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"THE GRAPES OF WRATH" A STUDY

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*A Pilar
mi madre con el mismo amor
con que ha guiado mi vida.*

*A mi maestra directora de tesis.
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con agradecimiento.*

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" THE GRAPES OF WRATH " : A STUDY

I N D E X

	Page
1.- INTRODUCTION	1
2.- BEGINNING AND EXPOSITION	3
3.- SETTING	6
4.- STRUCTURE	8
5.- THE JOADS AS A GROUP	10
6.- AN INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS	27
7.- THE INTERCHAPTERS.....	59
8.- JEFFERSONIAN AGRARIANISM	71
9.- STEINBECK'S PHILOSOPHY IN "THE GRAPES OF WRATH"	75

1.- I N T R O D U C T I O N .

John Steinbeck was born in 1902 in the town of Salinas California where he lived most of his first forty years. He spent his childhood close to nature, in a way very much like Jody, the boy of "The Red Pony".

I believe that his close contact with nature forms the background from which Steinbeck takes his detailed and accurate descriptions of nature. As a young boy Steinbeck read widely, probably through the influence of his schoolteacher mother. He has indicated a wide variety of reading interests: Walter Scott, Jack London, Robert Louis Stevenson, Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment", Flaubert's "Madame Bovary", Hardy's "The Return of the Native". He commented on his reading achievement: "I read all of these books when I was very young and I remember them not at all as books but as things that happened to me". (1)

Steinbeck has also expressed his interest in non-fictional universally great books, such as the Bible, philosophical literature of ancient India, and the Greek historians.

Steinbeck attended Stanford University for five years as an

2.-

English major, without taking a degree. During the intervals of attendance at Stanford he got jobs in ranches and road-building gangs. He worked as an assistant chemist in a sugarbeet company. This experience put him in direct contact with working men.

In this way he learned to know them, their situation, attitudes, feelings, needs, problems, language etc.

Steinbeck's environment provides a source of material for his writings. Steinbeck's long residence in the Salinas Valley covered years of both regional and national unrest and change like the alteration of the economic structure of the Salinas Valley first organized as small farms, later replaced by larger ones and the financial picture enlarged to include corporations, large investments and amassing fortunes - All this with the negative consequences of social injustice for the poor. The discontent grew with unemployment. This situation was only a part of the terrible national crisis that culminated in the stock market crash of 1929 and the depression period following. Steinbeck made use of this material in his three most sociological novels: "In Dubious Battle" (1936) Of Mice and Men (1937), and "The Grapes of Wrath" (1939).

Steinbeck's friendship with Edward Ricketts, the marine biologist, which lasted from their acquaintance in 1930 until Rickett's death

3.-

in 1948, is very important, because it exerted a great influence on Steinbeck's general biological view of life.

In 1962 he was awarded The Nobel Prize for Literature.

Steinbeck's major works are: Cup of Gold, 1929; The Pastures of Heaven, 1932; To a God Unknown, 1933; Tortilla Flat, 1935; In Dubious Battle, 1936; The Red Pony, 1937; Of Mice and Men, 1937; The Long Valley, 1938; The Grapes of Wrath, 1939; Sea of Cortez, 1941; Bombs Away, 1942; The Moon Is Down, 1942; (this work and for Mice and Men also appear as plays); Cannery Row, 1945; The Pearl, 1947; The Wayward Bus, 1947; East of Eden, 1952; Sweet Thursday, 1954; The Short Reign of Pippin IV, 1957; The Winter of Our Discontent, 1961; Travels with Charley, 1962.

2.- BEGINNING AND EXPOSITION.

Architecturally, "The Grapes of Wrath" is a well built novel. At the beginning Steinbeck gives us a precise exposition of the situation we shall find in the story. The crop has been ruined by the lack of rain and as a direct consequence farmers will meet misery; but as we are told, in spite of this, "The faces of the watching men lost their bemused perplexity and became hard and angry and resistant. Then the women knew that they were safe and that there was no break". (CH. 1, p. 7)

In this way two very important subjects that are going to be found

4.-

through the novel, misery and the indomitable spirit of man are introduced from the very beginning.

In chapter 2 the author introduces Tom Joad. We come to know his antecedents through the short relationship he has with a truck driver, who gives him a ride. Steinbeck presents a "nosy guy" who presses Tom by his attitude; in this way we know that he has been in jail for four years for murder. On the other hand, through the way the relationship is presented we know that this guy, Tom Joad, is very smart and self-confident.

His experience in jail has made him more perceptive about things.

"But look, when you been in a stir a little while you can smell a question comin' from hell to breakfast - You telegraphed yours the first time you opened your trap." (CH. 2, p. 15)

The second character that Steinbeck introduces is Jim Casy. We know about him by the dialogue he has with Tom. From the very first he is presented as a man who has abandoned preaching and enjoys thinking. His philosophy is also introduced here.

By chapter six the whole situation has been presented; we know through Mauley that the tenants have been pushed out of the land by a company so they had to move to work in another place, what place?

5.-

California "a promise land" for them.

By chapter 8 all the main characters of the novel, the members of the Joad family have been introduced. We can say that the introduction of the novel ends here.

3.- S E T T I N G .

I think that Steinbeck is very careful in describing places. Setting is always in accordance to what is happening or to what Steinbeck expects us to feel. For example, in the first chapter, there is a careful description of the weather in Oklahoma. He describes the gentle rains of Spring, the dry May, and June that ends with the dust storm that finishes with every hope of a good harvest or any harvest at all. Steinbeck thinks that the people's behavior is a result of this, as well as their future. He believes that man is determined by his environment.

When the Joads are in their journey to California, the description of the highway makes us feel that it is endless. We get tired and kind of desperate with the characters. There is a feeling of a crisis coming. It seems that all the people are moving westward. "Highway 66 is the main migrant road. 66 the long concrete path across the country." "66 is the path of people in flight, refugees from dust and shrinking land from the thunder of tractors and shrinking ownership." etc. (CH. 12 p.108)

6.-

When the Joads get to a Hooverville, we feel poverty and sadness through the description of the place and people. "And next there was a huge tent, ragged, torn in strips and the tears mended with pieces of wire. The flaps were up, and inside, four wide mattresses lay on the ground", "little boys in overalls and bare feet, their hair grey with dust". (CH 20 p. 221)

In contrast with Hooverville we have the government camp, quite a different place and a very adequate setting for the characters and kind of action that takes place there. This is a very well organized place, clean, with facilities, inhabited by nice poor people, very poor, but kind, just and honest. California is described in the novel as a beautiful place, a paradise, "The Spring is beautiful in California. Valleys in which the first blossoms are fragrant pink and white waters in shallow sea". Fertile and abundant. This abundance makes more pathetic the hunger of the poor migrants. The feeling of injustice is greater for there is hunger where there is abundance.

After the Joads leave the government camp they go to a place where they pick peaches. From the first moment a great difference is established between the hospitality of the people living in Weedpatch camp, and the coldness with which the Joads are welcome in this place. "They sure do want a make us feel at home," Tom says ironically. (CH 26 p.338).

7.-

In accordance with this unpleasant situation the place is not nice or cozy, but ugly and dirty. "The floor was splashed with grease. In the one room stood a rusty tin stove and nothing more". The room smelled of sweat and grease". This ugly place foretells and prepares us for an unpleasant experience. (CH 26 p. 338)

After they leave this place, the next one is not a pretty one, or very comfortable, but it is pleasant." 'It's nice,' she said. 'It's almost nicer than anything we had 'cept the gov'ment camp'." (CH 28 p. 375) This place provides an atmosphere of optimism and a kind of relaxation from the tense situation they just were through. For the first time in a long time they have good money and enough to eat.

Suddenly the nice place changes into a dangerous and a threatening one. The Joads work madly, struggling with the rain and mud. A period of anguish and crisis external and internal is happening.

Uncle John feels an immense anguish produced by the memories of his dead wife at listening to Rose of Sharon's shouts. Rose of Sharon is struggling hard with the delivery of the baby who is born dead.

By the end of the novel all hopes of improving their situation seem to be gone; so is their truck. Practically they have been left without a home, because the truck was the symbol of a home

8.-

for them. The place where the novel ends is an abandoned barn:
"They came panting up to the rain-soaked barn and staggered into
the open end. There was no door in this end. A few rusty farm
tools lay about." (CH 30 p. 415) This place is exactly like
them, rain-soaked and abandoned like the family that has come to
pieces.

I have tried to demonstrate that I think that Steinbeck succeeds
in giving the adequate setting for the action that takes place,
for the feelings or emotions he expects to arouse in us. This is
why the atmosphere, as a result of all this adequacy of factors,
is well achieved and clearly felt in the novel.

I feel that the atmosphere of the novel is one of anguish; there
is wrath felt at some moments, but I think anguish prevails upon
wrath.

4.- S T R U C T U R E .

"The Grapes of Wrath" is built as a journey. This structural
device is in perfect accordance with the theme of the story: The
search for opportunity and justice.

This novel is divided into thirty chapters, but as we read we can
notice three major parts: The drought, the journey, and California.
The first part ends with chapter X. It is separated from the
second part by two interchapters. The journey part extends past

the geographical California border across the desert to Bakersfield; this part ends with chapter XVIII. Chapter XIX begins The California section. It is said that Steinbeck took these divisions from the Old Testament. These three parts of the novel correspond to the Oppression in Egypt, the Exodus, and the sojourn in the land of Canaan. The Egyptians, (banks) the exodus, journey; and the hostile tribes of Canaan (Californians).

Steinbeck has two blocks of material. On one hand there were the adventures of the Joad family and there was also the Great Depression. Steinbeck brings these succesfully together, dealing with the Joads in the story and incorporating in separate philosophical inter-chapters his ideas about the Great Depression. Many critics have pointed out the fact that the plot is not the organizational principle of the novel, not realizing that this apparent lack of organization is a device used by Steinbeck with the purpose of dealing successfully with the story of the Joads and with his philosophical ideas. Because if we had the novel organized by a unifying plot, the novel's unity would be threatened by the inter-chapters' constant breaking up of the narrative line of action. But as "The Grapes of Wrath" is not organized in such a way, the inter-chapters are absorbed smoothly into the novel.

This novel is the story of the Joads, who represent the dispossessed, and it is told from the observer author's point of view. Consequently,

10.-

all information must depend directly on presentation of background, external action, gesture and speech. This method tends to make the story a series of objective scenes very much like a play.

It is said that Steinbeck has the tendency of the scenic toward the pictorial, because his subject is not an action so much as a situation.

Description must often substitute narration. This substitution of the static for the dynamic explains the functions and nature of the novel characters, who have been called "puppets", "symbolic marionettes", and symbols'. Steinbeck presents his characters in different situations, to make them behave in a certain characteristic way.

Some of them change or have an important development like Casy, Tom, Rose of Sharon etc.

It is true that these characters are so absorbed into the novel's basic situation that one is not worried for the luck of each one of them as individuals, but rather for the social condition of the group. This, I think was Steinbeck's intention, and in my opinion, he was successful.

5.- THE JOADS AS A GROUP.

The Joads are chosen by Steinbeck to represent a much larger group

11.-

of people, the result of an economic problem, the dispossessed victims of industrialism. Living with them from the beginning to the end of what we could call this "hard journey of struggle for survival", we come to know about thousands of other migrants' journeys. In the novel the Joads as a family are subjected to two opposing and complementary movements. One of these, the negative one, concerns itself with the constant and increasingly narrow economical circumstances. This economic decline is paralleled by a disintegration of the family's moral. As the family declines economically and morally, the second movement emerges; this is the integration of a larger group. This sense of a communal unit as the only answer to their situation and to an improvement as human beings develops through the novel.

