The Fallacy of the American Dream in *The Grapes of Wrath* (1938) by John Steinbeck

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**Abstract:** The American Dream can be defined as a deeply rooted ideology in the American society with the belief that any person living in the United States can become rich through hard work, courage, determination, and divine grace. Though this idea is deeply rooted in the mentality of many Americans, the reality has disappointed a great number of persons. One of the foundations of this ideal is the economic and political liberalism that has characterized the United States for a very long time. Experience has shown that very often, those who pursue this ideal of life with great optimism find themselves in difficult conditions when they arrive in the United States, or are simply disappointed to find their dream shattered. John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath* counts the Joad family's odyssey to California as a symbol of the journey to the supposed Promised Land. Opportunities offered by the capitalist system to solve their problems were in reality the other side of the coin.

**Keywords:** Dream, Fallacy, Hope, Disillusionment, Poverty, Capitalism.

**INTRODUCTION**

America is portrayed as the El Dorado of the West socio-economically and its success is extraordinary. America offers a favorable atmosphere for private entrepreneurship. Anybody can get rich there overnight; so much so that there is even a myth called the American Dream. The latter is the key of development in the United States because it pushes all of its inhabitants to work hard to achieve this ideal. It is also a pledge of hope for giving meaning to existence. It must be said that the American Dream is a long standing concept because at the end of 1848, the precious metal fever was spreading in the eastern United States, when the rumor of exceptional discoveries circulated in California. Fascinated by the hope of a quickly acquired fortune, thousands of people, in an atmosphere of delirium, rushed to the new El Dorado where they will experience total disillusionment. So the gold rush or "golden rush" in the west of the United States is just further proof of America’s founding principles.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, history repeats itself, of course, but is inscribed in a particular context of the crises of the 1930s. This crisis enabled Steinbeck to take a critical look at the American economic model. Indeed, does the capitalist system make it possible to achieve this ideal which is the American Dream? This ideal is recurrent in *The Grapes of Wrath* as farmers are kicked off their land by banks often engage in this chimerical activity in an attempt to make a new life for themselves. Thus, in this novel as stated by Rucklin, “John Steinbeck, faithful to the values of postmodernism, describes the odyssey of farmers to the Promised Land. This novel has a binding dimension because it recalls the promise made to Moses by the God Yahweh. Thus the journey of the Joad clan, like among many others, to the grapes of California is strewn with pitfalls.” (Rucklin, C. 2003: 12)

The forces that oppose the farmers, however, are not from another world, like this God who guided the Hebrews in the wilderness and punished them when they disobeyed. The torturer of the farmers is down here and inflicts his abuse through a so-called capitalist system, more brutal and more cynical than ever. The "Okies" are also strangers in the Promised Land, and their wandering poverty creates exclusion and violence.

The study will try to show first, the context in which the novel fits through the crisis of the 1930s and the bankruptcy of the capitalist system as a possible deduction from this period. The second part will deal with the mechanization of agriculture as a cause of the exclusion of farmers and its corollary of promise of a bright future in California. The last part entitled: From Dream to Reality, will deal with the Joad family's odyssey to the Promised Land and its disillusionment.

**THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

In October 1929, the United States stock market crashed, sending the country into an economic depression that lasted for more than a decade. All of a sudden, millions of people were out of work and facing poverty. Many American citizens became dissatisfied with how their government handled the crisis. During that period, farmers suffered through severe hardships.

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1 For the following references in the text we will adopt (Steinbeck, 1938: page) for any reference to the work of John Steinbeck entitled *The Grapes of Wrath* which is the subject of this study.
including crop failure and the falling prices of farm products. Extreme drought and soil erosion led to horrible farming conditions throughout Oklahoma Texas, New Mexico and other states? Crops failed and thousands of people lost their farms. Many of these people lost their farms. This period is viewed as a systemic crisis; the collapse of a financial system portrayed as the bedrock of the American power.

