



---

# Universidad de Valladolid

FACULTAD de FILOSOFÍA Y LETRAS  
DEPARTAMENTO de FILOLOGÍA INGLESA  
Grado en Estudios Ingleses

## TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

CINEMA AS A MIRROR: An analysis of the reflection of American Society of the 1920s and the 1930s in the motion pictures *The Great Gatsby*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *Modern Times*.

Imanol Mondragón Martín

Tutor: Jesús Benito Sánchez

2016/2017



## ABSTRACT

This dissertation will analyze the motion pictures *The Great Gatsby* (2013), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), and *Modern Times* (1940) focusing on the three social classes (upper, middle, and lower) with the object of proving that cinema is a valid medium for the analysis of the social, cultural, economic, and political realities of a determined place and time, as well as to observe how the evolution of these socio-economic groups in the decades of the 1920s and 1930s of the twentieth century has been reflected in cinema.

**Keywords:** American culture. American society. *The Grapes of Wrath*. *The Great Gatsby*. *Modern Times*. 20th century.

En este trabajo se analizarán las películas *El Gran Gatsby* (2013), *Las Uvas de la Ira* (1940) y *Tiempos Modernos* centrándose en las tres clases sociales (alta, media, y baja), con el fin de demostrar que el cine es un medio válido para el análisis de las realidades sociales, económicas, culturales, y políticas de un momento y lugar determinados, así como para observar cómo se ha plasmado en el cine la evolución de dichas clases sociales a lo largo de las décadas de los años 20 y años 30 del siglo veinte en los Estados Unidos de América.

**Palabras clave:** Cultura americana. Sociedad americana. *El Gran Gatsby*. *Las Uvas de la Ira*. *Tiempos Modernos*. Siglo 20.



## INDEX

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1.) The Roaring Twenties.....	8
2.2.) The Great Depression.....	8
2.3.) The New Deal.....	9
<b>3. ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1.) <i>The Great Gatsby</i> and the American society of the Roaring Twenties.....	11
3.2.) <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> and the American society of the Great Depression ...	16
3.3.) <i>Modern Times</i> and the American society of the New Deal .....	22
<b>4. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>5. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>33</b>

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper has as its object to conduct an analysis of the representation of the social classes through their reflection in three remarkably different motion pictures cinematography-wise and content-wise and which are of great relevance in the history of cinema (*The Great Gatsby*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *Modern Times*) and are representative of the decades of the 1920s and the 1930s.

From the many motivations behind the choice of the topic of this paper, the following are to be stressed: 1) the significant social, cultural, economic, and political transformations in an extremely brief period of time, 2) its artistic and cultural influence in the subsequent movements (e.g.: literature, cinema, music, painting, etcetera), and 3) a personal interest in the representation of this period on different artistic media.

This dissertation will attempt to prove that cinema, as a mass media and art form, reflects the different historical, social, economic, religious, cultural, etcetera realities in a determined time and space. In order to refute the hypothesis a methodology has been created, which is explained below.

Firstly, in the chapter 2, a background containing a general overview of the historical periods (The Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and the New Deal) is provided as the basis for the later analyses of the movies and for a better comprehension of the differences between those periods and the evolution that took place through them.

Then, each film is analyzed in isolation from the rest, providing basic information on the production of the film itself and then linking it to one of the three periods that were presented in the background. Afterwards, the society is divided into three social classes so as to create a social classification that allows for a better understanding of the social reality of the moment and which is used to organize the different characters appearing on screen. These classes are: the upper class, the middle class, and the lower class. These social classes are very dynamic to be able to adapt to the demands of the films. The upper class consists of the wealthiest and most influential people of a society, the middle class is formed by those individuals who are neither too rich nor too poor, and the lower class is composed of the poorest and most underprivileged people of a society.

The characters are then classified as belonging to one of these classes and their weight and portrayal are extremely relevant for the social analysis, as they might hint at social tensions, or any event of magnitude that would prove important for this paper. These characters are used also to define the jobs their social class performs, their education, their living standards, and their social recognition or status, among other many aspects. Quotes, scenes, and other elements might also provide useful information for the analysis.

Lastly, in the conclusion, the data obtained from these three analyses is combined in order to showcase and contrast the different portrayals of these three socioeconomic groups in such a brief period of time. These results would determine whether the hypothesis of this dissertation is rejected or refuted.

## **2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The time span covered in this period comprises the entire second and third decades of the twentieth century. These two decades are generally divided by historians into three periods, with some overlapping the span of others, which are as follows:

### **2.1. The Roaring Twenties (1920-1929)**

The Roaring Twenties are defined by Dictionary.com as “the 1920s regarded as a boisterous era of prosperity, fast cars, jazz, speakeasies, and wild youth” (“The Definition of the Roaring Twenties”). This definition lists many stereotypes about this era, as most of them were real. It was a period of great economic expansion, owing much to the development of the stock market and to the appearance of mass consumption products, such as cars, as well as the mass media (i.e. radios). Since people earned more money they spent it on house appliances such as washing machines or radios, on commodities such as cars, or on entertainment. The birth of the mass consumer society allowed for faster and better communication, and with the popularization of the radio, jazz music spread very fast through the American geography.

On the legal aspect, the Prohibition also marked the decade, and so speakeasies became social meeting spaces, making the alcohol bootleggers rich. In addition to that, white women were allowed for the first time to vote, and their newfound economic independence contributed to the evolution of women into a more independent model, though still not as advanced as today’s. These changes were not very well received by everyone, and so it was a period of conflicts, as this excerpt from History.com might help illustrate:

These conflicts—what one historian has called a “cultural Civil War” between city-dwellers and small-town residents, Protestants and Catholics, blacks and whites, “New Women” and advocates of old-fashioned family values—are perhaps the most important part of the story of the Roaring Twenties (“The Roaring Twenties”).

### **2.2. The Great Depression (1929-1939)**

The Great Depression has been defined by Dictionary.com as “the economic crisis and period of low business activity in the U.S. and other countries, roughly beginning with



the stock-market crash in October, 1929, and continuing through most of the 1930s” (“The Definition of the Great Depression”).

This was one of the most troubled times in American history and was caused by the speculative bubble created in the Wall Street stock exchange as many people had indiscriminately invested and, as a result, the market did not seem to reflect the truth of the situation. Suicide was common and misery became a serious issue as the United States of America had no Social Security system at the time, so that ruined families were entirely dependent on the charity of others, unable to rely on the state for support.

The atmosphere was that of despair as most people were willing to do anything to guarantee the survival of their families and themselves, and vagrancy and crime were frequent, as were alcoholism and drug-addiction. This data from History.com might help illustrate other problems emerged from the economic crisis: “By 1933, when the Great Depression reached its lowest point, some 15 million Americans were unemployed and nearly half the country’s banks had failed” (“The Great Depression”).