The possession of land for this agricultural family is the source of all good and worth in life; so their strength, position, firmness of character is founded on the security that owning a piece of land gives them. This is very important to understand, because once they are dispossessed, there occurs a change in their psychology. It is as if the ground they had under their feet had been taken away, and they were left standing in the air. At the beginning of the novel when Tom gets to his house and is told of what has happened by an old neighbor, he is surprised and says, "I wonder Pa went so easy, I wonder Grampa didn't kill anybody An'Ma ain't nobody you can push around." (CH 6 p. 45)

12.-

Here Tom depicts his family as people with impulsive characters who know what their rights are and defend them, but he still has not faced the actual situation. He is judging them as if they were in the old position with their old values and status. We know that a big chance has occurred. When Tom meets his family, we have the opportunity to see what a close relationship exists among them. Love can be felt in many descriptions and dialogues, as for instance when Tom is about to speak to his father for the first time. "He wet his thick lips with his tongue, and he said softly" "Pa". It's Tommy-' And then, still informing himself:

It's Tommy come home.' At last he touched Tom, but touched him on the shoulder, timidly, and instantly took his hand away'. This short scene is full of tenderness, is simple but meaningful.

(CH. 8 p. 66) At this point of the novel every one is in his own place: grandfather, grandmother, father, mother etc. Father is the real leader of the group, but we are immediately aware that Ma is the center, the nucleus of this group. The members of the family will gather around her, attracted to her like the moon toward the earth by the force of gravity. Ma's force is her love, and she acts intuitively according to it.

Tom says, "you never was like this before". Her face hardened and her eyes grew cold. "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." (CH. 8 p. 72)

13.-

With Grampa's death, we have another opportunity to see the whole family acting as a unit, helping each other. All of them try to do their best to face this situation. Ma as always is the strong one; she is the one who prepares the body for burial. Although they have seen many deaths and his pa buried his Grampa etc, this time is different and they know it. "The preacher rose high on his elbow Law changes he said." (CH. 13 p. 128)

"Pa said ashamedly: We can't do like Grampa done. We got to get California 'fore our money gives out." The old values (feelings) have to be changed in order to survive for practical motives.

The Joads are helped in this distress by other two people like them, The Wilsons. They are united against the same enemy-poverty- and they have shared with them the loss of a dear person.

The relationship between the Joads and the Wilsons is developed by meaningful details that we may call symbols. Grampa Joad dies in The Wilsons' tent and is buried in one of the Wilsons' blankets. The epitaph which is buried with Grampa is written on a page torn from the Wilsons' Bible. According to Lisca, this page is "usually reserved for family births, marriages and deaths. In burying this page, with Grampa, The Wilsons symbolize not only their adoption of the Joads, but their renouncing of hope of continuing their own family line" (2). Somehow, instinctively, they feel that to survive is necessary to change from an "I" situation to a "We" one.

14.-

"Sairy - We' re proud to help. I ain't felt so -safe in a long time. People needs -to help'." (CH. 13 p. 129)

Pragmatism is reflected in the first experience of the families on the road, and at the campsite. "The highway became their home and movement their medium of expression." (CH. 16 p. 149)

They are behaving according to the new situation, they are modifying their conduct in order to adapt and survive. They are behaving pragmatically. "The families learned what rights must be observed -the right of privacy in the tent; the right to keep the past black hidden in the heart; the right to talk and to listen; the right to refuse help or to accept, to offer or to decline it'" (CH. 17 p. 178)

As we see the group struggling in their adaptation to the new way of life, the danger of the family falling apart rises before them. A car is out of order and it has to be fixed; Tom plans to stay behind to meet them later. Ma feels that as there is a crisis she has to act according to it, in a strong way, to make them react, and she does so. To prevent the disintegration of the family, for the first time she rises up against Pa and the other men in the family considered as authorities.

The strong bond that exists between the Joads and the Wilsons is reinforced and made explicit when Sairy complains about their

15.-

having been trouble. Pa answers: "We ain't a gonna do it. We got almost a kin bond, Grampa, he died in your tent." (CH. 16 p. 153)

In chapter 18 we have a warning of the hard situation they will meet in California through a couple of men in blue jeans who are coming back from California and tell them bad news about it; but as pragmatists that they are, they decide not to worry until they are there. Uncle John speaks for all: I don't think nothin' about. We're a goin' there, ain't we? (CH. 18 p. 190)

Steinbeck speaks through this man they meet in the river. Steinbeck feels and sees a change is coming, because things are so bad that he thinks the poor people cannot stand it much longer: "They hate you 'cause they're scairt. They know hungry fella gonna get food even if he got to take it. They know that fallow lan's a sin an' somebody's gonna take it." (CH. 18 p. 188) The distribution of land is unjust. This means that the kind of social organization, the government that exists is wrong; it gives justice and happiness only to a few and leaves many unprotected and almost starving. These many are the ones who have to look for the change.

Casy, being the philosopher of the group, expresses the ironical fact that rich people are afraid of dying, while the poor are not, because poor people live, while the others devote their time to

16.-

accumulate material goods, money, but inside they are empty, unable to give anything because they have nothing. They are not satisfied with their life and think that making more money they will feel better. So we can conclude saying that the poor are not as poor as they seem to be and the rich are not as rich as they seem to be; it all depends on what basis we are going to judge -poor people are poor in material goods, but rich in many other things, like living, enjoying the simple facts of life. Rich people are rich in material goods, but poor, because they do not know how to enjoy life in a natural way; they need more than their persons to think they are happy, a very expensive car or an extremely expensive dress etc.

Happiness is only superficial, related to things, no to themselves.

The comment of the service-station boy is an example of selfishness and of how unfairly and stupidly men sometimes judge their fellow men, superficially, without any further reasoning: "Will you and me got sense. Them goddamn Okies got no sense and no feeling. They ain't human. A human being would't live like they do. A human being couldn't stand it to be so dirty and miserable. They ain't a hell of a lot better than gorillas." (CH. 18 p. 203)

This is the kind of comment we have most of the time. People do not understand that for the dispossessed there are not many choices

17.-

left; they are the victims of circumstances that are beyond their control: "Tom says: "It don't take no nerve to do somepin when there ain't nothin' else you can do." (CH. 18 p. 203)

Ma's love for their family is boundless, as well as her feeling of protection towards them. She knows they need to cross the desert that night, so she stays all night with Granma's corpse, demanding of herself all her strength and more: 'The fambly hadda get acrost' Ma said miserably.' Don' touch me' she said.' I'll hol' up if you don't touch me that'd get me." (CH. 18 p. 210)

Tom, next to her in strength, is the one who is able to understand her better and the only one on whom she can lean. The relation between Ma and Tom is beautiful, full of love and understanding. This love and understanding is reinforced through the novel, being each scene or dialogue between them an affirmation of the excellent communication that exists between them.

We have a contrast of life and death, young and old. While Granma, an old hopeless person, tied to her old land and a widow, is dying, the young couple, full of energy life and hopes are making love. Life has to continue, and birth, love and even death are simple parts of life. Everything has a moment and a place in this life. Hopes, making love, are for young people, while death is mostly for the old ones.

18.-

When the family gets to California, Tom says that the children are the ones who are going to belong to this new land, the old ones, if they had been alive, would have seen their old land in this.

In chapter 20 we have a remark of how important it is for them that the family sticks together. In such circumstances the member of the family as a person is not so important. The important thing is the family as a group: " Al said ' By God, I think I'll go if the res' goes or not. I'll hitch there."

'An' leave the fambly?' Tom asked.

'Sure. I'd come back with my jeans plumb fulla jack. Why not?'
'Ma ain't gonna like no such thing' Tom said. ' An' Pa, he ain't gonna like neither.' (CH. 20 p. 239)

A person's will must be subjected to the interest of the group, as Tom says.

Chapter 20 is important because all of the sudden the Joads are confronted with the terrible reality; there is no job, people are starving and they are not treated like human beings. The exploitation these people endure is made obvious by Floyd's words. Floyd is the young man who talks with Tom when they arrive at Hooverville. He explains him how bad the situation is for the migrants. How they are only tools, used by the rich people when

they are needed and thrown away when the job is done: "Three thousand of you. The work's done. You might steal, you might get drunk, you might just raise hell. And besides you don't look nice, living in old tents; and it's a pretty country but you stink it up. They don't want you around. So they kick you out, they move you along. That's how it is." (CH. 20 p. 225) If they need 3,000 men to work, they will try to get 6,000, to hire them at half the salary or less. This poor people are not given any rights, they cannot protest or ask fair salaries because they are sent to jail or killed without any consideration. The interest of the rich always prevails. They are the ones who are always right. The dispossessed and poor have nothing but their poverty and lack of power, so they can be accused of anything:

he's talkin' red, agitating trouble." (CH. 20 p. 242), even if he is only asking for his most basic rights. Steinbeck presents this problem from a socioeconomical point of view, that of course has moral and emotional consequences. Steinbeck thinks that is not that men should be born bad or good, but it is according to the circumstances that men are formed and behave. If the economical and social organization does not contribute to a harmonious development of the positive characteristics of human beings, like respect, love, consideration, cooperation, but on the contrary, ironically it goes against them and contributes to the development of negative characteristics, like competence envy, dissatisfaction,

20.-

aggressivity; it is clear that in this situation a man cannot be judged on the terms of good or bad congenital characteristics. The kind of relationship the Joads have should be taken as an example of family unity and support. Steinbeck is really good at describing how Tom manages to take uncle John with him. He hit the chin a delicate perfect blow." (CH. 20 p. 254) We realize that Tom has taken all the consideration not to hurt his uncle, only to give him what he needed to let himself be carried. In spite of this, Ma asks Tom if he was not hurt. Tom apologizes:

'I had to hit' m a little to make 'im come. Poor fello ."
(CH. 20 p. 254)

After their stay in Hooverville and all the previous incidents, where they have suffered all kinds of humiliations and seen all kinds of injustices, their stay in the government camp provides a contrast. Let us say it is as different as hell is from paradise, where justice has its real meaning. This is, everybody is treated equally, in a democratic way; justice does not depend on wicked individual interest. They are treated, for the first time since they left their home, like human beings, with rights and obligations. Every member of the family feels renewed and with hopes again, as Ma says: " Why, I feel like people again."
(CH. 22 p. 282)

In the description of the government camp Steinbeck gives his ideal of social organization. An adequate environment to promote

21.-

the development of the positive characteristics that all human beings have. The way the modern Kibutz is organized, for the people and by the people. Nobody takes advantage on anybody. They make people feel that they are human beings who are worthy of respect and consideration. They make the difference between "Charity", and communal living. In this camp they help each other but there is no "Charity", because Steinbeck thinks that "Charity" as it is practiced in the external world, takes away the dignity of people. They get helped when they need it and whenever they can afford it, they will pay back. In other words, there are no inferiors or superiors but equals. Cooperation, respect and consideration are practiced here.

Pragmatism is generally considered to be one strand of philosophy found in the novel. According to Steinbeck it means looking at things and trying to evaluate them, to accept them as they are, not as they should be. Jim Casy, Tom Joad and Ma are examples of pragmatists.

The conception of sin that the fanatic religious woman of the camp had, is exaggerated. She was trying to make people feel guilty and unhappy about everything, arguing that it was for the salvation of their souls. This woman was not realistic and she did not help to improve the people's situation or psychological conditions; on the contrary, she disturbed them and made them

22.-

more unhappy. As a contrast with her, we have the manager of the camp, who is a pragmatic person. 'He don't believe in sin. Tol' me hisself. Says the sin is been' hungry.' (CH. 22 p. 284)

Chapter 24 is a cheerful interlude in the lives of the Joads, except for the incident at the dance of the three young men who have been hired to start a flight and cause trouble in the government camp; so that the police has a pretext to intrude into the camp. This negative incident has a positive result; it proves that with a good, honest organization of the people such as the one they have in the camp, the police participation is not needed. Cooperation and union are the key words for them, the solution to their problems. They begin to be conscious of it, as we know by the men of the black hat's anecdote about the revolt of the mountain people against the rubber companies in Akron Ohio. The Joads identify themselves with those people, dispossessed. No matter how poor or dispossessed they were, their situation had changed thanks to themselves. This is a hope for them, an unknown way to their liberation is opened.

