

Grapes of wrath book review example

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



The book "The Grapes of Wrath" written by John Steinbeck and originally published in the year 1939 is one of the unique literary works in the genre of history. The book dates back to the period of Great Depression in America, which started in the year 1929 due to the crash of the stock market and lasted until the beginning of the Second World War. The period saw drought and high winds affecting several parts of the country, especially the Midwest region of America, including the Oklahoma state. Several residents of the state of Oklahoma moved to other places in the west, such as California, in search of fertile land to earn their living and a hope for a brighter future. The book "The Grapes of Wrath" is a tale of unity and love. It portrays the importance and need of cooperation in the difficult times rather than individualistic behavior.

The major character of the book is Tom Joad is a man of morale. He shows the most development through the experience of education of the heart. The education gained by Tom Joad through experience, intuition and Jim Casy's teachings illustrates his moral journey from 'I' to 'we'. Tom transforms into a man who cares not only for his family, but also for the entire world as a family. He is a merciful, yet angry and independent in nature. He embodies the central theme the book, such as pragmatism, contrary to the talkative and idealistic man of the novel, Jim Casy. While Casy is an expert in observing and commenting on the human condition, Tom's subconscious acts of humanity, his insights and sympathy for others are intuitive in nature rather observational.

Tom faces several hostile situations throughout his journey, including the death of his dog, which a roadster runs down the dog and leaves it dead in

the middle of the road. The ghastly death foreshadows the tragedies that await Tom. Tom also watches the death of an old man of his family called Grampa Joad, who dies on the way after complaining resentfully that he doesn't want to leave his farm in Oklahoma . During his first days in California, Tom loses his Granma, which influences his state of mind in an adverse way. Struggling for food, looking in vain for work and moving from one camp to another makes Tom desperate. He tries to hold his family together, but fails to do so due to the nasty fights between the migrant workers in the overcrowded camps. Finally, after the murder of two, Tom sets out on a camp to unite the migrant workers.

Tom starts the novel in possession of self-interest. After spending four long years in prison, Tom claims that he transformed into such a person who dedicates his time and effort to the present moment. He does not concern about the future, which is illusionary and out of reach. Tom adopts such a principle of philosophy towards living not for his selfishness, but as a means of dealing situations in a reasonable manner. He often fears that putting his life in a context, which is larger than the present day, will drive him with mad, anger and impuissance. Tom exhibits thoughtfulness, moral certainty and a rare strength, which enable him for more than a mere day-to-day endurance. He undergoes one of the most prominent transformations in the novel as he gets rid of the philosophy of ' seize the day' for a dedication to the betterment of the future .

Tom is a man who analyzes and concerns with the practical aspects of life as they relate to the situation, rather ideological or moral circumstances encircling his actions. After Casy witnesses his beliefs comported by his jail

inmates, he transforms from a man of observation and reflection to a man of action, while Tom's role in the society transforms him into a man of reflection from a man of action . It is only after Tom stops his reactions that he gets the opportunity to absorb the ideas of Casy. During his journey towards the west, Tom acquires the role of Casy's loath disciple. Casy, who is a former preacher, stresses that a human being will have a little impact on the world in situations in which he needs to act alone without the support of others. Casy states that one can achieve unity by devoting their lives to fellow human beings .

Tom goes through hostility and hardship as he proceeds towards the west with his family. When Tom and Casy reunite at the cotton plantation, Tom perceives that he cannot be silent and bind by the injustices happening in the world. He realizes that it is unjust to take bread from another family in order to feed his family. At the plantation, Tom desolates his private life through the help of other characters of the novel, namely Pa Joad and Uncle John, and heads on a course of public action . He pledges to continue the actions, which Casy began in the plantation. On one occasion, Tom attacks a policeman and another civilian on the account of cave-dwelling fugitive. Though his actions are illegal according to law, they are morally just. Author Steinbeck dramatically portrays the desperate troth of the period of Great Depression and the lives of the migrant workers, especially Tom, whom the society abandoned forever .

“ The Grapes of Wrath” describes the relationship between Tom's family and the Wilsons' family, and the way Tom merges his family with that of the Wilsons' to share each other's hardships and commit to survival. Tom

eventually realizes that ' his' people meant the entire crowd of migrant workers. In spite of adversity he integrates the migrants as a union within a remarkably short span of time . Tom always believes that it is not the blood relationship, but the loyalty and commitment to each other that builds a true relationship. Tom realizes the fact that hardships are not a result of misfortune, but a result of fellow human beings who separate the people on the distinction of ' rich and poor', and ' owner and tenant' . Tom stands as an example in his refusal to be broken by the situations, which conjure against him.

On every occasion, Tom shows his dignity and honor, and stresses on the importance of holding self-respect in order to survive through adverse situations in a spiritual way. Tom suffers incomparable loss by being away from his family, yet, he manages to get on his feet above hardships to carry out the act of unexcelled benignancy and generosity for the starving men, portraying that Tom hasn't lost his sense of the importance of human life . Tom's actions in the novel imply that as long as human beings maintain justice and anger towards those who seek to avoid show pride, they will never fail to maintain dignity. The self-interest of the landowners motivates them to maintain a system, which drops down thousands of migrants into poverty, including Tom. As a contrary to the conflicts that arise due to selfishness, stands Tom's behavior towards other migrants.

While Tom is aware that his and his family's survival depends on the dedication he shows to the collective good, he unites the migrants in to share their dreams as well as burdens to survive for a livelihood. Throughout the book " Grapes of Wrath," author Steinbeck consistently portrays Tom

and his views towards self-interest and selflessness as identical and contrary powers . In the novel, Tom hails from a traditional family, in which the men are the decision-makers and the women are obedient who follow the orders as told by the men. When Tom starts his journey to California with his family, he observes dynamic changes taking place in a drastic way. Tom observes his Pa withdrawing his role as a leader of the family due to the mounting failures upon them, during which Ma takes the responsibility of the family and involves in decision-making. Tom witnesses drastic changes by the end of the story when traditional men retreat their role of leadership and women take control of the family. At this point, Tom believes in fairness and equality among the human beings rather than love or ambition for power and authority.

References

Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Penguin Books Limited, 2000.