

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Critique of Capitalism in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath***

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## **Abstract**

Each society has its own socio-economic structure which has a direct impact on the lives of the people. In modern industrialized societies the economic system determines the relationship between the people as they are classified into owners and workers. The owners subdue the workers at various levels. As a result, the workers rebel and attempt to establish the world of their own, full of equality and justice. John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* depicts such struggle of working class people against the capitalist system.

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## I. Fictional World of *The Grapes of Wrath*

### Introduction

Research 'either in a small or larger scale' is a project that requires a great deal of study to conclude a logical end and nevertheless it result fruitfully to all the concerned. This current thesis at hand strives through John Steinbeck the renowned American novelist's, *The Grapes of Wrath*, a novel which awarded him a Pulitzer prize and a National Book Award. The thesis inscribed gives a new reading and interpretation of the assigned novel. It explicates fundamental issues expressed by another in one way or the other in regard to the previous studies about the novel as well.

For convenience of all and to maintain the cohesive and chronological relationship in developing ideas the thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter, with its topics and subtopics, is to introduce another, thematic and technical aspect of his works. Further it provides a brief summery of the novel which is taken in consideration to another original idea. No doubt the portion encompasses how other people have viewed the work and the present dissertation takes a departure from them. The second chapter and its subsequent subtopics develop an approach to penetrate the depth of research. Therefore developing a methodological tool and modality that could be applied to the text in a fair manner will be the second effort. The third chapter is the applied phase in which the modality propounded in the second chapter is exploited to explore the fundamental issues which the dissertation anticipates to dig up. The disintegration of the society and the representative family caused by capitalistic mood of production fruition class antagonism, alienation and rejection of materialistic bourgeoisie value will be the locus of study. Eventually the fourth chapter presents a

comprehensive brief and forthright manifestation of ideas developed in the dissertation. Certainly it remains as the essence of the study.

John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1902 as the son of John Steinbeck Sr. a German man and Olive Hamilton an Irish woman. His father was the country treasure and his mother was a school teacher. He accepted his mother's influence to be a writer and California where he was born and spent most of his life motivated him towards writing. Steinbeck did not graduate from Stanford though he attended rather instead he chose to support himself through manual labor while writing. California was supposed to be the land of plenty opportunity during the Great Depression. His experiences among the working classes in California lent authenticity to his depiction of the lives of the workers, who remain the central characters of his most important novels. His writing interested culminated while he was at university for four years. He studied Marine biology which aroused him lifelong passion for the field. He wrote many stories and articles for the university's student newspaper albeit he did not enroll in 1925 without a degree.

Steinbeck's first novel, *Cup of Gold* was published in 1929, and was followed by *The pastures of Heaven* and in 1923, *To a God Unknown*. However, his first three novels were unsuccessful both critically and commercially. Steinbeck had his first success with *Tortilla Flat* (1935), an affectionate and gently humorous story about Mexican-Americans. Nevertheless, his subsequent novel, *In Dubious Battle* (1936) was notable for its markedly grim outlook. This novel is a classic account of a strike by agricultural laborers and the pair of Marxist labor organizers who engineer it, and is the first Steinbeck novel to encompass the striking social community the characterizes his most notable works. Steinbeck received even greater acclaim for the novella *Of Mice and Men* (1937), a tragic story about the strange, complex bond between two migrant laborers.



Steinbeck's crowning achievement, *The Grapes of Wrath*, won him a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award. It was also adopted into the migration of a dispossessed family from Oklahoma Dust Bowl to California and critiques their subsequent exploitation by a ruthless system of agricultural economics. After the success of *The Grapes of Wrath* Steinbeck went to Mexico to collect marine life with the freelance biologist Edward F. Ricketts, and the two men collaborated on *Sea of Cortez* (1941), a study of the fauna of the Gulf of California. During World War II, Steinbeck wrote some effective pieces of government propaganda, among them *The Moon Is Down* (1942) a novel about Norwegians under the Nazis. He also served as a war correspondent. With the end of World War II and the move from the Great Depression to economic prosperity Steinbeck's work softened some what. *Gannery Row* (1945), *The Pearl* (1947) and *The Bus* (1947) that followed the war were more sentimental and relaxed. Along with his literary experiences that made him recognize to the world, he secured his married life with the third wife Elaine Scott, with whom he lived in New York City.

Two years later of New York life, he published the highly controversial *East of Eden* the novel he called *The Big One* set in the California Salinas valley. However none of his writing could reach the height of 'The Grapes of Wrath'. In 1960, he decided to tour to the United States recording their travels in *Travels with Charley* (1962) where he expressed his curiosity in the state of rural America. In the same year, Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. He lauded literature in his speech:

Literature is as old as speech. It grew out of human need for it, and it has not changed except to become more needed. ...furthermore the writer is delegated to declare and to celebrate man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit for gallantry in defeat, for courage, compassion and love....I hold that a

writer who does not passionately believe in the perfectibility of man has no dedication nor any membership in literature.

To sum up Steinbeck, a prominent American novelist studied the condition of post war American that suffered traumatic economic depression and made it visible in verbal artistic creations like *The Grapes of Wrath*. His contribution to literature counts different epithets from different critics. However reading through the leftist point of view, no one can go beyond the perception of exploitation and individualism in his novels.

John Steinbeck's time of writing grimly related to the time of economic depression caused by the war. And his experiences of life, throughout many upheavals, working in the form of California and a company laborer in New York highly correspond to the themes developed in the novel.

In all of his works, Steinbeck expressed the need for change in the economic and social system of his time. He eloquently told the plight of poor families and individuals who were helpless, powerless in fighting against the system that had oppressed them. Steinbeck had genuine concern for the state of the down trodden people and commented on how to improve their condition. He states the fact that the growth of industrialism yielded the capitalistic mode of production which benefits only the capitalist, the minority and the actual laborers who had heartedly work are marginalized. Therefore the huge class gap between the classes and their antagonistic performance against each other, forceful tussle between the classes and strong reaction against injustice and exploitation are his basic themes of the novel. No doubt his reputation is dependent primarily on the naturalistic proletarian themed novels since he wrote during the depression.

In stark and moving detail, John Steinbeck depicts the lives of ordinary people striving to preserve their humanity in the face of social and economic depression. Regarding 'The Grapes of Wrath' when the toads lose their tenant farm in Oklahoma, they join thousands of others traveling the narrow concrete highways toward California and the dream of a piece of land to call their own. Each night on the road they and their fellow migrants recreate society: leaders chosen, unspoken codes of privacy and go generosity evolve lust, violence and murderous rage erupt. Thematically, a portrait of the bitter conflict between the powerful and the powerless of one man's fierce reaction to injustice and of a woman's quiet stoical strength, *The Grapes of Wrath* is a landmark of American literatures. It captures the horrors of the Great Depression as it probes into the very nature of equality and justice in the capitalistic society of American.

Regarding his style and techniques, he appears quite simple and straight forward. The themes of human dignity and compassion and sense of vision of America remain unchanged in his works though there is variation in subject and style in each work. However he takes conflict as a basic tool to evince the verbal picture of migrant workers and their oppression by the corporations of America. His plots are crammed with characters who dispersed themselves being individualistic as the victim of capitalistic modes of production and distribution. The hostility of characters aims to break away oppressive and exploitative nature of the minority who guides and controls the society. Steinbeck subverts the centre and expresses his rebellious attitude demolishing the standard form of language. He uses mostly colloquial language, fuel of dialects make the novel quite rural and lively realistic. The mode of the novel flows forthright in an epic manner. Especially *The Grapes of Wrath* is featured all these attributes. This novel weighs thematically more than the artistic deviation of any kind. Thus the fundamental issues are highly glorified.

John Steinbeck has chosen the title of the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* from Julia Ward Howe's civil war poem "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord  
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored  
He has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword  
his truth is marching on. (qt din Donohue173)

Peter Lisca interprets the title with biblical reference. In his words, "The novel's title...is itself a reference to revelation: And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of god" (173). The grapes symbolize fruitfulness, renewal and promise as well as bitterness and copiousness. They are the symbol of plenty which the Joad family strives for in California but it turns counterproductive to the family. Kelly Crocket writes the title "Itself a stirring call for victory over the forces which were repressing another down-trodden group" (107).

The *Grapes of Wrath* refers to the struggle of men within hostility and oppression. When someone is in need of something and wants to achieve it and if his/her need is blocked by institution, state etc, he/she will get angry. The Joads are willing for a better and secure life in California because they cannot get it in Oklahoma. But along the way their need is obstructed time and again. They encounter hardships, cruelty and exploitation. What was once thought to be the land of equality, opportunity and work turns out to be the land of desperation, pessimism and exploitation. They cannot get wage enough to sustain their life. California was supposed to be green valley of opportunity which turns out to be a false dream. Only after stepping in California, they get disillusioned. Californian land owners and businessmen take advantage of them, exploit them and they are left in helpless condition. This arouses anger

which grows and turns into wrath. Steinbeck writes in 25<sup>th</sup> Chapter, “In the soul of the people, the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy for the vintage (412)”.

The narrative begins from Tom Joad’s point of view just after he is paroled from prison after serving four years for manslaughter. On his journey home, he meets a preacher. Jim Casy, whom he remembers from his childhood and the two travel together. When they arrive at Tom’s childhood farm home, they find it deserted. Disconcerted, he and Casy go to his Uncle John’s residence a few miles away, where he finds his family loading a truck with everything they own for a move; he learns that his family’s crops destroyed in the Dust Bowl and they were forced to default on outstanding loans. With farm repossessed, the Joads seek solace in hope; hope inscribed on handbills that are distributed everywhere in Oklahoma, describing the beautiful country of California and high wages to be found out west. The Joads, along with Jim Casy, are seduced by this facade, and invest everything they have into the journey.

