

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

Ústav cizích jazyků

Bakalářská práce

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Obor: Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání – Společenské vědy se zaměřením na
vzdělávání

Of Mice and Men

Steinbeck's view of 1930's reality in American South

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OLOMOUC 2016

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne 15.6. 2016

Podpis

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank to my supervisor Mgr. Andrea Hoffmannová, Ph.D. for her guidance and valuable advice.

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Abstract

The present work analyzes the novella *Of Mice and Men*. The starting point of this review is a compilation of historical fact of the life of John E. Steinbeck as well as the brief regional history of central California. The analysis of the characters and the plot as well as the analysis of the language means of expression is taken from the Central-European non-native English-speaking reader.

Keywords: John E. Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*, analysis, American literature

Abstrakt

Práce analyzuje novelu *Of Mice and Men*. Východiskem práce je kompilace historických faktů o životě autora Johna E. Steinbecka a historických reálií z období, ve kterém byla práce psaná. Následuje subjektivní analýza jak jednotlivých postav, tak také děje a jazykových prostředků. To vše je zpracováno z pohledu středoevropského čtenáře žijícího v odlišných reáliích než spisovatel.

Klíčová slova: John E. Steinbeck, *O myších a lidech*, analýza, americká literatura

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Introduction

The unusual story *Of Mice and Men* is interesting not only in view of exotics for the Central European-dweller but also in the descriptive of moral in multiple levels. Moreover, the theme of The Great Depression and people desperately trying to find the place in the world is not so far away from the contemporary situation in the world whether or not we want to think otherwise. That is why I herewith submit my personal point of view on the short story from the perspective of 21st century person.

The possibility of the objective analysis of the literary piece is severely limited. The technique of the compilation of previous analysis and the other literal sources may objectify that a little. On the other hand, the action of the fiction is dependent not only on the setting in which it was written but also on the settings in which it is read. That is why this analysis is written with awareness of the previous admittedly more expert and deeper analyses but as far as it is possible independently on them in hope to create its own point of view.

In the first part of the work we will go through the background of the novel. We will explain some facts about the differences between European and American literature, as well as social status of the main heroes in the literature works written on these two continents. To understand the idea of the work, we will describe important facts about the Steinbeck's life, also his personal experience and work. We will have a look on his work and the novel through the eyes of literature scientists and reviewers. We will also picture social background of the story and the place where it was held – Salinas Valley. It is also necessary to mention an important history fact – The Great Depression and its impact on the social life.

The second chapter will show us typology of characters in the novel. We will mention not only main characters, but also some of the additional characters. Lennie and George are the main characters of the story, but people and events around them are creating the world for them and because of that, we will mention more than these main characters.

The third chapter is dedicated to formal information about the language and the stylistics of the book. We will try to compare the language and stylistics used in this novella with other works of great writers. At the end of third chapter, we will also describe the nature of the story.

The novel *Of Mice and Men* became so attractive, that there are many films based on it. In the fourth chapter we will go through some interesting cultural and other references of this novel.

1 Background facts of the novel

The themes of friendship, unusual alliances and extreme conditions where men have to live have been omnipresent in the fiction since the very beginnings. However, a social criticism had little room in these stories. Unusual stories rather attracted attention due to their fantasticism and unrealistic nature. Things twisted in 19th century, where everyday life and everymen heroes come to scene, firstly in European, especially French and Russian critical realism, followed by European naturalism. Social criticism in pieces of the European authors as Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Stendhal or Balzac as well as social critical parts in naturalistic works of Zola or Flaubert built a canon of social aspects in Europe's and world literature as we know it. (Lawall, 1994)

American fiction, on the other hand, had initially little been influenced, with the realistic and naturalistic tendencies present in literature of Europe. 19th century in America is the époque of American renaissance, mostly romantic or transcendentalist stories are present. Great names as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville or Nathaniel Hawthorne focused their themes on individuals, their freedom of choice, their relationships with God or their morality. The reasons for this setup were arguably social, the American literature of those times was created almost exclusively in East Coast and both the writers and the ordinary readers were well-situated protestant Yankees. There is no surprise, that one of few social criticizing tendencies is present in the writings of Mark Twain (as is the pen name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens), the first non-East Coaster, in recognizable American literature. (Lawall, 1994, Zhang, 2015)

The thirst of the social themes, however, was present in United States even in the time of high transcendentalism. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was stated the bible of abolitionism, the leading social issue in mid 19th century in United States of America. Social criticism and everyman everyday life, however, becomes more present in American literature during the early 20th century, especially after the trauma of the 1st World War. The Lost Generation embodied by Francis Scott Fitzgerald or Ernest Hemingway firstly started to be openly critical to the social issues, the concepts of wars as well as the myths and truth of so-called American dream. (Lawall, 1994)

John Steinbeck himself, although often ranked among the members, was too young to be a proper member of The Lost Generation. Yet The Lost Generation writers could be

told his literal companions without any doubt. The theme of impact of The Great Depression on the ordinary or low-class people is deeply present not only in his novel *Of Mice and Men* but also in the other pieces.

Richard Astro (In:French, 1990) named the main reason why John Steinbeck is among the most significant writes like this: „ Steinbeck believed in people...his main thesis is that humans are rarely satisfied, but their dissatisfaction is the source of their greatness.” (p. 594)

1.1 John Steinbeck's personal experience

John Ernest Steinbeck Jr. was born 27th of February 1902 in Salinas, California. It is worth mentioning that his hometown was no further than 27.2 miles (42.1 km) from Soledad, California where almost the entire plot of the short story is located. The descent of the author is partially English and Irish, his name is an abbreviation of Großsteinbeck having the origin in his German ancestry. His family was neither poor as much as the main heroes Lennie Small and George Milton nor as rich as The Boss. Yet, his father's career after years of falls and successes in grain and flour business ended up being a Monterey County treasurer. Before Steinbeck's graduation at the Salinas High School in 1919, he had worked as a junior lab assistant in the Spreckels Sugar Factory laboratories. It has been due to some sources the first time he began writing the fiction on regular basis. (Benson, 1990, Benson, 1984)

The income of family somehow had to be big enough to ensure John the studies on Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. Though his passion on literature, perhaps inherited from his mother, his major studies of English literature were not successful. Steinbeck, on the other hand, was not intensively seeking a degree at the university; he preferred the courses he was interested in and making money in the aforementioned Spreckels' laboratory. In 1925 he moves to New York City (on a boat through Panama channel) where he changes inferior jobs trying to break through as a reporter or writer. With a little success he moves back to California in 1928 finding a job as a tour guide on Lake Tahoe. (Benson, 1990, Benson,1984)

The actual beginning of The Great depression met newlywed Steinbeck in Los Angeles, California, running along with his wife the business with plaster mannequins. Maybe due to the crisis or perhaps due to their lack of business spirit, this business

eventually bankrupted. After that Steinbeck took advantage of the status of his father and remained supported by his family in both housing and cash point of view, so he could be a full time writer. (Benson, 1990, Benson, 1984)

