

Critical Analysis Of “The Grapes Of Wrath”

Introduction

The Grapes of Wrath is a novel and movie written in 1939 by John Steinbeck, who was born in 1902. The writer’s intention was to rouse his readers against those who were responsible for the poverty of the American people in the early 1930s. It tells the story of the Joad family, migrant farmers who travel from Oklahoma to California.

Despite being a great story, which even became an Academy Award-winning movie in 1940, it received a lot of criticism and was even called communist propaganda. It was also banned from many schools because of its vulgar language (Dr. Zavari, 2006).

In a nutshell, the story discusses how the financial center of the United States of America crashed in 1929 due to poor governance under President Hoover, with the crisis lasting until 1933. As a result of this depression, six million people became unemployed, many businesses collapsed, banks and other financial institutions closed, and homelessness increased. It was also the time when farmers were hit by a severe drought. In the wake of this, thousands of people left and headed to California, where they had heard there were jobs, fruit, and green land. The Joad family also leaves Oklahoma for California, since they have been tenant farmers for many years.

Social Philosophy

Steinbeck presents social philosophy in *The Grapes of Wrath* in a complex and contradictory manner. The primary social theory by Jim Casy, acted on by Ma Joad and later realized by Tom

Joad, is depicted through the so-called little people in the community who try to come together

against the wealthy (Steinbeck, 2006). The social philosophy in this movie maintains that survival for disadvantaged individuals in society requires coming together to gain strength through unity and action.

The Structure of *The Grapes of Wrath*

The Grapes of Wrath uses different interesting techniques to pass its messages to its readers and viewers. It uses short sketches, narratives, and informative discussions that show what the conditions were like at that time and what activities people were doing, which creates the mood for viewers while watching the film.

These techniques are depicted in chapter three, where the story of a land turtle crossing the highway is told. It shows how the turtle struggles up the embankments to cross the road while avoiding death. In the following chapter, Tom Joad is seen picking up the turtle, but the turtle tries to escape several times as he tries to catch it. It keeps struggling until the enemy passes it and it gives up. The film viewer sympathizes with the turtle as a persistent creature.

The foreshadowing of Tom Joad's family, in which the audience of the film sympathizes with the turtle, shifts to the Joad family, who will not give up. In the end, the turtle is not happy, and neither is the Joad family, but both survive despite all the encounters.

Another interesting technique in *The Grapes of Wrath* that Steinbeck uses is seen in chapter seven of his novel and in the movie (In Bloom, 2009). At this point, the car salesman is seen selling his old secondhand car to the migrants. In this scene, he uses short descriptive phrases without predicting the thoughts of the car seller. Steinbeck uses these short descriptive phrases to bring viewers' attention to the urgency of the car seller to sell his old broken car and the urgent

need of the migrants to buy the car to take them to California. For instance, Steinbeck quickly introduces the used car lot with only a few short words.

Conclusion

Steinbeck understood the idea of the American dream and wrote about it in a simple style and understandable language. For this, he earned many prizes, including the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962 and the Pulitzer Prize in 1940.

To date, Steinbeck is greatly remembered for his famous movie *The Grapes of Wrath* because of its real stories and the challenges people faced. *The Grapes of Wrath* has become one of the most famous movies in America because of its achievements. The film continues to be influential in modern society.