They say: They're gettin' purty mean out here. Burned that camp an' beat up folks. I've been thinkin' maybe we ought to git up turkey shootin' club an' have meetin's ever' Sunday." (CH. 24 p. 317) A lot of such thinking hunger, and restlessness we will have action, initiated by men like Jim Casy, who will carry on what he

23.-

had thought for a long time. Even Pa who has been very passive, says: "They's change a-comin.' I don't know what. Maybe we won't live to see her. But she's a-comin.' They 's a res'less feeling.'" (CH. 24 p. 316)

The Joads have lived in the government camp for one month. They are out of money, without job and hope. Ma, as usual the strong one, speaks out the problem with great energy and courage. Men resent to have lost the control of the situation and the family, especially Pa.

Understanding between Ma and Tom is reinforced after every crisis. Ma tells him that he is different from the rest: "Ever'thing you do is more'n you.'" (CH. 26 p. 323) She knows that he always acts unselfishly, thinking of the family first. In a way this is a prediction of what Tom will become. A person dedicated to the good of others; not only of his family, but of all people like him: The dispossessed and the poor.

When they decide to leave the government camp, to look for a job up in the north, all the Joads are sorry and regret it. Pa likes to take a shower every day, Tom likes the dances, Al has a pretty girl, the children love to play croquet; only Ma and Rose of Sharon seem not to regret it, but though the attitude of both is of indifference, their motives are quite different. Ma regrets to

leave comfort and the atmosphere of respect and cooperation, but she has to be strong, not to show her regret, and to encourage her family to go and look for food. That is the most important thing, food. Rose of Sharon is all concentrated on her sorrow and problems. She is absent from this world and from her family's struggles.

As soon as the family leaves the government camp, the old problems start again. They experience again the fear of being in a hostile environment; even the children are afraid: 'They did not dash away to inspect the place. They stayed close to the truck, close to the family.' (CH. 26 p. 339)

Casy's death and Tom's reaction to it by killing a cop gives the reader the opportunity to observe the idiosyncrasy of each character as a member of the family. All of them react in accordance to the personality they have shown through the novel: Al and Rose of Sharon very selfishly. Al wants to get out of any problem and leave his folks at the moment when he is badly needed. He really does not care for his brother who is in danger.

Rose of Sharon does not care if Casy was killed in such an unjust manner, defending other people's cause. She reproaches Tom to have killed a man, to have sinned and because of it her baby will not be born alive. Uncle John, as usual, blames himself for this calamity; he thinks that his sins have caused this problem, Pa

was deeply sorry, but passive. Ma and Tom are the only ones who are in such a level as to be able to understand Casy, and so Ma is the only one who tries to understand exactly what had happened and is more than concerned for Casy's death. She is the one who plans what they most do; and with her deep understanding; understanding that only she can give, she says to Tom: It's awright. I wisht you didn't do it. I wish you wasn't there. But you done what you had to do. I can't read no fault on you." (CH. 26 p. 360)

There is an enormous contrast in the different attitude of the two women of the family. Ma is all understanding, thinking only in her family; Rose of Sharon thinking only in herself, not caring for anybody else.

Ma is very worried because due to the hard circumstances, the family is falling apart, but she is the only one who is conscious of it: and though she thinks she does not know why she gives her reasons: "We're cracking up." (CH. 26 p. 360) They are no tied to their land anymore, children are not born there. Adults do not die in their land; they have been thrown to strange places unsettled and unwanted. There is no security in anything. Everything is uncertain, their main need, food is uncertain. From that, a series of unusual reactions from them have to be expected. 'Pa lost his place.' 'He ain't the head no more.'

26.-

(CH. 26 p. 360) He knows it and regrets it, but he is helpless, he does not know what to do about it: He says: "Seems like the man ain't got no say no more. She is jus'a heller. Come time we get settled down, I'm a' gonna smack her." (CH. 26 p. 367)

Rose of Sharon is an abandoned wife who does not want to face the fact and realize that her husband was coward, the only one who has the obligation to satisfy her needs, which she demands to be fulfilled from her family with selfishness and no gratitude. Al, like his sister Rose of Sharon, behaves in a selfish way. Uncle John is almost drowned in his guilty complex. This prevents him from looking at things in an objective way.

Tom continues being noble, but his preoccupation for others and his convictions have put him into trouble. He has killed another man. This also contributes to the separation of the family.

The children are growing up uneducated, without any security or discipline: "Winfield -what's he gonna be, this-, -way? Gettin' wild an' Ruthie too- like animals. Got nothing- to trust'" (CH. 26 p. 361)

Ma and Tom are the moral supporters of the family, like the columns of a house that will go to pieces if the columns fall. Tom has to go away from them and from this moment on, the disintegration of the Joad family is imminent. They have what we can call an interlude.

27.-

They are picking cotton, they eat well and are respected in that community. However, the worst part comes to them with the heavy rain. They are left without any money and without a truck. Rose of Sharon's baby is dead. The family loses another member, Al who stays with his young girlfriend Aggie.

At the end of the novel the family is cracking up, with no hope for the future of being again the strong, complete nucleus that was before." However, there is the hope not of integrating a family with all the people like them, the dispossessed people.

The end is a promise of this. They seem to have learned their lesson: to survive they must be united. Even Rose of Sharon, the most selfish, has suffered a change, and for the first time she gives her milk to the dying man, and she gets satisfaction out of her giving: "Her fingers moved gently in his hair. She looked up and across the barn, and her lips came together and smiled mysteriously." (CH. 30 p. 416)

6.- AN INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS.

JIM CASY

We come to know Jim Casy as an expreacher; a man respected by his community in spite of his refusing to preach. Casy loves people. He believes in God but he does not believe in the structure of

28.-

religion. Hell, evil, sin are words that have lost meaning and value for him. He has got to this conclusion after a long meditation and struggle: "The hell with it; "There ain't no sin and there ain't no virtue. There's just stuff people do."

(CH. 4 p. 23)

Once that Casy has abandoned his old values, he feels uncomfortable because he does not have a set of new values to replace the old ones. He does not have a definite goal where to lead people, because he feels he has to guide them, but where? That is the way Steinbeck introduces Jim Casy, in a moment of crisis. He changes the development of the action in the novel and Casy's new values will develop in a parallel way. The first orientation he receives to fulfill his unsatisfied call is to follow the Joads because he decides that these people: "Gonna need help no preaching can give 'em.'" (CH. 6 p. 49)

Casy is described by Steinbeck as the new kind of prophet adequate for the hard times. He presents him as the pragmatic humanistic leader, ready to give real help. According to Steinbeck, he is free from the prejudices and hypocrisy that in this situation would be only a burden for the people suffering. He is a humanist because he tries to understand and care for the people rather than to condemn them. He is also the first in the novel who in simple words expresses the concept of the oversoul: " I figgered about

the Holy Sperit and the Jesus road. I figgered, "Why do we got to hand it on God or Jesus? Maybe," I figgered, maybe it's all men an' all women we love; maybe that's the Holy Sperit-the human sperit-the whole shebang. Maybe all men got one big soul ever' body's a part of (CH. 4 p. 24) One big inclusive soul that unites all people.

There are some parallels between Casy and Jesus Christ: the first parallel we find is his speech comparing himself with Jesus: I been in the hills, thinkin' almost you might say like Jesus went into the wilderness to think his way out of a mess of troubles." (CH. 8 p. 75) Like Christ he preaches love. His conclusion is love: one oversoul not many souls, but all in one: I got thinkin' how we was holy when we was one thing an' mankin' was holy when it was one thing." (CH. 8 p. 76)

In chapter 10 Ma reiterates her feeling how he has changed; he is more spirit than man: "He looks baptized. Got that look they call lookin' through." (CH. 10 p. 86) It is as if she were describing one who meditates. He corroborates this saying that he has discovered "some place to go." He has to go where "The folks is goin'". (CH. 10 p. 86) Insisting that he will never preach again, he tries to explain his new beliefs: "'I ain't gonna try to teach 'em nothing. I'm gonna try to learn.'" (CH. 10 p. 86)

We find in his speeches two of the recurrent themes in the novel; humanism and pragmatism. When Grampa dies Casy is demanded by the circumstances to say "pray": His "pray" works out to be a series of humanistic and pragmatistical thoughts "All that lives is Holy" "Grampa here, he got the easy straight". "An'now cover 'im up and let'im get to his work." (CH. 13 p. 132)

Though he is the only onw who understands Grampa 's situation: "He died the minutes you took'im off the place." (CH. 13 p. 134) he acts according to what he finds more practical to do them: nothing.

Casy begins to share his social preoccupations with Tom. Casy unconsciously, is beginning to convert Tom from a pragmatist into a socialist.

Casy: "Well-s' pose all these here folks an' ever'bodys'pose they can't get no jobs out there? Goddamn it; Tom cried; how'd I know? I'm jus' puttin' one foot in front a the other." (CH. 16 p. 158)

Casy is presented as a keen observer and as a man who has a deep knowledge of human nature, as we could appreciate by his comment about Grampa dying the moment he left his land; and when the Joads are in their first camp, a man tells them about his bitter experience: a dead wife, two children dead. The Joad men are

bewildered by his behavior, the only one who understands it is Casy. The preacher answered: He's tellin' the truth awright. The truth for him." (CH. 16 p. 176) When they cross the desert and Ma spends the whole night with Granma's corpse he says: "John, there's is a woman so great with love- she scares me. Makes me afraid an'mean." (CH. 18 p. 211) This statement makes him appear as the one who really understands Ma's greatness.

Casy with his social ideas acts as a teacher to Tom. For the first time in chapter 20 they share a social preoccupation. Many poor people are starving; this situation can not be tolerated long. A change is needed badly and it will not come by itself, it has to be provoked. Rich people will not give up their privileges easily; action is needed. He feels that praying as he used to do when he was a priest and had a problem does not help: Tom says Prayer never brought in no side meat: takes a shoat to bring in pork . (CH. 20 p. 229)

Religion does not help, Casy thinks. What helps is social justice: Tom is identifying with Casy. Casy, like Tom, can not stand injustice. Casy acts according to his principles, no matter what the consequences may be.

He hits a cop and takes the blame for Tom's deed. After this he feels immensely satisfied with himself.

32.-

Casy compares himself to Jesus. Casy went to jail for meditation. He thinks that he almost got the answer. He tries to make people conscious of their situation by talking to them. He is full of anguish for the situation of the poor people, but even more for their lack of social awareness. He knows that the solution is to stick together and fight for their rights, but unfortunately each one of them, with the exception of a few, are very selfish and only care for themselves and their family. They do not realize that for their own personal good they should be united and be one against their enemies.

Casy talks to Tom about this. Steinbeck puts in Casy's mouth some words just before he dies: "You fellas don't know what you're doing." (CH. 26 p. 354)

According to some critics there are several resemblances between Jesus Christ and Jim Casy; They have the same initials, 2.- Jim is preaching a new gospel. 3.- Jim went into the wilderness to prepare for his mission. 4.- Jim assumes the sins of the group. 5.- Jim prays for his killers. 6.- Jim is killed.