The crisis of the 1930s

In the fall of 1929 America entered an extremely serious economic crisis that brutally destroyed its hitherto most steadfast liberal convictions. It was the stock market crash that cruelly exposed the inequities of American society. Indeed, all economic sectors are affected and thousands of people are plunged into the most appalling misery. Thus, in the financial sector many banks are on the verge of bankruptcy. Already, in 1930, there were 22,700 banks that were bankrupt. Many establishments, unable to collect the money they lent, in tum failed to reimburse their customers. The impact of these bankruptcies on purchasing power, especially when they affected, banks like the “Bank of the U.S.” several hundred thousand savers, inevitably dealt a great blow to the American economy.

During the depression, there were several foreclosures made by banks in all sectors of economic activity which amplified the already dire situation. Thus in the agricultural sector many indebted peasants were driven from their land. In 1932, a third of the population was unemployed and the poor flocked to the roads of the West in search of work. America now presented the distressing spectacle of poverty. John Steinbeck, in tune with the times, writes The Grapes of Wrath to show the tragedy of Oklahoma farmers, the ones commonly known as the Okies. In this major economic crisis, some say it is the materialization of the failure of the capitalist system that bore fruit and raised the United States to the top of nations during the 1920s.

The collapse of the capitalists system

The economic success of the United States is based on a so-called capitalist system. This economic system is based on private property and the reinvestment of profits. It is an economic doctrine which advocates the principles of free enterprise, free competition and the free play of individual initiatives. This is liberalism, the foundation on which capitalism rests. This economic doctrine offers an atmosphere conducive to individual success and is the pledge of the dazzling development and supremacy of America during the 1920s to such an extent that it will even boast of imposing its economic model throughout the world. So this system will be the propaganda tool of the United States during the Cold War. So during the presidential elections of 1928, Hubert Hoover did not praise this system in these terms: “today, in America, we are closer to the definitive triumph over poverty than any country has. never been” (Duhem,2006: 12) Yet four years later, his name was cruelly associated with the most shocking misery and the most desperate biterness. In fact, during the crisis, the liberal doctrine, which was irreproachable in origin, was called into question. The American model has shown its limits and its traditional “laissez-faire” will be abandoned to restore the country’s economic situation.

In addition, one of the peculiarities of liberalism is also the fact that most of the objects produced are destined to become commodities and the orientation of production no longer towards direct consumption but towards sale on the markets. This situation will inevitably accentuate the crisis which was a crisis of overproduction since it was characterized by a rupture between production and solvent demand. There are too many products in almost all areas of economic activity, but that will not prevent the misery of the populations since they are plunged into total poverty. Therefore, some thinkers express doubts and wonder about the effectiveness of liberalism which has shown all its fragility during the crisis. How can an entire nation suddenly fall into misery? Is the capitalist model the best system for distributing the wealth of humanity fairly? These questions deserve thoughts, especially when we know that America wants to teach all mankind a lesson. John Steinbeck poses the debate in The Grapes of Wrath. Indeed, this novel shows the flaws of capitalism through the journey of the Joad family.

The Mechanization of Agriculture And The Hope For Better Life

One of the most profound changes in the United States at that time was the national abandonment of farming as a livelihood strategy. This change is evident both in the exodus of Americans from farming and in the conditions faced by the farmers remaining most of whom are marginal producers in and increasing concentrated industries. This mechanization will have tremendous impacts in the situations of farmers during the 1930’s crisis. Family farming is going to be replaced by industrial farming creating joblessness and misery. These farmers expelled from their home land have no other choice than to migrate in California where they heard about great opportunities. Since the days of the Gold rush California had earned that reputation as a land where fortunes were made and opportunities were abundant. A favorable, plentiful resources and a visually arresting landscape where all compelling attraction for many Americans. Migrants will take it for granted that picking cotton and grapes in that Promised land will open up for them a bright future.

The exclusion of farmers

From the outset of the novel, Steinbeck describes a scene close to the hecatomb, a still life invaded by dust and cotton. Indeed, like a divine curse, the dust storm makes the fields impassable and even prevents people from going out. “Men and women huddled in their houses, and tied handkerchiefs over their noses when they went out, and wore goggles to protect their eyes” (Steinbeck, 1938: 3) The sharecroppers are unanimously hit by the dust and drought. Dust seeps everywhere and makes life almost impossible in
Oklahoma. This cloud of dust is ominous because it foreshadows the difficulties to come. The farmers are helpless in the face of their already sealed fate and regret the destructive arrival of dust. "If the dust only wouldn’t fly. If the top would only stay on the soil, it might not be so bad" (Steinbeck, 1938:33).

