

Learning Process through Natural Landscape in “Travels with Charley: In Search of America”

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Abstract

The road provides opportunities to explore the world and the self; this keeps travelogues as a popular genre in contemporary American literature. This study brings into focus John Steinbeck's "Travels with Charley: In Search of America. It aims at examining opportunities the road provides in order to interrogate the human's kinship with the natural world. Emerson's Self-Realization and Deep Ecology prove to be helpful in approaching the text. Steinbeck realizes that the individual self cannot be recognized unless it is considered part of the unified natural world. Moreover, he is the reflection of this world.

Key words: self-realization; Steinbeck; travel; learning processes; natural world

1. INTRODUCTION

“Travels with Charley” apparently presents descriptions of Steinbeck's journeys through specific sites. However, this narrative reflects the effect of encountering natural world in his perception and the psychological transformation he undergoes. As Hamera and Bendixen (2009: 1) see travel as a component of cultural meaning rather than being just movement from place to place. Any journey must have its own purpose that gives it

the personality and defines travelers' perception of the worlds they encounter.

The narrator of travelogue under focus leaves behind the domestic traditional life to worlds where he undergoes learning processes. He comes to a clear understanding of himself and realizes his position within the world through reflecting on different relations with the surroundings. Dunphy (2005: 117) claims that Steinbeck in “Travels with Charley” emphasizes the importance of the free real self which gives vitality to the narrative. Buckton-Tucker (2010: 258-59) claims that travelogues reflect values central to human life that is the desire to ‘return to simplicity’. They represent the human desire to explore the unknown. Steinbeck (1986: 10) desires “to move about, free and unanchored, not toward something but away from something”. In his quest, he embodies Emerson’s notions of self-reliance and his view of nature. He tries to identify himself in the background of his land through different relations he indulges in during his journeys. He praises the unity of the universe in order to achieve harmony and to understand everything with relation to this wholeness

Emerson's views of the 'self' and its relatedness to the natural world and social conformity are helpful to investigate "Travels with Charley: In Search of America". Another philosophy concerning the individual self is Naess's idea of self-realization which is founded up on the individual awareness of himself/herself. Deep Ecology theory is also useful to interpret Steinbeck's deep feeling of the living components of the worlds he passes through.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Steinbeck and his Work an important aspect of American culture

John Steinbeck has attracted the interest of a whole generation of fiction scholars worldwide because of his concern of ordinary

people and his believe in humans' greatness. He (1986: 33) states, “for man has to have feelings and then words”. Steinbeck was born in Salinas in 1902. His family has considerable love for plants and animals. Benson (2006: x1i) considers the natural beauty that Steinbeck grew up within has great influence on his development as a novelist. He employed his own “resources” developing himself as an author and appreciated the qualities he acquired from the natural world. Vicic (2012: 57-58) believes that Steinbeck in some of his works takes his readers to his delightful countryside of Salinas Valley, his homeland. He was not influenced by the writers of the “Lost Generation” and was away from the effect of the artistic movements of his time. Steinbeck (1986: 197) states, “When I was a child... we called San Francisco “the City”.. Once I knew the City very well, spent my attic days there, while others were being a lost generation in Paris. I fledged in San Francisco, climbed its hills, slept in its parks, worked on its docks”.

Steinbeck wrote stories which were considered as reflective of Steinbeck's experience such as “To a God Unkown” published in (1933). The main character in this narrative is Joseph whose concern is examining the human relation with the surroundings as a perquisite in the process of recognizing the position of the self within its world. Rice (2011: 37) views Joseph's quest as a means to reflect the opposing elements in the nowadays “ecological” dispute. The book moves in the direction of identification of the self within the wide natural world. This motif reappears during Steinbeck's encounter with the natural world in his cross country travels that are represented in “Travels with Charley”.

“The Winter of Our Discontent” (1961) is Steinbeck's final finished novel and the last to be published. Railsback and Meyer (2006:434) claim that the book is about a large part of America, New Baytown. The town is representation of Sag Harbor where Steinbeck spent a part of his life and where the central character, Ethan Allen Hawley, wanders throughout

the town as Steinbeck did in reality knowing every detail of the place and people's life. Steinbeck in this narrative expresses his view about the great change that overwhelmed life in America in the year 1960.

