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The Impact of the Great Depression and Social Injustice on American Society in John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the subject of racial discrimination and economic inequality between classes of American society during the Great Depression (1929) in John Steinbeck's novel "The Grapes of Wrath". The narrator highlighted the problems faced by farmers and migrant workers through the inhuman and hostile dealings by the financial institutions of the capitalist and bourgeois classes. The events of the novel revolve around the material situation of agricultural workers whose livelihood and dignity have been robbed by machinery and technology. Here, through the Jawad family and their migration to California, the narrator illustrates the suffering that family experienced and the ways they struggled to create a new life at the height of the Great Depression. John Steinbeck presents his main idea in this novel is to support the poor classes and criticize the bourgeois classes and the way they deal with the working classes by starving them and taking away their rights, so the narrator has given an indirect message of revolution against the landowners and owners of capitalist companies and taking rights from them through the character of Tom and a protest against the injustice that occurred society because of the greed of those companies.

Keywords:

The Grapes of Wrath, Great Depression, Capitalism, Economic inequality, Racial discrimination, Inhumanity.

1. Introduction:

The period between the early 20th and the mid-20th century saw unprecedented ups and downs in US history due to a combination of external and internal factors that caused economic prosperity on the one hand and the economic decline of most people on the other. In fact, after World War I, the United States celebrated a decade of extraordinary prosperity known as the Roaring Twenties. It was the most influential period in American history, but stock market problems ended that boom and led to the ten worst tragic years in the history of American society, which is noted referred to as the Great Depression. (Merada,2017:7).

In fact, the 1920s in America were years of economic activity marked by great changes in

every detail of life in American society. Certainly, English literature was no exception to these changes in terms of themes and techniques that invaded American society and that coincided with literary modernity so many writers of the period sought to keep pace with the growing modern society with the economic boom by modern style. Notable writers of the World War I period continued to draw inspiration from their contexts, including Ernest Hemingway, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, John Dos Passos, Fitzgerald, and John Steinbeck. Americans lived different experiences during that period through new inventions that made life easier in society with the emergence of the American character with new ways of living with machines that appeared in literary traditions. In the end, the end of this decade

was a tragic split by the sudden collapse of the New York Stock Exchange, which opened a state of economic depression. (Gam,2017:1)

The Great Depression of the 1930s encouraged thinkers and artists to write many works of art that reflect the grief and anxiety of the American people who were suffering from poverty, hunger, and unemployment. One of the great works that appeared in response to the migration of the people of Oklahoma to California is the novel *"The Grapes of Wrath"* by John Steinbeck, so it explains the difficult life of the American people and criticizes capitalism, especially in Oklahoma City, because of the Great Depression, dust disasters, and others. Here, John Steinbeck also showed the injustice suffered by the tenant farmers as a result of the American economic system through capitalism and the system run by the bourgeoisie and farmland lords. Thus, critics considered the weapon of the poor through their criticism and protest against American capitalism at that period. (Shillinglaw, 2011:181).

American novelist John Steinbeck was born in 1902 in Salinas, California. He grew up in a big house as the children in that small town was called "the castle". From the very beginning of his life, he had romantic inclinations and appreciated the beauty of nature. It is clear that the natural beauty, valleys, hills, rivers, forests, and coasts of Central California have greatly influenced his imagination through many of his novels such as *"Of Mice and Men"*, *"The Grapes of Wrath"* and *"East of Eden"*. In addition, the narrator Steinbeck's upbringing was with immigrant workers in his area such as the Chinese fisherman, Mexican Indians, hobo workers, and factory workers in Monterey, so he did most of his work in support of the working and poor classes until his death in New York City in 1968 and was buried in Salinas. (Benson, 2011:14).

