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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

The California Dream:

A Dangerous Social and Environmental Myth Protested by John Muir and John Steinbeck

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

in

World Cultures

by

Raymond Earl Winter III

Committee in charge:

Professor Jan Goggans, Chair  
Professor Michael Barbour  
Professor Gregg Camfield  
Professor Sean Malloy

2010



The Dissertation of Raymond Earl Winter III is approved, and it is acceptable in quality  
and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

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Chair

University of California, Merced

2010

## DEDICATION

Before and beyond all others, this endeavor is dedicated to my wife, Kelly, who has been more patient, supportive, and enduring than anyone could possibly expect of another human being. Kelly, your sacrifices throughout this journey have been immeasurable, WKRXJK , ¶YH FRXQWHG HYHU\ RQH , DP KRQRU accomplishment with you, which could never have been achieved without your vision of LWV FRPSOHWLRQ DQG ZKDW VR RIWHQ DPRXQWHG WR go play outside.

To my children-- Emma, Paige, and Ethan <sup>2</sup> I hope your youth protected you from the hardships of this season. You continue to be my inspiration for pursuing scholarship I believe will make a difference in your world. I hope to do my part in making each of you world-changers who pursue justice where it is needed.

To Paula Watney, truly a third parent to our children, thank you for your sacrificial and gracious nurturing of RXU NLGV :H FRXOGQ ¶W LPDJLQH H their lives with anyone else. I know you love it, but we no doubt tested your limits, yet never found your breaking point. This degree likewise belongs to you.

Thank you to my extended family for the support, encouragement, and a lineage full of the stories and experiences of a western migration which have shaped and inspired me.

To my insightful and inspiring advisor, Jan Goggans, thank you endlessly for the healthy doses of perspective, your perpetual sense of humor, and your genuine concern for me, first as a family man and secondly as a professional. You always made this seem more possible when I was less than optimistic. Likewise, I thank committee members Gregg Camfield, Sean Malloy, and Michael Barbour for their insight, and the World Cultures faculty for their investment of wisdom and support.

I hope my effort at encouraging greater social and environmental justice models a form of stewardship and service that inspires others and honors God.

Table of Contents

Signature Page ..... iii

Dedication ..... iv

Table of Contents ..... v

Vita ..... vii

Abstract ..... viii

Chapter One: The Social and Environmental Destruction Invoked by the California  
 Dream ..... 1

    Central California Today: A Brief Social and Environmental State of Affairs ..... 7

    Defining of Terms and Structure ..... 11

    Dissertation Overview ..... 18

Chapter Two: The Inventors and Investors of the California Dream in the American  
 Imagination ..... 21

    Explorers ..... 28

    Builders ..... 46

    Profiteers ..... 79

& K D S W H U 7 K U H H 0 D Q \ & D O L I R U Q L D V 0 X L U ¶ V 6 H U P R Q R  
 California Landscapes ..... 96

    0 X L U ¶ V , Q . W . H . Q . W . L . R . Q . V ..... 118

    0 X L U ¶ V 7 H . E . K . Q . L . T . X . H . V ..... 135

    7 K H 5 H F H S W L R Q D Q G ( I I . H . E . W . V . R . I . 0 . X . L . U . ¶ . V . : U L W 5 6 Q J

& K D S W H U ) R X U 6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V \$ O W . H . U . D . W . L . R . Q . R 7 5 D 0 D O L .

6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ . V . . . Q . W . H . Q . W . L . R . Q . V . . . . .	180
6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ . V . . . 7 . H . F . K . Q . L . T . X . H . V . . . . .	207
7 K H 5 H F H S W L R Q D Q G ( I I H F . W . V . . . R . I . . . 6 . W . H . L . Q . E . H . F . N . . . ¶ . V . . . : U L W L G . . . . .	
Chapter Five: The Central Valley Testifies: Muir and Steinbeck in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century . . . . .	249
Appendix . . . . .	264
Works Cited . . . . .	270

## VITA

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The California Dream:

A Dangerous Social and Environmental Myth Protested by John Muir and John Steinbeck

by

Raymond Earl Winter III

Doctor of Philosophy, Emphasis in World Cultures

University of California, Merced, 2010

Professor Jan Goggans, Chair

This study examines the L Q W H Q W L R Q V W H F K Q L T X H W y D Q G H I I H First Summer in the Sierra D Q G - R K Q The Grapes of Wrath (1939) as they review the social and environmental injustices in the Great Central Valley which have been F U H D W H G E \ W K H S H U S H O W D W H L R Q R K H W H 3 & D I O W H F the Dream itself, making a case for a less individualistic and dominating perspective of land ownership and of fellow mankind, to be replaced with a more altruistic and interdependent model.

I establish the sources and early applications of this utopian mythology through W K H H [ S O R U H U E X L O G H U D Q G S H O R L W H H ( U ) S K D V H V R I &

belief that California is limitlessly bountiful and a guaranteed source of prosperity for every hard worker falsely represents opportunity and literally overwhelms the landscape; (2) certain parties of industry continue to perpetuate an Edenic California mythology for the sake of profit at the cost of land and livelihood; and (3) literary efforts to counter the myth continue to challenge a social and environmental ethic that inappropriately encourages social hierarchies and environmental degradation. These literary efforts, as modeled by Muir and Steinbeck, likewise shift the psychological location of California in the American imagination into a more honest, informed, and justice-oriented position.

The study concludes with a contemporary review of how the myth continues to this day to justify social and environmental crises in the Great Central Valley, and how writers and citizens alike must continue to reorient the perception of this place in light of radical social and environmental changes that have occurred since the founding days of the California Dream.

Chapter One:

The Social and Environmental Destruction Invoked by the California Dream

7KH ³&DOLIRUQLD 'UHDP ´ RU WKH DUWLFXODWLRQ RI \$  
 DSSOLHG WR WKH-FROWL³&DOLIRUQLD WKH HQGOHV  
 expansive place to start over and find prosperity hard work on its beautiful and  
 conseFUDWHG ODQG ZLOO DOZD\ V UHVXOW LQ IXOILLOOPH

³\$UW LV QRW D PLUURU KHOG XS WR UHDOLW\ EXW D KI  
 --Bertolt Brecht

³\$OWKRXXJK WKH FUHDWLYH DQG FULWLFDO DUWV PD\ V  
 investigationand public policy, clearly they are exercising, however unconsciously, an  
 influence upon the emerging culture of environmental concern, just as they have played a  
 SDUW LQ VKDSLQJ DV ZHOODV PHUHO\ H[SUHVVLQJ HYH  
 How weimage a thing, true or false, affects our conduct toward it, the conduct of nations  
 DV ZHOODV SHUVRQV ´

--Lawrence Buell

)URP D GLVWDQFH &DOLIRUQLD¶V \*UHDW &HQWUDO  
 HFRQRPLF IRUFH SRUWUD\ V WKH LGHDO H[SUHVVLRQ RI  
 Yet if examined closely, taking into account the tensions of race, class, land ownership,

and the environmental degradation which are byproducts of this mythologized agricultural paradise, the Valley becomes an imperialist dystopia.

Still marketed to America as a land of gingham table-clothed picnics and all-American conservative family values lived out on thousands of modest family farms, the environmental and social constructs of the Valley are nothing of the sort. The state of California and industrial giants which stand to profit from such idealized representations frequently avoid addressing the issues of itinerant field labor, the polarization between whites and people of color, the dependency on toxic chemicals for the sake of durable and beautiful produce, and other significant environmental concerns such as air quality, water use, and land degradation. Instead, the economic juggernaut of the region, agriculture, has used media to sustain the mythologized image of the Central Valley as a wholesome and pristine heartland of abundance, purity, and the ultimate land of opportunity. The lineage of such dangerous untruths is clearly traced to idealized writings by past dreamers of the land, then perpetuated by voices seeking to profit from this perception of paradise. ~~6 X F K Q D L Y H G H S L F W L R Q V K K C H U V R F L H W~~ The needs of a place and its people in a steward-based, ethics-oriented, and informed manner. Social and environmental injustices are left largely unacknowledged and therefore continue to perpetuate themselves unchecked.

This is where the writers in and of the Central Valley have distinguished themselves over the last century-- as informative voices of protest against the natural and human abuses that come with commercialization and nation building, reigning in the unbridled California Dream and calling a nation to action. California writers of all genres have considered their craft not simply an aesthetic exercise, but an effective medium

through which to change the perceptions and actions of a nation. Their voices have reflected the victimization of a land and its people with a sincere tone and unsettling content grounded in reality. They have sought to plow a new, more true furrow in the western consciousness of America.

- R K Q 0 MYL F 1 S Summer in the Sierra (1911) D Q G - R K Q 6 T M E H L Q E H F N ¶ V Grapes of Wrath (1939) D U H W Z R R I W K H 9 D O O H \ ¶ W R A P R V W H L Q I O X H Q F X O W X U D O O \ H Q J U D L Q H G 3 & D O L I R U Q L D ' U H D P ´ L Q W H U F landscape and its labor force against an anachronistic mythology. Despite being voices of influence decades ago, the egalitarian philosophies of Muir and Steinbeck still powerfully speak into the 9 D O O H ¶ V most contested situations that reflect the inherent injustices sourced in the mainstream idealization of California. Corporate agricultural giants subsuming small farms, urban sprawl, air and water pollution, and farm laborer rights are but a few of the highly charged regional issues with which Muir and Steinbeck continue to take issue. They dominate the landscape of protest so overwhelmingly in part because they were groundbreaking voices offering a radical shift in perspective, and also because they did so with such craftsmanship. Thus, their ideas continue to insist on a philosophical and practical engagement in the process of reimagining this region.

I assert that these protesting voices of the Valley, despite the propagandistic agents of commerce working against them, activated a perceptual change in the understanding of regional realities that catalyzed a spirit of advocacy. In defending its silenced workers of the Dust Bowl era, and the appropriated land of early statehood, Muir and Steinbeck demythologized an idealized region full of social and environmental injustices.

At the center of their argument is an insistence that the tenets of the established California Dream must be replaced as the standard social and environmental philosophy lived by in the modern era. The Dream may have applied to the state at the time of its admittance into the Union in 1850, but it became almost immediately obsolete as all the land was quickly claimed and an unforgiving capitalist model was applied to its many bounties. Perpetuating this landscape from a never-ending flood of pilgrims seeking their share of the promise. It abandoned all else to seek prosperity in the Promised Land, left to discover all too often that they came far too late. Their fate is relegated to doing the difficult and unrewarding labor necessary to sustain the wealth <sup>2</sup> and the mythology <sup>2</sup> of the fortunate few who

The Grapes of Wrath as an entry point into this reevaluation of California in the national consciousness. I consider how the California Dream leads directly to social and environmental injustices, and assert that it is an important examination in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in light of intensified cultural and ecological contestation. Artists and citizens alike are inspired and informed by understanding how these two voices, the best at what they did, have effectively shifted mainstream culture toward justice.

interchangeable terms such as the Promised Land, New Jerusalem, Eden, Arcadia, Land of Milk and Honey, and Manifest Destiny. My definition of the Dream in this study is a

compilation of fundamental American ideas developed in many literary and historical representations of individual prosperity. It is here articulated as such: California is the endlessly bountiful and expansive place to start over and prosperity<sup>2</sup> hard work on its beautiful and consecrated land will always result in fulfillment

It must be stated explicitly that the California Dream has environmental and social aspects to it which are innately connected. Thus, when the D U H D P L W Q E U V A R I F L D O environmental injustices take place. When land is abused for gain by one group of people, another group of people (along with the collective, ultimately) is burdened or victimized. This occurs either through the act of altering the landscape or through the efforts of the labor class, thus invoking social hierarchies. Likewise, when a group of people apply a model of social hierarchy on a society, it obviously burdens or victimizes W K H <sup>3</sup> O R Z H U ' F O D V V 7 K L V V R F e l d o n e s h o u l d w h e I L F D W L R Q L environment, full of symbols and structures of stratification that perpetuate social injustice through environmental realities. Such an oppressive synergy of cause and effect clearly manifests itself in the examinations of Muir and Steinbeck. While the idealized depictions of California are founded on beautiful people and places that actually exist, this romantic perspective is far too narrow and must be broadened for the sake of justice. There is enough room for both the glorious and the galling in the social construction of California. Indeed, it can be argued that retaining the glorified images are just as important in developing a culture of activism and stewardship since they show the public a beautiful place and lifestyle worthy of preservationist efforts.

There are certainly many less culturally significant stereotypical perceptions of California which are not explicitly U H I H U H Q F H G L Q W K L V <sup>3</sup> & D O L I R U Q L D '

making and studying such a list it is not difficult to identify their source in the mother archetype. For example, consider the following:

- x Californians are all liberals.
- x Everyone eats organic foods and is health conscious.
- x Everyone is an environmentalist or environmentally conscious.
- x Earthquakes happen every day.
- x You see movie stars all the time.
- x Everyone is peace loving and fights for social justice.
- x 7KHUH¶V DOZD\V JUHDW ZHDWKHU WKH FOLPDWH L
- x Everybody is middle or upper class.
- x Most people are blonde and beautiful.
- x ,W¶V DOO WKH sLD.PH.K.R.R.H.Q.R.X and active.
- x Everyone lives close to the beach.

While each of these myths offer insight into the location of California in the American mind and are worthy of interpretive consideration, the fundamental California Dream as articulated earlier is the broadest and most culturally pervasive. Centering it as the basis for analysis enables other texts, historical events, and entities of popular culture to also engage in this dialogue. Ultimately, the California Dream is the basis for nearly all others, representing the fundamental ideas of improved social standing and unlimited opportunity through the consecrated land. It has at once a social and environmental orientation which appropriately weaves the two most important entities of the American psychic identity inseparably together.



Central California Today: A Brief Social and Environmental State of Affairs

The effects of industrial agriculture have altered the landscape and environmental conditions significantly from what the Great Central Valley was like before the explosion of agricultural renovation took hold of the region around the turn of the century. Erosion, salination, toxic pollution, the eradication of indigenous plants and wildlife, and statewide damming that eliminates entire habitats are direct results of the agricultural

L Q G X V W U \ | V D F W L R Q V I R U P D [ L P D O S U R G 6 X I F W L R Q 6 F K R

radical alteration, Elna Bakker notes in her ecological construction of the state, *An Island*

Called California W K D W L Q G L J H Q R X V J U D V V H V K D Y H 3 U H W U H D Y

Valley. With them went many of the animals and other plants which, in adjusting to each other by the laws of communal living, had succeeded in creating an extensive and

I O R X U L V K L Q J F R P P X Q L W \ ' 7 K H U H D U H W Z R & D O L I R

of the past, and that of today, the latter being a product of technology, commercial demand, and a culture of capitalism.

The diversity of plant and animal life in California before European arrival is seen only in scattered remnants today. The rare patches of blossoming annuals in vernal pools west of the Sierra Nevada and Peninsular Ranges and the tule elk which once roamed the grasslands by the thousands are now confined to pockets of protected reserves. Even the blossom trails of the Central Valley are considered tourist attractions limited to specific routes, rather than simply being what much

R I W K H 9 D O O H I | V | O P R U

W U D Q V I R U P D W L R Q P D N H V L W T X L W H H D V \ W R E U R D G O \

appropriated into orchards, vineyards, and pastures. This enormous ecological ecosystem since so many of them have been eliminated or severely reduced. Encounters

with kit foxes and coyotes, for example, are anomalies. Other large mammals of prey that have either moved out of the Valley or have been eliminated by human efforts are mountain lions, grizzly bears, and gray wolves (Schoenherr 550). In terms of major vegetation types, 99% of the prairies, 94% of the freshwater marshes, and 89% of the riparian woodlands that were present in the early 1800s are now gone, replaced by fields of produce, roads, and suburbs (516). Irrigation farming has also largely neutralized the influence of an aridity gradient which increases from north to south, dropping as low as 12.5 cm of average rainfall in the southern San Joaquin Valley<sup>1</sup>. This technically classifies indigenous growth as desert scrub, yet this is the most agriculturally lucrative region in the world.

Unfortunately, one of the traits the Great Central Valley is known for is its poor air quality. This is due to two main factors, the first of which is unavoidable. The Valley is encircled by two substantial mountain ranges<sup>2</sup> the Sierra Nevada to the east and the Coastal Range to the west. Besides a small passage at the San Francisco Bay which roughly divides the two north-south running valleys (Sacramento and San Joaquin), air flow coming in or going out is very limited. The second factor compounds this problem. Particulate matter and invisible gases (such as dust, airborne pesticides, and livestock CO<sub>2</sub>) lifted into the air from agricultural activity combines with the auto emissions from an ever-growing populace to create dangerously poor air quality. According to the American Lung Association, four of the six most polluted U.S. cities by ozone are located in the Valley (#2<sup>2</sup> Bakersfield, #3<sup>2</sup> Visalia, #4<sup>2</sup> Fresno, #6<sup>2</sup> Sacramento), and

---

<sup>1</sup> )RU D PRUH WHFKQLFDO DQG GHWDLOHG SURILOH RI WKH \*UHDW & climate patterns, see Barbour, Keeler- : ROIH DQG 6 Forests of California<sup>rd</sup> ed.

four of the seven most polluted U.S. cities by airborne year-round particle pollution are located in the Valley (#1<sup>2</sup> Bakersfield, #4<sup>2</sup> Visalia, #6<sup>2</sup> Hanford, #7<sup>2</sup> Fresno) ( <sup>3</sup>Most Polluted ). Needless to say, this environmental challenge significantly affects the vascular health of its residents.

With each decade there seems to be a new round of residents from somewhere on the globe who have joined the planetary microcosm that is California. And despite its lack of a worldly and metropolitan reputation, the populace of the Central Valley is very ethnically diverse and is the location of several big cities. The urban areas of Sacramento, Fresno, and Bakersfield have more than 500,000 residents each( <sup>3</sup>Urban ), bigger than such other major U.S. cities as New Orleans, Cleveland, Kansas City, Oakland, and Minneapolis ( <sup>3</sup>Top ).

California has 76,000 farms which collectively have earned over \$30 billion from the sale of produce each year since 2004 ( <sup>3</sup>Agricultural ´17). It is the most lucrative state in the Union in terms of agricultural profits, out-earning number two Texas and number three Iowa combined (18). The average California farm earned three times the profit made in other states, even though being smaller on average (346 acres to 446 acres) (19). The counties of the San Joaquin Valley, which makes up the southern half of the Great Valley, are the most profit-generating agricultural counties in the nation. Within the state, six of the top seven most profitable counties are in the San Joaquin Valley, each of which far eclipsing the billion dollar mark in annual revenue (19). California also leads the nation in the production of over 80 major crop and livestock commodities (20).

In discussing the ethnic makeup of the Valley, two of the most respected literary

KL VWRULDQV RI WKH UHJLRQ \*HUDOG +DVODP DQG -DP

ZKLFK VRPH GLVPLVV IURP DIDU DV μUHGQLFN ¶ EXW ZK

comprised not only of transplanted Texans and southerners, but of transplanted Swedes, Blacks, Germans, Italians, Yugoslavs, Armenians, Portuguese, Mexicans, Japanese,

&KLQHVH DQG %DVTXHV DQG WKHLU FKLOGUHQ DQG V

people who share for better or for worse an interest in its two great natural resources,

IHWLOH ODQG DQG RLO ´ 7KH HWKQLFLWLHV WKDW PD

global diversity, perhaps due in part to the myth of new beginnings that appeals to everyone everywhere. According to data recorded by the California Pan-Ethnic Health

Network, people of color make up nearly 64% of FUHVQR &RXQW\¶V %SR SXODWL

SDFUDPHQR &RXQW\¶V SR SXODWL RQ

Demographic Statistics. The largest of these ethnicities is Latino (49% and 20%), followed by Asian and African American. In Fresno County, one in three citizens lives below the poverty line, and in Sacramento over one in five is in the same category. In terms of languages spoken in the home, 40% and 24% of people in these two counties, respectively, have a first language other than English. The breadth of ethnicities and language groups are represented within the large categories of Asian and Latino, in particular, where there are over 100 languages and dialects spoken as the primary language in the homes of Fresno County students (Mason).

The political culture of the Valley is known to be of a conservative bent, dominated in the voting booth by white, evangelical, and big-business-oriented citizens.

Even in a state which is thought of around the world as a wellspring of liberalism, the

³KH DUWODQG ´ RI &DOLIRUQLD GRHV QRW YRWH DFFRUG

up the Great Central Valley, twelve voted by majority for the Republican candidate in the 2009 presidential election, with four of the seven democratic counties being so by 4% or

less. The three counties which were aligned with the Democratic party were located near

WKH 6DQ )UDQFLVFR %D\ DUHD WKH PRVW VWULGHQW  
( Election ).

&DOLIRUQLD ¶V \*UHD Win& hQW hDQ 9DQD\ LV FHUWD  
landscapes in the world. The careful management of its land, its dwellers, and its image  
are big business to many market-driven individuals and corporations. At the same time,  
activists are striving to promote a reimagining of the land and its dwellers in a way that  
more accurately reflects the complex and often unjust realities there. This battle for  
FRQWURO RYHU WKH JXLGLQJ SHUFHSWLRQV RI &DOLIR  
for the victor <sup>2</sup> if the Dream, as expressed in the Central Valley, goes unchecked and  
perpetuates itself for another generation, the land and the people of this place will be  
burdened beyond recovery. But if the voices of protest effectively expose the myth for  
what it is and what it causes, an era of restorative justice can begin.

Defining of Terms and Structure

<sup>3</sup>)RU SHRSOH ZKR \H DUQ WR EH KHUH WKLV VWDWH  
EOHDFKHG EORQGHV ZLWK VWUDLJKW WHHWK EORQGHV  
on roller skates from hot tubs to haute cuisine to the strobe-lit splendor of nightclubs; or,  
in the last century, a place where gold nuggets could be scooped up by the shovelful and  
fruit burgeoned year- URXQG 8QUHDOLVWLF H[SHFWDWLRQV KDYH  
(Haslam Many 7KLV VQDSVKRW RI WKH LGHD RI &DOLIRUQL  
WKHUH EHJV WKH TXHVWLRQ <sup>3</sup>+RZ GLG WKLV SHUFHSW  
formalized version of the same question is asked by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann

in their foundational sociological text *The Social Construction of Reality*:<sup>3</sup> R Z L V L W  
 possible that subjective meanings become R E M H F W L Y H I D F W L F L W L H V " ' "

The nature of teaching and learning cultural norms-- ways of seeing the world-- is based on the institutionalization of ideas. Language is the most fundamental medium for articulating and passing on traditions (myths) to those not experiencing it first hand; it is

DOVR D PHDQV RI μLQFRUSRUDWLQJ¶ QHZ XQGHUVWDQO  
 H[SODLQ WKLV SURFHVV <sup>3</sup>/DQJXDJH REMHFWLYDWHV WH

available to all within the linguistic community, thus becoming both the basis and the instrument of the collective stock of knowledge. Furthermore, language provides the means for objectifying new experiences, allowing their incorporation into the already existing stock of knowledge, and it is the most important means by which the

objectivated and objectified sedimentations are transmitted in the tradition of the

FROOHFWLYLW\ LQ TXHVWLRQ´

In other words, the California Dream is fundamentally sourced in various expressions of language. It is also by this same dialectic experience between the world and culture that social constructions of counter-narratives can be constructed, shared, and integrated into the culture, reshaping the normed understanding of a given idea. Thus,

both the perpetrators and protestors of the California Dream engage in this socially

PHGLDWHG GLDORJXH . H Social Construction: A Reader's H J H Q ¶ V

WKLV VKDUHG DFFHVV WR WKH PHDQV RI SHUFHSWXDO

meanings, and these constructions are ultimately used to dominate others, then the chief

PHDQV RI UHVLVWDQFH OLHV LQ FRXQWHU FXOWXUH FU

OLQJXDO UHVLVWDQFH IRU WKH VDNH RI MXVWLFH DV <sup>3</sup>

argue Muir and Steinbeck do to the Californ LD ' UHDP WKURXJK WKHLU UHVS  
 point of unmasking is to liberate the oppressed, to show how categories of knowledge are  
 used in power relationships. . . . One hope of unmasking is to enable the [oppressed] to  
 take some control over their own destiny, by coming to own the very categories that are  
 DSSOLHG WR WKHP' +DFNLQJ :KLOH VRFLDO FRQVW  
 rhetorical explanation for the propagation of specific cultural perceptions, it is not central  
 to this study. I simply borrow some of its language here to express the means by which  
 all ideas, accurate or ill-intended, get processed by a culture.

, XVH WKH WHUP <sup>3</sup>SURWHVW OLWHUDWXUH' WR GHV  
 others. Like the terms myth, dream, and justice, defining literature as specifically oriented  
 toward protest is an ambiguous affair. I am compelled to briefly define and characterize  
 protest literature here for the sake of validating the use of the expression on the works of  
 John Muir and Jo KQ 6WHLQEHN ,Q KLV HVVD\ <sup>3</sup>7HDFKLQJ 3URV  
 describes it is a social dynamic with varying complexities and nuances, rather than a  
 finite literary term to be clearly denoted (12). Protest scholar Zoe Trodd also refers to its  
 common and therefore diversely implemented qualities in American literature. In  
 UHIHUHQFH WR D IRXQGLQJ KHULWDJH RI GLVVHQW VK  
 DIWHU PDGH \$PHULFD D SURWHVW QDWLRQ DQG SURWH  
 (xxvi). And in a nation which seems to always have been in the midst of reevaluation and  
 self-reflective change, literature has always served as a medium of exploration and  
 debate. There is certainly no shortage of examples among these waves of literary protest  
 in American history inspired by significant public uprisings in the pursuit of justice. The  
 5HYROXWLRQ DEROLWLRQLVP DQG ZRPHQ¶V VXIIUDJH

movements powered by literary protest before the Progressive era of Muir and the New Deal era of Steinbeck. California not only inherited the American Dream but also the legacy of protest inherent in the American experience. Whenever false promises have been made in America, there have been voices exposing the lie. Even after the New Deal era, critical moments of polarized philosophies swelled to the surface, most notably the Civil Rights movement and cultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, and I would argue the present environmentalist surge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Defined simply here as a point of reference<sup>2</sup>, protest literature in this examination is meant to be understood according to the terms given it by American literary scholar John Stauffer: it By language [he refers] not only to words, but to visual art, music, and film. Protest literature functions as a catalyst, guide, or mirror of social change. It not only critiques some aspect of society, but also suggests, either implicitly or explicitly, a solution to strives to give voice to a collective consciousness, uniting isolated or inchoate that are measurable. Though the means of calling readers to action may vary, the intention of converting them from inanimate spectator to invested activist is consistent. This desired effect of protest literature, that of psychologically and physically relocating

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<sup>2</sup> techniques of the texts in this study and those of protest literature stands as a strong enough case.



WKH UH DGHU ¶ V UHODWLRQ WR WKH LVVXH IURP XQLQYF

influence pursued by the artist.

The general aesthetic qualities and rh HWRULFDO VWUDWHJLHV DVVLJQ reflect the works of Muir and Steinbeck, though in markedly divergent ways. In terms of content and technique, protest literature is anything but one dimensional and frequently blends multiple techniques. It is often political by default, it gives voice to the marginalized/unheard, strives to identify with and be familiar to the masses, implements empathy and shock value, uses ambiguous symbolic action, contains religious language, uses a structure and syntax which mirrors injustice, reveals the interiority of characters, and possesses realist and naturalist styles of journalistic factuality and rich imagery<sup>3</sup>.

Ironically, many of the techniques listed here are also used in propaganda literature upholding the Cal LIRUQLD 'UHDP )RUWXQDWHO\ <sup>3</sup>, QVWLWXWLRQ irreversible process, despite the fact that institutions, once formed, have a tendency to SHUVLVW´ %HUJHU O\WKV DUH PDGH DQG DOWHUHG

The writer of protest literature must therefore craft a product grounded in the common experience of life while surpassing that of its opponent in quality and imaginative influence.

The use of terms such as social justice and environmental justice are primarily intended to be understood according to their implied general meanings. However, the academic or formal meaning of these terms as applied to the interrogation of the

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<sup>3</sup> This list was compiled from the following sources, which are also fully cited in the works cited: Stauffer, John. Foreword of American Protest Literature, Trodd, Zoe. American Protest Literature, Lauter, Paul. <sup>3</sup> 7HDFKLQJ 3URWRADICAL TEACHER Philip. Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel, Norman, Brian. The American Protest Essay and National Belonging: Addressing Division; Warford, Elisa. Americans in the Golden State

California Dream enrich the analysis<sup>4</sup>. As general concepts, social and environmental justice have a long history in American culture, but as the terms relate to their more contemporary meanings, they both generally identify their source in the cultural and environmental revolutions of the 1960s. Social and philosophical transformations of race, class, gender, environment, and political structures merged into a confluence of revision.

This also explains why, from a post-modern perspective, social and environmental

D J H Q G D V D U H L Q V H S D U D E O \ L Q W H U W Z L Q H G H [ S O L F L W C  
env L U R Q P H Q W D O M X V W L F H W R <sup>3</sup> F D O O D W W H Q W L R Q W R W  
power often leads to correlative social upheaval and the unequal distribution of

H Q Y L U R Q P H Q W D O G H J U D G D W L R Q D Q G R U W R [ L F L W \ '  
concerns of the environmental justice movement, noting, <sup>3</sup> 7 K H R Y H U U L G L Q J F R Q F H

that fundamental changes were needed in how we understood the value of nature and how

Z H R U J D Q L J H K X P D Q V R F L Q W L K H L D F H R V D L Q Q W H J U D W L Q  
Environmenta O L V P D Q G + X P D Q 5 L J K W V ' - D P H V 1 L F N H O D Q G (  
analogous characteristics of both: <sup>3</sup> % R W K D U H S U H W R P W A I D Q W O \ S R V W

movements; both are international in scope; both are movements that find support among

μ F R Q V H U Y D W L S U R P L W Z H O I O V D V E R W K D U H F R P P L W W H G

institutions; both support the survival of indigenous peoples; and both emphasize

consciousness raising, individual engagement, and political activism as means of

S U R P R W L Q J W K H L U J R D O V '

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<sup>4</sup> A pragmatic definition of social justice as the basic liberties related to thought, morality, politics, and the physical self is articulated by the much cited philosopher John Rawls (*Justice as Fairness: The Law of Peoples*). A Theory of Justice while the Green Party defines and applies these issues of social justice in more political and economic terms. Environmental justice denotes the disproportionate burdening of one particular group or location by the effects of industrialization, particularly considerate of race and low economic status as common influences.

