

## Summary

A characteristic of Steinbeck's works is the abundant usage of color words. The connection between Steinbeck's fiction and colors has been considered from various points of view. However, there are few previous studies focusing on the relation between his use of colors and his view of life. In this thesis I focused on the color words "white" and "gray" which are employed in *The Grapes of Wrath*, and attempt to indicate the deep relation between the colors he uses in the novel and his view of life.

The main characters, the Joads, and many others were expelled from the land where they had lived and farmed, and journey to California as migrants longing to find new land to start a new life. However, the agricultural system in California was different from the type of farming they had engaged in for a long time. It was intensively commercialized agriculture and land owners secured profits by the exploitation of the migrants. The migrants were not treated as human beings but as disposable tools. In spite of this extremely difficult situation, these migrants had a strong desire to survive adversity and to work for a better future. Steinbeck uses the white color to describe their strong will to live in some chapters, including chapter 22.

In addition to "white," I considered Steinbeck's use of "gray" and his view of life in chapters in which "gray" appears frequently. In these chapters Steinbeck describes the business practices which exposed migrants to danger, and how the times and society, which migrants could not resist individually, changed. Steinbeck vividly depicts migrants driven to death by huge powers they could not oppose. Migrants felt both terror and anger when their efforts to live were unfairly suppressed and their lives were fatally exposed to danger. Steinbeck describes some of the crises the migrants experienced. One is that migrants were driven to the point that they did not have the means to live; another is that they were prevented from reproducing and passing life to the next generation. In addition, he states how the dignity of their lives was denied. He indicates that the flow of life was obstructed by man's stupid acts. In his use of the color "gray," Steinbeck conveys the migrants' wrath and terror.

When I consider "white" and "gray" from such a viewpoint, it turns out that in these colors there is a deep connection with Steinbeck's view of life, which he describes for us in *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*. What he wants to express is the immortality and eternity of life. That is to say, those who receive a life have to live and have to pass on their life to the next generation. From the above, I can conclude that Steinbeck's use of color is a reflection of his view of life.

Many studies about how color influences human emotion and psychology have

been conducted by many researchers, including Newton, Goethe and others. To perceive colors is an important aspect of man's psychology; it also plays an important role in man's physiological function. Johannes Itten who is an authority in chromatics insists that color is a vessel expressing a dominant feeling which man may only feel vaguely. Whether we are conscious or not of a particular color, color has the power to affect us positively or negatively; color is something which possesses a kind of energy. It is very difficult to put abstract ideas about human life into words. However, in his works Steinbeck realizes Itten's ideas regarding "the power and energy of the color," and with the references to color, which has a great influence on man's mind and psyche, he effectively expresses his view of life.