Steinbeck is multiple times told to be keen in Salinas Valley nature. So the intimate knowledge of Salinas Valley landscape next to Soledad present in the novella is obvious. As his father ran the grain business and flour plant when young Steinbeck was adolescent, the experience with Salinas Valley ranchers and ranch-hands had to be also present in his memory for a long time. „A life among farmers, migrant workers, and ranchers of the Salinas Valley; biblical lore; the knightly adventures of King Arthur; a summer course in marine biology; a devotion to *The Golden Bough*; and a fascination with the mysteries of the unconscious all shaped Steinbeck’s writings. In his lifetime the Nobel Prize-winning author wrote over twenty-eight plays, movie scripts, short story collections, books of non-fiction, novels, and political documents.“ (Lewis, 2014, introduction)

Also the experience of a low end worker doing occasional inferior jobs is definitely mirrored, at least in the characters of Lennie and George the wage men roaming from ranch to ranch for \$50 a month. Beyond that he had probably not the detailed view to the situation in agriculture during The Great Depression. Mayhap that is why the story itself proceeds in timelessness of its kind. There are no strict references to certain time when the plot takes place other than we must know is during the barley harvest. (Benson, Benson 1990, 1984, Steinbeck, 1993)

Generally, the *Of Mice and Men* novella or at least its settings, though it is a fiction, is based very deeply on the existing personal experience of John Ernest Steinbeck jr. up to the point he was writing that. It remains noteworthy fact that the novella of *Of Mice and Men* became almost immediately a basis for the same named movie (in 1939) made by Lewis Milestone and John Steinbeck. The film was very successful and eventually was nominated for four Oscars.

1.2 John Steinbeck’s work and the *Of Mice and Men* novella in the prism of literature scientists and reviewers

John Steinbeck as a writer has been a subject for multiple literature science studies since he has been awarded by the Nobel Prize in literature (1961). His work firstly even examined in

the late 1950s (Lisca,1958). The pieces of John Steinbeck were also a big theme for literature critics a journalists contemporarily as well as retrospectively. One of the famous reviewers of the novella *Of Mice and Men* was Eleanor Roosevelt. It is worth mentioning that the very most of the contemporary reviews was without any doubt positive, usually stressing the fatal aspect of the poor people struggling to live happily.

The objections on the novella are mostly summed in the Mark Van Doren's review (Van Doren,1937), famous for being one of the few notable exceptions amongst generally positive acceptance of the book. Novella *Of Mice and Men* is usually criticized for being overly sentimental. The fatalism of the book is also challenged as the lack of the free will of the characters.

As the human nature is, each period of the history brings its own view on the piece of John Steinbeck's work, mostly more influenced by the themes present in the period itself than the ones present in the book. 1960's and 1970's reviewers, for instance, stress the novella as a milestone of the American fiction canon, which started to be formulated in those years. Later interpretations are stressing the other features of the piece. Later on, the autobiographical and historical features of The Great Depression are mentioned. The 1990's and later reviewers, on the other hand start to pick up the social features of the book often yet untold and unseen, especially the theme of sexual minorities, gender point of view and attitude of man and the landscape or, more contemporarily said, environmentalism. (Van Doren, 1937)

The unusual alliance between George and Lennie in the novella *Of Mice and Men* is attracting the attention for those who can see it from the sexual minority point of view (Person,2004). The homosexual undertone of their relationship is argued. The queer glimpses are observed mostly in the comparison of the novella *Of Mice and Men* and novels *Tortilla Flat* and *East of Eden*, however, the arguments are often find to be weak. In fact, the emotional alternatives to the mainstream family life, often described by John Steinbeck in his work are not necessarily to be equaled or confused with the homosexual relationship. (Person,2004)

The complementary argument to the queer glimpses in the work of John Steinbeck is his attitude to the women characters. Women in the Steinbeck's work are considered to be in accordance to the 1930's social canon more or less inferior to the men. The accent of

the women (one woman in case of *Of Mice and Men*) as a sexual objects and Salome-like irresponsible primary seducers seems to be obvious in the case of the Curley's young wife. On the other hand his picture of women is far different than the Victorian point of view. The woman character in the *Of Mice and Men* is mostly considered as the complementary characteristic to the men characters and, of course the catalyst of the happenings. (Liang S-f.1994)

The ecology and environment feature of the work of John Steinbeck is more obvious. Even though the theme of conservationism was at least minor in the time when the novella was written the intimate relationship between the author and the landscape is obvious. Arguably, however, there is more sentimentality in the relationship than the conscious environmentalism.(Person,2004)

1.3 The Salinas Valley

The Salinas Valley is situated in the Central California along the river Salinas. Originally inhabited by the contemporarily extinct Native American tribes of Salinas, the modern history starts to count with the Spanish missionary colonization in the 18th century. That is the reason why a lot of municipalities there still carry the Spanish name. One of the most important missions was called Nuestra Señora de Soledad giving the name of the current municipality of Soledad. Unlike the most of the California the Salinas Valley is not and never has been a touristic spot. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was the trading and shipping center and big part of the economy there is atypical for the state made by agriculture, which is why the valley is often nicknamed The Salad Bowl of the World. (Holmes,2012) Steinbeck (1933) once wrote to his friend:"I think I would like to write the story of this whole valley, of all the little towns and all the farms and the ranches the wilder hills. I can see how I would like to do it so that it would be the valley of the world" (In: National Steinbeck center, J.S. Biography)

The exceptional character and the relative sunkenness of the valley is also the reason for the special traditional demographics in terms of California. Traditionally, in the 19th and the first two thirds of 20th century the valley was mostly inhabited by white peasant people often offensively called hillbillies. According to census in 1970 the number of white peasant people was more than 90 %. Despite the demographics twisted nowadays (made by the huge colonization of Pacific Islanders in the region), in the 1920s and 1930s

the nature of the region was deeply influenced by this fact. The limited presence of the traditional ethnical minorities created the ideal spawn for local patriotism as well as insularity typical for those regions. The main picture observed from John Steinbeck's perspective was the provinciality of the region with all the pros and cons included. (Holmes,2012)

On the contrary of that, the nature of Salinas Valley is up to date referred as exceptionally nice. The climate created by the influences of the Pacific Ocean as well as the peaks of the Gabilan Range brings the ideal condition not only for the fertile agriculture but also for the natural sights, for example the Pinnacles National Park, one of the newest national parks founded by Barack Obama in 2013. (Holmes,2012)

The contradictory character of the parochialism and exceptional natural beauty of the Salinas Valley and the adjacent region are the principals which could be found in the sceneries of multiple Steinbeck's books as is *East of Eden*, *Grapes of Wrath* or *In Dubious Battle* and plays the crucial role in the descriptions and characteristics present in the analyzed model *Of Mice and Men*. The detailed knowledge on the landscape discussed in the previous chapter allowed Steinbeck the capture of the sentiments and moods of the Salinas Valley creating the entire original atmosphere of his work. (Holmes,2012)

1.4 Great depression in California

On 29th of October 1929, "Black Tuesday" began the greatest economical depression of modern times.,,The problem of explaining why the world economy collapsed in the 1930s has provided a difficult challenge to economists for more than six decades." (Bernake, 2000, p. 276) Whether or not "Black Tuesday" was the beginning or an initial symptom of the all-economics worldwide crisis to be argued by the economists, the impact on the ordinary people especially the wage workers was arguably devastating. The unemployment rate dropped from the nearly saturation rate of 3.2 % in 1929 to a peak 24.9 % in 1933 which can be pictured as approximately ten million people losing their job in those four years. Way more than this numbers were the people whose income dropped down significantly and the poverty in seemingly away from the most of the social classes in USA in 1920s became an issue once again. (Osborne, 2012)