A final correlation worth noting, which further legitimizes my use of such terms in describing the social and environmental fallout of a mythical paradise, is the consideration given to local circumstances of the land and its people. Jodi Adamson, editor of *The Environmental Justice Reader* (SODLQV W K D W <sup>3</sup> F R Q W U L E X W F), literature by analyzing the connections between different incidents of environmental degradation and economic exploitation while at the same time emphasizing the local, regional, and cultural (O W X U D O F R P S O H [ L W L H V R I W K H V W U J X J O H V W D) description of the field of environmental justice sounds like an analysis of texts by Muir and Steinbeck, confirming an alignment between their literary intentions and contemporary understandings of social and environmental justice.

I most frequently describe the imaginative understanding of the California Dream as myth (P R G H O H G L Q + H Q U \ 1 D V W R G P L A N D I N D I E A N M U S E U M L I Q) the canonical California histories of Kevin Starr). The colloquial definition of myth which I also feel represents the intended meaning of the word as it is used here, is found (L Q ' R U D % H T D O I S L A N D O F C A L I F O R N I A : A H I S T O R Y O F T H E M Y T H) unless expressly noted, the occasional use of the words *symbol*, *vision*, and *archetype* to communicate this idea should be considered interchangeable.

### Dissertation Overview

Chapter two examines the origins of the myth and the founding texts of the state and its Great Central Valley (Z K L F K H V W D E O L V K H G W K H J U R X Q G Z R U N).

construction of California. My purpose is to confirm the sources and the psycho-social depth of the myth in order to portray it as an historically pervasive perception which has played a continuous role in regional injustices, rather than simply being a benign association of beauty and hope. It also proves the very difficult task undertaken by Muir and Steinbeck as they proposed a new, less subjugating means of living. This task of

Construction of What? displaying its extra-theoretical function. The distinction is not all that sharp, for some analyses that chiefly aim at refuting or discrediting may gain added cogency by showing

KRZ ZKDW LV WR EH UHIXWHG RU GLVFUHG LWHG ZDV FR

I distinguish three eras of statehood as defined by the intentions of its people: the explorer, the builder, and the profiteer eras. In each, I highlight significant examples of California (1846) are the representative texts expressing the imaginative trajectory of the exploring era. The building era is examined through the eyes of Horace Greeley in his widely read text *An Overland Journey: From New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859* and [sic] (1873). The profiteers are more loosely represented by the various forms of propaganda produced by big business entities such as the railroads, tourist organizations, land developers, and industrial agriculture.

Chapter three analyzes the intentions, techniques, effects, and reception of John Muir's *My First Summer in the Sierra*, focusing on the environmentally

degrading aspects of the California Dream and the ways in which he calls for a new land ethic centered in beauty, science, and spirit. Chapter four focuses on the social injustices

V W H P P L Q J I U R P W K H & D O L I R U Q L D T H E G R A P E S W I T H A X J K - R K Q  
Z L W K O X L U , F R Q V L G H T E C H N I Q U E S , E F F E C T S , A N D I T E M P T I O N W I T H Q U A L R Q V

to reshape the California Dream from capitalist-driven to one of interdependence. These two chapters consider the social, historic, and literary context in which they were written, framed by the respective social, political, and literary movements of the day. Ultimately, they challenge the myth in the name of environmental and social justice, do so through specific stylistic techniques, and, I assert, changed the way in which America imagines California, enlightening the nation to enough of the uglier truths of the state to invoke varying degrees of social and political change then and now. Muir and Steinbeck are selected as the challengers of the California Dream because they are giants of imaginative change, a Q G W K H \ D F F R P S O L V K H G W K L V G X U L Q J W Z R R I \$ P H reflective eras. There are other strong examples and voices, but none greater.

It is not surprising that Muir and Steinbeck maintain the same power among us today that they did in their time. Despite being rather homogenous-- not only as white men but also in terms of their economic locations <sup>2</sup> their inclusive and egalitarian philosophies were ahead of their time then and continue to challenge the status quo. The culture of the Great Central Valley has broadened over time, as has the literature which expresses its ever-divergent voices. Chapter five offers a final consideration on what Muir and Steinbeck have meant to the literal and imaginative shaping of the Central Valley, and how they continue to engage contemporary examples of injustice through the new voices that challenge them.



Chapter Two: The Inventors and Investors of the California Dream in the American Imagination

7KH O&DRUQLD 'UHDP ' RU WKH DUWLFXODWLRQ RI \$PHU  
DSSOLHG WR WKH-FROWL@BOWIPUQHDWLVWKH HQGOHV  
expansive place to start over and find prosperity  
consecrated O D Q G Z L O O D O Z D \ V U H V X O W L Q I X O I L O O P H Q W '

3)URP WKH EHJLQQLQJ &DOLIRUQLD KDG EHHQ D GLUHF  
H[SUHVVHG LQ WKH GRFWULQH DQG SUDFWLFH RI ODQL

--Kevin Starr

37KH JUHDW VWUXJJOH IRU IUHHGRP KDV VDQFWLILHG  
VWUHDP DQG URFN KDV LWV OHJHQG ZRUWK\ RI WKH

±Roland Van Zandt

In order to fully understand the social and environmental ethic that great voices of protest such as John Muir and John Steinbeck waged war against, the story explaining the escalation of the California Dream must first be told. No other land of its size save the whole of the New World has ever been such an imaginative force or held as many universal associations as this western-most Eden. And the misleading message that this dream carries <sup>2</sup> one of bountiful harvests and certain prosperity for the motivated individual <sup>2</sup> manifests the inherent injustices that Muir and Steinbeck so vehemently

protest. With such a foundational symbolic location in the collective mind of a nation, the Dream persists as a psychological entity almost beyond the influence of criticism.

However, understanding the origin and lineage of such a primary archetypal entity helps translate its pervasive influence over turn-of-the-century, Depression-era, and contemporary social and environmental thought.

The theories related to archetypal thought in the California imagination as explained in Willia P ( Y H U A r c h e t y p e West: The Pacific Coast as Literary Region greatly illuminate the substantial imaginative forces that Muir and Steinbeck were up

against. Everson identifies place as the archetypal life force of the Californian psyche, its

L P S U H V V R Q W K H D U W L I D F W V R I K X P D Q L W \ ^ 3 Q R W R Q O \ I

(xiv). Furthermore, the origins of the California Dream are located in its larger and ever

deeply rooted corollary, the American Dream. Everson explains the reductive qualities of

D U F K H W \ S H V D V W K H \ ^ 3 L Q G L Y L G X D O L J H ^ I U R P W K H L U P R

^ 3 U H G X F W L R Q ^ , S U H I H U W R G H V F U L E H L W D V D ^ 3 F R Q F H

intensity of the myth in expression and belief. The California idea became an undiluted

national fantasy that ravaged the working class and the land, igniting the influential

literary masterpieces from advocates Muir and Steinbeck as instruments of war in their

specific battles.

This lineage stretches hundreds of years into the past. It is manifested most overtly by the expressions of Judeo-Christian theology and the ways in which an organic hierarchy was practiced by the Puritans, the literary fantasy established most significantly in the literature of the Spanish explorers, the influences of Romantic aesthetics, and the forces of capitalism as it transformed an agrarian culture into an industrial economy.



Thus, the American Dream became the myth of the West as the nation expanded, which eventually concentrated into the California Dream by 1849. If the Western myth can be the most extreme expression of the West, then the Central Valley and its affected borders are the epicenter of this myth, the most manipulated model of human and ecological utilitarianism in the world.

This calculated appropriation as played out through the philosophies of the California Dream was the injustice Muir and Steinbeck sought to reveal and reshape through their literary craft. This chapter reveals the unbroken lineage of the California Dream and the invasive and broad immersion of the myth in the mainstream imagination, a misleading pattern that Muir and Steinbeck sought to disrupt. They both knew that to reform the public consciousness into a more altruistic and informed location, the archaic mythologies driving the perspective of the day must be tapped into and subtly revised. Likewise, this chapter seeks to inform the reader of the philosophical sources of the California Dream and the cultural infrastructure that has maintained it for over 160 years, disclosing the context of the myth for contemporary society as we attempt to build a new psychological and cultural paradigm in place of the old one. Just as old wineskins with new wine will rupture from the pressure of freshly fermented spirits, old mythologies strangle the development of new societies, ultimately leading to a rupture in the land and its people. This is precisely the conflict in which 21<sup>st</sup> century California now finds itself as it strives to reconcile the age-old myth of promise with the dangers of disillusionment exposed by Muir and Steinbeck.

7 K L V F K D S W H U I R O O R Z V s W a k i n g , O a n Q n d e J a n R I & D O L I R U G

magnification of the myth from roughly 1840 through today. The three eras of exploring building, and profiteering offer a chronologically escalating framework for this analysis. These periods are loosely assigned and often overlap in terms of how they were influenced by the myth and why they propagated the myth to influence others. At times they share intentions, techniques, characteristics, and effects <sup>2</sup> to suggest any more <sup>3</sup> F O H D Q ' R U V F D I I R O G H G Y H U V L R O R K L V W B U \ Z R X O G P

unclean lines of influence are mostly due to the rapidly changing social and H Q Y L U R Q P H Q W D O O D Q G V F D S H R I & D O L I R U Q L D R Q F H L W

from the east.

Representative rather than definitive works from each era assist in demonstrating the ever present yet variously intentioned application of the western myth through time, paying particular attention to the eras in which Muir and Steinbeck wrote their highlighted works. The first group of writers whose words began to shape the mysterious western lands into a rugged yet attainable paradise is the explorers of approximately 1840 through 1848, at which point California became an American territory and gold was discovered in abundance. Their intent was to inspire the potential for continued national growth and reveal the many grand wonders of the West to the frenetic eastern populace. Not always for mass consumption, some of these writings were personal journals which were only later published. This could either suggest a greater authenticity of content, since there was no primary motivation of profit, or that they could contain embellished imagery in the name of pride and imagination. Other writings were commissioned expeditions, the products of which were expected to be made public and written to be

grand. The issue of authorial intent directly addresses the composition and desired effects

RI WKH P\WK E\ WKHVH ZULWHUV ([ DPHL Q B WLLRDCQWFI M / DXQ

to Oregon and California (1845) and ( G Z L Q % W h D t Q S A W I M California (1846)

are selected to represent the explorer era based on the breadth of readership and influence attained by these two texts. Succinct references to writings by Jedediah Strong Smith, Pedro Fages, John C. Fremont, Richard Henry Dana, and Bayard Taylor compliment this section.

The second group of writers whose works continued to shape the myth of California is the builders of a newly established state possessing abundant space and resources. This era lasted from 1848 through approximately 1893, the year of Frederick

- D F N V R Q 7 X U Q H U ¶ V I D P R X V <sup>3</sup> ( Q G R I W K H ) U R Q W L H U ´ W K

writers vary <sup>2</sup> many had begun to see the monetary value in further embellishing the

V W D W H ¶ V E H D X W \ D O C E R K O W \ D O C E W K H O H ( I

argue the majority) were doing more to write a state into being rather than inflating their own economic standing. There was a tone of genuine pride in their articulation of a new landscape, and the adventurous American spirit of exploration and the desire to chart the land for the sake of national advancement is heavily represented in the pages of this era.

This is the period in California that is most embracing of the idea of a collective Manifest Destiny, its writers celebrating all of the abundance offered in the West and offering it to

a growing and enthralled readership. Of the many notable voices of this period, Horace

\* U H H O H \ ¶ V Z h O v e r a n d J o u r n e y : F r o m N e w Y o r k t o S a n F r a n c i s c o i n t h e

Summer of 1859 D Q G & K D U O H V 1 R U G K C a l i f o r n i a O u r T r a v e l l e r s a n d S R S X O D U

Settlers[sic] (1873) seem the most representative. The influential and frequently

anthologized works of Samuel Bowles, Josiah Royce, Bret Harte, John Rollin Ridge, Joaquin Miller, William Henry Brewer, and Clarence King could just as easily perform this task, but they are relegated to the role of supplemental references here. This is also the age in which Muir did much of his initial travelling and writing throughout the state, including his journaling as he traversed the Sierras for the first time in 1869, later to become *My First Summer in the Sierras* 7 K X V W K L V F R Q W H [ W R I <sup>3</sup> E X L O G H to the cultural influences and intentions of his writing as he promoted a finely balanced environmental haven to be cherished and protected.

% \ W K H W X U Q R I W K H F H Q W X U \ <sup>3</sup> P D U N H W H H U L Q J ' L land developers, and industrial agriculture ran ahead with the money-making myths of California, publishing propaganda that told the consumer and aspiring citizen what they wanted to hear <sup>2</sup> the Land of Milk and Honey was still out there. It is at this point in & D O L I R U Q L D ¶ V K L V W R U \ D Q G O L W H U D W X U H W K D W D G H the West and its influential markets. First as settlers and then as builders, the myth-makers of California had now become shameless profiteers and in response the artists of the dawning Progressive Era initiated a protest that continues, as do the works of the profiteers, to this day. A talented literary class which included mainstream dissenters Frank Norris and Mary Austin, Muir led the way with writing that possessed a distinct social and ecological consciousness and engaged the American imagination in its first attempts at a shifting perspective.

Though the serious California writers of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry often sold the public a particular dream of the far west, they rarely portrayed a paradise. While guilty of exaggerating a rough and tumble culture of the wild west for the sake of

entertainment during the early years of statehood, these voices also sought to shape a cultural identity distinct from those of the more established regions of the nation. As the California Dream began to be used for large profits by the few, however, these writers recognized their responsibility as the voice of the people, if only from a white, middle-to-upper-class male perspective. In a mere fifty years of statehood, the social and environmental injustices had grown so out of hand that artists were unable to stand by while these patterns were encouraged to continue through the marketing of a land that no longer existed in its originally imagined utopian state. This kind of righteous indignation best describes Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, which depicts the shameless capitalizing of a flooded labor market during the Depression. This profiteering phase-- and the artists who challenge its idealized construction of California-- has never relented. The dominant figures of a leading global market continue to pander perfection, and the artists of the region still strive to tell it like it is. The historical profiteers held accountable here are big business entities such as the railroads, tourism, land developers, and industrial agriculture.

California, the state of Esplandia (The Adventures of Esplandia) preceded reality and this state has rarely been viewed as conventional or common since. While 30 million human beings experience real life here every day, California remains at the source of its naming by Hernando Cortes twenty-five years later, then it is true that a specific kind of mythical aura preceded the reality of this land and its people. The coding of California in the imagination of the world is founded in fantasy. In the introduction to

his anthology, *The Literature of California: Writings from the Golden State*, editor Jack Hicks furthers these thoughts concerning the legacy of Las Sergas de Esplandian

H[SODLQLQJ ³LW WHOOV XV &DOLIRUQLD LV DQ LVODQO

us the dream came first. The place came later. His novel was a concoction that actually

IHG WKH KRSHV RI WKH UHJLRQ¶V HDUOLHVW H[SORUHU

UHDOLW\ KDV LQIOXHQFHG WKH OLIH DQG WKH ZD\ LV

benchmark event of the 1849 Gold Rush served to confirm California as a paradise and a national treasure, compounding the idealized composition of this far away region newly

DGGHG DV DQ \$PHULFDQ WHUULWRU\ %XW, DRQJ EHIRU

dream has preceded the realities of the place in the American mind. And more than

influencing the ways in which it has been written about, this lineage of fantastic

SHUFHSWLRQV KDV VKDSHG WKH YHU\ UHDOezD\ WKDW

treated. This manipulation is what Muir and Steinbeck take issue with as they strive to

redirect a physically and psychologically westering society unswervingly bent on

acquiring a personal paradise.

Explorers

³)URP >WKH JROG UXV KQD has been perceived as a Face&D:

linked by air and rail and asphalt to the rest of North America, yet somehow a separate

region, with its own mystique and climate and economic history, its own legend

tied to that first tumultuous era of settlement and a crossroads culture that grows

LQFUHDVLQJO\ FRPSOH[´

--Jack Hicks

& DOLIRUQLD EHFDPH WKH HSLFHQWHU RI WKH <sup>3</sup>ZHV  
 western frontier. As it became a state, offered gold, and stood geographically as the  
 furthest and thus ultimate physical expression of the mythical Land of Milk and Honey  
 long applied to each appended region before it, the specific qualities of the region  
 transcribed the essence of the American Dream into the California Dream The myth  
 finally had a home, for better or for worse (I argue the latter <sup>2</sup> the full force of centuries  
 of expectations overwhelmed the land and its least aggressive RU <sup>3</sup>DUFKHW\SDOO\  
 FKDOOHQJHG ´ SHRSOH 7KHHVH WZR IXQGDPHQWDO DV  
 with the land and his fellow man, are the focus of the analysis here, which establishes the  
 mo WLYDWLRQ DQG LQWHQW RI & DOLIRUQLD ¶ V PRVW LPS  
 people <sup>2</sup> John Muir and John Steinbeck.

The complex development of an Edenic mythology is one which stretched out  
 over nearly two millennia before geographically locating itself in California in 1848.

)URP (XURSH ¶ V ILUVW HQFRXQWHU ZLWK WKH ZHVWHUQ  
 landmark year of 1848 in which California became a U.S. territory and gold was  
 discovered, the myths of this region grew out of excitement and opportunistic legend.

)URP WKH HDUOLHVW ZULWLQJV DETHEXPLIKU UHJLRQ I  
 Esplandian(1510), God and gold were consistently the two inspirations driving its  
 depictions and occupation. From the sixteenth through the first two decades of the  
 nineteenth centuries, the story of California is dominated by the developments and  
 exploits of the Roman Catholic Church and Spain. Following the Lewis and Clark  
 expedition and a growing American population with a hunger for land, the early years of  
 the nineteenth century experienced a small but influential influx in the settlement of the

far West by Americans. This was an incredibly turbulent time for the region. Mexico established its independence from Spain in 1821 and continued to struggle for stable leadership throughout the region. America saw these western territories as a natural extension of the expanding Manifest Destiny that had already brought them to the Rocky Mountains. This desire continued to increase into the 1840s when the Bear Flag Revolt, Mexican American War, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ultimately ushered in a new state in 1850.

This span of three hundred years serves as a time of exploration and settlement in California. It ends at approximately the point where the mythology of the state begins to directly address the lives of American citizens in terms of land and prosperity. By the 1840s, American explorers began to be an influential presence in the region. This is also the time at which the numbers and intentions of these Americans shifted from the few profit-oriented fur traders to the thousands who desired to expand America with settled farms and share all of its wonders and potential with the East. This was greatly aided by a number of influential texts written by Americans with first-hand accounts of this mysterious and untapped natural resource. The journeys of fur trapper Jedediah Strong Smith laid a foundation for Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* and Lewis and Clark's *Journal of the Expedition Across the Continent*. The *California* surveying expedition throughout the state from 1842-1846 was also a significant event. The *California* was a major focus of the New York Tribune.

The *California* was a major focus of the New York Tribune. The *California* was a major focus of the New York Tribune. The *California* was a major focus of the New York Tribune.



of California ~~DUH /DQVIRUTG EFDJVDLQW ¶¶ \*XLGH WR 2UHJRQ DQ~~

~~DQG (GZLW %LSAD Q California~~ 1847). These two texts were widely read and trusted as not only the most factual account of the place, but also as trusted guide books to a wave of migrating settlers seeking land and prosperity of their own.

The intentions of the settler, state builder, and profiteer blur greatly; there are no clean chronological lines which distinguish one mindset from the other, and in each category are examples of the others. In fact, it is difficult to imagine any one of these phases without the presence of the other two, either by necessity or by precedent. Yet the general pattern proposed here roughly reflects the sentiments of the American as he represented California to the nation in literature. Mary Spence notes that Lansford

~~+DVWLQJV ¶ LQWHQWLRQV PDWFKHG WKRVH RI WKH QDW~~

the reasons for the growing surge of movement to Oregon and California were diverse and complex, and would have to include economic drive coupled with land hunger, the basic lure of adventure, the complicated call of religion, and an innate desire to extend the American empire and way of life. Also important was the optimistic and exuberant literature produced by official and unofficial boosters of all kinds <sup>2</sup> explorers, missionaries, and avowed propagandists. It was in this last role, as a self-styled publicist of the West, that history cast Lansford W. Hastings.

Through the ~~SXEOLFDWLRQ RI 7KH region and DQW ¶¶ \*XLGH~~

California (1845), Hastings undoubtedly interested many in moving on to the Pacific shore. (v)

Hastings saw the opportunity to put himself in a place of social, political, and literary power by establishing himself as one of the early publishing voices in the West. Muir most certainly viewed his early location in California as likewise opportunistic, though not for the sake of self- D G Y D Q F H P H Q i n t e n d s t o e x p a n s i o n in the name of democracy and God were coupled with an opportunistic invitation for others to partake in the bounty of the West. In other words, he was a booster for the white settlement of California. According to Jack Hicks, 7 K H ( P L J U D Q W ¶ V \* X L G H W R 2 California <sup>3</sup> Z D V W K H % L E O H I R U W U D Q V F R I Q W s f i r s t w a g o n party west in 1842 and returned with visions of a California republic, like Texas, free from Mexican control and led by himself as president. An early promoter and land developer, he also had plans to subdivide and sell land along the banks of the Sacramento River. A guidebook celebrating the region, he hoped, would lure west the Americans he Q H H G H G W R K H O S K L V S H U V R Q D O G U H D P F R P H W U X H ´

While the book is laden with facts, it is equally laden with anecdotal experiences and personal perceptions. He is also starkly racist against Mexicans and Native \$ P H U L F D Q V L G H D O L ] H V W K H H F R Q R P L F S R W H Q W L D O L Q G H I H Q G W K H Y H U D F L W \ R I L W V J O R U \ 2 W K H U W K D Q W K content D Q G V W \ O H L U R Q L F D O O \ S D U D O O H O + D V W L Q J V ¶ O L Y introduction to the Da Capo Press edition of his Guide in 1969, Mary Spence reveals two I X Q G D P H Q W D O L Q W H Q W L R Q V R I W K H W H [ W <sup>3</sup> W K H F D U H I forts, settlements, resources, and possibilities for economic development both of Oregon

DQG RI &DOLIRUQLD EXW &DOLIRUQLD ZDV +DVWLQJVT  
 WKDW <sup>3</sup>&DOLIRUQLD ZDV SDUDGLVH SDU H[FHOOHQFH> «  
 DQG LW ZDV DYDLODEOH' YL ,Q WHUPV RI LWV RYHUD  
 Guide <sup>3</sup>LVD SHULRG SLHFH ZKLFK UHIOHFWV WKH LGHDOV  
 QLQHWHHQWK FHQWXU\` YL 1RW V\XUSOLVLO\ +DVV

work in such terms. In his own words, he stated his intentions to be purely altruistic,  
 practical, and fact- EDVHG ,Q WKH SUHIDFH WR WKH WH[W +DVV

pages is not to treat in *extenso* of Oregon and California, but merely to give a succinct,  
 and at the same time, practical description of those countries; embracing a brief  
 description of their mountains, rivers, lakes, bays, harbours, islands, soil, climate, health,  
 productions, improvements, population, government, market, trade and commerce; a  
 description of the different routes; and all necessary information relative to the

HTXLSPHQW VXSSOLHV DQG WKH PRIMK RQ RMRWUJYMO  
 excrescences have been cautiously lopped off, leaving scarcely any thing more than a  
 PHUH FROOHFWLRQ RI LQWHUHVWLQJ LPSRUWDQW DQG

The response to his book was precisely what Hastings had hoped it would be.

First and foremost it promoted the idea of a grander and God-blessed America, a nation

WKDW RXWPDWFKHG DOO RWKHUV LQ SURYLGHWLDO E

disciple-like response to these early travel guides perfectly represents its history as a land  
 of pilgrims migrating west in search of a God-ordained destiny. The following quote,

H[FHUSWHG IURP FKDSWHU WKLUWHHQ WLWOHG <sup>3</sup>\$ 'HVI  
 WKH HQYLURQPHQWDO DQG VRFLDO LPSOLFOWLRQV RI V

remark that in my, opinion, there is no country, in the known world, possessing a soil so

fertile and productive, with such varied and inexhaustible resources, and a climate of such mildness, uniformity and salubrity; nor is there a country, in my opinion, now known, which is so eminently calculated, by nature herself, in all respects, to promote the

XQERXQGHG KDSSLQHVV DQG SURVSHULW\ RI FLYLOLJH  
 ³VLOYHU SODWWHU´ TXRWDWLRQ DV DQ GOMURGXFWLRQ

regards to his treatment of environmental, or land-oriented, promises implied in the California Dream. It is the beginning of a utilitarian anthropocentric hierarchy that Muir challenges head-on a few decades later, arguing that, in fact, the beautiful resources of California are intricately and interdependently woven together in ecological balance in such a way that the unbridled appropriation of one results in the destruction of all.

³\$OO WKRVH ZKR ZHQW ZLWK PH WR &DOLIRUQLD D

are residing there, are extremely delighted with the country; and determined to remain there, and make California the future home, not only of themselves, but also, of all their friends, and relatives, upon whom, they could possibly prevail, to exchange the sterile hills, bleak mountains, chilling winds, and piercing cold, of their native lands, for the deep, rich and productive soil, and uniform, mild and delightful climate, of this

XQSDUDOOHOHG UHJLRQ´ +DVWLQJV VHWV XS D GL

California and every other landscape, placing the soil and climate of this western Eden so far above that of the next best option that the reader is left with no sense of scale. It should be noted that Hastings wrote this just before the Mexican-American War, while California was a region belonging to Mexico. Thus, he refers to Americans, or other

³ZKLWH´ VHWWOHUV WKHUH DV IRUHLJQHUV +H LPSOL  
 UHPDLQ´ LQ WKH UHJLRQ DQG JUDIW LW LQWR DQ \$PHU

Californios the foreigners. In describing the soil of the Central Valley, he even goes so

IDU DV WR GHFODUH LW VXSHULRU WR WKDW RI WKH ³G

(81). This exotic and biblical allusion further draws the reader into a sense of the

Californian landscape as something of a paradise, requiring less of the farmer while producing much more.

Hastings continues to establish the region as a perpetual paradise which seems to defy the known rules of fallen man in a fallen world. Seasons of rest, cycles of life and death, and a painful subsistence accomplished by the sweat of the brow are all challenged

E\ WKL V ODQG VFDSH ZKLFK VHHPV WR KDYH EHHQ H[HP

The following quotes reveal such assertions, a far cry from his advertised intent of a

³VXFFLQFW´ DQG ³SUDFWLFD O GHVFULSWLRQ´ 7KLV LV

throughout. Here the seasons and limits of growth are other- ZRUOGO\ ³ODQ\ NLQGV

vegetables are planted, and gathered, at any and every season of the year, and of several kinds of grain, two crops are grown annually. Even in the months of December and

January, vegetation is in full bloom, and all nature wears a most cheering, and enlivening aspect. It may be truly said of this country WKDW µ'HFHPEHU LV DV SOHDVD

This excerpt suggests a freedom from decay, both physically and spiritually through the

ERXQGOHV V YHUGXUH RI WKH ODQG ³7KH SXULW\ RI WK

almost incredible. So pure it is, in fact, that flesh of any kind may be hung for weeks together, in the open air, and that, too, in the summer season, without undergoing

SXWUHIDFWLRQ > « @ 'LVHDSH RI DQ\ NLQG LV YHU\ VHC

FRXQWU\ > « @ ,W KH DQOMKR ISWUW LFRQWRI WKH ZRUOG´

FHOHEUDWHV \*RG¶V JUDFH LQ OLIVLQJ WKH FXUVH RI V

SXWWLQJ D IHQFH DURXQG VRPH VRLO ZLOO VSRQWDQH

portions of the country, in the interior, the Indians subsist almost wholly upon them, and in other portions, if a farmer wishes to grow a crop of oats, he has nothing to do, but to designate a certain tract as his oat field, and either fence it, or employ a few Indians, to prevent the herds from grazing upon it; which being done, in May or June, he reaps a much larger crop, than we are able to do, in any of the States, with all the labor and

H[SHQVH RIFXOWLYDWBQ. Hastings promotes a pattern of distance between the farmer and the land, implying that one need not come to know the soil providing sustenance, but rather simply take from it what it so naturally offers. This physical separation between

PDQ DQG ODQG GHYHORSV LQWR D VSLULW\DO VHSDUD

obstacle as he seeks to express the innate moral and spiritual values to be drawn from the land. This perspective is best, or most horrifically, manifested in the means of production adopted by industrialized farming and challenged by Steinbeck.

PagH DIWHU SDJH UHOLVKHV WKH TXDOLW\ DQG <sup>3</sup>LQH

resources (101), and a number of times throughout the text he is prompted to address the suspicions of others who question the veracity of his claims. By bringing up such an issue, and giving specific instances of organic abundance, Hastings adds credibility to his claims and makes the California Dream even greater:

Several very respectable and credible gentlemen, informed me, that there had been an instance, within their own knowledge, of a

IDUPHU¶ received one hundred and twenty bushels to the acre; and that, the next year, from a spontaneous growth, upon the same ground, he received sixty-one bushels, to the acre. To many it

will appear impossible, that one acre of ground, should produce the quantity of wheat, and hence, to them, the above statement will appear incredible; but I have not the least doubt, of its entire

FRUUHFWDHSLFWRQV. (89)

:KLOH KH LQVLVWV WKDW KLV GHVFULSWLRQV RI WKH C  
H[DJJHUDWLRQV' WKH HSLF WRQH DQG LQFRPSDUD

This may have been exactly what the reader as a potential settler wanted to hear and believe, and Hastings was more than willing to hyperbolize the actual verdure of the land for the sake of national expansion. Of course, the ultimate failure in these false

H[SHFWDWLRQV DQG PDQV YLROHQW UHHSRQVH WR WK

precisely the inherent danger of the myth that Muir and Steinbeck so adamantly decry.

