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**The Impact of Emigration on the American
Society in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath***

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Dedications

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Abstract

Since emigration has been for centuries the prominent characteristic of America, and the mainstream issue of our contemporary life, the purpose of this dissertation is to shed light on the history of emigration in the United States, and to provide a particular focus on the issue of emigration in John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*.

To fulfil such a process, the present work is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is a reference to the history of emigration and its influence in attracting millions through the ideal of the American dream. Then we sought to analyse the principals of highly impacting movements and philosophies that emerged due to major events that reshaped the American economy, society and culture during the early decades of the twentieth century; naturalism and modernism, Social Darwinism and determinism; along with stating a short biography of the accomplished novelist John Steinbeck and his major works. The second part deals with the issue of emigration in John Steinbeck's depression-era master piece *The Grapes of Wrath* in which he strove to portray the ordeals of hostility raised by the locals and authorities of California against the unfortunate migrants and their disastrous effects in exacerbating their struggles, after fleeing from the harshness of the Dust Bowl in the late 1930s and the callousness of the banks by the enclosure of their lands and homes.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Emigration has been a defining characteristic of America since the first discovery of the continent in 1492 by the Italian Explorer Christopher Columbus, the discovery which paved the way for the great phase of a mammoth movement of peoples known to historians as the “expansion of Europe.” (Billington 1)

The expansion of Europe toward the western Hemisphere had economic and political motivations, which appeared in the massive influx of emigrants such as English, French, German and Dutch, and many other from countries in North Western Europe, who ventured into the New World fleeing religious persecution, and the deep recession of economy that swept across Europe during the 15th century onward, seeking their fortune by emigrating to the land of opportunities. (Billington 1)

Within this course of thoughts, the following memoir will examine the historical and economical background of emigration to and migration within United States, by focusing on the roots of the creation of the United States and by shedding the light on migration in Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Therefore, the questions which arise are:

- 1- What are the economical and the historical motivations that influenced emigration to America since its discovery until the twentieth century?
- 2- How did economy push Americans westward to seek their fortune, and what are the social challenges that faced the American migrants toward the west in John Steinbeck’s novel *The Grapes of Wrath*?

In order to answer these questions, the study makes use of “New Historicist approach”. It is composed of two chapters.

The first chapter which is about the twentieth century America is devoted to the historical and economical background of emigration to the United States, and the influence of the Great Depression on the Americans’ life in the early decades of the

Twentieth Century in addition to the theories and approaches that influenced the literary works of the period, whilst for the second chapter sheds light on emigration in John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* by emphasizing on the economic recession after the devastating effects of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression that stirred the wave of migration within the United States by forcing many American families to leave their homes in desperate search for work in John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Chapter One: Twentieth – Century America

1.1. Introduction

1.2. Historical and Economical Background

1.2.1. Emigration in America

1.2.2. The American Dream

1.2.3. The Great Depression

1.2.4. Social Darwinism and Determinism

1.3. Twentieth – Century American Literature

1.3.1. Naturalism

1.3.2. Modernism

1.4. Conclusion

1.1. Introduction

This chapter is devoted for the massive changes that brought about the united States during the early decades of the twentieth century where the country witnessed an unprecedented boom in its economy, due to the industrial development which not only made the life of Americans much easier and more prosperous but also helped generating greater profits by financing the first World War (1914-1918) which in turn provided job opportunities to everyone who would endeavour to work hard to reach upward mobility and live a life of affluence and prosperity during the 1920s, the age that become known as the Age of Prosperity. However, the Stock Market Crash of October 1929, along with the Dust Bowl of the 1930s marked the endpoint of economic prosperity and lavish lifestyle, paving the way for the Great Depression that affected the American economy and society alike, which result in high unemployment rate and forced thousands of American families to migrate to other states in search for job opportunities. Consequently, massive changes of the period gave birth to new literary movements such as naturalism and modernism, these new literary movements emerged to adapt to the new changes and shift away from the traditional style because the traditional literary movements proved to be incapable of coping with the fast changing and harsh conditions that took place in the American society in the aftermath of the Great Depression. This new literary movement infringed old conventions and decorum in order to adapt to the modern events and development by “make it new”.

1.2. Historical and Economical Background

On the 12th of October 1492, 3 ships sailed under the command of the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus; in a voyage sponsored for discovering a new frontier, by the Spanish Catholic Monarchs¹. They landed in the Bahamas, where they encountered for the first time the indigenous people of Americas. Columbus perceived

¹ Isabella I (1451-1504), and Ferdinand V (1452-1516), queen and King of “Castile” during (1474-1504), also known as “Catholic”, their reign was marked with the conquest and the retrieval of Granada from the Muslims after a long struggle and the ruthless of expulsion of Spanish Jews (Isabella I)

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them as Indians, taking advantage of the Natives naivety which appeared in their hospitality and generous acts of bringing food and water out to the sailors, in addition to different commodities for the sake of trading with the new comers, Columbus wrote in his journal that They brought balls of spun cotton and parrots and javelins and many different things, and they trade their possessions for anything that was given to them (William Least 37). Moreover, the easy going way of the natives strengthened his perception as another indication of their potential for subjugation. He wrote:

These people are very naive about weapons, as Your Highnesses will see from seven that I caused to be taken in order to carry them away to you and to learn our language and to return them. Except that, whenever Your Highnesses may command, all of them can be taken to Castile or held captive in this same island; because with 50 men all of them could be held in subjection and can be made to do whatever one might wish (William Least 38).

The first people Columbus met in the Americas were a group of the Caribbean tribes called “Taino²”, dependant mainly on fishing and farming for survival. However their peaceful society made them easily exploitable by Spanish Colonists who used them as slaves to labour in their lands and mines. Moreover, forced labour along with Old World diseases such as smallpox that spread out among the natives, resulted in the elimination of many tribes of the indigenous people. (Smith 11)

Columbus discovery was highly appreciated by the Spanish Monarchs, due to his exploration of the new land which not only provided Spain with tremendous opportunities for wealth; especially after mining for precious metals such as gold and silver; but also it provided European plants like sugar, coffee, and rice new fertile lands, in addition to different crops brought back to Europe from the new land, developed by the Native Americans agriculturalists, such as corn and potatoes that altered the European diet forever, Exploration of the Americas pushed the wheels of economy

² A tribe that lived throughout the Caribbean, also known as the Arawak, for sharing a common language of Arawak that is used also in many other tribes of the Caribbean. (Smith 11)

forward as fruitful businesses emerged by the establishment of new trade routes (Smith 11).

1.2.1. Emigration in America

The success of Columbus voyage and the discovery of the rich land, inspired many other European nations to take part in the lucrative exploration. A vast westward emigration of people was set in motion, hoping to increase the territory of their empires and to enrich the wealth of their “mother land”, through the exploitation of natural resources and the creation of new markets for their manufactured products.

Consequently, the competition among the European powers of acquiring and claiming lands in America was at its peak during the age of the Renaissance³. The first explorers were followed by settlers, who eventually extended their homeland territories by the establishment of new colonies in America.

Many Europeans left their countries in escape from the constant wars, that resulted in a severe economic recession, and the wide spread of famine, diseases, and religious and political persecution, in an endeavour to improve their social life and achieve affluence and freedom in the land of opportunities without the intervention of the crown.

In the New World, the European settlers’ main fortune was made through the cultivation of sugar, rice, tobacco, and cotton crops. However, the cultivation of the vast lands in addition to the Old World diseases undermined the ability of the enslaved Native Americans. Therefore, in order to meet the demand for labour, more slaves were needed. As a result, slave traders sought to find new sources of slaves from West and central Africa, consequently, a lucrative Transatlantic Slave Trade was established to maintain the constant flow of slaves to the newly discovered continent, resulting in a forced emigration of Africans who were captured and taken prisoners in their own land, forced onto the ships toward the Americas, where they worked in extremely vicious

³ The period in Europe during the 14th, 15th, 16th century when people became interested in the ideas and culture of Ancient Greece and Rome.

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conditions for no pay and no chance for freedom, unlike the “white slaves⁴” who eventually obtained their freedom and could also own properties and businesses of their own, after the end of the contract (Smith 113).

After the end of the American Revolution⁵ in 1783, the United States territory expanded exponentially, through purchasing, winning, and negotiating for territories extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. The movement was known as the Westward Expansion, by the 1800s the Americans settled in the lands extended from the Atlantic to the far west until the Mississippi River. (Mountjoy 15)

From the beginning of the European colonization, the land between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains known as the Louisiana territory, was under the control of the French; both the need of the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte⁶ to fund the French military operations in Europe, and the threatening occupation of Louisiana by the British, prompted Bonaparte to offer to sell Louisiana to the United States, president Thomas Jefferson⁷ seized this precious opportunity, documents of ceding Louisiana to the United States were signed by 30th of April 1803, agreeing on the purchase price of \$15 million for the land of 800.000 square miles that doubled the size of the United States territory. The deal which became known as the "Louisiana Purchase." (Louisiana Purchase)

Jefferson addressed the congress, and explained the importance of the newly acquired territory for the United States and emphasised that:

While the property and sovereignty of the Mississippi and its waters secure an independent outlet for the produce of the western States... the fertility of

⁴ They are indentured servants who came to America according to their free will, because they couldn't afford the transatlantic voyage, they worked for a particular period of time in return for the expenses of the voyage, and then are able to obtain their freedom.

⁵ The war of American independence with Britain that lasted for seven years, until finally Britain recognized the United States of America in 1783, after which America became an independent nation.

⁶ Emperor of France during (1804-1815), known as one of the greatest military commanders, he conquered much of Europe during his reign.

⁷ The 3rd president of United States during (1801-1809), one of the nation's founding father, he wrote most of the Declaration of Independence.