California witnessed the big economical boom in 1920s concerning the industry as well as the agriculture. The depression did not take as much this boom in early 1930s as it

was in the other parts of USA (for example the Midwest states or the East Coast). On the other hand, as much as some process in depression could be called so, the relative success in California played the role of double-edged axe. The Great Depression led to an intrastate immigration wave when the lots of desperate people from the Midwest and Eastern Coast tried to challenge their luck in better place during the harsh time. Moreover, the severe droughts in 1931 in the American Midwest commonly known as the Dust Bowl crisis created the mass of approximately 200 000 immigrants or better said refugees desperately moving to California already facing the wage and unemployment crisis. “Oklahoma-born song writer Woody Guthrie wrote several ballads about the plight of the Dust Bowl refugees. In “Do Re Mi” he offered an unheeded warning about the unfulfilled promises of the Golden State: “California is a garden of Eden, a paradise to live in or see. But believe it or not , you won’t find it so hot, If ain’t got the do-re-mi.” (Guthrie,1930, Do Re Mi)

These conditions along with the continuing interstate immigration to California mainly from the eastern Asian countries (Philippines for instance) resulted in the unhealthy competition on the labor market and the measurable wage dropdown (from \$3.50 a day in 1929 to \$1.75 in 1933). These events caused without any doubt a big raise and amplification of the hidden or latent animosities in the society. The higher concurrence in the labor market meant bigger ostracism of people who were out of the mainstream of the society. Racism began to flourish once again along with the intolerance of immigrants and all of the other, already unpopular, classes of society. Moreover, the strikes became more and more present which ultimately lead into the “bloody Thursday” the brutal suppression of San Francisco general strike on the 5th of July 1934. (Osborne,2012, Bernake,2000)

The xenophobia and nativism along with the protectionist tendencies penetrated also in the high executive politics. The Filipino repatriation act in 1935 was the great success of the protectionist and nativist lobby offering involuntarily to Filipinos the one way return to the country of their origin. This is one of the darkest precedents of the history of USA when basic human rights such as family reunification or freedom of residence were broken and sacrificed at the altar of the popular act. The repatriations hallowed by federal and Californian government also involved Mexicans and other Spanish-American nations. (State university, 2009)

Despite the hard protectionist acts, the poverty and failure were omnipresent. The ramshackle poverty slams grew all over the California filled mostly by the Dust Bowl

refugees and domestic bankrupts. The symbol of it was a Pipe City, the sewage pipes stored next to the city of Oakland, California, where the homeless people sought a shelter and a substitute of domicile. The problems of the Dust Bowl immigrants are mostly reflected in the Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. (State university, 2009)

All the aforementioned historical fact created the scenery in which the plot of the book *Of Mice and Men* take place. The mood of apparent helplessness and deprivation as well as the social exclusion lead people which would act ordinarily otherwise to the extremities. The limited comfort of everybody and the paralysis of the lacking future prospects are creating the resigned feeling of the entire book. There is no direct clue, however, whether the book really takes place during The Great Depression. Though, the feeling of the book definitely prompts this scenery was present in the authors mind during the writing.

2 Typology of novella characters

The extremism of the individual characters put together in the story is the essential mean of expression as well as driving force for the story. The whole storyline would not be possible if the puzzle of the characters have been designed otherwise. Therefore, the analysis of the book is inevitably possible only on the background of the analysis of the characters themselves. That is why the brief typology of the main and most important characters is offered bellow as a base of the analysis of the entire novella.

2.1 Lennie Small

The story begins and ends with the central doublet in which the biggest and little bit more important story mover is Lennie. Lennie Small is admittedly neither a small guy, nor a clever guy as well. In fact he is neither even capable to take care of himself, nor to handle an everyday life. He has a limited capacity of the memory. His behavior is definitely closer to a child than to adult man. In the physical point of view, however, he is very strong, capable to lift a full grain bag alone. The greatest misfortune of him is that he is not capable to fully control his strength due to his insufficient awareness of it. There is an obvious need of somebody taking care of him, in the time of the plot, George Milton is in charge but we know that before it was his aunt Clara who took care of him.

Lennie is described as a character who cannot be fully responsible for his life and for the situations or problems he causes. He is very loyal to George, but we can say, that he does not know what truly the loyalty is. He does things that get him into trouble, but he is not really aware of it. He always thinks about a situation in terms of what will George say or do, but he does not consider what is right or wrong.,,“If George sees me talkin’ to you he’ll give me hell,” Lennie said cautiously... “Well, he said if I done any more bad things he ain’t gonna let me tend the rabbits..” .” (Steinbeck,1993,p.126)

He likes to pet the smooth things. His passion of petting mice furs, regarding his unawareness of his power of push, usually lead to killing the mice; this has been repeated in case of Slam’s puppy and eventually with Curley’s wife as the plot climaxes. Notwithstanding his condition, he is not any kind of bad person. He cannot be. His intentions are childishly clear, sometimes a little selfish, but not more than one would expect from the “big child”.,,George said coldly, “You gonna give me that mouse or do

I have to sock you?" "Give you what, George? "You know God damn well that. I want that mouse." Lennie reluctantly reached into his pocket. His voice broke a little. "I don't know why I can't keep it. It ain't nobody's mouse. I didn't steal it. I found it lyin' right beside the road." (Steinbeck, 1993, p. 5)

Lennie is not just childish, his another real feature which causes him problems is his bad memory. He can not remember things like other people, he always forgets things and also experiences. He even does not remember his aunt Clara, who was taking care of him before George. „George scoffed. "Lady, huh? Don't even remember who that lady was. That was your own Aunt Clara. An' she stopped givin' 'em to ya. You always killed 'em." (Steinbeck, 1993, p.44)

In the main character of Lennie Steinbeck points out the mistreatment of the mentally conditioned people. The prejudices apparently play the crucial role in the relationships between him and other people. The contradict of his mental weakness and physical strength causes other people to be scared of him more than it would be necessary which ultimately leads to the sad end of this character. (Goodman, 1984)

2.2 George Milton

George Milton is a guy roaming the American South to get an occasional job. By the coincidence not really clear from the story he is now travelling with Lennie. Yet we know he promised it to Aunt Clara. At first we can think that George is just using poor Lennie for his own profit, because this is how the world goes. Steinbeck is also pointing out this prejudice. At the very beginning of the story, the boss is asking George about his benefit from this non-equal relationship. "I said what stake you got in this guy? You takin' his pay away from him?" "... "Well, I never seen one guy take so much trouble for another guy. I just like to know what your interest is." (Steinbeck, 1993, p.57)

George is the only person fully aware about Lennie's condition and treats him more like a parent than like a friend: „But not us, " Lennie cried happily. "Tell about us now." George was quiet for a moment. ... "Because I got you an' ---" An' I got you. We got each other, that's what, that gives a hoot in hell about us," Lennie ried in triumph." (Steinbeck, 1993, p.145) Yet his character is not entirely altruistic towards Lennie, sometimes he takes advantage of Lennie's physical strength both in work and as a potential bodyguard. Definitely though, he cares more to Lennie than uses his presence in his life. Despite of he is trying to take a responsibility of Lennie and he has got his full trust in that, he is

notcapable to preclude all the damage Lennie causes. This is caused partially because of Lennie's mental disability and his childish behavior. Lennie's intentions which are usually good are blurring oncoming troubles.

