

# The mental journey on the way from Oklahoma to California based on John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*

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The theme of journey is one of the most deeply rooted in our culture. It can mean both the trip or walking some way (moving from one place to another) as well as looking into your interior (a journey into yourself). Facing the course of fate and therefore life itself is also a kind of journey. Travelling has always been a part of human life therefore it is not surprising that this motif is present since the beginning of the literature. It appears correctly in the works from all literary periods from the Bible in which a story of Abraham has been described who by the will of God departs from the land Haran to Canaan in Palestine<sup>1</sup>. Another and perhaps the most well known biblical embodiment of the journey theme is the forty years wandering of Israelites led by Moses into Canaan — the promised land. Also in myths for instance about the Odysseus returning to Ithaca we have to deal with this theme as well as in the seventeenth-century novel by Miguel de Cervantes 'Don Quixote of La Mancha' who travels throughout Spain and looks for an opportunity to become famous in heroic deeds. On the other hand, we find about the journey into the depths of oneself in the work of Marcel Proust's — 'In Search of Lost Time'. Also in James Joyce's 'Ulysses' the main character travels and actually wanders through Dublin. The motif of the journey is not only used in literature but virtually in every field of art familiar to us — in painting (such as *The Edge of the Forest or the Flight into Egypt* by John Brueghel) cinema (such as 'The Straight Story' by David Lynch in which the main character pursues his

1 See: *Abraham*, [in:] Kopaliński W., *Słownik mitów i tradycji kultury*, Warsaw 1985, p. 12.

aim by traversing the path on a lawn mower) or music (such as *Sea Silence and Happy Journey Op. 27* by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdi).

In my opinion, the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck is a perfect embodiment of the journey theme. Although this book was analyzed on many fields by critics but in Polish there are a few papers about it. In 'The Grapes of Wrath' the theme of travel appears and is understood not only as a movement in any direction but also in a metaphorical sense as the changes that occur in described characters. The author describes the journey of farmers from Oklahoma in times of great crisis. What is also portrayed here is the sphere of the tension between the individual and the collectivity and the transformation that occurs in the Joads as well as in other farmers while travelling. The grapes from the title can be understood both as a fruit of the biblical promised land<sup>2</sup> as well as the harvest which was collected by the angel of revenge<sup>3</sup>.

It should be mentioned here that the reasons for writing *The Grapes of Wrath* were articles that the author wrote for 'San Francisco News'. The writer published articles on the situation of migrant farmers in California. They were an attempt to answer the question: 'Are the camps set up by the federal government a success or a failure?'<sup>4</sup>.

Symbolic recognition of the travel of the Joad family and other farmers is the turtle which appears at the beginning of the book and which like them will stubbornly look for its destination<sup>5</sup> and carries his house on his back like farmers who loaded all their possessions on the old trucks. In addition, the turtle which is able to survive in appalling conditions can be considered as a symbol of these farmers who for the sake of family agree to live in filth associated with being in a continuous journey. They are forced to leave their homes which are going to be razed to the ground because the land occupied by them now belongs to the bank and settlement is illegal. They have no right to the land which was cultivated over the years by them.

Initially, both Joad family and all the farmers who have to flee from their previous place of residence are portrayed as selfish people who only care about their families. Under the influence of events and Casy<sup>6</sup> the preacher

2 See: *Biblia Tysiąclecia*, No 13,23–27, [online], [access on: 16.06.2013], <http://www.biblia.info.pl/biblia.php>.

3 See *ibidem*, Ap 14,19–20.

4 See Wiśniowski B., *Faulkner, Hemingway, Steinbeck*, Warsaw 1961, pp. 253–254 and Parini J., *John Steinbeck. Lekceważony noblista*, transl. J. M. Głogoczowski, Warsaw 2005, pp. 195–196.

5 H. Levant, *The Novels of John Steinbeck: A Critical Study*, Columbia 1974, pp. 102–103.

6 In the interpretations of the novel Casy is repeatedly linked to Christ both in terms of what he does, and the psychological portrait, created by Steinbeck. Although he resigned from being a preacher he utters the following words: 'I feel the calling to lead people but I do not have the place to lead

they realize, however, how great strength lies in the group because the only chance to survive is when they are together. Jay Parini describes it as follows:

[...] ich udział w grupie wędrowców ma zasadnicze znaczenie dla przeżycia ich samych, a w ostatecznym rozrachunku dla zachowania gatunku. W wyniku rozwoju duchowego Joadsowie przechodzą od świadomości jednostkowej do świadomości zbiorowej, w miarę jak po kolei każdy z nich nawiązuje relacje z innymi<sup>7</sup>.