The implications of social prosperity in the California Dream is such a fundamental message in the text that it seems unnecessary to state. As this concept is ana O\]HG LQ \*DK/WRQV. If the phrases start over and find prosperity and hard work . . . results in fulfillment. The lineage of American frontiersmen have always used the ideas starting over and fulfillment for working hard to promote expansion of the nation to the west, and now, having reached the final frontier halted by the Pacific Ocean, the settlers of the mid-nineteenth century suggest that not only is it the end of the continent, but it is the best of the continent. The elusive Eden of modern civilization of course requires greater sacrifice in terms of travel, and faith in the fact that it really is as good as advertised. The guarantee of a successful and thriving farm or business was enough for almost every reader looking to improve their state, especially when it was advertised as an almost effortless process.

Hastings develops the myth of certain prosperity in California by characterizing

WKH \$PHULFDQ ³IRUHLJQHUV´ DV WKH PRVW LQG XVWUL

tends to place himself in this category, believing that they too are worthy of such a challenging adventure. He also forwards the myth through the depiction of the region as an uninhabited paradise open to any taker, completely disregarding, among other realities, the indigenous population living throughout the region. All one has to do is

VXUYH\ WKH ODQG DQG SLFN WKH VHFWRLRQ ZKLFK EHV  
WR HVWDEOLVK KLV RZQ SHUVRQDO NLQJGR +DVWLQJ

from all countries, of the most enterprising and energetic character, are annually arriving, selecting and improving the most favorable sites for towns, and selecting and securing

H[WHQVLYH JUDQWV RI ODQG LQ WKH PRVW GHVLUDEO  
FRQWLQXH V WR PDQLSXODWH WKH SULGH RI WKH \$PHU  
LQG XVWULRXV LQGHSHQGHHQH WKDW LV VR LQJUDLQH

of this country are, generally, very intelligent; many of them have received the advantages of an education; and they all possess an unusual degree of industry and enterprise. Those who are emigrating to that remote and almost unknown region, like those who are emigrating to Oregon, are, in all respects, a different class of persons, from those who usually emigrate to our frontier. They generally, possess more than an ordinary degree of intelligence, and they possess an eminent degree of industry, enterprise, and EUDYHU13).

The irony of the California Dream is that it is not accessible to everyone, only white Americans or those originating from Western Europe who look and act according to the norms of colonial America. This racist perspective was all but a given among



citizens at the time. Minorities implicitly knew Hastings was not inviting them to realize their dreams out west, just as whites exceptionally envisioned their new region as a culturally homogenous one. Though explicitly expressed in American writing to a decreasing degree over the years, Hastings is quite transparent in regards to who it is he envisions joining him, showing no signs of self-consciousness as he warmly invites whites only to immediately marginalize Mexicans and Native Americans. The irony of his language as he mixes benevolence with racism is more than a little disturbing to the twenty-first century reader, but the racial polarity firmly fixed at the time of its writing no doubt allowed for the white reader to consume it without batting an eye.

A more kind and hospitable people are nowhere found; they seem to vie with each other, in their kindness and hospitality to strangers; and at the same time, they treat each other as brothers.

> « @ 8 S R Q W K H r a n g e r u n o n e , R e q u e s t i o n i s n o t , i s h e a n E n g l i s h m a n , a n A m e r i c a n o r F r e n c h m a n , b u t i s h e a f o r e i g n e r ? w h i c h l a t t e r , i f h e i s f o u n d t o b e , h e r e c e i v e s a l l t h a t k i n d n e s s a n d h o s p i t a b l e a t t e n t i o n , p e c u l i a r t o t h e f o r e i g n e r s o f C a l i f o r n i a . T h e s e a r e t r u l y a h a p p y p e o p l e ; a m o n g w h o m , n o d i s t i n c t i o n o f c l i m e i s r e c o g n i z e d , n a t i o n a l p r e f e r e n c e s a n d p r e j u d i c e s d o n o t e x i s t , r e l i g i o u s r a n c o r i s h u s h e d ; a n d a l l i s o r d e r , h a r m o n y a n d p e a c e . ( 1 1 3 )

The very next paragraph describes Mexicans and Native Americans with terms such as ignorant, superstitious, beastly, destitute of intelligence, and as semi-barbarians best ridden and restrained (113-14). Nowhere in my research is a better example of an

idealized, non-prejudiced social structure that is in reality rife with racism and injustice. Over the years, the overt racism in the voices perpetuating the Dream has lessened, but the myth continues to be understood as a racially exclusive one. This undertone of bigotry in the California Dream is cleverly assaulted by Steinbeck as he illuminates the ironic racing of Okies by white Californians in *The Grapes of Wrath*, challenging this pervasive social injustice that resides in the myth.

California reflect his desire to expand America by settling the Far West. They also exemplify the presentation of the myth and the dangers inherent in it. He concludes in the *Red Rover*

I can not but believe, that the time is not distant, when those wild forests, trackless plains, untrodden valleys, and the unbounded ocean, will present one grand scene, of continuous improvements, universal enterprise, and unparalleled commerce: when those vast forests, shall have disappeared, before the hardy pioneer; those extensive plains, shall abound with innumerable herds, of domestic animals; those fertile valleys, shall groan under the immense weight of their abundant products: when those numerous rivers, shall team with countless steamboats, steam-ships, ships, barques and brigs; when the entire country, will be everywhere intersected, with turn-pike roads, rail-roads and canals; and when, all the vastly numerous, and rich resources, of that now, almost unknown region, will be fully and advantageously developed. > « @ \$ Q G L Q I L Q H Z H

are also led to contemplate the time, as fast approaching, when the supreme darkness of ignorance, superstition, and despotism, which now, so entirely pervade many portions of those remote regions, will have fled forever, before the march of civilization, and the blazing light, of civil and religious liberty; when genuine republicanism and unsophisticated democracy shall be reared up, and tower aloft, even upon the now wild shores, of the great Pacific. (151-52)

Hastings was not an anomaly of his era, but rather quite representative of the voices forming the early narratives which shaped California. These stories directed the ways in which California was perceived by the rest of the nation, and therefore decided the cultural and environmental legacy of the region through the living out of these mythologies by the settlers that responded to them. What (Sawyer, 1847) continued to build on the environmental and social myths of paradise founded by his contemporaries. Though he stays closer to what he and Hastings say they intended their works to do, which is to describe, aid, and inform on practical matters, Bryant inevitably promotes the California Dream through assertions and anecdotes. Like Hastings, he knew that their perpetuation only aided the cause of expansion. And while much of the content in their guide books was practical and beneficial to the traveler, the P\WKV WKDW VWUHWFKHG WKH JUDQGHXU RI WKH VWDW harm them in any grave way. Ultimately, however, it was the subjugated land itself and the disempowered working class who were victimized by this idealized dream chased down toward the setting sun.

A native of Massachusetts, Edwin Bryant founded two Lexington, Kentucky, Bancroft cal Gaer 39), in which he sought to tell of the history, culture, geography, and regional habitats of California, as well as offer insights on routes and traveling. In his Preface (italics added), he explicitly states his reasons for writing the text at all, saying:

In the succeeding pages, the author has endeavored to furnish a faithful sketch of the country through which he travelled ~~its~~ capabilities, scenery, and population. He has carefully avoided such embellishments ~~as~~ would tend to impress the reader with a false or incorrect idea of what he saw and describes. He has invented nothing ~~to~~ make his narrative more dramatic and amusing than the truth may render it. His design has been to furnish a volume, entertaining and instructive to the general reader, and reliable ~~and~~ useful to the traveller and emigrant to the Pacific. If he has succeeded in this, it is as much as he can hope. The facts in reference to those military and naval operations in California which did not come under his personal observation, have been derived from authentic sources

Bryant works very hard at the outset of this book to develop trust with the reader, communicating in multiple ways and places that his observations were to be trusted. He is very candid regarding the issue of a polarized west which is either heavenly or hellish in the second-hand retellings of those in the East (5). He implies that his first-hand

experiences are to be trusted and even acted upon. This earnest promise made to the reader reflects a sincere altruistic intention, thus making any comments on the Edenic design is to give a truthful and not an exaggerated and fanciful account of the occurrences of the journey, and of the scenery, capabilities, and general features of the countries through which we shall pass, with incidental sketches of the leading characteristics of

While subtly perpetuating the myths of California through his opinions and impressions, Bryant ironically notes the influential power of such stories; even absurd tall tales leave a residual impression on the minds of the recipient. The following passage reflects his understanding of perceptual influences through stories, while also

commenting on the significant presence of prospectors and dreamers in the dominant American culture. The myth of bountiful plains and certain prosperity was already alive Californian man living to 250 due to the climate, dying only by leaving the country, and being revived when buried in Californian soil due to its richness: Stories similar to the foregoing, although absurd, and so intended to be, no doubt leave their impressions upon the minds of many, predisposed to rove in

The myth of a bountiful, expansive, and beautiful California is frequently supported through opinion and assertion. Though he details at great length the horrors of the Donner/Reed party in the High Sierras, this tale acts as much as a juxtaposition to the verdant and balmy valleys that await the traveler as they descend the snow-swept range.

In capturing the value and dimensions of the Great Central Valley, Bryant borrows from another explorer, ironically a second-hand dealing which he earlier condemned as an

X Q W U X V W Z R U W K \ P H G L X P <sup>3</sup>, V X E M R L Q D G H V F U L S W L R Q  
P R X W K μ 7 K L V Q R E O H Y D O O H a l i f o r n i a , W K H o f t h e m o s t  
P D J Q L I L F H Q W L Q W K H Z R U O G ¶ ' 7 K H W H P S W L Q J D O

describes it as perfect, yet fortunately uninhabited. In his perspective, the native tribes of the Valley did not count as legitimate holders of the land. No American or European held large tracts as yet, thus, it had yet to be cultivated to the extent of which it was certainly

G H V W L Q H G W R E H <sup>3</sup> 7 K H Z K R O H R I W K L V U H J L R Q K D V E H  
F R Q W L Q H Q W ' + H J R H V R Q W R F H O H E U D W H W K H K D  
T X D O L W \ W R R W K H U S O D F H V \$ V S H U K D S V W K H R O G H V W  
F R Z V F R P H I U R P & D O L I R U Q L D ' K H Q R W H V <sup>3</sup> W K H & D O L I R  
W H Q G H U D Q G V X U S D V V H V L Q I O D Y R U D Q \ Z K L F K , H Y H U

The myth of environmental perfection innately implies the myth of social and economic prosperity, and vice versa in the midst of an agrarian-based culture. This is  
V H H Q W K U R X J K R X W % U \ D Q W ¶ V Z U L W L Q J V D V K H S U R M H I  
W K U R X J K W K H D S S U R S U L D W L R Q R I & D O L I R U Q L D ¶ V Q D W X  
passage discussing the abundance of fish in the rivers of the Great Central Valley and the profits to be made from them, Bryant had no idea that the rivers and their mountain sources would yield hundreds of millions of dollars over the next two decades, albeit in gold rather than fish. Nonetheless, he urges his readers to consider the economic

SRVVLELOLWLHV DV KH VD\V 37KHVH VDOPRQ DUH WKH

have seen salmon taken from the Sacramento five feet in length. All of its tributaries are equally rich in the finny tribe. American enterprise will soon develop the wealth

FRQWDLQHG LQ WKHVH VWUHDPV ZKLFK KLWKHUWR KD

implication here would be quite appalling to Muir. Bryant forwards the concept that every life-giving or bountiful natural resource is good only for its market value, and

anything less than capitalist endeavors related to nature is a foolish response. Clearly, the

FRQVXPHULVW PLQGVHW LQKHUHQW LQWKHRA\WK LV DC

revision was made ever- PRUH GLILFXOW %U\DQW DOVR LQVLJKWID

pride in their expansionist philosophy as a holy right. In recounting the discovery of

\$PHULFD\ DV DWWHPSWV DW DFTXLULQJWKH&DOLIRUQLD

the grand assumption in the hearts of Americans <sup>2</sup> that the frontier to the west is

perpetually acquired for their prosperity, and it is WKH ZKLWH DDQ\it.EXUGHQ

Lansford Hastings and Edwin Bryant are but two voices from the exploration period of California history which implemented the myths that provoked a distancing from and destructive treatment of the land, as well as a return to feudalism based on property and labor (the very patterns that Muir and Steinbeck railed against). Their intentions were not always purely for the sake of democratic and Christian expansion, but this was their largest source of inspiration. At times looking for personal or political advantages, these early voices did so in the same spirit of democracy that they invited others into. Come they said, and let us take of the best fruits destined to us by God. There is enough for everyone, and no one will be for want

<sup>3</sup> EXLOGHUV ' RI & DOLIRUQLD ZKRI\QF\WKH

so with a captive audience already present and ever growing in the West. They desired infrastructure and democracy to gird up the economic and philosophical pillars of the nation; they also polled for cultural validity in a region seen as unrefined and wild. This building era ranges roughly from 1848 through 1893, the year in which Frederick Jackson 7XUQHU GHOLYHUG KLV <sup>3</sup>)URQWLHU 7KHVLV´ VXJJHVWL explaining the individualistic and self-serving tendencies of west coast profiteers. In that historic moment, the perspectives of the builders and profiteers sharply bisected, initiating a more distinct separation of social and ecological philosophies that has played out in art, culture, and politics ever since. Even today, the responses to this philosophical schism that stand as benchmark works of protest are those of Muir and Steinbeck, who IRXQG WKHPVHOYHV EXLOGHUV RI D FRPPRQ JRRG ZKHQ became self-serving.

Builders:

<sup>3</sup> \$W WKH FRUH RI WKH GUHDP ZDV WKH KRSH IRU D VSH

--Kevin Starr

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while being the most complex period of social shaping in American history, is a very simple historical period to understand in terms of its patterns of migration. Between the archetypal force of land in the American imagination and the expanse of it to the west, the only possible outcome was a transcontinental tipping of the population. Owning land came with a guarantee of independence and a classless, democratic society, all of which was available in the West.



While this was expressed legislatively in the Homestead Act of 1862, there is no question that the cry of gold really stands as the symbolic starting point of the California Dream.

<sup>3</sup> (YHU VLQFH >WKH JROG UXVK@ &DOLIRUQLD KDV EHFN

who come to the state looking for job opportunities, sunshine and surf, safe refuge, or

VWDUGRP´ %DUURQ f gold cause Wk HlegayLW] R

Throughout these formative years of statehood, the intentions of the voices put into print which held California as their subject matter ebbed and flowed between

propaganda and objectivity. Kevin Starr, the preeminent Californian historian, notes in

Americans and the California Dream, 185915 WKDW LW ZDV QRW XQWLO )

1866 work History of Californiathat a fair and objective history free of propaganda and

hyperbole was written (113). This suggests the tendency toward boosterism in the early

building years, but also reveals an eventual refining of the state in art and cultural

representation. This enhancement of cosmopolitan potential was greatly aided by the

natural wonders of the West, tantalizing Romantic sensibilities at the height of its

American expression. Upon the exploration of the Far West and the discovery of sights

such as the Grand Canyon and Yosemite, builders of the West were armed with natural

wonders such as these to represent the grand creativity of God and the grandeur of His

American gift. Readers were no longer deluged with the overused narratives of wild west

shoot-outs and dusty, provision-starved settlements, but enticed with gardens and forests

alluding to the holy Eden. This intersection of sublime landscape with an aesthetic appeal

IRU LW FRXOGQ¶W KDYH FRPH DW D EHWWHU WLPH IRU

new world of natural wonders and hyper-imagined opportunity. As for Muir, who lived

most of his life in this period, he was the master of developing sublime landscapes of the

West into the icons of a new environmental ethic which countered the dominating tenets of Manifest Destiny. He wanted to build a western ethic founded on preservation rather than conquest.

Calif RUQLD VFKRODU -DFN +LFNV VSHDNV WR WKH JR early writers in advertising it as a place worthy of renown and unique from all others:

<sup>3</sup>>, QD &RROEULWK@ FUHDWHG WKH SHUVRQD RI -RDTXL poet Cincinnatus Hiner Miller to adopt frontier buckskins <sup>2</sup> along with mustachios, a

floppy hat, boots, and spurs <sup>2</sup> a pen name, and a Byronic Western image. And she advised him further to take the whole act to England, where matters Californian were all the rage. -RDTXLQ 0LOOHU ZDV DQ LQVWDQW VXFFHVV´

Poet Laureate, an appropriately ironic title of honor reflecting the grand sentiment of the HUD \$V H[SUHVHVG E\ 6W DUU FRQFHUQLQJ WIKGHVH HDU

put together, a means by which Californians sought to know <sup>2</sup> and sometimes to delude <sup>2</sup> themselves. This fable was both a history of the past and a taxonomy of present DQG IXWX American\$20)V´

With romantic landscape came a romantic diction to market the California Dream.

\$Q H[DP SOH RI VXFK ZULWLQJ GUDZQ IURP 7KRPDV 6W natural wonders are the grandest expressions of creation ever. Appeals to the Romantic

concept of the sublime cannot be missed here; he wrote the following in a series of articles for the Boston Evening Transcript in the winter of 1860 describing his travels to Yosemite Valley:

:H ZLOO QRW DWWHPSW DQJ G H7KFHU LSKWLQRJQ IRM W

<sup>3</sup> WK hwyHip in the Sierras, and all we have to say is that he

who has threaded the streets of Nineveh and Herculaneum, scaled  
 the Alps, and counted the V W D U V I U R P W K H W R S R I ( J \ S W ¶ V  
 measured the Parthenon, and watched the setting sun from the  
 dome of Sai Q W 3 H W H U ¶ V n O R R N E G i u s , Q W R W K H  
 taken the key note of his morning song from the thunder of  
 Niagara, and has not seen the Yo-semite, is like the Queen of  
 Sheba before her visit to King Solomon <sup>2</sup> the half has not been told  
 him. (qtd. in Demars 9)

As historically monumental as the Gol G 5 X V K R I Z D V W R W K H Q D W  
 migration, a benchmark of psychological transformation in the form of historical theory  
 F D P H L Q P D U N L Q J W K H L P D J L Q D W L Y H D Q G O L W H U D  
 California and W K H Q D W H R Q 3 C considered one of the most influential pieces  
 of writing about the West produced during the nineteenth century, Frederick Jackson  
 7 X U Q H U ¶ V S D S H U R Q μ 7 K H 6 L J Q L I L F D Q F H R I W K H ) U R Q W  
 American Historical Association in Chicago in 1893) attributed to the West the  
 U H V S R Q V L E L O L W \ I R U Y L U W X D O O \ H Y H U \ \$ P H U L F D Q Y L U  
 6 P L W K V X P P D U L ] H V W K H F H Q W U D O S R L Q W R I 7 X U Q H U ¶ V  
 the West, not the proslavery South or the antislavery North, was the most important  
 among American sections, and that the novel attitudes and institutions produced by the  
 frontier, especially through its encouragement of democracy, had been more significant  
 than the imported Europ H D Q K H U L W D J H L Q V K D S L Q J \$ P H U L F D Q V R F

This geographic determinant of the American experience exposed the suddenly  
 flaccid archetype of America in light of its fully settled land and reverberated throughout

the popular, artistic, and theoretical circles of the decade. This ultimately led to the need for a reevaluation of the American identity, past and future. The literary voices of the Progressive Era, roughly 1890-1914, eagerly and effectively mediated this national reconsideration of the American identity with it. The most dominant of these was Muir, urging a preservationist philosophy toward the land in light of its finite limits and ecologically complex nature.

Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century America was ripe for taking hold of a new icon of the myth that defined a distinct American identity. Selling the Western idea to an adventure-seeking nation would not be very difficult; the only thing needed was a physical icon to match its philosophical ideology of new beginnings and endless possibilities. The western frontier in all of its immense potential, capped by the discovery of megalithic Yosemite, finally presented America with a place and a reason to stand distinctly apart from, and above, the rest of the world. Muir must significantly credit the beauty with which he had to work with in arguing his case.

The opening of the Far West, with its astonishing array of natural wonders, provided Americans, at last, with claims to scenic superiority that were difficult to dispute. Everything seemed to exist on a monumental scale. Boundless prairies teemed with numberless herds of buffalo, while giant rivers cut enormous chasms through towering ranges of snow-covered mountains. These natural attractions without rival in the known tourist world. (Demars 21-22)

The settlers and builders of California faced a challenging paradox as they sought to portray the region to the rest of the world through fair and accurate depictions<sup>2</sup> they often encountered a uniquely pristine and distinctively beautiful landscape that called for elaborate description. This is largely where Muir and others diverged<sup>2</sup> Muir highlighted their grandeur as something sacred to be preserved, while others praised it as the physical provider of prosperity. It must have been very easy for them to slip from objective description to fantastic conjecture and dimensional hyperbole as they considered the voluminous bounty of the expansive land and the economic security that seemed guaranteed through its settlement. As they sought to offer first-hand objective insight into the settling and development of California, their words seemed to have an agenda of their own, establishing and then furthering the grandiose myths of this western territory. In writing this place into the minds of America, two significant things happened. These

H D U O \ G H V F U L S W L R Q V E F F E D P H S H O P D O W I D W I D L E S

bounty and certain prosperity that carried over from decade to decade. The effect of these idealized symbols of the California Dream created the second result of a mythologized West<sup>2</sup> thousands of people went there in search of that Promised Land and sought to draw prosperity directly from it. The obvious problem with the perpetuation and pursuit of these myths is that there is a finite point of saturation at which the land is either negatively altered or fully occupied, and the availability of the American Dream for newcomers ceases. Ironically, this flood of migration was the central desire of the settlers and builders in the name of progress and prosperity, yet it led to degraded landscapes and a caste social system of land owners and laborers. *The Grapes of Wrath* best tells of the

social ou W F R P H R I W K L V S H U Y D V M Y F I R S T D R I V E I N T H E S I E Z K L O H O X L U  
 reflects the ecological dangers in metaphorical condemnation of his destructive sheep.

Put simply, these early Californians had good intentions but ill effects. The growth rate was so rapid that, in the short time it took private parties and corporations to stake a claim to every parcel of land and the resources upon it, the myth of land and prosperity for all had reached its peak. The balance of supply and demand for the California Dream was abruptly out of balance, and the resulting strain on the land and its Q H Z D U U L Y D O V Z D V D O O E X W L Q H Y L W D E O H , Q W K H  
 92,000. By 1860 it had increased by more than 300% to 380,000. For the next seven decades to follow, the population averaged nearly a 50% increase, swelling to 865,000 by 1880 and 1.21 million in 1890 (U.S. Census). This conflict between actual opportunity and the limitations of reality was articulated in the last decade of the nineteenth century, but not before the good-intentioned builders of the Golden State upheld the myth of prosperous opportunity and a bountiful landscape for all.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, America had established itself as a country and a people of great promise, yet still found itself in the shadows of its European forefathers. Europe had a rich history of art, culture, and landscape, making it very difficult for America to gain an equal respect in these areas. The eastern states continued to emulate Europe for many years, demonstrating cultural originality only in the forms of religion and governmental philosophy. The West, however, was continually appropriating the qualities of its dramatic landscape for the development of a unique and significant culture all its own. The fringes of civilization, along the western edge of American expansion, continued to be the place where the nation established a unique

identity. Borrowing the big ideas from Europe and from its own short past, the ever-expanding America of the frontier was where the dreams of progress and the culture of innovation were perpetually born. This national tension between maintaining a comparable cultural identity with European nations while at the same time developing a culture unique enough to match the distinctive land and philosophies of America played itself out in the publishing world as much as it did in Washington D.C. or any other culture-shaping medium. The Western voices projecting messages of personal and national prosperity (boasting of a truer democracy representative in the untamed and free lands of the West) challenged their eastern brothers and sisters to extend their American journey. This invitation was offered by both the settlers and the builders that followed them from 1848 through 1893.

The list of voices which fall under the category of builder is much larger and distinguished than that of the settlers before it, and much more personalized than the often times nameless corporate and state profiteers that follow. This can be accounted for by the increased number of professionals and publishers venturing west, which likewise correlated to an increased interest in the topic from those in the east. It was also one of the most significant topics of conversation and curiosity among the population of a growing nation, matched only by such weighty topics as slavery and reconstruction, the <sup>3</sup>, QGLDQ TXHVWLRQ ´ DQG DQ Xagrarian and Industrial Revolution, and the foundations.

Another circumstance of mid- to late-nineteenth century culture promoting western literature is the increase in fictional prose, adding invented retellings of the Wild West to the consciousness of the nation and further complicating the distinction of truth

from reality. While every reader was certainly able to decipher the difference between fictional prose and non-fiction writing in the form of travelogues or biographical narratives, the power of association held in the fictional words and images did not bring this difference to the minds of readers then, nor does it now. For example, readers knew images of a rough riding gambler Mr. Oakhurst and his motley assortment of companions listening to a colloquial recitation of the Iliad as they froze in a Sierran snow storm would factor into their image of the west. Also clouding truth from fiction since the mid-nineteenth century was the rise of realism as a literary technique, in which the author sought to capture the events, characters, and locale of a story in as strict a verisimilitude to reality as possible. This move away from the romantic approach of writing added a sense of truth, or reality, to the fictitious regional tales of the West. Likewise, the non-fiction of the time focusing on California, though intended and declared by its authors as objective, consistently reveals a romantic tendency to portray a pastoral ideal and hyperbolize the dramatic landscape. Much like the nation which increasingly struggled to reconcile its cultural identity between the urban and the frontier, the literary world was likewise in flux, casting the myths of California as truth. For a truth teller and naturalist like Muir, the adoption of fantastical myths as truth did not help his preservationist cause.

Selected for its breadth of influence and its representative nature of writing from *W K L V H U D + R A N D O L P H A N D J U N I O N F R O M N E W Y O R K S A N F R A N C I S C O* in the Summer of 1858, the central text for analysis of the building *S H U L R G \* U H H O H \ ¶ V E L R J U D S K H U \* O \ Q G R Q 9 D Q ' H X V H Q D V V L J Q V K L P ³ U H P D U* observation that made him a real authority on the resources, interests, and state of



GHYHORS PHQW RI WKH UHJLRQV WKDW KH YLVLWHG ' (QJODQGHU ¶ V REVHUYDWLRQ VNLOOV KLV KLJKO\ UHVS and leader added a great deal of power to his words. At the age of thirty he founded the New York Tribune , Q WHUPV RI SRSXODULW\ DQG UHVSHFW - P eye for what middle-class citizens wished to see in a newspaper, and his vigorously reflective editorial opinions had given the Tribune a national readership and had made him the best- NQRZQ QHZVSDSHUPDQ LQ WKH FRXQWU\ ' YL & SUHVWLJLRXV RSLQLRQ OHDGHU ' 0DQIUD YL WKURXJK +RUDFH ' ZDV D WUXH DGYRFDWH RI QDWLpation DO H[SDQV tone in terms of what America and Americans can be, are made of, and will do. He was even nominated for President of the United States in 1872, but lost to the war hero of the day, Ulysses S. Grant. Besides being a trusted reporter and politician, he had also established himself as the teller and knower of the wide world, writing *Glances at Europe* LQ +LV LQWHQW DV DQ H[SDQVLRQLVW FRXOGQ ¶ W Iowa lecturing on his favorite issues such as emancipation and a transcontinental railway, among others (Manfra vii).

% DODQFLQJ RXW \*UHHOH\ DUH VHOHFWHG H[FHUSW California for Travellers and Settlers. While also a first-hand account, this book was less targeted at the specific issue of promoting the construction of the transcontinental railroad and more focused on the task of establishing a European-American populace and a thriving tourist industry in California. Parts of his book appeared first in +DU S, ¶ V Tribune and the Evening Post, evidence that it reached a large number of readers and therefore held significant sway.

There are many other writers of the era that could have been highlighted as examples of state builders whose words also constructed a mythological California. Mark

Twain is the most significant of this group, particularly his regional western writings of

W K H V D Q G V - D F N + L F N V L Q G L V F X V V L Q J 7 Z D L Q  
Z H V W H U Q F X O W X U H D Q G O D Q G V F D S H surviving that V X J H W V W K D W

was both exhilarating and terrifying: a place to start over again, to find a fortune, a sight on which innocence might encounter darkness <sup>2</sup> perhaps even transform it <sup>2</sup> the

J H R J U D S K L F D O H Q G R I W K H O L Q H I R U living that W K H Z H V W Z D U G R

Twain saw his writing as a working through of the cultural conflicts, or of the complexities of defining the nation, points to the shared understanding by Muir, and later

Steinbeck, as literary activists. Second only to Twain in profits and fame via stories of the west, Bret Harte began publishing the *Overland Monthly* out of San Francisco in 1869; it

took the East by storm, selling more copies in New York than all of the Western territories combined. Though both Twain and Harte moved back East while continuing

W K H L U <sup>3</sup> P \ W K L Q J ' R I W K H Z H V W critical awareness of the W K H L U Z R U N <sup>3</sup> D O V R P D

character of the Golden State, an ambivalence toward the dreams that beckoned others.