But of course there are more differences than resemblances between Jesus and Casy; some of those differences are: that from the moment he was born, Jesus knew what his mission was, and how he was going to fulfill it; there was never confusion in his mind. He was God's Son, he was not merely human. His beliefs are based

on the traditional religion and oriented toward a life after death. There is, for him, always something more important than material things. For Jesus the individual soul is always responsible for himself. Though Jesus always preached love, he never lost sight of sin as a spiritual reality. He recommended prayer and thought it essential for man. Jesus never preached pantheism, like the doctrine of the Oversoul. For Jesus, the individual soul, though united to other souls in the communion of saints, never loses its individual personality.

The development of Jim Casy is similar to Tom's. He moves from Bible evangelism to social prophecy. At the beginning of the novel, he has already abandoned preaching, considering it unpractical in the real situations of the people. He has returned from "in the hills, thinkin'". He is preparing himself for the revelation of the Over Soul, but it is only in his experience with the Joads and the other people that he fully develops into what he has been looking for, into a social prophet. As Tom moves from a mere material resentment into a higher kind of feeling, let us call it social indignation, so Casy moves from thinking to practice. His developments of that social awareness is paralleled to that of the Joad family. Casy is the first, of the whole group, to get "The social awareness or consciousness"; for this reason he becomes "the prophet of his new beliefs trying to make all the people he is in touch with conscious of them. Like a prophet he is always

34.-

talking about his beliefs trying to convince people; that is why Tom tells him: "Always talk. If you was up on the gallows you'd be passin' the time a day with the hangman. Never seen such a talker'." (CH. 26 p. 350)

In fact he dies for his beliefs, but his preaching and death are not sterile. Tom is converted after his death; so we know he will continue his teacher's work.

We can get to the conclusion that all of Casy's efforts are based on his new faith and directed to the development of it. As he says, his new faith has four major beliefs: 1.- A belief in the brotherhood of man, manifesting itself as "love", good will, compassion, and cooperation.

2.- A belief in the spirit-of-man as the oversoul or Holy Spirit shared by all men.

3.- A belief in the unity of man and nature.

4.- An acceptance of all life as an expression of spirit.

Casy is one of the most important characters, because he is the one who introduces the most important themes of the book like social awareness, the concept of the oversoul, pragmatism and humanism.

T O M J O A D

Tom, next to Casy and Ma, is one of the most important characters in the novel. This character brings an enormous contribution to the development of the story. Steinbeck introduces Tom early in the novel, in chapter 2; he describes him as a strong young man with a firm character. We get to know more about him by his acquaintances with the truck driver. Tom proves his intelligence by engaging the truck driver to give him a lift: "'Sure-I seen it. But sometimes a guy'll be a good guy if some rich bastard makes him carry a sticker. (CH 2 p. 10)

Although he has killed a man, he does not feel any remorse or a feeling of guiltiness. Steinbeck is speaking for him here. He does not think of Tom in terms of good or bad, but circumstances lead him to it. It was a matter of choosing the life of the man or his own. Tom says: "´He got a knife in me, an´ I killed him with a shovel´". (CH. 4 p. 25) "´But hell, I seen Herb Turnbull comin´ for me with a knife right now, I´d squasch him down with a shovel again." (CH. 6 p. 51)

Tom is seen from the beginning as a member of a united family. His love and tenderness for his family is stated in the way he speaks about his mother, grandfather, grandmother etc.

Tom is seen also as a person who faces problems in a direct way,

not beating around the bush. This is part of the education he has had and the reason for the admiration he feels for his family; He is used to behave openly according to what he thinks is right. He is very conscious of having courage. This has been his background and set of values that operated correctly in the old times, but now he is beginning to be forced into a change. Mauley is the first who puts him in touch with the new situation. Mauley said: "There's one more thing about bein' hanted. You get to thinkin' about all the dangerous things. If you're huntin' you don't think about 'm, an' you ain't scared.'" (CH. 6 p. 54)

We know that by himself he has learned a lot about life during the time he spent in jail. Pragmatism has been his only way of life, in order to keep his mind reasoning well. Now he realizes that pragmatism must be used in every situation in life especially in hard ones. Referring to his life in jail, Tom says to his mother: "'You can't go thinkin' when you're gonna be out. You'd go nuts. You got to think about that day, an' then the nex' day, about the ball game Sat'dy. Whyn't you do that? Jus' take ever'day.'" (CH. 10 p. 84)

Ma feels that Tom is the only one in the family who is strong enough to be her confident and she tells him her doubts, and though she is very strong, she is also a human being with a need for communication.

37.-

In chapter 16 we have another evidence of Tom's pragmatism in the talk that Casy and Tom have. In opposition to Casy who is concerned with the situation of all the poor people moving west: 'It's like a whole country movin'.' (CH. 16 p. 158) Tom is only worried about his family but more than that he is worried about the moment: 'I'm still laying my dogs down one at a time.' (CH. 16 p. 159) 'I climb fences when I got fences to climb.' (CH. 16 p. 159)

Up to here Tom is not prepared to understand Casy's social preoccupation, though I believe he is putting up a defence or barrier so he can avoid problems and complications, and live in a easier way. He behaves as an individualist. We know he has been through a very hard experience: jail. He has to be different from the others and in some way superior as strength is concerned. Morally he is very strong and mature. That is why he is closer to Ma than the rest. 'She got plenty to get worked up about 'thout me givin' her no troble; said Tom.' (CH. 16 p. 161)

Tom's strain of stoic realism is useful to his growing philosophical awareness; for example, the way he deals with the self-pitiful one-eyed service station attendant by trying to show him how he really appears and how he could appear; seems to have some effect, for the attendant asks Tom softly: 'Think somebody 'd like-me?' 'why sure' said Tom.' (CH. 16 p. 165)

Tom is a courageous man. When they are about to cross the desert, "People done it" said Tom. "Lots a people done it, an' if they

38.-

could we could." (CH. 18 p. 204)

In chapter 18 Tom is beginning to sound a philosopher like Casy. His awakening is starting. He thinks more deeply about things in life, and because of this he is the only one on whom Ma can lean: "' He is Tommy's growed way up-way up so I can't get ahold of 'im sometimes." (CH 18 p 211) Tom's experience in jail developed his individualisms: Not to mind other people's business. It also gave him resistance and in some way prepared him for what he is going to become: a leader, observing and learning more about human nature: "When a bunch a folks, nice quiet folks, don't know nothin' about nothin' somepin's goin' on." (CH. 20 p. 231)

As the novel advances, he becomes more conscious about the problems and the importance of union and solidarity among poor people. The strength of the poor people lies in their number. Tom says: "Well s'pose them people got together an' says, let'em rot." (CH. 20 p. 226) Tom rebels against social injustice: "I ain't gonna take it. Goddam it, I an' my folks ain't no sheep. I'll kick the hell out a somebody." (CH. 20 p. 226) Tom is being Casy's disciple. Now in chapter 20 they speak about the same thing from the same point of view and with the same attitude toward it: "That was about what I was gonna tell ya. An' you seen awready." Their conclusion is the same too: "prayer never brought in no side-meats, takes a shoat to bring in pork." (CH. 20 p. 229)

According to Steinbeck hunger is pushing men to have justice and food by action, not by praying, because praying will never solve the problems. Tom understands the attitude of Californians against the migrants: The folks here is scared of us people comin'west; an' so they got cops out trying to scare us back." (CH. 20 p. 230)

In chapter 20 Tom acts with courage; he takes the side of social justice. He can not stand injustice. He does not speak, but he acts putting his foot for the deputy to trip over. Tom is an honest simple man used to act always according to his principles, no matter what the consequences may be; but in the new situation that the whole family and himself are, he has to give up a little for everybody's sake, though this makes him feel miserable. He feels that he is losing his dignity and at the same time he knows there is no other way. He has a great help in his mother. She, with love, tenderness, but also with strength, stops him from behaving aggressively toward the cops: Easy, Tom' Ma soothed him' Wasy, Tommy. You done good once. You can do it again." (CH. 20 p. 258) Ma has absolute confidence in Tom: she knows that any other could fail but him. After the family left the government camp, they go to work at the place where they have to pick fruit. When they get there they do not care about what is happening to a bunch of people like them, who are crying and are surrounded by cops. Only Tom feels that he has to know what is going on. Casy's words are beginning to yield their fruits. Tom

40.-

starts being conscious that all this world is not only he and his family, but other people like him. He is irritated by social injustice. He kills a cop and feels satisfaction for it. He acted according to his principles. In chapter 28, in the parting scene between Ma and Tom, we have a Tom Joad transformed into a disciple of Casy, a follower of his ideas. In a way, he, like Casy, arrives at the concept of the Oversoul. He has no soul, but he is only a part of a great soul. Even if he dies he will be present: I'll be ever' wher-where-ver you look. Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there." (CH. 28 p. 385)

He has passed a physical state. According to his belief in the Oversoul, Tom Joad feels he is not only the body one can see or touch, but much more; he is part of everything, he has improved to a spiritual stage, to believe in immortality and he has learned that the spirit is limitless in space and time. His social ideas can be summed up in his words: Throw out the cops that ain't our people. All work together form our own thing- all farm our own lan'." (CH. 28 p.384)

Tom's development of his social awareness like that of Casy is symbolic of the changing social condition, and paralleled to the development of the Joad family as a group.

At the same time his development is similar to that of Casy, because

as we have seen, at the beginning of the novel Tom's attitude is individualistic. His first great lesson is when Casy takes the blame on him and goes with the police. Right after this, there comes the stay of the family in the government camp where Tom learns a lot of things such as the government of the people by the people. When this is successful, people bring out the best of themselves, love, cooperation, respect etc. Here Tom finds a dream, a utopia come true; this gives strength to the beliefs that are taking shape in his mind. By the time Casy is killed, Tom is ready for his conversion. During the time Tom is hidden in the cave from his persecutors, Casy's ideas and all the events that have happened work on his mind to reach the conclusion he states to his mother, that he will dedicate his life to fight for justice and equality for his people.

In other words, he has moved from an individualist to a social prophet. It is significant that the last interview between Tom and Ma takes place in conditions similar to the prenatal state. The entrance to the cave is covered with wild blackberry bushes, the inside of the cave is damp and completely dark, so that the contact of mother and son is physical; she gives him food. At the moment he leaves the cave, it will be as if he were reborn, because in a sense, while he was in that womb, he was growing and coming to a point of rebirth. So a new man will come out of that cave.

M A

Ma is one of the most important characters in this novel. She symbolizes love. She always acts in the right way, moved by her extraordinary intuition. She knows that of all the members of her family she is the only one who is capable to hold them together, and she will strive for this to the end with all her great strength:

She seemed to know that if she swayed the family shook, and if she ever really deeply wavered or dispaired the family would fall."

(CH. 8 p. 69) As I said before, we find in "The Grapes of Wrath" the theme of love for people, humanism, pragmatism, and Ma is a good example of them all.

She takes things as they happen. For instance, when Al asks her if she is scared about their new life: I'm jus' a settin' here waitin' 'when somepin' happens that I got to do somepin' I'll do it." (CH. 13 p. 113)

She is the only one of the family besides Tom who senses Casy's personality: "'Watch the look in his eyes' said Ma. ' he looks baptized. Got that look they call lookin' through. He sure looks baptized.'" (CH. 10 p. 86)

In chapter 16 we find two trends in her development: her fierce struggle to keep the unity of the family and her pragmatism.