Overall, Steinbeck used a real and realistic figure as a central theme in most of his literary works. Therefore, he shows the lives of the oppressed, the poor and the downtrodden through calm, sympathetic and heroic characters in his novels. According to Mangunwijaya (1988), Steinbeck's work enjoys a different populist preference than most

writers of the period in that he specifically expressed his humanistic attitude toward the American social condition as if he were a non-American person. His style of criticism and writing was like an Indian American. For example, Steinbeck's *"The Grapes of Wrath"* is not only read for entertainment and pleasure, but also as a reliable source of information about disasters that America has experienced such as the dust disaster, the American Great Depression, and the brutality of American capitalism that affected on the poor of America such as tenant farmers and migrant workers, particularly in the 1920s. Here, Steinbeck used this novel to reflect on the state of American society and its sympathy for them by turning reality into fiction. The poorer classes of workers, farmers, and others considered Steinbeck their spokesman and this account as their manifesto, while capitalists, landowners and administrators considered this *"The Grapes of Wrath"* novel to be part of communist and socialist propaganda. (Jack, 1939:7).

2- The Effects of Economic Prosperity on American Culture in the 20th Century:

The effects of the economic prosperity on American culture in that period were the birth of a new style and a new life in various scales, through the excellent financial situation, which prompted the American people to completely change their lifestyle. In fact, material wages and living income were on the rise and at the same time the prices of all commodities fell and this was the main reason for the rise in the standard of living with a massive increase in consumption. This era was marked by the construction of a new America, which included all social classes with all the different facilities of life, with a marked shift in social and moral attitudes. Therefore, urbanization at that time was a shining slogan as change was happening rapidly in all aspects of life. ***"...during the twenties, the big city became the predatory instrument of modernization, prizing costly bigness and gaudy proliferation of material goods to be sold, enjoyed and discarded"*** (Silder,1973:284).

In particular, the twenties of the last century were a period in which business flourished in

all its aspects and successful people thrived beyond their unexpected dreams. For the first time, so many young Americans are enrolled in higher education, so the number of college enrolments has doubled exponentially. Classes of society flourished and Americans began to enjoy the highest average national income in the world at that age. Many people bought a token of the affluence of its time (the car). The typical urban American home glows with electric lights that make the house beautiful, with pride in a radio that connects the house to the outside world, perhaps a phone, camera, typewriter, or sewing machine. (VanSpanckeren & Clack,2015:50).

Most Americans of the "Roaring Twenties" fell in love with the other modern entertainments of the time. Most people went to the movies once a week. Although the production, transportation and sale of alcohol was banned in all countries by the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, but began in 1919 its ease-of-use underground through nightclubs, featuring jazz music, cocktails, and daring styles of dress and dance. In fact, dancing, seeing movies, driving around in cars and listening to the radio was a patriotic frenzy. At the time, American women in particular felt liberated from societal constraints through the haircut and the wearing of short "flipper" dresses with the right to vote guaranteed by the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, passed in 1920. They spoke boldly for their opinions and assumed public roles. In the community. (Ibid)

Here, many historians consider the 1920s to be the only turning point in the United States in all its political, economic, moral, and cultural aspects. In addition, one of the most important things that gave this period its distinction was the type of music that spread widely among all social classes, namely jazz. And if we want to identify it as this type of music, it is an exclusively American type of music, it began at the beginning of the twentieth century within the societies of Americans, especially of African descent in the southern parts of the United States, which is characterized by a unique characteristic through a mixture between some traditions of African and European music

Typical, so the birthplace of jazz was in New Orleans Plus, it spread across America very quickly. (Merada,2017:12).

In fact, the popular obsession with jazz was one of the reasons why this music was so innovative in the 1920s that it was as new as inventions, cinema, cars, and even clothes. The invention of jazz was the most recent of its kind in that period because it was a mixture of other genres that had already been invented. At that time, jazz was not only popular because of its modernity, but another invention that contributed to its spread "the radio". The radio began to modify and change the way of life in American society, so Americans used radios as one of the important means to keep themselves occupied at home or even at work in addition to enjoying interesting programs. Most broadcast programming such as Presidential Reports, News, Comedy Shows, Coverage, Opera, Jazz, Variety, and Drama were available all day on this device. (Ciment,2007:270).

In short, films were of interest to all social classes in American society. Hollywood and Los Angeles were where all the movies were made at the time which movies were not what they are now. In fact, they were black, white and silent, and one of the most famous actors of that period was the comedian, Charlie Chaplin. The number of people who attended those films was so great that they competed with those who attended church as stated in A People and A Nation:

"The U.S. movie industry also took place in this era of prosperity. It began to locate in the Hollywood neighborhood of Los Angeles, California, in the 1920s, and movies became to be a popular obsession. Almost every community now had a theatre in town. In 1922, about million people were going to the theatres each week and that number jumped to about 100 million people by the end of the decade. This number was larger than the number of people that attended church weekly". (Norton, nd:213).