En route, they discover that the roads and highways are saturated with thousands of other families making the same trek, ensnared by the same promise. As the Joads continue and hear stories from others, some coming back from California, they are forced to confront the possibility that their prospects may not be what they had hoped. This realization, supported by the deaths of grand pa and grand ma, and the departure of Noah and Connie is forced from their thoughts: they must go on they have no other choice.

Upon arrival, they find hordes of applicants for every job and little hope of finding a decent wage, due to the oversupply of labor, lack of rights, and the collision of the big corporate farmers. The tragedy lies in the simplicity and impossibility of their dream: a house, a family and a steady job. A gleam of hope is presented by Weedpatch, the clean, warm camps operated by the Resettlement Administration, a New Deal Agency that tried to help the

migrants. Unfortunately, however the benevolent bureaucrat Jim Rawley who manages the camp does not have enough money and space to care for all the needy.

In response to the exploitation of laborers, the workers begin to join unions. The surviving members of the family unknowingly work on an orchard involved in a strike that eventually turns violent, killing the preacher Cazy and forcing Tom Joad to kill again and become a fugitive. He bids farewell to his mother, promising that no matter where he runs, he will be a tireless advocate for the proletariat. Rose of Sharon's baby is stillborn; however, Ma Joad remains steadfast and forces the family through the bereavement. In the end, Rose of Sharon commits the only act in the book that is not futile: she breast feeds a starving man, still trying to show hope in humanity after her own negative experience. This final act is said to illustrate the spontaneous mutual sharing that will lead to a new awareness of collective values.

Implication symbol is another technique Steinbeck has used to assert his themes of class antagonism, severe struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed, alienation and disorientation. Oklahoma, Dust Bowl and the widespread layer of Dust over there is the symbol of deserted condition in modern capitalistic society. The desert of California which is supposed to be a promised land is the symbol of shattered dreams. On the same regard Charles T. Dougherty asserts "the book is rich in Christian symbolism and generalize that there is a substantial agreement that Jim Casy is a Christ Figure" (115).

John Steinbeck's touching novel, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) has been reviewed in a number of ways. Critics have come up with their understanding of the novel. Naturally some praised it open heart and some severely attacked it as propaganda. B.R. McElderry views *The Grapes of Wrath* as sentimental and at the same time he suggests that sentimentality is not very important flaw in a novel. He writes:

The Grapes of Wrath is a shrewd novel, a lively pattern of experience varied and skilful in texture; but it may be attacked as basically sentimental[.]. The assertion that the brighter future is coming stated by Ma Toad and implied by Steinbeck is thus more sentimental optimism (132).

Mc Elderly, thus, only sheds his lights on the dream collected by the characters in the novel. It is human nature that however struggling and troubled you are, you always hope of a bright future that one day you would get released from the suffering and god will bless you a happy life. Otherwise if you do not see the way out and be hopeful you may risk end your life unexpectedly. Therefore rather to point out the nature, analysis must focus on the causes of problems prevalent in the novel.

Martin Shockley studies the novel from religious perspective in which the whole chaos and havoc is expected to mitigate by the Savior, Christ figure, as Shockley sees Jim Casy as a simple and direct copy of Jesus Christ. He states “Steinbeck’s Grapes of Wrath was the logical consequence of privation insecurity, low income inadequate standards of living impoverishment in matters of education and cultural opportunities and lack of spiritual satisfaction (53,95).

Alexander Galt and Lyle H Boren have treated the novel as nonsense. In the words of Galt, “The book contains vulgar words and a book is no place to put these words” (4). Boren comments “I can not find it possible to let this dirty, lying filthy manuscript go heralded before the public without a word of challenge or protest” (27). Thus these two critics totally negate the thematic aspects of the novel and react about its form.

Frederic I carpenter sees transcendentalism of Emerson reappeared into the novel is modern revised form. In his words, “Here the mystical transcendentalism of Emerson reappears and the earthly democracy of Whitman and the pragmatic instrumentalism of

William James and John Dewey” (81). So Carpenter, casting his blind eye to the journey of Toad Family, philosophizes the novel. Richard M Eastman praises the Toad family’s “will to survive” even in difficult situation. He is of the view that “Deaths, desertions and lesser misfortunes cripple the Toad family but cannot break its humble will to survive” (224). He has focused only the disintegration of family neglecting the main crux of their struggling and disintegrated life caused by the capitalistic mode of production and distribution.

Warren Motley observes:

By establishing parallels between the oppressed and the oppressor throughout *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck also attributes the external pressures on the Toads particularly the cruelties of land owners to the failure of frontier individualism as a social principle. (204)

Warren seems more studious thematically however he does not analyze it analogically with the capitalistic mode of economic system. So, none of the aforementioned critics have explored the fundamental issues of class antagonism, alienation and struggle to subvert the prevalent capitalistic culture in the 1930s era of economic depression.

Thousands of families including the representative family, the Toads, have lost their land to drought to big farm economics and rumbling west on US Route 66, in a dilapidated and disjoined trucks with the hope of good life with material comforts. The developmental banks and its employees caused them to have forceful migration from Oklahoma, Dust Bowl to the promised land of California. They confront many troubles on their journey. Despite the loss of family members, they are forced to disperse and some characters are victimized by specter of individualism. When the families get to California, they enter not the expected land but a new captivity. They are settled in squalid camps, exploited at cut-rate wages as fruit pickers, and oppressed by police. They were hounded by Sheriffs and labor contractors. The Toads



exchanged their bad life in Oklahoma to worse in California. So, the journey proved perilous for the Toads to a shattered Eden known as American success. Steinbeck's view in the novel is crystal clear. He sympathizes with the migrants and condemns the banks, the police, the land owners, the sheriffs, and anybody who exploits the migrants and makes their plight. So, this aspect of the novel will be the focal point of the undergoing research.

With the completion of this introducing chapter, the upcoming chapter deals with the theoretical modality that has to be implemented for the textual analysis of the assigned work. Rather than technically perfect experimental theories, attempts will have been made to build up a tentative modality which assists to unfold and analyze various aspects pervaded in the novel.

## II Marxism and class culture Analysis

A literary text, the out put of the author's creative bent of mind remains open to the readers who attempts to survey it through certain lenses. Readers and critics foster their own attitude towards the work from a certain angle. There are a number of approaches that can be applied to read a work and draw a conclusion. Here in this chapter, Marxist viewpoint to look at a literary work is supposed to be developed.

This approach at hand to read literature for the first time initiated after Karl Marx, an economist, historian, sociologist and ideologist of 19<sup>th</sup> century propounded a universal theory of class struggle with the publication of "The Communist Manifesto" in *Das Capital*. As Marx states in The Communist Manifesto, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle (Lohani 21). Marx was concerned with the forces of history and his view of history was that it is progressive and, to some extent, inevitable. This view is very prominent in The Communist Manifesto, particularly in his review of the overthrow of feudal forms of government by the bourgeois. He thought that it was inevitable that the bourgeois and the proletariat would engage in a class struggle from which the proletariat would emerge victorious. Marxism disproves the Bourgeois economic, political and social mechanism. It initiates movement of proletarians against bourgeoisie by raising a voice in favor of proletarians. Bourgeois is that group of people who owns the means of production and material things whereas proletariat refers to that group who does not posses any means of production but only work/labor. As the oppression from bourgeois side increases too much, they raise their voice against proletarians without their toil. Marx initiated that movement of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. This emancipatory movement has been initiated by Marxism at abolishing the accumulation of wealth in the hands of small minority by seizing the political and legal power from the hands of bourgeois class. So, Marxism as a political

theory, advocates class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeois until the political power is captured and socialist emancipatory society is established.

Marxism brought significant change in bourgeois ideology. It challenged the old view point of philosophy. Before Marx people have been led to believe that their ideas, cultural life, legal systems and religions were the creations of human and divine reason which should be regarded as the unquestioned guides to human life. Marx reverses this formulation and argues that all ideological systems are the products of real social and economic existence. The material interests of the dominant social class determine how people see human existence. As Marx stated that “The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it” (qtd. In Selden 24) and explained life and world from a different perspective. Aiming at intensifying the inevitable process of change, his theory brought considerable change in the concept of art and literature as well.

Marxist criticism, in its diverse forms, grounds its theory and practice on the economic and cultural theory of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The three basic points that Marx has raised are: the material production of the society largely determines the evolving history of humanity, of the social relations, of its institutions, and of its ways of thinking; the second, human consciousness is constituted by an ideology—that is, the beliefs, values and ways of thinking and feeling through which human beings perceive, and by resource to which they explain, what they take to be reality; and the third, historical changes in the fundamental mode of material production effect changes in the class structure of a society which establishes dominant and subordinate classes in each era that engage in a struggle for economic political and social advantage. An ideology is the product of the position and interest of the particular class. In any historical era, the dominant ideology embodies and serves to legitimize and perpetuate the interest of the dominant economic and social class of the time.

The Marxist literary criticism is best expressed in his works like *The German Ideology* and *The Communist Manifesto* written with Engels. Marx brings forth a model of history in which economic and political conditions determine social conditions. In the words of Marx the production of ideas, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Marx and Engels respond to social difficulties stemming from the rise of capitalism. For Marx and Engels, the resulting class struggle is the driving force of history. The working class, which emerges in significant numbers with the advent of capitalism, is the first exploited class with both the desire and the ability to overthrow the exploiters and reorganize society in its own universal social interest. Marx and Engels interpreted events in their lifetime as significant steps towards that revolutionary outcome, while they describe their own theories as “the reflex of proletarian struggle in the world of ideas” (Cohen 320).