About the first, she feels that there is a crisis and she has to act according to it. Surprising her family, she unexpectedly threatens them: Pa looked helplessly about the group. She say' he said.' I never seen her so sassy'. Ruthie giggled shrilly'. (CH. 16 p. 154) For the first time in her life she rises against Pa and the other men considered also as authorities. She gets the control of the group. She was the power. She had taken the control of the family." The money we'd make wouldn't do no good. She said "All we got is the family unbroke'." (CH. 10 p. 155) By acting strongly she is able to maintain her family together. Her pragmatism can be seen in the reply she gives to Rose of Sharon's question if they would all pick fruit and live in the country when they were in California: We ain't there yet'. We don't know that it's like. We got to see.'" (CH. 16 p. 150)

In chapter 18, Ma lets us know that her life has not been a waste of time, but that she has learned to live, that she is wise and like all mothers in the world, she would like her children to learn from her, without pain all she has learned painfully; paying such a high price: suffering: An then a hurt don't hurt so bad cause it ain't a lonely hurt no more. Rosasharn. I wish I could tell you so you'd know, but I can't.' And her voice was so soft, so full of love, that tears crowded into Rose of Sharon's eyes." (CH. 18 p. 192)

44.-

With love she is teaching her daughter the art of living. Ma behaves unusually again, aggressively when she is treated roughly by a policeman. Tom tells her: "My God, Ma, I knowed you when you was gentle. What's come over you?." (CH 18 p. 197) As she said to the policeman in her place she was respected, never treated like that. She is facing an unusual experience. She gets discouraged at the impotence of keeping her family united, because when Noah leaves them she can not do anything: "Family's falling apart' 'I don't know, seems I can't think no more." (CH. 18 p. 198)

In chapter 20, Ma's struggle between her duty to feed her family and her compassion for the hungry children is touching; her behavior toward the aggressive attitude of the woman who tells her: "You kin he'p me by mindin' your own children an' lettin' mine alone." (CH. 20 p. 237) shows her as a very understanding person. Ma is the person who gives strength and controls all the members of her family. She helps Tom to cool down and behave nicely toward the cops in the critical moments when she knows how hard it is for Tom to control himself to that extreme.

She also gets hold of Rosasharn when she feels that Connie has left her. Ma stops her from feeling sorry for herself. She demands strength from her, emphasizing that there is a time when the needs, sorrows and sufferings of a person must be kept to herself, the family's problems as a group being more important:

Rosasharn, you're just one person. an'they's a lot of other folks." (CH. 22 p. 286)

Ma is surprised to realize that when she is in the government camp, which is a nice place, for the first time since they left home she can feel happy; she begins to think or we would better say she begins to realize the exact measure of all the sad things that have happened; how the family has been reduced by death and desertion. Crampa, Granma, Noah, Connie. She could not have permitted herself to feel all the intensity of this before, at the moment it was happening, because she would have fallen to pieces. This is a defense of her subconscious.

Once more Ma uses her instinctive wisdom and pragmatism when her family has lived in the government camp for one month and they are out of money, without job and no hope of finding one; she gathers all her atrength and speaks out the problem that has been in the mind of all and each one of the members, but because of fear, nobody would talk about. She makes her husband mad, so that he can react, and throws off his passive attitude. She encourages Tom, making him feel as her moral support.

She gives moral support once more to Rose of Sharon who is very depressed and hopeless, full of fears about her baby. Ma gives her her small gold ear-rings to cheer her up. Ma imposes her honesty and humanism to the clerk of the food-store who becomes

aware of his wrong mocking attitude. At the same time Ma realizes that he is not the owner of the company and that his only fault was to be ironical to his own kind of people. At last she gets to the conclusion that poor people are the only ones who would help poor people.

In chapter 26, we see Ma as the strong one, the pillar of the family. She is always alert to defend any member of her family against any danger. She fears that her family would fall apart: " ' We're crackin' up." (CH. 26 p.360) She is the only one who is conscious of it and struggles bravely to stop it as long as she can. There is a beautiful scene between Ma and Pa: Pa is complaining of his having lost his place as leader in the family. Ma tries to explain it as a logical consequence due to the different nature that a man and a woman have: " ' Woman can change bettern' a man' ' Woman get all her life in her arms. Man got it all in his head." (CH. 28 p. 388) Ma tries to make him feel better. Pa is giving up, he is disappointed and depressed, but Ma tries to cheer him up with arguments that only she can give. If we have seen her through the novel as a wise, strong humanistic and pragmatist woman, in this scene we admire her understanding more, her deep knowledge of life: " to live the day." (CH. 28 p. 384) not the part of the future like uncle John who spends all his life regretting his, or like Pa, who lives in the past to escape from the present.

47.-

Up to the end of the novel we see Ma as the leader of the group. Taking care of her family, she gets a dry blanket for Rose of Sharon to wrap in. Ma is the one that silently orders Rose of Sharon to give her milk to the dying man. In this novel we could say that Ma is the best example in action of the demand for justice. She has come to "feel mean", a feeling which she pleads Tom not to acquire. We can say that Ma represents the ideal mother. She never complains of her endless labors, she is entirely devoted to her family. If Rose of Sharon acts always, except at the end, selfishly, Ma is the opposite, the representation of unselfishness. She is sweet and lovely, but at the same time, she is strong and brave. She is the only one in the family who worries about encouraging her family, preventing their moral collapse.

There is a very important aspect of her that makes her more human; there are moments in the novel when we can catch her in a doubtful or weak attitude, like when she gets to the government camp and starts, for the first time, measuring the enormity of what they have been through. She is one of the key characters in "The Grapes of Wrath"; without her the novel would have been different.

P A

Pa is introduced as the real head of the family. When the novel starts, he is respected, loved and obeyed by all the members of his family. As the novel develops and the circumstances change, he loses the command of the family because he has not the moral strength of Ma's or Tom's.

Although Pa is the head of the family, he does not have the stature of a leader and we sometimes see him doubting in his opinions or decisions: "What ya think Pa', Tom asked: 'Well I don't know. Do us good to get a little rest.'" (CH. 18 p. 186)

In chapter 20, we get a glimpse of Pa's understanding of human nature: "A fella got to do what he got to do: "Nobody don't enough to tell 'im." (CH 20 p.247) In simple words he states a beautiful truth.

Through Pa's conversation with a group of men in the government camp, their miserable situation is emphasized; to get a job means to lower the salary of other people like him, but on the other hand this is food for his family and he has to support them. They have to eat, nobody finds a reasonable answer to this problem. He behaves enthusiastically at the beginning. He could get an acre, Ma could work there, he could get a job out of the house, kids would go to school." He is awakened from his dreams by the rest, who are men who have been living there and looking for a job longer

than he has. Their reality is cruel and hopeless. There is only one way for them: union and cooperation.

Through the whole novel, Pa is depicted as a passive person who leaves all the decisions to Ma, but as we know, he has not been always like this, as I said before. He has changed due to the new circumstances that have confused him. He has not been able to adapt himself to this new life of constant changes. He has lost his personality, he is no longer Mr. Joad, who was known and respected by everybody in town. He has lost his place in his family as the leader and head, he feels very sad about it, but he does not have strength or courage to change the situation: " Funny; Women takin' over the fambly. Woman sayin' well do this here, an' we'll go there. An' I don't even care." (CH. 28 p. 388)

Pa escapes from his cruel reality remembering the past or the terrible future. This prevents him from acting right in the present. This is why he can not make decisions; he is always busy with the past or the future. Ma tells him: " Jus' live the day; ' Dom' worry yaself." (CH. 28 p. 389)

Pa arrives at a hopeful conclusion if not at a realistic one:

They might be a good year nex' year, back home." (CH. 28 p. 389)

R O S E O F S H A R O N

Rose of Sharon, the young newly married daughter of the Joads, at the beginning is an opposite character to that of Ma. Ma is full of love and care for all the family. Rose of Sharon is only full of love and care for herself, the baby and her husband. All the facts and circumstances have to adapt to herself and are seen through her selfish interest. But there is a fact that Steinbeck uses to raise her stature as a character, and that is that she is pregnant: "Her whole thought and action were direct inward on the baby.- And the world was pregnant to her." ((CH. 10 p. 88))

Although Rose of Sharon has been presented as a weak woman, there are some details that make us think that in the course of time, when she becomes a mother she will behave like her mother does.

In chapter 20, she demands firmness of character from her husband: " We got to have a house 'fore the baby comes. We ain't gonna have this baby in no tent." (CH. 23 p. 20) Rose of Sharon is stronger than her husband and when he is complaining about the situation and regretting his coming, she demands fortitude and courage from him, though at a certain moment she feels that he is going to give up. All strength seems to have gone away from her after Connie has left her. She acts childishly and selfishly thinking only of herself. However, Ma prevents her from letting

51.-

herself go further in her self pity. Ma demands from her strength and courage which has been the family's way to act.

Rose of Sharon feels very unhappy because her husband is not with her. She is unrealistic saying: " Ef Connie hadn't went away, we'd a had a little house by now, with him studying'an'all. Would a got milk I need." (CH. 26 p. 324) It seems that for her all the cause of disgrace is Connie's desertion.

She does not realize that her financial situation would be pretty much the same with Connie there. She behaves selfishly, only thinking of her own good. This attitude is contrasted with Ma's, who never thinks of herself, but who is always thinking of her family.

At last Rose of Sharon seems to become more sympathetic and offers her participation to pick cotton; in fact she demands to participate. She behaves bravely in the loss of her baby. She does not demand any more; she is willing to cooperate not to be a burden, so she says: " I can walk, I'm awright." (CH. 30 p. 412) We feel that she has grown when at the end she is able not only of not demanding, but of giving. By giving her milk to the starving man and saving his life she feels satisfied." In the end we hope that she can grown to Ma's stature.

U N C L E J O H N

Uncle John has a guilty complex; his wife died due to his carelessness, because he did not bring a doctor. He tries to pay for that in several ways, being a very quiet person, being kind with people, giving candy to children. As a reaction to this conduct, at times he gets drunk, goes with prostitutes etc. Then he goes back to his usual purgative conduct. I kilt'her. An' sence then I tried to make it up mos'ly to kids. An' I tried to be good, an' I can't- I get drunk an'I go wild." (CH. 18 p. 206)

In chapter 20, we have another opportunity to observe uncle John's attitude. Due to his guilty complex, he feels like a coward for not behaving the way Casy did, taking the blame on him and letting himself be taken to prision. Uncle John feels that he just missed a great opportunity to get rid of his sins by sacrificing himself instead of Casy. But as he was unable to do it, he gets drunk after he practically has the family's permission to spend money in that. At the end of the novel Uncle John is sent to bury the corpse of Rose of Sharon's child, but he does it in a way that expresses his anger; he sets it to float on a stream and tells him: " Go down, an' tell. Go down in the-street an'rot an' tell' em. That way. That's the way you can talk. Go on down now, an'lay in the street. Maybe they'll know then." (CH. 30 p. 410)

53.-

He had been under a terrible emotional stress all night, listening to Rose of Sharon's cries that reminded him of his wife's cries. He works like crazy to avoid listening to them and then, after all the effort on the part of the whole family, the baby is born dead, and the levee is spoiled by a cottonwood. Disaster is there; and even a person like him, who feels so guilty and takes everything as a deserved punishment for his sins feels that this is too much, unjust. Who is to blame? he does not know, he only feels the need to protest and let the comfortable people know about their situation.

A L

Al's love for engine cars is shown, in chapter 20, as well as his childish character, when he starts boasting about Tom's killing a man.

He is a sixteen year old boy, an expert in two things: tomcatting and mechanics. He is responsible for the Joads' truck. This job he does like an expert. He cooperates in everything he is asked to; he is rather the kind of person who can follow instructions. He seems not to have much initiative or leadership. Only in the last chapter does Al lead the action, because he fears that the water will come in and float the truck away. So he proposes:

We can tear-out the side-boards of the truck and build a kind of

54.-

platform in here to pile our stuff an' to set up on." (CH. 30 p. 409)

He never seems to love his family very much; he is very selfish and at the end he is willing to abandon his family if they are an obstacle to his happiness, no matter how badly he may be needed by them.