Steinbeck's desire to shift to simplicity recurs in a number of his narratives. Cerces (2006: 65) claims that in “Tortilla Flat” (1935) “Sweet Thursday” and (1954) “Cannery Row” (1965) Steinbeck succeeds to contrast the trueness of his simple non conformist characters to the alienated materialistic society. Vicic (2012: 56) believes that in “Cannery Row” Steinbeck brings together organismic, ecological themes with ethnic issues through his characters who are detached and untouched by the materialism of the twentieth century society. The main characters, the setting and plot sequence of “Cannery Row” recur in the “Sweet Thursday”.

Contemporary issues during the 1960s like environment and racial equality were part of Steinbeck's concern. Also his great concern for the racial inequality appears in his narrative “Travels with Charley”. For example, he expresses his disgust against white women when they insult black children in a school in New Orleans. Steinbeck claims that this problem will not be solved until Americans perceive no difference between blacks and whites.

Steinbeck continues to reflect his love of nature in his works. In the beginning of his travelogue “Travels with Charley” he names his truck “Rocinant”. According to Steinbeck (1986: 7) the truck's name is reminiscent of Don Quixote's horse- Don Quixote de la Mancha is a main character in the novel “Don Quixote” by Miguel de Cervedra published in 1605 and 1615.

The name is interesting because it is reflective of Steinbeck's personality. The name can be linked to the pony his father gave him to take care of while he was young. Giving the truck such a name indicates Steinbeck's love of animals and nature. De Barros (2009: 239) claims that the traveler's vehicle

is an embodiment of his interior, a sensed projection of his individuality.

Steinbeck goes further in his love of the natural world examining the natural world and human society as integrated entity. Railsback and Meyer (2006: 374) claim that transcendentalists' had an impact on Steinbeck's view of nature and his regard of the natural world as a source of learning. A specific influence is credited to Henry David Thoreau (1817—1862) and his ideas in “Walden” (1854). Like Thoreau, Steinbeck thinks of man's relatedness to nature and thinks of the natural world as the instructor which takes people to a space that enables them to gain qualities of nature such as simplicity and wisdom and question the values that characterize ‘civilized’ deeds.

Steinbeck thinks of nature and human communities as one entity which is superior to the world and any individual within this unified whole, a view he shares with Thoreau. A representative of the wise man who is closely associated with the natural world is Casy in “The Grapes of Wrath” (1939). Like Thoreau he frequently escapes to nature and lives with people as a guide. Moreover, he does not acknowledge social structures that give him status. He regards them social restrictions and moves between different people as a by passer, as a prophet. In this narrative, the author calls to resist the social frameworks and values that take people away from natural world. Cerce (2006: 64-66) claims that Steinbeck's concern for the common people and their struggle was not a way of honoring them but is a response to the vanished ethics and values in the modern materialistic society. The suffering of the out of work poor people was his main concern during the 1930s Depression. His experience of the harshness of the thirties enriches his knowledge about workers' dilemma and enables him to depict the situation effectively more than any other writer. In “The Grapes of Wrath” he reflects his experience, thought and feeling which privileged him as a writer. De Barros (2009: 236) claims

that “The Grapes of Wrath” is a characteristic of the “American travel experience as a whole”.

In “Travels with Charley” he introduces a new perception of travel. Steinbeck points to the reflections of a journey on the traveler’s psychology. The individual encounters the realities of the world that help changing his perception of himself within this world. According to Steinbeck (1986: 4) a journey as a human with individuality one cannot control it. A traveler does not take a journey; nevertheless, it takes him/her. In the narrative he confesses his desire to travel throughout the continent in order to experience America and American people. He states:

....I discovered that I did not know my own country. I, an American writer, writing about America, was working from memory, and the memory is at best a faulty, warpy reservoir. I had not heard the speech of America, smelled the grass and trees and sewage, seen its hills and water, its color and quality of light. I knew the changes only from books and newspapers... I was writing of something I did not know about. (Ibid: 5)

The travelogue is praised for its contribution to the changes in American culture. Cerce (2006: 69) argues that this travelogue is an impressive twentieth century ‘myth’ that changed American’s consciousness. It is an important milestone in the development of American culture. De Barros (2009:240) points to the influence of his travelogues on a number of contemporary travel narratives such as Bill Bryson’s “A walk in the woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail (1998)

2.2. Critics’ views on “Travels with Charley: In Search of America”

Some critics approach Steinbeck’s travelogue on the basis of the conventions of travel writing. They view it as a reflective of American culture through the descriptions of its different components. This investigation focuses on the exotics rather

than the transformation that the character undergoes during his encounter with these external realities. Stowe (2009:34) believes that in “Travels with Charley: In Search of America” Steinbeck represents a recent individualistic picture of the Americans through the descriptions of “land, people, customs, and history.”