Although Marx and Engels did not propound any systematic theories about art and literature, they have raised some basic questions about them in relation to their discussion about base and superstructure. According to Marxism, base is primary and the superstructure is secondary. Base here means the socio-economic relations whereas superstructure refers to the religion, politics, art, ideology. Economic and social forces together constitute the base on which is erected the superstructure—the state, politics, law, culture, ideology, religion, values, philosophy and the arts. The relation between base and superstructure is dialectical but the main line of force runs from the base to the superstructure rather than the other way around. Marx represented “ideology” as a superstructure of which the concurrent socioeconomic system is the base. Marxists believe that each economic structure e.g. feudalism capitalism or socialism of society leads to its own type of social organization and production of its own literature, art, culture and religion. So, basic characteristic of literature and art is determined by

socioeconomic factors. Engles described ideology as “a false consciousness”. A further claim is that in the present era of capitalist economic organization, the governing ideology incorporates the interests of the dominant and exploitative class, the bourgeois, who are the owners of the means of production and distribution, as opposed to the ‘proletariat’, or wage-earning working class. This ideology seems a natural and inevitable way of seeing, explaining and dealing with the world but in fact has the hidden function of legitimizing and maintaining the position, power and economic interests of the ruling class. All the social and cultural institutions and practices including religion, morality, philosophy, politics, the legal system as well as literature are permeated and dominated by the ideology.

Literature, from a Marxist point of view is treated as the reflection of the socioeconomic life. Orthodox Marxist critics opine that the origin, development, success or failure of a literary work should be judged on the basis of its relation to socio-economic life of the contemporary society. So, for Marxist, literature is an expression of socioeconomic life and it is judged on the basis of how far it has fulfilled this function. In the words of Trotsky, “Art is always a social servant and historically utilitarian ...The poet can find material for his art only in his social environment and transmits the new impulses of life through his own artistic consciousness” (Adams, 794). He further claims that the effort to set art free from life, to declare it a craft self-sufficient unto itself, devitalizes and kills art.

The difference between Marxist criticism and the other criticisms is that others emphasize only on the interpretive function and whether a work of art is successful in interpreting life and world, but Marxist criticism examines how far a work of art has ability in altering human existence and lead human being in a progressive path and emancipation. For other types of criticisms, interpretation is the primary function of art and literature whereas Marxist criticism aims at revolutionizing the whole economic life establishing new political

system led by proletariat. The theory strongly insists that a work of art should reflect the class relation and be committed to the cause of working class people. It demands the author to produce reality as objectively as possible with special attention to class divisions, especially, the exploitation of the lower class by upper class. So, art and literature should explore the inner causes instead of rendering outward superficial appearance of reality. Outward, superficial depiction of things, like that of naturalism and modernism, bracketing of all the contradictions, inner causes of society, can never lead to reality. Literature should be auxiliary in spreading the ideology of working class. So Marxism is critical of the movement of art for art's sake. It denounces the modern trend of writing which concentrates on minute subjective picture of the world. For Marxist, literature should aim for the betterment of society. It has social as well as political implication. So, it disproves the early concept of art and literature.

Marx argues that the capitalist division of labour destroyed an earlier phase of human history in which artistic and spiritual life were inseparable from the processes of material existence and craftsmen still worked with a sense of beauty. The separation of mental and manual work destroyed the unity of spiritual and material activities. The result is that the masses were forced to produce commodities without the joy of creative engagement in their work. The truly popular art and literature is that which is accessible to the masses and will restore their lost wholeness of being

Marxist criticism is sharp\stark opposition with Russian Formalism. The latter emphasizes only on form of art totally negating the content. The formalist regarded literature nothing more than the special use of language. But for Marxist, the content is important. As Trotsky writes, "they believe that in the beginning was the word. But we Marxists believe that in the beginning was the deed" (Adams 799). For Marxists, writers should have profound understanding of wretched conditions rather than subjective experience and aestheticism.

Thus, literature should be a medium to spread the ideology of working class people. As Yakhot says:

It is a well-tried compass, a guide in every day life and activity. Bound up with the study of Marxist philosophy, with mastery of the scientific world outlook, is the optimism of the working people, their unshakable confidence in a happy life for all people throughout the world. (Yakhot 223)

Marxist hoped literature and art could play influential role to develop human understanding and spread socialism. It must have social and political there which should be committed to lead human in the progressive path and for the advancement of a society and literature should be interpreted in socioeconomic context. So, Marxist critics explain literature of any historical era, not as work created in accordance with timeless artistic criteria, but as 'products' of the economic and ideological determinants specific to that era. They are of the opinion that literature can play active role in the development of human understanding and beside its aesthetic purpose it can be used as a vehicle for non-literary ideas.

### **Capitalism: Class Division, Individualism and Profit Motive**

As Collins English Dictionary defines Capitalism is an "economic system based on the private ownership of industry". It is often defined as the opposite of Socialism. It is such a system in which production is carried out for profit and in which goods and services are distributed across a market for sale. No one can have these items if they cannot produce enough currency for it, regardless of their needs. Production need not be socially relevant, it simply has to earn a profit for its owners. The primary feature of capitalism is that its industries and services are privately owned by individuals.

Capitalism evolves and promotes class culture. People under the system are divided into two groups: capitalists and workers. In Marx's term, they are called 'bourgeoisie' and

'proletariats' respectively. A capitalist is an individual who owns a sizable portion of productive or distributive property that he/she does not have to work in order to receive wealth. A capitalist produces no wealth at all but simply owns it. On the other a worker is an individual who does not own enough productive property to live off of and therefore must work for a capitalist. Workers may work for the government that the capitalist control, in order to survive. A worker does not receive the full value of the work that he/she creates. The production makes the workers dependent upon capitalist. They are alienated from the product. Therefore the amount of the individual's income does not make them a capitalist or a worker. It is made rather by their relationship to the means of production.

Capitalists run industries solely for the purpose of earning a profit. The needs of society at large are a second priority. They utilize profit for the acquisition of personal power and might by which they control the political state and make all the important decisions of production. They make the rules for working class and impose it on them to promote their business. Capitalists are small number but they employ a large number of workers. Workers perform the useful labor in society, but they do not own any industries. They receive a tiny fraction of the wealth that they create in return for their services. They have no power in decision making process of production. When this harsh exploitation is realized, conflict appears between the classes. Capitalists even deploy forces like police to maintain order in a system, but that breeds further disorder. The conflict persists on.

Though capitalism seems to allow the society the greatest advance by industrializing the agrarian society it creates artificial limits on production, a minority benefits and enjoys oligarchy but a vast majority is deprived from the benefit, rather they become the victim of inequality. Freedom ambiguous and individualism is possessed by the capitalist only. It forms dictatorship imposing bourgeoisie rules on the workers for the minority enrichment.



Hardworking as a primary source of wealth turns false to large number of workers. It sounds like a social myth in capitalism.

Capitalism has become the cause of fragmentation and alienation. It encourages both internal and external war. It lays terrible effects on culture. It results in the transformation of family development into commodities. Instead of a woman or man staying home to raise children, they go to work where their labor is quantified and return to them in the form of a pay check. This money as value of work is recognized by themselves and society as a measure of self worth.

We no longer live and work together as family members and neighbors. This is one of the most corrosive social problems faced by the capitalist societies today. This turbulent problem has remained as the essence of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. The perpetual suffering of the Joad family other migrant workers, their struggle to get appropriate value of labor and their conflict with the land owners at various levels are the consequences of capitalism. Throughout the novel, Steinbeck disdains this mundane capitalistic world of America and appeals that the sense of community is inherent in shared labor. Even more he emphasizes shared labor as a fundamental social thread that ties human beings together. This is the product of our historic communal evolution.

### **Class Struggle and Exploitation**

Karl Marx believed in class struggle. He found the economic society always divided into two hostile camps with ongoing class struggle-the bourgeois (capitalists, property owners) and the proletariat (workers/laborers, without property). The history is progressive and all things that exist in society are inevitably changing. Marx had strengthened materialistic view and said that economic institutions of the society develop naturally.

Marx has stated in the very first line of the Communist Manifesto that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle” (qtd. In Lohani 21). In each age, in any form, there is the existence of two classes: one class ruling over another. The modern ruling class that is bourgeois has developed from the ruins of feudal society which still has to face class antagonism. By replacing the feudal society, it has established new classes, new forms of oppression, new forms of struggle with proletariats. But the class struggle has not been caused. They are always struggling-one trying to overcome another.

The bourgeois has put an end to the family relation. It ends the connection or bond between man and man. It motivates people for self-interest. Individual is important and all kinds of interests and relation are diverted to cash payment. Marx writes in “The Communist Manifesto” as:

It has resolved personal worth into exchange value and in place of the numberless infeasible charted freedoms has set up that single, unconsiderable freedom-free trade. In one word, for exploitation veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked shameless direct brutal exploitation (22).

So, give and take relation is established. Personal worth changes into exchange value. All ecstasies of human relation of ideal enthusiasm and of sentimentalism are turned to bitter egotistical, selfish calculation. Exploitation is the major effect of this system. All are professional. Physician, lawyer, priest poet, scientist and all other people of occupation have been made ‘wage laborers’. Family relation has also become merely money relation. “The bourgeoisie has torn away the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a more money relation” (Communist 23). Therefore, success of possessing more and more wealth is given more privilege. Love relation is considered to be obstacle in success of life.