He is Tom's younger brother, but we are sure he will never develop as Tom has done, because of several reasons; his selfishness, and his having a family of his own too soon, which will absorb him completely.

We can say that Al is for Tom what Rose or Sharon is for Ma: a contrast, a point of comparison. At the beginning of the novel Tom is always worried for his family; at the end he is worried for all the dispossessed. At the beginning Al is concerned with himself, and at the end, the same.

THE JOAD CHILDREN

Ruthie and Winfield are the Joads' children. Ruthie is twelve years old and Winfield is ten. Children are indispensable in the novel to have a complete family-like situation, and observe children's behavior. In chapter 20, Ruthie is angry with the poor hungry children especially with the girl who is talking

about the government camp because they are attracting Ma's attention, and maybe she is afraid that Ma may give them some of her food. She gets more angry at every word the little girl utters, until she gives way to her rage and shouts: "Granma died right on the top a the truck." (CH. 20 p. 233)

Then she gets the attention she wants. Winfield and Ruthie play to imitate Uncle John's attitude; it is obvious that they can not understand the pathos of his situation; for them as children, that they are, this situation is funny and crazy. This is contrasted to the adults' opinion. Al thinks their game is crazy, though he would not judge John's attitude that way, but as Ruthie says: "It ain't no crazier'n a lot of things." (CH. 20 p. 248)

Of the two children Ruthie and Winfield, Ruthie seems to be the stronger. She is able to do or say anything to call attention from the adults and admiration from Winfield.

When they get to the government camp and go to the toilets for the first time, Winfield twisted the flushing lever. The roar of water frightened them because they thought it was broken: At first Ruthie got mad, but at last she felt pity for Winfield: Never you mind she said 'I wan't tell on you." (CH. 22 p. 275) In spite of her saying this, she accuses him to her mother. However, she derives much of her boldness form Winfield, without whom she is not so confident. She is not able to go into the toilet room

by herself; she needed Winfield to do it, though she boasted about knowing things first.

Ruthie is presented as a rebellious girl; she did not want to meet the Ladies' Committee because: " We got washed for them sons-a-bitches. I ain't goin' with them." (CH. 22 p. 291) Her saying so gives Winfield an opportunity for revenge. He threatens her but we know that he will not act against her.

Ruthie acts aggressively again when she wants to be admitted immediately in the croquet game. To achieve her purpose she is willing to do anything, even to slap a girl. This attitude is only the consequence of a profound childish mistrust of her own social acceptability, because of the rejection and aggression all her family has suffered.

Steinbeck uses these children's attitudes as a means to express a different point of view from that of the adults; a more spontaneous and less comprehensive one about the situation. This causes an ironical effect in the novel, like when they leave the government camp, complaining, and asking if at the place where they are going they will be able to play croquet, when we know that maybe they will not be able to get food. Or when Ma tells Ruthie that there was no baby and she says: Shucks; yawned 'I wish it had been a baby." (CH. 30 p. 408)

Ruthie is not idealized; on the contrary, she is mean, envious, always wanting to be the center of attraction and getting the best. She even takes revenge on Winfield, who is shown to us as a boy of quite good temper, mischievous, but good-hearted.

GRAMPA AND GRANMA

Grampa is described as a very peculiar old man, mean, lecherous etc., and Granma is presented as just the match for him. Once:

She fired both barrels of a shotgun at her husband, ripping one of his buttocks nearly off, and after that, he admired her and did not try to torture her as children torture bug." (CH. 8 p. 72) Both of them used to complete the family frame. Grandparents are indispensable members in such a family. They are also the kind of people who can not survive to be uprooted. They are too old and have their habits and ideas too fixed to bend an inch; they will rather break. That land where they were born is their life. Without it they are left with nothing. The disintegration of the family begins with them. There is a foreboding of what may happen when Grampa has to be forced to go with them. The pathos of what happens to Grandparents is stressed by the contrast of the apparent vitality that Steinbeck gives to them at the beginning, especially to Grampa, and his subsequent easy destruction. All his strength and vitality depended on his place and

58.-

Granma's on her husband: Jus' let me get out to California where I can pick me an orange when I want et. I'm gonna squash 'em on my face an' let 'em run offen my chin." (CH. 8 p. 77)

The impersonal characters of interchapter 9, speak for Grampa and Granma. These are they: " Maybe we can start again in the new rich land in California where the fruit grows. We'll start over. 'But you can't start. Only a baby can start. You and me why, we're all that's been. This land, this red land is us." (CH. 9 p. 81)

N O A H

Noah is the ~~eldest son of the Joans.~~ Nobody even knows what Noah thinks or feels or even if he is ~~feeble-minded, as Pa fears,~~ because when he was born Pa helped to deliver him using his hands as a forceps and: " The midwife, arriving late, had found the baby's head pulled out of ~~shape,~~ its neck stretched, its body warped." (CH. 8 p. 73)

Noah is a very uncommon person, neither sad nor happy, but quiet he lives in a world of his own, but he is not lonely. He works well, and does everything he is asked to.

In Chapter 18, Noah lets himself be heard: " Like to jus'tay here. Like to lay here for ever. Never get hungry an' never get

59.-

sad. Lay in the water all life long, lazy as a brood sow in the mud." (CH. 18 p. 186) He depicts himself as a being who does not want to make any effort to live, and staying there, he will live like a plant. Near the river he will have food, and water. This means that he will have all he wants in life: food and rest. He is the second member of the family who leaves. The family is disintegrating quickly and nothing can be done to prevent it:

" It ain't no use, Noah said, 'I'm sad, but I can't he 'p it. I got to do." (CH. 18 p. 191)

7.- I N T E R C H A P T E R S .

Steinbeck begins his novel with an interchapter. These inter-chapters are used as a technique to give coherence in two different things in the novel: The sequence of events and Steinbeck's analysis and points of view on the social organization of the country.

These interchapters present a social background which serves to amplify the pattern of action created by the Joad family. Three of them provide historical background information. The inter-chapters give more meaning and depth to the Joads' story.

The first interchapter of the novel establishes a situation and an atmosphere from which the conflict that the people will face will come out. The devastation of the land by the drought is described in detail as well as the effect it has had upon the people and

60.-

and their lives.

We get a picture of the difficult situation these people are undergoing, of the men's courageous attitude toward adversity, of the women and children's anxiety: To the fear that their men would break." (CH. 1 p. 7)

Interchapter three gives us a keen description of the movements of the turtle, which symbolizes survival, for the mysterious and everlasting life force, which impels him is the same that drives the Joads, and in the same direction: Southwest. In interchapter five an explanation of the new economic organization running the country is given; the situation of the Joads is clear now; we are conscious of the hard experience they have been through until they took the decision of leaving their land for California.

Steinbeck presents this new organization that has evolved from small business, money lenders into big companies or banks, as a dehumanized process. The bank or the Company is a faceless monster (many powerful men and no one in particular), with whom you can not talk about your needs, sorrows or feelings. This monster has all the advantages: it is powerful, rich and with no feelings; his only need is to get profits: " The tenant system won't work any more. One man on a tractor can take the place of twelve or fourteen families." (CH. 5 p. 31)

61.-

The owners of the land are obliged to adopt the modern agricultural techniques if they want to survive. The tenants show different feelings before this situation: anger, fear and confusion. They remember that it was not easy for their ancestors to get and keep the land. They were threatened by Indians, or by snakes and they defended it. However, now it is different, because the enemy has no face. Who are they going to kill? the bank? Who is the bank? Many but nobody in particular. So their resolution of leaving is not the result of lack of courage, but of impotence. Someone tells them that California is the paradise: " Why don't you go on west to California? There's work there, and it never gets cold. Why you can reach out anywhere and pick an orange." (CH. 5 p. 33)

Too easy and perfect to be true.

Industrialism, according to Steinbeck, spoils the natural relationship between men and nature, becoming dehumanized and without love, although rapid and efficient. This new organization, however thriving it may be, is breaking the economic equilibrium quickly, making a very few immensely rich, depriving many of work. A new equilibrium has to be found before the country collapses.

Interchapter nine depicts the hard situation that the Joads and people like them are undergoing. These anonymous characters are the Joads and all the dispossessed. We hear Grampa and Gramma talking through anonymous characters, giving us the anxiety of

62.-

their struggle, and the hopelessness of their conclusion. This is the beginning of a long journey full of injustice, exploitation and misery. They are the needed, they have to sell their belongings to be able to leave. The ridiculous prices are fixed by the ones who are not in need. These buy and get splendid profit out of the need of the poor: you're buying years of work", you're buying a sorrow that can't talk." A packet of bitterness to grow in your house and to flower some day." And some day the armies of bitterness will all be going the same way. And they'll all walk together, and there'll be a dead terror from it." (CH. 9 p. 81)

Bitterness will unify them so they will act as a group in favor of their own benefit.

For the migrants, their land, each thing of their environment has a great meaning, so that leaving all these things, they are leaving their past, and the most important, they are leaving their identity.

In interchapter 11, as in the interchapter 5, the deadness of steel is contrasted with the warmth of the earth, of animal and human beings. Steinbeck stresses the fact that mechanical agriculture is absolutely dehumanized and deprived of love for the land. There is nothing; the land is lonely. Ironically, the only thing that gives life to the place is the inanimate tractor which does not

63.-

have any feeling, a machine efficient and cold. The man who drives the tractor becomes a driver of machine, the time of the farmer is over.

The atmosphere of this interchapter is of loneliness and decay. The wild behavior of animals and plants is in accordance to the present situation, but it would have been totally impossible if the place had been inhabited by people: The bats which had stopped at the doors for fear of light, swooped into the houses and sailed about through the empty rooms." (CH. 11 p. 107)

This change of the conduct of nature is a symptom that something wrong has happened.

Interchapter twelve gives us a depressing panorama of the journey of the dispossessed on highway 66. There are the many people in flight from hunger, in search for work and food, suffering all kinds of accidents. They are being abused by their own country men, they are not seen as someone who needs help but rather as victims ready to be exploited: Fella in business got to lie an' cheat, but he calls it somepin' else, that's what's important. You go steal that tire an' you're a thief, but he tried to steal your four dollars for a busted tie. They call that sound business." (CH. 12, p. 11)

Migrants are learning that beyond the place where they were born,

democracy and freedom do not have any meaning, unless you are rich and powerful. Otherwise you have to accept the values of the powerful and the rich: Well, try to get some freedom to do.

Fella says-you're jus' as free as you got jack to pay for it."

(CH. 12 p. 110) As a contrast to the message of the interchapter, at the end we are told a very unusual story about a family, who was pulled and fed by a man, with such things, as, Steinbeck says:

The faith is refired forever." (CH. 12 p. 112)

It is also a warning to society. He looks how things are coming as a natural result of: "We have a little food." "I lost my land", We lost our land", so he says that Jefferson, Lenin and Marx were results, not causes." (CH. 14 p. 138,139) His social ideas are stated here: For the quality of owning freezes you for ever into 'I, and cuts you off forever from the 'we'."

(CH. 14 p. 139)

He is not theorizing about Marxism, though, saying that it is the best of the best, but on the contrary, he goes from reality to reality, he gives facts and leads the reader to a conclusion. A change in the economic administration of the country is needed.

In interchapter fifteen, three different social and economic levels are represented: the rich people, the low middle class people, and the dispossessed.

