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Ethical Literary Interpretation of
The Grapes of Wrath

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Abstract

John Steinbeck is one of the greatest American writers of the 20th century. *The Grapes of Wrath*, awarded Pulitzer Prize, remains one of his most successful and well-read novels. John Steinbeck manifests his deep concerns for the farmers and keen observation to the society by constructing a story that during the Great Depression in the 1930s, at the brink of bankruptcy, the farmers in mid-America have to migrate and struggle to adapt to the drastic changes of social environment, which brings about the change of the ethical relationship and moral values. This thesis attempts to analyze *The Grapes of Wrath* in the light of Ethical Literary Criticism and to explore the author's ethical thoughts.

This thesis first presents a brief introduction to John Steinbeck, the importance and the research background of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Chapter one focuses on the concept of Ethical Literary Criticism, its theoretical basis, the reasons of the ethical literary interpretation of studying this novel and the research value of this thesis. Chapter two mainly analyzes the ethical environment of the novel. Drought and horrific dust storms have haunted the countries of Oklahoma; the residents' identities in mid-America have changed from farmers to migrants; the ethical order has collapsed and traditional family system has fallen apart; the whole American society lose their moral values, which demonstrates and concentrates on materialism and inhumanity. Chapter three is devoted to study of the moral tendency of major characters. Muley, with his inherent immutable ethics, has his alienation from a human being into an animal and ghost; Tom's ethical values have experienced a cycle, his self-pride turning to self-compromise and finally leading to self-rebellion; Rose of Sharon's self-awareness is a kind of spiritual transformation. Due to the great changes she encounters, she becomes independent, mature and compassionate. Chapter four explores the author's ethical thoughts as well as their influence on *The Grapes of Wrath*, which completely embodies in his respect and sympathy for the powerless farmers, while showing his disgust and condemnation to the powerful capitalists.

The conclusion indicates that from the Ethical Literary Criticism, the migration of the Joad's family is a tragedy due to the reality, but the family members' spirit of helping each other and strong will are worthy of respect. John Steinbeck expresses his ideal of humanity, kindheartedness and toleration of human kind in the novel.

Keywords: John Steinbeck; *The Grapes of Wrath*; Ethical Literary Criticism; ethical environment; moral tendency

摘 要

约翰·斯坦贝克是二十世纪美国文学史上最重要的作家之一。《愤怒的葡萄》，作为普利策获奖著作，是他最知名的小说，也是其最成功的小说。在这本书中，约翰·斯坦贝克作品表达了他对农民的关心和对社会敏锐的观察，描写了美国三十年代经济恐慌期间，美国中部各州的农民面临破产，以逃荒和斗争来适应社会环境的巨大变化，随之伦理关系和伦理思想相继产生变化的故事。本文以文学伦理学批评角度，对《愤怒的葡萄》进行伦理学解读，并分析约翰·斯坦贝克的伦理观念。

论文的引言部分首先就约翰·斯坦贝克的生平和《愤怒的葡萄》的重要性和研究背景做了简要的介绍。第一章关注的是文学伦理学批评的概念，理论依据，及分析这部作品的原因，并指出本文的研究价值与意义。第二章主要分析了《愤怒的葡萄》的伦理环境。横行在俄克拉荷马州的平原上的干旱和可怕的沙尘暴将这个地方变成了不毛之地；整个美国社会都丧失道德价值观，仅仅追求物质主义，变得冷漠无情；美国中部居民由农民变成流民，伦理秩序和传统家庭体系开始解体。

第三章重点分析了《愤怒的葡萄》中各主要人物的道德倾向。缪利固有的伦理观念让他从人类向动物和鬼魂的异化；汤姆的价值观念由自尊到自我妥协再到自我抗争，经历了一个循环。罗莎夏的自我觉醒体现在她变得独立、成熟和富有同情心，完成了自己的精神蜕变。第四章分析了约翰·斯坦贝克的伦理道德观念及这些观念对其创作的影响；集中体现在作品中，作家对弱势农民的尊重和同情和对强权资本的厌恶和憎恨。

结论部分总结得出，从文学伦理学批评的角度分析出《愤怒的葡萄》里，乔德一家的迁移是现实造成的悲剧，但是他们互帮互助的奉献精神是值得尊敬和颂扬的。约翰·斯坦贝克通过作品的描写，阐释人性关怀，仁爱，忍耐的美好理想。

关键词:约翰·斯坦贝克 《愤怒的葡萄》 文学伦理学批评 伦理环境 道德倾向

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Introduction

John Steinbeck (1902-1968), born in Salinas Valley, California, is one of the most eminent literary figures of the 20th century. As a Nobel Prize-winner, Steinbeck creates nearly 20 novels in his life, most of which are based on his hometown California. The theme scope of his works includes culture, politics, war, natural science, and social aspects. John Steinbeck is a highly regarded American writer, whose influence and appeal impact most of the North American writers. Because he is great and best-known, he and his works have received lots of critics since his works were published. He is good at using the modern techniques in his writing. Therefore he has made significant contributions to the development of the experimental novel and the innovative novel writing. He has developed a highly individualized style, revolting against the traditional writing techniques. He is also well-known for his forward-looking modern ideas, especially the sensitivity of ecological environment. A compilation of papers by scholars from the United States, Japan, China, England, India, and Australia, devotes to provide a window into the critical reception of Steinbeck's works around the world.

Therefore, volumes of incorporates diverse approaches have been used in analyzing his works, including cultural studies, film studies and gender analysis. In Steinbeck's fiction, much attention has also been attached to the extent of comparative studies of sociopolitical, philosophical, and religious motifs. These attentions can be classified into four parts, each considering a broad dimension of Steinbeck's works. Some prominent scholars on moral philosophy, some multifunctional families and other topics devote essays on the cultural and social dimensions of Steinbeck's fictions. Some scholars focus on Steinbeck's theatrical vision and postmodern aspects of his works, in the extent of the aesthetic dimensions. The possibilities of future Steinbeck studies have also been explored in some essays. His works have been found in many fields, such as the films, fictions and philosophy, which rises a breadth of current international interest of the readers in the world. These included essays which are particularly useful for showing critical readings from various cultural readings and standpoints, which usually stand in sharp, interesting contrast to each other. More interesting is that in some of the particular surveys, some Buddhist and Indian philosophy has been echoed in his works. From the unmatched sense by the essays of the scholars, it is easy to verify the

importance of John Steinbeck and his works, which continues to reach scholars and readers in the world.

The Pastures of Heaven, his first book, shows his high concerns with subjective exploration. This story is about the common life of some inhabitants in a California valley, where the life is very charming and rich and the settlers are all pleased with. John Steinbeck's best writing skills are vivid in this fiction by unless using some mood or central theme to bind all the chapters together, by ending of the fiction with a sort of O. Henry twist, which aims to avoid falling into a loose paten. Such a story, becoming merely a sequence of short stories rather than a connected whole, surprises the readers a lot. John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* can not only be considered as a prose masterpiece, but in the sight of which, it is also a surprise in the social stir in years. It is a story of two barley bucker friends, one of whom is a giant with a child's brain but the strength of ten men, and the other is a man without a heart to be hurt. Both of the two pals share the happiness and sorrows in life, and their friendship turns into a tragedy but remains unbroken. The important is not only the course of swift-moving tale which John Steinbeck is good at telling, but also the methods of pageantry of portraits in toil, in man's passions and repressions, in workers' dreams. He concerns about the workers' conditions since this fiction's publication.

The Grapes of Wrath was published in the 1930s. It is a novel written by John Steinbeck, with the background being set during the Great Depression, and with a plot line of the Joad's family who are forced to leave their hometown and on their journey to California. These poor sharecroppers have lost their lands as well as their home by suffering the drought and economic hardship. The changing agriculture industry has driven the sharecroppers into a hopeless situation, so thousands of "Okies" have become migrants heading to the Central Valley in California in search of land, jobs, and dignity.

The Grapes of Wrath is widely discussed and debated by the public in different attitudes since its publication. It is regarded as a social document by some scholars for the faithful record of the misery of the migrant workers. Professor O. B. Duncan believes the descriptions of all the plots in *The Grapes of Wrath* were reliable. Once he was in an interview, he defined that there were unnecessary statistics to find and refute. Some scholars find author's personal philosophy in *The Grapes of Wrath* to be in a

sense of the biological view of man. In his essay *The California: Storm and Steinbeck* (1941), Edmund Wilson writes, "Mr. Steinbeck almost always in his fiction is dealing either with the lower animals or with human beings so rudimentary that they are almost on the animal level", perceiving an animalism leaning in Steinbeck's works. The Essay, *California's Literary Regionalism*(1955) written by Frederick Bracher, is concerned with the representations of non-teleological thinking in Steinbeck's novels. In the past several decades, there is a shift changing the sociological readings to artistic critiques. As the result of this shift, John Steinbeck has been considered as a creative artist by assessing the literary value of his great masterpiece. Joseph Warren Beach is one of these critics to evaluate this novel aesthetically. In *John Steinbeck: Journeyman Artist* (1920), he discusses Steinbeck's intentions, themes, writing style and symbols. Peter Lisca, an expert on Steinbeck, also speaks highly of Steinbeck's craftsmanship in *The Grapes of Wrath* which made this novel an American epic (1958). The latest one is to interpret this work from the aspect of eco-criticism. In the sense of cultural view of *The Grapes of Wrath*, Patricia Leigh Brown expresses his opinion in his essay *Oklahomans Try to Save Their California Culture* (2002). He proves the historical foundation members of the Dust Bowl, who does efforts of re-establishment of the ruin homeland. Comparing the present-day migrant workers in California with the migrants in *The Grapes of Wrath*, Michael Kinsman presents the social injustices in his column *Knight-Ridder/Tribune Business News* (2002). In *The Lingering Shadow: The Grapes of Wrath and Oklahoma leaders in the Post-Depression Era* (2003) written by Jennifer J. Collins, the author points that the stereotyped image of an "Okie" is so vivid and lingering that even after decades, the Oklahoma's image as a Dust Bowl migrant has never changed. Tracy Daugherty in his personal essay, *Five Shades of Shadow* (2003), which aims to give the grief about the bombing of Oklahoma City, mentions that it was the first time did he realize the power of language by reading *The Grapes of Wrath*, did he examine the world has been evoked by the plots of the struggles of women and men.