For the existence, the bourgeois has revolutionized the instruments of production, the relations of production and the whole relations of society. Capital is increased and gigantic machines are discovered. Laborers are activated. As a result, enormous amount of things produce. Enormous product requires larger market and for the market, the bourgeois expands its realm all over the world. It has exploited the world market and has given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. All old fashioned and small industries and products are being replaced by new ones. Marx writes in the “Communist Manifesto” that “It (bourgeois) has agglomerated population, centralized means of production and has concentrated property in a few hands” (24). So, modern economic system is in control of bourgeois which becomes means of exploitation to all the proletariat.

The proletariat class is a class of laborers, working and struggling class. In the words of Marx, proletariat is “a class of laborers who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital” (Communist 25). These laborers do not own any means of production but only their toil. They must sell themselves for piecemeal; they are a commodity like any other articles of commerce. Because of intensive use of machinery and division of labor, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, all the charm for the workman. Lukacs writes, “the worker had already become a narrow specialist in a single direction and the state apparatus had already begun to transform its civil servants into mindless and soulless bureaucrats” (qtd. In Adams 904). The workers do not have the sense of ownership. They are alienated from their work. While working, they do not have the feeling that I am doing my work.

In capitalist society, the typical situation of the worker is one in which he must perform tiresome labor on objects that he will not himself use or own. They will instead claim by his employer when they are finished, and he in turn will attempt to sell them in the market. So,

from the worker's point of view, the objects so manufactured are produced without a purpose; the only reason the worker does the work at all is to acquire enough in wages to buy outside the factory the necessities of life. Thus, the worker is alienated from the objects he produces since they are appropriated by others and used for other people's purposes, not his own; and from his work since he has no genuine personal interest in it. He is also alienated from his fellowmen, from his employer and other capitalists because they have privileges that he is denied. He is alienated from both these two groups because he is prevented, under the conditions of the market, from joining with them in expressing a social purpose in production. So, in capitalistic system, the workman is always alienated from his work and his fellow workers.

Furthermore, a laborer becomes an appendage of the machine; he has no individual character. His ability of running the machine is only required. The wage of laborer is restricted to the extent that s/he will come tomorrow for work. His payment is decreased almost entirely to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance. As they receive the lowly wages in cash, there are other ready to seize it from them. In the words of Marx, "no sooner in the exploitation of the laborer by the manufacturer, so far at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, then he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker etc" (Communist 26).

So the laborers' wages and expenditure are always in balance or wages is lower than expenditure. For survival, they are compelled to take loans in advance. The salary of the whole month is spent in advance. The small and middle class owners cannot compete with the great capitalists. As a result, they (small tradesmen, shopkeepers, landowners, peasants) all will gradually sink into the proletariat class for "their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which modern industry is carried on . . . ., for their specialized skill is rendered

worthless by new methods of production” (Communist 26). On the other hand, the price of a commodity and also of labor is equal to its cost of production. So, under capitalist system, the workers labor for someone else. He is exploited. His labor is thus something external to him or something that does not belong to him. The worker becomes alien to his work but at the same time also alien to himself. Therefore, s/he hates his/her work. S/he loses touch with his own reality.

### **Alienation**

The term alienation is defined in different ways having a lot of modifications in one of its broad meanings which is suggested by etymology. Dictionary of philosophy defines it as "alienation (or estrangement) is the act or result of the act, through which something or somebody becomes (has become) alien (or strange) to something, or somebody, else." In contemporary sociology and psychology it is often used to name an individual's feeling of alienness towards society, nature and other people. And there must be some propelling reasons for people's alienness. According to Marx, man feels alienated under the capitalist system. Man experiences fragmentation through the division of labor, mechanization, exploitation, miseries etc. The longing for unity with one's self, with one's kind, with nature from which man has alienated never comes to reality in capitalistic society. Only if socialism gets established, it is possible, for Marx.

Marx is a humanist. His theory of alienation has lasting effect in this field. Though Marxist thought underwent many variations, his starting point has remained intact: the possibility of total man. Marxist philosophy begins in man and ends in the emancipation of man from alienation and exploitation. Marx writes in the Critique of Hegel's State Law, "Democracy proceeds from man and makes the state objectified. Man does not exist for law's sake, it is human existence, whereas (for) the others" (qtd. Fisher 17). Here, Marx puts man

prior to the state, law. Similarly, Marx's concept of socialism is a condition in which man can develop his freedom and inherent different potentialities and permit the actualization of man's essence by overcoming his/her alienation. So, Marx is a great humanist whose starting point is a total man. In other words, he wanted emancipation of human begins from alienation.

For Marx, man is a communal being. He needs the community to develop into a free individual. But an individual who behaves as if he is independent is, in reality, conditioned by the whole social development, language, tradition etc. Social relationship and conditions determines his personality. As Marx claims, "What I myself produce I produce of society and with consciousness of acting as a social being" (Economic 130). Man is individual as well as total in relation to society. Therefore, the more a man is able to take possession of the outside world through his sense, spirit and intelligence, the greater are his chances of becoming a whole man.

Thus, there must be interaction between man and society for the real existence. It is through labor that man interacts with the society. The man is as the result of his own labor. It is an act of self-creation. Besides, man makes his activity an object of his will and consciousness. He has a conscious and creative labor. Man produces himself in the object which he has consciously, actively and creatively produced.

But instead of being creative, when labor is destructive, undertaken, under coercion, not as free play of force, when labor is divided, then labor is denial of its own principle. It becomes alienated labor, therefore lost the principle of man. Man loses his unity. Furthermore division of labor "not only destroyed unity: by introducing inequality among the various occupations it created and reinforced social inequality. Labor was not, and still is not divided up into equal parts, but is dividend for the profit of the stronger and the disadvantage of the weaker" (Marx 37), writes Ernest Fischer.

Division of labor even leads to the creation of private property. It divides society into haves and have-nots, property owners and propertyless workers. So, private property is “therefore the product, the necessary result of alienated labor” (Economic 105). The object produced by labor becomes alien to his producer. It even stands opposed to him. It exists independently outside the worker. So, an objectification of labor into object is lost. When objectification appears as loss of that object, the worker is deprived of the most essential things not only of life but also of work. Marx writes:

Labor certainly produces marvels for the rich but produces privation for the workers. It produces palaces, but hovels for the worker. It produces beauty, but deformity for the workers lack into a barbarous in of work and turns the others into machines. (Economic 97)

Thus, the object to which he gives lives dominates and sets itself against him as an alien. Not only the product, but within productive activity alienation appears. The production is indeed the resume of activity of production. Consequently, if the product of labor is alienated, production itself must be the activity of alienation. So, the work is external to the worker; it is not a part of his work; it is not a part of his nature.

The work is not spontaneous, voluntary but is imposed and forced by someone else. So the worker has feeling of misery rather than well being. The work does not satisfy the need of the worker, but it is only a means of satisfying the needs of other. As Marx states, “external labor, labor in which man alienates himself, is a labor of self sacrifice, of mortification” (Economic 99). In general, in capitalistic society, a man, a laborer is alienated from himself. By exploitation, his individually, sense of ownership is lost forever. He is dehumanized, fragmented, alienated and frustrated. This same kind of personality is shown in the modernist works of literature.

Theodor Adorno, criticizing Lukacs, advocates this type of modernist works which deal with the alienated personality. Lukacs denounces the works of modernists and their technique of stream of consciousness and interior monologue. In his view, the modernist writes like Joyce, Proust, Woolf go away in the direction of subjectivity separating individual from social process. By sacrificing dynamic historical environment in the interest of rendering subjective impression, the modernist writes totally fail to present reality. They alienate their characters away from the social, historical process and plunge them into inescapable flux. Lukacs objects this kind of fragmentation, alienation and presentation of human being as a lonely being unaffected by the social and economic forces. For Lukacs, a true artist is objectively through his works.

But, Adorno is in favor of modernist writers who have depicted the fragmented and alienated man. He criticizes Lukacs for appreciating only the dialectical totality in classical works. Adorno argues that literature does not have a direct contact with reality. In Adorno's views, "art is set apart from reality; its detachment gives it its special significant and power. Modernist writing are particularly distanced from reality to which they allude, and this distance gives their work the power of criticizing reality" (Selden 34). Because modernist works reflect the alienated inner lives of individuals, Lukacs attacked them as "decadent" embodiments of late capitalist society and evidence of the writers' inability to transcend the fragmented work in which they are compelled to live. Adorno argues that art cannot simply reflect the social system, but acts within that reality as an irritant which produces an indirect sort of knowledge. This can be achieved by writing difficult experimental texts and not directly polemical or critical works.

For Adorno, literary form is not simply a unified and compressed reflection of the form of society but a special means of distancing reality. By disrupting and fragmenting the picture



of modern life, modernists become able to see that alienation as a part of an objective social reality. The absurd discontinuities of discourse, the passed down characterization and plotlessness all contribute to the aesthetic effect of distancing the reality and them by giving us "a negative knowledge of modern existence" (Selden 35). Adorno, by negative knowledge does not mean non-knowledge. It means knowledge which can undermine and negate a false or reified condition. So, Adorno lauded modernist writers proposing that their formal experiments effect a distance detachment and alienation that serve as an implicit critique or yield a 'negative knowledge' of the dehumanizing institutions and process of society under capitalism.