This wish shows all their innocence and the inhuman nature of the bank, which cares only about its survival. Indeed, failing to be no longer profitable, powerful limited companies are appropriating the land from indebted farmers. “The bank - the monster has to have profits all the time. It can’t wait. It’ll die. No, taxes go on. When the monster stops growing, it dies. It can’t stay one size” (Steinbeck, 1938:33).

Steinbeck describes the inhuman character of the bank described here as a monster that swallows only profits. The owners turn all responsibilities over to the bank. In doing so, it is much easier to dupe illiterate farmers and expropriate them. The bank is portrayed as an unreachable creature so the dispossessed have no one to complain to. However, the farmers, formerly owners, have gradually been despoiled by the monster. Steinbeck describes the injustice done to smallholders by the big banking corporations who crush them mercilessly.

Another vector of the disarray of the sharecroppers, the machine will succeed them. So behind the farmers brand new tractors invest the land. The lands of the farmers are desecrated and under the incedulous gaze of the last peasants. Steinbeck even calls the tractor intrusion a passionless rape. “Behind the harnows, the long seeder – twelve curved iron erected in the foundry, organs set by gears, raping methodically, raping without passion » (Steinbeck, 1938: 37-38).

The operator of the machine has no affection for the earth. He just does his job to survive, and he doesn’t mind when the harvest isn’t good. He is even assimilated to a robot as his work is so stereotypical. So he acts without thinking mechanically and automatically, surely because he does not own the earth. He is content only to obey his master. The notion of ownership is even challenged by Steinbeck here since, according to him, being a landlord does not amount to legally owning land and entrusting it to someone else for a salary for its exploitation. The tenant pondered more.

“But let a man get property he doesn’t see, or or can’t take time to get his fingers in, or can’t be there to walk on it - why, then the property is the man. He can’t do what he wants, he can’t think what he wants. The property is the man, stronger than he is. And he is small, not big. Only is possessions are big and he is the servant of his property. That is so, too” (Steinbeck, 1938:39).

Thus, to be an owner, there is a sentimental bond that must be woven between the owner and the land. As was the case with the farmers otherwise the owner becomes a slave to his property. In addition, the mechanization of agriculture will put thousands of farmers out of work. The new owners will take a single man to replace several people for a pittance.

"That’s right’”, the tenant said. But for your three dollars a day fifteen or twenty families can’t eat at all. Nearly a hundred people have to go out and wander on the roads for your three dollars a day. Is that right?” (Steinbeck, 1938: 38-39) Steinbeck, far from blaming the tractor driver, blames industrialization for the plight of farmers. Owners like banks are concerned only with the profits, not the misery they can create. Now the only option available to the farmers is the exodus to the west of the United States because the eviction times are short and the tractor continues on its way, crushing the farmers’ houses one by one. It’s the heartbreaking spectacle that Tom Joad, a former inmate, back home witnesses. Tom accompanied by a former pastor, Jim Casy goes to find his parents’ house in nims and their field disfigured.

“The fences were gone and the cotton grew in the dooryard and up against the house, and the cotton was about the shed barn. The outhouse lay on its side, and the cotton grew close against it. Where the dooryard had been pounded hard by the bare feet of children and by stamping horses’ hooves and by broad wagon wheels, it was cultivated now, and the dark green, dusty cotton grew” (Steinbeck, 1938: 41)

When Tom arrives, the properties are empty, the families gone and the Caterpillar tractors crush everything in their path. Cotton has now taken precedence over all other crops. This is the era of monoculture; all land is now overrun with cotton. This overexploitation quickly impoverishes the fields, but the new owners do not care about the well-being of the soil but their profit. The farmers’ attachment to their land runs deep and is highlighted when Tom’s grandfather cries out in despair at the situation.