John Steinbeck and his works have received their academic research bloom in early years in China. From that period, many Chinese scholars began to translate most of his works and a lot of academic research from various angles mushroomed. The research is mainly from the angle of modern techniques and themes in his works. There are many

domestic researches in Steinbeck and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Steinbeck's research mainly focused on the different work highlights the analysis of the theme, the analysis of the image of text character, the author's poetic pursuit of literature, the epic theme, the artistic research of text, the practical significance of work, and so on. Tian Junwu, from the perspective of ethical literary, writes his paper *The moral singer in the lost generation—a study on John Steinbeck's novels from an Ethical narrative* (Tian 25). He mostly focuses on the ethical elements *In Dubious Battle*, *East of Eden* and *Winter of Discontent*, analyzing how Steinbeck does combine the contemporary human condition with the human past experience, analyzing how he does penetrate the human consciousness of ethics and ethical behavior. All of these papers indicate that the author aims to evoke the weakling moral consciousness instead of even losing one day. Significant new selections from other sources, published over the previous two-to-three years, but not reported here, provide evidence of Steinbeck's continuing—and ameliorating—appeal in the twenty-first century. So far the greatest attention has been directed to *The Grapes of Wrath*, but an abundance of cultural, philosophical psychological, and ecological studies display an outpouring of interest in Steinbeck's work.

With an overall view of the author and his work *The Grapes of Wrath*, all these essays and arguments aim to analyze the importance and the value of John Steinbeck and his works, such as the structure, the theme and the content.

This thesis, in the light of Ethical Literary Criticism, attempts to demonstrate that the tremendous changes of social environment will inevitably lead to the change of people's ethical relationship and people's moral values.

The Grapes of Wrath is a novel full of ethical elements. The plots of the whole story follow a line of the Joad's family immigration to their dream place—California. This thesis first analyzes the ethical environment which the Joad's family lived in, (this family is an typical representative of the American farmers' family at that time), then it focus on analyzing the family members' ethical identities which change under the influence of the ethical environment, and it analyzes the process of the moral tendency of major characters, such as different ethical selections, and the changing ethical moral values.

Chapter 1 A General Survey of Ethical Literary Criticism

According to Ethical Literary Criticism theory, initiated by Chinese scholar Nie Zhenzhao, Professor of English at Central China Normal University, literature is not the art of languages but is a text consisting of the interrelationships of characters. It is not like any other ideology, instead of an aesthetic ideology, but a material form existing as a literal text (Nie 12). The essential concept of Ethical Literary Criticism is that literature is intrinsically the art of ethics—not simply a specialized expression of ethical ideas or the moral idealisms or vision of a particular historical period. Ethics and the Ethical Literary Criticism have many similarities in their study objects, but their basic concepts are quite different. (Nie 13)

For the former one, Ethics is a subject of science that studies social morality, in which the value of good and evil, the right and wrong, the virtue and vice, and the justice and crime have been judged. And the Ethics has its special researching objects and fields. Ethical Literary Criticism, it studies literature--the imaginary fictional art world, and the moral phenomenon in the literature world, the relation between author and his works or the society, from ethical perspective (Nie13). The major branches of Ethics are Moral psychology, Normative ethics, Applied ethics and Meta-ethics, for the importance of which as a theory concerning moral issues can also be widely applied to another. The subjects of good and evil, obligation, moral principle, moral valuation and moral behavior are all the moral phenomenon and moral issues in the realistic society. In general, Ethics attach great importance to the study of fields of realistic society, but the Ethical Literary Criticism studies not only the virtual society in literature works, but also the relationship between the realistic and virtual society. Literature describes society and life and has always been connected with moral issues in society, thus providing possibility and basis for Ethical Literary Criticism. Literature, turning the real world into a fictional artistic world with artistic devices, also transforms all kinds of moral phenomenon in real life into different ethical contradictions and conflicts in arts, especially focuses on reflecting the ethical contradictions and conflicts of the human society. So the reason why literature becomes the studying object of ethics is mainly that literature fictionalizes human society that contains all the content that ethics needs

to study. (Nie 13) In the aspect of methodology, Ethical Literary Criticism is a kind of researching methods of literature criticism, on the basis of borrowing and absorbing ethics theories, and combined with the literature studying methods. It is to conduct historical and dialectical interpretation of the moral phenomenon depicted in the literature history and to make an ethical judgment about the phenomenon with ethical principles at that time. (Nie 12)

The Grapes of Wrath is just a novel full of the moral elements, not only from the ethical environment but also from the moral tendency of each character. Like most of John Steinbeck's works, *The Grapes of Wrath* has been read as typifying the Joad's family's migration as a whole. The novel centers on the Joad's family. They suffer a lot on their way to California. The family and the whole Oklahoma country fall victim to those vices that the author believes are responsible for the problems in the environment crisis and the modern industrializations. The whole ethical environment is full of dust stone, sandstorm and flood, and the America people are avaricious, selfish. They concentrate on materialism and inhumanity, and lack ethical values. The family system, the life style, cultural tradition, the moral values that the mid-American people used to be very familiar with fall apart under the impact of the capitalist industry and commerce culture. While the history, the legend and the estate of old mid-American still haunts in the mind of the residents. John Steinbeck, as a pioneer of literature, is very much preoccupied with the question of how the "Okies" could live in this era, and has greatly expressed his honor and compassion about the spirit of the poor people in *The Grapes of Wrath*. There is an important element throughout his works, namely, the America society, economic and ethical values and family traditions.

Professor Nie Zhenzhao believes Ethical Literary Criticism should include the following. As for the author's creative writing, it should study the relation between the work and various moral phenomena that exist in the real world, that is how literature reproduces ethical phenomenon of the real world in the artistic world, and what is the moral tendency of the work, and what is the social and ethical value of the work. (Nie 14) He concludes that Ethical Literary Criticism explains and comments upon the various lifestyles of the characters in a given society in different occasions of their development. As for the relation between the author and the work, Ethical Literary

Criticism studies the relation between the author's ethical and moral concepts and the characteristic, causes and the historical background, the formative process of the concepts; and the work's ethical values and the influence of author's moral tendency in his works.(Nie 12)

Ethical Literary Criticism aims to examine the ethical connotation about literary phenomenon, such as the writer and their works from a historical perspective, combining political, economic and legal systems to interpret the ethical relations between man and man, man and society, man and nature, and further to come up with a new conclusion.

Ethical Literary Criticism studies the ethical connotation of writers and their works, from the perspective of history, and combines the social, political and economical background to interpret the ethical relations between human and society, human and nature within the historical context. *The Grapes of Wrath* is closely related to the social, political and cultural background of the Oklahoma. So it is practical to study this novel with Ethical Literary Criticism.

Ethical Literary Criticism also studies ethical values of the writers and their impact on their works. As John Steinbeck is brought up in the south, the traditional culture has definitely determined his values and thoughts. Literature works are the reflection of the social reality, so the ethical values and principles of the writers will be directly or indirectly reflected in the literature in some way. The ethical thoughts of John Steinbeck reflected in *The Grapes of Wrath* should also be studied.

Since the publication of *The Grapes of Wrath*, there have been divergent comments on the novel. This thesis intends to analyze and interpret the changes of the ethical values and ethical orders of different characters set in the specific historical background in *The Grapes of Wrath* from the perspective of Ethical Literary Criticism, and thus to offer a platform for the readers to trace the ethical ideas of the author, John Steinbeck. Readers can find Steinbeck's advanced ecological thought that the harmony between man and nature, man and man is the key to improve ecology and avoid ecological disaster. For John Steinbeck, he tries to send a message of the urgent needs of advocating virtue among the American in 1930s. Therefore, in *The Grapes of Wrath*, the Joad's family set a good example highlighting the humanity, kindheartedness and

toleration of human kind. This is considered as the echo of the author's concerns on the importance of moral values of human being.

Chapter 2 Ethical Environment of *The Grapes of Wrath*

According to Professor Nie Zhenzhao, ethical environment is also called the ethical context, it is the historical space where literature exists. Although Literature has provided enlightenment for the future, but most of the content of literature are about has already happened. Therefore, Ethical Literary Criticism requires that the analysis and criticism of literature should under the specific ethical environment, which explains that the requirements are objective ethical interpretation of literature itself, rather than abstract or subjective moral evaluation. (Nie 15)

During different historical period, literature has its fixed ethical environment and ethical context, which belongs a certain history. Thus the understanding of literature must take literature back its ethical environment or context where it belongs to, this is a premise of understanding literature. Ethical Literary Criticism with the characteristics of the historical criticism, the main task of which is the use of its own unique method from the angle of history, it aims to analyze and to summarize various literary phenomena in social life objectively.

