

Theme of journey in grapes of wrath

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



In John Steinbeck's famous novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, Tom Joad and the rest of the Joad family go through a wild journey in search of jobs in California during the Great Depression. When Tom gets out of prison, he sees the effects of the Oklahoma Dust Bowl. He meets Jim Casy on his way home, and they find the rest of the Joads' family together after they got kicked out of their family home by the landowners.

The economy is very poor as a result of the Stock Market Crash. It is often referred to as the worst economic downfall in United States history. There are no jobs in Oklahoma anymore because there is no farm and soil to grow anything, leaving thousands of families with no income. As the Joad family travels across the country, they encounter a various amount of different people, some help them, and some do not. Throughout the novel, the reader learns about how difficult it really was to live in this time period. Before all this everything was fantastic, jobs everywhere, people were just throwing money away because of how much they were making. After the crash, nobody had any money saved because it was all invested in the stock market. People had kids they could not feed, they had to deal with plenty of death and their well-being. Although the text is fiction, it captures the things people had to do to survive. It shows the importance of family and how working together is extremely important in a time of need.

In the beginning of the novel, once Tom and Casy make it to Uncle John Joads' house, the family gets ready to start their journey to California. The family's first struggle was trying to get money in order to make the drive. We sold all the stuff at our place, and the whole bunch of it is chopped cotton, even Grampa (page 83). From selling everything, they only got \$200. This shows

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how hard the times were during the Great Depression, nobody was looking to buy anything. This was because there were very few jobs and the people with a job, saved all their money in case they lost the job. After buying a truck for seventy-five dollars, the Joads were not left with a lot of money, considering they are traveling with a very big group of people. It was a very tough car ride for the family as well. With so many people and only one car, people were forced to go on the rough in the blazing hot sun. Another struggle people had to deal with was just leaving everything they ever knew behind. I never had my house pushed over, she said. I never had my family stuck out on the road. I never had to sell ever'thing Here they come now'" (Page 81). Ma Joad never imagined this would happen to her. Her and her family are losing everything, and it is not even their fault. Granpa even refused to leave, he had to be drugged in order to get in the car. It was extremely difficult to live in these times not only the challenge of staying alive, but the ability to just get up and leave everything.

During this disastrous time in American History, people came together to help others in need. The Joads family needed to stop and rest and for a little and the Wilsons were so happy to have them. The appeal to hospitality had an instant effect. The lean face broke into a smile. Why, sure, come on off the rad. Proud to have ya (Page 134). When everyone is in distress, people come together to help people. This is weird that it happens this way, but people are just more likely to help others in really bad times. Another example of this was on September 11th, 2001. 9/11 was one of the worst days in American history, but after it happened, all Americans came together. It didnt matter their race, gender, or religion. This is the same for

the Great Depression. The Joads are from Oklahoma, and the Wilsons are from Kansas. During these times people from different states are not very fond of each other, but in this moment, they are helping each other out. Tom and Al even fix the Wilsons car when it breaks down for them. The Joads and the Wilsons begin to work together in order to make it through this terrible time. Along the way, they encounter more and more families, and they continue to make their group bigger. In the evening a strange thing happened: the twenty families became one family, the children were the children of all. The loss of home became one loss, and the golden time in the West was on dream (Page 193). All the families come together here and something special happens. They all realize that they need one another, everyone has something to contribute on their journey for a good life. None of the families want to be doing this alone, and because of this, they chose to work together. In the last scene, the whole idea of family really comes together when Rose of Sharon breastfeeds the half-starved man (Page 455). The starving man is a father to his son, and the reason he has not eaten anything is because he has been giving his son all his food. This shows that even through all these hard times, family is still the most important thing to him. When Rose of Sharon feeds the man, she is treating him like family. He is a complete stranger, but he needs help, so she helps him. Now he is part of this big family. Throughout the novel the theme of family is showed and how important it is to really stick with one another.

Although this novel is about people working together, there are always going to be people who only think about themselves. When Tom and Al try to find a tire to fix the truck, they encounter a selfish car salesman. Take it or leave it.

I aint in business for mu health. Im here a-sellin tires. I aint givin them away. I cant help what happens to you. I got to think what happens to me (Page 120). The cars salesman only cares about himself and feeding his family. The man is making the tires so expensive because of the high demand Tom and Al have for a tire. He knows that if they do not get this tire, they cannot go anywhere. Although the salesman is extremely selfish, it is his business. It is a basic business strategy, the higher the demand for a product, the more expensive one can charge for it. Although he is just trying to run a business in a time of terrible, he is very selfish and not interested in helping others at all. In this time, social class and wealth had a very big part in the way people act, I'm learning one thing good, she said. Learnin' it all the time, ever' day. If you're in trouble or hurt or need go to poor people. They're the only ones that'll help the only ones"" (Page 398). This shows the way society was during this time, and still is today. The rich only look to get richer and do not care who they are hurting in the process. Poor people understand other poor peoples trouble, and often times will put somebody else in front of themselves.

The historical novel about the Oklahoma Dust Bowl, *The Grapes of Wrath*, by John Steinbeck displays what life was truly like during this time period. The author takes the reader on a journey making them feel a part of what is going on. The Joad family went through extremely difficult times but displayed excellent teamwork with the families they met on their journey. With the economy crashing and people having extremely different views on how society should or should not help people, the Joad family displayed great courage and teamwork in helping themselves out, but most importantly their

family. This novel shows that no matter how hard times can get, family will always be there for each other.