Farmers go to sunny California where is, as the story goes, a lot of seasonal work and living conditions are better. Grandpa Joad and mother echoing his dream:

Niech tylko dostanę się do tej Kalifornii, gdzie będę mógł zrywać pomarańcze, kiedy mi się tylko zachce! I winogrona. [...] Zerwę z krzaka czy gdzie tam to rośnie, rozgniotę je sobie na gębie, niech mi sok po brodzie cieknie. [...] Aż miło pomyśleć, jak przyjemnie będzie w tej Kalifornii, może... nigdy nie bywa tam zimno. Wszędzie owoce, a ludzie mieszkają ślicznie w białych domkach wśród pomarańczowych drzew<sup>8</sup>.

Farmers from Oklahoma perceive California as a land of milk and honey. They expect that there will be favorably received there and, above all, they be able to live in dignity and provide goods for their family. These hopes alive within each of farmers' families departing on a journey, including Joad family: the grandfather and grandmother, mother and father Tom, Uncle John, the eldest and pregnant daughter Rosasharn with her husband, the eldest son Noah, the younger Al, Tom (son who is conditionally released from prison), two youngest children (Ruthie and Winfield) and accompanying them former pastor Casy. Force that pushes them there is a mythical idea of paradise. The pilgrimage of the farmers is a bit like wandering of Jews to the land of Canaan promised by God. Farmers, however, have no divine care so they have to face the hardships of travel, hunger and poverty alone. Unfortunately the biggest failure will be the fantasy land of eternal sun from their dreams — California — which proves to be only an apparent Arcadia dominated by greed. Sweet grapes, in turn, will not be available to ordinary employees.

them' (Steinbeck J., *Grapes of Wrath*, transl. Liebfeld A, Warsaw 2007, p. 34). See: Timmerman J. H., *John Steinbeck's Fiction: The Aesthetics of the Road Taken*, Oklahoma 1986, p. 114.

<sup>7</sup> Parini J., op. cit., p. 124. See: Timmerman J. H., op. cit., p. 109

<sup>8</sup> Steinbeck J., op. cit., p. 120 and 132.

Despite of rumors that reach the Joad family that, in fact, California is a place of almost slave labor and the exploitation of poor people by the owners they, on the one hand, do not allow themselves to think about the veracity of the news, on the other hand, they simply do not have a choice. Family members need food and their current place of residence is to be planted with cotton so they must go in search of a new home. Changing of the environment is not easy for the Joads but going away from Oklahoma is their only chance of survival.

The Joads ride the famous highway no 66 connecting eight states on which they have to deal with the first twist of fate — their car breaks down. In all towns through which the legendary ‘Route Sixty six’ is going people have no qualms about trying to earn some extra money on someone else’s harm selling used already cars or parts for exorbitant prices.

During this long and hard journey grandfather dies. Minds of the members of the family begin to change during the trip. Earlier they would not allow that any of them would be buried in the ground without a coffin but now they must count each penny because they may run out of money for the rest of the journey. They comment:

Musimy dostać się do Kalifornii, zanim wydamy resztę pieniędzy. [...] jeśli zostawimy kopczyk, na pewno go zaraz odkopią. Trzeba zamaskować mogiłę<sup>9</sup>.

Death of the grandfather also makes them realize that they are not alone and managing one’s own good is partly due to fear and desperation. It is much more likely to survive together than as an individual.

People moving to California stop for the night near cities somewhere in a ditch by the road and when someone parks there he or she does not have to wait long for the next visitors who want to have company. Everywhere makeshift camps are formed in which you must follow strict rules:

Gwalci prawo ten, kto zanieczyszcza teren w pobliżu obozu, kto w jakikolwiek sposób zanieczyszcza wodę do picia, kto spożywa dobrą, obfitą strawę w obecności głodnego, a nie zaprosi go do wzięcia udziału w posiłku. Wprowadzeniu praw towarzyszyło wprowadzenie kar. Stosowano tylko dwie kary — szybką i okrutną chłostę i ostracyzm<sup>10</sup>.