A number of critics focus on Steinbeck’s apparent reason to be on the road ignoring the opportunities the road provides to Steinbeck which help his recognition of his relatedness to the natural world. Vicic (2012: 61) considers Steinbeck’s travels with Charley as a quest for his romanticized America. He encounters the racial injustice, monoculture and the American commonness. He was fascinated when he recognized that all Americans define themselves as a nation with specific shared attributes.

Other critics have consideration of Steinbeck’s desire of psychological change. Dunphy (2005) claims that in “Travels with Charley”, Steinbeck goes back to the times of self-reliance. He escaped into “spiritual and physical semi-individualism” and follows un-planned route having the desire to be unrecognized. He is moved by the desire of discovery to be on the road to reflect on what he encounters. He believes that planning for a trip is stupidity because all plans go futile.

2.3. Methods of Analysis

Employing Emerson’s Self-Reliance is helpful in interpreting the narrator’s communication to the world and his recognition of the individuality of the different component of the universe including humans. Emerson’s belief in individuality developed as a part of the American character with the publications of Ralf Waldo Emerson’s essay ‘Self –Reliance’ in 1841. It has its impact on American literature and helped shaping Steinbeck’s ideas. This philosophy is founded on the relation between the individual and the world. The independent self is capable of defining and understanding its position within this world.

Emerson insisted on being individualistic in thoughts and behavior. Emerson (1995: 26) asserts “No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature”

This concept is reflected in Steinbeck’s pursuit of reality as quest for his selfhood. He (1986: 6) decides to depend on his own eyes experiencing what he encounters throughout his journeys. This is supportive of the idea that one is capable of self-orientation and has ability to perceive the world which constitutes the core of Emerson’s teaching. Emerson says,

“Man is his own star; and the soul that can
Render an honest and perfect man,
Command all light, all fate,” (1995: 23)

O’ Dwyer (2012: 103) interprets Emerson’s message as a call to perceive the surrounding with the individual’s own eyes and to experience life in his or her own way. This philosophy is reflected in Steinbeck’s perception of the places he comes through during his travel.

Another important philosophy that can help the interpretation of the characters’ reflection and engagement in the natural world is Arne Naess’s notion of Self-Realization, the ultimate norm. This norm involves the individual to stop considering the self as an isolated entity from human communities. Talukder (2016: 219) claims that this concept transcends the individual’s conscious of his own self, ego, and emphasizes the union of this self and the universe. It helps emphasizing the role of the integrated world in the process of ‘Self-Realization’.

Deep Ecology is a universal philosophy that concerns the relation of humans to the environment. Rice (2011: 31-32) argues that the concept of man-natural world relation is important for the process of perceiving the other. It considers equally all elements of life, living and nonliving creatures and reflects consciousness of the unity of the different elements of the universe and the position of man within it. It paved the way

for the movement that is known ‘Deep Ecology’. It calls for a new conception of life recognizing their belonging to the diverse and complex natural world. Talukder (2016: 221- 224) claims that Deep Ecologist identify the human within the “greater whole” world and establishes its work upon the idea that everything is interrelated. The principle is considered an alternative of Darwin’s theory which adopts “either you or me”. This principle of integrity is the foundation of ‘Self- Realization’ in Plato’s view of self development and in Aristotle’s “holism”. Plato’s opinion of the self was drawn upon Socrates’ notion of “know thyself”. The self was the core of Socrates’ thought who believes that the “unexamined life is not worth living”. In other words self knowledge involves understanding, examining and interpreting the self, which is considered the goal of “self-realization”. To put Plato’s individual self in its world there was Aristotle’s holistic approach to nature; the individual self has to perceive everything in this universe as interrelated parts. Humphrey (2012: 254) argues that biological individuals exist as integrated connected entities in a larger whole, which is easily recognized in the routinely principles of this world. In other words, the earth is more than the human. It is more than the species of man and it is for the benefit of humanity.