“I ain’t sayin’ for you to stay,” said Grampa. ‘You go right on along. Me - I’m stayin’ here. I give her a goin’-over all night mos’ly. This here’s my country. I b’long here. An I don’ give a goddamn if they’s anges an ‘grapes crowdin’ a fella outa bed even. I ain’t a-goin’. This country ain’t no good, but it’s my country. No, you all go ahead. I’ll just stay right here where I b’long” (Steinbeck, 1938: 121)

The old man mourns this land which has seen the birth and death of so many generations, this land which, more than a simple title deed, is the land on which their lineage is inscribed, the land which has seen their blood flow. Despite the lamentations of the old man, the farmers must leave their land and only the American myth of renewal in California, the Promised Land seems to console them in these hardships.
The promise of a bright future in California

Steinbeck was inspired by the promise made to Moses by the God Yahweh to highlight the determination of the farmers to believe in the Promised Land. Indeed, in the Exodus, part of the Bible that serves as a reference for Steinbeck, the Israelites, under the leadership of Moses, fled Egypt where they were persecuted to go to The Promised Land. Steinbeck equates the persecution of the Israelites with that of the farmers. However, the terms of the pact to have the salvation promised by Yahweh are different because for Moses and his people, you just have to comply with certain rules and prohibitions. On the other hand, farmers only need to believe in the promises made by capitalism and empower themselves to be there in California to achieve happiness. Tom Joad, accompanied by Casy a defrocked pastor, will play the role of shepherd to bring the flock to the Promised Land. The Joad clan will serve as a mirror to the suffering of a whole people now determined to believe in an ideal and to follow their destiny.

In Steinbeck's romantic fiction, the farmers, immediately excluded from their land, begin to dream of an ideal of life. Thus, their misfortunes are gradually fading as hope is reborn in their entire community thanks to the rumors of exceptional promises in the rich valleys of California. California grape fever is spreading everywhere through leaflets distributed by the thousands among farmers.

"Well-nothing seems too nice, kinda. I seen the Han'bills fellas pass out, an' how much work they is, an' his wages an' all; an' I seen in the paper how they want folks to come an' pick grapes an' oranges an' peaches. That'd be nice work, Tom, pickin' peaches. Even if they wouldn't let you eat none, you could maybe snatch a little ratty one sometimes. An' it'd be nice under the trees, workin' in the shade. I'm scared of stuff so nice. I ain't got faith. I'm scared somepin ain't so nice about it." (Steinbeck, 1938: 97)

This confession of Ma Joad reflects the degree of belief in this dream which leaves no one indifferent. However, we can detect here a certain apprehension of Ma Joad that she tries to hide from elsewhere. The dream is like an outlet here in the face of misery. They all believe that California, the land of Canaan in the western United States, is a heaven on earth where you find work, and something to survive on. Yet Tom quotes an excerpt from the Bible to tell him that it is not good to want too much of one thing. "Don't roust your faith bird - high an' you won't do no crawlin' with the worms." (Steinbeck, 1938: 98) When Ma Joad keeps going, Tom tries to warn her by telling her that he has learned that California is not what you think it is.

"An' he says the folks that pick the fruit live in dirty old' camps an' don't hardly get enough to eat. He says wages is low an' 'hard to get any.' "As if Tom committed a sin, Ma Joad gets angry and cuts it short": A shadow crossed her face. "Oh that ain't so," she said. "Your father got han'bill on yella paper, tellin' how they need folks to work. They wouldn't go to that trouble if they wasn't plenty work. Costs 'em good money to get them han'bills out. What'd they want to lie for, an' 'costin' 'em money to lie ?" (Steinbeck, 1938: 99)

My Joad, like all farmers, is intoxicated by flyers that erase the shadow of doubt. The evidence is overwhelming, California is undoubtedly the Promised Land and to deny this evidence is blasphemy. Thus, each one goes there of his own fantasies. Take, for example, Grampa Joad, the somewhat eccentric old man who wants to take it easy in California.