Here, the American people considered watching television, attending theaters, and listening to the radio as important and indispensable things at that time, so they included them in the daily program. Cinema

and theater have changed the cultural and intellectual patterns of American society. In particular, films played a major and important role in shaping decimal behaviors and specifically the role of women at the time. The woman who was a Victorian patriarch is gone forever. (Reeves,2000:86).

3- The Impact of the Great Depression and Capitalism on American Society:

The Great Depression arose for the first time on October 24, 1929, due to the crash of the stock market, which later became known as "Black Thursday", which resulted in an unprecedented drop in all prices on the New York Stock Exchange (Wall Street). In fact, this collapse was a sharp turning point for the standard of living of Americans and as stated by most historians it led to the failure of the banking system with the closure of more than five thousand banks. Therefore, the wages of the average American could not keep pace with the continuous rise in industrial productivity. In addition, the sudden deterioration of the agricultural sector was a sign and cause of economic depression as well. In that particular period, the Midwest regions were exposed to the most severe drought ever, which was called the "dust bowl". Here, the term refers to the series of droughts and massive dust storms that caused this drought, especially the plains of Oklahoma and Texas. During the years of economic depression, this region was famous for its hostile conditions, infertile soil and strong winds. (Merada,2017:11).

The global depression affected most of the population of the United States at that time because workers in general lost their jobs due to factory closures and most companies and banks failed to keep pace with that collapse. In addition, farmers could not reap, move, or sell their crops and pay off their debts, so they lost their farms to droughts that turned the Midwest from a breadbasket into a dust bowl. Therefore, many farmers left the Midwest for California and other industrial cities in search of jobs that would keep them from starvation as clearly described in John Steinbeck's novel *"The Grapes of Wrath"* (1939). At the height of the Depression, more than a third of Americans

were out of work, and here many in American society saw the depression as a punishment for their excessive material sins and filthy lives in the boom. Here, it described by Szostak Rick ***"the Great Depression remains the longest, deepest, and most pervasive depression in American history"*** (Szostak,2005:44).

Clearly, the Great Depression was the worst economic crisis in the history of the United States that lasted from 1929 until World War II causing many changes in the lifestyles and cultural patterns of the country and society. Unexpectedly, this period had a profound impact on American society and, as usual, on American culture. In addition, the workers and farmers were the only ones affected by the new change, through the weakness of the economy, poverty and injustice by the capitalist classes who are only interested in earning money on the shoulders of the working classes, which pushed the American society to actions that are not in line with the American dream. Here, most young men and teens were on their way to looking for alternative jobs, as stated by Carson and Bonk: ***"Men wanted to go to work, but plants stood idle. Prolonged unemployment created a new class of people. The jobless sold apples on street corners. They stood in breadlines and outside soup kitchens"*** (Carson,1999:931).

Indeed, the US government at that time had nothing to do to avoid the economic problem because its financial situation was out of control, so the American population felt the magnitude of the disaster and understood the situation the country was going through, but the biggest problem in this collapse was the lack of cooperation between the classes of society. They are the capitalists and the bourgeois classes living on the poor by not giving them enough wages to satisfy their hunger. Besides the economic collapse, mass migration from villages and agricultural areas from the Great Plains westward, specifically California, strengthened their economic position to meet their daily needs. Here, in his book *"The Great Depression: The United States"* in the Thirties by Robert Goldston, provides an image about the displaced workers:

“Many of them hit the road. Accompanied by families, in broken-down cars or, increasingly, alone, jobless workers roamed from town to town, city to city, state to state, seeking work that was unavailable. The transient knew in his bones that things were no better ahead than they had been behind, but somehow the movement itself seemed positive. It was something, however a hopeless thing, to do” (Goldston,1968:52).