The wickedness and futility of the rich people is stressed here. Steinbeck unfolds a corrupted world full of awkward values. They are people from the cities, totally removed from nature, and as a consequence separated from the natural values. In their labels the insignia of lodges and services club, places where they can go and, by a weight of number of little worried men, reassure themselves that business is noble and not the curious ritualized thievery they know it is; that business men are intelligent in spite of the records of their stupidity: What a hell of a nuisance." (CH. 15 p. 141)

Truck drivers, Mae, the waitresses, and Al, the cook, represent the low middle class, and though they are not farmers and as a result they are not indirect contact with nature, they are not rich and superficial. They also have had needs and suffering; this makes them human and understanding. They are positive people ready to help whenever is needed. Their conduct is contrasted with that of the rich couple, who complain about everything and give no tip, while truck drivers owning less money are willing to give a half dollar tip each. Al and Mae show their human quality behaving in an understanding way with the poor traveler and his children.

The third class, the dispossessed, are represented by the traveler and his family. In contrast with the rich who have lots of money

66.-

and steal everything they can: An' the bigger the car they got, the more they steal-towels, silver." (CH. 15 p. 142) Poor people have no money but they are honest. Their hard situation is made obvious by their appearance and by the little amount of money they can afford to spend.

The exposition of the other two social classes in this interchapter serves as a frame to place and understand better the society as a whole, from which the migrants are only a part.

Interchapter seventeen. This interchapter deals with the way of life of the migrant people and the road. An integration and a unity is formed among them, arising from the same needs and feelings, so that every evening when they encamp, " The twenty families became one family, the children of all." (CH. 17 p. 177)

A new concept of unity and solidarity is being achieved, as well as a new concept of a big family is formed. The integration of the family is seen through the different representatives of the members of the family: adults, children, girls, getting in touch, members of one family getting in touch with others: And young girls found each other and boasted shyly of their popularity and their prospects. They spoke of the future; Wonder what it's like out there?. (CH 17 p. 182)

The change that these families of farmers had to undergo in order to survive was tremendous: they were not farmers any more, but

67.-

"migrant men." (CH 17 p. 180)

Steinbeck praises the precious characteristics of man: adaptation. They had to change all the aspects of their old life, such as rights, obligations, values etc. They did it without someone to teach or to explain; they learned and understood the new rules of the game, practicing; pragmatically. And the name of the game is life.

The aspect that deals with Jeffersonian Agrarianism in interchapter nineteen, will be discussed later.

Interchapter twenty-one. Steinbeck points out in this interchapter how wrong the economic system is, that powerful men are imposing. The aim is to produce more, to make money. The human needs, the fulfilment of oneself are not important aims, and as time passes by, men go farther from the real objectives of their lives: the improvement of their human qualities. For Steinbeck industrialism as it is handled now will never lead to this; on the contrary, it will prevent it.

He depicts the situation of the dispossessed as desperate, and the anguish of owning nothing but hunger and suffering, with nothing to lose. The rejection from the ones who are settled and are owners emerges from fear and consequently it engenders hatred in return: They're degenerate, sexual maniacs, dirty, ignorant."

(CH 21 p. 259) At the end the only ones who win are banks,

68.-

companies etc., not people or farmers who do their job with care and love. According to Steinbeck, from this negative aspect a positive one emerges; people shake off the powerful ones who are killing them.

Interchapter twenty-three. These migrant people have a really hard reality to face; so it is an urgent need for them to escape from it. There are several ways to do it: the less frequent of all is going to the movies. Then we have sleeping, being in the past, getting drunk etc.

Steinbeck deals with pragmatism in this interchapter, which, he says, means to judge life as it is, not as it really should be. For example, in order to escape from their cruel reality they would like to stay drunk all the time: "Who says it's bad? Who dares to say it's bad? (CH 23 p. 301) In other words who is so mean, cruel and not human to try to judge the people's way of escaping as "bad". Later he answers: Reformers, Preachers "They are living another kind of life, they can't judge." (CH 23 p. 301)

Religion is shown as useless and painful as it is practiced by some stupid preachers who do not understand people, who think that man is naturally mean and nature is good. From this idea, according to Steinbeck, results the uselessness and harm of religion. Nature is not mean, good or bad, nature is nature and I am part of nature.

Interchapter twenty-five. This interchapter is divided into two parts. The first gives a description of the beauty of the fertile country, the process from seeds to ripe fruits. People have worked hard but they are proud of their work because of the results: small sour fruits have been transformed into big sweet ones. These men have done their work with care and love: And these men must have surgeon's hands and surgeon's hearts to slit the bark, to place the grafts, to bind the wounds and cover them from the air." (CH 25 p. 318)

This part that describes a paradise of abundance and beauty, a delight for the eyes, smell and taste is a contrast with the second part that describes the waste of work and energy due to the economic organization of the country. All those beautiful fruits will not fulfill their function, to feed people, because with all their beauty they will rot while people will die of hunger. People with knowledge to make fruit grow better can not find a way to make the same fruit useful that it might be eaten by hungry people.

I find this interchapter beautiful; it communicates with all its beauty and strength the pathetic situation of some people - like little farmers and migrants. Decay physical and moral is the keynote of the atmosphere.

At the end of this interchapter, these words: And in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the

70.-

people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy for the vintage." (CH 25 p. 320) Leave us with a feeling of expectation. Something will happen.

Interchapter twenty-seven. We have a hint of what is going to happen to the Joads and to all the poor people. Picking cotton is not so bad as long as it lasts, even with the cheating and the hard work. If there is work, life is good. There is the fear of the machine. If the cotton picking-machine comes, the work will be less for the thousands of people needing it. Just now there are too many people working in every field. But the worst part has not come yet: Try for God's sake to save a little money." "Winter's comin' fast. They ain't no work at all in California in the winter." (CH 27 p. 374)

Interchapter twenty-nine, gives a picture of what the Joads will go through. Heavy rain, cars out of order because of it, hunger, sickness, death, no work. The humble people who almost begged for work are transformed into hungry men ready to steal their food:

The humor and fear bred anger." (CH 29 p. 398)

There is hatred everywhere- the migrants hate the: Comfortable people in tight houses." And these people hate the poor migrants who are threatening their security. Comfortable people did nothing to help them, neither does the government. Sheriffs do not buy food or medicine, but they buy new rifles and swear in new deputies.

71.-

The people are getting ready for a war against a fierce enemy:
hunger turned into wrath.

8.- JEFFERSONIAN AGRARIANISM.

In "The Grapes of Wrath" there is a strong protest against the capitalist system and industrialism which were killing the small farmers as well as their individualism; diminishing the importance of the normal relationship between men and nature. Jeffersonian agrarianism stresses the importance, of a close contact with nature and with God, because this makes and keeps men pure, making them feel a part of the universe. On the other hand, we have the city regarded as a place of evil. Immorality thrives there, alongside of business and finance where money is the master and only goal. No room for love is left. City men steal the common man of his economic and political independence and destroy the dominant position of the farmer in the affairs of the State, diminishing him into a puppet.

Jeffersonian agrarianism, was essentially democratic; it insisted on the widespread ownership of property, on political and economic independence and individualism. It created a society in which every individual had a status.

Steinbeck believed that the substitution of industrialism for agrarianism was the solution for the hard situation of his country.

Steinbeck's inspiration was Jefferson's Agrarianism, a doctrine which was based on the belief that "land property held in freehold must be available to everyone." Equalitarian democracy meant a country made up of small farmers, and in fighting for the abolition of entail and primogeniture in Virginia, Jefferson tried to achieve a commonwealth dominated by precisely this group.

Possession of his own land gave the small farmer control of the means of production, so he was economically independent and as a result he would also be politically independent: Men had a natural right to as much land as they could profitably use." (3) In this novel Steinbeck gives us a complete exposition of Jefferson's agrarian views. Early in the novel he introduces the conflict between the farmer and the financial industrial interest of the city. The truck driver tells Tom how the tractors are substituting the croppers. The full meaning of his observation becomes clearer in interchapter five where Steinbeck presents the tractors as the instruments of a mysterious financial system. He uses the tractor as a symbol to criticize the machine, industry, the new society. The methods used are effective as I said in the analysis of interchapter five; they are practical but inhuman. There is no love in them, nor feeling or passion: The man sitting in the iron seat did not look like a man: gloved, goffled, rubber dust-mark over nose and mouth, he was a part of the monster, a robot in the seat.

His feet did not stamp the clods or feel the warmth and power of the earth. He sat in an iron seat and stepped on iron pedals."

If a seed dropped did not germinate, it was nothing... It was no more to the driver than to the tractor." (CH. 5 p. 34)

Steinbeck emphasises here the importance of working the earth as a human being not as a machine, feeling, enjoying and suffering with it. As Chester E. Eisinger says: " He suggests a primitivistic conception of nature: that the farmer draws spiritual strength as well as sustenance from the soil. Antithetical to these notions is the aridity of the city- bred woman, the dishonesty of business and the essentially inhuman and unproductive nature of the machine age." (4)

Progress had come to this land, but as it is usually the case with new things, was based on the retention of the land. The people's roots were there, in the land that was theirs, it was their life, the source of everything good and vital, it was them: "Grampa took up the land, and Pa was born here, and we were born here. It's our land". "We measured it and broke it up". "We were born on it and we got killed on it, died on it. Even if it's no good, it's still ours. That's what makes it our being born on it working it, dying on it. That makes ownership not a paper on it." (CH 5 p. 32)

74.-

The Okies argue that what gives someone the ownership of the land is the work and love of it. The legal rights to as much land as he can profitably use. This belief in the ownership of the land passed into the nineteenth century and even into the twentieth. This is the reason why, when the Okies want to work a little patch of ground lying fallow, the Californian police chases them off, "You goddamned squatters. Pretty soon you'd think you owned it, You'd be sore as hell. Think you owned it. Get off now. "The cop was right." A crop raised-why that makes ownership." (CH 19 p. 216) And in fact, the people who were settled in California got their own land in that way.

When they are dispossessed of their land, they lost status and their life has lost meaning. The Joads are shoved off the land. Grampa can not stand it and dies, but as Casy puts it: An' Grampa didn't die tonight. He died the minute you took him from the place." (CH 13 p. 134) Pa survives, but has to pay a high price, enduring indignities and humiliations. He loses his social status as well as his position as the family leader; he never comes to be the same; all his confidence has gone in the same way his land has. The farmer is a productive element of society. Fallow land, when men are starving is a sin, and it is a symptom of the disruption that the new economic system brings.

Man goes farther and farther from nature. It is also a sin to let

75.-

the fruit rot or to squirt kerosen on it while a million people are starving. The feeling of in conformity that Steinbeck feels for the economic system that is totally inhuman, looking only for profit, convenient only for a few, is depicted in a masterly way: "Men who have created new fruits in the world can not create a system whereby their fruits may be eaten. And the failure hangs over the State like a great sorrow." "A million people hungry, needing the fruit and kersone sprayed over the golden mountains." "There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation." (CH 25 p. 319)

Things are going wrong, honest working farmers starving, being treated like bumps. Few men owning the land, working it with no feeling. Good harvest let rot and wasted while people starve. This seems illogical and inhuman, who is to be blamed and to stop the problems, not a person, not a name, but the bank or the company. There is a heavy contrast between the humanity of the tenants and their attachment to the land with the inhuman remoteness of the banks and the inanimate monstrosity of the tractors, including their gloved and goggled drivers, regarded by the farmers as traitors to the land and to their own folk.

9.- STEINBECK'S PHILOSOPHY IN " THE GRAPES OF WRATH " .

"The Grapes of Wrath" is a novel that has aroused violent

controversies since it came out, but these controversies have not dealt with its value as a novel, but with its value as a social document. If Steinbeck was a sensationalist, if he was exaggerating or distorting facts, or if he was degrading migrants from Oklahoma or Californians have been points at issue with lots of readers.