"The old man thrust out his bristly chin, and he regarded Ma with his shrewd, mean, merry eyes. "Well, sir," he said, "we'll be a-startin' 'fore long now. An' by God, they's grapes out there, just a-hangin' over in the road. Know what I'm a-gonna do? I'm gonna pick me a wash tub full a grapes, an' I'm gonna set in 'em, an' scrooge aroun', an' let the juice run down my pants." (Steinbeck, 1938: 100)

This desire of Granpa, the grandfather of Tom, reflects the subconscious of a whole people who want to finally know the fullness of happiness in California. Although Grampa will not be there, his revelations show the pandisdiacal character of California. Ripoll described the situation saying: "The expropriated people are won over in advance by the leaflets presenting California as an idyllic place, now they will give body and soul to reach the Promised Land. They reluctantly sell off all their personal belongings to second-hand dealers." The latter are offering the farmers pitiful prices that they cannot refuse because they have no other alternative to raise money to prepare for the trip (Ripoll, V. 2007: 24).

"In the little houses the tenant people sifted their belongings and the belongings of their fathers and of their grandfathers. Picked over their possessions for the journey to the west. The men were ruthless because the past had been spoiled, but the women knew how the past would cry to them in the coming days. The men went into the barns and the sheds. That plow, that harrow, remember in the war we plan to f..."

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The farmers are unanimously sorting out their belongings to take out those that can be sold later. This process is not without hard feelings as future travelers sell their stories, their lives, as evidenced by the
The Joad family's odyssey to the Promised Land

The Joad family piled up with their entire luggage in the truck and took Route 66. They left Sallisaw, their hometown, and traveled over 2000 km before reaching the Promised Land. The conditions in which she intends to make this trip are extremely difficult since in the old truck are embarked: Ma and Pa Joad, two old people Grampa and Granma, Rose of Sharon pregnant and her husband, Uncle John, Noah the bizarre, Al the specialist dead trucks, Ruthie and Winfield the children, Jim Casy, the defrocked priest and Tom Joad, the family guide to the Promised Land. It is important to stress here that Steinbeck does not intend to separate the experience of the Joad family from that of the other migrants because the Joads are one family among thousands in this exodus. Steinbeck extends their destiny to that of migrants in general, devoting entire chapters to this silent and anonymous mass in which the Joads mingle. It is Ma Joad who says it: "we are the people". Hence the epic and prophetic dimension of this human adventure.

The Joad family truck is overloaded and Al the driver must follow closely to identify any engine malfunctions early.

"Al, at the wheel, his face purposeful, his whole body listening to the car, his restless eyes jumping from the road to the instrument panel. Al was one with his engine, every nerve listening for weaknesses, for the thumps or squeaks, hums and chattering that indicate a change that may cause a breakdown. He had become the soul of the car". (Steinbeck, 1938:133)

This passage shows the state of mind in which the migrants are making the journey. Nerves heat up quickly because the truck is untrustworthy. Al knows the editor can give up at any time despite all the precautions he's taken in picking out old Hudson. The family cannot afford to lose the truck or make several repairs because they only have $180 to get to their destination. According to Sponville, "through the journey of migrants, Steinbeck reveals the nefarious influence of capitalist society. In fact, all along Highway 66 migrants can see luxury restaurants, gas stations of large companies, department stores, among others. However, access to these large structures is strictly prohibited for them. Except for a few desperate people who break the rule to beg for food."(Sponville, 1992: 22) “The man took off his dark, stained hat and stood with with a curious humility in front of the screen. "Could you see your way to sell us a loaf of bread, ma'am?" (Steinbeck,1938:173)

This sad episode highlights the destitution of migrants who cannot even buy a loaf of bread and feed their families properly. The Joad clan discovers this misery among the "people" during their first stopover to get water and fuel at a makeshift gas station. Thus, they realize their situation is much better than that of other migrants who cannot afford the luxury of buying gasoline at cash. In fact, according to the gas station attendant, most travelers beg for fuel or exchange it with their personal items. This explains the small travel budget of migrants who must ensure that every penny is spent for a useful purpose.