The situation was even worse in rural areas. Many farmers were forced to migrate searching for new opportunities, as in the Midwest they had not only to endure the recession, but also they had to cope with the massively destructive and recurrent dust storms taking place in what was known as the “Dust Bowl”, described by History.com as:

The Dust Bowl was the name given to the Great Plains region devastated by drought in 1930s depression-ridden America. The 150,000-square-mile area, encompassing the Oklahoma and Texas panhandles and neighboring sections of Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico, has little rainfall, light soil, and high winds, a potentially destructive combination (“Dust Bowl”).

### **2.3. The New Deal (1933-1941)**

The New Deal has been defined by Dictionary.com as “the principles of the progressive wing of the Democratic Party, especially those advocated under the leadership of President Franklin D. Roosevelt for economic recovery and social reforms” (“The Definition of the New Deal”), and as a period it overlaps with the previous one, and it is possible to even consider it a sub-period within the Great Depression. In 1932 Roosevelt won the elections for the presidency of the United States of America, taking office in 1933.

The New Deal is the sum of his policies aimed at ending the economic crisis by taking very different actions trying to generate employment, create wealth, increase consumption, and benefitting the economy in general. This period lasted the two terms he served as president and those policies were constantly evolving, as some of them failed, whilst others were successful.

Still today, Franklin D. Roosevelt's policies are controversial and their effects are still questioned today, some people defending his program as successful, meanwhile others consider that his policies had no impact on the economy of the United States of America. Nevertheless, some of his programs have left a permanent mark on the landscape of American politics, one mere example being the creation of a National Security System to look after the retired, the disabled, the unemployed, and children. This paragraph from History.com helps conceive how significant this period was:

From 1933 until 1941, President Roosevelt's programs and policies did more than just adjust interest rates, tinker with farm subsidies and create short-term make-work programs. They created a brand-new, if tenuous, political coalition that included white working people, African Americans and left-wing intellectuals. These people rarely shared the same interests—at least, they rarely thought they did—but they did share a powerful belief that an interventionist government was good for their families, the economy and the nation. Their coalition has splintered over time, but many of the New Deal programs that bound them together—Social Security, unemployment insurance and federal agricultural subsidies, for instance—are still with us today (“New Deal”).

### **3. ANALYSIS**

#### **3.1.) *The Great Gatsby* and the American society of the Roaring Twenties**

*The Great Gatsby* is a film dating from 2013 and was directed by Australian director Baz Luhrmann. He collaborated with Craig Pierce in the script, adapting Francis Scott Fitzgerald's novel of the same name. The overall reception was positive both critically and commercially. Due to the economic development trend ongoing in this period, living conditions in general were substantially better than those of the following decades. Despite this positive aspect, it is undeniable that some of the indicators of economic crisis are visible in the film, if not clear, at least in a subtle way.

The Roaring Twenties as defined in the historical background section are the chronological period of time within which the *Great Gatsby* can be placed. This era of American history is the living reflection of the American Dream. People were able to thrive and people were extremely optimistic. Notwithstanding, despite this apparent utopian prosperity, a hidden threat was growing stronger. As the narrator Nick Carraway says "Stocks hit record peaks. And Wall Street boomed, in a steady golden roar..." (*The Great Gatsby*) describing how the speculative bubble was forming. This golden era brought significant social changes to the American society, and the Puritan morals once dominant in the United States were abandoned. As Mr. Carraway indicates in this utterance: "The parties were bigger; the shows were broader; the buildings were higher; the morals were looser; and the ban on alcohol had backfired ... making the liquor cheaper" (*The Great Gatsby*), showing the radicalism of the changes driven by the economic bonanza.

For the period which the film covers, the upper class would translate into the richest people of the American society. These people would most likely be the heirs of the owners of the largest companies in the United States of America. On the other hand, as Arnold Weinstein says in his article: "Jay Gatsby is also a hero of self-creation, but unlike the enigmatic Biloxi, he is a passionate, tragic character, one who brought to the potential of signs the sign of his life" (Weinstein 38). In that he is right, for in this time of economic prosperity transitioning to a higher social class was possible, as Jay Gatsby (formerly James Gats) proves. Barbara Will reflects also on the character of Jay Gatsby: "For it is in the

final, lyrical paragraphs of the novel that Gatsby's fate takes on mythic dimensions, becoming an allegory for the course of the American nation and for the struggles and dreams of its citizens” (Will 125), further strengthening the idea of Jay Gatsby as the most clear example of the American Dream in this motion picture.

This group is not homogeneous, as there are certain criteria used to reflect the clashes between people as a result of the changing world. The distinction that is made between the people belonging to the upper class is what we might call “the criterion of longevity”. Hence, two subclasses exist under the names of the “new rich” (*The Great Gatsby*) and the “old rich” (*The Great Gatsby*) as mentioned very frequently in the movie. Tom Buchanan is the most representative member of the latter group, since his fortune and influence have been directly inherited from his family, and which encourage him to claim that he is different from other people, as seen in the scene where there is a confrontation between Gatsby and Buchanan regarding the issue of whether Daisy was going to elope with the former or if she was to remain by her husband’s side. On the other hand, both Jay Gatsby and Meyer Wolfsheim would be representatives of the former subclass, having amassed their fortunes in a relatively short period of time. According to Tom Buchanan “A lot of these newly rich people are just filthy bootleggers” (*The Great Gatsby*), in which he is actually right, at least in the case of Jay Gatsby’s fortune. Nevertheless, it seems logical that the old fortunes could felt threatened by this newly rich and so they decided to demonize them. As represented by Gatsby, some of these new upper class members owed their fortunes to the illegal alcohol trade. Nonetheless, other people had earned their money legitimately, one of the ways available being investments in the stock market in which Carraway works. Therefore, the legitimacy of their earnings would be the second criterion.

They enjoyed a very large income, mainly due to the always rising speculative market prices, and so they lived in a state of endless abundance and wellness. In this respect the Buchanans or Gatsby serve as referents, with large mansions, gardens, servants, the freedom to travel to where they wanted, enough free time to attend all events and parties of New York, etcetera. However, this prosperity has a dark side as natural. There is a scene in the movie where Gatsby drives to New York City at high speed and after being chased by a police officer and dropping his name, he gets away with the infraction without even paying

a fine. Thus, we observe that this more morally lax America is plagued with corruption, or, at least, so the director seems to want to show. Another example of this would be the scene in the speakeasy named “Dick Diver’s Barbershop Cuts” (*The Great Gatsby*) where Jay Gatsby boasts about his influence, introducing Nick Carraway to relevant members of New York’s society such as the commissioner, senator Gulick, or Wolfsheim himself, proudly talking about his influence and power due to the illegal alcohol trade. The fact that figures linked to spheres such as legislation or law enforcement break the law is itself ironical. Besides, the fact that these ideally righteous figures are networking with people belonging to criminal organizations may highlight even further this ubiquitous corruption. The speakeasies, the alcohol prohibition or the rise of the mafia are so strongly associated to the Roaring Twenties period as much as jazz music, the parties, or the economic boom. Hence the relevance it has, not being limited to a background, instead putting it in the center.