The above quotation shows that people from the influx regardless of where they are they create a code of rules which is intended to facilitate the func-

9 Ibidem, p. 201 and 207.

10 Ibidem, p. 279.

tioning in new and challenging environments. These principles are based on solidarity, compassion and empathy. Although each of the newcomers is quite poor he or she can afford to have a human impulse to share food with a companion in misery. Such rules evolved as:

Należało odpowiedzieć na pozdrowienie pozdrowieniem; każdy mężczyzna mógł żyć z przychylną mu kobietą, jeśli pozostawał przy niej, pomagał jej wychowywać dzieci i otaczał je ojcowską opieką. Nie wolno było jednak brać sobie co noc innej dziewczyny, naraziłoby to bowiem na szwank bezpieczeństwo nowo przybyłych<sup>11</sup>.

This passage shows that people did not forget about morality which is still an important part of their lives. They are guided by ethical standards that do not allow treason to occur. The highest value is to care for other man and loyalty. The natives, however, do not act according to these standards as they are not happy with the arrival of strangers:

Tamtejsi ludzie zaczną się wam przyglądać. Spojrzą raz, drugi, jakby chcieli powiedzieć: „Nie podobasz mi się, psi synu.” A potem zjawi się zastępca szeryfa i ten dopiero zrujnuje wam życie. Rozłóżcie się z obozem koło szosy, a on was przegna precz. Będziecie im czytać z twarzy, jak was nienawidzą. [...] Czują nienawiść dlatego, że strach ich oblatuje. Wiedzą, że głodny człowiek zdobędzie jedzenie, choćby miał wziąć je siłą<sup>12</sup>.

Additionally, they invented a term for new arrivals:

Jeszcze was dotąd nie przezywali „Oklaki”, co? [...] przezwisko „oklaki” dawano tym, co pochodzili z Oklahomy. Teraz oznacza ono, że jesteście parazyty skurwysyny. Żeście ostatnie szumowiny<sup>13</sup>.

Newcomers are treated by growers as second-class people. As if the fact that they come from another state of America testified that they are thieves, thugs and torturers. However, they are just hungry and want to provide a decent life to their family.

Theoretically, growers should be grateful that immigrants come to look for work in their places because Californians do not want to work. They claim themselves as heirs of an almost limitless estates who can kill anyone who would try to wrest the smallest piece of land from them. What is more, they pay fraudulent wages to workers and are well aware of how to deceive them:

11 Ibidem, p. 279.

12 Ibidem, p. 293.

13 Ibidem.

Macie, przypuścemy, jakąś robotę i szukacie robotnika. Dajmy na to, że zgłosi się tylko jeden chętny. Musicie wtedy zapłacić mu tyle, ile zażąda. Ale co będzie, jeżeli przyjdzie takich stu. [...] Że ludzie ci mają dzieci i że te dzieci są głodne. Że za parszywe dziesięć centów można kupić dzieciakom puszkę mącznej zupy. [...] Wystarczy dać im po pięćdziesiąt centów i skoczą sobie o te grosze do gardel<sup>14</sup>.

The workers do not have a permanent job and therefore are not able to save any money to buy a piece of field where they could settle. Wealthy Californians who were never touched by hunger do not understand the mass migration of people from other states, moreover, they are surprised by their determination:

- Cholera, co za twarde typy!
- Te Oklaki? Oni wszyscy tacy.
- Za żadne skarby nie pojechałbym takim gratem. [...] To nie ludzie. Człowiek nie wyżyłby tak, jak oni żyją. Nie zniósłby takiego brudu ani nędzy<sup>15</sup>.

Hatred towards the strength of immigrants is also due to laziness and weakness of the landlords. Paradoxically, they also hate their hunger because they are well fed. Lack of money of the workers raises the contempt of shopkeepers. Bankers hate the immigrant population because they cannot earn on them — after all newcomers have nothing.

Emigrants do not have a choice. They were forced to flee from the land they loved with all their hearts and to which they were attached. They have to live for something and feed their family. No one wants to die. It is no wonder that gentle and polite mother Joad, upset by a police officer who came to immigrants temporary camp to drive them out saying ‘We do not need here damned Oklacs’ dreams about slapping him on the face and tells his son what happened to her:

Był tu policjant. Powiedział, że nie możemy tu zostać. [...] Bałam się, że jak zagada do ciebie to dasz mu w łeb. [...] tak grzecznie się odzywał, że sama mu w łeb nie dałam<sup>16</sup>.