In addition, unlike the old migrants' cars, the brand new big trucks of the big companies and the luxury cars of some wealthy individuals are refueled in gas stations worthy of this sound. Steinbeck denounces here the discrimination and the imbalance of American society in which a minority controls everything. Barely a few
kilometers on the road, before even leaving Oklahoma, Grampa surrenders in the Wilson's tent. The old man who tenaciously opposed leaving the earth is taught so much that he had to be drugged to be embarked, dies of a heart attack. Yet Casy explains that Grampa died the instant he left earth.

“He was foolin’, all the time. I think he knewed it. An Grampa didn’ die tonight. He died the minute you took ‘im off the place… Why, no. Oh, he was breathin’, Casy went on, ‘but he was dead. He was that place, an ‘he knewed it’” (Steinbeck, 1938: 159-160).

Grampa’s death reinforces the idea that these people hold fast to their lands in such a way that excluding them there results in certain death. The old man is a perfect illustration of this fatal separation. This is the family’s first tragic event. The family is forced to bury Grampa without a burial so as not to arouse suspicion from the authorities because they say the government is more interested in the dead than the living.

“Sometimes feelas workin’ dig up a man an ‘then they raise hell an’ figger he been killed. The gov’ment’s got more interest in a dead man than a live one. They’ll go hell-scapin ‘tryin’ to fin ‘out who he was and how he died. I offer we put a note of writin ‘in a bottle an’ lay it with Grampa, tellin ‘who he is an’ how he died, an ‘why he’ buried here” (Steinbeck: 1938:162).

Steinbeck here denounces the hypocrisy of the government which cares only about the dead to the chagrin of its noble function of watching over the populations. Thus, a note explaining the circumstances in which Grampa died and an extract from the Bible (“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”) accompany the corpse. Hence the biblical dimension of the work. During the journey, relationships are forged and strengthen the bonds within the community of the abandoned. The agreement between the Joads and the Wilsons is a perfect illustration of this fatal separation. This is the family’s first tragic event. The family is forced to bury Grampa without a burial so as not to arouse suspicion from the authorities because they say the government is more interested in the dead than the living.

The Joad clan in turn, though Al decide to fix their car and ride together. Thus, the two families form one and only family and can now approach the hills under happy auspices. The strength of migrants lies in their sacred union and Ma Joad embodies it in a strong way through the novel. This generosity of Ma Joad is highlighted when Tom, to save time for the group decides to go it alone to repair the Wilson truck that broke down. For Ma Joad, it is out of the question to leave a member of his family stranded. They must all walk together.

“The money we’d make wouldn’t do no good,” she said, “All we got is the family unbroken. Like a bunch a cows, when the lobos are ranging, stick all together. I ain’t scared while we’re all here, all that’s alive, but I ain’t gonna see us bust up. The Wilson here is with us, an ‘the preacher is with us. I can’t say nothin ‘if they want to go, but I’m a-goin’ cat-wild with this here piece a bar-am if my own folks busts up” (Steinbeck, 1938:186).

As the saying goes that there is strength and in particular that of the family. In this perilous journey, the main thing is to keep intact the unity of the family, the only guarantee of being able to reach the Promised Land. No one should get lost in these unknown places where the law of the jungle prevails in this capitalist society. You may be helpless, but seeing family members all around gives you a feeling of security. Nothing seems to stop the migrants, Highway 66 is crowded with vehicles of all kinds without them knowing the force pushing them forward. It is as if they are being pushed by some divine force.

Tom cannot understand the magnitude or the exact reasons for this exodus. He is also forbidden to reflect or ask questions about the causes of this massive migration. He is content to move forward step by step without knowing the real motivations for this march. He thus equates this movement with his former prisoner status at Mac Alester. Perhaps it is the faith in California that explains this flight. Thus, neither Grampa’s death, difficult conditions, nor Sairy’s state of health seem to stop this movement. The toughest part of the trip is looming. Thus, after passing through New Mexico and Arizona, the migrants prepare to endure the ultimate test before reaching the Promised Land, namely the crossing of the desert. The migrants camp for the last time along the Needles River before facing the high mountains and the heatwave. The Joads and Wilsons are only a few miles away from knowing the consecration. The hour of glory will soon strike. In these moments, anguish overwhelms everyone to such an extent that Ma Joad renews the pact with God to consolidate his faith.