The vast majority of immigrants were teenagers who were looking for an opportunity to earn a living to provide for their families and to save them from starvation. As for those who could not even emigrate, they lived in large tent cities called (Hoovervilles). Here, they had two options, either to try to find work or a job in the cities or to live with a sense of desperation by accepting whatever food the soup kitchen offered to the charities that were later called Hooverstew. Bryn O' Callaghan had illustrated a description of the situation:

“You Walk: You get shoved out early: you get your coffee and start walking. A couple of hours before noon you get in line. You eat and start walking. At night, you sleep where you can. You don't talk. You eat what you can. You walk. No one talks to you. You walk. It's cold, and you shiver and stand in doorways or sit in railroad stations. You don't see much. You forget. You walk an hour and forget where you started from. It is day. And then it's night, and then it's day again. And you don't remember which was first. You walk” (O'Callaghan,2004:88).

The great economic collapse had an important role in the rapid rise in the crime rate in American society, especially in the mid-thirties of the last century, and much greater than the rate of the Roaring Twenties, as many farmers and unemployed workers resorted to petty thefts whose goal was merely to eat food on their tables. As the economic crisis intensified, there were some records of armed white men screaming violently, demanding that the US government should provide food for them and their families at no cost. (Zinn 363-364).

As for the bad side of the economic collapse, the first was the domination of the capitalists

over the state and the oppression of the poor classes of American society by starving them in order to earn money and making these classes obey them and not rebel against them and this was the basic idea of those bourgeois classes. The second bad side is the deviation of some girls into prostitution and make it as a financial source to cover the daily needs of the family. The third aspect is suicide because of this economic crisis, among them are fathers who see their children dying of starvation, and among them are business owners who are burdened with debts. Studs Terkel in his *“Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression”*, a mid-class suburbanite reports his neighbor's direction reaction to the depression, ***“lotta people committed suicide, pushed themselves out of buildings and killed themselves, cause they couldn't face the disgrace”***. (Terkel,1970:42).

On the other hand, although that decade was notorious for mass poverty and starvation that only leads to malnutrition, health care turned out to be worse for most of American society, but visits to doctors were reserved only for serious cases. Therefore, Americans sought ways to escape the bitter reality which caused the rates of alcoholism to increase significantly, but this did not happen until the ban on alcohol was repealed in 1933. Because the economic crisis was also the cause of a slight increase in the prices of cigarettes, which became expensive and here Smokers have switched to cheap cigarettes. In addition, new types of diseases are spreading among adolescents due to uncontrolled prostitution. In addition, fashion has also been affected by this social and economic change and here this decade has caused most American women as well as leading and famous models to switch to a new style that reflects the time that requires a new style in some way. In fact, women in their thirties differed in many different ways from the era of economic boom. This generation opted for a more feminine and practical image than the women of its predecessor, with skirts lengthened, and hairstyles becoming softer and more graceful. (Reeves,2000:124)

The effects of the economic depression reached the highest degree by bringing about

changes in the family scene in various aspects. The first of which is that home construction has slowed and is barely there. Secondly, the delay in marriage, which in turn led to the spread of more problems, depression and a severe sense of loss among girls. Thirdly, divorce rates have decreased in an unprecedented way over those years. Fourth, the rates of abandonment of marriage were constantly rising, but for those who were married, they learned about birth control due to poor financial conditions and poverty, which were not suitable for children, especially newborns. Thus, issues such as marriage, family, and family stability seem to be taken more seriously than they were in the 1920s. These factors led to a decline in birth rates, which led to the creation of new demographic trends that we only witnessed in that period. (Merada,2017:13).

4- The Effects of Capitalism on the Lower Classes of American Society in *"The Grapes of Wrath"*:

Actually, *"The Grapes of Wrath"* identifies the bad side of capitalism through disorderly, brutal, immoral and inhuman bad behavior based on greed and violation of the rights of poor citizens even though Steinbeck is a socialist because he owns large farms. The practice of capitalism that the narrator fought against was the taking of everything for themselves as well as the robbery of the rights and property of the poor and even their physical energy. Indeed, when Steinbeck published his book in 1939, it was criticized by Classes of Capitalists for being communist and socialist, but the writer's goal was to present a realistic picture that people should work together for the common good. Based on the theme of his pro-poor novel, Steinbeck can be classified as a proletarian writer. The proletarian writer is a brilliant and creative artist who is primarily interested in the lower classes with the subject of proletarian writing, so the poor called him the "apostle of reform,". (Jones, 1940:447).