The early California passages of *Roughing It* for example, question and counter the airbrushed idylls of topography, climate, and primitive innocence for which the good

F L W L J H Q V R I W K H ( D V W D Q G W K H O L G Z H V W W K L U V W H G '  
2 W K H U <sup>3</sup> E X L O G L Q J ' H U D Z U L W H U V S H U S H W X D W H G V

California promoting its promise while also beginning to selectively challenge its unqualified guarantee. The historian Josiah Royce wrote a more accurate depiction of

& D O L I R U Q L D <sup>1</sup> V G H V S L F D E O H V R F L D Dothan has seen D O D O C S R O L W L F D O D

written. He c K D O O H Q J H G W K H H W K L F V E H K L Q G W K H D F W L R Q V  
 mature self- F U L W L F D O F D S D F L W \ ' + L F N V L Q D P D Q Z K R E  
 U H V S R Q V H W R W K H ' U H D P D V P X F K D V D G a r r o d H O V H + H  
 (1884) revealed the plight of former mission Indians, though its effects were not what she  
 had intended. It sparked a kind of cult romanticism with mission images and ideas (Hicks  
 O D U L D \$ P S D U R 5 X L ] T h e S q u a t t e r L a n d R a m p o o  
 the thieving arrogance of American squatters on Spanish land grants, yet ultimately  
 shows the white settler and the railroad winning out over the Californios. Samuel  
 % R Z O H V ¶ W a d s t h e C o n t r o l  
 transcontinental railroad for the sake of expansion and development. - R K Q 5 R O O L Q 5 L G J  
 novel *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murrieta the Celebrated California Bandit*  
 (1854) was the first novel written in California. It condemns racism and violence by  
 Z K L W H V D J D L Q V W P L Q R U L W L H V H V S H F L D O O \ 0 H [ L F D Q V  
 the Sierras in grand Byronic style were widely read, thus becoming quite influential in  
 the public perception of California. Two others who greatly influenced the shaping of the  
 California landscape in the minds of Americans are the botanist William Brewer who  
 wrote the first-person account *Up and Down California, 1860-1864* and geologist  
 Clarence King with his *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada* (1872). This growing-up  
 period in California history from 1848-1893 seems to be the point at which the voices of  
 the region chose between measured optimism grounded in social and environmental  
 realities, led by Muir, or overt propaganda that perpetuated myths of perfection for the  
 sake of profit. The second of these, the profiteers, is considered following a look at one of

WKH VWDWH¶V PRVW VLJQLILFDQW EXLOGHUV DQG P\WK

voice of Charles Nordhoff.

³ μ \* R :HVW \RXQJ PDQ ¶ XUJHG +RUDFH \*UHHOH\ \$

MRXUQDOLVW RI WKH QLQHWHHQWK FHQWXU\ μJR :HVW

legendary advice, which Greeley did not originate but did popularize to the point that it

KDV EHHQ IRUHYHU DVVRFLDWHG ZLWK KLV QDPH UHPD

FRQYHUVDWLRQ ZLWK LWVHOI RQ PDWWHUV RI KLVWRU

the New York Tribune. Greeley was a very powerful voice in a culture run according to

WKH SULQWHG ZRUG RI WKH 1RUWKHDVW 8QGHUVDQG

and assets for future development were in the wild and bounteous West, Greeley invested

a good deal of his efforts in selling newspapers that waxed of the newly discovered

wonders of the Far West. He also personally devoted himself to prospecting routes for a

trans-continental railroad (Manfra ix). He was able to accomplish two goals through the

single medium of the publishing world <sup>2</sup> sell newspapers to a growing readership

throughout the East, and promote Western expansion through his propagandist non-

ILFWLRQ WKDW LV QRZ FRQVLGHUHG WKH EAAnUWK RI WU

Overland Journey: From New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859

appeared in the Tribune periodically throughout 1859, printed at intervals corresponding

to his investigative adventure west by train and stagecoach. In taking this overland

H[FXUVLRQ ³KLV PDLQ JRDO ZDV WR LQYHQWRU\ WKH F

Francisco and to create public support for a Pacific railway that would invite rapid free-

VWDWH FRORQL]DWLRQ RI WKH :HVW´ L[

. QRZLQJ \*UHHOH\¶V FHQWUDO LQWHQWLRQ FHUWDL

suspected it would be riddled with seductive hyperbole, one-sided propaganda, and continued mythologizing of California as a Garden of Eden. Yet, what was written as a first-hand account by one of the most respected and well known newspaper barons of the period was taken to heart by hundreds of thousands of his readers, based largely in the trend-setting East. The text makes it clear that his desire was rooted in development and infrastructure rather than personal gain, thus making the mysteries and potential of the Far West as alluring as possible to the wealthy venture capitalists and the restless citizens of the East.

As stated by Jo Ann Manfra in the introduction to the 1999 reprinting of *An Overland Journey*, his primary intention was to assess a central railroad route to the Pacific which would encourage Western colonization. Widely considered to be a national QHFHVVLW\ DIWHU WKH ERRP RI WKH HDUO\ JROG UXVK specific route became the center of debate more than whether or not it was wanted or needed. As a nationalist considering the broader needs and benefits of the nation, Greeley rallied for a centrally located line, while southerners insisted that a more southern route ZDV PRUH LGHDO \*UHHOH\ ³ODEHOHG WKH V&XWKHUQ S self- LQWHUHVW WKDW PDOLFLRXVO\ VHFWLRQDOLJHG ZKD (Manfra ix). This prompted his trip across the country along a central course, supported by rhetoric as to why it was the best choice. His belief that the railroad offered the best PHDQV RI DFFRPSOLVKLQJ \$PHULFD¶V 0DQLIHVV 'HVWL philosophies written in his 1850 work *Hints Toward Reform*, in which he suggests \$PHULFD¶V LQIUDVWUXFWXUH VKRXOG is with his XLOW RQ DG

advocacy in *An Overland Journey* for the settlement of millions of square miles of open land to provide for such an infrastructure. It also reinforces the American perception of the ever-available frontier to the west, an idea that Muir and Steinbeck advertise as not only wrong but dangerous.

In his closing paragraph of the book, he makes his intentions as a nation-builder more explicit than anywhere else, pleading with the nation to fully embrace the prosperity offered to America through transcontinental rail. His trusted voice is full of promise and optimism as he claims guarantees of personal and national advancement through appropriating the western landscape:

Men and brethren! let us resolve to have a railroad to the Pacific <sup>2</sup> to have it soon. It will add more to the strength and wealth of our country than would the acquisition of a dozen Cubas. It will prove a bond of union not easily broken, and a new spring to our national industry, prosperity and wealth. It will call new manufacturers into existence, and increase the demand for the products of those already existing. It will open new vistas to national and to individual aspiration, and crush out filibusterism by giving a new and wholesome direction to the public mind. My long, fatiguing journey was undertaken in the hope that I might do something toward the early construction of the Pacific railroad; and I trust that it has not been made wholly in vain. (386)

+ H L V N H H Q O \ D Z D U H R I W K H S R Z H U R I W K H W S D E I O H L F F W R L

His desire to build the west in the name of democracy and opportunity was in a large part

accomplished through the summoning of the American dream in the hearts of his readers, beckoning them to partake in and support the acquisition of a bountiful land which promised to provide a thriving future.

The environmental promises of the California Dream, highlighted by the phrases endlessly bountiful and expansive plain and beautiful and consecrated land,

dominate the landscape. Again, the aspects of the myth guaranteeing prosperity for western transplants through hard work is inseparably connected to the

LGHDOLJHG ERXQW\ RI WKH ODQG EXW \*UHHOH\¶V DQH

the inexhaustible natural resources present in the Far West. This implies multiple and diverse industrial opportunities dependent on the land, hopefully inspiring individual dreamers and bank-rolled companies alike to make the West their targeted investment of the future.

Perhaps the most praised resource is that of timber. He constantly rejoices in its plentitude, but also assigns an almost divine destiny in the land already having the most essential commodity for expanding civilization. In describing the forests of the Sierra

Nevad D 0RXQWDLQV KH VD\ ³+RZ JUHDWO\ EOHVW &DOL

QRW VD\´ +RZH YHU KH RI FRXUVH GRHV FKRRVH W

DEXQGDQFH ³7DNLQJ LQWR DFFRXQW JROG WLPEHU D

the richest and most productive mountain ±FKDLQ RQ HDUWK´ 1RW ORQ

description, he ties this bounty directly to monetary values and a thriving timber industry for whosoever may be the wisest to pursue the land immediately. He tempts the eastern

farm HU DQG LQYHVWRU DV V X² there are those liars who will get R W GLVWD

it<sup>2</sup> when what is now California will have a population of three to six millions; then

eligible timber-lands in the Sierra will be worth more per acre than would now be paid

IRU IDUPV LQ WKH ULFKHVW Y-DQDHW QHIDU GDQ )UDQFL  
 QDWXUH LV DJDLQ WKH DQWLWKHVLV RI OXLU¶V SKLORV

allure of profits rather than spiritual uplift from the forests of the Sierras had by that time  
 already established itself in California.

Greeley cleverly addresses every benefit of such a rich natural commodity in  
 order to draw in the points of interest and value of every potential settler and investor. He

highlights the aestheti F E H D X W \ R I & D O L I R U Q L D ¶ V I R U H V W V D V D U  
 precious than the timber itself; it is much more difficult to manufacture or find pristine

beauty on a grand scale like the Sierra Nevada Mountains at this time. While these ideas  
 encourage national pride, they by no means suggest preservationist thought. Indeed, the

E H D X W \ I R X Q G L W R W K H G W H I D S R I V W Y H U J U H H Q V ´ F D Q M X V  
 to be made from their fell. Making epic comparisons to the idealized Alps of Europe, he

says,

The Sierra Nevadas lack the glorious glaciers, the frequent rains,  
 the rich verdure, the abundant cataracts of the Alps; but they far  
 surpass them <sup>2</sup> they surpass any other mountains I ever saw <sup>2</sup> in  
 the wealth and grace of their trees. Look down from almost any of  
 their peaks, and your range of vision is filled, bounded, satisfied,  
 by what might be termed a tempest-tossed sea of evergreens,  
 filling every upland valley, covering every hillside, crowning every  
 peak but the highest, with their unfading luxuriance. . . here, I am  
 confident, [are] the most beautiful trees on earth. (301-02)



Greeley is much more judicious in his description of the climates throughout California than others had been. Yet whenever he identifies a region as less than ideal for the venture of farming, he qualifies it by explaining how it is still a bountiful provider, just in different ways. For example, the foothills are too dry for wheat and are not easily irrigated, yet they are as ideal for ranching as any known land in the country. He also

GHIHQGV WKH GU\ KRW VXP PHUV RI WKH 9DOOH\ DV <sup>3</sup>K

safety from crop damage due to rain, insects, rust, and weeds. Also, such weather leads to grand harvests of agriculture in multiple seasons. On this point, he explains the unique climatic patterns of the Valley which seem harsh to the easterner but prove to be twice as fruitful to the prudent farmer. Describing the thoughts of an observer from the foothills looking down across the plains in the heat of VXP PHU KH LPDJLQH V KLP VD\L

WKH \$PHULFDQ ,WDO\ " ,W ORRVN V PRUH OLNH D 6DKDUD

the winter and spring are the seasons of bounty in the lowlands, giving statistics that reveal the doubly productive harvests of California crops compared to those in the East (325-26).

The myth of environmental fecundity surfaces again as Greeley proclaims the

HDVH ZLWK ZKLFK D ULFK KDUYHVW LV DFFRPSOLVKHG

rye, and barley so largely and with so little labor as the great majority of these thirty

PLOOLRQ D<sup>45</sup>PHV

Greeley boasts of the fruit trees. In speaking of stone fruits such as peaches, apricots, and nectarines, he SURPLVHV WKH XQEHOLHYDEOH WR EH WUXH V

produced so readily or so bountifully. Such [fruit . . .] would stagger the faith of nine-

WHQWKV RI P\ UHGDGHUV ' +H FRQWLQXHV WKH JOR

bounty with a rare example of hyperbole that certainly perpetuates Edenic associations

Z L W K W K H O D Q G 5 H I H U U L Q J W R W K H D E V H Q F H R I S H V W

trees, you will not see one bulb which has prematurely fallen <sup>2</sup> a victim to this destructive

E U R R G ' \$ V V R F E D W L R Q V W R W K H floods the mind

when reading this early source of agricultural paradise in terms of abundance and ease

with which it is managed.

Just as endless bounty is to be had by agricultural means, it likewise awaits the

L Q G X V W U L R X V F L W L J H Q Z L O O L Q J W R F R Q W L Q X H W K H P L

years earlier. He advocates dams for the sake of irrigation, the result of which will be

<sup>3</sup> R Q H R I W K H P R V W S U R G X F W M Y H U H L R Q V R I Q H D U W K ' 3, H M L Q G Q R R Q H V H

the many tributaries flowing from the Sierras could more than provide for the mining

needs of the next quarter century. History proved his assertions wrong concerning the life

V S D Q R I & D O L I R U Q L D H V H J R B G H U J X H V H 3, H M L Q G Q R R Q H V H

apprehensions that California will cease to produce gold abundantly, at least within the

Q H [ W T X D U W H U R I D F H Q W X U \ > « @ , I W K H D P R X Q W R I D

considerable reduction of price, the gold product of California would thereupon be

L Q F U H D V H G V H Y H U D O P L O O L R Q V S H U D Q Q X P ' + H V

if it simply needs to be wished for, and refers to the most ecologically destructive form of

mining (hydraulic) as he dreams of the limitless economic potential resonant in the land.

7 K L V S H U V S H F W L Y H X S K R O G V W K H P \ W K R I Q D W X U H \ V F

highlights the escalating ecological dilemma between conservation and appropriation

faced by the builders.

In discussing the negative environmental effects of development, specifically

VWHPPLQJ IURP WKH PLQLQJ LQG X VWU\ \*UHHOH\ XOWL  
YLHZV WKH UHJLRQ¶V ODQG DV D JUHHG\ WHPSWUHV  
SLFWXUH RI &DOLIRUQLD LQ WKH DIWHUPDWK QRWLQJ  
WHQG WR EHDXLWLI\ WKH IDFH RI QDWXUH > « @ &DOLIRU  
VXUUHQGHUV PFK RI KHU EHDXW\ DOVR to escape the RW D VV

pollution <sup>2</sup> even the bountiful and naturally pure Sacramento is yellow with it, and flows

WXUELG DQG XQLQYLWLQJ WR WKH 3DFLILF > « @ \$V PR  
cuts and slashes as if he cared for nobody but himself, and no time but to- GD \ ' -93).

Clearly, Greeley and other well-intentioned builders of the American West were  
conflicted between responsible land use and unsuppressed appropriation of resources for  
the immediate expansion of a dynasty. This conflict plays itself out further as he  
encounters the giant sequoias of Mariposa Grove. In this instance, he calls for the  
preservation of these largest of all land dwelling organisms, second on earth only to the  
great coral reefs of the sea. While still giving detailed measurements of these

P\WK RORJLFD OO\ SURSRUWLRQH G WUHHV DQG IDVFLQD  
natural wonders, his preservationist stance separates him from the profiteers that had

begun to spring up all around him. They would want to cut them down for so many cents  
per board foot, or for the profiting spectacle of such an artifact from the exotic West, but  
he at least recognized the big trees as a symbol and source of pride for the nation, an

LUUHSODFHDEOH UHVXUFH e 3 county, in the state of California, RI 0DULS  
does not immediately provide for the safety of these trees, I shall deeply deplore the

LQIDWXDWLRQ DQG EHOLHYH WKDW WKHVH JLDQWV PL

He knew that his social influence and words held great sway in public opinion, and likewise held the government accountable to the defense of the trees. This attitude highlights the separation between the builders and profiteers as the turn of the century approached. The fully developed and radicalized version of justice-conscious writers of the building age such as Horace Greeley, Helen Hunt Jackson, and John Rollin Ridge ultimately surface in the Progressive Era with the likes of John Muir and continue through present day. Standing on these broad literary shoulders, they consistently counter the harmful perpetrators of the California Dream who have likewise grown more sophisticated with time.

In coming to the end of his journey, Greeley sought to concisely convey his central intents for writing his "WUDYHORJXH , Q DQVZHULQJ WKH TXH LQGXFHPHQW IRU IXWXUH LPPLJUDWLRQ" ' \*UHHOH\ JLY JUHDW QHHG RI YLUWXR XV HGXFDWHG HQUHJHWLF ZR KDUG ZRUNHUV QRWHW SHEWLSLOWR 3DQNUHWXUQ WR W populate and civilize the land (358- 2 Q WKL V O D V W S R L Q W K H H [ S R X C California at all, come to stay; and nowhere else will you find a little money more desirable than here. Even one thousand dollars, well applied, may, with resolute industry D Q G I U X J D O L W \ S O D F H \ R X V R R Q R Q W K H K L J K U R D G W depicting the California Dream was not to create entrepreneurial millionaires, but rather to encourage industrious citizens desirous of bountiful land all their own. He did not align Z L W K W K H 3 P D N H L W U L F K ' S U R S D J D Q G L V W V W K D W I R O C every traveler in order to profit from their naivety. He encouraged democratic ideals of a good solid living for hard work and wise investments, following the lines of a stable

agrarian market and according to the archetypal principles of Manifest Destiny. This principle may have held more truth when it was said, but while the realities of the land ¶ V availability changed, the ideal he offers continues to echo in the national imagination for JHQH UDWLRQV WR FRPH 7K XV 6WHLQE HFN ¶ V WUDJLF V less than seventy years later in an attempt to update the disappointing realities of a once promising land.

Greeley promoted economic and social success in a number of ways throughout

WKH WH[W , Q D VHF W, WR Q 5 W V W O U H G V & D O U H R U Q L D V W D W H one of the cheapest and best stock-growing countries V L Q WKH ZRUOG ´ 7KH

is that success done cheaply is success acquired easily, depicting a fated destiny of

SURVSHULW\ WR WKH DGYHQWXURXV VRXOV ZLOOLQJ W SLFNLQJV´ WKHPH FR Q W L Q X H V D W K H S R W W D V

HYHQ NHHS XS ZLWK WKH ZHDOWK ZKLFK \*RG DSSDUHQ

has a squad of thirty or forty men picking and boxing peaches for the last month, yet his

fruit by the cart-load ripens and URWV XQJDWKHUG´ +H FRQWLQ

continued to be augmented by at least twenty- ILYH SHU FHQW SHU DQQXP´

individual prospers from the decision to try his fortunes in California, the state and thus

nation likewise benefit from the imminent economic development of a major emigration

west. Such a shift in human resources, argues Greeley, is not only a safe but also a

SURVSHURXV FKRLFH IRU WKH FLWLJHQ DQG WKH ODQG

or of mining claims should strongly desire an ample and incessant immigration. This is

plain enough; while it is not so obvious, though I deem it equally true, that an

immigration of one hundred thousand effective workers per annum, would be readily

absorbed by California, and would add steadily and immensely to her prosperity and

ZHDOWK' +HRI FRXUVH LPSOLHV ZKLWH LPPLJUDQ

The most significant shadow that looms over this perpetuated mythology of a Promised Land is the racist premise never explicitly articulated but always implied in this myth. The Land of Milk and Honey was meant only for the chosen people, and in

\$PHULFD\ V FDVH WKLV PHDQW ZKLWH EUPHEUHFDMQV GHVF

the lips of supposedly staunch white abolitionists such as Horace Greeley, it was always abundantly clear that their vision of Manifest Destiny in the West was very white. It was never meant to apply to African Americans, Mexicans, Native Americans, or Chinese.

The California Dream was one in which they were not allowed to share. The following

TXRWH UHIOHFWV WKH SDUDGR[ RI \*UHHOH\ V H[SDQVL

to prosperity and the right of every man to pursue his dreams. In speaking of the Chinese

LQ &DOLIRUQLD KH VD\ V 3 an opium-smoker, a gambler, a

drinker, and a devotee of every sensual vice. But he is weak in body, and not allowed to vote, so it is safe to trample on him; he does not write English, and so cannot tell the

VWRU\ RI KLV ZURQJV > dia@s of YHQWKEH ZLUHWFKHG , Q

VXJJHVWLRQ WKDW WKHUH LV DQ\ NLQVKLS EHWZHHQ W

this racist exclusion of minorities from the California Dream empowered the profiteers that came after them in a number of ways. It allowed them to develop racially filtered communities throughout the state, and advertise the West as a racially pure society to match the pristine landscape shaping it. This in turn invited a land-owning citizenry to a state which had never sustained a stable economy without the exploitation of a minority class. These racist expectations, crushed by interracial realities, invoked a culture built on

principles of injustice rather than democratic dreams. In battling this social ethic, Steinbeck faced a mythology which had hatred woven into it from its very foundations.

This kind of perspective from Greeley certainly erodes any trust he may have had in a modern reader, but sadly, the white majority of the day were not likely rattled by the overt racism against Chinese and Native Americans. In short, Greeley knew he held a captive audience and used the myth of the Golden State to promote his goals for the nation. The results of such earnest writing from a reputable source are made explicitly clear in the following 1859 magazine article discussing the public reading of his Sierra Nevada accounts. Despite his first-hand accounts being more outlandish and fantastic than actual fictional tales, the readers still faithfully accept every detail in light of the fact

W K D W L W L V <sup>3</sup> 8 Q F O H + R U D F H ' V S H D N L Q J

7 X H V G D \ H Y H Q L Q J D ' Q I R U R R H O U J <sup>3</sup> J \* W H H I D I W H A W D R E U R \ X W

mammoth trees in California. Sinbad the sailor is outdone now; and yet we believe Mr. Greeley most implicitly. We should believe him if he said he saw a live sea-serpent. <sup>2</sup> He tells of trees which he doubts not were of substantial size when Solomon laid the foundation of the temple <sup>2</sup> which possibly indeed belonged to a geologic p H U L R G E H I R U H ~~contemporary of the~~ L R Q ferns fossilized in coal <sup>2</sup> tree one hundred feet in circumference at the height of six feet from the base, and three hundred feet high! These California discoveries make the world seem new. We need not go to the moon for wonders while we are so ignorant of the wonders on our own planet. (Oneida)

\$ VHFRQG SULPDU\ VRXUFH WDNHQ IURP WKH EXLOC  
 California for Travellers and Settlers (1873) helps to more fully represent these voices  
 through its nuanced differences in intent and style. Nordhoff was more specific in his  
 boosterism than Greeley; while Greeley polled for a railroad route to and through  
 & DOLIRUQLD 1RUGKRILVRODWHG KLV WH[W LQ WKH \*R  
 ZRUN LV D SURGXFW RI \*UHHOH\¶V DFFRPSOLVKPHQWV  
 earlier, the transcontinental railroad was completed, allowing for a steady stream of  
 travelers and settlers to access the Far West. As for his intentions, the title says it all <sup>2</sup>  
 both traveling there for pleasure or settling there for life are building enterprises. In fact,  
 combining a travel and settler guide is a very ingenious and effective rhetorical approach  
 for someone intending to develop a region. While he vividly advertises only the most  
 dramatic and bountiful regions of the state for visitors, he is simultaneously convincing  
 potential settlers to fall in love with a carefully crafted California Dream seemingly free  
 from imperfections.

,Q JHQHUDO 1RUGKRIL¶V LQWHQWLRQV ZHUH OLNH  
 democratic-minded builders of the mid- to late-nineteenth century. He desired to expose a  
 ripening yet unpicked California to the East, appealing to their sense of adventure in the  
 American tradition of western migration, and baiting them with an opportunity to start  
 anew. Nordhoff was not the wealthy philanthropist that Greeley was, however, and thus  
 also intended to profit from book sales which appropriated the irresistible mythology of  
 California to do so. In fact, he was later commissioned by railroads and land speculators  
 to wax eloquent about the wonderful opportunities in California (Kurutz 17). Yet in  
 California for Travellers and Settlers he also speaks quite matter of factly of his



EHQHYROHQW LQWHQWLRQV DQG REMHFWLYH VW\OH LQ  
 to give a p ODLQ DQG GHWDLOHG VWDWHPHQW<sup>3</sup> RI URXWHV V  
 H[SHQVHV +H DOVR JLYHV DFFRXQWV RI WKH DJULFXOV  
 reason of its fine healthful climate, its rich soil, and its remarkably varied products,  
 deserves the attention of farmers looking for pleasant homes and cheap and fertile lands,  
 FRPELQHG ZLWK D FOLPDWH WKH EHVW SURDEO\ LQ  
 charts and data tables give the text an overall impression of objective journalism, yet  
 closer scrutiny reveals an idealized opportunity and landscape. He is speculative in terms  
 of the agricultural promise for every industrious farmer- VHWOHU DQG PDQ\ RI K  
 are based on anecdotal encounters and personal observations. Well intentioned for the  
 settlement of farm families in pursuit of the American Dream, Nordhoff also perpetuates  
 the myth of California which ultimately set up optimistic settlers for harsher realities and  
 an already overrun landscape for more destructive alteration.

The environmental premises of the myth are excessively promoted to the reader  
 throughout the text. Seeking to alter the perceptions of any proud Easterners yet to be  
 converted to the belief that life in California is superior to that in New York, Boston,  
 Chicago, or St. Louis, Nordhoff insists on the far greater quality of life found out west:

<sup>3</sup>: H ZKR OLYH RQ WKH \$WODQWLF VLGH RI WKH FRQWLQ  
 doubt in our hearts that they would be only too glad to come over to us. Very few suspect  
 that the Californians have the best of us, and that, so far from living in a kind of rude  
 exile, they enjoy, in fact, the finest climate, the most fertile soil, the loveliest skies, the  
 mildest winters, the most healthful region, in th H ZKROH 8QLWHG HW DWHV<sup>4</sup>  
 phrases this concept in such a way as to reflect a kind of insider knowledge, letting the

reader in on an opportunity yet to be known to the general public. This is not simply a land to visit, he implies, but a land to settle which would greatly and immediately

H Q K D Q F H R Q H ¶ V T X D O L W \ R I O L I H

His efforts to expand the population by revealing the agricultural potential of the state are quite calculated. In speaking of the San Joaquin Valley after discussing the

natural bo X Q W \ R I & D O L I R U Q L D 1 R U G K R I I W H D V H V W K H U H D

plains alone contain nearly seven million acres of land, of which less than seven hundred

W K R X V D Q G Z H U H F X O W L Y D W H G O D V W \ H D U is a full 7 K L V S

embrace of the myth of endless bounty. Unmediated ejaculations of boosterism such as

3 0 R U H O D Q G 0 R U H I R U \ R X ( Q R X J K I R U H Y H U \ R Q H ' Z R X

places without a stark shift in tone. In offering this particular statistic, he falsely implies

that 6.3 million acres are fallow and waiting for any taker who wants it. He conveniently

avoids the ugly realities of land grant disputes and tenant farming which more accurately

U H S U H V H Q W W K H V W D W X V R Q W K D H W J O D X Q G , I O R I R W L Q L W

V D \ V 3 7 K H S H R S O H D U H E X W V O R Z O \ G L V F R Y H U L Q J W K D

L Q L W V S U R G X F W L Y H V R L O ' \$ V L I W K H U H V L G H Q W V

Nordhoff speaks to the potential settlers in the East in a confidential tone. He also plays

on the cultured pride of the Easterner, suggesting that they, unlike the Californian, are

intelligent enough to see the full potential in such an opportunity.

He further boasts of the general bounty of the state as he suggests that its every natural quality far surpasses the best offerings in the East. He also touches on the issue of a need for an intrastate railroad, reflecting his desire as a nation builder to unite land, people, and resources more effectively.

But nature has given it everything else except a railroad; a soil of remarkable fertility; a climate, according to the opinion of Eastern men with whom I spoke, who have lived here for some years, far more pleasant in the hottest summer heats than New York or Illinois, and in winter charmingly mild; healthful breezes, and freedom from malarious diseases except in the vicinity of Bakersfield; lovely mountain scenery; the capacity for a great variety of products; and water enough, flowing from the mountains on each side, if it is properly saved, to irrigate every acre of soil which needs it. (226)

The promise of prosperity and fulfillment in the myth is also a fundamental message of the text. The builders of this era not only implemented this perception among the populace as a means of promoting expansion, but truly believed in the essence of it. In their long-term vision of a continental democracy, they were short-sighted in terms of social and environmental injustices which inherently stem from the deflated realities of false expectations. Coupling this with a continued idealization of California in spite of significant falterings of the myth, the hard realities of the state became clear to the consciousness coincided with the rise of the profiteers, and these two schools of influence have existed ever since.

Nordhoff was still a part of the building generation that may have known that collateral damage to people and the land was an inevitability of expansion, but thought it a small price to pay. With good intentions for the nation, and certainly not a setback for

his own well-being, Nordhoff elicited a message of prosperity that would appeal to almost any reader. In his Preface, he claims that far more Americans have seen Rome, Paris, and the Alps than Yosemite. He then pleads, as he sells both his guide book and the *VWDWH RI & DOLIRUQLD WR WKHP*<sup>3</sup>, *KDYH QR REMHFWL* Americans, when they contemplate a journey for health, pleasure, or instruction, or all three, to think also of their own country, and particularly of California, which has so many delights in store for the tourists, and so many attractions for the farmer or settler looking *IRU D PLOG DQG KHDOWKIXO FOLPDWH DQG D SURG WRXULVW SURPRWLRQ KH GHOLJKWV WKH LPDJLQDWLR* comparable only to the grandest European destinations.

He steadily layers an argument for the all but guaranteed prosperity of the settler and the ease with which it is to be acquired, reminiscent of the hand-bills distributed *WKURXJKRXW 6WHLQEHFN V VRXWKZHUWV, GXJJHVWLQJ DVVHUV* *WVWKDW 3R*ly what they used to do in Illinois and Indiana<sup>2</sup> buy a *IDUP DQG ZLWK WKHLU ILUVW FURS FOHDU DOO WKHLU* suggests a new revolution in the American journey, making explicit references to the other established farmlands in the East which had demonstrated the most beauty and bounty. Not only is the good life to be had within the first year, but it comes to the farmer through far less toil, associating the land to the biblical Eden.