Deep ecology conception is reflected in John Steinbeck’s writing. In “Travels with charley: In search of America” Steinbeck reflects on different elements of ecosystem such as trees, rivers, forests, deserts and mountains. Through these integrated parts of nature Steinbeck (1986: 190) realizes that they are all reflections of himself. He grasps this truth when he reflects on the redwood tree. With this conclusion he believes that his quest comes to an end.

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

3.1. The Travelogue and the First Person Narrator

First person narration helps projecting the traveler's perception and creates a strong bond between the writer and the reader. It becomes convincing when the traveler is the narrator of the experience. He reflects the worlds he comes across reflecting his personality and his perception of what he encounters. “Travels with Charley” is a subjective representation of the worlds Steinbeck encounters. There is a strong connectedness between the ‘I’ and the ‘eye’ which is the window to his psyche and reflection of his personality and experiences. Firman (1996: 11) views the kin relation between the ‘I’ and the “Self” as a union between the reflection and its source.

Steinbeck is the ‘I’ traveling in ‘Rocinant’ encountering the surroundings and reflecting on them. In different situations Steinbeck is able to communicate precisely what he experiences in his travels. In his narrative Steinbeck confesses “I felt helpless to assimilate what was fed in through my eyes. Each hill looks like the one just passed. I have felt this way in the Prado in Madrid after looking at a hundred paintings—the stuffed and inability to see more” (221). Here Steinbeck expresses his perception of the integrity of the whole world, the greater whole, in a short scene in the narrative. In this situation the ‘I’ is very effective in reflecting his experience and perception of the world. The narrator reflects these moments of understanding and involvement with the natural world. The elements of this world are reflective of the truth of the whole life rather than being different sites he comes across.

‘You’ also appears in Steinbeck’s narrative in situations he enthusiastically involves readers sharing them the interesting experience he lives at moments he comes upon the tremendous natural production. His mind is agitated by the extraordinary energy of this production and the fantastic green edged road. At the moments Steinbeck tries “to arrange some

pattern of thought to accommodate the teeming crowds of my seeing and hearing” (108). He shares readers this perceptual experience; “I’ll tell you” (108). ‘You’ is affective in involving and convincing readers that nowhere one finds such natural greatness when he states:

Go to Uffizzi in Florence, the Louvre in Paris, and you are so crushed with the numbers, once the might of greatness, that you go away distressed, with a feeling like constipation. And then when you are alone and remembering the canvases sort themselves out; some are eliminated by your taste or your limitations, but others stand up clear and clean. Then you can go back to look at one thing untroubled by the shouts. (108)

The narrator’s intention is to direct readers’ mind to the difference between the teemed world and the situation Steinbeck comes across. Readers come up with the judgment themselves “untroubled by the shouts”.

3.2. John Steinbeck Starts Driving

As Steinbeck prepares to set out the hurricane Donna is reported to be approaching the bay. He describes the situation in these words:

The wind struck on the moment we were told it would, ..The boats which had been tethered one to the other had fouled up by now, the tow line under propeller and rudder and the two hulls bashing and scraping together. Another craft had dragged its anchor and gone ashore on a mud bank (14)

The descriptive language used by Steinbeck expresses his strong urge to detach himself from his domestic stable life and move somewhere. The wind here is a representative of his strong desire to cut himself from the “comet tail” and drive away. The word ‘struck’ is suggestive to Steinbeck’s overwhelming drive to move and learn about himself and his land. It recommends pulling himself away from his ordinary life like the craft drags its anchor and drives away.

3.3. Away From Home

The narrator attempts to have knowledge of himself through reflecting on different relations and elements of the worlds he comes across. Therefore, he needs to transcend his narrow world of the individual self and perceive his relatedness and position to the world he encounters. He needs to explore the world he belongs to unaffected by the views of others. Steinbeck claims that depending on other's views to shape his perspective of the world is a crime. He thinks that there are no constants; each individual has his own arrangements of the world and his or her personal views which are, to a greater degree, guided by the world one encounters (5, 77). One concludes that the individual's view of the world is not only shaped by his psychological composition but also determined by the world he encounters.

