

## UNITED STATES'RECESSION IN 1930 REFLECTED IN JOHN STEINBECK'S *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*

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**Abstract:** This article writer analyzes how recession condition in 1930 in United States that can be described in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* because historical background of recession 1930 in United States can be seen in the relation between main character that appears in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and her society where she is described to live in United States. Main character is not a real person but she is seen as a member of society where she lives in recession 1930. The recession in 1930 in United States causes Oklahoma people migrate to California as a promised land that condition really happened in 1930.

**Keywords:** *Recession, Historical Background, Promised Land*

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini menganalisa bagaimana kondisi resesi ekonomi di tahun 1930 di Amerika Serikat yang dapat di gambarkan dalam karya John Steinbeck dalam novelnya *The Grapes of Wrath* karena di dalam novel karya John Steinbeck menceritakan kondisi sejarah dari resesi ekonomi tahun 1930 di Amerika Serikat, dimana ada hubungan antara karakter utama yang ada di dalam novel dengan masyarakat yang digambarkan di Amerika Serikat. Tokoh utama bukanlah seorang tokoh nyata tetapi dia dapat di lihat sebagai anggota dari masyarakat dimana dia tinggal in resesi ekonomi tahun 1930 di Amerika Serikat. Resesi ekonomi menyebabkan orang orang di Oklahoma bermigrasi ke California karena dianggap sebagai tanah yang subur dan makmur, migrasi dari oklahoma ke California ini benar benar terjadi pada tahun 1930 di Amerika Serikat.

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**Kata Kunci:** *Resesi, Kondisi Sejarah, Tanah yang di janjikan*

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### INTRODUCTION

Hause explains recession in history of western civilization that in October, 1929, prices on the New York Stock Exchange began to drop very quickly, caused fear and panic in business world, many people had bought stock, many people sold their stocks, prices fell, unemployment went up everywhere (Hause, 2004). This

article writer analyzes recession 1930 that existed in John Steinbeck's novel; *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Recession in 1930 appeared in this novel because historical background in United States when recession in 1930 happened can be seen in the relation between Mother that appears in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and her society where

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she is described to live in United States. Ma is not a real person but she is seen as a member of society where she lives. Spielvogel describes that industrial expansion in 1920 was paid for with borrowed money from bank, many European countries had private loans from United States, depended on the stability of the American financial system cause the recession in 1930 (Spielvogel, 2011). Ma has debt to the bank because of the recession in 1930, bank takes her land because she has loan from bank. Main character, Ma faces recession reflected in this the quotation below:

“Her face hardened and her eyes grew cold.” I never had my house pushed over,”she said.” I never had my fambly stuck out on the road. I never had to sell-ever’thing here they come now” (Steinbeck, 1946:94).

In the novel, the recession causes peasants borrow money from bank. Farmers fail to harvest their crops because they cannot pay the loan. The bank takes their land and farmers decide to go to California from Oklahoma.

## METHOD

Recession in 1930 that is existed in the novel of *The Grapes of Wrath* included as a library research. Researcher conducts research by data reduction and triangulation. In this research, the writer only combines two types of triangulation. First, triangulation with multiple data sources triangulation by checking the data findings related to the source or the data in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Second using “Expert triangulation”, the writer asked and consulted to the advisor who master in literary works. The researcher uses both types of triangulation to strengthen the data and achieve a valid result.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

Recession in 1930 existed in the novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, can be seen in main character, the main character in the novel is Ma Joad. She has debt to the bank because of the economic crisis in 1930. Main character suffers economic crisis which is described in this following

quotation:

“Her face hardened and her eyes grew cold.” I never had my house pushed over,”she said.” I never had my fambly stuck out on the road. I never had to sell-ever’thing-Here they come now” (Steinbeck,1946:94).

Looking at the quotation above, the writer knows that at the time California was a promised land where it became a destination for many people around America suffering recession in 1930.

Masofa explains recession condition that can be seen from this quotation describes how main character ,Ma shows her mind about her dream, that Ma struggles in California are to achieve her dream. (Masofa, 2014)

“Yes,that’s a good way. But I like to think how nice it’s gonna be, maybe, in California. Never cold. An’ fruit ever’ place, an’ people just bein’ in the nicest places, little white houses in among the orange trees.” (Steinbeck, 1946)

Masofa describes recession that can seen in this following quotation,

“I wonder-that is, if we all get jobs an’ all work-maybe we can

get one of them little white houses. An’ the little fellas go out an’ pick oranges right off the tree. They ain’t gonna be able to stand it, they’ll get to yellin’ so” (Steinbeck,1946:113). to have a little white house is a visualization of how a better life can be achieved in the mind of Ma Joad. (Masofa, 2014)

However, in California, the better life and the wealth are not acchieved by the main character; Ma Joads. It is described by owning the little house in the content of novel.

Ma Joad moves from one place to another place in California to live better and get richer. Better life is closely related to richer life. When someone has a richer life, it reflected that he has a better life. The indication of being rich is usually signed by having much money, Because being rich is the standard of a better life (Steinbeck, 1946).

Masofa describes recession in research can be described in the quotation below:

“Winter’s on the way. I jus’ hope we can get some money ‘fore it comes. Tent ain’t gonna be nice in the winter.” Ma sighed, and then she straightened her head.”Tom,” she said,”we gotta have a house in the winter” (Steinbeck,1946:453).

The family live in a horrible situation, jobless, and no money. It is because of the upcoming winter (Masofa, 2014).

Masofa explains in jurnal fahum that Ma Joad wants to gain fuller life that her family can work in California where is yellow paper telling how they need folks to work (Masofa, 2014). Then, to get the fuller life, she finally leave Oklahoma:

“She said to her family “Your father got a han’bill on yella paper, tellin’ how they need folks to work. They wouldn’t go to that trouble if they wasn’t plenty work. Costs’em good money to get them han’bills out. What’d they want ta lie for, an’ costin’ em money to lie’?” (Steinbeck, 1946:113).

Ma Joad cannot gain her dream to live better in recession in Weedpatch Camp. Ma joad cannot achieve the opportunity because she is an Okie and harsh condition. (Masofa, 2014).

Ma Joad is reflected as okies. those are addressing names that are pejorative. It is described in John Steinbeck’s novel through Ma Joad, that has dirty, ignorant, degenerate, sexual maniac qualities and become

thieves (Steinbeck, 1946)

From the finding and discussion above, the resercher conclude that In John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* does not solve problem of the recession in 1930 in United States because Ma Joad as a main character in the novels cannot achieve opportunity to get proper job in California as Promised Land.

## CONCLUSION

Recession can be described in John Steinbeck’s novel, entittle ‘The Grapes of Wrath’ because historical background in United States when the deep depresion happened can be seen in the relation between Ma Joad that appears in John Steinbeck’s *novel* and her society where she is described to live in United States. Ma Joad is not a real person but she is seen as a member of society where she lives

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