) *XUWKHULQJ WKH PDKV MXJJHVWLQJ* investment, Nordhoff ignites the dream in the hard-working reader of becoming rich. *6WDWHG FRQFLVHO\ DQG DV D PDWWHU RI IDFW KH GH* idleness, ignorance, and unthrift, to pr *HYHQW IDUPHUV LQ D IHZ \HDUV E*

(228). This depiction of economic and thus social improvement is clearly an idealized version of what could be for a select few in California, likely to be only those who came with a great deal of money to begin with or social or political connections allowing them to acquire the scant few tracts of truly available and arable land. Nonetheless, he continues to make sweeping statements that insist on everything for nothing. In explaining homestead, anti-monopoly, and railroad land laws of the day, and how the Great Central Valley is the physical embodiment of Manifest Destiny, he proclaims,

3 7 K X V W K H J U H D W I H U W L O H 6 D Q - R D T X L Q 9 D O O H \ L V N H  
K R P H O H V V ' 6 X F K D n g e r o u s D u r n o t h e r b o w e r b a s e d i n g e s o f G D

perfection in that it targets those who already have no home in the east and are likely to come to California with not only greater expectations than those leaving land behind but with a greater likelihood of failing to thrive. This is the first time that white Americans were lured to California under the pretenses of fulfilling the American Dream only to be met by defensive, early-arriving settlers and convoluted land laws that confounded even the most astute citizen. The subtle ironies of this dispossession are fully unpacked in Depression.

, Q D V W D W H P H Q W Z K L F K F R P S O H W H O \ G L V D J U H H V Z  
the si W X D W L R Q I R X U W H H Q \ H D U V H D U O L H U 1 R U G K R I I L Q V  
V X S S O L H G Z L W K V F K R R O V ' , W F R X O G E H W U X H W K

the state grew exponentially during this period, but it is more likely another example of hyperbole seeking to reassure the skeptical Easterner of the culturally refined and socially conscious nature of the new West. He had as many myths to deconstruct as support in

regard to the cultural sophistication, or lack thereof, assigned to the scantily settled West in general and the ruffian-populated lands of California in particular.

Likewise, he insisted that the infrastructure required to execute the construction of modern towns and profitable farms was in place, simply waiting for people to take advantage of it. He goes on to suggest that now is the perfect time for an unparalleled

RSSRUWXQLW\ ,Q VSHDNLQJ RI WKH 6DQ -RDTXLQ 9DOO  
work was completed during the summer of 1872, and the whole great valley is now open to settlement, while the two railroads, which are being energetically prosecuted by  
ZHDOWK\ FRPSDQLHV ZLOO JLYH WR IDUPHUV D TXLFN  
ODWHU ³% XW WKH WUXWK LV WQD&W DLIURLFXIODW XUH LYFY

the words of Greeley to nearly the exact intent and phrasing, Nordhoff approaches the end of his text with a final paraphrase of the myth of success through hard work in California. Like Greeley, he emphasizes the properly intended designation of the land as meant for long term settlement and small scale farming according to an agrarian model.

Differing from profiteers that follow, Nordhoff believed in the spirit of expansion as something actually acquirable by every hard-working and optimistic family. Western plantations were not the intent, nor were absentee landlords invited; a true model of

GHPRFUDF\ ZDV WKH PHVVDJH ZKLFK UHVRQDWHG ZLWK  
opportunity in this great Valley for industrious and thrifty farmers. Millions of acres of fertile land lie open to settlement, and are reserved by Government, at a low price, for  
DFWXDO VHWWOHUV´

8QIRUWXQDWHO\ 1RUGKRII¶V LGHD RI GHPRFUDF\  
dream was as equally whitewashed as those of his forebears and peers. Written in 1873,

California had received hundreds of thousands of Chinese immigrants since the beginning of the gold rush. Yet as opportunities in the gold market waned and the transcontinental railroad was completed, a great deal of racist hostility to the Chinese resonated throughout west coast culture. This same racist perspective was true for Native Americans and Mexicans as well, but to a slightly lesser extent; these groups were more assimilated or of such small unthreatening numbers that they received only a fraction of the overt hostilities rained upon the Chinese. On the copyright page of the 1973

centennial reprinting *RI 1RUGKRII* by The Speed Press, the publisher posts a disclaimer of sorts, saying as respectfully as possible that the racist content of the text is a

UHIOHFWLRQ RI WKH WLP HV DQG FXOWXUH LQ ZKLFK LW WKH KLVWRULFDO SHUVSHFWLYH RI 1RUGKRII V VWXG\ quaintly- H[ SUHVHVG VRFLDO DWWLWXGHV ' 1RUGKRII DOVR

%HDOH LQ PHPRU\ RI SOHDVDQW GD\ DW WKH 7HMRQ

Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the 1850s, and owned the largest private span of land in California named the Tejon Ranch. While a defender of some Indians, he also became wildly rich through the acquisition of what was formerly their land. This is an ambiguous

IULHQGVKLS DW EHVW LQ WHUPV RI UDFH UHODWLRQV I

writing.

\$V D ILQDO JOLPS California for Travelers and Settlers, YH selected a quote which reveals the hyperbole and propaganda that grew more prevalent in regional tracts as time went on. The big opportunities for land grabbing and staking treasures had passed, requiring writers of the latter years of the nineteenth century to stretch the prospects of the state ever further. As half truths about the land and the

opportunities it held grew into schemes for profit, the line between builders and abusers blurred all the greater. The generalizations stated below by Nordhoff are comically absurd, yet stated with utmost seriousness. Implying a direct relationship between robust physical health and the perfectly temperat H F O L P D W H the climate in the west, which is perhaps one of its best tests. One can not travel anywhere in California without noticing that the forms of the women who have lived some years here are more full and robust than with us; while the children are universally chubby, fat, and red- F K H H N H G > « @ \$ O O D Q L P D O V D O V R I D W W H Q H D V L O \ K I O H V K \ W K D W W K H \ Z R X O G E H W K R X J K \ W). X Q I L W W R G U L Y

Health and prosperity cannot be avoided in the climes of the west; for any traveler willing to shed prideful misgivings of a culturally unrefined region and make the trip, affluence and beauty await. This is the same message delivered by the profiteers from roughly 1893 through today. The only difference between them and the builders before them is that there still were remnants of land and avenues to success available before this date. The builders wanted to believe in the myth of boundless expansion and attainable wealth for every individual, but the profiteers that followed knew the potential impact yet proceeded to connive the nation with unflinching sincerity and optimism. Benefiting themselves rather than reflecting the strained realities of the land and its citizens, the literary works of these entities starkly portrayed the injustices committed by means of perpetuating a by-gone myth. As the California Dream was offered on an ever broadening scale, the people and landscape of California fell deeper into a hierarchy of power sustained by a beautiful sounding promise. The next era of social and environmental advocates, led by Muir and Steinbeck, accepted the overwhelming challenge of refuting



the myth that had grown like a cancer on the landscape of California and on the minds of the nation.

### Profiteers

7KH H[SORUHUV ³GLVFRYHUHG´ LW WKH EXLOGHUV the next generation abused it for personal or corporate gain. Intentions as widely various as evangelism to highway robbery may have comingled throughout the earlier phases of California history, but the selfish pursuit of profit appears to be secondary to the altruistic intention of nation building. However, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, perpetuating the myth seemed driven by a singular intention and the singular, though broadly represented, effect of violence. This section highlights the darkest and most oppressive expression of the California Dream. Unfortunately, this era includes today.

0\ DQDO\VLV RI &DOLIRUQLD¶V SURILWHHULQJ DJH from 1893 on, highlighting the perpetuation of the myth both topically and anecdotally.

7KH XVH RI WKLV ³VKRWJXQ´ DSSURDFK UDWKHU WKDQ approach used in the explorer and builder sections is mostly due to the massive span of time it represents and the almost incalculable assortment of cultural representations found in it. The best evidence of the encyclopedic undertaking necessary to capture this span of KLVWRU\ LV VHHQ LQ Americans and the California Dream series of ERN the history of California.

%HLQJ WKH SURGXFW RI WKH VWDWH¶V EXLOGHUV in the philosophical crux between nation building and economic advancement. There is no doubt that many boosters believed both could happen simultaneously, but they did not

count the costs to the land or the backs on which profits would be made. As noted in

\* U H H O H \ ¶ V Z U H V W O L Q J U H I O H F W L R Q V R Q W K H V W D W H ¶ V  
 conflict in the minds of the builders was wanting the resources used in such a way that  
 would build the West into a dynasty, at the same time being conscious of the dangers  
 inherent in unregulated use of these resources. Ultimately, this generation justified the  
 environmental abuses for the sake of their higher cause, which was democratic expansion  
 in the form of both agrarian homesteads and industrial juggernauts.

Yet, as the resources dwindled or were chaotically parsed among various  
 independent industries, the negative effects of unregulated commercialism exponentially  
 exploded in California. As a new century approached, the philosophical conflict between  
 profiteers and concerned citizens became much more identifiable in the culture and thus  
 literature of the day. The Gilded Age and all that came with the rise of industrialization  
 was met by the Progressive Era bent on social, political, and economic reform favoring  
 the rights of the citizen rather than industrial monopolies and their aristocratic leaders. As  
 Jack Hicks describes, many voices of the late 19<sup>th</sup> F H Q W X U \ K H O G D Q <sup>3</sup> L Q F U H D V  
 F U L W L F D O Y L H Z R I W K H F R V W D Q G Y D O X H R I W K H \* R O G  
 between the haves and the have-nots, between the profiteers and the preservationists, took  
 place in the monopolizing medium of the printed word. The coincidence of an established  
 reading culture and a national identity crisis was at once a perfect opportunity and a  
 W H U U L E O H F X U V H W K H P H D Q V R I V H O O L Q J R U V D Y L Q J  
 controlling the sentiments and capturing the imagination of the reading public. The battle  
 was on.

Ironically, both the protesting artists and the pandering industrial giants functioned with a shared understanding concerning the reception of their carefully constructed Californias <sup>2</sup> that what they put in print or pictures would be as good as truth,

D Q G Z R X O G E H U H V S R Q G H G W R D F F R U G L Q J O \ % R W K V L  
 imagination explicitly understood the mechanisms of social construction and the power  
 of printed media as it pertained to W K H S X E O L F ¶ V S H U F H S W L R Q D Q G W U

and Luckmann, theoretical founding voices of social construction, explain that institutionalized meanings must be forcefully impressed on the consciousness of the

U H F L S L H Q W U H S H D W H G O G E N E R A L L Y I M P O R T A N T M E A N S . F U R T H E R M O R E ,  
 since human beings are frequently stupid, institutional meanings tend to become

simplified in the process of transmission, so that the given collection of institutional

μ I R U P X O D H ¶ F D Q E H M E N T O R D E R B Y S U C C E S S I V E G E N E R A T I O N S . D I E G

μ I R U P X O D ¶ F K D U D F W H U R I L Q V W L W X W L R Q D O P H D Q L Q J V

systematic pattern of simplified acquisition sounds a great deal like the print, radio, and

television ads since the inception of mass media, but could also be identified as

standardized literary techniques used by voices of protest. While both sides shared

techniques, the content and intent of their work was of course intensely polarized. This

simplifies the complexities of mass communication into a good guy/bad guy dichotomy,

but the literature of the era reveals very little gray area in this battle. Almost nothing has

changed in this struggle for possession of the popular imagination.

The transition from building to profiteering did not need Frederick Jackson Turner to tell the world that the frontier was officially closed. The realities of the West, particularly the swelling state of California, were apparent to everyone there, and many

forms and degrees of profiteering had already been taking place. In fact, the myths of Gold Mountain, as California was called by the Chinese, had already drawn tens of thousands across the Pacific in hopes of a glorious future only to have their bodies broken and deported once the transcontinental railroad was completed and the gold became more elusive. To the same degree, the unfulfilled promises of the dream had reached a critical mass among the thousands of settlers who expected one thing and experienced a harsh reality far from it. Henry Nash

break in the upward curve of economic progress for the Western farmer, the myth could become a mockery, offering no consolation and serving only to intensify the sense of outrage on the part of men and women who discovered that labor in the fields did not bring the cheerful comfort promised them by so many prophets of the future of the West. The shattering of the myth by economic distress marked, for the history of ideas in America, the real end of the

this contrast between image and fact, the ideal and the actual, the hope and the consummation, defines the bitterness of the agrarian revolt that made itself felt with increasing force from the 18

broadly endorsed announcement of a closed West, however, was the catalyst that prompted an electric urgency and anxious self-consciousness not yet experienced amidst

other specific

clearly the precise philosophical moment of crisis, which is rare in the slippery science of historicism.

6 P L W K H [ S O D L Q V W K H H P R W L R Q D O Z H L

U R Q W L H U S H U H R J G R H V R Q W R V D \ W K D W

¶ V R Q Z D U G 7 K H S V \ F K R O R J L F D O H I I H F W

& D O L I R U Q L D ¶ V D P E N T Y A N D L A N D S H I P T H O U G H R E S E A R C H

After the epiphany of 1893, the expansionist spirit of America was in need of a new catalyst to draw its people into a still sparsely populated Far West. Patricia Limerick describes this instinct of America at this time in her book *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*.<sup>3</sup> : KHQ μFLYLOL]DWLRQ¶ K μVDYDJHU\¶ DW DQ\ RQHDQBFVWHLKQVWRPERSDURFVNDWVHQ 7KH QLQHWHHQWK FHWXU\¶V SHUVSHFWLYH RI WK process with which America was infatuated. When the process was halted by no more land, the maintenance of the dream depended on revealing a newly discovered and magical icon of hope or altering the paradigm of the dream altogether<sup>5</sup>.

I assert that the profiteers did the latter, expanding the California Dream to include suburban, urban, and industrialized paths to prosperity. Simultaneously, Muir and other like-minded artists sought a revision of the California Dream based on social cohesion and ecological interdependence, a reflection of the Progressive ethic of reform that was sweeping the nation. America was going to respond one way or another to the unfulfilled promises of the Dream. It would either be in violent expressions of self-legitimizing power over land and man, or driven by a new philosophical inspiration to be illuminated by the artists of the day. Muir and his contemporaries sought to shape this new national creed through the microcosm of California. This alternative perspective still allowed for the American Dream, yet elevated the intrinsic value of the every-man and the land. Social and environmental abuses were no longer justifiable in the name of expansion; we had reached the shore, and with no other land to conquer, all abuses of the

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<sup>5</sup> \$Q H[DPLQDWLRQ RI \$PHULFD¶V LPSHULDOLVW SDWWHUQV VLQFH archetypal instinct is certainly a relevant and fruitful one, but for the sake of a continental examination of the myth, that is left for another study.

land and its people were self-inflicted wounds that countered the spirit of American freedom and opportunity.

myth, but also points to the naturally explosive reaction of a dream deferred. She reminds the activist-minded citizen that redemptive violence inflicted by disappointed pilgrims upon the withholding land must not go unchallenged. In her call to imagine a new pastoral and curb the injustice the old one brought, she points to Muir, Steinbeck, and others who have since pursued this very goal:

As with all frustrations that cannot be either mediated or resolved, the frustration of the pastoral impulse was finally expressed through anger<sup>2</sup> anger at the land that had seemed to promise and then is an anger that, unlike this chapter, did not end with the nineteenth century. What appears today as the single-minded destruction and pollution of the continent is just one of the ways we have continued to express that anger. That we can no longer afford to do so is obvious; our survival may depend on our ability to escape the verbal patterns that have bound us either to fear of being engulfed by our physical environment, or to the opposite attitude of aggression and conquest. Twentieth century pastoral must offer us some means of understanding and altering the disastrous attitudes toward the physical setting that we have inherited from our national past. (137)

In this brief indictment of profiteers between 1893 and today, the usual suspects of inbred social aristocracy are held to account. The railroad and land barons, entities of tourism (including the state itself) and local chambers of commerce, agribusiness, and the entertainment industry are the perpetrators singled out here. Some of these entities are monopolistic carry-overs from the Gilded Age while others come on the scene later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All of them, however, are guilty of psychological sabotage for promising the

ble V V L Q J V I U R P D & D O L I R U Q L D W K D W Q R O R Q J H U H [ L V W H

and masterfully crafted literature of protest led the fight against these social and ecological threats.

The Progressive Era, loosely assigned to the years 1890-1915 by historians, continued to be a season of profits for railroads and land developers following the era of infrastructure building throughout the continent but most notably profitable in the Far West. Reform was the word of the day, yet these entities, along w L W K W K H <sup>3</sup> P D U N H W H H

city builders in Southern California and the San Francisco Bay area in particular, continued to tap into the newly challenged California Dream as a symbolic springboard for new ideological frontiers such as charming middle-class family living, headquartering industrial companies, and travels in paradise.

The selling of this new myth is best exemplified in the popular national

D G Y H U W L V L Q J F D P S D L J Q V R I W K H - r i c h t e x t C a l i f o r n i a C a l l s D U \ . X U X

You: The Art of Promoting the Golden State, 1870 to 1940 H [ S O D L Q V <sup>3</sup> \$ V E R R V W H

gained momentum, its florid language demanded equally vivid illustrations. Artists of all interests and backgrounds borrowed from prevailing styles of the fine art and commercial worlds to create visually stunning images. Posters, postcards, pamphlets and fruit crate

labels created in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century set the tone and format for the advertising campaigns that continued into the 20<sup>th</sup>. Santa Fe Railways had laid track along the Pacific Ocean from San Diego to Seattle, as well as their trans-continental connections. The opportunity to capitalize on the western brochures of the late 1800s and early 1900s were written from the vantage point of the promises of a comfortable and clean experience (23).

They also instigated the nation- that abounded in California, being the only rapid means of mass transport of these products to the Midwest and East Coast.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, advertisements of California destinations included lush imagery of fruited plains and Edenic gardens. Another money-making ploy used by railroads was aimed at settlers, offering parcels of land owned by the railroads at the best market price (24). Not only was the traveler coerced, but the settler was immensely influenced by the opportunities made so available and communicated so plainly by railroad-funded brochures and pamphlets. One poster, created in 1905 by Southern Pacific, has an idyllic picture of two farmers working under

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<sup>6</sup> For examples and a more detailed explanation of the techniques and effects of the marketing of & D O L I R U Q L D. See McClintock, Gordon T., and Jay Last. California Orange Box Labels: An Illustrated History. Beverly Hills: Hillcrest Press, 1985, and Salkin, John, and Laurie Gordon. Orange Crate Art: The Story of the Labels that Launched a Golden Era. New York: Warner Books, 1976.



Z L W K S U R P R W L R Q D O W U D I N H I C S U L L F H V <sup>h</sup> to <sup>3</sup> & R O R Q L V W 5 D W  
 from: New York: \$50.00, Chicago: \$33.00, Buffalo: 42.50, New Orleans: 30.00,  
 Cincinnati: 39.00, Omaha: 25.00. Stop Over Privileges at All Points in California. For  
 details inquire of any agent of the SOUTHERN PACIF , & ´

Since the railroads held titles to so much land and profited from every other  
 industry in the state as its provider of transportation, they were more than willing to get  
 the traveler or settler to California for a low rate, knowing that their presence translated  
 into eventual profit one way or another. This monopolistic hold on the market by the

6 R X W K H U Q 3 D F L I L F L Q S D U W L F X O D U L V G H V F U L E H G E \ 6  
 was grossly wrong with California: a very few of the super-rich virtually owned the  
 state <sup>2</sup> its land, its economy, its government <sup>2</sup> D Q G Z H U H U X Q Q L Q J L W D V D S

(Inventing199). Despite such an oligarchy of power that guaranteed immense profits for  
 these few competing railroads, they still battled it out for every dollar. This occasionally

<sup>3</sup> V H U Y H G ´ W K H F R Q V X P H U D V G H V F U L E H G K H U H <sup>3</sup> & R P S  
 W R Q R W R U L R X V µ I D U H Z D U V ¶ W K D W J U H D W O \ E H Q H I L W W

at one point, the fare from St. Louis to California dropped to \$5.00, and for one

D V W R X Q G L Q J G D \ W L F N H W S U L F H V S O X P P H W H G W R I L I V

two decades of the twentieth century, rail lines developed vacation destinations to attract  
 the traveler and compete with the growing automobile industry. They frequently hired  
 well-known artists and writers to develop brochures for them that proved to be iconic  
 (25). Images of the natural wonders of the state were frequently implemented for their  
 striking dimensions and allure. Grizzly bears, trout-filled lakes, giant sequoias, and snow-  
 capped peaks overlooking verdant valleys were common images, along with endless

pristine rows of orange trees and other agricultural tableaux. Ironically, these iconic entities are the very things either threatened by mass emigration (Grizzly bears, giant sequoias, etc.) or the source of social oppression (large scale agriculture). These are precisely the battles instigated by the Edenic myth fought by Muir and Steinbeck.

At the heart of the myth maintenance were chambers of commerce and city builders competing for citizens to fill their shops, homes, and tax coffers. These regional efforts were frequently backed by railroad companies, who of course stood to profit from increased travel and settlement. Particularly as other money-making schemes in the state

FRROHG RYHU WLP H<sup>3</sup>WKH H[SDQVLYH JHVWXUH LQYLW  
&DOLIRUQLD ZRXOG HYROYH LQWR PRUH VHOHFWLYH μV  
20<sup>th</sup> FHQWXU\` .XUXW] .XUXW] H[SODLQV PRUH IXOO\

&DOLIRUQLD¶V PRVW HQHUJHWLF SURPRWL R

primarily by community leaders who formed local chambers of commerce and formed on boards of supervisors. Other efforts came from the State Board of Trade, convention bureaus,

Californians, Inc., the Sunset +RPHVHHNHU¶V %XUHDX DQG IR

wome Q¶V JURXSV %KWLQHVMOHDGHUV

organizations saw Califo UQLD¶V JURZWKOLQNHG WR ODQG

business diversity and solid co PPXQLWLHV >«@ 7KH &KDPEHU

[Los Angeles] campaign strategies involved advertising, product displays, publications, and mass mailings to other chambers throughout the country. Within its first decade the Chamber

published some thirty-five pamphlets with a distribution to at least one million readers. (39)

By the 1920s, and certainly ever since, the Hollywood film industry has been the epicenter of culture-shaping through commercialized imaging and iconic actors and landscapes. The location which manufactures the cultural mythology of Western civilization seems best suited for a highly mythed place, so it is no surprise that Hollywood became the global epicenter of myth-making, now a powerfully engrained synergy between actual beauty and make believe. Beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, famous actors and artists increasingly called places like Palm Springs, Carmel, and Rancho Mirage qualities of the place that famous people are likewise associated with. It seemed the only gods of culture.

The entertainment industry has never missed an opportunity to sell the myth for profit, particularly in times of crisis when the nation needed a dream to escape to or pursue. Philip Hanson explains in *This Side of Despair: How the Movies and American Life Intersected During the Great Depression* tensions of the Depression crisis, movies built themselves out of the anxieties of the bank or a failing farm nevertheless appealed to their audiences by offering indirect ruminations on central aspects of life. The California Dream lived on, only in many more

dimensions than the pastoral paradise of its earliest representations. In speaking of the  
 PRWLRQ SLFWXUH LQG X VWU\ DIWHU : : , , 6W DUU QRWHV  
 LPDJLQDWLYHO\ UHFRQVWUXFWLQJ DV ZHOOD DV GHFRQ  
 (Embattled Dreamix). Clearly, the California Dream stood as a microcosm of the hope  
 needed by a nation in healing. Hollywood was of course more than willing to provide the  
 mythic salve, but Steinbeck offered real medicine in the form of a new spirit of  
 interdependence and brotherhood.

Meanwhile, a number of brochures from specific cities, counties, or regions  
 WRXWHG WKHP DV ³WKH JDUGHQ RI WKH ZRUOG ´ RU DV  
 creative inspirations to artists, possessing the best school systems, the best climate, the  
 best highway system, local economic stability, and aesthetic charm (Kurutz 42-3). KD  
 DQG \*DU\ .XUXWJ ¶California Call Worked a WHI ¶  
 Wonder City, Los Angeles explaining the intentions and effects of the decades-long  
 DGYHUWLV LQJ FDPSDLJQV IRU WKH UHJLRQ ³6RXWKHUQ  
 to a simple formula. Through advertising it has attained over one million tourists  
 annually. These tourists spend over eight million dollars a week and each 100,000 of  
 them return to become residents and permanent consumers. Thus the tourist business  
 causes a rapid, yet sound, transplanting of buying power from other sections to southern  
 California ² a fundamental necessity to the creation of industry her H ´ 7KH PDUNHW  
 strategies worked, and California was successfully making the myth pay off long after the  
 gold and the land ran out. This success story of a region in the pre-war era of the 1930s,  
 though ultimately an elegy of the land and its people, is summed up by historian Kevin  
 6W DUU ³, Q V-R-P-D-Q-L-Q-W-H-  
 related pursuits: sport, leisure, fashion, architecture, urban and

suburban lifestyles<sup>2</sup> the creativity of pre-war California defined and broadcast a message of great social significance to the rest of the nation: California had arrived and, in

DUULYLQJ KDG DFKLHYHG WKH JRRG OLDREAMRU LQFUHDV  
Enduresvii).

(YHQ ZKHQ WKH VLOYHU VFUHHQ DQG ORFDO ERRV  
Dream, the metropolises of the state were quite literally doing so, albeit with temporary constructions of grandeur to play host to the ever- HQFKDQWHG ZRUOG DXGLHQF  
sixty years before the gates of Disneyland opened, California was creating cities of dreams, complete with castles, rides, and costumed characters. Between 1894 and 1940,

&DOLIRUQLD KHOG ILYH ZRUOG¶V IDLUV RQ LWV VRLO´  
:RUOG¶V )DLU LQ 6DQ )UDQFLVFR KRVWHG RQ 7UHDV

explains this dynamic between fantastic facades and reality:

Once again, hundreds of thousands of people, from all points of the compass, heeded the call to California and the lure of golden dreams This Fair did not disappoint. However, as with previous expositions, the enchanting buildings and attractions erected for the celebration were not meant to last. Eugen Neuhaus, a noted art historian commented: After it has run its relatively brief course, the site so magically created art transformed will be cleared to become an aviation field of the Federal\* R Y H U Q P H Q W « : H V K R X O G  
make every effort to accomplish some lasting results in applying the inspiring lessons of the Exposition to the permanent improvement of our cities and the West generally1)

This elaborate drama of what California was not, but desired to be perceived as, is a perfect example of local and state boosterism which promised to ensure long-lasting revenues on a global scale, be it through tourism, entertainment, or the more elusively valued cultural influence. The critical comments in the above quote regarding the magical setting of the Fair being transformed into an air field is ironic in that California again positioned itself as the land of opportunity in the midst of a world war, marketing itself in different ways to the federal government, private military contractors, and the public as a region full of unique potential.

Before considering the game-changing effects of World War II on the California Dream in general and its specific role in the fate of the Dust Bowl migrant, an indictment of agribusiness practices throughout the Great Central Valley during the 1930s must be highlighted. Chapter four more fully examines the crimes of the imagination performed by the summary, industrial farming corporations and labor contractors in California used labor and land advertisements to trigger the pastoral impulse in the people of the Central Plains, Midwest, and Southern farming cultures, who put their trust in it despite its being a tangibly broken promise. In defense of the sharecroppers and bankrupt farmers of these regions, the drought and Depression left them with few other options, so chasing the Dream all the way to California cannot be held against them with too much weight. But this unfortunate circumstance of having no other option makes the propaganda of hope from the corporations in the West seem that much more sinister, knowing that an already broken people would meet more hardship once they arrived, even if they were among the few who attained employment of some kind. Between the radical proliferation in

mechanization which revolutionized the labor market and the altering of the landscape by overgrazing and land appropriation for farming, the story of American farming may be the best example of how the California Dream created an ecological and social nightmare.

While voices like Steinbeck did much to challenge the myth and invoke public and legislative change, the same patterns of injustice on the land and its workers are still seen in every generation since. Describing other promotional materials of the Great Depression targeted at the cross-section of the population that sought California as an agrarian refuge in a time of drought

W . X U X W ] Q R W H V W K D W <sup>3</sup> E U R F K X U H

sturdy laborers busily at work in fields or factories, their faces glowing with optimism.

O R V W R I W K H V H S X E O L F D W L R Q V V K R Z H G & D O L I R U Q L D Q V

enthralled with structural feats such as the Golden Gate Bridge, accomplishments meant to boost the economy and to distract the weary. The brochures described communities

Z L W K E D O D Q F H G J U R Z W K K H D O W K \ L Q G X V W U L H V D Q G

plantation-like system of farming and social bigotry against the Okies was left out of the

<sup>3</sup> R S W L P L V W L F ´ G H S L F W L R Q V R I W K H \* R O G H Q 6 W D W H

As America committed itself to action in World War II and the battle escalated in the Pacific arena, California used the myth as a war industry opportunity. It sold itself to the government with its geographically strategic location and deep and wide ports, to the military industrial contractors with praises of a skilled and plentiful working class, and the unemployed public with the promise of good paying defense work in abundance. As expressed by many historians, economists, and politicians, nothing ends a bad economic

G H S U H V V L R Q O L N H D J R R G Z D U 7 K H U H L V Q R T X H V W L R

economic woes, but the cultural development of post-war America encouraged a voracious pursuit of pleasure and gluttonous consumerism which swung as far into the extremes of prosperous living as the Depression swung into impoverished fear. Kevin

6 WDUU VXPPDULJHV LW DV 3 D W L t h s , l i n R u n , e n g e r z w k D Q G D E X  
SHUVLVWHQW QRWH RI RSWLPLV G o l d e n F a r m s ) W h e H U L V P L Q S  
& D O L I R U Q L D ' U H D P D O Z D \ V H Y R O Y L Q J W R V X L W W K H S X

Unfortunately, it was the booming war-time industries and not an altered social philosophy that provided a hand up to many of the Okie families who had migrated west in the 1930s, and provided new fodder for the profiteers to boast of the thriving and promising landscape of California. The war coincidentally drowned out the re-

examination of social philosophies seeking equality and justice that were prompted in  
6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V U H Y R O X W L R Q D U \ Z R U N , Q V W H D G R I I R O C  
1 H Z ' H D O H U D D Q G 6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V Z R U N i n d e e d p e o p l e g r o u p W D W H T X

for another-- in the form of Mexican farm laborers <sup>2</sup> and a new age of war-time nationalist propaganda ensued, reinvigorating the tenets of the myth at the very moment it came closest to falling. World war was perhaps the worst thing that could have happened to California spiritually, socially, and environmentally, despite its immense economic effects.