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the country, its climate, and extent, promise in due season important end to our treasury. (Ritchie and Albert 363)

By the acquisition of Louisiana, the United States' territory doubled in size, thus, president Thomas Jefferson encouraged to send two US explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in 1804, to conduct a vigorous investigation to learn about the newly purchased land, the purpose was to assess the recent purchase from France and determine the possibility of the expansion, their successful journey became known as the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and considered as one of the major influence that encouraged many Americans to move to the west. (Lewis and Clark)

With the expansion of the United States territory, the 1830s witnessed a massive influx of emigrants into the eastern shores who came mainly from the Western Europe, such as the English, the Irish and the German. They were attracted to the cheap farmland that was available by the Westward Expansion, in addition to job opportunities that the booming cities offer, due to the industrial revolution.

The discovery of gold in California's Sacramento valley in January 1848 by James W. Marshall, an event which has a vital role in the migration of thousands of Americans toward the western part of the United States, it had surged the Forty-Niners⁸ toward California in response of the gold fever that spread among not only the Americans, but also among the people from all walks of life, who soon immigrated from Europe, Asia, and south America, journeying in risky and vicious conditions in order to join the Americans in their quest for gold in the rivers and mountains of California. (Gold Rush of 1849)

Due to the discovery of gold in California, and the advances in technology, the congress made the task of building a transcontinental railway their first priority. The new railway was built to link the United States from Omaha, Nebraska in the east to Sacramento, California in the west. (History.com) After its completion on May 10, 1869 the promising project made a continuous train travel from coast to coast possible, and

⁸ A popular appellation for the gold hunters, who went to California to look for gold during the Gold Rush of 1849.

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as a result, vast number of people travelled the line, which helped enriching the United States economy, and encouraged more settlers to flood toward the western territories. (History.com)

Furthermore, advances in technology improved steam powered ocean liners which made travel much more cheaper and easier, influencing millions of Europeans to immigrate toward the United States, seizing jobs opportunities that are available because of the industrial revolution that is taking place in the United States that created a constant request for even more labours in order to meet the demand of production. A flood of emigrants arrived to the United States mainly from southern and Eastern Europe, creating one of the largest influx of emigrants between 1880 and 1930 that exceeded 25 million immigrants. (History.com)

One of the main drives that influenced Millions of emigrants from all walks of life to flood to the United States, the land of opportunity and affluence, is the promise that the Promised Land kept to turn the dream of everyone who strive and thrive to achieve their dreams through hard work and commitment into reality, and to protect their rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

1.2.2. The American Dream

The American Dream has been initiated from the inception of America, by the time when the first emigrants who settled in this land of abundant opportunities, who sought to plant the seeds of their dreams in its fertile soil, which therefore, through hard work and commitment, they could harvest its bountiful riches whether material, spiritual or political. (Hochschild 19)

Furthermore, the vision of the American Dream is the dream in which all Americans will have the opportunity through hard work to build a comfortable middle-class life, which in turn, by the support of income growth and economic security of the middle-class families, the American Dream will not only push the wheels of economy and prosperity forward but also ensure political stability. (Garfinkle 12)

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Moreover, President Abraham Lincoln was the first American leader who fully grasped the notion of the American dream, because he believed that the declaration of independence enabled humble individuals to attain an independent, middle-class standard of living by the work of their own hand, who could eventually reach upward mobility by seizing the opportunities that are available to everyone willing to work hard to achieve their dream and accomplish their own version of success. (Garfinkle 13)

Those defining features made America the first nation on earth to offer opportunities of economic advancement to everyone, even the humblest beginner, to reach success and make their dream into reality through hard work and commitment regardless of their social background or status. (Garfinkle 13) As the American writer Thomas Wolfe⁹ mentions that the American dream is “to every man, regardless of his birth, his shining, golden opportunity, the right to live, to work, to be himself, and to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him.” (Wolfe)

Thus, according to Lincoln, the government has an active role in enhancing and sustaining Americans’ economic freedom by protecting the life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of each individual, and to clear the path for individual's economic prosperity in order to push ordinary Americans forward, by insisting in the famous words of his Gettysburg address, that government should be not just 'of the people' and 'by the people,' but also 'for the people.' As a result, the American dream saw government as a potentially constructive force. (Garfinkle 14)

In his visit to America in 1830s Alexis de Tocqueville was astonished by the exceptional economic equality among the Americans, due to the absence of the very rich people as well as the absence of the sharp divisions between wealth and poverty, because individuals had opportunities to better their economic circumstances, believing that through hard work they could have an upwardly mobile lifestyle. As a result, Tocqueville believed that the combination of relative economic equality and high social

⁹ (1900-38) a prominent American writer whose four long and powerful novels based on the events of his own life. They are *Look Homeward Angel* (1929), *Of Time and the River* (1935), and *The Web and the Rock* (1939), *You Can't Go Home Again* (1940) that were published posthumously.

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mobility provided by the American dream are essential keys that prospered the American economy and fortified its system. (Garfinkle 13)

Furthermore, the American dream made promise to provide a fertile land for everyone who is willing to plant the seeds of their dreams through hard work in order to achieve their own version of success. Therefore, throughout the history of America, the idea of the American dream as Jennifer Hochschild pointed out has fascinated

[M]illions of immigrants and internal migrants have moved to America, and around within it, to fulfil their version of the American dream. By objective measures and their own accounts, many have achieved success (15).

According to Jennifer Hochschild, the American dream consists of tenets of achieving success which can be measured in three ways, the first tenet is the absolute success which implies the achievement of the American dream by reaching some threshold of well-being and overcoming the adversities of one's own background and social status, by seizing the opportunities available that paved the way to the attainment of upward mobility. (16) As Bruce Springsteen puts it:

I don't think the American dream was that everybody was going to make ...a billion dollars, but it was that everybody was going to have an opportunity and the chance to live a life with some decency and some dignity and a chance for some self-respect (qtd. in Hochschild 16).

Another tenet is the relative success, because the achievement of the American dream means becoming better off than some comparison point which is anything or anyone that one measures oneself against. As a result, relative success implies no threshold of well-being, because everyone has his own definition of success and they are in constant state of challenging their competitors to reach a new level of accomplishment. (16)

Furthermore, success can be competitive, the success of some people in achieving victory over someone else implies the failure of others, thus the competition

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arises due to the scarcity of resources that made few spectacular winners who made their dream into reality at the expense of many dissimilar losers who failed to work hard for the sake of achieving their dreams. (Hochschild 17)

As the president Bill Clinton addressed in his speech to Democratic Leadership Council in 1993 that “The American dream that we were all raised on is a simple but powerful one, if you work hard and play by the rules you should be given a chance to go as far as your God-given ability will take you.” (qtd. in Hochschild 18)

Moreover, those tenets of success help us identify the elements and characteristics in pursuing the American dream, which could be achieved by everyone who has the will and commitment to overcome the obstacles and work hard to reach their goals regardless of their ascriptive traits, family background, or personal history, however the pursue of the American dream consists only of reasonable anticipation without any promise of success, because pursuing the dream requires seizing opportunities and making actions in order to achieve the desired goal. (Hochschild 18)

Even though, the ideal of the American dream made the United States one of the strongest and prosperous nations in the world in the nineteenth century, by offering the chance of economic opportunity and upward mobility to everyone who has the will to work hard, and the commitment to make his own dream into reality, by the turn of twentieth century the American dream lost its influence in the swamp of lust and greed for quick profit that poisoned the American economy which led to a severe economic recession known as the Great Depression.

1.2.3. The Great Depression

The Great Depression is an economic event that affected the United States that lasted for more than a decade after the Stock Market Crash on 29 October 1929, After an era that witnessed unprecedented improvement in the American economy and

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society referred to as the Age of Prosperity or the Roaring Twenties¹⁰, a decade, in which prosperity and lavish life style prevailed to almost every American citizen, who had opportunities through hard work to achieve their own version of the American Dream, and enjoy financial affluence and high standard of living that the technological development and new inventions brought about.

Consequently, the Great Depression transpired to be known for its worst and long-lasting economic collapse in the history of the modern industrial world (McElvaine and Robert). Although the devastating effects of the Great Depression began in the United States, its destructive influence spread out to the most of the world's industrial countries. Therefore, they witnessed a rapid decline in manufacturing and in sales of goods, resulting in a severe business downturn, and the rise of unemployment and lay-offs. Hence people's lives were destroyed by the loss of their jobs, homes, and savings, leading many of them to depend on charity in order to survive. (McElvaine and Robert)

The depression was the consequence of different serious weaknesses in the United States' economy, such as unevenly distributed wealth, grave failure of modern banking system, and post-war economic crisis overseas that devastated the rapid growth of the American economy, and brought about the stock market crash¹¹ of 1929, which announced the beginning of the Great depression, (McElvaine and Robert) even though, the precedent decade was distinguished and known for its unprecedented economic growth and prosperity.

The growth of economy in the modern age was enhanced as a result of the improvement in the efficiency of production of modern industries, which made even larger profits for the American economy. However, incomes were distributed unevenly, and the remarkable gains in the productivity during the 1920s was monopolized by the

¹⁰ The decade of the 1920s, especially in America, when economic growth, technological change, and the loosening of social codes encouraged a lively and uninhibited youth culture centered on the automobile and jazz music. (Roaring Twenties)

¹¹ Stock market crash of 1929, also called the Great Crash, a sharp decline in U.S. stock market values in 1929 that contributed to the Great Depression of the 1930s. (stock market crash of 1929)

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business owners, while the workers got a fairly small share of the wealth produced, in addition to the huge cuts that were made by income-tax¹² rate which worsened their wages. (McElvaine and Robert)

Furthermore, prosperity could continue only if the demand was able to grow as rapidly as the supply, the innovation of “credit” that was produced in the 1920s provided loans for the consumers in order to maintain the continuity of the consumption, therefore the continuity of the production. (McElvaine and Robert) In point of fact loans exacerbated the problem by allowing consumers to “buy now, and pay later” (McElvaine and Robert). People started to buy the things they do not need with the money they do not own, resulting in the accumulation of serious debts which they could not even afford to repay.