“I pray God we gonna get some res’. I pray Jesus we gonna lay down in a nice place…’I pray God we gonna be let to wash some clothes. We ain’t never been dirty like this. Don’t even wash potatoes ‘fore we boil ’em. I wonder why? Seems like the heart’s took out of us” (Steinbeck, 1938: 238).

Ma Joad prays to the good Lord so that all the efforts made are not in vain. The family went through a lot of sacrifice and now deserves God’s blessing. Everyone is tired but now is not the time to give up because the Promised Land is near. The specter of the desert is on everyone’s mind. You have to fight to survive and try to believe it again. However, Noah, Tom’s big brother, loses his faith and decides to live by the river, “Like to jus’ stay here. Like to lay here forever. Never get hungry an ‘never get sad. Lay in the water all life long; lay as a brood sow in the mud” (Steinbeck, 1938: 223-224).
Noah, in front of the beauty of the river and its potential wealth, loses faith and breaks the pact. He thus fell in love with the river. No one can go hungry near a place like this. However, the final warning from a migrant on the way home seems to prove him right. Indeed, another person exposes to the Joad family the situation which prevails in California. A beautiful place but very hostile to migrants. But the family is a few kilometers from happiness to believe in these lost souls. The procession must continue. Although, everyone is affected by the journey: Granma has been ill since the start of the journey, Sairy Wilson, also suffers and will even be the cause of the divorce between the two families. Indeed, by the time the Joads get ready to leave Sairy Wilson is already overcome by illness. Her husband knows that she cannot get out of this journey alive. “We can’t go folks,” he said. “Sairy’s done up. She got to res’. She ain ‘gonna git acrost that desert alive” (Steinbeck, 1938: 239).

Sairy Wilson despite her bravery can no longer take it, she knows that the Promised Land is not made for her. His destiny ends here. The Joad clan continues on their way after leaving some groceries and some cash with the Wilson’s as a symbol of their unfailing generosity. He travels through the night and halfway through Granma dies in her turn, but Ma Joad is silent and even uses it as a subterfuge to deceive the vigilance of the patrollers. Ironically, Granma gives up when Connie and Rose of Sharon begin to suffer from claustrophobia and engage in romantic activity to overcome their anxiety. At sunrise the Joads see the rich valleys of the Promised Land. The Joads exclaim with joy. Finally, their effort and the fervor of their faith are rewarded.

“They drove through Tehachapi in the morning glow, and the sun came up behind them, and then - suddenly they saw the great valley below them. Al jammed on the brake and stopped in the middle of the road, and, Jesus Christ! Look! he said. The vineyards, the orchards, the great flat valley, green and beautiful, the trees set in rows, and the farm houses. And Pa said, God Almighty! The distant cities, the little towns in the orchard land, and the morning sun golden in the valley… "I want your look at her.” The grain fields golden in the morning, and the willow lines, the eucalyptus trees in rows. Pa sighed, I never known they was anything like her. The peach trees and walnut groves, and the dark green patches of oranges. And red roofs among the trees, and barns - rich barn” (Steinbeck, 1938:250).

This panoramic view of California shows a heavenly place where it is good to live. California is characterized here by a landscape of unprecedented beauty with its tree species specific to the Mediterranean climate. The expanse of cultivable fields and modern cities are breathtakingly beautiful. Migrants can now fulfill their dream. However, isn’t California a mirage? Will the promised be kept? The migrants will soon discover that the dream does not come true as it usually happens for many people in the United States.

**CONCLUSION**

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck tries to describe the hard conditions in which farmers like the Joad family had to suffer during the Dust Bowl. Throughout the novel he focuses on the Joad family and their journey to California. Steinbeck had mixed intentions that he is trying to express. His message in this novel is how the dispossessed families were treated through the journey from Oklahoma to California and how the American Dream was shaped by the catastrophic events that was happening during this time. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck shows how unemployment and social inequality make the American Dream unattainable. The basic idea of this dream is synonymous with the belief that all citizens should be free and have equal opportunity for success. The Joad family will soon discover that the handbill advertisement for California work has beckoned countless other families onto route 66 where despair and disillusionment invade these migrants.

**REFERENCES**