The characters belonging to the upper class are also seen as pseudo-celebrities and they are familiar with Hollywood’s top stars. Events such as the wedding of Tom Buchanan are in the front page in newspapers and celebrity journalism magazines, while Jay Gatsby’s parties in West Egg draw the attention of all sorts of people, and in attendance one can find famous actors or musicians, as well as business tycoons or middle class people.

The second highest social class is that popularly known as the middle class. This group, nevertheless, is less profoundly represented. Overall, they are strongly benefitted by the prosperity of this “golden age”, even though it is a mirage. Besides, they now play a very important role in American society and economy, for they are the main speculators in the stock market, continuously asking for bank loans, seeking to make as much profit as possible. This social class is, as will be further mentioned throughout this paper, the main representative group in relation to the American Dream. The reason behind this lies in the endless possibilities this period offers to obtain good life standards and satisfy their desires, despite the fact that they are very likely to have lost this in a near future (i.e. during the Great Depression). The American dream is a controversial issue, and figures such as Tony McAdams wonder whether the society of the Roaring Twenties truly wanted to fulfill the “real” American dream, or whether they settled with the illusion created by wealth, as he proposes: “I ask whether that conduct was simply an anomaly and whether, in any case, we

have left it behind in pursuit of a nation truer to our original conception of the American Dream; a vision of the infinite possibilities of each individual rather than an acceptance of the appearance of self-fulfillment as depicted by wealth and possessions” (McAdams 658).

In the film we see plenty of examples of people belonging to this class, that despite their different backgrounds take a similar stance toward life. On the first place, perhaps the most representative example would be the friends of Myrtle in the house Tom has bought for her in order that they are able to continue their affair. These characters are nicely dressed, have reliable wages as the result of decent jobs, and they strive to imitate the higher classes. In this orgiastic scene with Catherine and the McKees we see many of the issues that plagued the period such as alcoholism, or drug-addiction. In fact, they attend Gatsby’s parties in New York’s West Egg and follow the fashion of this “jazz age”, revealing that the middle class people were looking forward to succeeding at becoming one of these “new rich”. Nick Carraway is perhaps the best example of one main character belonging to this social group. He is friends with Tom Buchanan, an extremely wealthy “old rich”, and he is connected to the upper class by his ties to Buchanan and his cousin Daisy, Gatsby’s romantic interest and Buchanan’s wife; while also being friend of Gatsby (“a new rich”). He is a First World War veteran and works in the Wall Street Stock Market, and so he is in the center of everything, as it was the stock market that created and burst the speculative bubble responsible of both the Roaring Twenties’ prosperity and the subsequent Great Depression. Since he does not have experience in economics, as he himself states, he has not been able to earn fast a fortune through investments, rather enjoying a good salary of his profession. Curiously, instead of looking for an abode in a middle class area, he chooses instead to rent a house in New York’s West Egg where “the new rich” lived, as is the case of Gatsby, and just opposite to the Buchanan’s manor at the other side of the bay. This could be considered as a reflection of the people’s desire to advance socially, till they become new rich and network with wealthy and famous people.

Lastly, but not less relevantly, there is the lower class which is very clearly represented in the film in the slum region called “The Valley of Ashes”, and which Nick Carraway narrates in the following excerpt:

The Valley of Ashes was a grotesque place...

New York's dumping ground, half way between West Egg and the city...

...Where the burnt out coal that powered the booming, golden city was discarded by men who moved dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air.

...This fantastic farm was ever-watched by Dr. T. J. Eckleberg...

...A forgotten oculist whose eyes brooded over it all like the eyes of God (*The Great Gatsby*).

This fragment of the script has a deeply critical look at the contrasts within a same city, a single society, and which is perhaps most ironical, is that it occurs in the promised land of the American Dream. The god-like figure of Dr. T. J. Eckleberg acts as the guardian of these wastelands, his eyes witnessing all that happens there, making sure they are working to sustain the industry of America. In this terrible area, the spectator witnesses the lowest social class, formed also by racial minorities (mainly African-Americans), work in terrible conditions, and, presumably, for the lowest wage possible. Indeed, Doctor Eckleberg is associated with God, perhaps being Wilson's scene of domestic abuse against Myrtle the best example of it, when he shouts "God knows everything you've been doing!" (*The Great Gatsby*), as he looks at the billboard with the doctor's eyes on it. Roger L. Pearson goes as far as suggesting that "There are strong overtones of T.S. Eliot's Waste Land here, and right-fully so, for the world of Gatsby is a spiritual wasteland - materialistic and mortal, and by its very nature doomed to ashes" (Pearson 640), as he reflects when criticizing the materialism and the lack of moral values in this period. Nick Carraway, as the narrator, thus the vehicle through which the author may actually influence our point of view, seems resigned in this respect. He has no motivation for change and he considers this valley as a necessary consequence of the wealth of New York City, and seems very relaxed, despite having to cross it daily to move from his humble home in West Egg to his office in Wall Street. This strengthens the ideas presented by Pearson, as the higher classes live in illusion and materialism, as the once dominant moral and religious values such as mercy fade.

Most characters belonging to this class are secondary characters, with the main exception of the Wilsons. Their actual names are George B. Wilson and Myrtle Wilson. He owns a small garage in which a sign prays "Cars bought and sold" (*The Great Gatsby*) indicating the activity performed there. They live above this garage in the Valley of Ashes.

In spite of their low class, they know Tom Buchanan and are in rather good terms with him, mainly due to Tom's efforts for being close to his mistress, Myrtle. Their business does not seem to have many clients and the isolation of the place from the rest of New York might even worsen their economic situation. This married couple works wishing to ascend socially and to earn more money, which prompts them to consider moving to the West of the United States with the hope of achieving their dreams during a late moment in the film. The flat Buchanan keeps for Myrtle in New York might be the best reflection of which life conditions and lifestyle they aspire to, that is: to own a decent home, to own a car, to live without worries and economic issues, to be able to live in a hedonistic way, and to be able to imitate the routines of the upper class.