Due to the devastating effects of the waging wars that swept across Europe in the First World War, European economies were damaged gravely and production declined exponentially. As a matter of fact, American farmers and industry owners strove to generate more wealth by expanding their production to meet the high demand of farm goods and weaponry in the war zones in Europe. (McElvaine and Robert) Unexpectedly, after the war, farmers and industries became in a harsh competition with an over-supplied international market, thus prices fell, and they were unable to sell their products for a profit.

Furthermore, the American bankers granted heavy and unwisely loans for the European borrowers. Unfortunately, after the war, they were in constant struggle to repay their debts. Hence, the United States fell in a severe economic downturn that weakened the international banking structure and made it unstable by the late 1920s. (McElvaine and Robert) .

One of the main causes of The Great Depression appeared in the emergence of new tendencies during the early decades of the twentieth century such as Darwinism and social determinism that affected economic policy as well as the social structure that

¹² A tax on the earnings of a person or corporation, which is paid for the government, and it is the largest source of government revenues in most developed countries.

appeared in the distribution of wealth unevenly among the social classes by giving the lion's share of wealth for high social classes at the expense of the working class, resulting in unprecedented inflation in the economy that led to the free fall of prices and caused the Stock Market Crash of 1929.

The following will analyse these new tendencies and theories that have major influence in the deterioration of the structure of the American Economy and Society as well.

1.2.4. Social Darwinism and Determinism

The English naturalist Charles Darwin developed the theory of evolution through his prominent work *On the Origins of Species by Means of Natural Selection* that was published in 1859. By the recent development in the application of the evolutionary theory to the social behaviour, so-called socio-biology, as Ruse pointed out, scientists and philosophers endeavour to “confirm and extend Darwin’s own thesis about the key to [understanding] human moral behaviour lying ultimately in the mechanism of natural selection” (Ruse 420).

By the same token, Human evolution is set in motion through the competition for the sustainable resources which only the fittest in the struggle could possess, Ruse explains that:

[With] the essential scientific background. Many more organisms are born than can possibly survive and, more importantly, reproduce. This sets up a “struggle” for resources. The winners in the struggle (by definition the fitter) tend to have features not possessed by the losers. Given enough time and enough generations (Ruse 420).

As a result, the natural selection allows the fittest to survive and eventually reproduce, leading human beings to change or evolve in order to adapt to the new environmental struggles, because it is crucial to bear in mind that the thus-produced organisms after the selection, no longer exist in any old fashion, but they function

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according to the adaptations of characteristics of the last successful survival and reproduction. (Ayala and Valentine I)

In the past century natural selection was fully explained with the development of the theory of heredity (genetics). Furthermore, the introduction of molecular theories and techniques identified how variations are produced and transmitted, as a consequence to genetically based variations that appeared randomly. (Ayala and Valentine I)

By the development of the theory of heredity in the preceding century and the introduction of molecular theories and techniques, in which the variations are produced and transmitted through natural selection, according to Francisco J. Ayala, the genetically based variations appear randomly, not in the sense of being uncaused, because the causes that made those variations are obvious, but in the sense of not being dictated by needs, and therefore there are no specific direction or teleology in the process of evolution. (59-90)

The survival in the struggle of existence is trusted in various adaptations which proved their worth and become innate dispositions that maintained human beings through their struggle until they managed to survive. As a result, humans' behaviour and actions are bound to the innate dispositions that constrain and govern their mind. Furthermore, those innate dispositions which are idiosyncratically human have been created and shaped by natural selection, because as Lumsden and Wilson argued "proto humans who thought in such ways were fitter than those proto humans who did not." (qtd. in Ruse 423)

The innate dispositions, also known technically as epigenetic rules, as Michael Ruse has noted, are based upon two levels. At the primary level the innate dispositions process the raw information absorbed from the external world. Whereas for the secondary level, the epigenetic rules serve as organizers of humans' thoughts and desires, as a result they control and guide their actions according to the rules and by making sense of the information from without. (Ruse 423)

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Concerning the evolutionary ethics, there is a long history of attempts to put ethics on a sound evolutionary basis, but unfortunately, those endeavours were led to failure due to many reasons on the core aspects of evolution that are apparent for most biologist and philosophers, through the notion of the struggle in the race for survival, and the possession of resources that natural selection presents. Evolution seems to preach a doctrine of selfishness, since only the fittest could surpass in the struggle and obtain as much resources as possible at the expense of the less fit, the quality which is considered as the very antithesis of moral behaviour, that characterises the fittest in order to guarantee his survival and therefore his reproduction. (Ruse 424)

Furthermore, even if morality is a human adaptation, the true motives and drives behind human's actions are concealed; even though, his actions and behaviour seems to be of a good intention they may be for the sake of expediency. (Ruse 424)

Moreover, through the empirical case for the evolution of morality, the true nature of natural selection appeared to be in contradiction with the belief of many post-Darwin evolutionist, because natural selection can never promote adaptations which are of benefit to the group at the expense of the individual. Therefore as Dawkins has noted that:

Any cooperation or working together must rebound ultimately to the benefit of the individuals involved rather than residing at some higher level of pay-off, whether to the population, the species, or an even larger unit (qtd. in Ruse 424).

In addition, according to Wilson and Maynard, the theoretical realization about the functioning of selection have paved the way for the discovery of the wide extent that animals actually cooperate and work together in the wild (qtd. in Ruse 424). For this reason, evolutionists have appropriated the term "altruism" which is a pervasive biological phenomena, that means cooperation, even at the cost to oneself, without any implications of intention, of wanting to do good, or even of consciousness. (Ruse 424)

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Consequently, evolutionists have built a number of highly plausible models to explain and predict "altruism." The first model "kin selection," as Hamilton has noted, "[it] explains cooperation in terms of the biological benefits that accrue to an individual whenever close relatives reproduce" (7). And for the second model, "reciprocal altruism" as Trivers mentioned, is the model that "emphasizes the need of each of us for help at various times and the consequently favourable cost-benefits of being prepared to offer help in return". (46)

Due to the fact that humans are almost in constant need of "altruism" to resist and challenge the hard circumstances and struggle for the survival, the strength of human being relies upon solidarity and unity with others. Even though the origin of "altruism" lay in a cause-and-effect feedback process, it is an agreeable fact, since modern human on one's own would be practically helpless in the midst of the trials and tribulations of the modern life. (Ruse 425).

Among the epigenetic rules, there are some rules which make us "altruistic" and persuade us to cooperate with other fellow humans, by making us think we ought to help each other; in effect, for the sake of achieving "altruism" (in the biological sense) our biology makes us altruistic (in the moral sense). Furthermore, natural selection has imbued us with thoughts of right and wrong, good and bad in order to break our naturally selfish mode. By the same token, Ruse suggested that "oughtness" or morality are essential to free human beings from their selfish cocoon (qtd. in Ruse 426). And once human beings are freed from their selfish cocoon, they will cooperate according to morally based interests in which benefits are balanced and shared evenly among them. (426).

John Rawls suggested that in order to avoid the bad consequences of human selfishness of getting as much out of life and society as possible, the society ought to be balanced by handing out goods and making demands according to human's needs and abilities. (Ruse 427)

However, because humans have certain aggressive tendencies as a result of their biology, the attempts of the traditional evolutionary ethics to justify human capacity for

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morality on the grounds that it evolved, proved to be wrong, since value finds no foundation of this kind within Darwinian Theory. (Ruse 427) Therefore, as Huxley went on to highlight that "at this level, morality consists in opposing nature rather than in quietly acquiescing in its demands." (qtd. in Ruse 427)

Moreover, in the argument of Ruse against the traditionalist, he sought to emphasize that evolution explains not justifies the origin of morality and therefore there can be no ultimate support for morality in the sense of reasoned absolute foundations, because morality is part of the makeup of human beings, and due to the binding of a shared morality, human rights are preserved and they are fairly and squarely treated, otherwise, some of them would no longer resist in the struggle for their survival and then soon they would be selected out of existence. (427)

Ruse went on to highlight that the moral capacity is no more than an adaptation like hands and teeth, furthermore, he recognizes that human tendency is based on insight into objective reality as Hume argued that: "vice and virtue ... may be compared to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which...are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind" (469). In conclusion, humans are bound to think about morality as more than a mere adaptation, otherwise they would not be "altruists."

According to Michael Ruse "Aristotle clearly stated that morality presupposes and demands some sort of freedom, some sort of ability and opportunity to put one's will into play." (qtd.in Ruse 428) However the assumption of biological approach that human actions are determined by their natural genes and everything about them is a function of the forces of evolution has doubted the possibility of human freedom, therefore, through the senses of determinism Ruse sought to provide an explanation for the influence of morality upon the genes that could eventually result in human freedom. (428)

Casual determinism: is based upon regularities that are expressed by scientists as the laws of nature, which are necessary in order to bridge between world's object and their events, what is known as cause and effect, due to the fact that every human thought or action is an effect of past events and eventually a cause of future events, human

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thoughts and actions seemed to be determined by the effects and influences of past events that result in determined behaviour, therefore, human beings have no free will or genuine freedom. (Ruse 429)

Biological determinism: states that human beings are the component of particular genetic constitution that is built upon the evolution of natural selection that determines human nature. Therefore morality is determined since human beings have a natural tendency to be moral just as they have the natural tendency to walk on two legs. In this course of thought their morality is therefore determined for them. (Ruse 432)

Yet on the other side, because of the fact that thoughts, behaviours, and intentions of human beings can be altered with the changes that may occur within their environment and especially their culture, Michael Ruse therefore argued that human beings are affected by their biology in conjunction with the surrounding environment, and it is undeniable that human thoughts and behaviours are malleable to the changes of their environment. (433)

Control determinism: states that the true freedom in the context of morality depends on the absence of constraints. As a result, the existence of internal constraints can be so powerful and overwhelming by which humans are rendered to be incapable to exercise their freedom, because their actions are determined and no moral fault or praise can be ascribed. (Ruse 435)

According to evolution, human actions are bound by their emotions and feelings which constrained humans' freedom because they are controlled by their genes and through them they are determined by the forces of natural selection. (Ruse 435)

Due to the fact that morality provides humans with the flexibility that enables them to respond according to the situation, Michael Ruse believed that humans can obtain freedom within the capacity of responding to their situation. (Ruse 435)

As a result Michael Ruse went on to highlight that:

“Freedom according to my conception lies in our being able to control our emotions. We rule them rather than having them rule us. [which means]

that we have the ability to bring our emotions into line with and to the service of other “higher” aims or wishes that we have” (436).