To emancipate man from this alienation, dehumanizing condition, there must be creative labor, equality. One must have freedom to work as his wishes and desires. "The free development of each is the condition of the free development of all" writes Marx in *The Communist Manifesto*. Such free development of individual is possible in socialism only. Thus, the revolution for socialism is necessary to emancipate human beings from every suffering. In John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* as well, all tenant farmers and migrant workers are alienated from the real fruit of their labor, product and in a whole the main stream of social life. They are slave like working to quit hunger and survive animal like. It is the sole cause of capitalistic moods of production and distribution system. In the coming up chapter, Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* will be analyzed applying this chapter as a theoretical frame of reference. Attempts are sure to make analysis of the treatment of Joad family, representative of working class people in various working conditions. It would certainly not leave any stone unturned to present the novel as a critique of capitalistic society.

### **III. Critique of Capitalism in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath***

Every writer views a matter and shapes the matter with his own style. Their world of writing depends on the experiences they collected and visions they imagined. However, the variation of the topics of discussions and style in their works considerably include the contemporary social reality. Since the writers and his works both are inevitably the production of the same society.

As regard to John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, the novelist studies the Great Depression of the 1930s in America and its effects on working class people who undergoes severe hardships and suffering under capitalist system of the time. The novel is an explicitly political track that champions collectivist action by the lower classes over capitalist self interest. It criticizes corporate and banking alliance for shortsighted policies mean to maximize profit even while forcing farmers into destitution and even starvation. The novel expresses an era when social despair and political indignation failed and decay bred wrath. It arguably takes the position that the elimination of capitalism is necessary for a just democratic, and non exploitative society.

Steinbeck presents *The Grapes of Wrath* as a social novel. In stark and moving detail he depicts the lives of ordinary people who are striving to preserve their humanity in the face of social and economic desperation. The novel contains a story of the Joad family, a representative of working class people in America. Because of the Bourgeoisie encroachment on their farming land, the Joad's lose tenant farm in Oklahoma. They are coerced to accept the capitalistic mood of production which becomes the main cause of their suffering and exploitation. They are transformed to be exilic offering new hopes of better life in California. Then the Joads join thousands of others similar to them. They travel through the narrow concrete highway towards California. By the time, they have already realized that they have

been the victims of exploitation. Therefore, as a practice of socialist society each night on the road they and their fellow migrants recreate society. They feel it is their own society where they would be secure with justice and freedom of real value. They are united. Their segments of families are merged in one. Leaders are chosen. They establish unspoken codes of privacy and generosity evolve. They strive for a united rebellion. As a result, before and after entering California, various forms of violence and murderous rage erupt.

Eventually the novel appears as a portrait of the bitter conflict between the capitalists and the workers, between the powerful and powerlessness. It describes the working man's fierce reaction to injustice and women's quiet, stoical strength. Thus through *The Grapes of Wrath* Steinbeck strongly opposes the exploitative capitalistic system and advocates the foundation of socialist democracy.

### **Critique of Capitalism: Formation of Communal Society**

*The Grapes of Wrath* appears analogous to Marxist theory of conflict between the classes: bourgeoisie and the proletariat, powerful and powerless respectively. Depicting the real picture of 1930s America, Steinbeck critically observes the capitalistic socioeconomic structure of the then society and its severe effects on a larger number of people compelled to live socially destitute, insecure and starkly hungry. Throughout the novel the plot is developed as if it is the obligation of Marxist predictive theory for foundation of socialism instead of capitalism. However, perpetual struggle of the migrant workers with various forms of rebellion has become the chief feature of the novel. Though the novel is chiefly about the fate of the Joad family, Steinbeck explores the history of American land owners and their conversion into capitalist and the emergence of capitalism as the principal socioeconomic system in the 1930s America.

### **Emergence of The Classes**

As Steinbeck states in chapter 19, American land was anciently occupied by the Mexican while at a time it was captured by a horde of Americans. They took control over the land with the power of guns and established themselves as landowners. In course of industrialization of farmlands in modern times, as Steinbeck says, "...crops were reckoned in dollars, and land was valued by principal plus interest, and crops were bought and sold before they were planted. Then crop failure drought and flood were no longer little deaths with in life, but simple losses of money" (272). Human relationships no longer came into existence as "all their love was thinned with money"(272). Every means of production was seen from the point of view of business. It was such a business which had given everything a monetary value. People's mind turned to be money oriented and profit centered in business.

With the application of large machines in farming land and industrialization of the crops the value of the production reached to the owner in a large portion. They became richer. On the other, a large group of working class people were destabilished by their machines. They were forced to work with low wages. They were likely to starve to death. Unlikely the owners enjoyed accumulation of wealth. They further invested. The great owners who had been able to turn themselves to notorious businessmen made some other owners hard to stay in business. They were compelled to sell land to the great owners. As a result "all the time the farms grew larger and the owners fewer" (273). The great owners invented a new way to market their product. "When the peaches and the pears were ripe they cut the price of fruit below the cost of raising it" (334). They started canning goods up and took the 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 also owned the canneries (334).

Thus the farming lands, the means of production gradually transformed to a fewer hands. They soared extremely rich but those who could not follow this system, a large group

of people went to merge themselves to the working class people. And there emerged a clear division of classes: owners and the workers. The workers had to earn their life, to quit their hunger. They had no other ways to survive. They worked for the owners. They produced goods but they had no right to patent it. Further the “owners no longer worked on their farms. They farmed on paper and they forgot the land, the smell, the feel of it, and remembered only that they owned it remembered only what they gained and lost by it” (273).

So the sole of economy of the country went in the grip of a few capitalists. They made all the important decisions about the means of production. This system of capitalism could not protect humanity of rest of the workers. They felt urgency to fight against it and it led birth to a clash between the classes. In the strongly the capitalists tried to maintain status quo and the workers attempted to over through it. Steinbeck models *The Grapes of Wrath* in this socioeconomic reality of 1930s America and advocates in favor of workers system of socialism.

### **The Joads' Experience**

The Joad Family is the representative of all the migrant workers in the novel. The story covers a plot which presents a role model of the brutality and cruelty of capitalists over the migrant workers who try to create a society of their own rebelling against the capitalist.

In the beginning of the novel, the Joad family lives in Oklahoma Dust Bowl. Because of sever drought, Oklahoma is changed into dust bowl. The dust stricken landscape is viewed with horror b its inhabitants. The dust comes to stand not only for the land itself but also for the basic situation out of which the novel's action develops. Drought has caused a deadly injury to the Joad family that fails to harvest enough crop. As a result, they can not pay back the interest

to the bank from which they have taken loan. The bank forces many families including the Joads to leave the place. Hence bank is the agent of capitalism. It is evolved as hostile to the migrant workers. They regard banks, “creatures do not breathe air, do not eat side meat. They breathe profits, they eat the interest on money” (37). Bank is such a tool of the capitalists that it enslaves the farmers and promotes profit in currency. The farmers are made really so weak that they are just staring “as though the Bank or the company were a monster, with thought and feeling, which had ensnared them” (37).

The Joads are helpless against the hostile and barren Oklahoma and oppression of banks. Three generations back, the Joads took their land and their children grew on it. Now it is seized from them, and they have been share croppers. The farmers think that it is their right to live in Oklahoma. Unfortunately it is obstructed by nature and forced to abandon the land by societal enemy, the bank. On the verge of their exile, they demonstrate strong aggression. And they piled up the goods in the yards and set fire to them. They stood and watched them burning (103)”. However their aggression is futile. They realize the fate of the tractor driver, working for the bank, only for three dollars a day. He needs it to run his family though there lies no contentment. The Joads are forced to take exile. They load their possessions onto dilapidated and worn out truck to westward. It is a human nature that when you fail a thing you immediately hope of another. Hope persistently lengthens your life. When they set off to California Pa Tom reflects his hope, “Just let me get out to California, when I can pick me an orange when I want it. Or grapes. There is a thing I am not never had enough of gonna get me a whole high bunch a grapes off” (96).

Through highway 66, the Joad family heads for California. They are said to have a good life there. They think they will get lots of job opportunity. There will be no one to encroach their life. They will be given proper wages and their labor will be respected. They

still do not realize that they will under go the same socioeconomic system, capitalism in which laborers are judged from their cheap labor.

Reality always appears unusual than the expectation. The suffering and hardships for the Joads start along on the way. They face many trials and tribulations. Granpa becomes the first casualty of the family's flight to the west. The truck gets damaged. They meet many people coming back from California and they unfold the reality about their 'promised land'. Still they are not discouraged by these rumors. They are dauntless in their decision. They observe the power of the tenants "To California or any place everyone a drum major leading a parade of hurts, marching with our bitterness will all be going the same way. And they will all walk together and there will be a dead terror from it" (102). It looks as if to test the boundary of their static endurance and lasting forbearance, they are further tortured and troubled by the oppression of the police and camp guards. They bear some squinted eyes, suspicion and hatred on them. However Ma Joad devotes herself as an emblem of the unity of the family. He says, "All we got is the family unbroken. Like a bunch cows, when the lobos are ranging stick all together. Ma Joad is still confident. Family is the strength for her". I am not scared while we are all here, all that is alive, but I am not gonna see us bust up" (198) Ma says. It suggests a dreadful struggle to sustain the life in that capitalistic world.