In the relationship of George and Lennie we can see a big example of the loyalty. When for example Lennie has troubles with a girl in the town, just because he wants to touch her dress made from nice fabric. George could leave Lennie and start a new life without him. Instead he helps Lennie to survive and to find a new job on the other farm.

The conflict of young irresponsible man having to take care of somebody is the main leitmotif of the George's character. It is very understandable that Lennie is for him a burden, on the other hand, their unusual friendship is for George somehow very important. This is perfectly illustrated in the final scene when George decides to shoot Lennie dead instead of Lennie being taken by Curley's punitive squad or Curley himself. "Lennie said" "I thought you was mad at me, George." "No," said George. "No, Lennie. I ain't mad. I never been mad, an' I ain't now. That's the thing I want ya to know." ...And George raised gun and steadied it, and he brought the muzzle of it close to the back of Lennie's head. He pulled the trigger. The crash of the shot rolled up the hills and rolled down again. Lennie jarred, and then settled slowly forward the sand, and he lay without quivering." (Steinbeck, 1993, p. 148,149)

The character of George Milton presents the stereotype of the migrant worker neither with a permanent place to stay nor with an existential certainty. The way-out of the permanent deprivation of that kind is presented in the dream of, or better said plan to buy a "lil' house with couple of acres" shared with Lennie as a "story of rabbits". Whole story is inevitably permeated of the atmosphere of that plan in which Candy becomes eventually involved. On the other hand, Candy and Lennie are clearly more enthusiastic of this possibility than George alone, despite Candy's involvement makes the plan more achievable. The moral ambivalence of this character and his desperate effort to find the best possible solution of unsustainable situation leads at the end to the radical solution at the climax of the story. We can say that George kind of sacrificed himself, his chance for a better life for Lennie, he stayed with Lennie all the time until the very end.

2.3 Curley

Curley is the prototype of a young rich man. A little stereotype kind of young man having rich father (The Boss), beautiful wife and workless life tough still not being satisfied in a way. The source of his limited self-esteem is his short stature. This fact is compensated by the boxing training and partial success in the boxing ring on Candy's reference :“He done quite a bit in the ring. He's a lightweight and he's handy” (Steinbeck, 1993,p.61). A part of his low self-esteem compensation is definitely a paradoxical over-confidence in presence of workers, especially Lennie who provokes him with his body strength, low intellect and generally happy way of living. „Well, let him be handy,“ said George. “ He don't have to take after Lennie. Lennie didn't do nothing to him. What's he got against Lennie?” The swamper considered....“Well...tell you what. Curley's like a lot of little guys. He hates big guys. He's alla time picking scraps with bug guys. Kind of like he's mad at 'em because he ain't a big guy. ...“I seen plenty tough little guys. But this Curley better not make no mistakes about Lennie. Lennie ain't handy, but this Curley punk is gonna get hurt if he messes around with Lennie.” (Steinbeck, 1993, p. 62,63)

Moreover, he is morbidly jealous of his wife which leads to extreme expressions of his anger whenever his wife seems to have a conversation with the other men. This leads to severe conflicts and threads to both George and Slim. The conflict of Curley with Lennie ending up Curley having the fist crushed by Lennie's powerful squeeze may be a specimen of his generally parent behavior of and his gratuitous vindictiveness, this time punished deservedly. The aforementioned personal qualities of Curley along with his morbid jealousy and his lack of broadmindedness eventually co-create the scene of Lennie's failure and the tragic end of his wife. Furthermore, his immediate hectic organization of punish-ride for Lennie creates the conditions of the tragic end of the entire story in fact not leaving another room for George than to shoot Lennie dead.

The Curley character is almost entirely the rich baddy having a little to excuse his behavior in the story. Steinbeck shows hardly a bit of sympathy for his holding generally. In fact, he is the exact embodiment of the low opinion of rich people, or inherently rich people especially, which is often present in the works of Steinbeck. That shape of the novella or novella is sometimes explained as class-warfare-ish. (Goodman, 1984)

2.4 Candy

Candy is an old man, possibly an aging migrant worker, who stays on the Tyler ranch as hen keeper and does also another minor works. He suffered a hand injury four years ago which limits him in the work more than the age. He has strong emotional bond with his very old dog which he “had since he was a pup” (Steinbeck, 1993,p.81). Though, he is eventually talked by Carlson into allowing him to shoot down his dog. This regretful event which serves also as a presage of a horrid end of Lennie has an overwhelming impact on Candy’s psychics. Hence, as he attains knowledge on a “house with coupla acres” from the speech between George and Lennie he becomes enthusiastic of it. He is visibly afraid of being “kicked out” from the ranch as soon as he “can’t swamp out no bunk houses they’ll put him on the county“ (Steinbeck, 1993, p.98) and he desperately offers them \$250 out of six hundred needed to buy a house, moreover he offers to this: “I’d make a will an’ leave my share to you guys in case I kicks off”. (Steinbeck, 1993, p.97) After the Lennie’s final incident Candy is the one who finds the body of Curley’s wife and he with respect to their agreement gives George a lead of knowledge what happened which indirectly allows George to find Lennie ahead of Curley’s suite.,,George was a long time in answering. “Guess...we gotta tell the ...guys. I guess we gotta get ‘im an’ lock ‘im up. We can’t let ‘im go away. ...“ Maybe they’ll lock ‘im up an’ be nice to ‘im.” But Candy said excitedly, “ We oughtta let ‘im get away. You don’t know that Curley. Curley gon’ta wanta get ‘im lynched. Curley’ll get ‘im killed.” (Steinbeck, 1993, p. 134)

The character of Candy allows Steinbeck to point the mistreatment of old and disabled people. In fact the whole Candy and Candy’s dog sub-story raises the question how much should be value of people and living creatures generally derived from their usefulness, and, beyond their usefulness, they become redundant and their right to life becomes questioned and diminished. The obvious parallel of the utilitarian approach to things and living creatures which logically became present in the time of The Great Depression is one of the strongest moral accents of the entire novella. (Goodman, 1984)

2.5 Crooks

Crooks is a black male working as a stable-hand (or a “stable buck” as it is described in the story). The name of this character has its origin in his crooked body as a consequence of occupational injury. We do not even know if Crooks is just a nickname, or it can also be his real name, but we know, that he was once kicked by a horse on his back and since then he has crooked body. He lives in a harness room in the barn. He keeps distance from the other workers on Tyler ranch and demands other to keep theirs. The reason for this is in fact apartheid. The white workers would not allow him to live in their room for his descent and color of skin and therefore he is not allowing anybody to contact him., “Why ain’t you wanted?” Lennie asked. “Cause I’m black. They play cards in there, but I can’t play because I’m black. They say I stink. Well, I tell you, you all of you stink to me.” (Steinbeck, 1993, p.106) We can see that Crooks is described like a man who knows his social status and also hides his anger in his heart. His social condition is amplified by his physical infliction gained as a result of his job. He is mistreated many times just because he is black. His boss uses him like a victim of his anger all the time. When there is a problem, the boss always yells at him., “The boss gives him hell when he’s mad. But the stable buck don’t give a damn about that” says Candy. ” (Steinbeck, 1993,p.55) There is an obvious compensation of all his social limits expressed as his aloofness, penchant for books, especially dirty books, and tidiness.