Other examples of this lower class are the countless servants for the rich, mainly of African-American ancestry, which might have been considered as a decent way out of poverty. Here one can see social criticism and a change of perspective in terms of racism and racial attitudes, as there is a scene where Nick Carraway sees something shocking for the time while Gatsby drives him to the Manhattan. He narrates that "By the time we reached the bridge I was impossibly confused..." (*The Great Gatsby*), and immediately he sees a car with a group of elegant African American people drinking champagne while a white chauffeur drives the car across the Queensboro bridge. Society was still not that advanced in terms of equality, thus the more likely interpretation might be that of the surreal, as he is talking about how Gatsby's story is coherent yet grandiose, and so he uses this as a way of showing his surprise, disbelief, or amazement at his tale.

### **3.2.) *The Grapes of Wrath* and the American society of the Great Depression**

*The Grapes of Wrath* is an American drama film from the year 1940 directed by John Ford and based on the eponymous novel published in 1939 by John Steinbeck, adapted by Nunnally Johnson into the script. The story follows Thomas Joad and his family as they travel from Oklahoma to California and tell their experiences there as economic migrants and cheap manpower.

This film would be classified as belonging to the Great Depression period described previously in the historical background section. The main aim of the novel and the movie based in the novel is that of describing the harsh conditions that the lowest classes of



society had to endure in this period of American history, more specifically focusing on the economic migrants that moved from the Midwest to the West of the United States of America. It can be considered as a faithful portrayal of the lives of the poorest Americans, especially the farmers living in the Midwest who have been forced to relocate to because of the “Dust Bowl” that razed the farms, towns and most buildings of central United States. However, authors such as Vivian C. Sobchack indicate that the reception of the film might have been polarized for the following reasons: “The Grapes of Wrath has been praised for its courageous realism and its social relevance as well as damned for its conservatism and timidity in addressing the problems it pretended to tackle”(Sobchak 597). And it would allow to study the issues which Carl R. Siler claims can be found in the novel and, subsequently, in the motion picture: “(a) economic forces at work, (b) the role of government in addressing the needs of its citizens, (c) societal changes, (d) clash of classes, (e) conflicts between business and labor, (f) the Dust Bowl, and (g) the treatment of those less fortunate” (Siler 40).

In this movie, the upper class is composed of bankers, landowners, and businessmen, among other wealthy professions. They are clearly underrepresented throughout the film, and when they appear they are the embodiment of the tycoon stereotype, and their actions are seemingly evil and are the reason why the lower classes are miserable. The society is corrupt and these businessmen seem to be almost omnipotent when it comes to what they can do within law. This corruption is further exposed when the government camp caretaker answers to Tom Joad by saying “No. No cops. Folks here elect their own cops” (*The Grapes of Wrath*). Basically, they pay and chose the law enforcement employees, who they use to control their workers, trying to silence those who dare speak for the rights of their peers. In addition to their influence on the official forces, they hire private security in order to keep their workers even more controlled and submissive. And they use the pamphlets in order to draw the farmers of the Midwest to California to work for them as pickers in their farming facilities. This plan has carefully been devised since they manage to draw many people there and they have already organized how they are going to use this cheap labor, guaranteeing themselves new manpower in case their workers protest or threaten to go on strike should their wages be further reduced.

One of the upper class members appearing in the movie is Spencer. He drives casually by the Joads and offers them a job in a very friendly manner, which highly motivates them, as the script prays “This is electrifying news, as their faces show” (*The Grapes of Wrath*). Nonetheless, they discover later that he was searching for cheap manpower to substitute those who had gone into strike under Casey's lead. It is not the first instance of such behavior, as is the example of the unnamed agent hiring workers, in spite of not hiding that he plans on taking advantage of the despair of the migrants. One of them, named Floyd confronts him, thus revealing to the Joads which tricks they do: “All right, mister. I'll go. You just show your license to contract, and' then you make out an order--where and' when and' how much you gonna pay--an' you sign it and' we'll go” (*The Grapes of Wrath*). He insists the agent signs a paper to safeguard the interest of the workers, annoying the agent who calls the sheriff deputy who was travelling with him and who chases after Floyd, firing accidentally at an innocent woman.

However, the situation for them is not as perfect as it might seem, since the crisis has created problems for them too, as some businessmen were in debt to banks or other companies. For instance, “the Shawnee Land and Cattle Company” has a Chief Executive Officer who seems to act according to the dictates of a bank, as an agent says “But it ain't his fault, because the bank tells him what to do.” (*The Grapes of Wrath*) when telling Muley Graves that he cannot be blamed for the evicted farmers. To further highlight the effects of the Great Depression, when Graves asks this agents where the bank is, the agent answers by saying “Tulsa. But what's the use of picking on him? He ain't anything but the manager, and half crazy himself, trying to keep up with his order from the east!” (*The Grapes of Wrath*) which reflects that even the wealthiest people and institutions were at risk of bankruptcy if they did not act in more efficiently.

The higher class is the least represented out of the three social classes and, in consequence, it is the one of which we receive less information. Despite this fact, it is logical to presume that they are highly educated (e.g.: tertiary education), that they enjoy very good living standards, and that their wealth is such that they can afford not only to satisfy their every whim, but also to maintain in staff the law enforcement, and other workers so as to guarantee that no problems would occur in their business, and using

politics, more specifically “the Red Scare” in order to chase any leader figure among workers.

The middle class in this film is composed of the land’s natives, who are those people that neither are rich nor are they not economic migrants in the state. There are plenty of examples in the many different states the Joad family travels through as is the case of Arizona. This socioeconomic group will be taken as a broad umbrella term for this people, so that people ranging from waiters and gas station workers to police officers and public servants. Despite this apparent lack of homogeneity, they are all White-Americans. These people frequently live in the same place where they were born, yet some exceptions exist such as the police officer from Oklahoma that threatens to imprison them should they not move into the transient camp located outside the city. The attitude of this man seems to be quite illogical, and it puzzles the Joad family, for he should understand why they had to move to California, yet he has a decent job and wage and might feel superior to them for those reasons.

These characters’ wage seems to be good enough to maintain decent living standards, having all comforts that we associate with the middle class, yet they do take advantage of others in order that they are able to keep their lifestyle. One of the examples is the waitress named Mae in a roadside restaurant who after reluctantly giving the Joad’s a loaf of bread on Bert’s orders, tricks them by selling candies to them for more money they are worth, and when the two truckers present in the roadside restaurant confront her about it, she answers “What’s it to you?” (*The Grapes of Wrath*). It is also worthy of mention that some characters in this group are wealthier than others, as is the case of the two truckers Bill and Fred, who do not want their change, which is two and a half dollars, a relatively large amount for the era. Another example is the son of Joe Davis who answers to Muley’s questions of why he is trying to expel them from their lands by saying:

For three dollars a day, that's what I'm doin' it for. I got two little kids. I got a wife and my wife's mother. Them people got to eat. Fust and on'y thing I got to think about is my own folks. What happens to other folks is their lookout (*The Grapes of Wrath*).