In speaking of the complex relationship between myths and their cultural  
L Q W H U S U H W D W L R Q + H Q U \ 1 D V K 6 P L W k v d w W k D W 3 W K  
they are drastic simplifications, yet if the impulse toward clarity of form is not controlled by some process of verification, symbols and myths can become dangerous by inciting behavior grossly inappropriate to the given historical s L W X D W x ) . F i c c o n t i n u e d



DSSOLF DWLRQ RI D 3GUDVWLFDOO\ VLPSOLILHG´ DUFKD

proven dangerous to the well-being of the land and its people. Even with contemporary

FXOWXUH¶V FRQWLQXHG DWYHPSW-WR-LD-G-D-FKURQLVW

0XLU DQG -RKQ 6WHLQE HFN WKDW HQJ DJH WKH \$PHULF

YHULILFDWLRQ´ 7KH\ H[SRVH WKH &DOLIRUQLD´UHDP D

retire it and replace it with one grounded in egalitarian peace and interdependent balance.

Starting with Muir and his contemporaries and building ever stronger through each generational wave of cultural enlightenment, the fight to wake the nation from this terrible dream has advanced.

Landscapes

7KH <sup>3</sup>&DOLIRUQLD 'UHDP ´ RU WKH DUWLFXODWLRQ RI \$  
DSSOLHG WR WKH-FRQW: L<sup>3</sup> & BOWIPU QHD WLVWUW and HQGOHV

expansive place to start over and find prosperity hard work on its beautiful and

FRQVHFUDWHG ODQG ZLOO DOZD\ UHVXOW LQ IXOILOO

<sup>3</sup>&DOLIRUQLD LV HOXVLYH 7KDW¶V WUXH ODUJHO\ EHF

already know where and what it is. Outsiders are often more certain of their versions

than are natives because outsiders are seldom burdened by facts or knowledge of the

VWDWH¶V DFWXDO GLYHUVLW\ 7KH\ GRQ¶W NQRZ WKH

--Gerald Haslam

This quo WH WDNHQ IURP Many California Designers to the  
core of this chapter. He notes that the native Californian is unable to define the state in  
simple terms in light of its social and ecological diversity encountered every day, while  
outsiders are that much further from understanding California for exactly the opposite  
reason <sup>2</sup> it is encapsulated in just a few fantastic thoughts or images: the warm sandy  
coastline of the Pacific dotted with beautiful people, Hollywood Boulevard with cafes  
patroned by movie stars, and verdant rolling hills dotted with happy talking cows,  
perhaps. It is a rare exception when vast deserts, irrigated orchards, high mountain  
passes, or the intersection of these regions come to mind for the outsider when thinking

RI & DOLIRUQLD %XW IRU WKRVH WKDW OLYH WKHUH W  
 held with much less mythologized grandeur. Since landscape is such a fundamental  
 VKDSHU RI WKH FXOWXUH RI WKH SHR SORH ZKR OLYH RQ  
 homogenous with its many and diverse points of intersection.

7KH LQKHUHQW GDQJHUV LQ PDLQWDLQLQJ DQ <sup>3</sup>XQE  
 developed here. This chapter challenges the environmental implications of the California  
 Dream, emphasiz LQJ WKH VSHFLILF FRQFHSWV RI & DOLIRUQLD  
 H[SDQVLYH SODFH' VHW DVLGH DV D <sup>3</sup>EHDX and Lax O DQG F  
 social aspects to it which are innately connected. While I emphasize the land ethic  
 aspects with Muir and focus on the social ethic with Steinbeck, it is made apparent  
 throughout the research that both aspects are always engaged in the reconciling tension of  
 correcting the myth.

The sources of this myth have been established in chapter two, but it is worth  
 mentioning some of the major origins here for the sake of continuity. The boosterism and  
 propaganda of the early years of the West seem to have never left. It is a distinct trait of  
 California in particular to advertise itself as a paradise under the setting sun, and pander  
 the same handful of images in every possible medium of communication. Besides the  
 images of golden cities and idyllic vineyards originating even before the writings of  
 Spanish conquest and the missions which followed, the California of American statehood  
 has always created more than its share of associations to paradise. The shining discovery  
 in 1848 and the chaotic land rush that followed, the harvest of Sierran natural treasures  
 soon thereafter, and the Southern California real estate development during the first two  
 decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are but a few of the most significant episodes of strategically

marketed boosterism. Whether it was in the name of national pride or personal gain, the many larger-than-life images and descriptions that came out of the state established an

LGHQWLW\ RI XQPDWFKHG ERXQW\ DQG EHDXW\ WKDW U

of greatest social influence on the nation, industrial-scale farming and Hollywood, continue to sell an idealized existence to the masses. Today, these two entities, along with the state itself that profits greatly from tourism, continue to be the most significant obstacles to an accurate representation of the environmental and social diversity of the state.

John OXLU¶V YRLFH VWULYHV WR UHYHDO WKH GLYHU

environmental dangers inherent in pushing the balance of co-existing regions to their limits. Through his 1911 book *My First Summer in the Sierra*, he depicts an environmental ethic which respects the many intrinsic qualities found in various regions

RI WKH ODQG 0HDQZKLOH VRFLHW\¶V DEXVLYH DWWLW

differentiate the iconic harvests of food and beauty from the Central Valley and neighboring Sierras. Man-land reconciliation is an issue of knowing the land intimately. If one has an intimate relationship with the land, these writers assert, s/he will not perpetuate patterns of injustice. Thus Muir takes the reader with him on his pensive journeys as a shepherd, allowing them to see the land as benevolently as he sees it. He fights against unregulated resource acquisition and tourism, pushing for the preservation

RI WKH 6LHUUD¶V QDWXUDO ZRQGHUV %HDLWUHHV R

from nature is its intrinsic spiritual value. The world sees the sweeping granite vistas of the Yosemite Valley flanked by Half Dome and El Capitan, but they are not aware of the struggle for and loss of its sister valley Hetch Hetchy. Likewise, the world sees fresh

SURGXFH LQ WRGD\¶V VXSHUPDUNHWV ODEHOHG DQG E

they do not know about the pesticide-induced illnesses assailing the workers who pick it.

This half-informed perspective, this thin glossy cover over a place as much dystopic as Edenic, and its dangerous location in the American consciousness is what Muir strives to make whole.

The history of protesting responses to the California Dream does not pre-date 1893 due mostly to the fact the these voices of the Progressive Era were catalysts of change rather than simply rhetorical and artistic exercises received as such by America.

'DYL G : \DWW FRQILUPV WKHVH LQWHQWLRQV RI FKDQJH

language aimed at something beyond the interrogation of its own procedures; it is aimed

at changing the world. It magnificently passes this political test. Emerson and his heirs

build their own worlds at the price of powerlessness in any immediate historical arena;

Muir sacrifices an answerable style in order to locate a place in the popular mind. Muir

finds salvation in surrender to landscape, and his attempts to know it from within can

SUHFOXGH D PRUH YLVLRQDU\ SRVVHV VLRQ´ \$OVR

representative perspectives and styles from two of the most significant eras of protest

over the last century. American writing is protesting by nature, born out of the spirit of

revolutionaries who re- ZURWH WKH PHDQV RI FLYLOLJDWLRQ RQWR

There were certainly a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century voices such as James Fennimore

Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman, who intimated

questions or offered at least embryonic theories concerning the nation ¶V DUFKHV\SHV DG

what they revealed about the natio QDO LGHQWLW\ %XW LW ZDVQ¶W XQV

Frederick Jackson Turner, John Muir, Frank Norris, and Mary Austin at the turn of the

20<sup>th</sup> century that it was explicitly communicated by a voice of the people which significantly impacted the collective culture. William Everson explains it in these words:

3)RU DV ZH HDUOLHU VDZ LQ WKH KHDUW RI WKH \$PHU

two terms, God and Nature, were covertly interchangeable. Nature is divine, the American soul was saying. And it was Muir who, more than anyone else, confirmed the intuition, spelled out the potentiality, brought it to concrete specification. Perhaps, given the pragmatic American temper, it could only have been done by a naturalist, the scientist rather than the poet or novelist. True, it was Emerson and Thoreau who put the vision in

0XLU¶V KHDG EXW XQWLO WKH VFLHQWLWV VSRNH WK

UHPDLQH FRQWHQW LQ K5DVE EDWHUHQDOHVWLF GUHDP´

reader of the Progressive era tended toward the expert, scientific, or rational, another

UHDVRQ 0XLU VWDQGV DV WKH ILUVW EHDUHU RI RYHUV

between inspirational and scientific also describes the essence of the Progressive era in

which KH IORXULVKHG .HYLQ 6WDUU¶V GHILQLWLRQ RI WK

0XLU FKDUDFWHUL]LQJ LW DV 3LQWHQVH WR WKH SRLQ

pragmatic, [it] was energized by forces bubbling up from deep within the collective

3URWHVWDQW ERVUDJH¶LV SV\FKH´

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century American reader was a collective of these overlapping

SKLORVRSKLV 7KH\ GLGQ¶W WUDGH RQH SHUVSHFWLY

contemporary thought, but were rather a product of many rapid and overlapping layers of aesthetic and cultural exposure. Muir sought to use his literary voice to invoke a

preservationist ethic in the nation as it attempted to reshape an environmental ethic. He

accomplished this with the nearly simultaneous publications of *My First Summer* in the

Sierra and The Yosemite in 1911-

expectations of realism, and ever-growing respect for expert voices of science. These two texts fully used all of these avenues in speaking to the American imagination. One was overt (*The Yosemite*) and the other covert (*My First Summer in the Sierra*) in its message of change and rhetorically persuasive style. Thus while *The Yosemite* analytically speaks for itself as the overt expression of change, this examination looks closely at the intentions, techniques, and effects of *My First Summer in the Sierra*, a more nuanced yet equally powerful protest against the proliferating effects of the California Dream.

Muir seemed the perfect man for attempting such a convergent literary work. He was a converted transcendentalist from a deeply rooted Christian tradition, who happened to be trained as a natural scientist. In other words, his literary style, or voice, was created by the same multiple and diverse philosophical proclivities of his readership, allowing literary mandate of the day was Progressivism, an era of reform throughout the spectrum of American policies and structures resulting from the period roughly located between 1890-1915.

Reserve system), adopted an income tax, established national regulatory agencies (the Federal Trade Commission), and amended the Constitution to have senators elected by the people rather than by state legislatures.

the people rather than by state legislatures. The Progressive Era was a period of significant reform in the United States, characterized by a wide range of social and political changes. Key figures of the movement included Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Jane Addams. The Progressive Era was a period of significant reform in the United States, characterized by a wide range of social and political changes. Key figures of the movement included Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Jane Addams.

strong and the weak, the powerful and the helpless, the many and the few, between the

JHQHUDO DQG WKH VSHFLDO LQWHUHVWV¶ L[ 7KXV

new ideas promoting justice for the land and its people. He had established himself as the preeminent sage in environmental reform.

To be clear, the Progressive Era was as much a result of increased egalitarian ideals as it was the cause; all epochs of history and the events which define them are a result of many GLYHUVH IDFWRUV 8OWLPDWHO\ WKH QHHG IR reimagine another kind of relationship with the land fortunately came at a cultural moment of great receptivity, sparking a lineage of protest that has not stopped since.

Everson des FULEHV 0XLU¶V PDUULDJH WR WKH 6LHUUDV DV Z encounter with the time, when the archetype that forged his soul broke him on the anvil

RI WKH FRQVFLRXVQHVV RI KLV SHRSOH´ 7KH VXEM

projected themselves into the objective calculations of history and challenged its best of efforts at logical explanation.

, DSSURDFK 0XLU¶V WH[W ZLWK D Wknterhis SDUW DQD terms of his desired reception from the reader and effects on society in general. These

intentions center on the preservation of natural spaces that possess unique beauty and resources, thus placing them at risk for exploitation. He also necessarily targets the general perceptions of nature, or landscape, pursuing a land ethic centered more on

interdependence rather than on utilitarianism. Once I establish and defend these

intentions, I analyze the various techniques used by Muir in creating literature that

promotes environmental justice and persuades the reader to be a part of the change. For

Muir, writing in non-fiction is a device in and of itself, promoting rapport and trust with



his readers while revealing new perspectives toward the land that they experience firsthand. In terms of specific techniques, he implements religious associations, classical rhetorical strategies, expert opinion, plot structure, and photography to accomplish his desired effects. The analysis of these techniques brings focus to the text, proving my assertions.

The third section of analysis <sup>2</sup> the social effects and reception of the text <sup>2</sup> requires a bit of imagination. Interpreting and extrapolating the social effects of the text

D Q G L W V H I I H F W R Q W K H L Q G L Y L G X D O ¶ V S H U F H S W L R Q  
 reviews and sal H V R Q O \ V X J J H V W V R P X F K D E R X W W K H E R R N ¶ V  
 D E L O L W \ W R D F F R P S O L V K L W V F U H D W R U ¶ V G H V L U H G H I  
 other social and legal events of the era, and identify correlations between the immediate  
 effects of the text and residual patterns in present- G D \ F X O W X U H 2 E Y L R X V O \ - R  
 influence stands the test of time, and many of the ways in which we interact with and  
 think of nature have a direct lineage to his work. We now begin in the past, climbing up  
 the mountain with Muir before descending to the hot Valley floor and the social injustices  
 revealed by Steinbeck.

<sup>3</sup> \* R G K D V F D U H G I R U W K H V H W U H H V V D Y H G W K H P I U R P  
 thousand tempests and floods. But he cannot save ¶ H P I U R P I R R O V ´

John Muir

& L W L Q J 5 R R V H Y H O W ¶ V Z H O O N Q R Z Q T X R W H D E R X W  
 & D O L I R U Q L D \* H U D O G + D V O D P Q R W H V <sup>3</sup> O L N H P D Q \ R X W

there were <sup>2</sup> and are <sup>2</sup> many Californias and that those Californias are constantly

FKDQJLQJ \$W WKH YHU\ WLPH KH VDZ D YHUVLRQ RI WH  
 DQG FRZER\ V KHUGHG FDWWOH RYHU PFK RI WKH VWD  
 IORFNV WRZDUG IUHVK JUDVV shi\$PHULFDWV QDW W μZLOG  
 DQG FDQ\RQV HDVW RI WKH 6DFUDPHQWR 9DOOH\ DQG  
 DQG IR RWRK L. O. Muir did much to change this narrow perception of the

west for Roosevelt and for America at large as he recorded his excursions through valleys  
 and over mountain tops, countering the myth that California is bountiful, coastal, and  
 beautifully temperate everywhere and has a homogenous perfection and geographic  
 sameness to it. Perhaps more than any other message next to the call for preservation,

0XLU UHYHDOHG &DOLIRUQLD ¶V GLYHUVLW\ 7KLV GLYH

itself is a rare national treasure worthy of being preserved.

As a naturalist and environmentalist, Muir found himself in a unique place of  
 power in the early part of the twentieth century. Not only did he have an intimate and  
 holistic knowledge of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the urgent dangers they faced,  
 but he also had an established audience with America as a well known and respected  
 nature writer. As an advocate of preservationist thought, Muir realized that with the

NQRZOHGJH RI ZKDW ZDV KDSSHQHQJWR \$PHULFD ¶V ZL

resources and overrun by unregulated commercialization <sup>2</sup> comes a responsibility to

VSHDN RXW DJDLQVW LW ,Q VSHDNLQJ RI 0XLU ¶V ZULW

over 200 million people, with a far denser web of artifice obscuring the natural order, [a]

private quest had become difficult. Environmentalism was, therefore, not a private

UHODWLRQV KLS QRW D NLQG RI UHWUHDW EXW D GHF

His Yosemite journal from 1869 represented the bygone days of private exploration and spiritual and intellectual gratitude drawn from nature, but the realities of

GHPDQGHG WKDW LW EH WUDQVIRUPHG LQWR D <sup>3</sup>SX

Vale describes this social metamorphosis rooted in a love for the land, explaining that

<sup>3</sup>KLV DWWDFKPHQW WR WKLW SODFH ZDV Viana by as RIRXQG

well as physically, and it eventually led him away from the life of an inward-searching

naturalist to that of an outward- ORRN LQJ DFWLYLVW ' \$V D FLWL]H

of his civil rights in the political arenas of his state and nation in an effort to protect

national treasures such as Yosemite Valley. As an artist, he implemented all of his genius

to persuade the reading public to do the same. Yet where political persuasion often calls

for overt rhetoric, changing the American public ¶V SHUFHSWLRQ RI QDWXUH D

relationship to it requires a greater aesthetic sensitivity. By appealing to the ideas of

beauty and morality as modeled in wild nature, Muir approached the needed

SKLORVRSKLFDO WUDQVIRUPDWWKQHRW\$PULJKD¶WKIS HUH

intellect, as well as their artistic and literary tradition of viewing nature through a

Romantic lens. His philosophical paradigm and religious insights also prompted him to

integrate spiritual metaphors in an effort to locate nature in a more benevolent-- rather

than adversarial-- perspective. Working with content and a style that aligned with the

UHDGHUV¶ VHQVLELOLWLHV 0XLU XVHG OLWHUDWXUH V

the American people, and therefore in the 1DZV RI WKH ODQG 1RWHG DV <sup>3</sup>D

SDVW ZKR GHYRWHG KLPVHOI WR WKH LQWHUSUHWDWL

influence on the contemporary American perception of nature is immeasurable.

Upon a first reading, without an historical or political context, his *My First Summer in the Sierra* appears a docile, meditative prayer book for the mountain lover. Frankly, I believe Muir intended that when it was being written in 1869. Yet, I suggest that Muir edited and published this personal journal in a particular time (1911) and style so as to alter the way in which the law protected and the American public viewed natural spaces. In other words, it was a political tract arguing for the preservation of the doomed Hetch Hetchy Valley, an environmental manifesto declaring where America should locate nature in their value system, a literature of protest against the degradation of

Q D W X U H ¶ V V D F U H G S O D F H V

Unfortunately, the original journal is among the few works of Muir ¶ V ¶ R W D in his expansive archive held at University of the Pacific, eliminating the possibility of comparative stylistic analysis between the original and published texts to consider any later manipulations. However, in a series of letters between Muir and Ferris Greenslet, the representative of Houghton Mifflin who corresponded with him regarding matters of publication and payment, there is a clear intention to link art with activism. After gratefully receiving a pamphlet for publication on the Hetch Hetchy issue, Greenslet calls

f R U W K H P D Q X V F U L S W R I W K H M R X U Q D O Q R W L Q J W I  
V H D V R Q I R U V X F K D E R R N ´ - R K Q 0 X L U & R U U H V S R Q G H Q F

confirms he is working on this project and plans to send it off soon, speaking specifically of the Hetch Hetchy battle in the next sentence without so much as a transition phrase:

¶ We are having a hard fight on the Hetch Hetchy Dam scheme. I wish you would come to our help by writing to the President and Secretary Ballinger and the Chairman of the

Public Lands Committees if you have not already done so. We must keep protests flying about t K H P W K L F N D V V W (R U R, M O R Z I O D N H V ´

Ultimately, this text of masterful persuasion and political maneuvering used the S X E O L F ¶ Vs to accomplish the essential goals, and each of these intentions has a correlating technique which Muir used to see that intention effectively promoted in the text. His primary intention was to relocate nature in the American consciousness from an adversarial entity to one of advocacy and interdependence, placing it with humanity as a divine product of God. The use of spiritual metaphors grounded in the natural environment, the personification of non-human nature, and a plot structure which alludes to the Christian faith journey are his primary means. This narrative association acts as a moral appeal to the readers, directing them to see the interconnection between humanity and nature, and the innate godliness in the natural world which therefore requires respect.

The second significant intention is a corollary of the first. Muir argues for the innate value in beauty as a spiritually and philosophically transforming agent. Therefore, his intention was to reveal the immeasurable beauty of the Sierras to establish the necessity for the preservation and protection of this purifying national resource. The S U L P D U \ W H F K Q L T X H L Q I R U Z D U G L Q J W K L V F R Q F H S W L V diction as elevated as the peaks he spoke of, but his detailed illustrations and accompanying photographs also sought to capture the unique beauty of this place which was ever so worthy of preserving.

The third intention in publishing this text was to recruit advocates for preservation from various camps, as well as deepen his rapport with the public as the benevolent ambassador of nature. Like other writers of protest before and after, Muir spoke to the

common citizen first, letting others listen in and likewise be moved in support of his cause for environmental justice. Displaying his vast personal experience, altruistic intentions, and expertise as a naturalist gained him a partnership and trust with his readers.

The effects and reception of this work often blend together with the rest of his work on the preservation of natural spaces. The specific reception of the book as a literary text was very positive, as seen by a number of book reviews and successful sales. His effect on society in terms of how they viewed nature, valued beautiful landscapes, and advocated for the land is nearly immeasurable. He is unanimously acknowledged as the single most influential voice of preservation, shaping the way the modern world thinks of and interacts with nature.

Quartzite in the large scope of environmental history. The literary exposure of his childhood was almost completely limited to the bible, of which his father would insist he memorize lengthy passages. As he found independence from the extremely conservative control of his parents, he consumed the contemporary transcendentalist philosophers and writers such as Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman. The exposure to, and alignment with, these writers further explains his pantheist perspective of nature and the inclusive universality of his philosophy. It is not unfair to assert that the world would not have a Muir if it did not have an Emerson and Thoreau.

A brief biographical sketch may at least reveal various associations and general sources of inspiration for this uniquely American figure<sup>7</sup>. Born in Scotland in 1838, he explored the bogs and plains of his coastal home before moving with his family to Wisconsin at the age of 11. Being the year of the great California gold rush, the lure and legend of California undoubtedly swelled in his young and newly Americanized mind. While working as an unpaid farm laborer for his father, he occupied his free time with memorizing the New Testament and developing inventions of varying practical application. At the age of twenty-three he began his two and a half years of geological and botanical study at the University of Wisconsin under Dr. Ezra Carr, husband of his mentor and benefactor Jeanne Carr. At the age of twenty-eight he published his first work, *Calypso Borealis* in the *Boston Recorder* and a year later set off on his first of many long excursions. He walked from Indiana to Florida, and extended this trip to Cuba. On this now famous thousand-mile walk from Louisville to the Gulf of Mexico, John Muir was more than spartan in his provisions. Perhaps too comfortable a trip would have distracted him from an intimate contact with the nature that constantly surrounded him. He was, after all, on a spiritual journey that would later place him at the helm of the great environmental movement of the twentieth century. However, he found it necessary to pack certain words of inspiration for this trek, pointing to the truth that all great shapers of history are to some degree or another shaped themselves by the great minds that

SUHFHGHG WKHP \*UHWHO (KUOLFK ZULWHV RI KLV WUL

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<sup>7</sup> This information, unless otherwise referenced, was found on the John Muir ([KLELW´ ZHEVLWH FUHDV maintained by the Sierra Club.

VXLW DQG EHV LGHV WKH Paradise Lost Volume of poems by J. L. H. G. 0 L O V  
 Rob HUW % XUQV DQG WKH 1HZ 7HVWDPHQW

It was at this point that Muir travelled to California for the first time, soon to write of his Sierran adventures in *The Mountains of California* (1894) and *My First Summer in the Sierra* (1911). Though his first Sierran trek occurred in 1869, it is still important to consider the philosophical, political, and cultural influences that came after his initial journaling since *My First Summer in the Sierra* was not actually published for another forty-two years. These in-between years were a formative time in which Muir developed a passion and knowledge of the land that he so fervently fought to defend, thus influencing his timing and, no doubt, editing of his first and most intoxicating encounter with the Sierra Nevada Range. Had he not met renowned geologist Joseph LeConte in 1870, his philosophical muse Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1871, academic contemporary Asa Gray in 1872, and visited Hetch Hetchy Valley in 1871, there may not have been the traveling lectures of 1876 lobbying for the preservation of more natural spaces or the thirty-eight years of advocacy that followed. By the time he chose to publish *My First Summer in the Sierra* Muir had founded the Sierra Club (1892), camped with two presidents, and received honorary doctorates from prestigious institutions such as Yale, Berkeley, and Harvard. Clearly, he had an agenda beyond offering a bucolic tale of his politically naïve youth.

, I WRGD \ ¶ V HQYLURQPHQWDO HWKLF LV WR EH VOXI  
 philosophies must first be specifically identified in order to be recognized. This is no simple task, since his perspectives toward the organic world are sprinkled throughout his immense body of writing, rather than collected as a set of tenets in a single place. In



assessing the greatest philosophical influences on his life, and therefore on his body of work which shapes the contemporary American land ethic, the most distinct and consistent are transcendentalism, Christianity, and the practical concern for the land that comes from decades of farming. However, Muir was a product of an era in flux between spirituality and science. While Emerson, Thoreau, Jesus Christ, and St. Francis were his spiritual and philosophical muses, he was also greatly influenced by science. The thinking of Darwin, Mendel, Humboldt, and Ben Franklin certainly took part in shaping his world view.

There are five basic concepts that generally encompass his perspectives, each having roots in the past and progeny in the present. The first of these concepts is that

ZKLFK DWWHPSWV <sup>3</sup>WR FRXQWHU DQ LPSOLFLW FRUROO

LV WR VHUYH PDQ' 3D\QH 1R ORQJHU LV WKH KXPD

entities revolve. He sought to dissolve the hierarchical chain of being that dominated as a

VRFLDO QRUP )XUWKHULQJ WKLW FRQFHSW 5REHUW \*R

QRWLRQ WKDW ZLOGHUQHVV PDLQWDLQH D VHSDUDWH

LWV XWLOLW\ DV DXLUH\RUHQ' WKH, QDW WKDW QDWXU

spiritual and utilitarian sense is secondary to the fact that nature is, in and of itself,

independent from the influences of man. Though man without nature would not survive,

nature without man would flourish. He was not alone in this breaking away from

hierarchical structures of domination; the transcendentalists of his day were in agreement

with such a perspective.

\$FFRUGLQJ WR 3D\QH <sup>3</sup>0XLUH\V EUHDN ZLWK WKH DC

in natu UH LV HYHQ PRUH FOHDUO\ VWDWHG WKDQ 7KRUDX

WR 0XLU¶V VHFRRQG- HFRORJLFDQ FRQFHSW and

Roosevelt took the politically supported angle of resource use and management for commercial exploitation, the difference between reverence and utilitarianism. In other

ZRUGV WKHVH QDWXUDO PRQXPHQWV RI \*RG¶V FUHDWL

experience as they are, and should not be manipulated to serve other purposes requiring

the alteration of the natural ecosystem. Ironically, Muir worked in a saw mill during his younger years, so he was not against the use of timber for fulfilling the needs of

civilization. His fear was that a perspective of utilitarianism would become legislated and cemented as the only way in which America addressed the wild.

7KH WKLUG FRQFHSW WKDW VKDSHG 0XLU¶V HQYLU

of nature and how it possessed and reflected the sacred. Not only was nature an equal to

humanity in Mu LU¶V SDQWKHLVW SKLORVRSK\ EXW LW DOVR S

SRWHQWLDO QRW UHJDUGHG E\ FXOWXUDO FXVWRP 3H

HFRORJLFDQ SKLORVRSK\ DV RQH WKDW WKRXJKW ³FHU

hum DQ EHLQJV FRXOG HQFRXQWHU WKH KRO\´ 7KH IF

last major book *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth* perhaps communicates these

VHQWLPHQWV EHVW ³7KH\ WHOO XV WKDW SODQWV DU

is immortal, etc.; but this, I think, is something we know very nearly nothing about.

Anyhow, this palm was indescribably impressive and told me grander things than I ever

JRW IURP KXPdq SULHVW´ 3HWHU +D\ XVHV ELWV I

LGHD RXW HYHQ PRUH DGGUHVVLQJ ZLOGHUQHVV DV ³I

spiritually through their intuitive capacity to apprehend the very soul of the universe.

:LOG FRXQWU\ KDV µD P\VWLFDO DELOLW\ QM S V U µD

ancient mother- O R Y H ¶ W K D W L V F H Q W U D O W R W K H E R G L O \ L Q  
 health of the individual <sup>2</sup> as against civilization, which has distorted our sense of  
 μ U H O D W L R Q V K L S W R R W K H U O L Y L Q nature and culture, ¶ 7 K L V  
 especially in an age of exponential industrial and national growth, make clear his  
 reasoning for his fourth fundamental principle of the environment.

Despite his inventive tinkering, Muir was an anti-modernist, perhaps as much as  
 anything influenced by his humble agricultural roots in Scotland and Wisconsin. He  
 associated the wilderness as the polar opposite of the industrialized city where the spirit is  
 distracted by the bustling pace. To Muir, wildness was a necessity for each human being,  
 its simplicity and beauty able to transform the spirit far better than any modern  
 advancement. This most basic of human rights is what he so passionately fought for;  
 going to the mountains for John Muir was always going home.