In order to compose his own perspective of himself and the world he has to give up what is thought of as the warmth and the comforts of familial life and drives through the terrors, uncomfortable and the unknown (19). This helps him expose himself to a wider world that could provide a clear authentic view of his life. Talukder (2016: 231) believes that we need to refine our perception in order to achieve self-realization and this occurs when our narrow self becomes unauthorized. The individual makes efforts to make sense of the surroundings in order to identify this self in relation to the world.

3.4. Attachment to Nowhere and Encountering the ‘Other’ During Travel

Being on the road gives Steinbeck opportunity to go through a process of self-knowledge or self-realization. Emerson (1995: 31) considers “Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his thought and posterity, seems to follow his steps as a procession”. He reflects this principle and transcends the “commonplace” of his social views. He states “On the long

journey doubts were often my companions” (76). He has the desire to put down the formulated concepts of his world and have a clear perception in order to discover the realities of his land following his own observation and judgment. It is suggested in his words: “I confess to a feeling of gray desolation” (21). This dark image suggests his dissatisfaction of the formulated views of his land. Steinbeck decides to drive “free unanchored” (10), led by his unrestricted star and he is aware that “my trip demanded that I leave my name and my identity at home. I had to be peripatetic eyes and ear” He continues his journeys anonymously driving and signing hotels and camping in different locales in the country (6, 234). This anonymity is an attempt to detach himself from what he considers disturbing of the wholeness of the world he wants to be absorbed in and tries to realize his position within. Emerson (1995: 31) believes that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but he is the center of things. Where he is, there is nature.

3.5. Being on the Road and Learning Process

On the road one leaves behind all the pressures, routines and all materialistic views of life that affect human perception. Consequently the individual begins recognizing the world and people around him. Active engagement with the new worlds, the other, involves one to refrain himself from some of old ideas of society in order to have a clear perception of this other. The individual begins to think differently about the surroundings and the self. Wispinski (1997: 4) argues that humans have inborn tendencies to find regularities and travel provides them an opportunity to have a clear vision and position themselves within these arrangements. According to Thompson (2011: 6) travel is one of the greatest gates to the liberty of the individual and travelogue is a way of appreciating this liberty.

Enjoying this freedom enables Steinbeck to recognize the truth of the existence (6). His intention is the act of traveling

rather than the destination. It gives him opportunity to expose to different components of this world; different people and locales. The road gives him the opportunity to reflect on different relations with the other, different peoples and sites, he encounters. De Barros (2009: 238) concludes that travelogue's art provides a way of self-examination; traveling absorbs the traveler and paves the way for his encounter with the other and then carries him to reflect on his inner self.

Steinbeck views travel as an integral part of his education. Being attached to home brings him to where he is directed within the confines of his familial and social norms that does not help his education. He leaves the narrow view of the self to a wider world that provides a rich source of learning. He believes in his silent reflection and he is sure that his own view guides his observation. He drives his truck alone because he believes that more than one person disturbs the “ecologic complex” (6, 20). Here Steinbeck views himself within a world in which everything is interrelated. This view emphasizes the principle of ‘Deep Ecology’ that one can identify himself within the “greater whole”. Through this integrated world the individual is able to obtain knowledge of himself/herself, to achieve self-realization. He, as a Deep Ecologist, perceives the earth as more than the human and everything in this universe as interrelated parts. This reflects Steinbeck's awareness of important facts and relations in this complex integrated world. Perceiving these relations, later, helps Steinbeck's understanding of his relation to the natural world. He discovers the commonness between different components of the natural world- the ecologic complex that includes human.

To go further with his relation to the landscape, he starts to think of himself as a reflection of his land and it has a great part in forming one's individuality. When Steinbeck reaches California, where he spent his boyhood, he discovers that the place of his origin had changed through progress. Here, he realizes that “what we knew is dead, and may be the

greatest part of what we were is dead” (154). It means one does create an identity to the place through his or her encounter and own perception of the ‘Other’. This comes true with what Stowe (2009: 26) believes; landscape is a reflection of the inner psyche of the observer. They are not entities that are envisioned but rather a number of mental processes through which identity is built and the place of an individual within the world is realized.