The Grapes of Wrath, is in the fixed ethical environment and ethical context, that was in the Great Depression in 1930s, all the mid-American farmers had to migrate because they were at the brink of bankruptcy. From 1920s to 1930s, the United States had been transformed into a highly industrialized country. As the traditional cultivation methods could not meet the need of the development of capitalist economy, the traditional cultivation methods gradually had been replaced by the modern machinery in agriculture. The application of modern machinery in agricultural has reduced the cost, and has greatly promoted the development of American agriculture. However, the development has also caused the environmental crisis. The crisis is inevitable because all of the development in agriculture, in industry, economy, are on the premise of natural destruction, on the predatory resources, on the destruction of the “human, biological and natural environment of the earth’s biosphere” - nature. (Zhang 103)

2.1 Moaning Oklahoma

The harmony between man and nature has been destroyed and it will lead to a

later revenge of nature, such as the environmental disaster, the Dust Bowl. Before 1930s, the Great Plains had been haunted for many decades. In 1930s, drought and horrific dust storms turned the once-fertile agricultural lands of mid-America into virtual dust bowls and wastelands. It was reported that dust clouds covered the land, suffocated livestock, and impeded visibility. Meanwhile, poor farming techniques of the tenants had inflicted great destruction on the agricultural capacity of the land with the harsh corn crops taking all the nutrients off the soil.

Lands, plants, animals and any other creatures consist of the nature. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the lands have been excessively used, which turns to the terrible environment situation in Oklahoma country. In *the Grapes of Wrath*, The lands are moaning under the reclamation of the modern agriculture machine. The tractors are too cold-blooded to treat the land in a nice and kind way. The monster-like huge machines are too powerful while the lands are too poor. The landowners devote themselves to plants more crops on the poor lands. The ignorance of the fact is that the farmers are responsible for the deterioration of their land. Not until they are forced to leave the land, do they realize that it is their irresponsibility that has caused the dust storm and the disaster. What makes matter worse is that the landowners use much cruel and deadly modern industrial machines upon the lands. The farmers have planted cotton for many successive years. Thus it gives no chance for the land to replenish. The landowners' using the tractors gives the lands last blows. As for the former, they have been aware of their ignorance and regret. They knew "the land's getting poorer"; They knew "what cotton does to the land; robs it, sucks all the blood out of it"; They knew "If they could only rotate the crops they might pump blood back into the land". If they did not concentrate on the single cash crop, the dust would not fly and the top would stay on the soil, and it might not be so bad. On the contrary, the latter, the landowners only focus on excessive use of the lands to make more money. Therefore, the modern machinery has become the main trend in agriculture.

The primitive cultivation methods with relative low productivity do not threaten the land of nature. In order to satisfy the desire for food of rapidly swelling population, people begin to introduce modern machinery. After the application of industrialized production and business operation, unprecedented changes occurred to the production

methods. Modern industrialization impels the conquest of nature to an unprecedented height although it brings prosperity to human society. The land of nature has suffered with the overused desire of the landowners as well as the farmers' unconsciousness, moaning throughout the whole countries of Oklahoma.

The land problem has become more and more terrible because of the Great Depression. As a consequence, the farmers' life become even worse. As a powerful community, being desperate to find a way to recoup losses, the banks and land companies begin to remove the farmers from their farms. Uneducated and inexperienced in matters other than farming, the dispossessed families were driven westward to search land, jobs, and dignity. Thousands of destitute farmers packed their families and belongings into and onto their cars and left their homes in search of agricultural work in central California. Their plight and the politics of that day are told in the novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. The farmers like Joad's family are reluctant to leave their home land, the start of their trip signs the end of their farming life.

Undoubtedly, land is the most important property to the farmer, from which they are able to make a living and find their identities. When the landowners force them to leave this piece of land, they protest since it is them who measures and cultivate the land. It is the place where they are born, working and ready to die. Growing and dying on the land naturally declares a right of succession that nothing could deny. Unfortunately, the power of the farmers is so weak that they cannot overwhelm the huge powerful community of landowners and banks. The loss of lands leads to loss of their living, and taking their land away is more like taking away their breath. A double blow drives all the farmers with unspoken sorrow, grief and sadness. Although their sadness does not reveal violently, reader can traces in their words, on their faces and even deep in their heart. The moaning Oklahoma starts from the land of nature and ends in the migration of the farmers.

2.2 Collapse of Ethical Orders

During the 1930s, an extreme desire to acquire money hangs over the whole American society, and thoroughly alters the American people's behaviors. The culture

of American people is over determined by money-making attitudes so much so that they are deeply affected by a lack of moral values. The loss of moral values of American people have new life doctrine that physical well-being and worldly possessions constitute the greatest good and highest value in life, which demonstrates and concentrates on materialism and inhumanity.

Being lack of moral values and having no ethical peculiarity may be owing to the extreme acquisitiveness of social success. The rapid development of economy in 1930s had transformed the whole American society. However, during the thirties, the American society had difficulties in reconstructing the much fragmented society. As a result, American people are less committed to impose upon themselves a worthwhile conduct. Some of them choose to live properly in solidarity in their small community, adapting themselves to social or economic change.

The pursuit of material success has warped the whole American society. All American people are confronted with a problem of material success. The more they attach importance to the wealth, the less they are aware of the loss of moral values. They focus mainly on money-making too hard to have no time to find their true ethical values. The desires of extreme materialism take over their human nature, as a result of which, the American nation remains morally and socially in a state of regression. The American inhabitants are more or less the victim, far from privileging and conserving the respect of human values.

In a materialistic society, everyone tries to make money and there is no solidarity. Their increasing desires of living a luxury life determines the detriment of someone else in order to get better one's life. Therefore, there is a position of exploitation, debasement and brutality. American people are aware of it, but do not appear to get rid of the continuing and cruel longing for social success. During the thirties, the question of human values in America could be exemplified in *The Grapes of Wrath*. This work by John Steinbeck contends that this nation is doubly affected by the power of money and the yearning for modernity. In the American society, the loss of moral values becomes the main stream, and a sense of human anxieties are prevailing. Therefore it is urgent to pay much attention to this moral crisis.

The American citizens live ingloriously with the unsettling state of mind. For one

part it is because they have adopted an acquisitive frame of mind focusing on the pursuit of wealth; for another it is for that they have a belief of a system that does not extol the virtues of ethical values. Therefore, in *The Grapes of Wrath*, the working class has undergone ruthless treatment by the landowners due to the brutal effect of materialism. Just as the materialistic landlords in *The Grapes of Wrath*, they are divided by personal interests. Being stimulated by economic privileges and overtaken by the crazy pursuit of utility, these opportunist landowners become selfish and inhuman. They are aware of the loss of moral values, but pay no attention to create good conditions for a better existence in their country. Their sense of selfishness and their cruel behaviors go against the goodness of human nature. The immigrants, as the prototype of working class, move out on the highways and search for food and jobs like streams of ants. They are called agrarian folks, and their lands have been taken away by the landowners. Their original farming has been replaced by the modern machines. As they move toward the west dream land, their identities have been changed full of hunger and desperation. The “Okies” have been considered as the perceived threat to the California natives, because as the powerless community, their existence has once again been examined as the result of basic decencies denied to a grate number of people by a powerful community. The swarm of displaced workers all covered with sorrows and desperation. Their desperation has increased to such a level that there is wrath is going to brew for the outbreak.

The story that Steinbeck describes in *The Grapes of Wrath* is an effort to depict his miserable experiences next to the migrant farmers as well as to impose order on his society. The society he lives in is under the impact of the money-making. John Steinbeck is not pleased with this influence of wealth of this society. The past main stream of social values has been torn by extreme desires for material gains, turning into inhumanity and materialism. Making money is not the only simple lust that forces all the America people to become selfish and inhuman. The truth is that they pay no attention to the virtues of solidarity and respect for themselves and for others. The powerful community like the landowners and the banks in *The Grapes of Wrath* just seize any chance to make money and monopolize resources in spite of the tragic situation of the powerless community. The powerful community tries to obstruct some gateways to social and political progress. This truth is paradoxical because the

modernity is synonymous of progress, but it also causes the loss of moral values. People cannot live a happy life in this materialistic society and all of them are dissatisfied with this society.

The people come with nets to fish for potatoes in the river, and the guards hold them back; they come in rattling cars to get the dumped oranges, but the kerosene is sprayed. And they stand still and watch the potatoes float by, listen to the screaming pigs being killed in a ditch and covered with quick-lime, watch the mountains of oranges slop down to a putrefying ooze; and in the eyes of the people there is the failure; and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage. (Steinbeck, 127)

The Grapes of Wrath represents the vanity of rich people. It's true that material success brings comfort but it also causes sorrow and fatality. The greatness of Steinbeck's work lies in that it highlights the coldness and inhumanity of the powerful authority as well as the dignity and solidarity for the powerless majority. The former represents the loss of moral values. They conduct their greed and hypocrisy behaviors. On the contrast, the latter, the scarce moral values are increasing, the strong unyielding spirit, the maintenance of dignity and the persistent solidarity are the glory of moral values. Steinbeck's perspective seeks to reconstruct the American nation cultural, political and social policy in order to provide the American people more civilized conducts. Steinbeck's work makes the reader think about the future in a materialistic world. In every case, that many people believe that material prosperity can solve all their problems, which is not exactly right. In short, a loyal and rational consideration should be granted to the quest for wealth in order to live placidly together.

2.3 The Dissolution of Traditional Family System

The developing plots of *The Grapes of Wrath* follow the route of the Joad's family heading to California. As a result, the family ethics of Joad's family more or less reflects

the family values of common people who are fleeing at that time.

All the members of the traditional family all live on a little piece of land, and rely on more or less forty acres from generation to generation. The country of Oklahoma is typical agricultural-based place, where the basic operation form of agriculture is plantation, like corns, oats and cottons. As the harvest is unpredictable because it is plagued by the vagaries of weather, all the family members live together as an economic unit.

The agriculture used to dominate the country of Oklahoma. It impacts the people's political, economical and social life. Thus a general framework of family is formed as a unit, and attached great importance is attached to family. That can explain why Steinbeck focuses on the description of family change and interpersonal relationship known as agriculture with family-centered ethics. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, it described a family-centered society, in which the family values are more prominent.