Consistently, Steinbeck's interests were with the working class, the poor, and the marginalized so he used photorealistic images of working-class people in indigenous settings

to politically charge his work through visual stories for international readers and as in this novel. Here, the researcher finds that a wealth of working-class theme is embedded in the social commentary that applies to most of his writing on the criticism of capitalists. In fact, although economic prosperity is a sign of the success of the American capitalist system, it also had negative consequences for the value of the lower classes and the morals of the American people, so the repercussions appeared in conjunction with the familiar economic crisis. American society in the Great Depression. (Hasyim,2014:19).

Indeed, Steinbeck was exposing the misery and injustice of the California immigrant workers by the capitalists through the harsh agricultural practices of corporations that herded immigrants like cattle, surrounded them with armed guards and made them starve as with the Judd family whom the writer made a symbol of persecution. Although this condition is well known to farmers and migrant workers, they cannot change their situation or do anything about it. These immigrants think that this treatment of capitalists is normal because they are just workers. In fact, the capitalist class is one of the bourgeoisies and as the ruling class it forces society to accept its own ideology of oppression of the poor as the dominant ideology. Although *"The Grapes of Wrath"* is fiction, many critics and capitalists accuse Steinbeck of spreading communism. *"The Grapes of Wrath"* is the novel in which Steinbeck's commitment finds harmony with period themes, art, and heroes of his imagination. The aim of this novel was to unite the author's concerns about poor and exploited immigrant workers in California with the problem of the poverty of the human spirit and the greed of capitalism. (Selyandita, et al,2014:58).

The writer realizes that when wealth spoils, it spoils completely, because the capitalist system gives one person without another to rule on the basis of his capital. ***"The result of capitalist mode of production produces capitalist private property"*** (Marx, 1956:141). However, the rich classes differ from the poor classes not

only because the rich have a lot of money but because they can be frozen in their possessions. ***The quality of owning freezes you forever into 'I,' and cuts you forever from the We*** (Steinbeck, 1997:259). Moreover, the ownership of the capitalist class has a direct effect in constructing an unbalanced distribution of power in the society. Therefore, "the economic superiority of the capitalist class requires its political superiority, and the class that owns the various means of production and economic power can also usurp political power. This class holds, ***state power and all the means of political power which go with it (police, prisons, army, courts, etc).*** Thus, it can be said that the domination of production produces also all other types of domination of society" (Mbengo, 1998:10)

Absolutely, the narrator (Steinbeck) sees that the source of the struggle of capitalism and the bourgeoisie against the working classes and the poor are the banks, big corporations and agricultural companies. They have become monsters so they refuse to breathe air but, ***"breathe profits; they eat the interest on money. If they don't get it, they die the way you die without air"*** (Steinbeck, 1997:53). Indeed, they were so madly obsessed with his property that they hired armed guards to keep intruders out. For Casy, such irrational and brutal appropriation creates a spiritual void that no amount of possessions can fill, ***"Million acres? What in the worl' can he do with a million acres?"*** (Steinbeck, 1997:359). Then, he follows that:

"If he needs a million acres to make him feel rich, seems to me he needs it 'cause he feels awful poor inside hisself, and if he's poor in hisself, there ain't no million acres gonna make him feel rich, an' maybe he's disappointed that nothin' he can do'll make him feel rich ... I ain't tryin' to preach no sermon, but I never seen nobody that's busy as a prairie dog collectin' stuff that wasn't disappointed" (Steinbeck, 1997:360)

Through natural factors, economic depression and industrialization is the main cause of alienation and displacement, and Steinbeck discussed it at the beginning of this novel as a tractor demolishing the homes of

farmers through the appearance of a man who says that he is nothing more than a driver or a robot in the service of a machine, ***"Behind the tractor rolled the shining disks, cutting the earth with blades--not plowing but surgery, pushing the cut earth to the right where the second row of disks cut it and pushed it to the left; slicing blades shining, polished by the cut earth ... No man had touched the seed, or lusted for the growth The land bore under iron, and under iron gradually died"*** (Steinbeck, 1997:59) Then the writer explained that this economic and intellectual contradiction between the capitalists on the one hand and the proletariat on the other by creating the conditions for organizing the proletariat, which leads them to achieve their goals that they want to achieve through the necessity of revolutionary action. (Selyandita, et al,2014:61).