The final general prin F L S O H R I 0 X L U ¶ V H Q Y L U R Q P H Q W D O H W K  
 O L Y L Q J W K L Q J V ´ 3 D \ Q H ¶ 3 0 X L U H O R T X H Q W O \ D Q G S D  
 Z R U O G E H S U H V H U Y H G I R U L W V R Z Q V D N H D V Z H O O D V  
 K H P D L Q W D W Q F K G G ¶ V W ¶ K H Y H U \ W K L Q J H O V H D Q G K X P D Q V  
 Z H U H L Q W H U I H U L Q J Z L W K W K H J U H D W F R V P L F S O D Q ´ 6  
 W K D W ¶ W K H H Q Y L U R Q P H Q W D O P R Y H P H Q W L V J X L G H G E \  
 influenced in this mode of thinking by the great American poets and philosophers of his  
 day, especially those calling themselves transcendentalists such as Emerson, Thoreau,  
 and Whitman. This life of abundant adventure and revolutionary influence perpetually  
 tied to the natural world shaped John Muir into the voice of protest he will forever be,  
 and offers the scholar great insight into the intentions and techniques of his literary craft.

/LNH WKH PLQGV RI HYHU\ RWKHU WUDYHOHU WR W  
 the American landscape was powerfully altered by his visit to California and the  
 necessity to reconcile a physical limit with the boundless American ideal. Perhaps his  
 experience would have been different if the western-most land of the continent lacked the  
 extreme contours it possesses. As it is, he encountered a flowering valley of Edenic  
 proportions flanked by a snow-capped mountain range that overwhelmed the  
 imagination. If ever a landscape acted as a catalyst prompting a desire for preservation  
 from the ills of industrial and cultural expansion, the dramatic intersection of these two  
 unique regions did so in Muir as he encountered them for the first time. Hicks labels  
 O X L U ¶ V The ~~Evermann~~ <sup>Evermann</sup> Remains of California as the medium through which Muir  
 navigated K L V W K R X J K W V D Q G G L V F R Y H U L H V F D O O L Q J L W R  
 P R G H U Q G L V F R X U V H R Q W K H U H O D W L R Q V K L S E H W Z H H Q  
 R S H Q L Q J D Q G F O R V L Q J F K D S W H U V W L 3 D O W G U 7 H V H 6 L H U  
 respectively, Muir paints a picture of the Central Valley on his way into and out of the  
 mountains. His observations are based on his experiences during the seasons immediately  
 preceding his writing of *My First Summer in the Sierra*, the winter and spring of 1868-  
 1869. These excerpts highlight what the Great Central Valley was like before widespread  
 L Q G X V W U L D O I D U P L Q J D Q G F R Q V L G H U V Z K D W L W L V D G  
 man. It acts as an introductory and supplementary perspective to *My First Summer in the  
 Sierra*, adding a multi-regional dimension to his consideration of the man/nature  
 relationship. It also highlights the diversity of the state from region to region and season  
 W R V H D V R Q F K D O O H Q J L Q J W K H S H U F H S W L R I O W R I 3 R X W

in their imaginations or by way of the perpetuated myths of its homogenous serenity and landscape.

The following opening lines capture the unified yet diverse nature of California. They also detail the striking beauty of the sublime scene, making numerous Biblical allusions to the New Israel of the Judeo-Christian heaven as it is described as an

³ D G D P D Q W > L Q H @ ´ ³ F H O H V W L D O F L W \ ´ ³ Z K R O O \ F R P S R V

intentions are addressed in these few swaths of the pen:

Making your way through the mazes of the Coast Range to the summit of any of the inner peaks or passes opposite San Francisco, in the clear springtime, the grandest and most telling of all California landscapes is outspread before you. At your feet lies the great Central Valley glowing golden in the sunshine, extending north and south farther than the eye can reach, one smooth, flowery, lake-like bed of fertile soil. Along its eastern margin rises the mighty Sierra, miles in height, reposing like a smooth, cumulous cloud in the sunny sky, and so gloriously colored, and so luminous, it seems to be not clothed with light, but wholly composed of it, like the wall of some celestial city. Along the top, and extending a good way down, you see a pale, pearl-gray belt of snow; and below it a belt of blue and dark purple, marking the extension of the forests; and along the base of the range a broad belt of rose-purple and yellow, where lie the miner's gold-fields and the foot-hill gardens. All these colored belts blending smoothly

make a wall of light ineffably fine, and as beautiful as a rainbow,  
yet firm as adamant. (Mountainsch.1, par. 2)

, Q K L V F O R V L Q J F K D S W H U ³ % H H 3 D V W X U H V ´ 0 X L U

Central Valley <sup>2</sup> it is not a pristine land of milk and honey. In fact, this very allusion to the Biblical Promised Land of Canaan to Moses and the Israelites is flipped on its head as Muir identifies the environmental devastation brought on by the pilgrims from the East. Both in 1894 (when this was published) and today, this description of a California never to be seen again is made painful in its beauty; Muir shows us what was, and follows it with what has taken its place, an overt statement of protest against a land ethic that disrespects beauty and disregards the value of diversity. He reflects on the treatment and status of the Valley upon descending the mountain:

When California was wild, it was one sweet bee-garden throughout  
its entire length, north and south, and all the way across from the  
snowy 6 L H U U D W R W K H R F H D Q > « @ % X W R I O D W H  
have made sad havoc in these glorious pastures, destroying tens of  
thousands of the flowery acres like a fire, and banishing many  
species of the best honey-plants to rocky cliffs and fence-corners,  
while, on the other hand, cultivation thus far has given no adequate  
compensation, at least in kind. (ch.16, pars. 1-2)

He deepens the painful plow lines that mar this garden by showing the reader what it looked like before ranches and farms overtook the land en mass:

The Great Central Plain of California, during the months of March, April, and May, was one smooth, continuous bed of honey-bloom, so marvelously rich that, in walking from one end of it to the other, a distance of more than 400 miles, your foot would press about a hundred flowers at every step. Mints, gillias, nemophilas, castilleias, and innumerable compositæ were so crowded together that, had ninety-nine per cent. of them been taken away, the plain would still have seemed to any but Californians extravagantly flowery. The radiant, honey-ful corollas, touching and overlapping, and rising above one another, glowed in the living light like a sunset sky--one sheet of purple and gold, with the bright Sacramento pouring through the midst of it from the north, the San Joaquin from the south, and their many tributaries sweeping in at right angles from the mountains, dividing the plain into sections fringed with trees. (ch.16, par. 4)

The pristine beauty of the past and the destructive patterns of the present were both effective in revealing to America not only the impending doom of the idyllic California landscape but the myopic and reckless manner in which the myth related to natural spaces. Appropriately, Muir offers his prophetic images of what such a

G H V W U X F W L Y H O D Q G H W K L F Z L O O G R W R & D O L I R U Q L D ¶  
 S H U V X D G L Q J W K H U H D G H U V K L S W R F R Q V L G H U W K H L U U  
 D Q G E H D X W L I X O W R <sup>3</sup> F L Y L O L J H G ' D Q G of Sp... SHURXV ' K

hands of ignorance. While precisely correct regarding the redistribution of the rivers from

the sea to the fields, he was wrong in assuming that it would likewise harvest general prosperity. Later articulated by Steinbeck, the manipulation of the land for the sake of industrial-sized profits only creates factories in the fields, by which slaves are made. As a farmer by trade, Muir hopes for the best for the land and the people of the Valley as it develops, but acknowledges that one dream is always sacrificed for another. The land may bring great harvests, but it will be forever more barren of its first fruits. He parts with his audience with these prophetic words: "The time will undoubtedly come when the entire area of this noble valley will be tilled like a garden, when the fertilizing waters of the mountains, now flowing to the sea, will be distributed to every acre, giving rise to prosperous towns, wealth, arts, etc. Then, I suppose, there will be few left, even among botanists, to deplore the vanished primeval forest" (Muir, 1906, par. 23).

### OXLUV, QWHQWLRQV

Throughout his writings, Muir made numerous statements of his persuasive intent to his readers, openly pleading for their open-mindedness. Muir's words would spur a greater awareness of, and concern for, the threats made upon the land. In his preface to *Our National Parks*, Muir writes: "I have done the best I could to show forth the beauty, grandeur, and all-embracing usefulness of our wild mountain forest reservations and parks, with a view to inciting the people to come and enjoy them, and get them into their hearts, that so at length their preservation and right use might be made sure." *My First Summer in the Sierra*, whether received by every reader as a



political and philosophical manifesto or not, was just that. On the surface it may not appear to have such an agenda, but the beautifully depicted vistas revealing what is at stake in the conflict between nature preservation and utilitarian commerce and law show otherwise. Rhetorical techniques throughout the narrative grant the text political agency, seeking to change perceptions and laws through moral obligation and philosophical

DUJXPHQWDWLRQ \$FFRUGLQJ WR 5LFKDUG -fiction ODUG 3V  
ZRUN WKDW LV O\ULFDO LQIRUPDWLRQ Most DQG DSROLV

Summer in the Sierra all of these, yet the timing of its publication coupled with the reception of its message made it a device of political influence. Muir understood that ethics shaped politics, and in order to accomplish a political culture that pursued a preservationist ethic, he had to move the value assigned to nature in the minds of the masses. This insight and effective implementation of such intentions make Muir the father of American environmentalism, a man unwilling to be confined physically or philosophically to the deadening DQWKURSRFHQWULVP RI 3FLYLOLJDWLI

In order to make any difference at all in the minds of the reader, Muir had to place DQ 3HPSKDVLV RQ ZLOGHUQHVV DV D SDOSDEOH UHDOL centuries-old representations of the wildernes V DV WKH XQFLYLOLJHG ODQG 3 perimeter of society, a place where evil lurks yet opportunity awaits. The wilderness has always been an alluring and horrifying entity of the American imagination, and to alter the nature of wild spaces from a mysterious psychological entity into a tangible and inviting resource of beauty was no small task for Muir in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet this was exactly the transition that America needed to make, having stretched itself to the edge of the continent and crossed it with a railroad. Terry

\* LIIRUG GHVFULEHV 0XLU¶V HIIRUWV WKH IROORZLQJ ZI  
 frontier mentality of the conquest of nature and rediscovering an essential inner frontier  
 experience for XUEDQ YLVLWRUV WR ZLOGHUQHVV SUHVHUYHV  
 corresponds to the European location of natural spaces which identified the innate  
 spiritual and aesthetic values in visiting and preserving such places.

There are no documents availab OH WR WKH VFKRODU ZKLFK H[SOL  
 intentions in publishing My First Summer in the Sierra , ¶YH JOHDQHG FRPPHQW  
 personal correspondence and other writings, considered the work in light of the rest of his  
 OLIH¶V ZRUN DQGWH¶MDPQWGHQWKHVWHQH DQG LWV VRF  
 the source of my assertions. As for his reasons for writing the journal in 1869, it is clear  
 from the text itself that his intention was to study the flora, fauna, and geology of the  
 Sierra Nevada Range as closely as possible, permitting him to document his findings as  
 any scientist would. He likely planned on seeking publication of these findings. From the  
 outset of his journey, I believe that he wrote with the intention of having a broad  
 audience later read his thoughts. By 1871, the New York Tribune was publishing his  
 articles about the Sierras for the general population, so he demonstrated an intent to write  
 for an audience even beyond the bounds of his scientific field of study, sharing his  
 philosophical thoughts and highland adventures with the average citizen. While it may  
 have been for personal comfort or as a keepsake such as a diary may be, evidence points  
 to a premeditated audience as he framed his narrative. In the entry dated July 20, he hints  
 DV PXFK DV KH VNHWFKHV WKH 1RUWK 'RPH RI <RVHPLV  
 SHQFLOV DQG ZRUN RQ DV LI RWKHEV B LCKW SRVVLEO\  
 remark, this establishes his self-conscious efforts in the journal.

Still, the degree to which he intentionally structured the book according to literary protocols is certainly debatable. It can be argued that the text was originally written for

self- J U D W L I L F D W L R Q L Q W K H I R U P R I D S I G U D R U P D H G G Q H Y H U

readers. However, there are a number of points that complicate this argument. First, the

Y H U \ Q D W X U H R I F K U R Q L F O L Q J R Q H ¶ V S U H G H W H U P L Q H G

another automatically implements a linear structuring, assisting the reader in processing

text, and provokes an anticipation for the coming pages. Indeed, Muir wonders if his

work will ever hold audience with someone other than him. Sketching from atop the

1 R U W K ' R P H R Q D S H U I H F W - X O \ D I W H U Q R - R O X L U U H I C

to vanish like fallen leaves or go to friends like letters, matters not much; for little can

they tell to those who have not themselves seen similar wildness, and like a language

K D Y H O H D U Q H G L W ´

Having established his intention of an audience, the next challenge is to ascertain what those intentions were in the summer of 1869. Again, the text itself, and the context of his life and times, give a number of clues. Some of the messages he undoubtedly

desired to communicate were the sheer beauty of Californi D ¶ V 6 L H U U D 1 H Y D G D 5 D G

F H O H E U D W H \$ P H U L F D ¶ V U L F K Q D W X U D O Z R Q G H U V W R L

mountains, and to catalogue the diverse species of this elusive region. All of these

intentions remained, even at the time of its publication thirty-eight years later. However,

during that time he developed a greater understanding of the adversarial and thus

dangerous location of such majestic natural places in the minds of America, and a greater

call to preserve what he saw as a purifying conduit for the individual and the nation.

This conflict between preservation and appropriation of the environment culminated in the battle over Hetch Hetchy between the years 1906 and 1913, at which

SRLQW 0XLU¶V HIIRUWV ZHUH HETCH HETCHY IN YOSEMITE VALLEY WAS WKH EHD) GDPPHG IRU 6DQ )UDQFLVFR¶V JURZLQJ ZDWHU QHHGV

savvy as leverage for popular support, Muir published *My First Summer in the Sierras* in 1911, revealing the transforming beauty and holy craftsmanship that first overwhelmed

KLP LQ \$OO RI WKLV LV WR EH ORVW KH DUJXHG I

with water. Therefore, his intentions in publishing the text in 1911 centered on (1)

LQIRUPLQJ WKH SXEOLF RPTERVAL AND PUBLIC WEALTH, BY SING UDWLRQD

and protecting nature and its transforming power; (2) altering the relationship with nature

IURP DGYHUV DULDO WR IULHQGO\ UHORFDWLQJ QDWXU

interconnected, made by God just as humanity is; and (3) recruiting advocates from

various camps (religious, scientific, nationalist, etc.) and maintaining rapport and trust as

QDWXUH¶V DPEDVVDGRU

His writings, activities, and philosophy throughout his lifetime further supported the validity of these intentions. It is important to note such patterns since they model the century of activism that followed his death in 1914. In 1873 he began writing about protecting Yosemite Valley, heightening the awareness of the threats and dangers to such a magnificent place, and began a specific lobbying campaign for its preservation in 1876.

After years of hard work, including some influential articles in 1890 seeking to make Yosemite a national park, Yosemite was given such a title in that very year. 1892 brought

0XLU¶V HVWDEOLVKLQJ RI WKH 6LHUUD & OXE ZKLFK KH QXPEHU RI DUWLFOHV ³LQ +DUSHUV :HHNO\ DQG \$WODQ

IRU SURWHFWLQJ IRUHVWV´ LQ ~~Was established~~ 0W 5DL

after Muir advocated on its behalf in a number of writings. The year 1901 brought

Theodore Roosevelt into office and a new partnership in the mission to save the

ZLOGHUQHVV <sup>3</sup>/HVV WKDQ WZR PRQWKV ed. ~~My First~~ U KLV LQD

message to Congress directly on the question of resource development, a speech that

ZRXOG EHFRRPH WKH EHQFKPDUN LQ WKH ULVH RI FRQVH

1903 Muir accepted an offer by Roosevelt to camp alone with him in Yosemite, where

the two giants in history solidified a friendship and somewhat of a shared mission.

Inspired by his relationship with Muir, Roosevelt was able to establish preservation

strategies in the political realm in such a way that Muir had never achieved through

literature. Three years later Petrified Forest was named a National Monument by

Roosevelt, one year after Muir campaigned for its protection. The same year also saw

Yosemite come under the control and protection of the federal government, ensuring that

it would not be abused by loggers and miners despite its title as a national park. In 1908,

Grand Canyon National Monument was established. Muir continued to use friendship

with presidents as a tool to defend the wilderness, as seen by his personal leading of Taft

through the Sierra Nevadas in 1909. Clearly, the publication of *My First Summer in the*

Sierra ZDV PRUH WKDQ DQ ROG PDQ¶V QRVWDOJLF UHFROO

skilled in prose, and keen to the pulse of the American consciousness, Muir placed this

lovely narrative in the hands of the nation as a radical and subversive form of protest and

perceptual influence.

, Q HVWDEOLVKLQJ WKH YDOLGLW\ RI -RM¶Q 0XLU¶V S

*First Summer in the Sierra* begin with a quote from the text that succinctly captures it.

His intention was to alter the relationship with nature from adversarial to friendly,

U H O R F D W L Q J L W L Q \$ P H U L F D ¶ V F R Q V F L R X V D V D V D F U H

interconnected to humanity. In short, he evangelized the gospel of nature in an effort at converting the public. In a private conversation with his fellow shepherd Billy in which he urged him to recognize the majesty of Yosemite Valley, Muir confesses that he

<sup>3</sup> S U H V V H G < R V H P L W H L X S R D U K I R F I E U N G M Y D W A S H I N G T O N V S H O ´

102). There is a clear and consistent effort throughout the text to assign the wonders of the Sierras as products of God. A man of deep spiritual convictions founded in Christianity and flavored in the philosophies of transcendentalism, Muir also knew that his national audience was by and large a Christian culture which would be able to relate to and be impacted by spiritual metaphors and Biblical allusions he scattered throughout the text. He sought to engage readers on a spiritual level, certain that this was the most incisive medium through which to reach them. He spoke their language, while attempting WR KHOS WKH SXEOLF VHH WKH QDWXUDO ZRUOG ZLWK cultural covenant of earthly dominion.

O X L U ¶ V Z U L W L Q J V D O W H U H G \$ P H U L F D ¶ V W U D G L W L R

reshaping the American mind in regard to its characterization of nature by the same means as Christians are shaped by the Bible. The specific biblical parallels throughout the text extend to the work as a whole and the author as the messenger, with John the

<sup>3</sup> D S R V W O H ´ Z U L W L Q J D K R P L O H W L F H S L V W O H W R D V S H

In considering this somewhat static mode of teaching, philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer makes an insightful clarification concerning the relationship between the reader, the

Z U L W H U D Q G W K H F R Q W H Q W R I W K H W H [ W <sup>3</sup>, W L V Q R W

between the reader and the author (who is perhaps quite unknown), but about sharing in

ZKDW WKH WH[W VKDUHV ZLWK XV´ 0XLU¶V WH[W D

which the author and reader establish shared meaning. He KRSHG WR FRPPXQLFDWH

benevolent essence, yet like the apostle Paul struggling to express the nature of God,

0XLU UHYHDOV WKH GLILFXOW\ ZLWK ZKLFK WKLV LV D

the exquisite beauty and charm of this mountain park <sup>2</sup> 1DWXUH¶V ODQGVFDSH JD

WHQGHUO\ EHDXLIXO DQGLYXFOUH´ perhaps 7KLV GLI

reconstructing, the reverent nature of a place is therefore remedied through biblical

association, a lexicon both known and sacred to the reading public. Through a parallel

FRQVWUXFWLRQ RI QDWXUJDOGRQJLIXO FUHDW

LQWHQW WR <sup>3</sup>FRQYHUW´ WKH UHGHU

Muir counted on his readers to decipher these spiritual sentiments. John Leighly

VWDWHV <sup>3</sup>0XLU ZUDSSHG D FRYHULQJ RI LQWHUSUHW

in the presence of the phenomena observed, and these experiences were what he was

most eager to report to his readers. It was not merely shallow sentiment that Muir invited

his readers to share. He was convinced that the emotional rewards of association with

nature increas H ZLWK LQWHOOFWXDO XQGHUVWDQGLQJ DQG

(312). I go further in suggesting that Muir was convinced of spiritual rewards through the

VDFUHG DVVFLDWLRQV PDGH ZLWK QDWXUH 7KLV PD\

sen WLPHQW´ EXW 0XLU LV VLQFHUH LQ KLV DOLJQPHQW

respected the intelligence of, and desire for knowledge in, his modern audience, yet he

also coupled reason and science with spiritual values to shape a pattern of respect for

nature. In a wonderfully creative text retracing the steps taken by Muir on that first

ramble through the Sierras, Thomas and Geraldine Vale consider the influential effects of

UHDGLQJ VXFk D WH[W WKDW PRGHOV V s Pffhat RVLV ZLWK  
 VXPPHU RI WR UHFRUGLQJ IDLWKIXOO\ DQ LQVLJKW  
 LQWHOOFWXDO SHUFHSWLRQ¶ VRXJKW E\ (PHUVRQ \$C

journal with the idea of sharing it with others, his highly personal perspective serves well

DV D JXLGH IRU RXU LQGLYLGXDO HQJDJHPHQWV ZLWK  
 VWHS QHDUHU WR WKLQJV¶ DQG μVHH WKH IORZLQJ RU  
 GLVDJUHH ZLWK WKHLU FODLP n Wkdw Ms jkna Glagce ¶ W RULJL

with their point that his language shaped the text into a more intimate way of seeing

QDWXUH )RUHYHU FKDQJLQJ WKH ZD\ QDWXUH LV YLHZ

retelling of his transformation of love stands as a significant early example of wilderness

literature as an instrument of broad environmental change.

Two textual examples that highlight this intention include a blessing from man  
 and the curse of man. As Muir sat writing on the afternoon of June 13, he said of a nearby

OLJDUG ³+HDYHQ EOHVV \RX DOO DQG PDNH \RXU YLUW  
 WKDW VFDOHV PD\ FRYHU IHOORZ FUHDWXUHV DV JHQW  
 (28-29). This blessing serves as a moral instruction to the reader. He s SHDNV RI PDQ¶V

insistent tendency to create hierarchies among the organic kingdoms and challenges this

pattern as one of earthly ignorance. He later goes on to highlight humanity as the single

most destructive entity in the organic world, chiding not only our anthropocentric

SHUVSHFWLYHV EXW DOVR RXU UDYDJLQJ DFWLRQV ³\$C

men, bears and squirrels, wolves and sheep, birds and bees, but as far as I have seen, man

alone, and the animals he tames, destroy these garde QV ´ 8OWLPDWHO\ 0XLU



W KH OLPLWV RI &DOLIRUQLD ¶V ERXQW\ WKURXJK W KH G  
 balanced ecosystems of the Sierra Nevadas by two thousand sheep. He also celebrates the  
 GLYHUVLW\ DQG FUHDWng regions, yet was against the danger of ¶V YDU\L  
 \$PHULFD ¶V WHQGHQF\ WR SHUFHLYH DQG WUHDW DOO C  
 humanity, nature is sacred yet finite, and like humanity it was made diversely and  
 EHDXWLIXOO\ LQ \*RG ¶V intention was making this ¶V study by the  
 reader.

Accomplishing this first intention greatly furthered accomplishing the second. He  
 sought to inform the public of the inspirational potential and unique beauty found in  
 specific California landmarks, encouraging the protection and preservation of them and  
 WKHLU WUDQVIRUPLQJ SRZHU ,Q IDFW KH ZURWH LQ KL  
 knows that John Baptist was not more eager to get all his fellow sinners into the Jordan  
 than I to baptize all of PLQH LQ W KH EHDXW\ RI \*RG ¶V PRXQWDLQV  
 combined beautiful places with beautiful truths in the name of preservation, yet he also  
 knew that nature was not the only winner of a revised land ethic. The transforming power  
 it has over the pilgrim ties beauty and truth together here, making the preservation of  
 beautiful places not only the morally responsible thing to do, but the most personally and  
 VRFLDOO\ EHQHILFLDO FKRLFH 0XLU ¶V RZQ WUDQVIRU  
 beautifully explained by Thomas Vale:

During his first Sierran summer, Muir was Knower and Sayer but  
 not Doer, an entity he would become only after coming down from  
 the Yosemite Sierra in 1873. . . Muir sought truth and beauty for  
 himself, for his own growth and development, which he later

translated into words that help us to see with the clarity of the deep pools of the Merced and with the sharpness of quartz crystals of Cathedral granite, what we, as individuals, might gain from our

R Z Q <sup>3</sup> V W X G L H V ' R I W p k (115) R V H P L W H O D Q G V F D

His style of applying his philosophy of love to writings in the natural sciences was unique to his time. Yet even though few of the naturalists of his generation appealed to it, many of them recognized a moral obligation toward nature (Leighly 313). At times

S D Q W K H L V W L F 0 X L U ¶ V I U H T X H Q W G L Y L Q H P H W D S K R U V

sanctity of creation, therefore leading them into a moral, preservationist response. Indeed,

K H D O L J Q V W K H U H D G H U ¶ V V \ P S D W K H W I F D Q G H P E U D F L

interests of God:

Everything is perfectly clean and pure and full of divine lessons.

This quick, inevitable interest attaching to everything seems marvelous until the hand of God becomes visible; then it seems reasonable that what interests Him may well interest us. When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe. One fancies a heart like our own must be beating in every crystal and cell, and we feel like stopping to speak to the plants and animals as friendly fellow mountaineers. (110)

The following quote reveals the connection between these two intentions, where he

D S S U H F L D W H V W K H E H D X W \ D Q G S R Z H U R I D I H U Q J O H Q

head and worldly cares are cast out, and freedom and beauty and peace come in. The

waving of a pine tree on the top of a mountain <sup>2</sup> D P D J L F Z D Q G L Q <sup>4</sup> e d y W X U H ¶ V k

devout mountaineer knows its power; but the marvelous beauty power of what the Scotch call a breckan in a still dell, what poet has sung this? It would seem impossible that anyone, however incrustated with care, could escape the Godful influence of these sacred

I H U Q I R U H V W V ' + H I X U W K H U F R Q Y L F W V W K H P R U D O

by portraying the ignorance of his fellow shepherd to the value of the place, encouraging

W K H P Q R W W R E H D V E D V H D Q G Z L W K R X W V S L U L W D V D

pass through one of the finest of them without betraying more feeling than his sheep.

μ : K D W G R \ R X H W K L Q W D R I G W H U Q V " , D V N G H E L J Z E U D M K I N \ T U K

U H S O L H G '

Though Muir assigned value to every region, he clearly argued that some landscapes held greater aesthetic value than others and should therefore be protected from utilitarian or capitalist influences. The following quote contrasts the beauty in places like Yosemite Valley and others such as the Central Valley, where he accurately describes the climatic realities of the flatlands. In fact, he begins his text with these images, juxtaposing the harsh aridity of summer all the more with the verdure of the mountains:

3 , Q W K H J U H D W & H Q W U D O 9 D O O H \ R I 2 & D O a n d R U Q L D W K H U

summer. The spring begins with the first rainstorm, which usually falls in November. In a few months the wonderful flowery vegetation is in full bloom, and by the end of May it is

G H D G D Q G G U \ D Q G F U L V S D V L I H Y H U \ S O D Q W K D G E H

W K H U H D G H U \ V W K L U V W I R U Y H U G D Q W E H D X W \ D V K H D

the aesthetics of nature increasing with elevation above the comparably crusty valley

I O R R U Z K H U H K H V W D U W H G 7 K L V F R Q W U D V W Z K L F K G H

greater value in entities broadly seen as beautiful, also works on the moral norms of the

culture. This ethic asserts that beautiful things hold innate value and should be preserved from alteration.<sup>8</sup>

Along this line of thinking, phenomenologist Hans-Georg Gadamer suggests that

3 ZKHQ ZH ILQG WKH EHDXWLIXO DURXVHV LQWHUHVW RQO\ LQ VRPHRQH ZKFR PRUDOO\ JRRG ¶ ' OX make up of his Zeal, confident that ZKHQ H[SRVHG WR VRPHWKLQJ 3LQQDWHO\ ' EHDXWLIXO ZRXOG EH GLFWDWHG E\ WKHLU HQJUDLQHG PRUDO FRG LQWHQW WR SRUWLD\ QDWXUH LQ Q\*RG¶V nature as the enlightened pilgrim. Ironically, Muir accesses the same psychological location of the God-nature relationship which perpetuates the California Dream so that he could preserve the landscape rather t KDQ GRPLQDWH LW :LOOLDP (YHUVRQ H[SO WKH UHGDHU RI WKH VDQFWLW\ RI FUHDWLRQ DV VXFK +HWFK +HWFK\ KH DSSHDOHG GLUHFWO\ WR WKH \$PHUL Nature and God. > « @ LW ZDV WKH RFFDVLRQ XSRQ ZKLFK KH W LW WR VXUIDFH LQ WKH QDWLRQ¶V FRQVFLRXVQHVV ' ( ZULWHU \*HRUJH 6DQWD\DQD DOVR QRWHG \$PHULFD¶V U

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<sup>8</sup> This perspective aligns closely with Immanuel Kant ¶V DHVWKHWLF WKH RQD QDWXUH SRVVHVVLQJ LQQDWH EHDXW\ RQDWH RQD QDWXUH WKDW LW 3GR YDULDELWLW\ ' ,Q KLV HVVD\ 37KH 1DWXUH %RRN LQ \$FWLRQ ' QDWXUH DV LQQDWHO\ SRVVHVVLYH RI PRUDOLW\ RU EHDXW\ +H D itself beautiful or ugly. It is functional. It is. No good nature book imposes on other species any human-EHLQJ V\WHP IRU DHVWKHWLFV PRUDOLW\ HFRQRPLFV FRPIRUW of the aesthetic, for the sake of truth and beauty, in th LV FDVH OXLU¶V ZULWLQJ DV D OLPLW understanding is free of all prejudices (490).

of art and religion in the same year of My First Summer in the Sierra V SXEOLVKLQJ

VD\LQJ <sup>3</sup>μ, DP VWUXFN LQ &DOLIRUQLD E\ WKH GHHS DO

people have for nature and by the sensitiveness they show for its influence . . . It is their

sponta QHRXV VXEVLWXWH IRU DUWLFXODWH DWLW DQG DU

IROORZLQJ SDVVDJH UHIOHFWV OXLUV SOHD IRU QDWX

sensibilities:

A few minutes ago every tree was excited, bowing to the roaring storm, waving, swirling, tossing their branches in glorious enthusiasm like worship. But though to the outer ear these trees are now silent, their songs never cease. Every hidden cell is throbbing with music and life, every fibre thrilling like harp strings, while incense is ever flowing from the balsam bells and leaves. No

wonder the hills DQG JURYHV ZHUH, and the more LUVW

they are cut down and hewn into cathedrals and churches, the

farther off and dimmer seems the Lord himself. The same may be

said of stone temples. Yonder, to the eastward of our camp grove,

VWDQGV RQH RI 1DWXUH, in DWKHGUDOV KHZQ

almost conventional in form, about two thousand feet high, nobly

adorned with spires and pinnacles, thrilling under floods of

sunshine as if alive like a JURYH WPHSOH DQG ZHOO QDPHG

3HDN (102)

His assignment of divine beauty to these metaphorical cathedrals makes their destruction

D VDFULOHJLRXV HYHQW DWWDFNLQJ QASWISRQO\ WKH U  
spiritual convictions.