The only person contacting him in attempt of friendly interaction is Lennie, for his childish nature unaware of the unwritten social rules of the ranch. The dialogue of two renegade personalities points out the Crooks’ involuntary social separation along with the low social intelligence of Lennie. The initial conflict develops into a speech to which Candy and Curley’s wife are later involved. In this dialogue taking place at time where most of the men from the ranch are in the town is revealed the superiority with which he is treated, mostly from a Curley’s wife part., She turned on him in scorn. “Listen Nigger, ” she said. “You know what I can do to you if you open your trap?” Crooks stared hopelessly at her, and then he sat down on his bunk and drew into himself. She closed on him. “You know what I could do? ”Crooks seemed to grow smaller, and he pressed himself against the wall. “Yes, ma’am.” “Well, you keep your place then, Nigger. I could get you strung up on a tree so easy it ain’t even funny.” (Steinbeck, 1993, p. 119)

Crooks' character is definitely a picture of the status of ethnical minorities, especially the black people in the 1930's California. The social status is not only a thing of interracial relationships, Crooks himself points out that he "ain't a southern Negro" (Steinbeck, 1993, p.108) highlighting proudly the fact that he comes from California and this father had a chicken ranch. In fact, it is nothing but a picture that the expressions of hate have to do a lot with the common desperation present in the society during The Great Depression. (Goodman, 1984)

2.6 Slim

The Slim introduced in the story as a "big tall skinner" is a guy who runs a team bagging the burley in the Tyler ranch. Lennie and George join his team at the beginning of the story. In the story he is a middleman between The Boss and the other workers on a farm. He is referred that Curley's wife "has an eye for him" but nowhere in the story is their relationship spelled out. On the other hand, we know that Curley overreacts any mention of the eventuality Slim and his wife could be together. This could be a little reference due to Curley's commonly known jealousy.

Besides the controversies with Curley, Slim is a prototype of an ordinary Californian worker. He has got a little to be controversial. Except his height he has no special features. Vast majority of the people talk about him as about a good guy and he plays the role of a counselor and a parental patron on the ranch. Moreover, Slim is the only guy to have a regular personal contact with Crooks at least on the professional basis. He becomes a friend of George in the beginning of the story and stays friendly to him in a way until its very end. (Goodman, 1984)

Nevertheless, he is embodiment of a dilemma between loyalty to the employer and solidarity with the social class one belongs to. This is demonstrated the best after it turned out that Lennie killed Curley's wife. When the squad to get Lennie is formed, Slim is one of the leaders showing some loyalty to Curley who is claiming the will to kill Lennie.,,George stepped closer. "Couldn' we maybe bring him in an' they'll lock him up? He's nuts, Slim. He never done this to be mean."Slim nodded. "We might," he said. "If we could keep Curley in, we might. But Curley's gonna want to shoot 'im. Curley's still mad about his hand. An' s'pose they lock him up an' strap him down and put him in a cage. That ain't no good, George." (Steinbeck, 1993,p.137)

On the other hand, as a member of Curley's squad he is the only one clearly appreciating the gravity of the situation and offers George a drink. „Slim came directly to George and sat down beside him, sat very close to him. “Never you mind,” said Slim. “A guy got to sometimes.”... Slim twitched George's elbow. “Come on, George. Me an' you'll go in an' get a drink.” George let himself be helped to his feet. “Yeah, a drink.” Slim said, “You hadda, George. I swear you hadda. Come on with me.” He led George into the entrance of the trail and up toward the highway. (Steinbeck, 1993, p. 148,149)

The Slim character is the representation of quandary of being mainstream and good member of the society on one side and not to following the wrong way on the other side. The balancing between the stereotypes and social conventions and deep understanding of the individuals and trying to treat them well turns out to be the better skill of him than driving the mules. (Goodman, 1984)

2.7 The Boss

The boss is the head of the ranch wearing high heeled boots with wearing “high-heeled boots and spurs to prove he is not a laboring man.” (Steinbeck, 1993, p.55) He is present in person only at the beginning of the story as he takes on George and Lennie. In the rest of the story he is only spoken in third person. Though, a significant difference can be seen between the old Boss and the young Curley in the approach to the laboring men on the ranch. Despite his anger of delay in the arrival of Lennie and George he shows the kindly face letting them work after the dinner. The kind part of The Boss is referred by Candy also by the Christmas story when The Boss provided a bottle of whisky to the workers in the bunk house. „“What kind of a guy is the boss?” George asked. “Well, he's a pretty nice fella. Gets pretty mad sometimes, but he's pretty nice. Tell ya what—know what he done Christmas? Brang a gallon of whisky right in here and says, ‘Drink hearty boys. Christmas comes but once a year.’” (Steinbeck, 1993,p.55) Nonetheless, he is not entirely good in his behavior he is referred to discharge his rages on Crooks as an easy target due to the color of his skin.

In fact the biggest message as the novella is that the boss is not present in the most of the story. This in fact points a big distance between the employers and employees and it may indicate that this gap has grown bigger in time of The Great Depression. (Goodman, 1984) It remains a noteworthy fact that in any of the key events of the story, happening

exclusively on his ranch, he does not come to scene, nor there is a mention whether he is conversant with as things stand.

2.8 Curley's wife

The femme fatale of the story is a newlywed young lady. She has married Curley two week ago a she is now living in the Tyler ranch in the house of The Boss' family. She is not very satisfied both with the life on a ranch which she out rightly finds boring and with her husband who seems more keen in his hobbies than in her attention. Furthermore, she reveals her past ambitions to be a Hollywood actress which was in that time supposedly the dream of each Californian girl. She visibly compensates her discomfort and lack of the attention on husband part flirting with the laboring men on ranch. Her attempts to flirt with Slim and George are usually covered by a pretense of searching for her husband.

She appears not to be touched with Curley's morbid jealousy, furthermore it is clear she tries to provoke it. This logically leads the laborers of the ranch to judge her as a "tart." In the scene with Lennie is revealed that she is rather frustrated form the life brought her by her fresh marriage. „Well, I ain't told this to nobody before. Maybe I ought'n to. I don' *like* Curley. He ain't a nice fella." And because she had confided in him, she moved closer to Lennie and sat beside him.“ (Steinbeck, 1993,p.128) She is definitely amused and enthralled by the conversation with Lennie, "the big baby." Unfortunately, she is not able to handle Lennie's passion for petting her hair and her panic is punished by reckless reaction of Lennie eventually causing her death.

Hart (2005) called Curley's wife enigma. All the men at the ranch are talking about her but she is present in person in novella only few times. She is not defined like a character, she has innocent features, but on the other hand many times she is featured as a seductress. We can say that a reader can choose to like her or not.

Another fact we know is that Curley's wife does not have a real name. In the whole novella, she is referred only as Curley's wife. „ Steinbeck claimed he did not give the character name because he did not perceive her as a full character but only as a foil for the mail characters.“(Anderson,2010,p. 212)

The character of Curley's wife is in fact the image of status of women in the Southern society. Due to her marriage, she is not forced to work and would not probably be unless her tragic death. On the other hand, she is bored and obviously lacking a social

contact being the only woman on the ranch because all the speech of married woman with the man who is not her husband is at least unseemly if not a kind of cheating. Steinbeck, on the other hand, does not access to the status of this women in the story so descriptively as to the other underdog characters (e. g. Lennie, Crooks, Candy) which can mean that the picture of women status in 1930s is in Curley in case of Curley's wife could be unintentional.