Finally, Steinbeck presents a depiction of the inhumanity and general injustice of immigrants that leads them to realize the necessity of society and bring about unity through the actions of the immigrant workers themselves. From this standpoint, the narrator applies Marx's intention to the idea of socialism. For the Marxist idea, ***"The Marxist writer has an obligation to articulate and express the interest and the needs of proletariat class"*** (Marcuse, 1977:2). Here, Steinbeck can be said to have implemented "his decision regarding Marx's perspective in this novel by giving a realistic picture of immigrant workers and their suffering within the capitalist system of California. By depicting California's poverty of immigrant workers and farmers. Therefore, Steinbeck considers literature, and specifically the novel, to be an expression of the dialectical movement of political and economic thought. He also explains that his novel can be classified as a work of a social realist, ***Realism is the form in which the interaction between literature and society appears to be most obvious. In realist text, literature might be seen to reflect society or history"*** (Haslett, 1999:86). In fact, the writer confirms through his work that it is a good novel that works for humanity. Ultimately, through *"The Grapes of Wrath"*, the narrator succeeds in unleashing an

intellectual and cultural awareness of capitalist oppression toward the proletariat. Here, Steinbeck criticizes people's inability to see that poor people are human too. The writer is committed to social issues related to the living conditions of immigrant workers in California. Steinbeck shows the struggles that rise in some characters such as young Tom and the preacher Casy by inciting society to rise from this miserable reality by revolting against the oppression of capitalists and landowners. (Ibid:62)

5- The Impact of the Great Depression and Economic Inequality on American Society in "The Grapes of Wrath":

The novel "The Grapes of Wrath" was depicting the plight of the working poor during the Great Depression, which occurred at the end of the 1920s. Indeed, the novel's narrator highlights the problems faced by the poorer classes of farmers and migrant workers during the Great Depression. This novel exposes the inhuman and hostile nature of people through economic inequality and especially financial institutions. The story revolves around agricultural workers who have robbed machinery and technology of their livelihood and become unemployed and lack the resources to survive through the story of a dispossessed Oklahoma family and their struggle to create a new life in California at the height of the Great Depression. In this novel, the commentary focuses first on the broader and more comprehensive history behind those who owned and held most of the land in the West. In addition, the writer also focused on the specific experiences of the residents of those regions who are forced to move west due to the selfishness of greedy landowners who are only interested in filling their bellies. Here, they are thought to be exceptional in their malice and greed because of their strong hold on the poor, weaker labors. But the narrator also points out that the desire to rebel against the oppressive and corrupt power in all countries never goes away and is a definite fact in human history. (Nagpal, et al,2021:3214)

In this novel, the narrator Joe Steinbeck describes the tense and tense relationship

between landowners and tenant farmers through unfair treatment and starvation with low wages that hardly feed them even if the profits of landowners are very high despite the atmosphere of the rich and kind-hearted with the poor classes, but the difference between numbers is great This makes workers poor and hungry. Although the rich landowners and classes are more powerful and influential in society and the state than the poor farmers, they are also caught in the midst of extensive operations run by far-flung multinational corporations. ***"Some of the owner men were kind because they hated what they had to do, and some of them were angry because they hated to be cruel, and some of them were cold because they had long ago found that one could not be an owner unless one were cold. And all of them were caught in something larger than themselves."*** (Steinbeck,2006:31).

Indeed, the narrator Steinbeck showed his full sympathy with the working class and the poor and their struggles in the Great Depression through his novel "The Grapes of Wrath". In this novel, narrator Joe focuses on a low-income family of farmers, the Tom family, who struggle to adapt to the economic collapse, drought, and other hardships caused by the Great Depression. The story of the Tom family tells the harsh life realities of poor workers and farmers who were displaced by the Great Depression through high unemployment in Western industrialized nations. ***"The Grapes of Wrath is the manifestation of his exquisite literary sensibility with a focus on the socioeconomic survey of the time with the degree of consciousness of the workers to demand wages commensurate with their workforce."*** (Prakash,2017:44)

