

# Grapes of wrath chapter 25 analysis

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



The cold, soaked earth, which was a source of life not too long ago, abducts a young child while the mother can only watch hopelessly as the husband shovels mounds of dirt. This event is not too different than most that citizens living during the Dust Bowl had to deal with. The self-destructive nature caused the American people to keep expanding and shaping the land as they saw fit.

Because of this they overworked the land which, combined with drought, caused the Dust Bowl. The big corporations soon bought out most of the land in the Mid-West and many families were soon forced to make their living by other means. The shift of these families out west to a limited number of jobs damaged the United States' economy. In Chapter 25 of the Grapes of Wrath, John Steinbeck summarizes the human nature of self-destruction causing the corporations to showcase their greed and how it affected the laborers of California.

Steinbeck begins the section by painting a picture of California in (paragraph 1 and 2) in order to show how beautiful the country was when it was untouched by corporations. Steinbeck sets up many metaphors and images that he sums up towards the end of the chapter. He describes a beautiful California in which "fruit blossoms are fragrant pink" and flower petals "carpet the earth with pink and white."; using spring colors such as pink, white, and green to how California was beautiful and peaceful.

The beautiful, lush landscape that Steinbeck describes also draws parallels to the Garden of Eden when described as plentiful with fruit; so much so that "little crutches must be placed under them(the branches) to support the

weight" just as the Garden of Eden was described as being plentiful with fruit; showing the transformation of a place that is generally regarded as the most beautiful place while also enhancing the degree of beauty that California has. Steinbeck describes the California hills as "soft as breasts" and how it "quickens with produce"; details that show how Steinbeck sets the state up to be a nurturing, pregnant mother.

In (paragraph 3), Steinbeck starts to describe the type of men who work on the nurturing mother that is California. Steinbeck uses polysyndeton when describing these men show all wonderful qualities they possess, such as "understanding and knowledge and skill" showing how highly Steinbeck regards these men; arguing that the men are of the highest order of human beings. He then uses asyndeton to show the countless amount of plagues that the men's techniques can overcome such as "the molds, the insects, the rusts, the blights" again showing how important Steinbeck thinks these men are.

Steinbeck continues to build these men up by describing them as "men of knowledge"; again referencing California as the Garden of Eden by comparing the men to the Tree of Knowledge which serves as foreshadowing as the Tree of Knowledge bore the forbidden fruit that caused the fall of man. Steinbeck continues his mother metaphor by depicting the men as children of the nursing California. In (paragraph 4 and 5) Steinbeck's tone and diction change as he describes the men as the years go by to show how the men are destroying the land they once carefully cultivated.

He shows the shift of the men to destructive techniques by using words like "destroying" and "tearing" as opposed to "delicate" and "carefully" to further his idea that the men are changing. The fruit is no longer supported by the crutches but "sags down against the crutches" showing how the men are now actually destroying the land of their nurturing mother. Steinbeck begins his "grapes of wrath" metaphor by describing the grapes as "growing heavy"; signifying the rage that the common people feel towards the "men" who, in reality, are the large crop owners and the bank owners.

The men are also "proud" of their ability to make the crops heavy with produce and "transform the world with their knowledge"; drawing parallels to the big bankers and crop owners who exploited the poor people in order to shape the world to their likening. Steinbeck finishes the section with another usage of asyndeton to describe all of the things that these men can do to "drive the earth to produce" or in modern terms: control the wealth of the country.

In (chapters 6-13), the landscape of California changes for the worst as Steinbeck tries to describe the damage that the men have inflicted on California. Steinbeck's diction with words such as "rot", "waste", and "decay" associate the former Edenic California with a deathly image. This diction corresponds with the shift in imagery that shows "meat turning dark and crop shriveling on the ground" along with "black shreds(of cherries) hanging from them(the seeds)"; further depicting the change of landscape of California.

Instead of " valleys in which fruit blossoms", the valley expels an " odor of sweet decay" showing the horrible state that California has turned in to under the guidance of the " understanding" men. Steinbeck also uses strong imagery to depict plentiful pears falling " heavily to the ground and splashing on the ground"; a symbol Steinbeck also changes the main theme of colors from the beautiful pink and green of the former California to a deathly black. Steinbeck also uses the vernacular of Californians to show the panic that the farmers feel by expressing such phrases as " We can't do it. and " We can't pay wages, no matter what wages. " putting the reader in to the mind of the farmers to experience that panic and desperation they felt. Steinbeck's strong imagery is used again to depict plentiful pears falling " heavily to the ground and splashing on the ground"; a symbol for the failing system the farmers have that is causing their lives to fall, splash, and explode on the ground. Paragraph 9 goes on to present an example of " rotten, wasp-stung" grapes that correlates to the " swelling" grapes of paragraph 1.

The swelling grapes would be used to make fine wine that has a connotation of being beautiful and delicious while the rotten grapes would make an awful wine which is generally regarded as sickening and disgusting; nothing more than a concoction of mildew, formic acid, tannic acid, and sulphur. These two wines represent the country from which they are made, the good wine being the beautiful California and the sickening wine being the deathly country that the men created. (Paragraphs 18-23) show Steinbeck's complete opinion that the corporations or " men" and how they destroyed California and the lives of the poor. Steinbeck shows the sorrow of the situation by describing the " carloads of oranges dumped" and then being burned along with the

pigs being slaughtered then letting the " putrescence drip down into the earth. " He then chooses to reveal his thesis at the beginning of this section to signify his intent of exposing the injustices of the men. Steinbeck transitions from calling the farmers to " the people"; signifying that the poorly treated farmers are meant to be the American population of the 1930s.

This is meant to show the injustice that the poor people had to go through and the greed that the corporations exemplified. The fruit that people come for is burned for no other reason than that it benefits the big crop owners; showing more injustices that the " people" endure. The oranges are " golden mountains" when they are being burned; an allusion to the way the men, or corporations, burned the soft green hills of the former California because of greed.

In paragraph 22, Steinbeck uses anaphora to show the succession of horrible events that the people endure culminating to a " failure that topples all success. " Steinbeck's usage of grotesque imagery such as the children dying of pellagra is meant to accuse the men of killing these children with their crimes. At the very end of the chapter, the anger is building in the people as the guards can see the " growing wrath" in " the eyes of the hungry. " The pregnant mother is again used, only this time she is " heavy with" or birthing the rage of the people.

This is a call to action by Steinbeck meant to spur the impoverished people of California to revolt as Jim Casy and Tom did. Chapter 25 of *The Grapes of Wrath* serves as Steinbeck's critique of American society in the 1930s. He

analyzes the events of the Dust Bowl and how American people and corporation heads reacted to it. Steinbeck that the laborers of America needed to rise against the big corporation in order to better their lives. Steinbeck summarizes by calling the American people to act on the injustices that they endure and better their country.