The narrator encounters different situations and people and he recognizes that people are representation of their lands, one example is the man he meets North Dakota. Steinbeck manages to have a friendly talk with the man but he fails. It seems that the man reflective of his land (154-155). This awareness continues to be emphasized in the end of his journeys. Steinbeck discovers that what is thought of as external reality is not external (209). This supports the view of the external world as reflection of the inner self of the individual. Talukder (2016: 220) argues that the integrated whole is a broadened and developed individual self that contributes to the making and persistence of this unified whole that is composed of all sorts of life. Hamera and Bendixen (2009: 4) state “Land is the reflection of human psychology”.

Steinbeck’s search for America continues to be an attempt to obtain knowledge of himself. When he achieves it his journeys conclude before he returns to the “comet tail”. Lisle (2006) claims that the goal of travels is more than destinations; he states:

Travelogues are founded upon a commitment to self-discovery: it is the education of the soul that is the goal of these movements of the body...although the goal is self-knowledge, the journey is no less indispensable: it is by exploring the world that one begins to discover oneself. In this way, internal and external journeys fuse in the subject of the travel writer: physical journeys to far- away places provoked by an encounter with other places and people.(45)

Steinbeck concludes his trips identifying himself relating it to that natural world; reflecting on its rivers, deserts, lakes and mountains. This leads him to recognize his relation to his land “this monster of a land turns out to be the macrocosm of the microcosm of me” (209). During his travels Steinbeck recognizes that people on earth are one part of the greater interrelated world. Emerson (1995) states:

Things are so strictly related, that according to the skill of the eye from any one object the parts and properties of any other may be predicted. If we had eyes to see it, a bit of stone from the city wall would certify us of the necessity that man must exist as steadily as the city. That identity makes us all one, and reduces to nothing great intervals on our customary scale. (: 266)

It is very important to have a clear understanding of the self; experiencing oneself is indeed one of the characteristics that define human beings. Reflecting on landscape the traveler has the opportunity to learn about the bonds that bring him together with the world and reach a state of self-realization within this integrated world. According to Kidari (2012: 38) the wholeness of the unconscious or the ‘universal’ originals are found in every human and it is what brings all humans together.

Steinbeck is preoccupied by reflecting on the commonness his people. First he questions whether America is a place that could be individualized by its common attributes. He wonders “Does all America so far smell alike? Or are there sectional smells?” (140). Then he perceives the ultimate fact about the world he lives in; the commonness of these environments bring together all parts of the world. When he crosses Fargo, North Dakota, he comments, “Fargo to me is brother to the fabulous places of the earth, kin to those magically remote spots mentioned by Herodotus and Marco Polo and Mandeville” (135). A wider horizon opens; the road helps Steinbeck’s perception of the wider unified world

throughout different times. Polkinghorne (1991: 136) argues that individuals always set their lives by integrating their specifics into a greater entity. It is important to consider any entity as a part of a multiple unified whole a world within which travelers can easily identify themselves.

Steinbeck continues with his new consciousness of the world when he crosses River Mississippi; he remarks: “the country opened out” (130). His statement reflects an optimistic view that has its origin in the belief that the river is the wide unrestricting world for its people. Crossing rivers goes parallel to the change that takes place in the travelers’ perception of the world. In such situation Steinbeck gets out of his ‘ego’ world into a wide world with limitless horizons. This contributes to positioning himself within the whole world. In general, water is admired and considered the reflection of human life. More specifically, water represents values in human’s life such as purity and the continuous change as well as the human’s desire of eternity. Eom (2014: 31-32) argues that water is a source of learning. There is no presence of past or future in it; only the present is. It is the eternal sensation of life. Afrasiabi (2012: 7) argues that Mississippi represents liberty.

Steinbeck feels warmth, emotional and involvement when he passes by the natural world that he holds inside. This leads him to question the features of the components of this site in human individuals. Once, he states that he cannot describe Deer Isle. He says:

There is something about it that opens no door to words. But it stays with you afterward, and, more than that, things you didn’t know you saw come back to you after you have left. One thing I remember very clearly. It might have been caused by the season with quality of light, or the autumn clarity. Everything stood out separate from everything else, a rock, a rounded lum of sea- polished driftwood on a beach, a roof line. Each pine tree was itself and separate even if it was a part of a forest. Drawing a very long bow of relationships, could I say

that the people have that same quality? Surely I never met such ardent individuals (54).