### **Formation of Communal Societies and Perpetual Struggle**

The journey of Joads to the westward was not the trip taken by a single family. It was the exile of thousands of migrant workers resembling them. On the way unconsciously their vision of the idealized society emerges as an apparent subtext. "...strange thing happened the twenty families became on family...The loss of home became one loss, ....Every night relationships that make a world, established ...then leaders emerged, then laws were made, then codes came into being. And as the worlds moved westward they were more complete and

better furnished for their builders were more experienced in building them” (227-228). They reach to a government camp. It is the self governed camp where no cops enter. There are many facilities available like toilets, bathrooms to bathe, running water etc There is a central committee elected by the camp’s residents that keeps order and makes rules. The camp even holds dance nights. In the words of a girl, “Got nice toilets an’ baths an’ you kin wash clothes in a tub an’ they’s water tight handy, good drinking water, an’ rights the folks plays music an’ sat’dy night they give a dance” (324).

The camp represents heaven on he earth. It is an illustration of a socialistic world opposite to capitalistic world of Oklahoma. Tom desires “well, for christ’s sake! Why ain’t they more places like this?” (367). The camp proves a shocking interruption to the consistent maladies and hardships that have plagued the Joad family. It represents a communal society in which everyone has an equal share and an equal voice. It is a comfortable community where the Joads can live respectfully. The camp provides many things but there is no work around. So the Joads stay can not be long in the camp. However Steinbeck uses the camp ground life to build an idealized society in which the theory of socialism is applied and in which ostentatious display of wealth is shunned, equality reigns and no real ruling class emerges. The closest to ruling class that emerges is the elderly, who rule form wisdom and experience.

Unfortunately, the Joads can not live longer in the camp since they are looking for jobs. Their idealized world becomes transitory for them. But they really initiate their struggle for it after words and it is led by the Joad family in every situation. Now even in California, the Joads confront a harsh reality. They transferred themselves from Oklahoma to California but the socioeconomic structure of capitalism is still to be transformed. They are still the victims. The Joad’s dream of good work, good wages and respect is shattered. They are questioned and



put under suspicion even in California. Californian capitalists believe, “These goddamned Okies are dirty and ignorant. They are degenerate, sexual maniacs. These goddamned okies are thieves. They will steal anything. They have got no sense of property rights” (333).

The Joad family does not get steady work in California. The fate of other migrant workers is the same. They hope everyday to get a good job with good wages, but it always turns tragic. The fraudulent advertisements cheat them. They are published demanding more workers than necessary. This strategy help to drive down wages. One of the ragged men returning California states, “This fell a wants eight hundred men. So he prints up five thousands of them (handbills) things an’ may be twenty thousands people sees an’ may be two-three thousands folks gets morin’ account a this here han’bill (242). It is because “the more fell as he can get, an’ the hungrier, less his gonna play” (242). In this situation, the workers have to face unfair competition for their belly, and the capitalists benefit most. There fore the Joads fell urgent. “the movement changed them...the fear of hunger and hunger itself, changed them, the children without dinner changed them; welded them united them” (332).

In Hooper Ranch, a farming company, all the member of the Joad family work since morning to evening. Nevertheless they hardly earn for diner. The company has its own store which is twice as expensive as others. Thus the capitalists have a tight grip on wealth. The family starves nearly to death. The possible strikes are crushed by the men of capitalists. Tom Joad who has just been paroled from Mc Alester realized direly an urgency to fight against. How could other workers tolerate such an exploitation? Then “in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage” (412). Tom’s aggression further soars up. He says, “I been thinkin’ a hell of a lot, thinkin’ about our people livin’ like pigs, an’ the good rich |an’

layin' fallow, or may be one fellow or may be on fella with a million acres, while a hundred thousands good farmers is Starvin" (495).

Tom separates himself from the family. He joins Jim Casy, a preacher, who has supported the workers' voice. They engage in a strike. Though Casy is killed, Tom gets the leadership of fighting. He kills two men in a revenge mood. He hides himself from the envy of capitalists and involved in an endless fighting. The novel does not close up with a successive end. Rather it moves with a perpetual fighting. The Joads and other workers, though they undergo many hardships and suffering, engage in a war. The war is not against the exploitative socioeconomic relationship among people established by capitalism. It remains as a fighting against a system, capitalism and a perpetual struggle for the real democracy of socialism.

### **The Joad Family: Suffering and Victim of Exploitation**

John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* presents an archetypal Joad Family which becomes the victim of capitalist forces prevalent in the American society. With different hopes and aspirations the family leaves their native land for California. They have visualized an utopian world one after another. However they become the victim of the same system wherever they go. This kind of failure is caused by the capitalist forces like banks, land owners, businessmen, sheriffs, etc.

The novel begins with description of the disastrous condition in Dust Bowl, Oklahoma. The land that the Joad family cultivates is already owned by the bank. Because of the severe drought the crop is ruined. The family cannot pay the interest to the bank. So their land is captured. Here the bank is one of the agents of exploitation. It is completely devoid of human characteristics. It is monstrosity that "breathes profits" (39) and can never be satiated. The bank is inhuman, a destructive force that pursues profits at the expense of the life of poor people. Steinbeck symbolically describes the presence of agent of exploitation as; "the

concrete highway was edged with a mat of tangled, broken, dry grass,... little spears and balls of tiny thorns and all waiting for animals and for the wind for man's trouser cuff or the hem of a woman's skirt, all passive but armed with appliances of activity..." (27).

The Joad family is a proletariat group of people who does not own property. They are homeless, dispossessed, poor working class people. They own only labour. They are the people who belong to the group of "have not". To avoid exploitation they leave Oklahoma and set to California collecting hopes for stable and good life as proposed by hand bills, they find advertising work in the fields. "I got a han'bill says they got good wages, an' little while ago I seen a thing in the paper says they need folks to pick fruit" (241). But the reality is the opposite. In California, the family did not get steady work. These handbills are fraudulent advertisements meant to draw more workers than necessary and drive down wages. One of the ragged men returning from California states, "This fella wants eight hundreds men. So he prints up five thousands of them (handbills) things an' may be twenty thousand people sees an' may be two-three thousands folks gets movin' account a this here han'bill (242).

The joads have lost their old home and cannot find a new one .no one wants them at California. On the way, California shines ahead as a newer and greener home.but in California ,they meet only hatred, suspicion and without a touch of pity. A man returning from California describes on first arrival of California as,"people gonna have a look in their eye.they gonna look at you as their face says,I don't like you,you son -of -bitch.gonna be deputy sheriffs,an they'll push you around.you camp on the road side,an' they 'll move on you(262).

Instead of being welcomed the Joads are mocked, shamed and straved by the inhabitants of California.californians want to use them for their gain , to demand the greatest work for,for the least pay , for they know that the hungry can not refuse. The Joads are further exploited and cheated by using the same socio-economic structure.Tom Joad, son of the family just

released from prison, catches a huge red transport truck that belongs to Oklahoma City Transport Company. In *From The Dust Bowl to California: The Beautiful Fraud*, Jessica B. Teisch writes that the truck is "both promising and intrusive, a symbol of corporate domination as shown by No Riders' sticker so prominently displayed" (6). The truck driver is an alienated man for he is not given the chance to take any friend. The owner wants to keep him isolate, alienated and bored to the point insanity. Steinbeck brings another symbol of persecuted working class people, a turtle. While crossing the way, the turtle is run down by car and the truck but cannot kill it. It is a metaphor for the working class Joad family whose miseries and struggles under capitalism are recounted in novel. The truck that strikes the turtle is "the symbol of big business and commerce" (Teisch 7).

In capitalism human labor is replaced by machinery. The land that is cultivated by men is now crushed by the tractor. It is the intrusion of machinery over human labor. Steinbeck describes tractors' arrival of the Joads' land as "great crawlers moving like insects" (43). He writes, "behind the harrows, the long seeders-twelve curved iron pins erected in the foundry orgasms set by gears, raping methodically, raping without passion" (44). The man who drives the tractor is not human; he is a part of the machine, "a robot in the seat" (43). He has no individuality. But he is compelled to do it because he must sustain his life. He is selling himself for piece meal. Martin Shockley opines about the use of machinery; "*The Grapes of Wrath* was written to arouse sympathy for the million of poor farmers and tenants who have been brought to miserable ruin because of the development of machinery....The people are caught in the inexorable contradiction of capitalism" (qtd. In Donohue 56).

As promised by the handbills in which there is the demand of work in California, the Joad family along with many other families starts for California. Ahead of them California shines as a "Promised Land", full of opportunities, work, and equality, a better and prosperous world.

The migrating families are too ready to believe the handbills which assure them that there will be work for everybody in the orchards and orange groves. They swam over the mountains and across the deserts in their broken down automobiles. They suffer epic and incredible hardships on the way. They have to cross 2000 miles without sufficient food and proper sleep. In the way they are cheated, exploited by the car dealers, gas stations etc. By charging more, the car dealers give them worn-out, old cars knowing that the migrants cannot wait. This adds more miseries to the family. The owners of the car dealers mean solely to exploit impoverished buyers. They do not profit selling cars that will last but rather selling old car so that they have to repair it time and again. There is no compassion in the car dealers but rather "a perpetual cycle of exploitation" (Teisch 7).

As the people leave Oklahoma the houses are vacant. The whole field is empty without life. In chapter 11, Steinbeck contrasts living things with non living things. When people were there, the land was ploughed by horses. But now the horses are replaced by tractor:

And when a horse stops work and goes into the barn there is a life and a vitality left, there is a breathing and a warmth, and the feet shift on the straw and the jaws champ on the hay....there is a warmth of life in the barn, and the heat and smell of life. But when the motor of a tractor stops, it is as dead as one it comes from. The heat goes out it like the living heat that leaves a corpse (147).