From a gentle mother, as defined by her son, she transformed to an old hag<sup>17</sup>.

When traveling the Joad family delight in the beauty of the landscape, the greenness of fields, the rising sun. Passing through successive states they undergo checks if they are not carrying seed to plant them because

14 Ibidem, p. 350.

15 Ibidem, p. 315.

16 Ibidem, p. 307.

17 Before, the mother threw herself into all of us with a crank, now and again mom wants to bang the policeman's head. [...] That's some old hag! (Steinbeck J., op. cit., p. 307).

according to one of the controllers the man when he sows and then gathers he feels he has the right to the land:

Kiedy człowiek zbierze plon, działka jest jego własnością. Gdy ziemia jest skopana, a marchew zjedzona, człowiek jest gotów bić się o ten kawałek gruntu, który go żywi<sup>18</sup>.

The Joads manage to avoid the search only thanks to their grandmother who supposedly is seriously ill but as it later turns out is dead. Mrs. Joad hides that information from the rest of the family until they reach California and where they stop. In her opinion the family had to cross a checkpoint. They could not stay in the desert. Such situations like this point on the destruction of all human impulses for both the Joads and people at checkpoints. Mother Joad is put in a situation in which she must choose the lesser of two evils. She knows that if they would be arrested and they cannot survive so she fights for the survival of her beloved ones.

Packs of whole families of migrants settled on the outskirts of cities. Such sites known as Hooverville<sup>19</sup> were on the outskirts of every city near the mouth of rivers but there was no good sanitary conditions. After a while, usually a sheriff's deputy showed up and burns the entire camp often giving an invented reason. Residents of these camps were very helpful when it turned out that a family does not have enough money to bury their relative. People helped as they could. Each of them in the camp gave a few coins and thus the deceased did not have to be buried in a cemetery for the poor. However, when the Joad grandmother passed away the family could not ask someone for help because they did not reach the camp yet. Therefore, the old woman is buried the cemetery for the poor.

After arriving to California the Joad family despite their best intentions they cannot find work anywhere. Upon reaching Hooverville Mrs. Joad talks to the girl who tells her about the government camp where people can enjoy hot water and a toilet and the police have no right to drop in there.

Meanwhile, the camp to which the Joads came a provocation takes place. A *quasi*- grower arrives who looks for people to harvest the fruit. However, he does not want to show any authorization or write how much money will be paid to the workers. He answers all questions evasively. When one of the gathered farmers points all this to the grower he is accused of propaganda and he has to face with the sheriff who wants to take him to jail. A brawl

18 Ibidem, p. 337.

19 It was an ironic term for the camps of poverty formed from the name of President Herbert Hoover because despite of the fact that he saw 'prosperity just around the corner' during his rule a huge crisis broke out.

breaks out in which Tom and Casy are involved. At the final stage the former pastor takes all blame on himself and is taken into custody by the sheriff. In this situation, the Joads must escape from the camp as there is a high probability that it will be set on fire at night in retaliation for alleged agitation. Family members are moving towards a direction where supposedly a government camp is placed — they cherish hope to find a job on this area. As instructed they manage to get to the camp where — as the girl in Hooverville said — there is — actually access to running warm water. Staying there costs a lot but you can work it off. This place seems to be an idyll of which the Joad family dreamed so much. In addition, the camp can be considered as a symbolic image of collectivism and its strength lies in solidarity:

Policjant nie może przyczepić się do pojedynczego gościa w obozie, bo zaraz ma do czynienia ze wszystkimi. A nie śmie zadzierać z całym obozem. Niech no który z nas tylko krzyknie, a zaraz zbiegnie się dwustu chłopów<sup>20</sup>.

The same goes for ‘Oklacs’ — if they had said collectively that they will not work below the amount that was offered to them the growers would have to pay them as much money as promised. The police has no right to enter the governmental camp. People alone watch over the order. Special sections are being designated for this purpose as they are in charge of life in this place and which react on time if the police want to pacify them or try doing tricks such as sending people who aim at provoking a fight. Only in the face of the unrest in the camp the police is allowed to enter the area. Governmental camps are the proverbial thorn in the side for Californians:

Najgorsze są te przeklęte rządowe obozy [...] Daj raz holocie ciepłą wodę w kranach, a zawsze będzie się o nią dopominać. Daj im klozety z wodą do spuszczenia, a już się bez nich nie obejdą. Dajcie coś takiego przybłędom z Oklahomy, a już się niczym nie zadowolą<sup>21</sup>.