As Peter Lisca says: "From the very beginning it was taken as a substantial fact and its merits debated as a document rather than as a novel." (5)

However, Steinbeck's honesty as a man who writes following Hemingway's ideals of writing "Truly", without "Tricks" and without "Cheating", has been made clear in several ways, by his own writings and by the private investigations made by the producers of the film "The Grapes of Wrath", who found that the truth about the migrants was even worse than what Steinbeck had depicted in his novel.

However, It is normal that the reaction toward this powerful book had been tremendous, because it deals with a problem that affected so many people, and at the same time shameful acts came to the surface damaging the image of "a democratic country"; proving that such democracy only worked for some and not for all.

Walt Whitman said in "Notes let Over", if the United States, like the countries of the Old World, are also to grow vast crops of

poor, desperate, dissatisfied, nomadic, miserable, notwithstanding all its surface success, is at heart an unhealthy failure" (6). And Steinbeck says, "If on the other hand, as has been stated by a large grower, our agriculture requires the creation and maintainance of a peon class, then it is submitted that California agriculture is economically unsound under a democracy". (7)

We find in both Whitman and Steinbeck an indignation toward the violation of the American democratic principles. These violations cause a terrible damage to a sector of poor people: the "peon" class. To this problem Steinbeck offers three solutions: first "that the migrant laborers be allotted small "subsistence" farms on which they can live and work when there is no call for migrant labor. Second, that a Migratory Labor Board be created to help allot labor where needed and to determine fair wages. Third, that vigilantism and terrorism be punished. Steinbeck wrote this in his final article of the "news" series.

Pragmatism is one strand of the American philosophy found in this novel. Pragmatism is the first American philosophy developed independently of European schools of thought. Pragmatists believe that ideas must be tested against experience. William James held that "The consequences of an idea determine its meaning and that the truth of the idea can be measured by whether the consequences work satisfactorily in ordering a person's life." (8) His pragmatic theory is expressed as "What works is true". He was

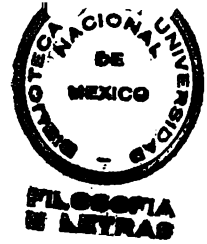
78.-

severely accused of undermining morals and truth by such a philosophy of sheer relativism.

The English thinker F C S Schiller agreed basically with James' view that personal satisfaction measures the truth of an idea, but he insisted that this satisfaction is always relative to the individual and to circumstance". Schiller concluded that "judgements of true and false, good and bad, and right and wrong can never be absolutely true".

Pragmatism is looking at things and evaluating them as they really are, not as they should be. According to Steinbeck, being pragmatical in this sense is to be very understanding and to have a wide criterion. Outstanding examples of Pragmatism are Casey, Ma, and Tom, though uncle John and Pa are also pragmatical in some situations.

They do not judge situations or people according to pre-fixed rules or a moral code. They take life and situations as they are. This pragmatism also implies the idea of facing the present, not of eluding it and living in the past or in the future but living day by day, as Ma says: Jus' try to live the day, jus' the day". Facing reality as Tom says: I'm still layin' my dogs down one at a time." "I climb fences when I got fences to climb (CH 16 p. 159)



79.-

Ma expresses that ahead of us there are a thousand lives we might live, but when it comes to facts, it is only one. So to keep herself under control she lives the moment, otherwise there would be many things that would upset her, and she can not afford that.

Uncle John says: " I don't think nothin' about it (the trips to California). We're a goin' there ain't we ? None of this here talk gonna keep us from goin' there. When we get there, we'll get there." (CH 18 p. 190)

Not to judge people requires a deep understanding of human nature. Casy says: " I'm sure nobody got a right to mess with a fella's life. He got to do it all hisself. Help him, maybe, but not tell him what to do." (CH 18 p. 206)

He accepts people as they are, because he has made a great effort to achieve this deep understanding of life and people. This emphasis on thinking of the moment works perfectly for the Joads due to the unsteady conditions they are living in (They are not even fulfilling their primary needs); otherwise men have to live the moment, the present, but they must also think of the future, to have a goal in life and to prepare to reach it. If it were not so we would live like the rest of the animal species, totally controlled by the environment.

Pragmatism as Steinbeck presents it in the special circumstances of the novel, is very effective. However we should consider what

80.-

the consequences of pragmatism would be in a normal situation. Vagueness and relativism created by an aimless life. This, I think goes in opposition to human nature. Man needs to feel that his life in this world has a definite purpose to fulfill.

Steinbeck believes that a pragmatist adapts better and quicker to any environment than any other person. For Steinbeck this condition of man, his adaptation, is very important. We know that biologically, only those species which are able to adapt, survive, man in "The Grapes of Wrath" is seen as an animal species; so, in order to survive, man has to adapt to an environment. In the novel the way to do this is through change. "Thus they changed; their social life changed as in the whole universe only man can change." (CH 17 p. 180)

Steinbeck loves nature "to which all things belong, bound together in a unity whose greatness he can barely hint." (9)

For Steinbeck, the most important thing is man. "Humanism" is another philosophical strand found in "The Grapes of Wrath". Humanism emphasizes man's potentialities. Humanists want "to enlarge man's awareness of himself". Man for them is the measure of all things". (10)

John Dewey and William James used the term to mean "a desire that man filled his higher needs by better understanding and utilizing

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the accumulated scientific knowledge of man and his natural environment". Consequently for these authors, humanism means "The belief that man is not dependent on divine grace but can progress to a perfect human nature through his own efforts". (11)

In chapter 14, Steinbeck expresses clearly his trust in man.

For man, unlike anything organic or inorganic in the universe, grows beyond his work, walks up the stairs of his concepts, emerges ahead of his accomplishments. "Fear the time when Manself (sic) will not suffer and die for a concept, for this one quality is the foundation of Manself, and the one quality is man, distinctive in the universe". (CH 14 p. 137)

In the novel, respect for every man's life, love to fellowmen, is stressed as vital to improve the people's actual situation.

Steinbeck does not see God through nature, or a life beyond this life. Casi says when Grampa dies: " I don't know whether he was good or bad, but that don't matter much. He was alive, an'that's what matters.

An' now he's dead, an'that don't matter: 'All that lives is holy."
(CH 13 p. 132)

It has been said that in this novel we find a kind of mystical religion based on reverence to nature and man. This explains Steinbeck's attitude toward the traditional orthodox religion

82.-

which centers on the worship of God and on love of man because of God. For Steinbeck the center of a new kind of religion should be man. Consequently he presents traditional religion as useless and even harmful. To produce this impression he chooses certain situations that present only negative and fanatical behaviors on the part of religious people, like the religious woman in the government camp, who is trying to scare Rose of Sharon by saying that dancing is a sin, the consequences of which will fall on her baby. Or the preacher of the story that made people hysterical and threw them into the water to wash their sins.

Casy comes to be the perfect model of a preacher of the new religion. He quit the traditional religion, because according to his beliefs it did not help to improve people's situation. He thought it was not in accordance to reality, so after thinking for a long time he found himself a believer, but not in God or in the Bible, but a believer in men, in one big soul: maybe it's all men and all women we love; maybe that's the Holy Spirit the human spirit-the whole shebang." Nevertheless, Casy is superficial in underrating the value of religion as one of the best motivations man has to love his fellows. He also forgets that prayer, besides securing God's help in all situations, contributes to man's peace and mental equilibrium. On the other hand, Casy's humanism is fragmentary, because the concept of God

83.-

as Creator, Redeemer and dealer of justice in this world on afterwards, is fundamental to understand the nature of man, and the need of his doing good to his neighbors.

Maybe all men got one big soul ever'- body's a part of." (CH 4 p. 24)

This belief in one big soul, called the "Oversoul", is another philosophical trend found in this novel. It is based on Emerson's philosophy of the oversoul. He believed that "each man has within himself the power to transcend the material world and to see and grasp the infinite." (12)

He believed that the Oversoul, or spirit of God, pervades and governs all forms of nature, including man, and that a person could therefore "discover God by following his own intuitions". (13)

He advised man "to reject conventional ways of living and orthodox religious forms, and to look within himself for eternal truth and freedom". (14)

At the heart of Emerson's philosophy lies the concepts of individualism and self-reliance: "Nothing", he wrote, "can bring you peace but yourself". He encouraged man to believe in and to be themselves.

The Oversoul is defined as a sense of oneness with God, with nature and with other individuals. The discovery of the Oversoul has to

84.-

be made by intuition. The meaning of the Oversoul for Steinbeck is a sense of oneness with God, with nature and with other individuals, though only twice in the novel, is a sense of oneness with nature mentioned, "There was the hills, an' there was me, an' we wasn't separate no more. We was one thing. An' that one thing was holy." (CH 8 p. 76) Casy says: " The stars are close and dear and I have joined the brotherhood of the worlds. And everyting's holy everything, even me." (CH 23 p. 301)

This sense of oneness with other men is very important for Steinbeck and is related to the great importance that he attaches to the concept of the family unit and the group action in the novel:

"How we was holy when we was one thing, an' makin was holy when it was one thing" "But when they're all working together not one fella for another fella but one." (CH 8 p. 76)

In this group action Steinbeck places all possibility of success or failure. If the dispossessed act as a group, united, they will succeed in improving their poor economical and social conditions. On the contrary, if they act selfishly, as individuals, or if they act only as a family, isolated from the rest of the families, they will fail.

Tom, of all the members of the family, is the only one who assimilates Casy's ideas, so that almost at the end of the novel

he also has reached the concept of the Oversoul, as his words let us know, when he is speaking to Ma: " Then I'll be aroun' in the dark. I'll be ever' where-whenever you look. Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat." (CH 28 p. 385)

Here Tom is feeling a part of all the dispossessed. He, as an individual; is no important. His importance lies in being a part of a group. This importance that Steinbeck gives to the group action has connotations of Marxism, that can be detected in the social philosophy of "The Grapes of Wrath".

However, I think Marxism is less influential in the novel than the other theories (the oversoul, pragmatism etc.). But Steinbeck's Marxism is mixed with American ingredients including the pioneer spirit of endurance, the will to go ahead and succeed etc.

All people under the same system have the same rights. All people are equal and if their rights are not-respected, they must fight for them. The government must be for the people and by the people, like the organization of the government camp similar to that of the modern Kibbutz.

I consider that Steinbeck has been influenced by Jean Jacques Rousseau's ideas about man and society; for example Rousseau considered the general will the most dynamic factor in the good society. "The citizens who compose society can have no human

86.-

identity or true interests apart from those of society or expressed in the law or general will." (15)

Steinbeck expresses the same concept through the novel, as well as the idea that man is basically good by nature, not made good, but that "this basic goodness and equality had from earliest times actually been corrupted by the very elements that his contemporaries called the agents of progress." (16)

"Some men, by cunning and by the calculation that their colleagues glorified as reason, took advantage of their fellows to gain unequal wealth and power. These cunning men then made their artificially superior positions secure by establishing a system of social conventions praised as civilization and by enforcing their will by laws that sanctioned poverty and upheld inequality." (17)

Steinbeck tells us that poor people are good, that if they are sometimes aggressive this is because of the hard circumstances they are subjected to by the rich classes, who are bad because they have been spoiled by the "agents of progress". Their greediness and calculation has been glorified as reason or good business. Thus, they take advantage of their fellows and control them. I must also comment the fact that Steinbeck presents the situation from a very partial point of view: all rich people are bad (Chapter 15). He has subjective opinion about the relation

87.-

between the two classes, and in order to bring his point home he exaggerates even the point of sentimentality.

To conclude I must say that "The Grapes of Wrath" is an outstanding novel for several reasons; but the most appealing to me are, that Steinbeck presents his characters in such a way that the readers get to live with them; this is to suffer, to enjoy, to struggle, to get angry with them.

I also appreciate a lot Steinbeck's faith in man's natural goodness as well as his compassion for the dispossessed.

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