Joad Ma claims that a family is a unit and all the family members should be mental and physical aggregation. She is a representative of the family-centered values. Therefore, she prevents her son, Tom, wants run away after committing a crime, from the whole family. In disagreement of the detachment of her daughter and daughter-in law, she persuades Rose of Sharon to stay until her baby birth. The French leave of Noch has broken her heart, and the Grandpa and Grandma's death, this suffering and pressure she can handle with ,but her elaborated family has eventually broken up, which indicates that no matter how much effort she has made, all these effort turns into a vain. The traditional family values have collapsed in that era.

The traditional family is that a whole family live in a fixed place with a fixed land. When the traditional farmers become migrants, their identities have changed not only because there is no fixed place to live, but also their ethics are going to change gradually. The Joad's family's journey can be a typical microcosm. They moves from one place to another place, sometimes they take a rest on the side of the road, sometimes by the river, and sometimes they look for a green shade. They live in the car during the day and sleep in a makeshift tent at night. There is no place like home. The latter provides more warmth and happiness. The most terrible thing is that from time to time, they suffer food shortages. There is no place where they can live for a long time. They are always

on their way to a ideal paradise California, where later they realize they can not find a job to support the family to survive. When the Joad's family goes through a difficult situation, suffering setbacks, each family member makes different decision. The traditional family ethical orders have collapsed, family members live on their own interests or personal desires, and the family-centered ethics has gone with the wind.

Traditionally, mothers are responsible for raising the kids while fathers are out to provide financially for the family. "The age group for parents ranges from teenage parents to grandparents who have decided to raise their grandchildren, with teenage pregnancies fluctuating based on race and culture." (Benokraitis 328) Older parents are financially established and generally have less problems raising children compared with their teenage counterparts.(Benokraitis 329) But this traditional function of family members is changed in Joad's. Firstly, when the eldest son, Tom comes back, he takes the control of the whole family as soon as possible, Ma makes some more important decisions than Pa on their discussion. But some of the traditional virtues have remained. The grow-up children have the obligations to support their parents when they are old; It is parents' duty to raise their children when they are young. Both parents and children should be filial piety for the grandparents. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the older generation, Grandparents like Grandpa and Grandma are always the family center full of care and love. The younger generation, like Lucy and Winfeld, share much attention from Ma.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's definition, these relatively common family arrangements are not officially recognized by families. While the Bureau's definition of families is not comprehensive with its limitation, it is important to recognize that a family is that all the people contributes to the household financial system, including servants (2001).Therefore, the relatives who play a big role in raising or looking after the children or doing some contribution are also considered part of the family. These examples highlight the fact that, though the Census definition is clear and helpful, there is no single understanding of what a family is; its definition varies across many groups of people. Especially in *The Grapes of Wrath*, Uncle John, who lives alone when his wife dies, "the longest goddam man in the world," (88) is undoubtedly one member of the Joad's family. Uncle John blames himself badly for his wife's death. As the guilty, he treats all the children well and always gives them candies, his kindness makes all the

kids crazy about him, as well as the children in Joad's family.

he'd come to our house in the night sometimes, an' we knowed he come' cause us'as sure as he come there'd be a pack a gum in the bed right beside ever' one of us. We thought he was Jesus Christ Awmighty. (89)

Tom's words indicate that Uncle John's behaviors are parent-like by treating them as his own children. Therefore, when Joad's family is heading toward the west, they take Uncle John together. Casy, a preacher, having blood relatives with them is also considered as one of the family member when the whole family are going to west. As a preacher, he does his work when Grandpa passed away thus he leads the family to pray and offers his help to Ma when she packs up for the leaving. He also plays an important role in helping Tom to solve some problems during the trip. As the Joad's economic situation declines, the family unit suffers more loss of their family members, as the death of Grandpa and Grandma, the armature leave of Noah, the selfish departure of Rose of Sharon's husband—Connie, and the arrest of Casy. Casy, Granma, and Connie are now gone. The global family unit, however, is beginning to be forged by an outward extension of love. All of these declare that the family has broken up inhospitably.

On the contrary, Casy, Uncle John, and the Wilson family increase new elements in Joad's family, as the increasing of the members. The movement toward a community unity makes as the traditional family unit replaced by a larger, world family unit. The sacrifice of Jim Casy, the exchange of help between Al and Floyd Knowles, and Ma's feeding of the hungry children are the vivid examples of this mutual love. When the migrants encountered a disastrous flood, during which Rose of Sharon gave birth to a stillborn baby. This deep water forced them to walk along the highway. Rose of Sharon tried to save a stranger by feeding him with her breast milk. This act of saving a dying man ultimately affirmed the Joad's family unit again. Recognition of their membership is in a large family of human beings, which from a macro sense, the benefits of being a global unit of family outweigh the sadness of the loss of family members.

Chapter 3 Moral Tendency of the Major Characters

Moral tendency is also called ethical tendency, it is the target direction of the moral changes, and it also means the moral changes from one state to another state. (Nie 14) There are various reasons of moral changes, but the target direction is mostly been influenced by the outer environment. In the novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck delves deep into each character thoroughly. Throughout the book, Steinbeck uses intricate descriptions in order to depict the development and subtleties of each character. Each character has his or her unique ethical concept, which is an explanation of their words and deeds, and some of their ethical concepts have been affected by the outside world, which essentially develops into new qualities and attributes. Such development is seen in many characters throughout the book, including Muley, Tom and Rose of Sharon. They have different ethical ideas, and they change their ethical ideas more or less adapt to the environment. Take Tom and Rose of Sharon for example, Tom is seen as self-pride in the beginning the book. But by the end, he takes action to be a rebel; Rose of Sharon learns to take the world into account and grows to become less selfish.

3.1 Muley's Alienation

Muley, seeming strange and stubborn, lives a non-human life in his hometown. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, it effectively argues that Muley is more like a graveyard ghost, who is strange, lonely and ghost-like. He is a human being driven by his attachments of his hometown, vulnerability toward a pathological reflection of what he loves most: land. The reading of Muley is one of the best explications of this character's changes of ethical order from a human being to an animal.

Muley Graves makes up his mind to stay with the land after all the rest of his family and his neighbors go west, living in a cave like an animal, just because his family is rooted in this land with blood. Muley's words and behaviors all seems strange and unfamiliar with Tom, indicating that he lives a terrible life when they meet in home river valley. The transformation, from a common person to a wild animal, is entirely due to his traditional, deep-rooted ethics of guarding homeland and inheriting of ancestors legacy. He is repeating again and again that he will not leave whatever happens. He says

that there is something that let him to not to live. But he does not realize that his reluctance to leave his homeland is completely rooted in his blood.

On one side, he recalls the past hometown life constantly, where his father came fifty years ago, and his family has settled down since then. This place is where he grows up, where his father dies, where the child Joad is born. All the people around here are familiar with each other. Every family farms land, gets married, raises their children. He recalls the happy time in the past. There are great, magnificent rallies and dance parties. He recalls the place where the prayers gather together to pray. It is a place with lands that they live upon, from the birth to death. Muley has got this concept even when he is a child, and without exception, he wants to live until he dies. His memories are so strong and deep that he does not tell wrong the tiny things. His deep love for this place not only makes him choose to stay at homeland, and constantly recall about the old days, but also makes him wonder around the places where the past stuff happened. His potential desires have been achieved when he lay down himself on the ground. It's bitter to remember how his father die, especially who get gored to death by a bull. He even seems a kind of mental derangement by claiming that he still can feel his father's blood on the ground.

So I went there an' I laid down on the groun', an' I seen it all happen again. An' there's the place down by the barn where Pa got gored to death by a bull. An' his blood is right in that groun', right now. Mus' be. Nobody never washed it out. An' I put my han' on that groun' where my own pa's blood is part of it." He paused uneasily. "You fellas think 'm touched?(67)

His deepest affection and various kinds of memories are buried in the homeland. If his ancestor and he live a life in this place in the past and he will, continuously trace his ancestor footstep in order to maintain the traditional virtue. He takes more responsibility to be a guardian of the homeland. There is no such a place than his homeland that gives him a sense of belonging. When he is asked by departure with Casy and Tom, Muley refuses at once, and he also offers his help to look after things to wait for them, his illusion of the gathering one day. "That's why I come. I'd tell myself, I'm

lookin' after things so when all the folks come back it'll be all right.”(67) Muley's hostile attitude breaks out when he talks about the harassment of the landowners and the tracker. He feels he is treated as a beggar, and a dog, which makes him take actions such as hiding in a cave and never leaving. Muley claims that as a backbone man, he will not follow others' orders, which is a kind of servile submission. It is his male chauvinism that will never let him, but his words are more on the surface of his ethics, and the truth is his inherent immutable ethics reflects his affection for the homeland. Once he left, he will lose his root foundation. Therefore, he lives like a graveyard ghost, wandering around, but will never leave.

“I ain't a-goin'. My pa come here fifty years ago. An' I ain't a-goin'... All 'cept me, an' by God I ain't goin'. Tommy, you know me. You knowed me all your life.” Muley said over the fire, “You fellas'd think I'm touched, the way I live.” “Touched nothin',” said Joad. “If you're touched, I wish tever' body was touched.”(63)

On the other side, when he sticks to his deep-rooted ethics, his alienation begins inevitable from normal human being to a wild animal, from a human-being to a wondering ghost. His alienation can be simply identified from his personal monologue as well as the dialogue with Tom. He is aware the fact that his garrison is useless and reasonable, the homeland is opened up by tractors, and the ownership of land does not belong to him. Everyone chooses to leave in case of starvation. Even his wife and his children have left. But despite all of these reasonable acts, Muley chooses to be an animal. Sometimes he does not have enough food, he hunts dogs and noises in the dry stream brush, and then he becomes a large predator. All the houses are destroyed by tractors, he wanders around, almost every place he can sleep, and then he becomes a tramp.