The chapter provides one more critique of use of machinery by capitalism. The tractors and their drivers have no connection to the land, little understanding and no relationship with it. The farmers who were evacuated, in contrast, have a deep and long-standing affection for the land in which they lived and worked.

The Joads are on the Highway 66. It is the main migrant road stretching from Mississippi to California, "66 is the path of people in flight refugees from dust and shrinking land from the

thunder of tractors and shrinking ownership..." (150). It is the mother road, the road of flight. It forms a mirage in search of equality and better life. It is the way to escape from injustice, inequality and exploitation to supposed justice, equality and freedom. But for Joads, it proves to be the most dire route. Grampa dies on the way and they bury him as pauper on the edge of the road, for they do not have money to give a decent burial. The family is exploited by gas stations, junk car owners. Steinbeck foreshadows a number of the problem that the Joad family has to face on their travels. It also hints that the final destination in California may not be panacea for the Joad's problems.

Casy, the ex-preacher sees something wrong within the country. He states that the nation faces "nearly unconquerable enemy" (Teisch 7). He says, "Here's me that used to give all my fight against the devil 'cause I figured the devil was the enemy" (163). Although Casy does not clearly identify the enemy, its characteristics to exploit poor and working class people indicate that it is the capitalist system that precludes normal people from making a decent living. It is too powerful.

Too many people are headed towards west to flee from exploitation, oppression and get a fuller, richer, and better life. They are hungry, without any property. This migration brings changes in the west. "The western land, nervous under the beginning change" (191), for there is growing labor unity, strikes, more hungry people. The landowners and controlling power-the government fear the changes that are imminent and that threaten their interests of maintaining status quo. The causes are "a hunger in a stomach, multiplied a million times; a hunger in a single soul, hunger for joy and some security..." (191). Steinbeck brings the importance of unity among all working class people for the imminent change:

Here is the nod, you (capitalists) who hate change and fear revolution. Keep these two squatting men apart; make them hate, fear, suspect each other. Here is

the anlage of the thing you fear. This is the zygote. For here 'I lost my land' is changed...into 'we lost our land'. The danger is here, for two men are not as lonely and perplexed as one. (193)

In this chapter, Steinbeck makes the adversary relationship between the owners and the working class people. The owners try to set apart the working class people in order to thwart the collective good. By forcing men to consider only their self interest, the owners prevent the possibility of revolution. Whereas, the working class people want to unite each other for they think "having stepped forward, he may slip back but only half a step, never the full step back" (193); because "need is the stimulus to concept, concept to action"(193).

On their first arrival in California, two guards scold them as "Okies". The comment of one of the guards is very bitter to them; Them goddamn Okies got no sense and no feeling. They ain't human. A human being would not live like they do. A human being could not stand it to be so dirty and miserable. They ain't a hell of a lot better than gorillas" (283). So, the Joads are unwanted in California. They have no place to stay. One of the men returning from California inform the Joads about the exploitations of Okies by the Californians. The land is owned by Land and Cattle Company. The wage-rate is so low that the workers have to scuffle for meal. Sheriffs push around migrant workers. The Californians want to use them so long as they need them. A owner possesses a million acres of land; he drives in a bullet-proof car and hires many men with guns to protect his land. If anyone tries to protest, he will easily be shot and has nowhere to file a case, for as Marx states government is formed to manage the common affairs of bourgeois elites, not the poor working class people. The Joads now know that the presumed opportunities for jobs are a fraud, inducing too many workers in order to drive down wages.

In chapter 17, Steinbeck visualizes an utopian, self-governing socialist country. It is a society of working class, a somewhat idealized society that forms spontaneously; "the twenty families became one family, the children were the children of all. The loss of home became one loss" (247). It is a communal society in which equality reigns, no ruling class emerges; the accumulation of wealth in few hands is shunned.

The strong class difference and struggle can be seen in chapter 13. Steinbeck here brings the Marxist-Leninist prediction that capitalism creates its demise through its own success. Once belonged to Mexico, the land of California was captured by Americans and they changed farming into industry. Americans took the land from the Mexicans, put workers into slavery and finally condemned the Okies who were forced to build Hoovervilles. The owners valued the land by principal plus interest; "And all their love was thinned with money,....and all the time the farms grew larger and the owners fewer...And the imported serfs were beaten, and frightened and starved until some went home again..." (297). This is the plight of the Joad family in California from where they have expected too much. They are exploited, oppressed in California. Steinbeck further states; "And it came about that owners no longer worked on their farms. They farmed on paper; and they forgot the land, the smell, the feel of it, and remembered only that they owned it, remembered only what they gained and lost by it" (198).

The owners' relation with land as well as with workers is monetary. They pay workers so long as their work makes profit. Human relation changes into cash relation. The Californian landowners want many things, "accumulation, social success amusement, luxury and a curious banking security" (299). They are the exploiters who demand much work in least pay. But the Joads including other working class people want "only two things-land and food" (299). They want work-scurrying to find work to do-to lift, to push, to pull, to pick, to cut-anything, any burden to bear, for food. They are forced to sell themselves for piecemeal. Further, the



landowners who also have the shop "paid the men, and sold them food and took the money back" (198).

The homeless "Okies" have no place to live. They take shelter on the Hovertilles which are dirty, unmanaged. But even there, the sheriffs and the police run them away, for they have fear that the working, poor, dispossessed people might unite and revolt against the owners. They torture the Joads and others because they want to prevent the workers from settling in California. If they were to settle down, they could vote and have political power. If they have no permanent residence, they cannot organize and threaten the ruling class. If anybody protests, the police can even murder workers for they have no name and no property, and thus no power. But, "How can you (capitalists) frighten a man whose hunger is not only in his own cramped stomach but in the wretched bellies of his children. You can not scare him-he has known a fear beyond every other" (303).

James W. Tuttleton opines; "Capitalism ca not destruy lofty human feelings in the working man. It hardens the spirit and will of a man and prepares him for the inevitable, decisive class conflict in future" (qtd. In Donohue 247). Steinbeck's view regarding the possession of property resembles with Marx's view about it. He is of the opinion that:

When property accumulates in too few hands; it is taken away...When a majority of the people are hungry and cold they will take by fore what they need. And the little screaming fact that sounds through all history: repression works only to strengthen and knit the repressed. (305)

After knowing this direful situation, Connie Rivers, husband of Rose of Sharon, abandons his pregnant wife, for his desire of a decent job, a little house, comforts can not come into reality. The reality is too miserable for him to face. Casy takes the responsibility of wounding one of

the sheriffs who came in the Hoverville to frighten the people. So, he is kept into the jail. One by one, the family members are decreasing. Some of them can not endure the situation; others sacrifice their life for the welfare of the family. Their dream of unity of family and within this unity, the better and prosperous life is turning into a mirage.

The government camp is the relief for the homeless people like the Joads in California. The life of the Joad family in the government camp is easy. It is an utopian place where there are no cops. Tom takes the camp as the most perfect place.

'I been thinking how it was in that gov'ment camp, how our folks took care a theirselves, an' if they was a fight they fixed it their self; an' they wasn't no cops wagglin' their guns, but they was better order than them cops ever give. I been a-wonderin' why we can't do that all over. Throw out the cops that ain't our people. All work together for our own thing-all farm out own lan'. (533)

The camp is self-managed. It represents a communal society in which everyone has an equal share and an equal voice. It is a comfortable community. But the bourgeois/landowners can't bear the little comforts that the poor consume. They try to enter into the camp causing trouble. On the day of dance, they hire some vigilantes and make them fight in the camp so that they can enter and abolish the camp.

Through the mouth of Tom, Steinbeck evokes his communist desire of abolishing the state which works only in favor of oppressors, elites. The self governing place where there is no dichotomy of rich and poor is the vision that Steinbeck has dreamt of. The camp provides many things but there is no any work. Without work, the people can't sustain their life. So, the Joad family leaves the camp in search of work.

The Hooper ranch is another place to exploit the Joad family. It is owned by a great land owning company. The wage is so less that their work of dawn to dusk can't earn enough for meal. Casy, after coming out of the jail, becomes the leader leading a strike in the Hooper ranch for the increase of wage rate. But he is killed instead. Gerard Cannon takes "the men who killed Casy were the hired hoodlums of the economic rulers of agricultural and corporate enterprises..." (qtd. In Donhoue 121). Tom killed the man who had killed Casy and he had to hide. The family cannot earn living in the Ranch and leave for some unknown place. In this way, the Joad family wanders here and there for work, for food, for life but everywhere they are suppressed, oppressed, exploited. They are hounded by the sheriffs, tortured by the police. Their dream of life, equality is coming to be false.

The misery of the Joad family does not last here. They reach to the cotton picking place where they are compelled to work in low wages. The season does not last. A big rain falls. Their truck is captured in the mud. Rose of Sharon gives birth to a dead child. Uncle John, instead of burying the child, makes it float on the water, "Go down an' tell 'em. Go down in the steet an' rot an' tell 'em that way. That's the way you can talk. Don' even know if you was a boy or a girl...Go on down dnow, an' lay in the street. Maybe they'll know them" (533). Here "they" refers to those who make the plight of the Joad family. The dead child is the outcome of exploitation, for if there was sufficient food, comfort to the mother, the condition would be different.