This quote might serve perfectly as the summary of the attitude that people take toward each other in society. They are trying to survive this crisis and in order to do so they are willing to do anything to guarantee that their families do not suffer and that they will recover from the terrible consequences of the economic crisis. Indeed, it seems like there is a direct connection with the upper class, for those people who work for them directly seem to earn a higher wage than those that work independently as illustrated by the contrast between Bert and Mae with Bill and Fred, the truck drivers.

Their portrayal in the film is more limited than those belonging to the lower class, yet it is possible to infer that some of them are more educated, as would be the case of doctors, or the caretaker of the government camp, and that they seem in general to distrust and dehumanize the people fleeing the Midwest with comments such as the one made by one of the young men working at a gas station “Well, you and me got sense. Them Okies got no sense or no feeling. They ain't human. A human being wouldn't live like they do. A human being couldn't stand it to be so miserable” (*The Grapes of Wrath*).

The lower class present in this motion picture is that of the farmers from the Midwest. Led by those malicious pamphlets, these families travel to California, presented in the film as: “this is the California the Joads have dreamed of, rich and beautiful, the land of milk and honey” (*The Grapes of Wrath*), a clear reference to the Biblical Canaan or promised land, where they are exploited for a very small wage, since they are desperate for working and earning money to feed their families.

They are the main protagonists of the film, as are the cases of The Joads, more specifically, Tom Joad. This family is composed of the characters: Granma, Granpa, Da, Pa, Al, Ruthie, Winfield, Rosasharn, Thomas, (Uncle) John, and Noah, in addition to Rosasharn's husband, Connie Rivers. They come from rural Oklahoma and are a very large family of farmers, who soon become victims of the terrible weather and socio-economic conditions in the United States of America at this moment in time. They are extremely poor and their education is rather deficient. On the other hand, Casey is a former preacher who abandoned this path after a spiritual crisis, becoming a vagabond roaming the region where he used to work as a priest.

This lower class, previously farmers in the Midwest, work for very small salaries as agricultural laborers in the large states some people of the higher class owned in California. They are forced to leave the lands where they had been working and living for generations due to the “Dust Bowl” and the farming tenants who own these lands and want to exploit them in a cheaper and more efficient way. Subsequently, as the situation is so dramatic, they are tempted by the offer made by the landowners in California, yet their initial optimism and hopes soon vanish. Upon their arrival in California they discover the dire truth and are soon forced to submit to the abuses of the landowners as they are the only employers and they need a wage for their families. A man sent by “the Shawnee Land and Cattle Company” (*The Grapes of Wrath*), the tenant of the lands the Joads or Muley Graves worked explains it rather clearly:

Fact of the matter, Muley, after what them dusters done to the land, the tenant system don't work no more. It don't even break even, much less show a profit. One man on a tractor can handle twelve or fourteen of these places. You just pay him a wage and take all the crop (*The Grapes of Wrath*).

They are economic migrants, and that fact generates tension among the local people, who take action several times throughout the film to try to expel them from the region since they believe they are stealing their jobs. Their situation is rather precarious since they cannot obtain a decent job (i.e. one with a contract, full-time, and with a salary that allows for a good living) and the constant threats made by locals and law enforcement forces alike. Throughout the film they constantly travel through California, trying to find the better life they were promised in the handbills mentioned before, however, is that dreamed life even possible?. They seem to finally be happy in the permanent government farmer's camp, yet they finally have to leave it for working in the cotton harvest, therefore Jason Spangler's statement seems to be true:

For all of the dreaming that the Joads engage in, for all the talk of a California promised land, there exists the unrelenting suspicion that they are moving simply because they can do nothing else. For all they really know, the road is a circuitous route that will deliver them not to a land of milk and honey but to a situation that reproduces their pitiable life in Oklahoma (Spangler 319).

By the end of the film, Tom Joad leaves the camp expressing his desire of fighting for the lower class rights, and there are clear references to what is known in American history as the “Red Scare” with statements such as “Shut up, you red!” (*The Grapes of Wrath*) by a deputy or with newspapers announcing “Citizens, angered at red agitators, burn another squatters' camp, warn agitators to get out of the county” (*The Grapes of Wrath*) which Tom reads aloud to other people while working.

### **3.3.) *Modern Times and the American society of the New Deal***

This film dates from the year 1936 and was directed and written by Charles Chaplin. The performers include Paulette Goddard as the Gamin, Charles Chaplin as the Tramp, and other actors such as Henry Bergman, Tiny Sandford, and Chester Conklin. The plot of this motion picture is described at the very beginning as: “Modern Times. A story of industry, of individual enterprise - humanity crusading in the pursuit of happiness” (*Modern Times*), and it has the Tramp and the Gamin as its main characters. The Tramp is a very popular character created by Charles Chaplin who fails to achieve his goals due to his clumsiness. The Gamin, on the other hand, is a victim of the Great Depression, and her criminal actions are the result of her lack of choices, as she tries to provide for her family and herself. She is described in the film in the following fashion: “Her little sisters - motherless” (*Modern Times*) implying that she has to take care of them, substituting her mother, as her only living parent is described as “The father one of the unemployed” (*Modern Times*), and, thus, they are unable to escape poverty. These characters are also very important for their contributions to the film, as Harry A. Grace states:

The point seems well substantiated that Chaplin's film themes often refer to matters of business, economics, and employment. Rather than belabor the sex theme, we may turn to the role of women as portrayed in Chaplin's films, for the theme is implicit therein. Women are used in Chaplin's films to depict the objective reality of a particular situation. They exemplify the realist position, and Charlie, the tramp, the idealist. While the real aspects predominate in any problem solution, sufficient credit falls upon Charlie to allow for some attention to be given to idealism. (Grace 360)

The historical period to which this film has been assigned in this dissertation is the New Deal. This period is rather a set of policies and their impact on society than a completely different era, as most events and situations are identical to those found in the era

known as the Great Depression, with which it overlaps. Therefore, this film could have been analyzed focusing on either of them, nevertheless, there is a constant sensation of optimism and through the film there is a positive economic and social development in the United States of America, unlike in *the Grapes of Wrath*, which is from a later date and is set in 1939, yet it focuses on the misery the poorest people had to endure. Additionally, the setting of the film is largely non-referential, because despite being able to locate the plot in an American coastal city in the East coast and in the decade of the 1930s for the presence of the Great Depression and the New Deal, the exact city or years are never clearly explicit. The fact that the meaning and results of this period are still unclear today, as R. G. Tugwell exposes:

Whether and to what extent he succeeded will become clearer as time passes. It seems to me that we have gained some parity or balance among economic groups, that we approach clearer designs of what we must do, and that we have clearly established the minima of social security-and this was what Roosevelt meant by "New Deal" (Tugwell 385).