The appropriate camp section learns in time of an evil plan of ‘law enforcement’ aimed at pacifying the camp and does all its best to relegate unwanted delinquents from there. Stay at governmental camps restores people’s humanity. They become closer to each other. They become a community no one is like a lonely individual.

Although the Joads feel good in this community they have no money for living. Their youngest son starts to decline in health it looks more and more

<sup>20</sup> Steinbeck J., op. cit., p. 514.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 479.



miserable and one time he faints. The family is forced to leave this place and search for the job. The mother administrates the departure from the camp. She does not allow the family to fell apart, scatter but also motivates her beloved ones to leave despite of the fact that so far the man undertook such decisions<sup>22</sup>.

The Joads get a job at collecting peaches. For picking fruit from dusk till dawn they are paid just enough for dinner. Nearby shop belongs to the owner of the plantation of peaches which is rising up prices in such a way that all the money earned by workers found their way back into his pocket. Although Ms. Joad argues with the shop assistant about too high prices, he cannot do anything. This scene shows once again mother Joad as head of the family who cares about the welfare of its members and who is able to fight for important things.

After work Tom comes out of the camp through the gate and meets Casy. He explains how he got to this place and says that he came here because he and his companions were promised five cents for picking peaches. Soon the grower announced that they will get half of that amount so they started the strike. The grower did not like it so he called the police. It meant that Casy and his companions would be pacified for inciting the rebellion. Casy claims also that when the strike is broken the rest of workers will be paid two cents and a half. Pastor asks Tom to carry this message to other people but the man does not know how to do this because he is aware that hungry people care only about themselves. They are not interested in the fate of others whatsoever. While Tom is talking with the pastor the police prepares an ambush. They become aware of what is going on and try to escape but it is too late. One of the men hits the pastor with a stick and kills him. In retaliation Tom deprives one of the perpetrators of life but he also gets injured. He manages to escape and reach the camp where he has his family but his face is massacred and he is confident that he has been noticed and probably he will be wanted. That is why the next day he says to his mother that he must go away in order to keep his beloved ones safe. The mother takes care of the indissolubility of the family and of course she does not agree so Tom invents a new solution. He explains that since the strike was broken the wages for picking of peaches will certainly be reduced and for that you cannot feed a family so they have to leave the camp. He decides that he will hide among the luggage because torturers will be surely looking for him. The family gathers up to go. The mother says that the constant pursuit and

22 See: Beatty S., *A Study of Female Characterization in Steinbeck's Fiction*, [in:] *Steinbeck's Women: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Tetsumaro Hayashi, Indiana 1979, pp. 3–4.

persecution changes them and the father replies that everyone is changing and that they were better in the government camp:

— Dziwnie się człowiek czuje, kiedy go tak ścigają. Zaczynam robić się coraz gorsza.

— Każdy się robi coraz gorszy — rzucił ojciec. [...] W obozie rządowym byliśmy lepsi<sup>23</sup>.

Subhuman living conditions are forcing workers towards hostility between each other. It is clear that migrating people who search for work changed. Steinbeck writes about immigrants and their new way of life:

Tak oto wędrujący w poszukiwaniu pracy ludzie stali się koczownikami. Rodziny, które dotąd trzymały się małego skrawka ziemi, które żyły i umierały na czterdziestu akrach, które żywiły się z plonów tych czterdziestu akrów lub przymierały na nich głodem, miały przed sobą cały zachód, po którym mogły się błąkać do woli<sup>24</sup>.

Animal instincts are waking up in people. Workers are fighting for survival. They are constantly blinded by their own hunger. They do not understand that there is strength in community. They do not want to be responsible for the fate of companions. They are only interested in their own family.

When packed their belongings the Joads agree to go on the road but they do not know which way to choose. Having traveled a considerable way they notice an information board that people are sought to harvest cotton. They go in the designated location. Tom seeing a ravine decides that he will stay there and sleep until his face heals. He requests that the rest of the family will head for the camp. He decides to hide in bushes and the mother has to bring food for him.