Steinbeck now is overwhelmed by the singularity of each of the different components of natural world. Something constitutes a great part of his unconscious and his inability to communicate it betrays his desire to speak it out. In this context Arne Naess's notion of Self- Realization is helpful to interpret Steinbeck observation, reflection and findings in this situation. The individual should stop considering the self as an isolated entity and emphasize the union of this self and the universe. The integrated world Steinbeck encounters has a great part in the process of 'Self-Realization'. He easily communicates this natural world since it is reflective of his spirit. In such sites Steinbeck lives special moments with nature and finds opportunity that could not be available elsewhere. In this stance he is enjoying moments of clear perception; he recognizes the mystery and individuality of the elements of the natural world. In his quest he attempts to explore and understand people's experience within the natural world and wonders whether that remarkable individuality and the wholeness characterize people's life. This leads to a further step in learning process; he emphasizes the unity of humans that reflects the integrated overall world. Emerson (1995: 261) draws it clear; he states, "walk onward into the opening landscape, absorbed by new pictures, and by new thoughts...until ...the recollection of home was crowded out of the mind ... and we were led in triumph by nature."

Later in his trip Steinbeck emphasizes this relation claiming the generosity of the land that stands as a guide for people (106). This criterion is helpful to bring the individual closer to a pure and clear world which can be a source of human education. Reflecting on the constituents of Deer Isle Steinbeck recognizes the individuality of the components of a forest and questions the connectedness of people to this part of nature as

he feels its intense emotion. For Steinbeck, at this moment the external world is internalized and he experiences a sense of the individualized self by questioning the same qualities of the natural world components within himself. A person gets out of himself to think deeply of the relation of this self and the surrounding. At such moments the feeling of the self will be replaced by the feeling of oneness of the entire world. According to Kidari (2012: 49) if a person transcends his/her feeling of the individual self and begins to learn to define himself/herself and the world, a deep feeling of oneness with the entire world begins to overwhelm the individual.

Later in the narrative, after a rainy night in Maine, Steinbeck awakes in the morning and describes the situation he is involved in: “The sun was up when I awakened and the world was remade and shining. There are as many worlds as there are kinds of days, and as an opal changes its colors and its fire to match the nature of a day, so do I” (63). It is a new day for Steinbeck and he is a different person; now he has a clear perception of the world. At the moment he moves further; he is sure of sharing the qualities of nature. He has a clear vision of the commonness between the humans and elements of nature.

Steinbeck continues involving himself with nature getting out from the narrow imperfect human sphere to the wide perfect nonhuman unified world. This view of humans’ relation to nature is supportive to concept that in this world everything is interrelated. In this situation Steinbeck continues to identify himself within the “greater whole”. It constitutes a step in his learning. Talukder (2016: 220) argues that everything in this world is internally unified and all creatures constitute this oneness. “Life” basically brings together the human and the environment. An active process of extending “oneself” in order to recognize that the ‘self’ is part of the landscape one encounters. Therefore, one cannot isolate an individual from this integrated whole. A human feels a strong bond with the surrounding natural world and what one does to

any element of this world; for example, plants would be reversed to himself/herself.

This statement interprets Steinbeck's interaction with the landscape; this relatedness comes to be part of his unconscious. Whenever he comes across natural landscape, the scene triggers his thoughts and his sense of belonging to this site as it happens when he encounters the natural world of Deer Isle. Emerson (1995: 160- 61) states “how willingly we would escape the barriers which render us comparatively impotent.. escape the sophistication... and suffer nature to entrance us...the incommunicable trees begin to persuade us to live with them and quit our life of trifles... and we were led by nature.

In another situation Steinbeck, as a part of the world he encounters, reflects and tries to learn about himself through the presence of other creatures. He makes it clear when he describes the night and the inhabitants of the darkness; those creatures declare their presence through their breath, perception, feelings and their communication. Steinbeck claims he felt relevance to these things (193). Now he has a clear perception of the world as a guide and inspiration of his thoughts not as a place to come across and describe. With the recognition of relatedness to natural world Steinbeck begins to think of the individual self as an entity that cannot be determined in isolation. Its presence within its world gives it individuality. In the end of his journeys he comes to the fact that this land is a reflection of him and he, as a human, holds and represents it “this monster of a land turns out to be the macrocosm of the microcosm of me”(209). Rice (2011: 35) argues that the nonhuman world is “a presence rather than a framing device... a process rather than a constant.” In this concern, Firman (1954: 27) asserts that at times of union with ‘Self’ one experiences oneness with all things and this experience influences one's relation to the self. Here a person seeks comprehensive relations with other people and the world

through which he/she learns about meaning of life. Consequently, the individual can identify himself within other relationships that make up different aspects of people's lives