The issue of determinism and free will were highly discussed in the literary movement of the twentieth century such as naturalism, a literary movement which was founded by the French theorist Emile Zola in 1880s and reached its peak in the United States by the turn of the twentieth century, in which naturalist authors sought to portray an accurate image of the unfortunate Americans who were in constant struggle against their determined circumstances and ordeals.

1.3. Twentieth – Century American Literature

By the turn of the twentieth century, Traditional literary theories proved to be incapable of keeping up with the rapid pace of changes that affected the American economy and society, due to the industrial development and the emergence of new tendencies that altered the structure of economy, society, and culture during the early decades of the twentieth century. Thus, new literary theories emerged to cope with the rapid changes by leaving behind old conventions and decorum and paving the way for more realistic and accurate description of remarkable social injustice, great wars, natural disasters and economic recession.

1.3.1. Naturalism

American Naturalism is a literary movement that flourished in America in the late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century, despite of the first appearance of this literary movement was in France in 1880s by the distinguished theorist and founder of naturalism, Emile Zola, Naturalism movement reached its zenith of achievement in America, thanks to Frank Norris, one of the first American proponents and developer of naturalism in the United States (Milne 534).

Naturalism is an offshoot of realism, both theories share many characteristics, therefore, naturalist writers similarly as their realist counterparts, endeavour to depict life in their novels from an objective, unbiased perspective, presenting the factual

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elements of the story in an accurate, simple, and clear manner, paying extra attention to details, by describing the setting, background, and appearances of their characters in their environment, and providing a notion of realistic feeling and a sense of truth to the work. (Milne 543)

As Abrams pointed out, naturalism provides an even more accurate depiction of life than realism, and it is a mode of fiction that was developed in accordance with particular philosophical thesis that emerged as the product of post-Darwinian biology in the nineteenth century. (261)

Even though, both naturalism and realism are interlinked literary genres. Norris argues in one of his later critical pieces, that naturalism is the opposite of realism, he says:

[Realism] is occupied with the everyday behaviour we encounter in our usual lives, whereas naturalism is concerned with the unusual and extraordinary, with life on a social level unfamiliar to us, or with happenings unlikely to occur in life as we know it (qtd. in Frohock 8).

Moreover, unlike realists, naturalists apply scientific principles and methods on their literary works, in order to understand the instincts and the drives which stimulate characters' actions in accordance with their environment, by relying heavily on the notion of determinism, causality, explanation, and experimentation. (Habib 471)

Moreover, according to Gillies and Aurelea, naturalistic fiction and drama tries to understand individual's struggle to adapt to historically determined circumstances through taking a major interest in describing the environment, not merely as a setting, but as an element of action. (157)

Furthermore, naturalists believe in the notion in which human beings exist entirely and only in the order of nature without the interference of any religious or spiritual aspects, that are beyond the natural world; thus, according to naturalism, human beings are considered as a higher-order animals whose characters and

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behaviours are driven by inherited compulsive instincts and drives which are entirely determined by two kinds of forces, heredity and environment (Abrams 261).

Hence, in Emile Zola's essay "Le Roman Expérimental" meaning "The Experimental Novel" in 1880, he provided an explanation for the naturalist novelist, that since characters' fate are conditioned and determined by factors and forces beyond their control such as heredity and environment, naturalist role must subject believable characters to experimental conditions, in order to understand and find the truth, because according to naturalists, the truth is found in natural laws and since nature functions according to consistent principals, patterns and laws, truth is therefore consistent. (Milne 533-536)

Consequently, Abrams pointed out that many naturalist writers:

[endeavour] to present their subjects with scientific objectivity and with elaborate documentation, by choosing characters who exhibit strong animal drives such as greed and sexual desire, and who are helpless victims both of glandular secretions within and of sociological pressures without (262).

Moreover, the theory of naturalism, lay great emphasis on direct observation, factuality and experience to reach the general truth, by addressing themes of socioeconomic conflicts for the sake of contrasting the vicious conditions of the poor with those of the upper classes in urban and rural societies. (Milne 654)

In addition to the application of the methods of physical science on naturalistic writings, Habib mentioned that:

Some naturalists also drew on the Darwinian conception of nature and attempted to express the struggle for survival, as embodied in the connections between individuals and their environments, often portraying the physiologically and psychically determined dimensions of their characters as overwhelmed by accidental circumstances rather than acting rationally, freely, and heroically upon the world (471).

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Similarly, Keith Newlin stated that “naturalism combines objectivity of presentation with a philosophical determinism that challenges or negates the possibility of free will by emphasizing on the external forces rather than rational choices as determining factors in human lives.” (272)

As a result, naturalism tends to shed light on the lower-class characters who are subjected to the complexity of their environment, and they are in constant struggle to overcome the obstacles that surround them. (Newlin 272)

Therefore, naturalistic novels are usually characterised by a tragic end at the conclusion of the story, where the protagonist of the story falls apart because of multiple compulsions that restrain his endeavours in overcoming his struggles (Abrams 262).

To conclude, naturalism is “an adaptive genre, changing its contours over the course of times” (Newlin 5). This movement remained in constant development until it drew its curtains revealing a new kind of literary genre known as modernism.

1.3.2. Modernism

After naturalism has reached its peak in the United States and Europe In the early decades of the twentieth century, a new literary genre has emerged known as "modernism".

This literary movement appeared in 1890 mainly in France, but it was at its most active and fruitful achievements in America from shortly before the first world war (1914-1918) until after the end of the second World War (1939-1945), (Cuddon 515) because of the rapid changes that came after the first World War, due to the catastrophic scenes of the war, natural disasters, and the great depression. As a result, western civilization's traditional literary modes proved to be inadequate to represent the harsh and the vicious realities of the post-World Wars. (Abrams 167)

Consequently, a new phenomenon called the avant-garde (a military metaphor: "advance-guard") emerged as a prominent feature that characterized modernism, in which a group of modernist artists and authors represented themselves as "alienated" from the established order. They deliberately endeavoured to infringe the accepted

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conventions and decorum and purposefully shifted away from the traditional style by creating ever new artistic forms and styles where they introduced neglected, and sometimes forbidden subject matters. (Abrams 168)

According to Peter Childs, in order to make the old conventions and properties new again and to cope with modern events and developments;

Modernist writers therefore struggled, in Ezra Pound's brief phrase, to 'make it new', to modify if not overturn existing modes of representation, partly by pushing them towards the abstract or the introspective, and to express the new sensibilities of their time. (4)

Furthermore, through their writings, modernist authors sought to raise the reader's awareness to the many changes that have taken place at the period starting from the outbreak of the first World War in 1914 until after the end of the second World War in 1945, where unprecedented chaos had invaded the whole world, which altered people's perception about how they could live their lives in the midst of the extreme poverty, violence and bloodshed that caused by the great wars which led to the downturn of economy, in addition to the invention of the atomic bomb which threaten not only the nations of the world but also the natural environment for a massive destruction. (Abrams 168)

As Hugh Witemeyer stated, "modernism may be characterized as a revulsion against urban, industrial, and bourgeois society, with its technologies of mass warfare" (qtd. in Pearson 14) .

Therefore, this movement as Peter Childs pointed out, "came associated with attempts to render human subjectivity in ways more real than realism." (3)

As a result, modernist writers sought "to present consciousness, perception, emotion, meaning and individual's relation to society through interior monologue, stream of consciousness, tunnelling, defamiliarisation, rhythm, irresolution." (Childs 3)

Modernism came as a response by artists and writers to the various changes that humanity ever witnessed by the turn of the twentieth century including industrialization, urban society, and the great wars, that brought chaos around of the globe, in addition to the technological development and new philosophical ideas that transformed and

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reinterpreted the western world by Carl Marx, Sigmund Freud and Charles Darwin, who respectively changed the established notions of society, individuals, and nature through their prominent contributions. (Childs 20).

As a result, modernist writers tend to leave the old conventions behind, in an attempt to embrace and cope with the ever fast changing world, as Lucy Tantamount addresses Walter Bidlake that:

[y]ou can't cart a wagon-load of ideals and romanticisms with you these days. When you travel by aeroplane, you must leave your heavy baggage behind. The good old-fashioned soul was all right when we lived slowly. But it's too ponderous nowadays. There's no room for it in the aeroplane. (qtd. by Gillies and Aurelea 1).

Therefore, according to Lucy Tantamount's demonstration, we have to sacrifice the weight of the past conventions and properties, in order to explore the new grounds on the horizon that the fast changing modern life have occupied. (Mary and Aurelea 1)

Similarly, according to the widely-used *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, Cuddon pointed out that the literary modernism

[r]eveals a breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions" which provides "fresh ways of looking at man's position and function in the universe and many (in some cases remarkable) experiments in form and style. It is particularly concerned with language and how to use it (representationally or otherwise) and with writing itself (516).