When Mrs. Joad learned that the youngest daughter revealed to others that she has an older brother who killed two men is going to the ravine to warn his son about the impending danger. Tom reassures her saying that no one took seriously words of one little girl, and that he as a boy also threatened children who buzzed around in such way.

In fact he undergoes a change while living in hiding. As Howard Levant writes "Tom's emotional weakness resulting from his imprisonment only on the way to California is replaced by a moral awakening<sup>25</sup>. The boy begins to see the truth about which says the former pastor Casy<sup>26</sup> — the strength lies

23 Steinbeck J., op. cit., p. 580.

24 Ibidem, p. 404.

25 Levant H., op. cit., pp. 113–114.

26 Tom remembered the words he had heard from Casy taken from the Book of Ecclesiastes: "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift

in the group. Tom changes from an individualist to an enthusiast of collective. Even at the cost of his life because if he is caught most likely he will experience the same fate as Casy — death from the hands of Californians. Despite of this he is ready to defend the idea till the end urging others to strike.

The Mother coming back from Tom meets a grower who needs people to harvest cotton. Mrs. Joad informs her neighbors and family about this and as a result both families decide to go to the plantation. There are so much people that cotton is quickly collected from the whole area. Soon it starts to rain and rain turns into a downpour. They have to save the camp because the water no longer soaks into the soil and begins to flood the tents. Meanwhile, the eldest daughter of the Joads begins to bear the child. Both the camp and the child cannot be saved. Water keeps taking and the child is born dead. Mrs. Joad is very tired. Her neighbor suggests having some rest when she sees that. Formerly 'the Oclacs' put their own good, their own family in the first place but now they are beginning to recognize that they are part of a community and need to help each other.

The Water is rising and the Joads try to save all their belongings. They put everything on the car. Uncle John is asked to elevate the body of the newborn and bury it. Meanwhile, he let go a bundle on the water saying 'Swim with the flow and tell them all [...]. Put out into the street and putrefy there so they can understand your speech'<sup>27</sup>. There was a clear allusion to the character of Moses whose mother let him go in the basket with the flow. Here we can deal with a dead infant as you do not need Moses who lead the chosen people to Canaan — here everyone can be like him. This land has been taken long ago. There is no point in going any further.

Family escapes from the camp and move on a platform of a van. When the rain stops the mother takes the youngest children and Rosasharn into a dry place. They find a the barn where they meet a young boy who tells them that his dying father gave him his food. The mother looks significantly at her daughter who knows what to do. She feeds the man with the milk from her breasts. This scene shows the existence of an undeniable link between dying and birth. You can also say that life triumphs over death.

Determination of people heading for California to feed their families is a force that makes them to take this trip and does not allow them to give up hope for a better life which is, unfortunately, fatal for many of them. Country which is bound to be the biblical Garden of Eden turns out to be

up the other. Again, if two lie together, they run hotter, but how can one be warm alone? And if you invade them one, then two against him will, a threefold cord is not quickly broken' (Steinbeck J., op. cit., p. 602). See: *Biblia Tysiąclecia*, op. cit., Koh 4, 9–12.  
27 Steinbeck J., op. cit., p. 644.

a machinery exploiting humans. Nothing counts there except of the profits of people on the upper levels of the social ladder. Despite of this fact the novel ends optimistically because Rosasharn's milk is a symbol of victory in the fight with the death. It gives hope for reversing bad luck and looking with hope into the future. This can also be interpreted as evidence of transformation of the Joads family. Rosasharn's gesture would be an act of mercy resulting from that process.

In the novel *Grapes of Wrath* which shows the journey of hope of 'Oclacs' hated by the Californians the documentary nature of presented image is strongly emphasized. This conclusion is derived taking into account Steinbeck's meeting with the vice deputy head of the FSA (Farm Security Administration) in which the writer said that he was going to write a book about the situation of migratory workers and that it will be realistic novel which will clearly show the living conditions of these people<sup>28</sup>. It Also illustrates how the farmers 'absorbed' by the journey change from non-subjective individuals to subjective community which is responsible for co-travelers. The journey that that is taken by the Joads changes their view of the world. They begin to understand that as individuals they are doomed to failure but their strength is in the solidarity with other farmers.

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28 See: Parini J., op. cit., p. 214.