2.9 Aunt Clara

Aunt Clara is a lady described as a little fat old woman. She is an aunt of Lennie. She took care of Lennie until her death. There is a little presence of Aunt Clara in the book because she is dead in the time of the story. Yet she is present in the speech revealing Lennie's background. In the final scene, she appears to Lennie in his mind as a glimpse of his consciousness. At that point she serves as an indicator for Lennie's realization of the way things are. „And then from out of Lennie's head there came a little fat oldwoman. She wore thick bull's-eye glasses and she wore a hugegingham apron with pockets, and she was starched and clean. Shestood in front of Lennie and put her hands on her hips, and she frowned disapprovingly at him.“ (Steinbeck, 1993,p.141) Lennie could not only see her, but he is also talking to her like she was there. „Lennie moaned with grief. “I know, Aunt Clara, ma'am. I'll goright off in the hills an' I'll fin' a cave an' I'll live there so I won'tbe no more trouble to George.” (Steinbeck,1993,p.142) It seems that in the times of trouble, Lennie created the picture of second (or first) person whom he ever believed and who represented for him some moral figure.

2.10 Candy's dog

Candy's dog is the only important nonhuman character in the book. He is described as a very old dog, drag footed, gray of muzzle, barely capable see or hear. He is struggling around the old man all day long and he is living with him in a bunkhouse on the ranch. There is a big emotional bond between the dog and Candy created by a fact he had him “since was a pup.” „You wouldn't think it to look at him now, but he was the best damn sheep dog I ever seen.”(Steinbeck,1993,p.81)The other laborers, especially Carlson, do not see the dog as worth living as he is not useful. Despite Candy's opposition the dog is eventually shut down by Carlson which causes a nervous breakdown to Candy. „He led the dog out into the darkness. George followed to the door and shut the door and set the latch

gently in its place. Candy lay rigidly on his bed staring at the ceiling....Slim said, “Candy, you can have any one of them pups you want.” Candy did not answer. The silence fell on the room again. It came out of the night and invaded the room.“ (Steinbeck, 1993,p.84,85)

The dog and his story of once useful shepherd dog living now beyond his usefulness is definitely a parallel to the story of Lennie’s killing. Moreover, his story raises the questions discussed in the paragraph 3.4 - the right for life for the creatures that are seemingly useless.

2.11 The other notable characters

What makes a novella a good one, is not only a good main idea, great main characters, but also the surrounding, background and all the characters, who give a good basis for drawing the main story. In the crew of Tyler’s ranch there are some other characters - Carlson and Whit who do not play such an important role in the story. However, we know that they are part of the entire description of the picture of this ranch. Carlson, Luger armed fat middle-aged man, who is the one that shoots Candy’s dog dead and whose Luger is stolen by Lennie’s escape, which makes the final excuse of the inevitable execution of Lennie, is an image of the contemporary typical southern nature and morality. The rough approach to the life and death in his character may serve as a glimpse of the canon of the pas wild west. Whit, on the other hand, is seemingly young ranch-hand interested in magazines, card games and brothels. That may show the apparent emptiness of the futureless youth during The Great Depression. (Goodman,1984) This not so dominant characters show us how hard should be life on a ranch. We can see features of the hard life during The Great Depression in his“less notable” characters, too.

3 Discussion on stylistics, story design and its parallels (Goodman, 1984, Short, 1970)

The distinctiveness of the piece can be recorded in two different areas. The language and stylistics of the novella are creating the tone of the piece and its settings. The book owes a lot of its success to the special contradictive style of narration and descriptions which are analyzed later in the Chapter 3.1.

Moreover, the readability and of the book is granted by the unusual storyline. The tension and the hunch of the bad end make the story itself attractive for the reader. The design of the plot as a mean of expression itself is discussed in Chapter 3.2. The parallels and outputs of the story are mentioned as far as they could be told are further discussed and analyzed. It can hardly be said that the story itself has a moral but the tones of could be captured in details of the novella very well. (Goodman, 1984)

3.1 Language and stylistics of the book (Short,1970)

Generally the style of the book is very descriptive. There is a little, if any, assessment in the story. The narration is brief and almost scientifically descriptive. Contrariwise, the descriptions are rich and they are building an atmosphere which is now pictured as a typical feature of the American South. The counterpoint of the brief story taking place in few days of the barley harvest in the ranch of central California with the poetic descriptions of the surrounding nature and the sleepy southern atmosphere is the factor X of the story. The complex sentences are present mostly in the descriptive parts setting mostly in the first chapter and the beginnings of the other chapters the timeless atmosphere of the California. The story itself takes place mostly in direct speeches and dialogues. The movement of the story is fast and interrupts the descriptive parts with a brutal fatalistic power. That is why the whole novella gives an impression of the film script or a scenario of the theatre play which made this piece an appreciative material for the film adaptations. (Short,1970)

It could be said, compared with the contemporary writers, the style of a book can be described as laying somewhere between the Faulkner's imagination and Hemingway's journalistic descriptions. Furthermore, the sense for detail is apparently lesser than in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* but definitely bears a comparison with the Dos Passos' camera eye style. The use of the language of the direct speech, on the other hand, is

contemporarily original. The thematic parallel on the other hand could be found with Romain Rolland, the French one generation older writer, concerning the intimate bond of the author and the region where the story is happening. Rolland's *Colas Breugnon* has definitely a lot of author's intimacy with the region as well as *Of Mice and Men* but unless this intimacy the pieces are totally different both thematically and stylistically (being written in first person for instance) as far as English and French written word could be compared. (Short,1970)

The grammar of the book is finely stratified. Whereas the descriptions are using very advanced sentence structure and rich vocabulary, all the characters of the book are speaking the grammatically improper slang language.,,"Come on, ya big bastard. Get up on your feet. No big son-of-a-bitch is gonna laugh at me. I'll show ya who's yella." (Steinbeck,1993,p.100) The basis of the language of characters has source in southern accents but does not copy them rigorously. Furthermore, the language used in direct speeches is virtually the same for all the characters giving them little racial and social differentiation, which is a contradictive feature due to the nature of the story. The language of the Steinbeck's characters serves as a demonstration of the background of the people working in agriculture in central California and in a way puts them all in the same subculture. Remarkably, despite the naturalistic grammatically improper rough language of the characters, there are surprisingly little really indecent expressions in direct speeches. Moreover, the abbreviated language of the characters has its own distinctive poetry and may serve as the co-illustration of the entire "southern" atmosphere of the book. (Short,1970)

3.2 The nature of the story

The story goes in fact in the straightforward way. The main story is about Lennie's repetitive failure which logically and inevitably leads to the tragic end of the book. The presages of the eventual end are present from the very first chapter, where there is the first victim of Lennie's passion is the mouse: ,,"It's on'y a mouse, George." "A mouse? A live mouse?" "Uh-uh. Jus' a dead mouse, George. I didn' kill it. Honest! I found it. I found it dead." "Give it here!" said George. "Aw, leave me have it, George." "*Give it here!*" (Steinbeck,1993,p.39,40) It continues through the reference about a woman in Weed which panicked when Lennie wanted to touch her red dress:,,Well, he seen this girl in a red dress. Dumb bastard like he is,he wants to touch ever'thing he likes. Just wants to feel it. So

heeches out to feel this red dress an' the girl lets out a squawk, andthat gets Lennie all mixed up, and he holds on 'Cause that's theonly thing he can think to do.“ (Steinbeck,1993,p.77) This story plan goes very clearly through the death of the Slam's puppy until the shocking end.,,Lennie went back and looked at the dead girl. The puppy lay close to her. Lennie picked it up. “I'll throw him away,” he said. “It's bad enough like it is.”“ (Steinbeck,1993,p.131) Actually, the way the story is told makes the end noticeably less shocking than it would be narrated.

