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Struggles of Female Immigrants

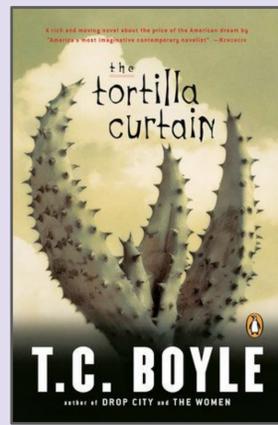
Karina Pedroza Sotelo

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The Tortilla Curtain

Follows the lives of América Rincón her husband as they attempt to settle down in the United States after immigrating from Mexico. When her husband is injured, América ventures out to find a job in hopes of prospering in a foreign country. However, by a terrible turn of events and racial tensions of the 1990s, América is hindered from realizing her American Dream.

Similarities

- Both novels have a pregnancy that highlights female virtue and vulnerability while enduring on a difficult journey.
- Boyle and Steinbeck agree that a mother's capacity to fulfill the American Dream is significant to the next generation. The death of the babies in both novels is significant to the destiny of both families.
- Steinbeck and Boyle lived and wrote about their times bringing into their novels historical context. Steinbeck illustrates difficulties migrating families had during The Great Depression. Likewise, Boyle touches on racial prejudice of the 1990s.

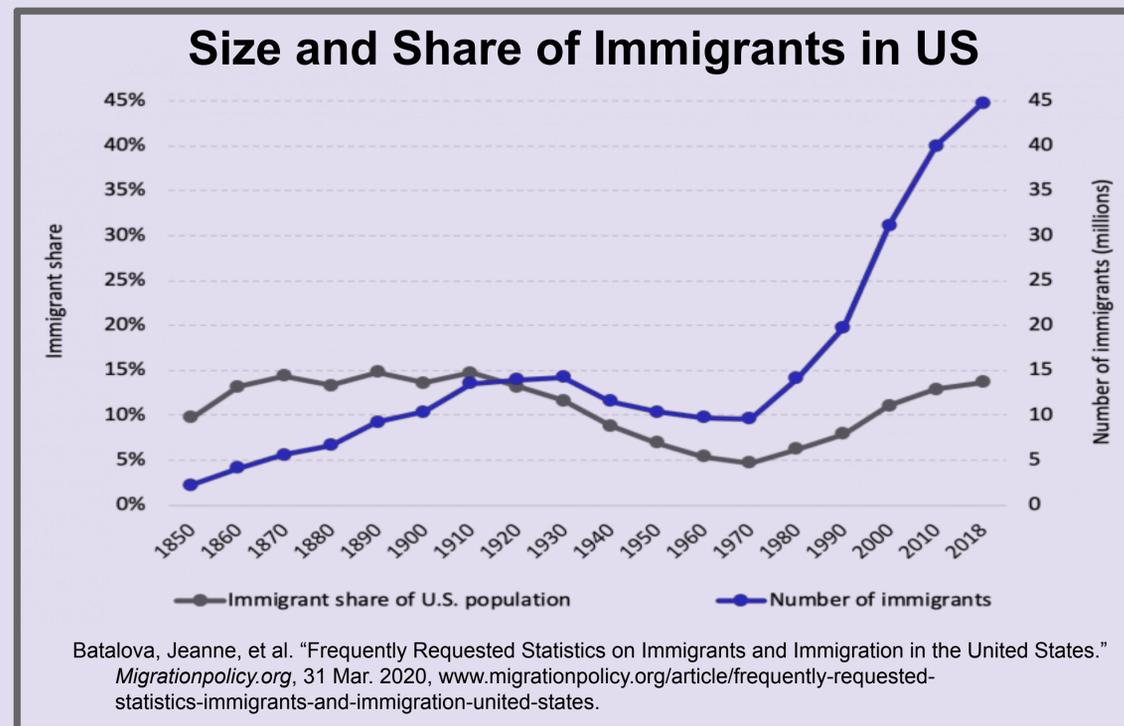
Struggles of Female Immigrants

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Thesis

Both John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and T.C. Boyle's *The Tortilla Curtain* express that female immigrants have the will to fight for a better life facing historical immigrant tensions, financial instability, and female oppression in the hopes of a better life. However, despite the fight, the American Dream is not always attainable for all.

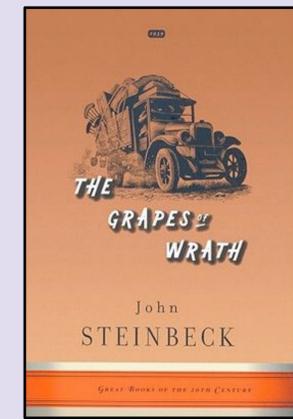


Conclusion

John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and T.C. Boyle's *The Tortilla Curtain* both that immigrating women face gender oppression, poverty, and historical problems in the hopes of a better life. Being at the bottom of the social hierarchy, immigrant women know more than anyone else the desire for the American Dream and the hope of a prosperous family. Though sticking out until the very end for some immigrant women, thanks to social prejudice, the American Dream will stay out of reach. Further research should be done to analyze the consequences of hindering women and their children from the American Dream.

Works Cited

Boyle, T.C. *The Tortilla Curtain*. Viking, 1995.
Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Penguin Classics, 1992.



The Grapes of Wrath

Follows the Joad family in their migration from the midwest to California during The Great Depression. Steinbeck revolutionizes literature by putting Ma Joad, a female figure, in charge during the migration. Ma takes on her role quite well and despite her many challenges is able to keep her family together; putting her ahead in realizing her American Dream.

Differences

- Culturally both novels take place from a different perspective. During Steinbeck's time, patriarchy views were modernizing; American society giving more importance to women. In contrast, Boyle notes a difference in female treatment in Mexican culture.
- Starting in the U.S., despite the time, money was less of a worry for Ma than for América. Coming into the U.S. as an immigrant it was difficult for América to find a job as a pregnant female.
- Ma and her family were looked down upon for being migrant workers, yet were overall favored as people. However, in América's case, she was despised for being an immigrant and further looked down upon for being a pregnant female.
- The baby's death in Steinbeck's novel is symbolic of a new beginning for Ma's family. While for América the death of her child is the loss of all hope; the finale in losing her American Dream.