In a nutshell, many writers of the twentieth century endeavoured to cope with the massive changes by portraying an accurate image of social challenges and struggles through the lenses of naturalism and modernism the literary movements that reached their peak of achievements by the turn of the twentieth century and emerged to cope

and fit with the harshness of many events that have taken place in America and damaged the American economy, society, and culture and reshaped their structure.

1.4. Conclusion

The industrial development of the early decades of the twentieth century improved the United States' economy exponentially and its prevailing influence brought massive changes to the American society and culture, by offering job opportunities to everyone who sought to reach upward mobility through hard work regardless their economic or social background, making the United States one of unique melting pot that attracts more emigrants to live the American Dream.

However, the age of prosperity and affluent lifestyle brought to an end, as a result of the Stock Market Crash in 1929, that paved the way to almost a decade of great depression, where millions of Americans become unemployed and left to struggle with the harshness of economic recession that provoked severe competition for gaining wealth at the expense of the unfortunate, resulting in the deterioration of the American dream that becomes a myth, which is unattainable by everyone.

The next chapter highlights the issue of emigration in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and the struggle of migrants to achieve their dreams that were confronted with hostility by locals and authorities of California.

Chapter Two: Emigration in *The Grapes of Wrath*

2.1. Introduction

2.2. John Steinbeck's Life

2.3. John Steinbeck's Works

2.4. Summary of the Novel

2.5. Main Characters

2.6. Determinism Vs the American Dream

2.7. Emigration

2.8. Conclusion

2.1. Introduction

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck sought to provide a very human perspective on the harsh lives of migrants, personified by the Joads and many other families who became homeless and jobless between overnight, and set on the roads toward California, the land of abundant opportunities in a desperate search for works to feed their families and improve their situation and relieve the harshness of their struggle.

However, those migrant families endured great hardships and vicious conditions along the way of their travel to California and by their arrival to the promised land, their hope for a good job and a better life was scattered because of the harassment of authorities and the hatred of the locals who feared the unwelcomed guests of desperate emigrants to steal their lands and job opportunities.

2.2. John Steinbeck's Life

John Steinbeck was born on 27 Feb, 1902 in Salinas, California, the only son of John Ernest and Olive Steinbeck, his father was a flour-mill manager and his mother was a school teacher. (Bloom 10)

As a child growing up with nature in the fertile and sharply beautiful Salinas valley, Steinbeck learned to appreciate the surrounding natural environment which developed in him an outstanding power of observation and precise description of nature which are demonstrated in his writings (Shilinglaw).

He wrote in the opening Chapter of *East of Eden* (1952), "I remember my childhood names for grasses and secret flowers...I remember where a toad may live and what times the birds awaken in the summer, and what trees and seasons smelled like." (qtd. in Shilinglaw)

Shilinglaw went on to highlight that at the age of fifteen, Steinbeck was encouraged by his freshman English teacher to pursue his passion in writing and decided

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to be a writer, he devoted hours in his upstairs bedroom, living in a world of his creation and imagination, writing stories and poems.

Moreover, his enrolment at Stanford University in 1919 was only to satisfy his parents' wishes. However, he signed for few courses of his interest such as, Classical and British Literature, Creative Writing, and some Science courses. He was obsessed by writing, even the President of the English Club remarked that Steinbeck attends meeting routinely in order to read stories aloud. He pointed out that "[Steinbeck] had no other interests or talents that I could make out. He was a writer, but he was that and nothing else" (qtd. in Shilinglaw)

Steinbeck used to scratch for a living by working in Spreckels Sugar factory near Salinas and in ranches that spread throughout the state, where eventually he encountered and worked closely with migrants and itinerates. The connection and the relationship which was established with his fellow workers deepened his empathy toward the deprived, the isolated and dislocated workers who are the victim of a severe circumstance striving to earn their living, an empathy that became one the defining characteristics of Steinbeck's prominent works. (Brain and J. Meyer I)

Even though Steinbeck studied at the Stanford University for five years period, he was not a dedicated college student and he had never graduated. In 1925 he left Stanford University and managed to move to New York City to work as a free-lance writer, the stories that he had written were rejected by Robert M. McBride & Company. Unfortunately his endeavours in New York failed gravely and he went back to California (John Steinbeck - Biographical). A decade later he even wrote about his tough experience in New York, expressing about his deep loathing: "I guess I hate New York because I had a thin, lonely, hungry time of it there. . . I was scared thoroughly." (qtd. in Brian and Meyer I)

After his return to California, he worked in many odd jobs until he finally settled in his primary employment as a caretaker for the Bingham estate at Lake Tahoe (Brian and Meyer I). During his work at the Lake Tahoe, he drew his inspiration from the nature that surrounded him, which as a result influenced him to become interested in

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Thoreau and naturalism's ideas, which sparked his creativity to write his first Novel, *Cup of Gold* (1929). (Bloom 10)

In 1930, he got married to Carol Henning, in spur-of-the-moment ceremony, and settled into his family's summer cottage in Pacific Grove where he pursued his passion for writing. Subsequently, Steinbeck met his intellectual companion Edward F. Ricketts, who contributed in inspiring Steinbeck in the creation of six novels including *The Grapes of Wrath*. (Shilinglaw)

After the publication of *Grapes of Wrath* novel, that not only became the best-selling book of 1939, but also obtained Pulitzer Price, the novel caught Hollywood interest as a result of the tremendous exposure which it possessed. Therefore, The Hollywood producer Daryl F. Zanuck paid Steinbeck \$ 75,000 (slightly over \$1 million in contemporary dollars) for the film rights to *the Grapes of Wrath* novel within a month of its publication in March 1939. (William H. and Nancy K. 220)

Steinbeck urged that the film must be straight and undiluted and threatened Zanuck that he would use the \$ 75,000 he received to sue him if the movie altered the perspective and the message that he strove to convey through his novel. However Zanuck reassured that he believe in the story and there will be no alteration of the truth that it conveys, it was therefore released within less than one year, an extremely short time for such a major film. (Benson 409)

Steinbeck left his wife Carol after deterioration in their relationship, and he established a new life on the East coast, where he set to work on his next novel *The Moon is Down*, and many other wartime projects. On March 29, 1943 Steinbeck and Gwyn got married. With his new wife, Steinbeck had two sons Thom Steinbeck and John Steinbeck IV, but nevertheless their marriage started falling apart shortly after his second son's birth and ended in divorce in 1948. (Shilinglaw)

He was elected to the academy of Arts and Letters, met Elaine Scott, a former actress and manager who introduced him to Roger and Hammerstein, who eventually bought the rights to a new play *Burning Bright* of Steinbeck. (Shilinglaw)

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After Elaine and Steinbeck were married on December 28, 1950, "[Steinbeck] dedicated to working on *East of Eden* a family history for the benefit of Thom and John" (Bloom 13). Shilinglaw noted that the novel "*East of Eden* contains those turbulent emotions surrounding the subjects of wife, children, family, and fatherhood [of Steinbeck]". Soon after its publication the novel became in the bestseller list of New York.

Due to his greatest achievement in Literature, John Steinbeck was awarded The Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962 "for his realistic and imaginative writings, combining as they do sympathetic humour and keen social perception." (John Steinbeck - Biographical)

Steinbeck remains one of the most influential and illustrious American writers in the 20th century. In his life time he wrote sixteen novels, a collection of short stories, and four screen plays. (Shilinglaw)

His writings filled with empathy and perspicacious remarks, he believed through his writings that peace can be spread by understanding each other, by shedding the light on the deprive he sought to empathize with them in their struggles in the harshness of life's circumstances. He proposed in a 1938 journal entry: "In every bit of honest writing in the world, there is a base theme. Try to understand men, if you understand each other. Knowing a man well never leads to hate and nearly always lead to love." (Shilinglaw).

After his return from Vietnam War where he worked for *Newsday* as a war correspondent, he was helpless suffering from serious back injury, his health condition exacerbated therefrom, and he passed away on December 20, 1968, (Bloom 14) and He was buried next to his parents and maternal grandparents at the Hamilton family gravesite in Salinas. (Benson 197)

2.3. John Steinbeck's Works

John Steinbeck's works are in the canon of the most influential American Literature that were translated to different languages. His increasing popularity was due

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to the inspiring books that he wrote in both naturalistic and modernistic style in which he combined sympathetic humour and keen social perception, shedding the light on the marginalized and dispossessed Americans, focusing mainly on the poor and the working-class people. In his writings he sought to convey a palpable empathy for ordinary folks. During his forty-year career he devoted an astute description of the American life in the critical periods between the two great wars and the cold war that the United States have witnessed during the first decades of the preceding century.

His prominent works are *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), the novel which tells the story of a poor family that fled the devastating Dust Bowl (1939), describing their struggle in their journey from Oklahoma to California in a hope for a better life. Moreover, he wrote *East of Eden* (1952), one of his most ambitious work in which he turns his attention from social injustice to human psychology. (John Steinbeck)

See appendix for John Steinbeck's list of works in addition to many others that were published posthumously.

2.4. Summary of the Novel

John Steinbeck prefaced his story with the Joad family who evicted their lands like many other tenant families due to the effects of the Dust Bowl that devastated the red country of Oklahoma, in which thousands of farms were dusted resulting in the loss of crops and livelihood of sharecroppers who lived in small farms for generations on which they had sustained their families by growing cotton.