Muley continued, “Well, sir, it's a funny thing. Somepin went an' happened to me when they tol' me I had to get off the place. Fust I was gonna go in an' kill a whole flock a people. Then all my folks all went away out west. An' I got wanderin' aroun'. Jus' walkin' aroun'. Never went far. Slep' where I was. I was gonna sleep here tonight. That's why I

come. I' d tell myself, I' m lookin' after things so when all the folks come back it' ll be all right.' But I knowed that wan' t true. There ain't nothin' to look after. The folks ain't never comin' back. I' m jus' wander in' aroun' like a damn ol' graveyard ghos' .”(64)

He also plays hide and seek game with the policeman. He fights against the landowners and wants to be a guardian. His monologue implies that his repeatedly calling himself a ghost reveals his confusion about his terrible situation. The dialogue with Tom adds more clues to his animal alienation. For the former, he does not realize his changes yet, and the latter strengthens his animal transformation by Tom. He transforms from a planting farmer to a bush hunter. He hunts animals like rabbits for food and overcoming hunger in the unlucky days. To avoid the deportation back by the police and the noisy reclamation by the tractors, he transforms from a hunter to a prey, hiding in the caves after all the houses have been destroyed.

Muley watched the approaching lights. “Yeah!” he said. “I was mean like a wolf. Now I' m mean like a weasel. When you're huntin' somepin you're a hunter, an' you're strong. Can't nobody beat a hunter. But when you get hunted- that's different. Somepin happens to you. You ain't strong; maybe you' re fierce.(64)

The transformation and alienation is his doomed destiny because his personal power is too weak to compete with the powerful unit. In the days of escape, he is like a graveyard ghost going to the neighbors' houses in the night, such as Peter's, Jacob's, Rance's and Joad's family. He hopes to find a companion, killing his loneliness of solitary. The disappointment blows him down, and he finally lives in a cave, like an animal. For quite a long time, he has no chance to chat with people. Almost no one can be found around him. This solitary keeps him away from the majority. This indicates that he has already separated himself from the group of people. He, like an animal, is scurrying around in the fields. Compared with a normal human-being, he is more like an animal.

Eventually he gives the last refusal of invitation by Tom, stressing his strong will of staying and guarding the homeland. It ends up by Tom, who takes the whole family on the trip heading to west, to California to start a new life. Even he is the last person in the

home land, he will not follow them to leave. He constantly strengthens his strong will and determination that he will never leave this place.

“Them sons-a-bitches,” he said. “Them dirty sons-a-bitches. I tell ya, men, I’ m stayin’. They ain’t gettin’ rid a me. If they throw me off, I’ll come back, an’ if they figger I’ll be quiet underground, why, I’ll take couple-three of the sons-a-bitches along for company.”(67)

Tom has a sensitive inspection about the changes of Muley. His mouth is like a parrot’s beak and his looks are more or less animal-like. The more he talks to Muley, the more he is sure of Muley’s craziness. In the eyes of Tom, Muley is like an animal, careful and cautious, and always pays attention to the surrounding noise just as a prey is afraid of being caught by a hunter, Muley is cautious of being caught by a policeman. The way he walks and the looks he carries, especially the cave, which he called kindly, all seems strange to Tom and Casy. When he leads Tom and Casy to the cave where he sleep, he even seems a little proud of himself. A cave in the bank, is covered by brush, the bottom of the gulch leveled off, and the footing is sand. It’s surprising that Muley uses a human calling “her” to describe the cave. And what is more shocked Tom is that Muley crawls into his cave, draws up his feet and clasps his legs. Through the comparison between Tom and Casy’s refusal of sleeping in the cave, Muley’s alienation seems more vivid and obvious.

Muley said, “I’ve covered her with bresh. Nobody couldn’t find her.” Muley pulled at the covering brush and crawled into his cave. “I like it in here,” he called. “I feel like nobody can come at me.” Jim Casy sat down on the sand beside Joad. “Get some sleep,” said Joad. “We’ ll start for Uncle John’s at daybreak.” (55)

Finally, Muley disappears in the subsequent chapters when he says goodbye to Joad’s family. His image of a guardian of the homeland leaves the reader a strong impression. His traditional ethic has made him stick to their homelands, which also strengthens his strong will. His alienation and transformation of a ghost and an animal

follow an inevitable trend, because his personal desire of land has never changed by the time. He is just a microcosm, living a non-human life as thousands of farmers at that time.

3.2 Tom's Unique Ethical Order

Tom Joad changes severely throughout the book from the self-pride person he once was, to a figure, compromising with his hot temper on his freedom with his family, finally turning to a rebel. Several examples showing Tom's changes can be seen throughout the book, as a result of his changing ethical ideas.

Throughout the novel, Tom has demonstrated his ethical ideas as self-pride, the self-compromise and the self-rebel. His ethical orders have experienced three stages. The first stage is the self-pride, which got him a prison term in the first place. The Second is the self-compromise for freedom that awaits him at home. The third is the self-rebel, which caused his second killing.

3.2.1 Self-pride

At the very beginning in Steinbeck's novel, Tom returns to find the home place abandoned, with only the ruins remained which he famously claims for his own in a hostile, paranoid note. Tom Joad's return home from a stretch in prison for manslaughter is a memorable, starting with his angry response to a truck driver's curiosity. Tom Joad is confronted with the truck driver, although in quite different terms. Tom's anger is a reflection of his self-pride. The trucker's curiosity inspires an outburst revealing sensitivity about his status as an ex-convict, delivering as a veiled threat. Tom's rough and talks smack all the time. His original manners also fade away without a trace. When a truck driver carefully observes him from clothes to look, in an impolite suspicious way, considering whether to give him a lift, he shows Tom a sticker that says, "no hitchhikers allowed", Tom replies, "sure—I seen it. But sometimes a guy'll be a good guy even if some rich bastard makes him carry a sticker". (23) This strong response like a slap in the face of the man, which he is more marked his point of view. That's the first impression of Tom. He is always able to number one on the heart of the

matter. Tom reinforces that old adage, "Don't judge a book by its cover."

You got me wrong, mister, I ain't keepin' quiet about it. Sure I been in McAlester. Been there four years. Sure these is the clothes they give me when I come out. I don't give a damn who knows it. An' I'm goin' to my old man's place so I don't have to lie to get a job. (56).

Tom has got nothing to hide, for he is honest as the day is long, and he's not interested in burying the truth. In the face of the truck driver's more hidden and prudent inquiry, Tom has become more frank and he replies in a more forthright way. He tells the truck driver his name, what he is going to do, and his hometown, and his past crimes. As a criminal, he was in prison for four years but now is released. It is his self-esteem that makes him calm and composure without panic. It's more vivid to release his calmness and his attitude by drinking the wine the truck driver offered. Aside from his defensiveness, Tom seems relatively unmarked by his prison experience. This, which maybe he is aware of, can chiefly serve as an interval that removed him from the disasters of the dust bowl, making his reentry all the more shocking. As long as their conversation continues, his ethical concept of self-esteem becomes more and more obvious. In fact, he can totally tell a lie to a stranger in order to hide his awful worse experience in the past, to lessen others' fear and shock. The refusal of making a fake identity or a story, as he tells the truck driver the truth, is the effective evidence to highlight his self-pride. It is the unyielding self-esteem that makes him talk freely and completely as well as not being humble to achieve his own goal.

Later, when Tom meets Muley, a ghost-like poor guy, who is an encyclopedia of the great changes in the place, their conversation releases more of Tom's attitude towards this crime. They firstly talk more about the great changes of hometown and the terrible situation the local people suffered. When asked about the crime again by Muley, Tom seems relatively unmarked by his crime and his prison experience again.

Tom talks about his past crime openly with Muley. When Muley is careful and timid about the inquiry, he is afraid of raising Tom's anger. Tom does not act in a hot temper, he said, "I ain't huffy. It's just some pin that happened." (61) Not being ashamed

and embarrassed, he does not deny his approach. At the same time, he starts to give his point of view. The fight with Herb is an accident. Tom has explained the situation to prove the fight is not his fault. He is drunk at a dance, and when he sees Herb coming to him with his knife, he grabs a shovel to fight against him. He says the fight was inevitable when his life is threatened.

“Drunk at a dance. I don’ know how she started. An’ then I felt that knife go in me, an’ that sobered me up. Fust thing I see is Herb comin’ for me again with his knife. They was this here shovel leanin’ against the schoolhouse, so I grabbed it an’ smacked’ im over the head. I never had nothing against Herb. He was a nice fella. Come a-bullin’ after my sister Rosa sharn when he was a little fella. No, I liked Herb.”(78)

Tom Joad is not reluctant at all when he is telling his story of how he gets into prison. The fact that he does not care that he has killed a man, and even offers to do it again shows that it is not all his mistake. There is no personal grudge between Tom and Herb, even not the feud between families. This tragedy is due to their confusing state. Both of them are drunk. Tom’s justifiable defense turns out to be an over-defense, and the result is that Herb is dead. Therefore Tom admits that his over- defense, which causes the ultimately death, is wrong. He accepts the punishment as he is put into prison for four years. On one side, it is hard to conclude that Tom is the one who should take all the responsibility for the death. His self-pride make him to fight back when be attacked, but he does not live with a cruel and inhuman nature. His ethical concept is that a man should not be coward or timid instead for the provocation from others, a man should fight back without hesitation. His behavior is conducted by his ethical values, that a mature man must be responsible, and should take the responsibility for their misdeeds. Tom’s leading desires is another reflection of his self-pride. The revelation of Tom’s leading desires can also summarized as two aspects. One is that he takes charge of the journey. Another is that he is really good at giving advice.

When the family are about to leave barren Oklahoma for the orange groves, Tom quickly takes charge of the journey, and his mother clearly recognizes his superiority as a leader. As the eldest son in the home, Tom indeed can take the responsibility for

leading the whole family to the west. Once he returns to his family, he helps the whole family to make the final decision for the moving journey.

