důsledně věnuje využití biblického intertextu v *Na východ od ráje*. Příběh knihy je založen na osudu rodiny Trasků a rozdělen do dvou generací. Steinbeck zasazuje příběh Kaina a Ábela do kalifornského údolí Salinas na přelomu 19. a 20. století. Hlavní postavou je Adam Trask, který reprezentuje Ábela. Adam si bere za ženu Cathy Amesovou, která mu porodí dva syny, Arona a Caleba. I když to v knize není řečeno přímo, Steinbeck naznačuje, že Aron a Caleb jsou ve skutečnosti syny Adamova bratra Charlese, jehož předlohou byl Kain. Jejich vztah je založen na bratrovražedné lásce, která přeroste spíše v nenávisť ve chvíli, kdy jejich otec Cyrus přijme Adamův dar a Charlesův odmítne. Charles se v záchvatu žárlivosti pokusí Adama zabít. Zde se příběh rozchází se svou předlohou, jelikož Adam přežije Charlese, který v průběhu let práce na farmě utrpěl tržnou ránu na čele, která symbolizovala Kainovo znamení.

Další postavou založenou na intertextu, je Adamova žena Cathy, která je popsána jako čisté zlo. Cathy je chápána jako postava Kaina v ženském provedení. Nezastaví se ani před vraždou svých rodičů, pokusí se zabít své děti i Adama, nakonec skončí coby prostitutka. I ona nese na svém čele Kainovo znamení. Jejími syny jsou Aron a Caleb, kteří tvoří druhou generaci a jejich příběh se rozvíjí v druhé části knihy. Aron je popsán jako čistý a hodný chlapec s blondatými vlasy a andělskou tváří, kdežto Caleb se od svého bratra liší tmavými vlasy i pletí a vychytralou povahou. Tyto aspekty jsou Kainovo znamení Caleba. Steinbeck si hraje s iniciály jmen hlavních představitelů, kdy postavy s Ábelovými vlastnostmi začínají na písmeno „A“, a postavy s Kainovým charakterem na písmeno „C“ (anglicky: Cain). Cathy Ames má v iniciálech obě písmena. „C“ v jejím příjmení jí přisuzuje Kainovy vlastnosti a „A“ symbolizuje její andělský vzhled.

Hlavními postavami jsou také Samuel Hamilton a Lee, oba představují určitou podobu Boha. Samuel je zchudlý kovář, který pomáhá Adamovi a v knize zosobňuje přírodu. Lee je chápán jako hlas rozumu.

Vertikální osa intertextu, propojení původního textu s novým, je možno najít hned v několika případech. V úvodu knihy Steinbeck popisuje Salinaské údolí stejně jako je popisován vznik světa v Bibli. Využívá zde intertext pro vykreslení úsvitu rodinné ságy. Adam Trask v těchto místech žije se svými syny a s čínským sluhou Leem. Scéna, kdy Lee, Samuel a Adam vymýšlí jména pro chlapce, je dovede k příběhu Kaina a Ábela. Lee zde naráží na hebrejské slovo „Timšel“, které v pravém smyslu znamená „můžeš“. Je to slovo, které Bůh použil při rozhovoru s Kainem. Lee přijde na to, že Hospodin dal Kainovi na výběr přemocť svůj hřích, bude-li chtít. „Timšel“ se stává jedním z nejvýznamnějších symbolů v celé knize.

Steinbeck buduje napětí mezi Calebem a Aronem po celou druhou část knihy. Když znovu dojde na intertext nabízení darů, vzorec se opakuje. Adam, který se nyní ocitl v roli Boha, přijme Aronův dar, ale odmítne Calebův. Caleb hnán žárlivostí zasáhne pobožného Arona tam, kde ví, že ho to zraní nejvíc – poví mu pravou profesi jejich matky Cathy, kterou Aron celý život považuje za mrtvou. Na tento popud Aron narukuje do armády. Když se Adam shání po Aronovi, ptá se Caleba, zdali ví, kde je jeho bratr. Caleb použije téměř tu samou větu, kterou odpověděl Kain Hospodinu na tu samou otázku: „Jsem snad strážcem svého bratra?“ Posléze se pravda ukáže a Aron je zabit v bitvě. Adam nese smrt svého syna těžce, což mu přivodí mrtvici. Caleb tedy dostojí osudu Kaina a nepřímo zaviní smrt obou postav založených na Ábelovi. U Caleba ale následuje odklon od jeho biblického protějšku, protože si uvědomuje svou chybu a provází ho výčitky svědomí. Lee dovede Caleba k Adamově smrtelné posteli, kde ho prosí, aby svému synovi odpustil. Adam z posledních sil řekne: „Timšel.“ Adam, stejně jako Bůh, dal Calebovi možnost přemocť svůj hřích.

Vertikální osu, která představuje spojení mezi spisovatelem a čtenáři, lze zřetelně najít. Steinbeck svým stylem psaní a vykreslováním postav mění stručný biblický příběh v epickou pout' po stopách propracovaných postav. Steinbeck bere původní text na úplně jinou rovinu a podkresluje ho motivy, které dodávají logičnost jednání jednotlivých postav, a v tomto důsledku mají silný emocionální dopad na čtenáře.

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