At the last stage , family leaves the truck , takes shelter in a dry barn . they are totally destitute , helpless , dispossessed , penniless in the face of exploitation and cruelty . the hunger people are in search of food and shelter . their children are dying of malnutrition . on the other hand ,the owners damage the surplus food that cannot make profit and try to keep the price high. They "dump potatoes in the rivers...slaughter the pigs and bury them in the ground

"(444) , for a profit cannot be taken from them , the poor working people and their children are dying of starvation. So:

there is a crime that goes beyond denunciation . there is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize . there is a failure here that topples all our success ..... in the eyes of people there is the failure ,and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath . In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage. (445)

So, Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* strongly denounces the capitalist system that is responsible to make the plight of the working class Joad family. The poor people, after proctored of the land in Oklahoma are ready to believe the handbills which assure them that there is enough work and opportunity for everybody in the orchards and farms in California. It is their dreamland. They swarm over the mountains and across the deserts in their broken-automobiles. They suffer miseries and hardships for a golden future in California. But the Joad family's land of plenty turns out to be the land of despair. They have exchanged a bad life for a worse.

The fruit picking is overcrowded, the season is short, wages have been cut down to starvation level; they are hounded and tortured by the sheriffs and the cops. The Californians arm themselves to protect their exploitative economic security. Camping miserably on the edges of the towns, the starving people are persecuted by the police. The Joads come to a land flowing with milk and honey, but California then becomes a place of extreme exploitation and torture for them and they must wander infinitely. In this way, Steinbeck has successfully shown the dream of Joad family for better and prosperous life in California which turns out to be a mirage because they have to face many hardships caused by capitalism that has taken California under its clutch.

## **Alienation of Joad Family**

According to Marxist theory, a man is alienated from his work, friends and the product for which he has been working. Man experiences fragmentation through the division of labor, mechanization, exploitation. The longing for unity with one's self, with one's kind, with nature from which man has alienated never comes to reality in capitalistic society. In this regards, *The Grapes of Wrath* presents alienation caused by exploitation and mechanization under capitalism. The truck driver who gives a lift to Tom in spite of the 'No Riders' sign is one of the alienated men. The owner, the Oklahoma city transport company wants to keep him alone. So, the driver is not satisfied with his work. He is obliged to work for wages. There is no any emotional connection of him with his occupation.

The Joad family gets alienated from their land because of the intrusion of machinery. There is home no longer, there is no place they belong. Without the land of their own, there is only wandering. After their human labor is replaced by machine, they are obliged to live the native land. The tractors, as an agent of capitalism replace their labor and make plight for the family. They are alienated from their homeland Oklahoma and heads towards California. Steinbeck describes the tractors as "the tractors came over the roads and into the fields, great crawlers moving like insects, having the incredible strength of insects. They crawled over the ground laying the track and rolling on it and picking it up" (43).

The man who is driving the tractor is not man. He is a part of the machine, "the man sitting in the iron seat did not look like a man; gloved, goggled, rubber dust mask over nose and mouth, he was a part of the monster, a robot in the seat" (43). But he is also a paid-laborer. He is made to be inhuman and mechanized. He is not working for himself. He is alienated from his work for he says, "Three dollars a day. I got damn sick of creeping for my dinner-and not getting it. I got a wife and kids. We got to eat. Three dollars a day, and it comes every day"

(45). So, the driver, one of the proletariat is working for someone else, the bourgeoisie. He does not have the sense of ownership.

The Joad family which consists of twelve members heads towards California. They can not live in Oklahoma because of the new mode of production of land. They are in internal exile in their own nation. They are alienated from Oklahoma. In California, the Joads are hounded by sheriffs, persecuted by the police. The family's main dream of getting steady and respectable job, and leading a comfortable life with their own houses does not come into reality. They are alienated both from their native land, Oklahoma and new land, California. They can't live in Oklahoma and they are unwanted in California. In California, not even a single member of the Joad family gets the job as expected. They are obliged to work in so low wages that they cannot even eat sufficiently. The more they travel the more they become impoverished, dispossessed. This dire situation becomes unbearable for the Joads. The family starts crumbling. Noah, one of the son of the family leaves the family saying, "I can't help it. I can't leave this here water" (266). His alienation is caused by the extreme exploitation in Californian land.

Other characters are also alienated in the same manner. Connie is another alienated man. He is expected to get a job in a garage and make a decent life in California. But all his dream changed into a nightmare as he can't make the minimum requirement of life. So he alienated himself from the family leaving the responsibility for his pregnant wife, Rose of Sharon. The reality is too miserable for him to face. He can't bear the extremity of exploitation in California. So he deserts the family because he is spiritually as well as physically deficient. Pa sees no way out of this misery. He leaves his position as the head of the family because he is too weak to tolerate the injustice in California. Al, one teenager boy, lives for engines and

girls. He cannot bear the difficulties. So, he says "I am going out on my own purty soon. Fella can make his way lot easier if he ain't got a fambly" (460).

In this way, the family comes to utter desolation because of exploitation. In the beginning of their journey, the family has money, some household goods, a truck and their good health. There is unity in the family. As the novel proceeds, they become more and more impoverished and alienated. At last they are destitute, sick, without food, the family is almost cut into half. They are without any shelter and without any work. They can't adjust them in California for they don't get any work and even if they got work, the wage rate is too low. So, they are alienated from their homeland, from their work and from their product. This all is caused by the exploitation they suffer under capitalism, the system of serving elites. So, California is not the solution of their problems and hardships but it further adds their miseries because of the system.

#### IV. Conclusion

Every society is governed by a particular socioeconomic system. The system lays a direct impact on the lives of the people of the society. John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* observes the socioeconomic system of America at the time of great economic depression in 1930s. The novel widely projects the capitalistic moods of production of the contemporary society and exhibits its harsh impacts on the lives of working class people, who are forced to suffer starvation, proper shelter, and clothing. Steinbeck presents the sole cause of their fostered plight is the economic condition established under capitalism. He develops the themes and ideas in the novel as the Critique of Capitalism.

The plot of the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* contains the details of troubles faced by the Joad family. It is the account of their exodus from Oklahoma after their land is captured by monstrous bank, the agent of capitalism. They find no way without accepting the exile, however they don't leave collecting further hopes to get a good work, good wages, and proper respect in California. On the way, they release themselves from the Capitalistic Oklahoma society, and unconsciously form the society of their own. This practice of formation of harmonious communal society strongly relates Steinbeck's advocacy in favor of poor downtrodden, working class people and condemns landowners, banks, etc. as the agents of capitalism.

When the family finally reaches California, they become the victims of the same destiny which they faced in Oklahoma. Their enthusiasm with new hopes of life gets frosted. Their hopes and dreams of secure life get shattered. They became the victims of exploitation by banks in their native land in Oklahoma. They have been compelled to leave. Now they are the victim of capitalistic cruelty and police brutality. Now California is even worse than Oklahoma. It is also under the control of capitalist, especially of great landowners, sheriffs and police.



Named as 'Okies', they are shamed, mocked and starved by the Californian land owners. They want to use them in low wages so that they come tomorrow for work. In California, the Joads cannot get wage enough to sustain their life. They are compelled to work at cut rate wages; many people swarm over to get a work. The capitalist take much profit from their work. They lead a luxurious life whereas the Joad's a day's income is not enough to get enough meal. So, they are alienated from the work. They do not have the sense of ownership while working. This exploitation alienates them from each other. They are not only alienated from their employers, their work but also from their fellow family members. So, the Joads family crumbles and at the end of the novel cuts into half. The alienation caused by capitalism is responsible for the disintegration of Joad family.

The perpetual suffering and exploitation mounts high in California. They migrate from one camp to another looking for a job but they are cheated everywhere. Capitalists use advertisements as a means to cheat them. They suffer incredible hardships in order to exchange a bad life for a worse one. California, their promised land remains no more the land of plenty. They are stricken every minute as the fruit picking is over crowded, the season is short and wages have been reduced to starvation level. The Joads are hounded by the sheriffs and persecuted by the police. They are tortured by land owners. The constant efforts of the Joad family to find work and shelter are futile. The humanity gets lost. They are persecuted and looked upon not even as human beings. Eventually the family is forced to rebel however Ma Joad always remains as an emblem of stoic endurance. The protagonist Tom Joad is dragged down into the milieu of violence, murder and fighting. The capitalist hire people to suppress the united voice of the workers for justice. They even shot at Casy, the preacher. Killing Casy, a religious leader, is the murder of ethics. The capitalists do whatever they prefer to sustain their status quo. Thus the plight of migrant workers especially the Joad family is the

consequence of privation, insecurity, low income, inadequate standards of living caused by capitalism. The family is caught in the inexorable contradiction of capitalism. The description of these overall adversity among the lives of majority people clearly reflects Steinbeck's Critical bent of mind towards the system of capitalism.

To sum up, Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* dramatizes the terrible plight of tenant families who have been tracted out of Oklahoma. It exposes a system land monopoly as a destructive system. The Joads suffer because they become tenants under monopolistic and fraudulent capitalistic practices prevalent in the American society. It remains as the best example of domestic operation. When small farmers and poor people are being deprived of their homes and are sent roaming about the country. Knocking from pillar to post, when banks are bursting with ideal money, when the bourgeoisie are spending luxurious life and the poor, working class people are dying of starvation. Thus Steinbeck has attempted a sympathetic exposition of this status in the novel. In this regard, *The Grapes of Wrath* is a proletarian novel which expresses the need for a change in an economic and social system, if the condition of poor attempted to be improved. The novel eloquently tells the tales of poor, homeless working class Joad family which is power less in fighting against the system that has oppressed them. It is a work of art that soundly expresses Steinbeck's belief in the collectivists and unified action by the lower class over the ruling class who are responsible for the plight of the people. Therefore the novel marks its position as the critique of capitalism.

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