When Tom takes the charge of the Joad's family, his family makes friends with the Wilson family, who offers a lot of help to them. Finally the two families move westward as a unit. The car of Wilson is accidently broken on the way, it must be repaired or otherwise, their journey must be stopped at once. Tom puts forward the proposal as a volunteer. To save time, he puts proposal of driving the broken car to the car pits, and to make the family members more comfortable, he advises the other members of Joad's family and the Wilson family to go on their journey. He promises to Joad Ma as soon as the car has been repaired, he will catch the whole camp. Finally his proposal is adopted by the whole family with a little episode of his mother's objection. Tom persuades his mother to take his advice by analyzing the tough situation they are through. He is a good and talented leader who is good at arrangement. He arranges his brother Al to drive the truck to settle his family down, and later then to pick him and Casy to solve the car problems. It is obviously that during the whole journey ahead to the California, his desires of the leadership and his leading talents make him the center of the whole unit. He has undoubtedly become the most powerful and influential people. He plays an important role not only in his family, but also in others', his decisions and arrangements are deliberate and reasonable. A family gathering is necessary, and his words are reliable. His self-pride drives him in control of everything.

Tom is also cheerful and helpful to give others advice. One scene is his encounter with his one-eye mechanic. The poor man feels lonely and shamed of his disability. The man is ashamed of his disability. Without hesitation, Tom tells him to get an eye-patch and take a bath. Such a pretty practical advice, expresses his sympathy. It is easy to make sense of his self-pride that not only he holds dear but also spreads to the poor man. His inner monologue flares up by his verbal expressions. As a criminal, he is not knee-deep in self-ashamed and self-abandoned. Despite his inspiring encouragement, Tom is willing to find a job leading to good future. He does not doubt himself as well as his future. A disabled person, like the poor man, also should not abandon himself and not lose confidence of life.

When his little brother, Al, gets all defensive about having broken the touring car,

Tom tells him to take a chill pill and stop being so self-conscious. When Noah tells Tom that he's going to leave the family, Tom tries to tell him it's a bad idea. When Winfield gets sick for eating too many peaches off the tree, Tom knows exactly what is wrong with him. He is quite sensible of the problem of his bother, Al, Noah, and Winfield. For Al, It's not his behaviors of the negligence that matters, but the fact that Al is not responsible for his mistakes. The more excuses that he finds, the less responsibility he takes. It will lead to his future shortness. For Noah, he is quite selfish and immature. His left will break Joad Ma's heart, and the reckless behavior is childish and unreasonable. The last litter brother, Winfield, is just a child who needs Tom's guiding and guarding.

3.2.2 Self-compromise

Tom's ethical order changes gradually, from his self-pride yielding to his self-compromise. His changes are quite like his family arrival at the middle of their California journey. They change gradually in a subtle way, but the traces can be identified as the following scenes.

His love of his family is especially profound and strong. Therefore, when he was in prison, he could not stop missing his family in every single night, worrying every family member, their health and their life. His conversation with Muley reveals his deep love of his family and the desires of freedom. To achieve this personal goal, Tom pays much attention to his behaviors, due to which he is released earlier out of his expectation. He behaves himself in the prison.

"Like ever' place else. They give ya hell if ya raise hell. You get along O.K. Les' some guard gets it in for ya. Then you catch plenty hell. I got along O.K. Minded my own business, like any guy would. I learned to write nice as hell. Birds an' stuff like that, too; not just word writin". (57)

In prison, he acts like a wooden man, quiet and simple, and accepts the prison culture and education, which can get rid of the troubles. Tom's ethical values changes subtly, this is the very beginning of his self-compromise. After his release, his love of

family drives him to come back immediately, when he meets Muley, his first question starts, “where are my folk going?” His self-compromise also reveals in his looks. When he finally finds his family members, there is a conversation between his mother and him.

“Tommy,” she said hesitantly, timidly.

“Yeah?” His timidity was set off by hers, a curious embarrassment. Each one knew the other was shy, and became more shy in the knowledge.

“Tommy, I got to ask you- you ain’t mad?”

“Mad, Ma?”

“You ain’t poisoned mad? You don’t hate nobody? They didn’ do nothin’ in that jail to rot you out with crazy mad?”

“No-o-o,” he said. “I was for a little while. But I ain’t proud like some fellas. I let stuff run off” n me. What’s a matter, Ma?”

Tom’s heavy lips were pulled right over his teeth. He looked down at his big flat hands. “No,” he said. “I ain’t like that.” He paused and studied the broken nails, which were ridged like clam shells. “All the time in stir I kep’ away from stuff like that. I ain’ so mad.”(417)

And later his brother, Al, sees that his brother is not a swaggerer as he has supposed. There is some sort of the prison calm in Tom’s looks when Al sees Tom’s dark brooding eyes. From the smooth hard face of Tom, Al finds some mood, neither resistance nor slavishness, which is trained to indicate nothing to a prison guard. The man standing in front of him is more than a stranger, He even cannot remember what Tom was like before. He is aware that a change has occurred in the quality of his brother. He keeps silent and waits for something. From another man of his hometown, Tom gets another hostile message by being named “Okies”, which means the three hundred thousands of migrants there are dirty, and scum like hogs. Despite his awful feeling and anger, he chooses to ask for more information about the situation of this place. When another policeman threatens them to move at once, even Joad Ma becomes angry, claiming she could not stand up with these insults anymore. Tom chooses to keep silent and comfort

his mother's mood. Although, he is one hundred percent agree with her point of view, he also wants to hit the policeman to give him a lesson. In the end, the good self management and the constant endurance shows that he indeed avoids any confrontation with the policeman.

All of four years in prison really change Tom a little, not only in his looks but also in his heart. He begins to make more efforts to control his hot temper, to make self-changes for the early freedom, and shows his regret of his misdoing which drives him away from his family for quite a long time. He's got his feet on the ground, and, like his mother, he can solve and strategize the problem even better.

3.2.3 Self-rebel

When the family stops at the first tent camp they see on the outskirts of town, Tom meets Floyd Knowles, a young neighboring tent who explains the harsh harassment tactics of the police. If they think that anyone is heading up a group of workers, they will put that man in jail, and anyone who speaks out against the injustice of the law is killed. No one cares because the victim will simply be listed as a "vagrant found dead." At the very end of their unsuccessful negotiation, Tom takes action to help Floyd in spite of getting into trouble, because of his parole. This is the beginning of his changing ethical thoughts, and his self-compromise gradually turns to self-rebel.

"I know, Ma. I'm a-tryin'. But them deputies- Did you ever see a deputy that didn' have a fat ass? An' they waggle their ass an' flop their gun aroun'. Ma" he said, "if it was the law they was workin' with, why, we could take it. But it ain't the law. They're a-workin' away at our spirits. They're a-tryin' to make us cringe an' crawl like a whipped bitch. They tryin' to break us. Why, Jesus Christ, Ma, they comes a time when the on' y way a fella can keep his decency is by takin' a sock at a cop. They' re workin' on our decency." Ma said, "You promised, Tom. That' s how Pretty Boy Floyd done. I knowed his ma. They hurt him." "I' m a-tryin', Ma. Honest to God, I am. You don' want me to crawl like a beat bitch, with my belly on the groun', do you?" (432)

Tom begins to realize that they are badly treated as animals by these deputies, who are really monsters. The loss of dignity with not a backbone inside makes him unable to endure anymore. Tom has a rational, utilitarian sensibility, perhaps a key to his survival in prison, which makes him the driving force and organizational center of his family's journey west to California. But his self-esteem can be lessened but cannot be removed, and when his dignity is needed to defend, his self-rebellion conducts his all behaviors.

Casy's sacrifice marks a counter movement in Tom's conversion. Unlike Casy, who is moving from thought to action, Tom is working in the opposite direction: Unable to act (to get work or improve his family's situation), Tom is forced to observe and reflect. Up until this point, he has not paid much attention to Casy's ideas because they had not been relevant in day-to-day existence. Now, however, he begins to grasp Casy's ideals as well as his own social responsibility. The past tolerance Tom has endured is to be with his family, but his self-rebellion, his inner rebellion breaks out like a volcano for Casy's death. Comparing the past misdoings, he feels some kind of guilty and he accepts the punishment. But the latter fight with the bad guy, from the dialogue of his mother, is an exception. The bad guy is not worth sympathy.

At the same time, he realizes that the blind self-surrender and self-compromise cannot bring the peace. "The powerless" community should form a whole unit to fight against the persecution and strike of "the powerful" community. All the laws and rules are partial to "the powerful" community. All the punishments and harmfulness aim to the "the powerless". Only the constant resistance can survive.

This inner morality of Tom turns to an outward expression of morality will be finalized when Tom is forced to hide out in the cave. Tom, considered to be Casy's disciple, vows to spread his message as he works toward greater social justice and he is waiting the next action.

3.3 Rose of Sharon's Changing Ethical Values with Her Self-awareness

Rose of Sharon's ethical values have been experienced with the journey to the hope land—California. Rose of Sharon is Tom's sister, the oldest daughter in the family, later marries Connie.

Compared with her mother, She is a young mother and wife, and seems more immature. At the first sight, she is a bit selfish, lack of independent ability and lives in a world of fantasy. Rose of Sharon is impractical, petulant, and romantic. She has got married and pregnant at a young age. It is her first time to be a mother. Therefore, she seems more nervous on the journey to California. She has encountered many changes, such as the Grandpa and Grandma's death, the abandon of her husband, the stillborn baby. All of these changes impact her ethical values greatly, under the influence of her mother. She starts to offer help and mutual assistance to the poor. When she finally becomes a mother, she has a complete spiritual transformation. Compared with her mother, she has a long way to catch, and is lack of many good quality. However, she finally faces straight to the betrayal, to the death of her baby, and overcomes the weakness of herself. Finally she becomes compassionate and independent with a kind heart.