In fact, the book's perspective was aimed at tenant farmers in cities that were hurt by the economic depression and at people who are disappointed with the process of selling their property and farm tools because they are now useless due to new technology and become completely destroyed, so their goal was to immigrate to California because it is a wonderful land of opportunity and a place to restore some of the agency and stability that

tenant farmers in Oklahoma had lost. In fact, this was a falsity of the truth but then he knew that California was not just a random choice but a useless one. Here, Tom believes that wherever he and his fellow farmers go, they will be haunted by the sense of injustice on one side and the desperation that defined their work on the other. If there is any sliver of hope left, it is in fact bitter by any measure. So that, many people connected to shared experiences, even if those experiences are hopeless. ***"To California or any place—everyone a drum major is leading a parade of hurts, marching with our bitterness. And someday—the armies of bitterness will all be going the same way. And they'll all walk together, and there'll be a dead terror from it"***. (Steinbeck,2006:88).

In this particular novel, the narrator describes the changes that occurred due to technological advances that occurred after the Industrial Revolution to replace humans with tractors and other machinery on Oklahoma farms. Therefore, the narrator suggests that such industrial changes were the main reason for keeping the poor and especially the farmers away from their source of livelihood and livelihood. With the continued technological development to keep people away from their sources of livelihood and wealth. Indeed, the spread of technology means not only transforming beautiful and vast landscapes into ugly, barren and useless outdoor factories, but also robbing the livelihoods of the working classes, and besides this, people will feel themselves less powerful in their relationship to the place in which they live. He lives:

"That man who is more than his chemistry, walking on the earth, turning his plow point for a stone, dropping his handles to slide over an outcropping, kneeling in the earth to eat his lunch; that man who is more than his elements knows the land that is more than its analysis. But the machine man, driving a dead tractor on land he does not know and love, understands only chemistry; and he is contemptuous of the land and of himself." (Steinbeck,2006:116).

Through the events of the novel, narrator Steinbeck discusses a story he wrote to support

the poor, which is part of the history of a decade of injustice and suffering. Indeed, the characters in the novel may appear to be constantly desperate through their experiences such as Tom, the preacher Casy, Tom's father and mother, and other characters and their experiences may be unique in some ways but otherwise fit into the narrative that offers a glimmer of hope for revolution, resistance, and the struggle against the oppression and recognition of human rights. Here, *"The Grapes of Wrath"* may not include any revolutions or even political battles, but it remains in the background a message for both classes and is also relevant to everything that happens. (Nagpal, et al, 2021:3213)

"And the great owners, who must lose their land in an upheaval, the great owners with access to history, with eyes to read history and to know a great fact: when property accumulates in too few hands, it is taken away. And that companion fact: when a majority of the people are hungry and cold, they will take by force what they need. And the little screaming fact that sounds through all history: repression works only to strengthen and knit the repressed." (Steinbeck,2006:238).

In general, the increasing despair experienced by the migrant farm workers in this novel did not make these people real or even as farmers, but rather began to define them only as migrant workers who were uprooted from their land and homes and unable to settle in a new home that secures them dignity and a livelihood. So, the described "big firms" are keen to reduce as much as possible the immigrant workers who cannot support themselves or their families at meager profits. However, they grow hungry and hungry with the pain of losing those who could not resist. Here, companies believe that this hunger can be controlled to save their interests. In fact, they believe that these people are more malleable and less willing to rise up against the unjust forces affecting their lives. Therefore, the narrator explains hunger as not something meek and calm, but rather another kind of anger. Of course, anger can be powerful and a valuable force that can bring about change and

remind people in society that they are alive and here Tom and Jim Casy make a message to rise up against injustice and that they are alive enough to fight. ***"The great companies did not know that the line between hunger and anger is a thin line"*** (Steinbeck,2006:284).

