American Literature

*The Grapes of Wrath* Final “Discussion”

Choose ONE of the following prompts and write a 2-paragraph response.

* Your first paragraph should have a sentence of introduction and then explore one reference to the movie that answers the question.
* Your second paragraph should end with a concluding sentence after exploring another reference to the film that supports your answer to the chosen prompt.
1. Steinbeck admired the poor migrants and believed that from their enduring qualities would grow “a new system and a new life which will be better than anything we have had before.” Was he right? What kinds of changes have come about because of the suffering of those migrants of the 30’s? In our society today, what similar problems exist? What problems in recent (or past) times have been exposed by writers as Steinbeck did in *The Grapes of Wrath*?
2. “*The Grapes of Wrath* is not a story told for its own sake, or to give pleasure to its hearers; it is a [story] written with a specific social purpose, and every aspect of the [story] is wholly devoted to that purpose” (source unknown). What is the social purpose? How does Steinbeck specifically address and accomplish this purpose?
3. What does this [narrative] indicate about gender issues? What is the nature of male/female relationships? What seems to be Steinbeck’s view of the nature and role of women in society?
4. Socioeconomic views in the [narrative] seem to be based on ideas of Marx and Lenin and other socialist thinkers. Yet, the [story] also seems to advocate “the American Dream,” the principle of democracy, the pioneer spirit of endurance, the will to forge ahead and succeed. How do you reconcile these two views? What point does Steinbeck seem to be making to Americans of all socioeconomic groups?

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