On top of that, the film came to light three years after Roosevelt had taken office, and so the positive impact of his legislation is seen in the movie, with the appearance in the fictional "The Daily News" (*Modern Times*) newspaper of the following headlines: "Factories reopen! Men to be put to work at the Jeston Mills this morning" (*Modern Times*) or even more so in the case of "Prosperity has turned the corner" (*Modern Times*). Immediately after reading the news, the Tramp feels euphoric and says "Work at last!" (*Modern Times*). For all these reasons, it seemed more plausible to connect this movie to the positive evolution that the New Deal meant with respect to the Great Depression, rather than limiting its analysis to depict the miserable stagnant society of the latter period. Mark Winokur helps understanding the evolution and how it evolves by using certain devices:

The structure of *Modern Times* is governed by the institutions in which the tramp finds himself, and which he finds himself subverting again and again. The institutions become more humane in appearance as the film goes on: he begins as a worker on an assembly line repeating one motion over and over, and ends as a singing waiter with the sound of applause still ringing in his ears. (Winokur 221)

The analysis of the three social classes might serve to illustrate the small evolution of the society from the Great Depression, as they were struggling to succeed in their chase after the prosperity that these new policies might generate. It also reflects some of the issues that concerned Charles Chaplin, as are the lack of equality, the absence of any form of Social Security, the exacerbated capitalism of the society, the primacy of wealth over the well-being of workers, etcetera.

The upper class is underrepresented in this film, as the focus is placed at the lower classes of society. Its exponents differ from one another, and are mostly limited to the President of Electro Steel corp., the owner and director of the shopping mall, and the gentleman who orders a roasted duck in the café restaurant. Their jobs are generally those of being President, CEO, director, or owner of a company. In general, the idea defended by Harry A. Grace proves to be truthful, for he claims that “V. Chaplin's films cast suspicion upon authority figures in business and public affairs. The persons who symbolize authority in Chaplin's films are often portrayed as clearly unethical or immoral, or of doubtful character because of a compromising situation” (Grace 358). The first one can be likened to the figure of the Big Brother in George Orwell’s *1984* as he watches his factory workers through a series of cameras and screens, prioritizing profit above anything else, one example being his willingness to purchase “the Billows Feeding Machine” (*Modern Times*) if it was useful, as the main argument used by that inventor is that if workers had no lunch pause, production would be higher, and so benefits would soar. It is also particularly interesting that he is the character with most voiced lines, though actually most of them are instructions to his second-in-command to increase the speed of the assembly lines. On the contrary, the shopping mall director seems to be more compassionate and anti-tyrannical in his actions, his portrayal being less aggressive overall. These two character types represent the idea proposed by Grace above, as the latter is forced to fire the Tramp after his failure as watchman.

In general their situation is much better than those of the remaining two social classes; however, they too suffer the consequences of the Great Depression. Many factories and banks were forced to close as they became bankrupt, and so it is logical to imagine that the owners and directives, both belonging to the upper class, would have become part of the



unemployed and as such, part of the lower class. Others managed to prosper, as is the case of the director of the shopping mall, which is fully operational while millions of Americans are still living miserably. As the plot advances and the economic recovery starts, the closed factories reopen, providing jobs for the unemployed and helping these families earn money to sustain their families, yet the poor wages and work conditions, along with Roosevelt's policies, result in the unsatisfied workers demonstrating for better jobs, leaving these factories empty. In addition to that, it would be logical to presuppose that they have been educated and that their enormous wealth allows them to maintain very high living standards. This wealth did also mean social and political influence, as those who protest against factory owners are violently repressed by the law enforcement body.

The middle class at first might seem to be severely misrepresented, notwithstanding, towards the last part of the film, when the economic recovery is observable, the café restaurant where the two main characters work is crowded with people belonging to this social class, as they are prosperous enough that they do not need to worry in excess about spending money. The salesmen and saleswomen of the shopping mall, the waiters of the café, and other characters, such as some pedestrians, can also be classified as belonging to this group.

In spite of that, for the analysis the best option is to analyze two opposite couples, as they are the ones described more in depth and which reveal more information. These two opposites are the figures of the minister and his wife and the happy married couple living in a terraced house. The former is a more realistic impression of the reality of the middle class in that period, while the latter is very much idealized. The minister and his wife seem to be educated, enjoying good living standards, with exquisite manners, and they are respected by the individuals with whom they interact. On the contrary, the second couple is representative of the American dream and they are the embodiment of this ideal. They have the "perfect life" (i.e.: a good job, a good home, good living standards, and household appliances, etcetera), whose idyllic conditions Chaplin satirizes.

This social class should have dwindled dramatically from the Roaring Twenties to the New Deal period, as many of them invested in the stock market and its collapse would have supposed their ruin, hence becoming part of the lower class. Throughout the film one

sees a positive development, as the number of people belonging to this social class increases with the advancement of the plot.

The lower class enjoys considerably more representation than the other social classes and it is the one to which the two protagonists belong. The Tramp, the Gamin, and Big Bill are some of the countless examples of this social class. Barbara Korte comments that “Chaplin's Tramp films present poverty, but with an aesthetics that resists readings for a clear-cut 'identity' of poverty” ( Korte 139), and it can be certainly understood in that way, as he is poor yet his manners and dressing corresponds to the stereotype of a gentleman, an upper class character.

The lower class is formed by the unemployed, factory workers, vagabonds, criminals, and ethnic minorities, among many others, accordingly being the largest and most heterogeneous social class of the three that form the American society. Since they are the largest group and the one suffering more severely from the economic crisis, crime and social unrest are frequently represented in the film while simultaneously connecting them with this group. Concerning criminal activities, crime was seen as a valid way of obtaining the money or goods necessary for survival and its purpose can be that of surviving by stealing goods or that of attempting to get arrested and imprisoned. An example of the first type would be when Big Bill and two colleagues of his break into the shopping mall and when the Tramp wonders if they are thieves, he answers “We ain't burglars - we're hungry” (“Modern Times”), whilst the perfect example of the second is when the Tramp is in prison reading in a cell and seemingly very happy when in the screen the spectator reads “Happy in his comfortable cell” (“Modern Times”), showing that ironically jail is a very good alternative to options such as dying from starvation. This social unrest has two different aspects, the first being the conflict between demonstrators and police officers, and the second being a conflict among workers themselves. The father of the Gamin dies in what is mentioned as “Trouble with the unemployed” (“Modern Times”), more specifically shot in a concentration with other unemployed individuals. Later, when the Tramp works as mechanic assistant, they are notified by a peer that the factory workers are unhappy with the work conditions, and so he tells the mechanic “Get your coat, we're on strike” (“Modern Times”), after which the protagonist is imprisoned once again.