Absolutely, it can be said that John Steinbeck made it clear that a good harvest would save a lot of food but that business owners did not want that because it would risk losing money. Therefore, businessmen want to strip workers of immigrants and other basic necessities of living by watching potatoes, oranges, etc. spoil without doing anything. This sense of desperation is not only the horrific gap between abundance of food and hunger but also among the weak farmers responsible for choosing it to make the "people's souls" so heavy. Indeed, in the last line of the novel, the novel gives its title to which the sentence uses a metaphor of the vineyards, to describe a growing sense of despair and anger among them like grapes growing heavier like harvesting methods and here these workers also build their anger to an inescapable and unknown point in the future, they will not be able to bear what they are forced to experience in their lives. (Nagpal, et al,2021:3214)

"The people come with nets to fish for potatoes in the river, and the guards hold them back; they come in rattling cars to get the dumped oranges, but the kerosene is sprayed. And they stand still and watch the potatoes float by, listen to the screaming pigs being killed in a ditch and covered with quick lime, watch the mountains of oranges slop down to a putrefying ooze; and in the eyes of the people, there is the failure, and in the eyes of the hungry, there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people, the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage." (Steinbeck,2006:349).

Finally, in an article entitled "The Grapes of Wrath, as a result of Steinbeck's wrath", Ragina Williams spoke in this novel about the lives of migrant workers who suffered from the oppression of the capitalist and wealthy classes and technological development. The miserable

situation of the poor classes from the roles of the characters in this novel:

"The book's primary motivation was to expose the exploitation of the Okies and make his reader just as angry as he was. His anger stemmed from the fact that business owners, landowners, and even the average middle class seemed to ignore that the Okies were people. Some saw them make a bigger profit, others as a nuisance, and still others as dirty diseased and the reason for their tax increase. Steinbeck's earlier work in journalism that led him around California covering stories about the immigrants, left him not only with anger but with an overabundance of source material for his novel." (Williams,2018: 6)

Conclusion:

In fact, the period of the early twentieth century was marked by the unprecedented events in American history of the economic boom known as the Roaring Twenties. Those years were a prosperous period in which the United States enjoyed an economic boom that led to massive and unprecedented expansion of business and growth in wages and per capita income. In addition, it was also a period of global change that invaded the daily lives of Americans and replaced traditional life with the invention of technology. In addition, American women were granted all rights such as the right to vote and appearance while changing their role in society. In short, the decade of the 1920s was unique, but unfortunately for Americans it came to an end after the crisis in America called the Great Depression.

The Great Depression, which is the collapse of the stock market in America, which occurred on Thursday, October 24, 1929, and was the beginning of a bad omen for American society, specifically the working classes. The economy experienced a contraction in addition to hitting all the private and government sectors, but the stock market crash had its profound effects on society. The notable reversal on Americans was through mass immigration from agricultural states in the Midwest such as Colorado. In that period, government banks stripped farmers of their lands because they could not produce

crops amid the severe drought that accompanied the collapse of the economy, which made all the families migrate to another place to find jobs for themselves, specifically California, in the hope of finding jobs on farms during the fruit picking seasons. But the hatred was greater. Instead of improving their lives, these families found themselves paying the price for the collapse of the country's social and economic system.

Here, the researcher concludes that one of John Steinbeck's most valuable works during the Great Depression years is "*The Grapes of Wrath*" because it perfectly mimics the shape of American society during that period by depicting the misery of farm families immigrating to California. Therefore, the writer aims in this novel on the extent of the suffering experienced by the poor class and the injustice that happened to them through the bourgeois capitalist classes that control the state, which was embodied by the narrator in the Joe family, which conveyed the extent of the suffering to the poor classes in American society. In addition, we also infer from this novel that wealth is the driver that determines the nature of relations between American citizens and the bourgeoisie and how money is earned from working for California landowners and capitalists.

The researcher makes sure that the main concern of land owners is how to spend less money on workers in order to increase their financial income and on the other hand, keep these classes weak and unable to defend themselves because of hunger and acceptance of what the owners of companies impose on them. Finally, we conclude that the purpose of this novel is to send a message of support to those working classes that the main goal of salvation from this famine is the bull through the character of Tom, which was a harbinger of the ills of the capitalist classes. Therefore, this novel was more acceptable in that period. ***"The Grapes of Wrath is more widely accepted as a radical novel, but the emerging mysticism concerning the phalanx that Steinbeck ascribes to his more leftist characters simultaneously serves to uphold the rift between him and the more traditional***

radical novelists." (Jasinski,2008: 30). Last but not least, the writer followed a series of role-playing characters to show the transformation that takes place in the American family and the rise of the matriarchal system by including this element in his narrative of American society during the Great Depression.

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