In the history of western ethics, which has developed for thousands of years, the male-centered ethics has dominated the trend. They follows the route of "justice", while the women's voice has been drowned in the mainstream.(Xiao 35) Influenced by the traditional ethical ideas, Rose of Sharon also has this moral concept. As a woman, her easily reliance on her husband as an attachment, her voice also used to lose in the family decision. As a pregnant woman, she takes some advantages of getting care and help, which has basically meet her demand.

In order to make sure everyone has the awareness of her identity of a pregnant woman, she stresses that she is the mother of the future, heeding special care. All these claims she makes shows she demands too much care for herself. She is some kind of selfish. At the beginning of the journey, in order to ensure her fixed status, she keeps emphasizing that as a pregnant, she should take some special care and treatments.

On the way to California, she follows her husband to get together with the whole family. At the very beginning, she is some kind of independent, who is always asking for help, care and attention. As the traditional ethics she has absorbed, men are dominant. She, like those women who has watched the land change into eroded desert, stands behind men and waits for their decision-making. Therefore, on the way to California, she, as a pregnant woman, becomes more and more in need of care. She

worries constantly about her baby's health, and relies on her mother for information. She is more delicate with the environment and is quite picky for the food and water. She wants to get attention of the whole family.

Rose of Sharon's eyes were wide. "Do you think it'll hurt?" she begged. "But I feel it hurt. I feel it kind of jar when i yelled." When her Thermos walked over to her, she was still shuddered and asked Heather she was all right or not. Her mother words were as follows, "you go to greasing yourself and feeling sorry, and tucking yourself in a swallow nest, it might. Rise up now, and help me get Gramma comfortable." (230)

Meanwhile, after her husband's left, she also begins to dreaming that he will come back one day, "I really hope he can come back. He wants to come back, he'll be back." (135) Rose of Sharon loves her husband, but also has a fantasy about their happy life in the future as soon as they arrive at the dream California. She believes her husband's promise completely, believes his night-study plan, and believes that he is going to study energy at night school. When he has found a job as a worker, he will buy a big house for her and her baby. What is more, her life can be more colorful, such as going to see movies on the weekends, and buying pretty clothes for her baby. Everything is going to be all right. She holds this belief on the way to California even without a tiny doubt.

"We wanna live in a town. Connie gonna get a job in a store or maybe a factory. and he is going to study ant home.....And we'll have a car, little car. And agter he studie at night, why-it'll be nice, I'm goona have a elecric iron, and the baby will have all new stuff. Connie says all new stuff." (257)

While the family encounters obstacle after obstacle, Rose of Sharon first blames for the absence of her husband. Her weakness and independence keeps her from the reality. She has the day-dream of a life of ease. The more she believes Connie will give her a comfortable life, the less she is able to accept his abandon. Therefore, until she finds a proper reason for her husband's action, she could not stop thinking her future happy life.

The dependence also manifests in the form of self-deception, which is in her later repetitions by insisting saying his return in the future. Even for many days after Connie's left, Rose of Sharon talks to her mother, that she still believes that they will live a wealthy life with her husband in California. She can't shake her self-centered perspective of the world.

In summary, she falls into a selfishness emotion, relying on other people and lack of care for others. During the trip, when the family suffers hunger and obstacles, she has a feeling of a realistic crisis, but the only way she chooses is to escape all of these troubles by living in her own ideal future world set by her husband, Connie. Because of the mental immaturity, she does not understand how to help the family get rid of this crisis. When encountering a long-term lacking of food and other stuff, when the entire family is on the way to head west, the emotional and physical crisis is the most and deepest fear of her. She was willing to be a weak and submissive woman, who wants to live under her husband's care, under the protection of the entire family, enjoying some special treatment.

On the one hand, only "my family", not "our family", exists in her mind. Only "I", not "We," exists in her ethical values. She seems more or less selfish and immature at some extent. Although she has attached with the family on the way to find a new life, but in her deep heart, her thoughts all focus on her own interests, her own family, her baby and her husband. Rose of Sharon does not have a particular sense of belonging and a unique sense of cohesion for Joad's family. Therefore, she is reluctant to look after her family members, her elderly grandfather, grandmother and younger siblings. She is always asked by Ma to do her work in the family. She is still a child waiting for the orders from her mother. As there are two grow-up ladies who can share all housework, she does not realize her duty consciously and actively. She is a member of this family, and she takes advantages of this family by enjoying more care and warmth from other family members. She seldom shows any worries about her relatives' suffering, not less worries about her safety. The future fantasy in her husband promise keeps think of the good days of California. She also makes her decision that once she and Connie arrive at the ideal place, they will move out to live their happy life. The big Joad's family is too big to take care of, even which helps her small family a lot during the tough time. After

she has got a message that her brother, Tom is forced to kill a man, the first thing comes to her mind is that her baby in the belly will be cursed by his brother's crucial behavior. Her attitude towards Tom is not comprehensive and objective. She shows no compassion and mercy to her brother, even cries at night for her own baby. The only thing she concerns is her self-preservation at this very moment. Only "I" weighs anything around her, even her brother's life. The most important is that she and her baby are all right without any potential threats.

On the other hand, her mind is too simple to handle all the stuff by herself. She is naive and timid, and lack of assertiveness. The whole family finally arrived at a place called "the big camp" run by the federal government. The encounter with a woman is ridiculously fanny. This woman tells her to be cautious of her baby. She stresses that someone has lost her baby in the camp due to her hasty dancing with some male. By the woman's some intense and extreme rhetoric, Rose of Sharon gets frightened a lot, and keeps crying and worried about her baby. We can see that she holds a traditional Christian, that a woman must remain chaste. When the crazy woman mentions dancing with a male will lead to a punishment by God, she is afraid of the loss of her baby, although the dancer with her becomes her husband. Not until her mother explains a lot does she stop thinking her baby. She easily believes the words of others, it is obviously that she has no basic judgment ability, and she will also become a mother soon, but she lacks that kind of courage and wisdom like her own mother.

There are two twits of her ethical values changes. Firstly, after the Grandpa's death, the entire family is mired in grief, especially the Grandma, who cannot control herself and becomes the most fragile person in the family center. Influenced by Ma, who gives her a lot of instruction and education, she begins to rethink herself and the other members of this family. She is not the only one to be concerned and taken care of. She is indeed a member of this family, which means that she not only has the rights to enjoy the food, the water that the family offers, and she also need to fulfill her own obligations. When the other family members go out for a living, she does not begrudgingly helps her mother with cooking, cleaning, and other domestic chores. This is the first start that she begins to re-examine the relationships with other family members. Secondly, In Rose of Sharon's world, the kitty litter really hits the fan when Connie disappears after the

Joad's settling in their first Hooverville. Rose of Sharon does not know what she will do without him, and suddenly realizes the weight and responsibility that a new baby brings. It is the first time that she has an awareness of the lies and deception by Connie's faked promise. Her husband is not that great to create anything for her and her baby. He is arrogant and coward when they encounter obstacles. He cannot make his own dream come true, let alone hers. His selfish abandoning of wife and baby is unforgivable. When she has realized this, she becomes more independent and brave. Instead of keeping self-deception, she recognizes the truth that Connie is impotent and not reliable. She cannot get the spiritual concern, more worse, she cannot solve the dilemma by waiting for him. Her traditional ethics is collapsing. If a woman cannot rely on a man, she has to be independent, and try to live a life of her own.

As she watches her family scramble for food, Rose of Sharon begins to wake up and smell the grapes. When she is nearly nine-months pregnant, she insists on helping her family pick up cotton. She wants to be independent by going into work. As a result, she gets sick, but quickly goes into labor again. After her stillborn, Rose of Sharon is expected to be devastated by this second, and most heart-wrenching loss. She prevents herself from crying and sadness, she becomes brave with a strong will and who refuses the special care. She is not the one that we meet at the first few chapters by John Steinbeck. The episode of nursing milk to a stranger is a valuable action. After her eye-chatting, Rose of Sharon has already got her mother's message. She uses her breast milk (which otherwise would have been used to feed the new baby) to help nurse a half-starved man back to life. The act of nursing a grown man is definitely something that we have never expect Rose of Sharon should do, but she does so willingly and almost happily. Her independence pushes her to take more sight from self-concerned to others-concerned, which is an ethical change from the selfishness to taking responsibility. Her beginning to show care and help to others reveals her values. The process of her ethical transformation is gradually shaped by her kindness, courage and tolerance. Her mother is her role model. With the help of her mother, she has finished her moral transformation, from "I" to "We", from "my family" to "Our family", from the material self to the greater self, from the spirit of the fragile to strong will, and from selfishness to sacrifice.

Chapter 4 Ethical Thoughts of *The Grapes of Wrath*

The cultural and national elements of the works are not only important aspects of research of Ethical Literary Criticism, but also should focus on the relationship between the writer and the works to explore the writer's ethical and moral concepts. The characteristics of writer's ethical thoughts and the causes that produced these thoughts under the background of that time are both the important aspects that the Ethical Literary Criticism should concern. It aims to comprehensively and profoundly explore the relationship between the ethical thoughts of the writer and the moral tendency of the works. (Nie 36)

John Steinbeck is dedicated consistently to explore the traditional values and ethical principles of the California country. His works contained deep and distinguished meanings. All the moral values of humanity, such as sympathy, dedication, strong will and tolerance are throughout his works. He is good at measuring a person's character as well as its quality. All his works and his growth environment are inseparable. John Steinbeck's parents have live in Salinas, California, where he was born in 1902. He is educated well as his mother was a teacher while his father works as the county treasurer. He graduated from the local high school in 1919, working summers as a hired hand on California farms and ranches. In his California novels, he ruthlessly disclosed the local farmers' simple and quiet lifestyle without greed and envy of wealth. He also expresses his longing desires for returning to nature by his highlight of the beautiful nature of north. He holds a strong belief in the traditional culture in California, in terms of the criticism about the greedy capitalist society in breadth or in depth.