Young Tom Joad who is recently paroled after spending four years in prison returns to his father's place and find it deserted like nobody has lived there for years, "The Reverend Casy and young Tom stood on the hill and looked down on the Joad place... 'Jesus!' he said at last. 'Hell musta popped here. There ain't nobody livin' there.'" (Steinbeck 40)

Fortunately, Tom Joad learned from Muley Graves, one of the neighbours who refused to leave his father's land, that his family went to his uncle John's place where

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they prepare to leave toward California very soon, “they been choppin’ cotton, all of ’em, even the kids an’ your grampa. Gettin’ money together so they can shove on west.” (Steinbeck 46)

Furthermore, in addition to the great losses, the enclosure process operated by the banks forced the tenant farmers to evict and flee their homes and lands by claiming that the tenant system is no longer raising any profit to feed the monster which is the bank that is “sick” due to the profits deficiency, and replacing the tenant system with advanced machinery that generates more profits for the bank than the farmers do,

“[a]nd at last the owner men came to the point. The tenant system won’t work anymore. One man on a tractor can take the place of twelve or fourteen families. Pay him a wage and take all the crop. We have to do it. We don’t like to do it. But the monster’s sick..” (Steinbeck 33)

Moreover, one of the serious consequences that caused the disastrous Dust Bowl is the Unsustainable industrial farming practices such as the monoculture of cotton without crop rotation which caused the soil to die, and became prone to strong winds that lifted the dust in the air and created enormous dust storms.

Therefore, even though the land has been possessed and inherited by the farmers’ families through many generations, the callousness of the owners who work for the bank seized this opportunity to blame the farmers of over cultivating the land and make it prone to the devastating effects of the Dust Bowl, “[t]he owner men sat in the cars and explained. You know the land is poor. You’ve scabbled at it long enough, God knows... You know what cotton does to the land; robs it, sucks all the blood out of it.” (Steinbeck 32)

Consequently, the tenant farmer and their families were forced to evict their own lands and homes, by bringing tractors that went over the fields like insects driven by soulless men who tractored straight through their homes and knock them into their foundations, despite that they have nowhere to go.

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Everything is lost and nothing will stop them to take the risk to migrate to California, the land of abundant opportunities, which becomes a beacon of hope for thousands of tenant families who piled their trucks and set on the road in a mysterious journey toward California.

This resulted in the creation of massive migration toward the west as “species” uprooted from their lands intensified the prevailing of natural selection competition that emerged as a result of the greed and the lust of the bank, through the dissolution of the tenant system and the confiscation of their lands and homes.

As a result, the inability of the bank and the landowners to perceive the whole picture of their actions, led them into the well of their destruction, because through their oppressive tactics to boost their profits at the expense of the migrant farmers, they made the oppressed even stronger than ever before, due to their unity and cooperation to overcome the obstacles, providing a helping hand to everyone despite their need and extreme poverty, holding in the same hope of reaching the bountiful land of California, where they could find plentiful job opportunities and by the sweat of their brows and through hard work they could afford to own a house and a beautiful garden and live a prosperous life.

The Joad family like many other families that have been evicted from their homes, loaded their truck to the top and headed to California, making the highway 66 their temporary home “from Mississippi to Bakersfield” (Steinbeck 118)

On their road to California, many were having a sense of hostility toward the poor migrants who suspect them and perceive them as soulless thieves who could steal anything from them.

While the Joad family were stopping in a gas station, they met Ivy and Sairy Wilson, whose car has been broken down, though Mrs Wilson was suffering from sickness that kept her awake all night, she noticed that Grandpa was tired and exhausted from the long voyage, and invited him into their tent to have some rest. Unfortunately, grandpa took his last few breaths and then passed away. They managed to bury him by

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their own hands, because they couldn't afford to bury him according to the law, otherwise they will not be able to reach California due to the shortage of money.

As a token of appreciation, the Joads offered to fix the Wilsons' broken car and agreed to set off to California together and help each other to find a job and assist one another "as ma Joad says that, "each'll help each, an' we'll all git to California." (Steinbeck 148)

Throughout the road toward California, migrants become tougher in overcoming obstacles due to their solidarity and union as one family. Their kindness and acts of hospitality toward each other alleviated their sufferings and strengthened their will to overcome the struggles in order to reach the same hope and the same destination. They used to make camps near each other at night gossiping and chatting about their dreams and plans as soon as they reach their promised land of California.

However, concerning the banks and land owners who were busy in satisfying their lust at the expense of the people, their greed "for the quality of owning freezes [them] forever into 'I,' and cuts [them] off forever from 'we.'" (Steinbeck 152) Consequently, they lost the warmth of solidarity and the unity of the people, who were thrown from their own properties to become overnight homeless in the roads, having nothing except the hope and unity that strengthens their will to survive and keeps them moving forward despite the challenges and difficulties they're facing along their journey, as Ma Joad pointed out that the strength is within the unity of the family and she said that "[a]ll we got is the family unbroke. Like a bunch a cows, when the lobos are ranging, stick all together. I ain't scared while we're all here, all that's alive, but I ain't gonna see us bust up." (Steinbeck 169)

In spite of the difficulties that faced the migrants throughout their unknown journey to the land of opportunity, they sought to help each other and stick together as one family sharing the same struggle and the same hope, and as the night falls they set up camps together to feel as they're safe at home where neighbours around them holding their backs.

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One night as they come close to California, The Joad family met a man in a camp in which they were residing, who is on his way back from California, he tried to warn the families in the camp about the false propaganda that the handbills are conveying about the availability of the jobs in the trenches of California. He explains that these handbills were distributed and seen by thousands of people who are flooding to California from different states, and hungry to feed their dying children at any cost, the aim of distributing those handbills is to attract as many hungry workers as possible in order to have the ability to lower the wages at the minimum and increase their profits. The man insisted that this fact “Took two kids dead, took my wife dead to show me.” (Steinbeck 190)

Despite the fact that the man was telling the scary truth about how the promised land of California treated the migrants cruelly by building a sense of hostility toward the newcomers and endeavour to protect their interests and increase their profits at the expense of the hungry emigrants, the Joad family and many others were obliged to resume their journey, because they have nothing left in their homes, they hold in the hope of building a new home somewhere else.

In their struggle to achieve California, many migrants were overwhelmed by the harshness of the competition, because they could not adapt to the changes throughout their journey to achieve their desired goal. Like grandpa, grandma also could no longer bear the severity of the situation due to the illness that affected her health. In spite of grandma’s extreme fever that affected her body, a marshal came into the tent and threatened the family that they cannot stay and they are not in their country telling them boldly that they are not welcomed to settle down in California and addressed them as “Okies.” (Steinbeck 214)

In the morning as the Joads are preparing to leave before getting trouble with the police, they were in bewilderment that the Wilsons could not continue their journey with them because Mrs. Wilson is very sick to handle the long voyage across California’s desert.

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The sympathy and generosity of the Joads was apparent when they left skillet of meat and potatoes along with two dollars for the Wilsons even though they were in abject poverty. Their souls in fact were abundant with kindness and solidarity by providing a helping hand to everyone in need even on trials and tribulations which strengthen their ability to resist and evolve in their struggle.

After crossing the Needles's desert, they reached the inspection point of California's border, the guards asked the Joads to unload their truck for inspection, but Ma Joad interfered and spoke irresistibly to the guards about grandma's severe sickness and that she needs to see a doctor as soon as possible because her illness has exacerbated, they allowed the Joads to move on and instructed them about the nearest doctor's cabinet. When Tom Joad pulls the car away to inquire about grandma's condition, Ma reassured him that she will be alright.

By the time they will arrive to California, and they have to keep going, even though grandma died long before they arrive to the borders, Ma Joad concealed the truth until they reached California and finally admitted about the death of grandma and that she kept it a secret in order to make sure that they cross the borders without any trouble.

As they continue to journey toward the west, the Joad family meet more unavoidable losses and confront with even difficult and vicious conditions. By their arrival to California they were driven to one of the Hoovervilles¹³ a place where a collection of poor houses are made by cardboard or scrap metal, that are created on the edge of the city to hold all the emigrants and their families in one place, the place where the police have complete control, launching raids as soon as emigrants agitate for the simplest demands such as good wages that commensurate with the long hours of hard work, in order to satisfy the needs of their starving families.

However, both the corrupted authorities along with contractors' greed seize the opportunity to exploit emigrant's weaknesses and hunger to feed their families at any

¹³ A collection of poor houses inhabited by homeless and unemployed often made by cardboard or scrap metal, on the edge of the city that developed in the United States during the Great Depression, and were named after President Hoover, who was blamed for the Depression. (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*)

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cost, they often come to the camps to offer them works at minimum wages putting them in a terrible dilemma whether to accept the job or starve to death.

After some confrontation with the contractor who sought to exploit the men, Tom insists to Ma that the family must leave the camp before the night falls, because it is going to be burned down due to the incident. On their way to the Government Camp, the Joad family were confronted with a detour where a crowd of furious men refused any desperate emigrants to get into their town before the cotton is ready to pick. As a result they forced the Joads to go back, Tom was anxious about their cruel and soulless acts toward them, Ma tried to sooth her frustrated Tom, and said “You got to have patience. Why, Tom—us people will go on livin’ when all them people is gone. Why, Tom, we’re the people that live. They ain’t gonna wipe us out. Why, we’re the people—we go on.” (Steinbeck 280).

Despite the confrontation Tom insisted to reach his destination and took the off-road and headed toward Weedpatch camp that they heard about, in which migrants could make their own laws to live peacefully under the protection of the government because deputies are no longer allowed to arrest anyone in the camp without a warrant, unless “if there was a big fight and maybe shooting [inside the camp,] a bunch of deputies could go in and clean out the camp.” (Steinbeck 296)

However, many attempts were made by the Association that were formed by the great owners to protect and maintain their interest, to destroy the government camp by provoking skirmishes among its inhabitants, were led to failure, thanks due to the strict management of the camp that ensures the safety and comfort of the migrants.

Furthermore, despite the abundance of fruit in the lush and fruitful ranches of California, the starving migrants were not allowed to benefit from the over ripped fruits that was burned or thrown in the river before their eyes, in order to maintain the prices. In addition to the scarcity of job opportunities near Weedpatch camp the Joad family were forced to leave the comfortable and peaceful government camp in a desperate endeavour to find a job in the north in order to provide Rose of Sharon with good nutrition because her health declined and she wasn't far from due.