3.6. Within Mountains and Deserts

Mountains constitute a great part of the traveler's consciousness; the realization of mountains throughout the narrator's trips suggests the belongingness he feels to this entity. Hamlin (2016) believes that mountains are the foundation of the earth (185). This discovery comes to be part of Steinbeck's experience on the road. Driving through Salinas Valley he reclaims: “I remembered how once, in that part of youth that is deeply concerned with death, I wanted to be buried on this peak where without eyes I could see everything I knew and loved, for in those days there was no world beyond the mountains. And I remembered how intensely I felt about my interment” (207). The narrator feels intimacy to this element of nature. Steinbeck expresses the comfort and peace he feels on seeing a mountain in attempts to identify himself within the world of mountains and recognize himself like a mountain special and individualized. He desires to enjoy the mountains' secure world that embraces him and represents the wholeness of his universe. The top of the mountain where he desires to rest is the place where he communicates the world. He realizes that mountains represent the wholeness that includes all sorts of life when he says, “there was no world beyond the mountain”. Kyoung (2015: 72) considers mountains as sites of enlightenment and communication. Moreover, they represent self refining and progress.

Steinbeck continues realizing his existence within landscape. Desert is a world where one can find freedom and simplicity which is required in the process of self-realization. Crossing the desert comes parallel to crossing to a new stage of his perception. Driving through Southwest Steinbeck describes part of life in the desert,

At night in this waterless air the stars come down just out of reach of your fingers. In such a place lived the hermits of the early church piercing to infinity with unlettered minds. The great concepts of oneness and of majestic order seem always to be born in the desert. The quiet counting of the stars and observation of their movements, came first from desert places. I have known desert men who chose their places with quiet and slow passion, rejecting the nervousness of a watered world. These men have not changed with the exploding times except to die and be replaced by other like them.” (214)

Steinbeck experiences a clear perception of life in that waterless land. He starts to reflect in one of the universal facts; nature is unified and organized and these features are reflected in its people. He becomes conscious of the oneness of man and the natural world. Men of the desert are as pure and tranquil as the place they inhabit. They, like desert sands, are not subject to change or disturbance. They obtain continuity and serenity from the stars. It provides unbounded home and it greatly shapes the individual’s psychology and organizes his or her life experience. Later in the narrative Steinbeck emphasizes that one can obtain knowledge in deserts. He recognizes that “true secrets in the desert” (216). He becomes sure that “Life could not change the sun or water the desert, so it changed itself” (217). With the changing life the elements of the natural world remain untouched in their individuality.

3.7 End of Quest

In the end the commonplace view of Steinbeck’s land now falls apart. He confesses “I could not see everything. My impressionable gelatin plate was getting muddled... the road becomes endless stone ribbon, the hills obstructions, the trees green blurs, the people simply moving figures with heads but no faces” (210, 275). His intention to learn about America is unfulfilled. He drives all over the country through different elements of landscape and he feels lost and confused. His quest

does not come to an end and he realizes that there is no one reality; a surprising conclusion after crossing and reflecting on different worlds on the road. He remarks “I thought how every safe generality I gathered in my travels was canceled by another. In the night the Bad Lands had become Good Lands. I can’t explain it. That’s how it was” (157). Steinbeck’s belief that there are no constants is brought into ground and his view is controlled by the context. He grasps the great truth of his being; he is the miniature of his land. He says “this monster of a land turns out to be the macrocosm of the microcosm of me”(209).

CONCLUSION

- Steinbeck becomes sure that his recognition is controlled by the situation he encounters and not by the ready concepts of his society and he learns important fact of human’s existence.
- He finds that it is difficult to have a clear understanding of the individual self when it is considered in isolation. The self is not a scientific fact can be discovered once and accepted as one entity; it has individualistic presence within its integrated world.
- He finds an answer to his question about the commonness of humans.
- He realizes the psychological reflections of his land of himself; Steinbeck becomes aware of his belonging to his land.

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