Every person belonging to this social class was dramatically affected by the economic crisis, since they either lost their savings on the Black Tuesday (if they had invested in stock) or they were fired when the collapse of the financial system and companies forced their boards to cut wages or personnel, while the bankruptcy of others left thousands of Americans suddenly unemployed. This deteriorated further as a result of the lack of preparation of the government of the United States of America and the absence of a Social Security system, which left the lower class dependent on philanthropic organizations, relatives, friends, or neighbors. The situation continued to worsen, until the election win by Franklin D. Roosevelt who will become president of the United States of America, and whose policies created a Social Security system, allowed workers to form trade unions to demand better wages and work conditions, among other many positive advances, even though the road to full recovery would still take half a decade. The political balance of the New Deal for the working class was mainly positive; nonetheless, some shortcomings took place also, as Stuart Kidd recalls:

During the 1930s working-class pressure, refracted through the electoral victories of the Democratic Party between 1932 and 1936, prompted state managers to grant concessions to non-dominant groups, but concessions which would simultaneously ensure the future of capitalism and aggrandize the bureaucracy of the State through its expanded regulatory and social welfare agencies. (Kidd 400)

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

In a nutshell, throughout this dissertation three different motion pictures set in the second and third decades of the past century have been analyzed, allowing for a general analysis of the different portrayals of the American society of the time in American cinema. For instance, *The Great Gatsby* reflects the Roaring Twenties period and is a color and voiced drama movie, whilst *The Grapes of Wrath* is set in the Great Depression and is a voiced black and white drama film, with the remaining *Modern Times* being a black and white silent comedy movie that is set in the period known as the New Deal.

Each of the three selected films has been analyzed paying attention the same criteria and, thus, it is possible to compare the perception of each social class as they have been displayed on screen with the object of getting a general idea of how the American society was in the two decades in which this dissertation focuses, while simultaneously trying to refute the hypothesis. Now each of these social classes shall be commented according to their representation in *The Great Gatsby*, *the Grapes of Wrath*, and *Modern Times* while using certain threads in common to ease the comparison, which are: the relevance they do have in the movies, whether their characters protagonists or secondary, and lastly, which ideas are frequently connected to each specific social class and why.

The upper class represents the wealthiest and most influential members of a society and their representation is not cohesive in the three works. In *The Great Gatsby* the main protagonist, Nick Carraway, belongs to the middle class, nevertheless, his acquaintances belong mainly to this social class, and so throughout the motion picture the spectator is mostly exposed to the grandeur of the hedonist and capricious lifestyle of the upper class of New York City. In this film the issue of the schism between the “old” and the “new” rich is also discussed at length and presents this group as heterogeneous, basing this distinction to the connection of the wealth to alcohol bootleg in the America of the Prohibition. On the other side, this social class is still extremely influential in *The Grapes of Wrath* and in *Modern Times*, however their characters are rather secondary and they are underrepresented.

Its characters are frequently business tycoons, tenant farmers, high ranking employees of banks, factories, or companies, as well as relevant public servants. In *the Great Gatsby* the eponymous character and Wolfsheim are high-ranking criminals yet they socialize with relevant public figures openly. These characters are stereotyped frequently by presenting them as merciless bosses who do not care for the well-being of their employees, instead worrying about the production and the income it generates. With the sole exception of *The Great Gatsby*, they are strictly secondary and their apparition on scene is limited to less than ten minutes on most cases.

Regardless of these differences between the films, the upper class characters are presented with a series of common aspects which are generally negative in nature. They are very frequently presented as corrupt people who take advantage of their money and fame to be able to do illegal activities, one example being Jay Gatsby exceeding the speed limit, or the agent in *the Grapes of Wrath* who travels accompanied by a sheriff's deputy and uses the police officers to silence those who criticize him. This last example connects with the other general issue that is tagged to high class characters, which is oppression. Throughout the three films the audience can find examples of people being exploited for the enrichment of upper class individuals, some of this examples being: the Valley of Ashes in *the Great Gatsby*, the Hooper ranch in *the Grapes of Wrath*, or the company Electro Steel Corp. in *Modern Times*. In all these locations the spectator finds people of the lower classes working long hours for a very small wage, contributing these two aspects to the wealth of the city of New York in the first case, to the farming tenant named Spencer in the second case, and to the unnamed President of Electro Steel Corp. in the third and last case. On top of that, any employee who takes part on a strike or who decides to lead a movement in favor of workers is persecuted by the state and imprisoned by his or her actions, under the label of being "red" or "communist", as is seen in *Modern Times* and *The Grapes of Wrath*.

The middle class is formed by those individuals whose work conditions are acceptable to our current day standards and whose wage is sufficient to guarantee their sustenance, while giving them enough margins to be able to spend money on trivial issues that are not strictly necessary.

This class is the least represented out of the three, as can be observed from the analysis. Despite this apparent irrelevance, the glimpses shown provide a very interesting outlook, as the reflection of this class on the analyzed motion pictures is rather rich in terms of variety. Their niche in society is self-explanatory; however, its relevance is extraordinary, since it is the reason why their situation is presented in such a wide array of forms. In *the Great Gatsby* the constant influx of money in the America of that era guaranteed that they would not have to circumvent any economic problem, and so they could devote their resources to the imitation of the higher classes, and so they adopt the dandy lifestyle and attend wealthy people's parties. In *the Grapes of Wrath* their situation is much worse, and they resort to tricks such as taking advantage of other people in order to earn enough money to be able to keep their standards of living. On the other hand, in *Modern Times* the middle class is represented in two radically opposite forms, the first being that of a minister and his wife, who seem to live a very good life for a time of recession, and the second that is the idealized American family representative of the ideal of the American dream.

The middle class people perform jobs such as: stock market broker, coffee shop owner, truck driver, doctor, minister, or police officer, among many others. These characters are largely irrelevant to the plot, with the only significant exception being Nick Carraway of *the Great Gatsby*, who belongs to the middle class and is the main character of the story. In spite of this apparent lack of common aspects, the middle class is frequently presented with a certain number of traits which seem inexorably linked to their social group. The first one has been mentioned before and is the dynamism in their actions. In short, depending on their situation they might act to avoid becoming members of the lower class or they would spend as much money as they can afford in order to belong to the upper class. The second aspect is the ideal of the American dream. Among the social classes, the middle class is the one with the strongest connection to this ideal, as seen in the example of the idyllic house in *Modern Times*.

The lower class is composed of all those individuals who have low wages and who subsequently have very low living standards and it is the most represented out of the three in the films, the reason why being the intention of the director of making a social criticism.