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They eventually found a job for picking peaches in a ranch patrolled by police officers against protestants who were demanding for increase of wages. As soon as the Joad family accepted the job offer, they were escorted with many other families into the ranch and assigned into small and dirty houses. The Joad family unloaded the truck and then headed into the orchards to pick peaches.

After a tiring day, Ma Joad took the money collected from the work of the day to the ranch store to buy some groceries, however the expensive prices of goods exceeded her expectations, and she couldn't afford to buy all the things she needed to feed her family. The act of kindness of the clerk allowed her to pay him back with the next day's wages, though it wasn't permissible by the ranch's laws, and she highlighted for the clerk that "[i]f you're in trouble or hurt or need—go to poor people. They're the only ones that'll help—the only ones.'" (Steinbeck 376)

After dinner, Tom's curiosity about the strike led him to Jim Casy the preacher who sacrificed himself and took the blame of Hooverville dispute with the deputy in order to save Tom. Now he is sacrificing himself to defend the rights of the destitute migrants by holding a strike against the low wages that left thousands to starve to death because they couldn't afford enough food to feed their family. Unfortunately, the men holding the strike were soon surrounded by corrupted police men who protect the interests of the Association. They ended the devotion of Jim Casy for the cause by murdering him, resulting in the dissolution of the strike and the return of the wages to their former stream.

In a trembling rage for the killing of Jim Casy, Tom seized the heavy stick from the police man and killed him; however, the other police men hit Tom badly in his face and broke his nose. Fortunately he managed to escape from their grasp and lured to his assigned home. The Joads were astonished for what happened to Tom and decided to hide him and leave the ranch by morning, because the police are pursuing the wounded man who killed their partner and soon the rage spread among the Californians who also endeavoured to look for the murderer and hang him. The Joads successfully went out of the ranch and found a job for picking cotton lucky to get in early enough to have a

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place in the boxcars near the cotton field, while Tom hides in the bushes, until his faces heal from bruises.

At the end, while Tom was hiding he reflected on the notions of Casy and his sacrifice for the sake of the community, simply because he believed that each individual is one piece of a big soul. Therefore, Tom decided to follow the footsteps of Casy and devoted himself for a higher cause and reassured his worried mother that

I'll be all aroun' in the dark. I'll be ever'where—wherever you look. Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever they's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there...I'll be in the way kids laugh when they're hungry an' they know supper's ready. An' when our folks eat the stuff they raise an' live in the houses they build—why, I'll be there (Steinbeck 419).

2.5. Main Characters

Tom Joad: is the protagonist of the novel. At the opening of the story, Tom was recently paroled from prison and heading to his father's farm for the first time after four years of sentence for committing murder in a self-defence. Tom was one of the unique characters of the novel, his quick temper miraculously controlled and concealed behind his calmness. However, because he is a man of good intention, he rejects any form of injustice or oppression practiced upon the unfortunate people, he offers a helping hand to everyone in need. Consequently, his family depended on him in their endeavour to survive the struggle and vicious conditions throughout their journey toward California.

Ma Joad: one of the strongest and influential characters of the novel, **Ma Joad** is the mother of **Noah, Tom, Rose of Sharon, Ruthie,** and **Winfield**. Her passionate loving and caring for the family place her in uncomfortable position, where she makes countless sacrifices and strives to preserve the unity and strength of the family, to keep them move forward despite the obstacles that they face while journeying to California.

Jim Casy: is a former preacher who has lost his faith because he felt guilty for indulging in temptations that affected his spirit. However, throughout the novel **Casy**

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sought to find his spirit within the collective of society. **Casy** bravely sacrificed himself by saving Tom in a fight at a Hooverville against a deputy, and later he devoted his life to lead a strike to increase wages for the benefit of exploited workers. Unfortunately, to put an end to the strike, he was murdered by a police officer.

Pa Joad: is the head of the Joad family, he is a sharecropper like many others who were evicted from their farms due to the dissolution of the tenant system and the replacement of the sharecroppers with advanced agricultural machinery that hastened and increased the production exponentially comparing with the old tenant system. By the time he left his farm, he felt as if he lost his role as the head of the family, because he can no longer make righteous decisions, therefore he relies heavily on **Ma Joad** to steer and lead the family in their struggle to achieve the land of opportunity.

Uncle John: is the Brother of **Pa Joad**, his exaggerated acts of generosity were made to alleviate his grief for the loss of his wife who passed away after only four months of their marriage. He blamed himself for ignoring her while she was suffering the appendicitis that affected her health severely and caused her death. His guilty deeds often transferred to the feeling that he is responsible for all the difficulties that brought about the Joad family, who were forced to leave their home land and became homeless.

Rose of Sharon: is the younger sister of **Tom Joad**, she is recently married to **Connie Rivers** and pregnant with his child. Her exaggerated expectations for a brighter future along with her fantasy dreams of living in a middle class with her husband, made her in great frustration when her husband suddenly left her suffer with poverty and pregnancy of their child without former warning.

Connie Rivers: is the husband of **Rose of Sharon**, his unwise ambitions drove him to make promises that as soon as they get to California and take some correspondence courses, he could manage to find a good job by which he could provide a comfortable and prosperous lifestyle for his pregnant wife and their new-born. However, his expectations evaporated by the time they arrived to California, and soon he simply put an end to his extravagant promises by disappearing from **Rose of Sharon's** life forever.

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Noah Joad: is the eldest brother of **Tom**, due to an incident at his birth **Noah** wasn't a normal person "tall and strange...calm and puzzled...moved slowly, spoke seldom...people thought he was stupid." (Steinbeck 78) As soon as the family reached the borders of California where they camped to rest, **Noah** became interested to live as an outsider near the river and decided to leave the family and left the burden of explanation to **Tom**.

Al Joad: is the younger Brother of **Tom**. **Al** was fascinated by the boldness of his older brother **Tom**, he was a gifted mechanic and he successfully purchased a good used truck that endured the excessive load and the harshness of travelling towards California.

Ruthie Joad: is twelve-years sister of **Tom**, her boastful and immature behaviour to impress her younger brother **Winfield** and her peers gets her into many troubles. One day in a fight in order to threaten her opponent she revealed that her older brother **Tom** committed a murder at the Hooper Ranch, her slip made it difficult for **Tom** to remain with his family and therefore he managed to leave the family in order to avoid confrontations with the authorities.

Winfield Joad: the youngest brother of **Tom**, even though he was treated harshly by his sister **Ruthie** he was her loyal companion of all her troubles and her reckless behaviours.

Grampa Joad: is the father of **Pa Joad**, Grampa was "[V]icious and cruel and impatient, like a frantic child...he drank too much, ate too much, talked too much." (Steinbeck 78). His passion for his family's farm resulted in a protest against leaving to California; consequently the Joad family were forced to drug him in order to get him onto the truck. However, soon after commencing their journey he became severely sick and died of a stroke.

Granma Joad: is the mother of **Pa Joad**, she is a religious character, she had survived the vicious conditions of the travel because "she was as mean as her husband," (Steinbeck 78). However, after her husband's death, her health declined and suffered

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throughout the journey to California and unfortunately she died just after the family crossed into California.

Muley Graves: one of the neighbours of the Joad family in Oklahoma, despite the fact that he was evicted from his house and his family left to California, he decided to remain in the land on which he was born. Fortunately when **Tom** was paroled from prison, he met **Muley** who told him about the eviction of the Joad family and many other sharecroppers' families as well by tractoring their houses, and that his family are at his uncle John's preparing to leave to California.

Sairy and Ivy Wilson: a family that the Joads have encountered in their journey. They became intimate and helped each other as one family, especially after they offered them help while Grampa was severely sick and eventually died in their tent. They agreed to unite their forces in order to overcome the obstacles and reach their desired destination together. However, after Sairy's health declined, the Joads were forced to leave the Wilsons behind because authorities may accuse them of trespassing and they could never reach California.

2.6. Determinism Vs the American Dream

The notion of determinism states that everyone's fate is under the mercy of their social and economic background which are eventually determined by their biological genes and influenced by their circumstances and environment, whereas in the other hand, the American Dream is based upon the ideal of egalitarianism and the promise of opportunities that are available to everyone whoever endeavors to work hard and achieve upward mobility and prosperity regardless of their social or economic background.

From the inception of America, the American Dream has been an ideal of prosperity and affluence that incentivized countless millions of emigrants through the promise of freedom and better life for everyone who endeavour to achieve their version of the American dream through thrift and hard work to better their economic

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circumstances through hard work and commitment and consequently they could reach upward mobility (Garfinkle 12).

The enclosure imposed upon the sharecroppers' homes and lands by the bank necessitated the Joads and many other tenant families to confront with determined challenges in pursuing their dream by migrating toward California. Despite the harshness of the journey, they endeavoured vigorously with inspiration to reach their dream land of abundant opportunities where they could improve their lives and afford to own a fertile land to cultivate and a house to shelter them, through hard work in the ranches that the handbills were advertising, "I seen the han'bills fellas pass out, an' how much work they is, an' high wages an' all; an' I seen in the paper how they want folks to come an' pick grapes an' oranges an' peaches. That'd be nice work" (Steinbeck 90)

During the Age of Prosperity in the 1920s, many businesses flourished and ordinary people realized their American dream by reaching upward mobility and living lavish lifestyle through grit and hard work. However, the Stock Market Crash of 1929 along with the devastating effects of the Dust Bowl during the 1930s brought the Age of prosperity to an end. Therefore, the pressure to restore and regain material wealth raised harsh competition among the classes of the American society. As a result, the working class were exploited for the benefit of few wealthy people who own lands and businesses, which led to the corruption of the American Dream that becomes a myth that is far-fetched by the deprived social classes, due to unevenly distributed wealth and the exploitation of the poor migrants who were left to endure terrible ordeals.