The first step for understanding the end of the story is given us in the narration on the Candy's dog end. Indeed, there is more explanation given on the moral background of shooting down the redundant form of life than in the actual story of Lennie. (Short, 1970) The interesting output of this sub-story is that in fact more than the remorse of shooting up an innocent dog there is present a regret of Candy not to be able to do it himself. This prompter works George to make the execution of Lennie himself.

Despite the feeling of the virtual inevitability of the tragic end, the story has at least one anchor of hope. The George's plan of the “lil' house with ten acres” starting to get real in the story giving a prospect to Lennie of a place where he has more of the importance than a laboring power. Candy's motivation is also clear as he “ain't no relative or nothing” and he is seeking a place where he can be “let him hoe in the garden even after he ain't no good at it. “ This hopeful prospect in fact motivates all the involved characters to behave in a way of getting it. Yet paradoxically, the efforts of Lennie to fulfill the expectations of George to be able to “take care of the rabbits” catalyze the events of the tragic end in a way.

It could be said that all the sub-stories as much as they appear to be the regressive powers turn out to be a part of puzzle finally ending in the shocking climax. Though, it cannot be said there is much explicit fatalism in the story. The characters are acting voluntarily and often in unconventional way. The replenishment of the tragic hunch embodied by the death of Curley's wife is also more an accident, however predictable, than anything else. Hence, more than the inevitability of the fate the plot concerns the incapability to ward off an avoidable tragedy. The end makes an impression of something that could be somehow precluded and was not. For that this particular feature of the book is timeless in a way. The plot could have happened in the various époques and anywhere in the world. The sceneries of the central California as well as the mood of the nation

bleeding in The Great Depression are neither the necessary set for the story, nor something important for the way the plot is happening. The plot, however, cooperates tightly with the spirit of the landscape, especially because of author's familiarity with it. This is necessary for co-coloring of the tone of a book. (Short, 1970)

The important feature of the story is also the misapprehension of the George's dilemma performed by virtually all the characters except of Slim. The matter of the dilemma of the friendship loyalty and the extreme opposite needed to do by the external reasons along with the dilemma of the punishment of the creature which is not capable to realize what is it punished for are the philosophical overlaps. Steinbeck, on the other hand, does not discuss, neither leave any comments on this philosophical problems. The individual appreciation of the happenings is probably deeply intentional. Author puts himself into a role of the truthful reporter but does not put any additional emotions to the action. Also the emotions of the characters throughout the novella are brought indirectly and in its way by non-leading manner. As mentioned this is in the direct contrary with the description character of the sceneries where we can almost touch the author's emotions to the land.

It can hardly be said whether the emotional standoff from the characters co-present with the emotional engagement to the coulisses is intentional or casual. However, it without any doubt creates an elusive irritant power leading the reader into his own picture of the situation but also leaving a lot of room for the assessment of the situation. Furthermore, there is no evidence if the story is based on the real situation or it is a complete fiction. We have no reports from the story which are leading us beyond the end to say what happened after the execution of Lennie. This lack of any output enhances the non leading approach of Steinbeck laying somewhere above the morality and the natural human need of critical judgment.

The comparison with the contemporary European authors for example Franz Kafka or Erich Maria Remarque offers also the discussion on the morality expressed in the book. European tradition definitely puts the value of a human life certainly higher than it is expressed in the novella *Of Mice and Men*. As was noted previously the most of the characters in the book does not see any remote problem of killing an individual for the story listed reasons. On the other hand Remarque whose work is full of death expresses the death of individuals as a big tragedy and offers a readable disgust of the moral inferiority

of the when it is treated otherwise even in the works narrated in the first person when the source of the actions is in fact the narrator. Steinbeck, especially in this novel, is staying to say solely outside the happenings refrains any additional comments. (Short, 1970)

4 Cultural and other references on *Of Mice and Men*

The characters in the novel *Of Mice and Men* show us the difficulty of the feeling of loneliness and having unreachable dreams. Many people, even nowadays, can identify with these feelings and that is the reason why this novel with all its aforementioned features serves as a good material for the film adaptation. Therefore, a number of movies, television films and theatrical adaptations have been made.

The very first one was the famous film directed by Lewis Milestone starring the famous actors of their time Lon Chaney Jr. as Lennie and Burgess Meredith as George. This film was one of the breakthrough successes of the book and of John Steinbeck himself, however, the scriptwriter Eugene Solow have deviated from the original in the stylistic way. The daring rough language of the dialogues was edited to the milder less conflict way which Steinbeck was not very pleasant with. The film was nominated for four American Academy Awards (Oscars) but did not eventually score any. Frank S. Nugent, The New York Times writer, described film like this: "It would be idle, we think, to say that it has found new meaning, new depth, new significance as a film. Nor should such added value be required. Lewis Milestone, who directed it; Eugene Solow, who adapted it, and Burgess Meredith, Lon Chaney Jr., Betty Field and the others who have performed it, have done more than well in simply realizing the drama's established values. "Of Mice and Men" need not have been better as a play than it was as a novelette; it need not be better as a picture, so long as it is just as good." (Nugent, 1940)

The original film from 1939 became almost immediately a subject of multiple parodies usually which can partly picture the great impact and of course partly as a matter the roughness of Hollywood business inter-studio animosities. Especially the cartoons of Warner studios along with MGM pieces often referred the quotes of the film. The quote from the end of the film "Which way did he go, George." became a part of the American film-based cultural heritage and serves as the memetic quote until today.

David Susskind's TV film of 1968 was a little bit more faithful to the original than the Milestone's adaptation another TV film was made in the 1980s. The platform of the story is present in one of the most famous piece of Iranian filmography called *Topoli* (which means in Persian the Fat Guy referring the principal character known from the original as Lennie). The multiply awarded Iranian director scriptwriter and producer Reza Mirlohi pays in this a tribute to John Steinbeck's original in the film, however the plot of

the story is diverted in some important details from the original. S.Mirbakhtyar wrote about the story : “Topoli kills a woman and is killed by his best friend.” And also described Topoli as a successful adaptation of *Of Mice and men*. (Mirbakhtyar,p.187) This film was made in 1972,was directed by Reza Mirholi, produced by E. Sadeqpour and A. Homayoun, and starring Homayoun and Aghili. It was made seven years before the Islamic revolution of Iran, and is one of the symbols of Iranian cultural florescence in late 1960s and early 1970s. The Topoli adaptation could be the proof of the timelessness and the transferability of the theme itself.

The most famous adaptation of *Of Mice and Men* up to date is the film made in 1992 starring John Malkovich as Lennie and Garry Sinise as George. This film directed and produced by the one of the principle character actor Garry Sinise awarded in 1992 Cannes film festival with *Palm d’Or*. “Sinise says “*Of Mice and Men*” was his favorite novel as a young man. It led him to a love of Steinbeck, and he eventually played Tom Joad on stage in the famous Steppenwolf production of “The Grapes of Wrath.” (Ebert,1992) The film *Of Mice and Men* of 1992 produced by Sinice, using adaption by Horton Foote, set rigorously, partially unless the original, in The Great Depression period meant the renaissance of the book in the current times. The strength of the film is enhanced by the minute alteration of the end. This film ends to say two paragraphs earlier than the source book with the execution of Lennie making the strong and powerful point towards the entire story.