This class is undoubtedly the most heterogeneous and dynamic of all the social classes, because people can be impoverished for a countless number of reasons. In *the Great Gatsby* the Valley of Ashes is the dim, inhuman place where the lower class works in terrible conditions in order to generate the wealth that the middle and upper classes of society spend indiscriminately in New York City. It is actually the only motion picture where they do not take the protagonism. In *the Grapes of Wrath*, the farmers of the Midwest form this social class as they become economic migrants in the West. The Joads are the main protagonists and they are part of this underprivileged group. In *Modern Times* the Gamin and the Tramp, the dual protagonists of the story, belong to this social class and represent the constant struggle of the lower class to obtain a decent job that would allow them to own a house, as for them it would embody the ideal of the American dream, with all its positive aspects.

The lower class characters work as farmers or factory workers, while other people belonging to this socio-economic group resort to vagrancy or to criminal activities in order to earn money for their families and themselves. In *The Grapes of Wrath* the main protagonist Tom Joad is a farmer in Oklahoma, however he works also as a picker and do other sort of tasks for money while in California. On the other hand, in *Modern Times*, the Gamin “works” first as a vagabond and a thief, to later work as a singing waitress in a café restaurant. In contrast with the Gamin, the Tramp is initially a factory worker; however, due to his clumsiness and bad luck, he performs a wide array of jobs such as mechanic assistant, dock worker, shopping mall watchman, or singing waiter.

It has some issues that are common to most of them. Firstly, they are exploited at work and when they protest and demand better work conditions, they have to face police repression. Secondly, they are desperate and out of their need to provide for their families and themselves, they would perform any sort of job or activity, including those illegal in order to survive, or they might even commit a crime to get arrested and be sent into prison, where they were fed and looked after. Lastly, in the lower class we find ethnic minorities and migrants, groups poorly represented if at all in the other social classes. In *the Grapes of Wrath* we see the issues that economic migrants such as the farmers from the Midwest had to endure in the United States and it is ironical that the same arguments used against them

in this film from 1940 are still used today. In this very film, a Pueblo settlement is shown, yet the only glimpse the director shows us is that of their architecture, of some of its Native American inhabitants, and of the traditional activities they do. On the contrary, in *Modern Times* and *the Great Gatsby* the African-American collective is represented, yet very superficially and in a very small quantity. In the case of the former, they are mostly people arrested in the police van. In the latter, they are either workers in the Valley of Ashes or they work as butlers or servants for the wealthy upper class, as seen in the service staff of Tom Buchanan. This is indicative of the racism still dominant in the America of those years, since it would not be till the mid 1960s when they would get equal rights in the United States of America.

The results show that despite the differences concerning content and cinematographic techniques, cinema can be effectively used to analyze the reality of a specific period and place. Thus the hypothesis of this paper would be refuted, as the analysis of these three films has provided accurate information about the social, political, cultural, and economic, realities during the second and third decades of the twentieth century, or what is the same, in the three periods targeted in this paper (The Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and the New Deal).



## **5. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

"The Definition of the Great Depression." *Dictionary.com*, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/great-depression>. Accessed 20 June 2017.

"The Definition of the New Deal." *Dictionary.com*, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/new-deal>. Accessed 18 June 2017.

"The Definition of the Roaring Twenties." *Dictionary.com*, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/roaring-twenties>. Accessed 15 June 2017.

"Dust Bowl." *HISTORY.com*, <http://www.history.com/topics/dust-bowl>. Accessed 17 June 2017.

Grace, Harry A. "Charlie Chaplin's Films and American Culture Patterns." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1952, pp. 353–363. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/426065](http://www.jstor.org/stable/426065). Accessed 24 April 2017.

*The Grapes of Wrath*. Directed by John Ford, performances by Henry Fonda, Jane Darwell, John Carradine, Charley Grapewin, Dorris Bowdon, Russell Simpson, O. Z. Whitehead, John Qualen, Eddie Quillan, and Zeffie Tilbury, 20th Century Fox, 1940.

"The Great Depression", *HISTORY.com*, <http://www.history.com/topics/great-depression>. Accessed 17 June 2017.

*The Great Gatsby*. Directed by Baz Luhrmann, performances by Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey Maguire, Carey Mulligan, and Joel Edgerton, Bazmark Productions, Village Roadshow Pictures, A&E Television, and Red Wagon Entertainment, 2013.

Kidd, Stuart. "Redefining the New Deal: Some Thoughts on the Political and Cultural Perspectives of Revisionism." *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1988, pp. 389–415., [www.jstor.org/stable/27555051](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27555051). Accessed 25 April 2017.

Korte, Barbara. "New World Poor through an Old World Lens: Charlie Chaplin's Engagement with Poverty." *Amerikastudien / American Studies*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2010, pp. 123–141. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/41158484](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41158484). Accessed 21 April 2017.

McAdams, Tony. "'The Great Gatsby' as a Business Ethics Inquiry." *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 12, no. 8, 1993, pp. 653–660. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/25072450](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25072450). Accessed 15 May 2017.

*Modern Times*. Directed by Charlie Chaplin, performances by Charlie Chaplin, Paulette Goddard, Henry Bergman, Tiny Sandford, and Chester Conklin, United Artists and Janus Films/Criterion, 1936.

"New Deal", *HISTORY.com*, <http://www.history.com/topics/new-deal>. Accessed 20 June 2017.

Pearson, Roger L. "Gatsby: False Prophet of the American Dream." *The English Journal*, vol. 59, no. 5, 1970, pp. 638–645. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/813939](http://www.jstor.org/stable/813939). Accessed 18 May 2017.

"The Roaring Twenties", *HISTORY.com*, <http://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties>. Accessed 17 June 2017.

Siler, Carl R. "Using 'The Grapes of Wrath' to Teach the Great Depression." *The Steinbeck Review*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2005, pp. 37–48. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/41581965](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41581965). Accessed 15 June 2017.

Sobchack, Vivian C. "The Grapes of Wrath (1940): Thematic Emphasis Through Visual Style." *American Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 5, 1979, pp. 596–615. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2712428](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2712428). Accessed 21 June 2017.

Spangler, Jason. "We're on a road to nowhere: Steinbeck, Kerouac, and the legacy of the Great Depression." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2008, pp. 308–327. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/29533876](http://www.jstor.org/stable/29533876). Accessed 16 June 2017.

Tugwell, R. G. "The New Deal in Retrospect." *The Western Political Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1948, pp. 373–385. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/442937](http://www.jstor.org/stable/442937). Accessed 22 April 2017.

Weinstein, Arnold. "Fiction as Greatness: The Case of Gatsby." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1985, pp. 22–38. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/1345714](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1345714). Accessed 12 May 2017.

Will, Barbara. "'The Great Gatsby' and the Obscene Word." *College Literature*, vol. 32, no. 4, 2005, pp. 125–144. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/25115310](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25115310). Accessed 12 May 2017.

Winokur, Mark. "'MODERN TIMES' and the Comedy of Transformation." *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 4, 1987, pp. 219–226. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/43796322](http://www.jstor.org/stable/43796322). Accessed 21 April 2017.