The harshness of their unfortunate fate is illustrated by packing them in Hoovervilles and only when picking fruits season approaches and labour force is needed, contractors pay them a visit to offer them work without presenting accurate conditions of the work since they are supported by corrupted authorities and protected against anyone who endeavour to make agitation among the poor migrant by demanding their rights upon which they could start their business "You're a contractor, an' you got a license. You jus' show your license, an' then you give us an order to go to work, an'

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where, an' when, an' how much we'll get, an' you sign that, an' we'll all go." (Steinbeck 262)

Furthermore, the American dream deteriorated by exploiting the rights of the poor migrants despite their intention of reaching upward mobility and improve their situation through hard work. The American Dream therefore become achievable only for business owners who monopolized the wealth and contrived to protect their possessions by any means, even at the expense of the deprived migrant families who were left to starve and to struggle with their unfortunate fate. "Sure, nice to look at, but you can't have none of it. They's a grove of yella oranges—an' a guy with a gun that got the right to kill you if you touch one. They's a fella, newspaper fella near the coast, got a million acres'" (Steinbeck 206)

The result is the competitiveness of many starving migrants who were attracted by deceiving handbills that sought to bring as many hungry migrants as possible who

streamed in on the highways and their hunger was in their eyes, and their need was in their eyes. They had no argument, no system, nothing but their numbers and their needs. When there was work for a man, ten men fought for it—fought with a low wage. If that fella'll work for thirty cents, I'll work for twenty-five. (Steinbeck 283)

Thus, the increased demand for the jobs available, made wages become lower, which allowed great owners to generate even more profits, "[a]nd this was good, for wages went down and prices stayed up. The great owners were glad and they sent out more handbills to bring more people in. And wages went down and prices stayed up. And pretty soon now we'll have serfs again." (Steinbeck 283)

In addition, the lust and greed of great owners invented even more callous methods in order to generate larger profits by purchasing canneries,

"[a]nd when the peaches and the pears were ripe he cut the price of fruit below the cost of raising it. And as cannery owner he paid himself a low price for the fruit and kept the price of canned goods up and took his profit. And the little farmers who owned no canneries lost their farms, and they were taken by the great owners, the banks, and the companies who

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also owned the canneries. As time went on, there were fewer farms” (Steinbeck 284).

As a result the unfortunate were left to struggle because of their deprived background, in addition to the determined circumstances imposed upon them, and the exploitation of the business owners who callously realized their version of the American Dream at the expense of the deprived people who realized that the dream is a myth that is far-fetched and unachievable for everyone.

2.7. Emigration

With the struggle to survive the ordeals of economic downturn and social inequality that were brought about during the aftermath of the Great Depression in the 1920s, in addition to the state of materialism that prevailed on all layers of the American society, the idolatry of possessions or material wealth, caused Americans to lose their faith due to the harsh competition behind gaining wealth regardless of the means. The Americans therefore strive to protect their lands and the scarce sources of living, by establishing a sense of hostility toward the unfortunate emigrants who sought their help. (Effects of Materialism)

Emigration is a focal point of *The Grapes of Wrath* novel in which Steinbeck boldly strives to depict an accurate image of callousness and exploitation by fortunate individuals of California who should be the most capable of helping the destitute emigrants who left their homes and fled the harshness of the Dust Bowl, since California was abundant of fertile lands. Unfortunately, the monopolization and the greed of business owners refused to share their lands or offer some of its abundant fruits to alleviate the hunger of the starving families because they feared to lose their profits or give a chance for the migrants to overrun their businesses and therefore create aggressive competition with them due to their endeavours and commitments to achieve upward mobility through hard work. However, they seized the opportunity of their deprived social background in order to exploit them at the minimum wages possible and increase their unquenchable thirst for profits.

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Moreover, along with the contribution of corrupted institutional powers they rather raised a sense of hostility and hatred toward the desperate migrants even though they weren't foreigners but "seven generations back Americans," (Steinbeck 233) who fought together in the American Revolution and the Civil War.

Therefore, migration to California was perceived by many deprived families like the Joads as a beacon of hope, after they were dispossessed by banks enclosure and forced to flee their lands due to the disastrous effects of the dust bowl that affected their crops and fertile lands. A hope for the land of opportunities in which they could restore and build a new prosperous life through hard work and commitment to achieve upward mobility in the land that is capable to provide and offer abundant fertile lands and job opportunities as advertised in the handbills.

Avaricious business owners of California sought from distributing thousands of hand bills to attract and exploit as many poor emigrants as possible who flooded to California in a desperate endeavour to find a job to feed their starving families and improve their exacerbating situation by believing in a brighter future that hard work and grit could provide.

However events where working hand in hand with callous plans of business owner, piles of deprived emigrants arrived. Therefore, the demand for works increased exponentially. As a result wages became very low by which starving emigrants couldn't even afford to fill the hunger of their families after long hours of hard work, and they never did receive a helping hand from fortunate Californians who neglected them and left them to suffer from the determined social deprivation as a result of their social and economic background, because they feared to steal their lands or take their job opportunities due to their desperate endeavours to earn a living at any cost in order to feed their starving families. The unattainable American dream has made "the American culture less secure and less able to invest its myths with the forces of reality." (Biggsby 72)

Unfortunately, these images still can be seen nowadays when a sense of hatred and hostility towards emigrants still persists and has even intensified despite the fact that America was built upon the notion that it is the land of abundant opportunities that

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provides life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to everyone who devotes himself for hard work regardless of their social or economic background.

2.8. Conclusion

The Grapes of Wrath was successfully written to depict the harshness of events that emigrants had confronted along their journey to California. Certain themes were used to illustrate the hostility raised against the poor emigrants and the exploitation of their desperate endeavor to improve their deprived social background. Therefore John Steinbeck chooses Naturalism and Modernism, to convey an accurate image of the vicious conditions that are determined upon emigrants in their desperate hope to live the American Dream that is deteriorated by grievous injustice and exploitation by greedy business owners.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The abundance of opportunities that America has provided since its inception had attracted millions of people from all walks of life, to be part of the unique melting pot that offered prosperity and affluence to everyone who endeavours through hard work to live the American dream regardless of their geographical, social or economic background.

The changes that brought about America during the early decades of the twentieth century inspired even more influx of emigrants due to the industrial development that contributed in unprecedented improvement in the American economy, and therefore the structure of society and culture reshaped in order to cope with the booming era that reached its zenith of affluence during the 1920s, which become known as the Age of Prosperity.

Furthermore, the Stock Market Crash of October 1929 led America to the age of recession known as the Great Depression that affected American economy and society severely for almost a decade threatening the rise of hostility and competition among social classes because of the loss of the American values as a result of unevenly distributed wealth and the greed of business owners to rebuild their fortune at the expense of the poor.

The severe economic recession caused by the Great Depression along with the Dust Bowl of the 1930s that affected the Midwestern prairies forced thousands of American families to flee their lands and migrate to California, the land of abundant opportunities.

In John Steinbeck's masterpiece *The Grapes of Wrath* he sought through the lenses of the literary movements of Naturalism and Modernism to depict an accurate image and cope with the massive changes brought about the American society, by shedding light upon the vicious conditions that the migrants had confronted throughout their journey in a desperate hope to seize job opportunities that the handbills were advertising, to feed their starving families and to improve and alleviate their situation.

Their ordeal exacerbated by their arrival to California, because all hopes of prosperity and affluence about the dream land of abundant opportunities scattered due to the hostility raised against the emigrants, not only by ordinary citizens of California, who feared to lose their jobs, but also, by the greedy and callous business owners who sought to exploit the emigrants despite their struggles by intimidating them whether to accept unfair work conditions or to starve to death because there is an increasing demand for the job by other desperate emigrants who could desperately accept the job to feed their families.

In conclusion, Steinbeck sought to convey the message that the only people who could survive are those who fit in the struggle and manage to overcome the ordeals imposed upon them, thanks to the unity and solidarity among the emigrants who provided a helping hand to everyone in need despite their indigence. However, the avaricious and oppression of business owners that appeared in exploiting the deprived emigrants, proved to be incapable of offering while accumulating their selfish interests which weakened them and led to their destruction.

Steinbeck's novel has foreshadowed the present situation of emigrants in the United States who are facing hostility and are made as the scapegoats for the economic recession hitting America again. Donald Trump's election has been built on the fears from Mexican and Muslim emigrants rather than any greatness of the American dream.

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Appendix

- 1927 - *Cup of Gold*
- 1932 - *The Pastures of Heaven*
- 1933 - *The Red Pony*
- 1933 - *To a God Unknown*
- 1935 - *Tortilla Flat*
- 1936 - *In Dubious Battle*
- 1937 - *Of Mice and Men*
- 1938 - *The Long Valley*
- 1941 - *The Forgotten Village*
- 1941 - *Sea of Cortez: A Leisurely Journal of Travel and Research*
- 1942 - *The Moon Is Down*
- 1942 - *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team*
- 1945 - *Cannery Row*
- 1947 - *The Wayward Bus*
- 1947 - *The Pearl*
- 1948 - *A Russian Journal*
- 1950 - *Burning Bright*
- 1951 - *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*
- 1954 - *Sweet Thursday*
- 1957 - *The Short Reign of Pippin IV: A Fabrication*
- 1958 - *Once There Was A War*

- 1961 - *The Winter of Our Discontent*
- 1962 - *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*
- 1966 - *America and Americans*
- 1969 - *Journal of a Novel: The East of Eden Letters*
- 1975 - *Viva Zapata!*
- 1976 - *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights*
- 1989 - *Working Days: The Journals of The Grapes of Wrath.*

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