Richard E. Hart observes that in a time of "applied" philosophical ethics and explorations of literature and morality, the author of *The Grapes of Wrath* needs to have a careful look. "John Steinbeck has not been rigorously examined or fully appreciated as a contributor to moral philosophy." (Hart 1) What the contributors to this volume collectively demonstrate, Hart asserts, "Steinbeck was not just a superb experimental stylist, social critic, and, in many ways, the conscience of America. He was, as well, a moral philosopher who probed deeper than nearly any other American writer the contours of individual and societal ethics. (Hart 42) The Introduction by George and Li

adds weight to Hart's assertion by noting Steinbeck's readings in moral philosophy, his high moral purpose, and his ability to make readers thoughtfully live in his characters' ethical failures and successes.

Patrick K. Dooley in his essay, *John Steinbeck's lowercase utopia: Basic Human Needs, a Duty to Share, and the Good Life* (2003) points one of the best definition of the author's moral philosophy. For both Aristotle and Steinbeck, Dooley writes, "genuine moral goodness, genuine human happiness, and genuine human development are three ways to describe the same thing: a well-lived and fulfilled human life in a good society." (Dooley 23)

4.1 Respect and Sympathy for the Powerless Community

In his literary world, taking *The Grapes of Wrath* as an example, he has put the greedy capitalist in a group called the "powerful community", and put the kind, industrious working class into another group, the "powerless community". The landowners, the banks and the policemen make up the former group while the Joad's family is a typical representative of the latter group.

Steinbeck desires to return respect and dignity to the dust-bowl migrants. Most of his works demonstrate his enthusiasm for changing the prevalent perceptions of the poor in Oklahoma. He has a profound concern to the awful situation of the powerless community.

Steinbeck often presents generalized characters in similar situations as the Joad's, which is a typical example to explain the popular sentiments behind the situation. These migrants are born with a spirit of solidarity and mutual assistance with full of hope for the future. For immigrants, they all join in the camp of migration, and bring their whole family, including children, the olds, and all the stuffs to head to the dream land—California. The reason for their migration is that they have to migrate. Their migration simply indicates their hope for the future. They hope to live a much better life than before. Therefore, they go out of town. Everyone suffers through obstacles and hardship in the escape. But instead of giving up, they still try hard to find a way out.

One man in the chapter expressed his mood of hope by saying, "In California they

got high wages. I got a han'bill here tells about it" (163). Not only does he hold this belief but also the Joad's and Wilson's hope for prosperity. Not to mention most of the migrants on the highways to California. In the following chapter, Sairy demonstrated his hope by saying, "Why, I seen han'bills how they need folks to pick fruit, an' good wages" (201). When discussing the migrants' flight to route 66 and the highways, Steinbeck utilizes a dialogue to set up a generalized situation. The dialogue between two migrants about their dreams for California shows the driving worries. The car problem is just a simple problem unable to beat these migrants. Although these worries have the echoes in finding a job and making a living. "Al, at the wheel, his face purposeful, his whole body listening to the car, his restless eyes jumping from the road to the instrument panel". (167) Al also aptly shows his worries on driving, as he pays the utmost attention to the fragile and ancient car, but later he has been encouraged by Tom that all problems can have been solved with the hope of living a happy life in California. At the same time, the dialogue between two anonymous migrants' dream also leads to a redundant exhibition of the same idea. Pa Joad and Sairy Wilson have expressed their hopes that are mirrored in the migrant's dialogue.

In another chapter, the generalized popular enjoyment of the various forms of migrant entertainment, like tale-telling, instrument-playing, and dancing are discussed. In the same venue, this enjoyment undoubtedly expresses of their optimistic, open-minded life attitude. As the Joad's prepare for a dance at that very night in the Government camp, after a long time heading westward, their motivation of having a good life and desires of hopes have been reunited again. The explaining of the customs of the migrants is necessary as they are clearly exhibited through the Joad's experiences. Using the repetition of the same belief and hopes of the powerless community is significant and necessary. From it, the author's ethical thoughts of kindness and love of human has been identified, which is not redundant, excessive to understanding the novel.

Steinbeck extols a spirit of solidarity between man and other men when he discusses the coalescing of the migrants to a community, "This is the beginning – from 'I' to 'We' " (206). The assembled group and man's relationships with other men rather than individualism are more valuable and praiseworthy. Through his emphasis on man's

relationship to his land and the other migrants, Steinbeck exhibits his ethical ideals. Another chapter describes how the migrants come together while they are on the road. All the descriptions also explicitly expressed brotherhood. As masses of cars traveled together and camped along the highway, little communities appeared among the migrant farmers. In these communities, twenty different families form one big family. A child from one family becomes the child of all the families. All these communities of people have shared one goal-arrival of the dream paradise-California. They live together to fight against the fear and starvation, they take care of children and the olds. A tiny sadness can grow into a bigger one among all the people here, and the baby-birth can also fill all the people with joy here. This chapter helps to develop the theme of brotherhood by showing once again the special bond between those migrants who shared the common goal of survival.

The final chapter of the novel illustrates how the hostility directing toward the migrants changes them and bound them together. Property owners are terrified of “the flare of want in the eyes of the migrants” California people forme armed bands to terrorize “the Okies” and keep them in their place, The owners of large farms drive the smaller farmers out of business, making more and more people destitute and unable to feed themselves or their children.

As various groups of people are against the migrants, the migrants have established their own big family and an everlasting brotherhood had developed. Thus, Steinbeck develops the theme of brotherhood further by using these chapters to show how life on the road demanded that new kinships be formed between the migrants in order to survive. These kinships then develops into a family, a trust, a brotherhood.

4.2 The Disgust and Condemnation to the Powerful Community

At the same time, when Steinbeck portrays the bank as an evil machine, he is expressing his own interpretation and opinion, which is a vivid description of the powerful community.

Steinbeck blames the bank, a cornerstone institution of capitalism, for the inhumane evictions of the tenants. Moreover, Steinbeck displays the tractors that

damage the poor lands in an adverse manner, referring to them as cold and inhuman: "But when the motor of a tractor stops, it is as dead as the or it came from" (157). In contrast, the author's attitude toward the horses is mild and preferable. That the farmers use the horses to plow the lands is quite reasonable by saying that "There is a warmth of life in the barn, and the heat and smell of life" (157). These descriptions are vivid to catch the author's like and dislike. The former tractors are driving by the capitalists while the latter horses exemplify the author's anti-capitalist attitude.

Steinbeck also criminalizes the destruction of the surplus by stating that "the works of the roots of the vines, of the trees, must be destroyed to keep up the price, and this is the saddest, bitterest thing of all" (476). However, this process of limiting the marketable amounts of goods is essential and necessary to maintain the powerful community's Luxurious life. Steinbeck berates invisible powerful community as a system run by money, with no freedom available without capital to finance it.

In a conversation between two migrants, one declares, "It's a free country," while the other counters, "Fella says you're jus' as free as you got jack to pay for it" (163). By presenting aspects of powerful community as inhumane and unjust, Steinbeck uses the interchapters to propose his hatred. Steinbeck's description of the "powerful community" and "powerless community" in *The Grapes of Wrath* is not only necessary but also significant in understanding his ethical thoughts, since they are a source of propaganda from the author, an effort by Steinbeck to elevate his novel, as well as excessive, relevant, and repetitious.

Conclusion

Ethical Literary Criticism provides a brand-new perspective for the study of *The Grapes of Wrath*. From the analysis mentioned in the chapters above, we may realize that the ethical and moral concepts and values of Joad's family have changed a lot on their trip to California by the dramatic change of the ethical environment, and the traditional ideology they hold on gradually break up in the process of modern industrialization. The migration of the Joad family is a tragedy due to the reality, but the family members' spirit of helping each other and strong will are worthy of respect.

In John Steinbeck's spiritual exploration, the ultimate concern for human morality and ethical values is throughout his works, especially in *The Grapes of Wrath*. By making an extensive and profound exploration in the relationship between the powerful community and the powerless community, by investigating the moral tendency of the family members, it is very easy to detect the ethical thoughts of John Steinbeck. He mercilessly discloses the poisoning of humanity of the powerful community which is caused by materialism and inhumanity. On the contrary, he also highlights the kindness, courage and strong will of the powerless community. He also shows his great concern for the environment crisis and the social problems about the distorted humanity.

He describes lots of ugly scenes full of indifference, bullying, and oppression, in order to reveal the mercenary nature of the powerful community. He also describes lots of moving and positive scenes full of kindness, dedication, mutual love of the powerless community, hoping that people can attach more importance to the virtues. *The Grapes of Wrath* is a typical novel to study cases from Ethical Literary Criticism. John Steinbeck makes use of a variety of artistic means to express his ethical values and his pursuit of ultimate moral ethics. The Joad's family is a representative of thousands of the Okies, through which it can be found that John Steinbeck has earnestly advocated the traditional human virtues such as compassion, love and kindness. And the calling of reviving of these virtues has all embodied in his chapters in *The Grapes of Wrath*. The insight into the relationship between man and nature, man and society as well as between human beings brings the universal question to the reader. As the development of modern industrialization is speeding day after day, whether people should pay much

attention to the virtues? The answer is definitely yes. John Steinbeck has expounded his understanding and interpretation of human nature by exploring the powerful and the powerless community's ethical values in *The Grapes of Wrath*. His exploration of humanity and his concerns of human destiny undoubtedly have aroused modern people's concern and sympathy. In this way, the rich connotation of Ethical Literary Criticism has evidenced itself a practical meaning in analyzing certain literary works.

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