Another film based on the material of this Steinbeck’s book was also made in 1992. The famous Malayan movie *Soorya Manasam* directed by a Malayan film-hit maker Viji Thampi celebrated the great success among the critics and on various film festivals. The main role is played by Mammooty, who played the role of the slow-witted Putturumees, one of the most acclaimed characters in his career. Instead of stroking soft rabbits like Lennie, Mammotty talks often about his favourite dish PUTTU and KADALA which he loves to eat. (Vadakayil,2014)

Even earlier than a first film the theatre adaptation of the material made by John Steinbeck himself was done. It was premiered in the famous Broadway Music Box Theatre and lasted 207 repeats. Multiple revivals of the play were made on Broadway and off-Broadway and up to date it is one of the classic theatrical plays. Moreover, famous American composer Carlisle Floyd composed an opera *Of Mice and Men* premiered in 1970 in Moore Theatre,

Seattle, Washington. This opera was in repertoire of virtually all of the most famous opera ensembles in North America and English-speaking world in general. Despite this fact opera gained also many criticism, like the one from D. Henahan from The New York Times: "Last night the company gave another fairly recent opera an opportunity to shine by introducing New York to Carlisle Floyd's 13-year- old verismo drama, "Of Mice and Men."

The work, based on John Steinbeck's 1937 novel about migrant workers in California, did capture here and there the fatalistic, Lower- Depths mood of the original, mostly as the result of the staging. But Mr. Floyd's opera failed ultimately because it is a feeble score too dependent on gray, declamatory vocal lines and melodramatic cliches of the sort that no longer turn up even in television serials. Like most operas of our time, it concentrates on making the play work, using music mostly as a mood-setter. I went away wishing they had forgotten the opera and shown the old movie instead. "

Despite the direct adaptations, there have been countless intended as well as unintended references on the *Of Mice and Men* in the worldwide culture until the current time. The impact of the book on a culture appear to be present throughout the genres and authors, including the filmmaker Woody Allen or pop singers Laura Marling and Katy Perry up to the trash metal band Megadeth.

All the mentioned facts indicate that the novella *Of Mice and Men* became in the nearly eighty years of its existence a notable part of the American or better said English-speaking cultural canon and one of the most classic references to be made in the works of art which is often supposed virtually everybody would be familiar with.

Moreover, the author was awarded by the Nobel Prize "for his realistic and imaginative writings, combining as they do sympathetic humor and keen social perception," in 1962. Despite some controversies in awarding Steinbeck as a laureate revealed recently by the Nobel Prize committee and along with the fact that John Steinbeck had been nominated for the prize eight precedent times (in years 1943, 1944, 1945, 1949, 1958, 1959, 1960 and 1961) before awarding; the Steinbeck's winning is definitely the best indicator of quality of his work. The novella *Of Mice and Men* along with his later pieces have been without any doubt one of the principal parts of the mixed qualities which made John Steinbeck deserving this honor. The Nobel Prize winning can be considered as the ultimate and indelible humankind reference underlining the importance of entire Steinbeck's work and stressing the impact of the present novella as well. (Candidates, 2014)

Conclusions

There is no doubt there are too many pieces of American literature having greater impact on the creation of the film industry as well as on the popular culture itself. A short movie-like novella *Of Mice and Man* deserves its success due to its originality which holds truth up to the contemporary. The unique features of the piece, however, put an ambiguity to all the attempts to analyze the work. Author's approach left a lot of room to the imagination and mostly the judgment of the reader. Therefore the analysis cannot be separated from the personality of the analyst. The previous analyses have been made mostly by the American or native English-speaking experts on fiction which reveals the point of view which is definitely biased from the perspective of a central European nonnative English speaker.

On the other hand, in my best opinion, the central European point of view, however distant and unrelated to the theme, can bring new approaches to the discourse on the book. The analysis, however, cannot be made with the lack of the basic knowledge on the cultural facts and author's life. The previous opinions on the book, however biased, should not be excluded from account.

Further, the novel *Of Mice and Man* brought on a case of brief almost banal story the great dilemma of the right of life of the people and the comprehensibility of the violence. The philosophical outputs, which are in fact elusive and laying somewhere behind the principal text, could not be avoided.

In the first part of the work we described background of the novel. We started with the comparison of the European and American view on heroes as such in literature. The description of Steinbeck's life and work helped us to understand the whole story. We mentioned some of the opinions and works of literature scientists and reviewers. The description of the Salinas Valley as well as the facts about The Great Depression were necessary for better understanding of the whole context of the work.

The typology of characters creates an important chapter in this work. We went through the analysis of the main characters, like Lennie and George, and other important characters too.

In the third chapter we discussed the language used and we also analyzed stylistics of the book.

Many films were based on the novel *Of Mice and Men* and in the fourth chapter we mentioned some of them as well as other references of this novel.

The submitted analysis is aimed to reveal the outputs of the story based on a brief denomination of the background facts as well as the analysis of the text itself. Yet, the conclusions taken in the text could not be purified, due to the aforementioned reasons, from the subjective and individual point of view. As far as the fact collection and the knowledge of previous analyses allowed the conclusions are wished to be uphold able and arguable.

I hope that my work will help other students for better understanding of this masterpiece and will persuade them to read it more than once.

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Résumé

Práce je zaměřena na život a dílo Johna E. Steibeca a analyzuje novelu *Of Mice and Men*. Východiskem práce je kompilace historických faktů o životě autora Johna E. Steinbecka a historických reálií z období, ve kterém byla práce psaná. Následuje subjektivní analýza jak jednotlivých postav, tak také děje a jazykových prostředků. To vše je zpracováno z pohledu středoevropského čtenáře žijícího v odlišných reáliích než spisovatel.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Nigar Iljasova
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Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Andrea Hoffmannová, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2016

Název práce:	O myších a lidech - Pohled Johna Steibecka na situaci v americkém jihu v 30.letech
Název v angličtině:	Of Mice and men - Steinbeck's view of 1930's reality in American South
Anotace práce:	Tato práce je zaměřena na život a dílo Johna E.Steibecka. Základem pro Steinbeckova díla jsou jeho vlastní zážitky. Bakalářská práce se zabývá zkoumáním autorova života a vliv jeho zážitků na jeho pozdější dílo. Práce analyzuje Steinbeckův pohled na situaci v americkém jihu v 30.letech a následuje subjektivní analýza jak jednotlivých postav, tak také děje a jazykových prostředků.
Klíčová slova:	John E. Steinbeck, Velká hospodářská krize, americká literatura, analýza
Anotace v angličtině:	This work is focused on the life and work of John E.Steibeck. The basis for Steinbeck's works are his own experiences. The bachelor thesis examines the author's life and the way his experiences influence his work. The work analyzes Steinbeck's view of the situation in the American South in the 30s. It is followed by a subjective analysis of each character as well as an analysis of the story and the language.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	John E. Steinbeck, The Great Depression, American literature, analysis
Přílohy vázané v práci:	
Rozsah práce:	42 stran
Jazyk práce:	Anglický