The philosophical insights of Hans-Georg Gadamer further enlighten this

GLVFXVLRQ RI OXLU¶V LQWHQW WR DSSHDO WR WKH S  
morality for the sake of an increased preservationist ethic. In *Truth and Method*

examines the phenomenological reception of these concepts, establishing a grounding for

the persuasive intellectual techniques used by Muir. In particular, he defines the

parameters for the perception of art and nature as being beautiful and moral, as well as

where art and its representation of nature intersect. Art is both an acting mediator of the

natural entity it represents, and in need of mediation with the viewing participant by

means of some intellectual interpretation. On the o WKHU KDQG <sup>3</sup>EHDXWLIXO QD

DURXVH DQ LPPHGLDWH LQWHUHV V QDPHO\ D PRUDO R

the nature writer and the preservationist. Art is a means of exposure, education, and

added preservationist interests to the reader through an aesthetic medium that approaches

but, according to Gadamer, never fully equates to experiencing nature proper.

If, as Gadamer suggests, interaction with nature brings forth a moral response in

WKH SDUWLFLSDQW WKURXJK QDWXUHLI nature writer EHDXW\  
would be to create literature that likewise acts as a catalyst for a moral response to nature.

This does not seem attainable in light of the theoretical separation between the

interpretively mediated experience of reading and the innately moral response provoked

through experiencing nature itself. Yet the intent of the nature writer to preserve natural

space as a means of moral interest is never negated simply because it can never be fully

or perfectly accomplished. Clearly, both the natural and artistic sources of beauty are dependent upon one another, synergistically thriving or fading on parallel horizons. Muir recognized this need for both a thriving literature of natural places and a thriving of nature itself. In pursuing such ends on both of these fronts, the content and style of his literature and his preservationist lobbying reflect his awareness that beauty would arouse

D ³ PRUDO LQWHUHVW ´ LQ KLV DXGLHQFHV 7KHUHIRUH V  
the morality of a nation, while literature also worked toward this end, albeit interpretively.

\$ EULHI GHPRQVUDWLRQ RI 0XLU¶V H[SUHVVLRQ R  
follows, revealing the purifying qualities available through this unique and endangered

SODFH ³7KHVH EOHVVHG PRXQWDLQV DUH VR FRPSDFW  
personal hope or experience has room to be. Drinking this champagne water is pure pleasure, so is breathing the living air, and every movement of limbs is pleasure, while the whole body seems to feel beauty when exposed to it as it feels the campfire or

VXQVKLQH HQWHULQJ QRW E\ WKH H\HV DORQH EXW H  
heat, making a passionate ecstatic pleasure- JORZ QRW H[SODVLRQ

in the Sierra was an intentional aggressive appeal to the cultural and artistic sentiments of the American public, revealing to them just what was to be lost if capitalist expansion and utilitarian perspectives of nature prevailed. America needed to forge a new psychological

WUDMHFWRU\ RI LWV ODQGVFDSH DQG -RKQ 0XLU XVHG  
0XLU¶V WKLV LQWHQWLRQ LV WKH SUDFWLFDO RX  
wanted to change the psychological location of nature LQ WKH UHJUH¶V PLQG D  
the beauty it uniquely offered, but he also knew he needed a diverse band of allies in the

continual battle for such preservation. Thus, he intended the text to effectively recruit advocates from the religious, scientific, and political/nationalist fronts, and in so doing

PDLQWDLQ KLV WUXVWHG UDSSRUW ZLWK WKH SXEOLF

had much to fight for; the religious community saw its preservation as an act of responsible stewardship, the scientists acknowledged the vast body of study available in the fields of earth and life sciences, and national pride was at stake for those who desired the best for the legacy of a young nation. He spoke to a diverse audience and used a

plethora of devices a SSURSULDWH WR WKH QHHGV RI HDFK JURXS

how effectively the use of logic and the proper authority <sup>2</sup> LQ KLV IDWKHUV FDVH

Bible <sup>2</sup> FRXOG VZD\ D VHHPLQJO\ LQWUDFWDEOH RSSRQHQ

wilderness preservation were spiritual, he was remarkably adept at couching his

arguments in utilitarian terms when he knew that these would have a greater effect on his

LQWHQG HG DXGLHQ ~~For~~ ~~take~~ ~~from~~ ~~September~~ ~~1908~~ [openly

directed at the academic world, in which Muir had many friends and admirers. He creates

a veritable paradise for the student of rock, animal, and plant, tempting them with

LQVLJKWV WR WKH XQLTXH P\VWHULHV RI WKH 6LHUUDV

is! Every rock, mountain, stream, plant, lake, lawn, forest, garden, bird, beast, insect

seems to call and invite us to come and learn something of its history and relationship.

But shall the poor ignorant scholar be allowed to try the lessons they offer? It seems too

great and g RRG WR EH WUXH ' , Q WUXWK 0XLU QHHGGH

and law makers as much as they needed such a persuasive and eloquently provocative

OHDGLQJ YRLFH , W ZDV ZLWKRXW D GRXEW KLV OLIH¶V

places of the world, but he desired it to likewise be the intention of every other citizen.



0XLU↑V 7HFKQLTXHV

My First Summer in the Sierra was only one of many publications released by Muir between 1910 and 1914. The intent of My First Summer in the Sierra seems quite clear when these writings are looked at together. In isolation it appears to be the nostalgic if not academic ruminations of a bygone botanist, but next to his fiery attacks at his detractors it stands as perhaps the most divisive protest literature of his lifetime. The sharp juxtaposition of tone, style, and content between this journal and his overt political

FRPPHQWDULHV ZDV DQ LQWHQWLRQDO VWUDWHJ\ WR

greatest of its attributes. In The Yosemite 19 0XLU ZULWHV 37KHVH WHPS devotees of raging commercialism, seem to have a perfect contempt for Nature, and, instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the mountains, lift them to the Almighty

'ROODU ' & OHDUO\ KLV SUBVHQRWHHQWHS DJH Z

closer look at his persuasive rhetorical techniques reveal him as both a literary master and social philosopher ahead of his time, establishing a methodology of environmental protest that was to be emulated for the next century.

John Muir lived most of his years as an environmental advocate in the midst of radical cultural transition. His adult years encompassed the Civil War and Reconstruction, the ages of science and progressivism, the shift from Romanticism to realism, the waning of Christianity as the central construct of cultural formation, and the impending Great War. This span of time hinged by the turn of the century is arguably the most revolutionary and dynamic era in American history. Never before or since have so many fundamental tenets of art, science, religion, economy, politics, and culture been

FKDOOHQJHG DW WKH VDPH WLPH 7KLV NLQHWLF TXDO

difficult for artists to target a broad audience, being that the scale of understanding and belief had been broadened exponentially. Another way of looking at this task is to consider the cultural consciousness of the day as a moving target, changed almost daily by the developments in art, science, or politics.

This cu O W X U D O U H D O L W \ P D N H V O X L U ¶ V X V H R I Y D U L R  
 impressive, each one of them extending itself toward a sector of society so as to speak to  
 America in its entirety. His intentions have been clearly stated, summed up as an attempt  
 to alt H U S H R S O H ¶ V S H U F H S W L R Q V D Q G W U H D W P H Q W R I Q D  
 by the California Dream. His techniques were therefore sourced in appropriate rhetorical  
 modes intended to influence his diverse readership. The primary technique was rooted in  
 W K H V S L U L W X D O L G H Q W L W \ D Q G O L Q H D J H R I W K H Q D W L  
 a Christian world view. His use of holy metaphors in nature established God as its creator  
 and advocate, requiring a perspective of reverence and preservation.

The second significant technique addresses the cultural value of aesthetic beauty.  
 Muir was speaking to an artistically discriminating audience in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; as  
 the inheritors of Romanticism and adopters of realism, the mature turn of the century  
 American was fluent in the philosophical exercise of assigning moral and cultural values  
 W R D U W D Q G E H D X W \ ( P H U V R Q ¶ V W U D O M F H O G H Q W D O L V  
 tastes of a new century through the works of Carleton Watkins and Jacob Riis,  
 U H V S H F W L Y H O \ W R F U H D W H D J H Q H U D O E H O L H I W K D W  
 potential for spiritual and cultural uplift. Therefore, he applied elevated imagery through  
 diction, photography, and personal sketches for the sake of capturing the beauty of nature  
 and invoking a desire to preserve and protect it.

Finally, Muir tapped into the intellectual orientation of the era, invoking the powerful and trusted influences of science and expertise most widely expressed through literary realism and naturalism. Modernity was birthed from the finite absolutes of

VFLHQWLILF IDFW DQG DV VWDWHG RQH RI WUKH 3URJ

faith in the opinions of experts. This particular cultural location served Muir perfectly as he used his taxonomic skills in describing the flora, fauna, and geology, and his widely acknowledged expertise in rhetorical appeals advocating a new understanding of

&DOLIRUQLD¶V GLYHUVH \HW OLPLWHG UHVXRUFHV

These three cultural trajectories are not only isolated in the turn of the century consciousness, but are enduring issues that post-modern America continues to debate.

The spiritual, cultural, and intellectual engagement of this book maintains relevance in terms of its influence on the location of nature in the contemporary consciousness. By publishing his journal, he overcomes time/place limitations. In discussing language as a

medium of hermeneutic experience, Hans- \*HRUJ \*DGDPHU¶V WKHRULHV HO

LPSOLFLW SRZHU RI 0XLU¶V XVH RI OLWHUDWXUH WR F

toward a preservationist ethic, but also future generations of Americans who will

continue to determine the spiritua O YDOXH RI \$PHULFD¶V VDFUHG QDWX

language implicates Muir as a literary lobbyist, using this medium of communication to

VKDUH KLV PHVVDJH ZLWK DOO RI KXPDLW\ \$FFRUGLG

accident or mere supplement that qualitatively changes nothing in the course of oral

tradition. Certainly, there can be a will to make things continue, a will to permanence,

without writing. But only a written tradition can detach itself from the mere continuance

of the vestiges of past life, remnants from which one human being can by interference

SLHFH RXW RQH¶V H[LVWHQFH´ 0XLU H[HUWHG KLV

through the reshaping power of language, hoping to write it into being for generations.

In *Truth and Method* Gadamer speaks about the relationship between the reader

DQG WKH WH[W KLJKOLJKWLQJ WKH FRPSOH[LW\ DQG S

is so purely the trace of the mind as writing, but nothing is so dependent on the

understanding mind either´ 7KDW LV ZLWKRXW SDUDOOHO XQC

WH[W¶V LQWHQG HG PHDQLQJ DQG WKH UHDSHU¶V LQWH

lost. Yet in the experience of truly deciphering and interpreting it,

a miracle takes place: the transformation of something alien and  
 dead into total contemporaneity and familiarity. . . A written  
 tradition, once deciphered and read, is to such an extent pure mind  
 that it speaks to us as if in the present. That is why the capacity to  
 read, to understand what is written, is like a secret art, even a  
 magic that frees and binds us. In it time and space seem to be  
 superseded. People who can read what has been handed down in  
 writing produce and achieve the sheer presence of the past. (163-  
 64)

Regardless of temporal and spatial displacement of *My First Summer in the Sierra*

readers actually join Muir on his walk, but more importantly adopt the sentiments toward

QDWXUH WKDW JR DORQJ ZLWK WKH H[SHULHQFH 7KLV

construction of ideas familiar to the mainstream cultural consciousness, and nothing is

more embedded in it than Christian principles. He touches on various nuances of the

Christian perspective which more fully responds to the moral conscience of the reader.

These associations i Q FOXGH WKH UHYHODWLRQ RI \*RG¶V GLYLQL  
 \*RG¶V FUHDWLYH ZRUNPDQVKLS QDWXUH DV D FRQGXL  
 likeness with nature, and the moral corruption inherent in the abuse or disdain of nature.

O X L U ¶mry Snt in using spiritual associations is to demonstrate that nature  
 is a lens through which the divine can be seen. If this concept is found to be accessible to  
 the reader, the rest of his message has a chance of being heard. Muir proclaims early on  
 in his ascent that the depth to which one can understand and experience God is

PHDVXUHOHV LQ WKH PRXQWDLQV ³2K WKHVH YDVW  
 at once to work and rest! Days in whose light everything seems equally divine, opening a  
 WKRXVDQG ZLQGRZV WR VKRZ XV \*RG´ +H OLNHZLV  
 of being in the mountains to that of heaven, the limitless throne room of God himself. He

EHJLQV KLV -XQH HQWU\ ZLWK WKHVH ZRUDG ³\$QRW  
 any world can be conceived. No description of Heaven that I have ever heard of or read

RI VHHPV KDOI VR ILQH´ (VWDEOLVKLQJ WKH PRXQW  
 WDQJLEOH UHIOHFWLRQ RI \*RG¶V ZRUNPDQVKLS LV D Y  
 that holding the mountain in less than holy esteem is disgracing its maker. Muir is often

RYHUW ZLWK WKLW PHVVDJH VXFK DV VHHQ ZKHQ KH V  
 GRLQJ KLV EHVW KHUH ZRUNLQJ Q(4)NE D PDQ LQ D JOR  
 of the journey as Muir crests the first bluff and looks upon a section of the Merced

9DOOH\ KH DVVLJQV D VDFUHG LQIOXHGFH WR WKH EHI  
 VKRZH G HVLJQ OLNH PDQ¶V QR EOHV W VEXQ SWXUHV  
 \*DJLQJ DZHVWULFNHQ , PLJKW KDYH OHIW HYHU\WKLQJ  
 HYHU\ZKHUH EHQHDWK DERYH PDGH DQG EHLQJ PDGH



V X S S U H V V H - ~~Y P D Q T M N H O~~ Over nature upon seeing its unending worship which shames the best efforts by humanity, and through the reference to its Biblical creation which preceded that of humanity.

A few minutes ago every tree was excited, bowing to the roaring storm, waving, swirling, tossing their branches in glorious enthusiasm like worship. But though to the outer ear these trees are now silent, their songs never cease. Every hidden cell is throbbing with music and life, every fibre thrilling like harp strings, while incense is ever flowing from the balsam bells and leaves. No  
 Z R Q G H U W K H K L O O V D Q G J U R Y H V Z H U H \* R G ¶ V I I  
 they are cut down and hewn into cathedrals and churches, the farther off and dimmer seems the Lord himself. (101-02)

This parallel spiritual identity with nature radically contrasts the way in which turn of the century America was living out the California Dream. No longer an adversary or an entity to be cheaply pillaged, the Q D W X U D O Z R U O G D V V K R Z Q W K U R X J K a fellow creation and worshiper of God, but a mediating agent between God and man.

The use of personification at times subtly and other times overtly communicates the concept of nature as an equal in W K H K L H U D U F K \ R I \* R G ¶ V F U H D W L R Q  
 O X L U ¶ V X V H R I W K L V G H Y L F H D E R X Q G L Q V R J U H D W D Q  
 redundant and unnecessary in proving its effective use. This does suggest, however, that in assigning personage to various parts of the landscape, Muir communicates many messages to the reader. Among them, he challenges the anthropocentric perspective of  
 K X P D Q L W \ D V \* R G ¶ V R Q O \ F R Q F H U Q D Q G D U J X H V I R U D

these entities as holy vessels of worship, and celebrates the diversity among organic

QDWXUH HTXDO WR WKDW VHHQ LQ KXPDQLW\ 7R RIIHU

include two examples here. In a passage speaking of the purpose and intrinsic value of

poison ivy and oak, he chal OHQJHV WKH FRPPRQ DQWKURSRFHQWUL

RWKHU WKLQJV QRW DSSDUHQWO\ XVHIXO WR PDQ LW

ZDV LW PDGH" ¶ JRHV RQ DQG RQ ZLWK QHYHU D JXHVV

IRU LWV Hohe acknowledges the intrinsic spirituality and inviting call of

QDWXUH ¶V RUJDQLVPV VD\LQJ <sup>3</sup>(YHU\ PRUQLQJ DULV

plants and all our fellow animal creatures great and small, and even the rocks, seemed to

be sho XWLQJ μ\$ZDNH DZDNH UHMRLFH UHMRLFH FRPH C

& RPH '46).

On occasion, Muir rebukes any unmoved Christian reader by equating him to the

XQUHILQHG VKHSHUG %LOO\ RI ZKRP 0XLW VD\V <sup>3</sup>6XF

VPRWKHUHG DQG EHIRJJHG EHQHDKW PHDQ SOHDVXUHV

wants such a label, which categorizes one as not only separate from God but intentionally

immersed in worldly concerns counter to His will. He also reveals the spiritual discord

representative of the current broken relationship between man and land early in the

adventure. As he warns against the greedy manipulation of the world, he also hints at the

need for a land ethic that aligns with Christian principles of benevolence and humility:

<sup>3</sup>7KLV TXLFNO\ DFTXLUHG ZHDOWK XVXDOO\ FUHDWHV G

GUDZQ FORVH GRZQ RYHU WKH SRRU IHOORZ ¶V H\HV G

HYHU\WKLQJ ZRUWK VHHLQJ´



In publishing *My First Summer in the Sierra*, Muir worked as an agenda-driven artist rather than an artistic lobbyist. While politicians use rhetoric rarely worthy of being short-lived propagandist campaign. In so doing, he constructed a compositional framework for the story that catered to the literary savvy and tradition of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century reader. In other words, his choice of structure and style added a depth of meaning to the text not found in the narrative pastoral tale so intimately tied to the American Dream, and the time-honored and often borrowed Puritan jeremiad plot structure. With the use of these compositional techniques come a series of thematic meanings and nuances of tone that were highly familiar to the readership of the day. Gadamer speaks directly to this invisible power built into the [in which he includes poetry and rhetoric] is concerned not with the product but with the or appealing.

It can be argued that Muir used the familiar thematic literary plot of the American pastoral tale, originating with the bucolic depiction of shepherds and metamorphosing into the American farmer. This symbol reflects a moral, idealized way of life in a pristine natural setting innocent to civilization, where the shepherd leads a musical and romanticized life. Being so completely perfect, there is often a whimsical sense of otherworldliness to it, sadly unattainable but all the same longed for by the reader. These ideas, revived during the Renaissance and again in the age of Romanticism from first

century Greek poetry, can at times be elegiac in nature, mourning the passing of life as the unavoidable result of time. Hints of this melodramatic

KHUUH DQG WKHUUH DV VHHQ ZKHQ KH SURFODLPV <sup>3</sup>HDF

for a great life-long landscape fortune <sup>2</sup> a most memorable day of days <sup>2</sup> enjoyment

HQRXJK WR NLOO LI WKDW ZHUUH SRMVLWLFDOO\ ,W LVG

herding sheep in this story; the imagery of the sweeping plains, fecund valleys and perfectly clear-skied vistas as the backdrop for a shepherd and his flock are standardized to the point of cliché.

The difference in this version of the tale, which would be strikingly obvious to a reader of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century literature and classic verse from the Renaissance, is that

WKL V LV SDUDGR[LFDOO\ D GDUN VKH SKHUG ¶V WDOH 7

him, he is not at peace with his shepherding role, and the sheep in no way work with the rest of the pastoral setting in a symbiotic or balanced manner. This is clearly a statement

DERXW WKH LPEDODQFHV EURXJKW LQWR D SHUIHFW OD

and manipulation of nature. In this case, the sheep represent this broken trust between

PDQ DQG WKH ODQG DOOHJRULFDOO\ UHSUHVHQWDWLY

destruction by man for the sake of expansion and commercialism. In his chapter

<sup>3</sup>7KRXJK WKH )RRWKLOOV ZLWK D )ORFN RI 6KHHS ´ 0XLU

Scottish shepherd with the land and profit-hungry misery of the California shepherd,

portraying the broken life and soul that comes with such a perspective. He says the

Sco WFK VKH SKHUG <sup>3</sup>KDV SUREDEO\ GHVFNHQGHG IURP D U

DQG DSWLWXGH IRU WKH EXVLQHVV DOPRVW DV PDUNH

family and neighbors, has time for reading in fine weather, and often carries books to the



conversion experience that began on the road to Damascus. Muir also borrows from this very popularized plot structure that, being so frequently used in classic American tales, would be known to almost any literate person of the time. However, like the pastoral, Muir alters this stock structural device in order to reveal his benevolent philosophy

WRZDUG QDWXUH WR KLV UHGDGHUV %\ LQYHUWLQJ WKH

into the mountain wilderness as a pilgrim from a fallen valley below for the purpose of attaining a loving and enlightened relationship with God. As he ascends the mountain trail, so does his spirit. Meeting God at the highest of peaks, he descends back down to the Valley where his spirits descend along with the elevation. The verdure and wonder of the high Sierras is starkly contrasted to the landscape and climate of the Valley as he opens and closes this narrative. The last entry of his travels down the mountain laments:

³\$ WHUULEO\ KRW GXVW\ VXQEXUQH GGD\ DQG DV QR

the flock could find nothing to eat save thorny twigs and chaparral, we made a long drive, and before sundown reached the home ranch on the yellow San - RDTXLQ SODLQ´

These raw depictions of the Valley notably counter the springtime images which opened this chapter, taken from his 1894 text *The Mountains of California*. These differences highlight the seasonal diversity of California, provoking in and of itself, but it also indicates the likelihood that Muir was indeed structuring his tale on a plot line which called for a spiritual descent to match his drop in altitude. This inverting of the jeremiad structure successfully highlights the corruption VR RIWHQ IRXQG LQ<sup>3</sup> FLYLOLJH also urged for the preservation of these unaltered mountain peaks as sacred places where one and all can find peace that is so elusive in the ever-growing American metropolis.

In his book *The Yosemite*, printed just one year after *My First Summer in the Sierra*, his allegorical intentions were made overtly clear when he labeled his developer

IRHV<sup>3</sup> WHP SOH GHVWUR\HUV ' SURFODLPLQJ LQ D VDWL  
 GDP IRU ZDWHU WDQNV and W KH S, H R S O H H f t e m p l e D A W K H G U D  
 EHHQ FRQVHFUDWHG E \ 6 2 W A H K H D U W R P D Q

genius, Muir used both to promote the preservation of a waning wilderness that offered salvation to its visitors. His message of radical conversion can be seen in the following

SDVVDJHV ZLWK LWDOLFV DGGHG<sup>3</sup>:H V D Z DQRWKHU SI

Somehow most of these travelers seem to care but little for the glorious objects about them, though enough to spend time and money and endure long rides to see the famous valley. And when they are fairly within the mighty walls of the temple and hear the psalms of the falls, they will forget themselves and become devout. Blessed, indeed, should be every pilgrim in these mountains! (*My First Summer* 71-72). And also:

<sup>3</sup>:H DUH QRZ LQ WKH PRXQWDLQV DQG WKH\ DUH LQ XV

nerve quiver, filling every pore and cell of us. Our flesh-and-bone tabernacle seems transparent as glass to the beauty about us, as if truly an inseparable part of it, thrilling with the air and trees, streams, and rocks, in the waves of the sun<sup>2</sup> a part of all nature, neither old nor young, sick nor well, but immortal. . . How glorious a conversion, so complete and wholesome! (*lit* (10)). Through both Christian allusion and a structure denoting a pilgrimage, Muir converted many minds from viewing nature as an adversary to that of a symbiotic partner likewise made by God. Yet for those whom such a persuasive technique could not reach, Muir coupled it with a multi-dimensional portrayal

RI QDWXUH¶V EHXW\ ZKLFK LQVLVWHG RQ EHLQJ DVVL

Claiming the sublime beauty of the Sierras as a thing beyond description, and then attempting to describe it, is an example of the depth and detail assigned to the Yosemite region, the reader will always assume that, in even with the inclusion of photographs, which is a brilliant and now standard method of environmental protest, there is a lapse in the dimensionally exaggerated quality of the scientific exactness and implied honesty of a personal journal inform the reader that what he describes is really as he says it is, only more grand. In word, photographs, and sketches, Muir submits the beauty of this natural place to the artistically savvy and aesthetically appreciative audience of the early twentieth century. Facing the threat of seeing such a canvas submerged in water and ruined forever, the artistic and moral indignation of such an audience would surely join him in protest.

Muir was well aware of the challenge facing him as a writer <sup>2</sup> how to describe the indescribable through a limiting medium. There was no doubt a sense of anxiety and words will ever describe the exquisite beauty and charm of this mountain park <sup>2</sup> task, he did his best to paint the vast landscapes with color, movement, light, dimension, and texture. This occurs throughout the text, but a couple of selected excerpts do well to Yosemite Valley, without a doubt the most famous and inspiring view of the region. He <sup>3</sup> One of the most beautiful views displayed, with its sublime domes

and canyons, dark upsweeping forests, and glorious array of white peaks deep in the sky, every feature glowing, radiating beauty that pours into our flesh and bones like heat rays from fire. Sunshine over all; no breath of wind to stir the brooding calm. Never before had I seen so glorious a landscape, so boundless an affluence of sublime mountain

E H D X W \ '            7 K R X J K   W K H   U H D G H U   L V   D Z D U H   W K D W   W K L

travels to other exotic and geologically dramatic places on Earth, to hear this man claim the Yosemite region as the most beautiful place he had ever seen certainly carried weight with them as they re-created the images in their mind.

In stark and painful contrast to this beauty are images of destruction wrought by the economic endeavors of the white American. This is a case in which great detail strikes fear and disgust into the hearts of the readers rather than awe and reverence, prompting them to consider the myopic and ruinous effects of the California Dream.

: K D W ¶ V   P R U H   0 X L U   F R Q W U D V W V   W K L V   G H Y D V W D W L R Q   F

the gentle ways of the Native Americans, doubly convicting his often bigoted readers as the ones who have a subordinate heathen culture. He notes,

Indians walk softly and hurt the landscape hardly more than the

E L U G V   D Q G   V T X L U U H O V            > « @   + R Z   G L I I H U H Q V

white man, especially on the lower gold region <sup>2</sup> roads blasted in the solid rock, wild streams dammed and tamed and turned out of their channels and led along the sides of canyons and valleys to work in mines like slaves. Crossing from ridge to ridge, high in the air, on long straddling trestles as if flowing on stilts, or down and up across valleys and hills, imprisoned in iron pipes to strike and

ZDVK DZD\ KLOOV DQG PLOHV RI WKH VNLQ RI W

riddling, stripping every gold gully and flat. These are the white

PDQ¶V PDUNV PDGH LQ D IHZ IHYHULVK \HDUV

fields, villages, scattered hundreds of miles along the flank of the

Range. Long will it be ere these marks are effaced. (37)

Sadly, Muir did not hold an equally egalitarian perspective of Native Americans as he did of the natural world. He was clearly convicted by his own ambivalence toward

WKHP DQG ZKDW KH FRQVLGHUHG D VWDUN FRQWUDVW

WKHLU <sup>3</sup>SXUH´ 6LHUUDQ HQYLURQPHQW 7KRXJK KL

by his final wishes of brotherhood, other depictions of Native Americans in the text are far from a paradigm of social justice one would expect from such a defender of all things

organic \$IWHU KH ZDV <sup>3</sup>EHVLHJHG´ DORQJ WKH WUDLO E\ D

WR VHH WKHP JR KH UGIVRFMWHOVKDK<sup>3</sup>GWVSHHUPDWWDUH

fellow beings, however degraded. To prefer the society of squirrels and woodchucks to that of our own species must surely be unnatural. So with a fresh breeze and a hill or mountain between us I must wish them Godspeed and try to pray and sing with Burns,

<sup>3</sup>,W¶V FRPLQJ \HW IRU D¶ WKDW WKDW PDQ WR PDQ W

(153).

7KH IROORZLQJ SDVVDJH LV WDNHQ IURP WKH FKDS

other things, it reflects that even an authentic encounter with this majestic place does not guarantee to appeal to the aesthetics of all people:

It seems strange that visitors to Yosemite should be so little

influenced by its novel grandeur, as if their eyes were bandaged



and their ears stopped. Most of those I saw yesterday were looking down as if wholly unconscious of anything going on about them, while the sublime rocks were trembling with the tones of the mighty congregation of waters gathered from all the mountains round about, making music that might draw angels out of heaven. Yet respectable-looking, even wise-looking people were fixing bits of worms on bent pieces of wire to catch trout. Sport they called it. Should church-goers try to pass the time fishing in baptismal fonts while dull sermons were being preached, the so-called sport might not be so bad; but to play in the Yosemite temple, seeking pleasure in the pain of fishes struggling for their lives, while God is preaching his sublimest water and stone sermons! (132)

In this case, he is also imploring the reader not to be oblivious to the power of nature or presence of true beauty, but acknowledge its moral and aesthetic value. He persuasively makes them self-conscious, not wanting to be like the dolts who miss the grand spectacle for the sake of baiting a hook. This first-hand disregard for the inspirational potential of the place by some visitors also reflect that adding photographs and sketches to the text

GRHVQ ¶ W JXDUDQWHH WKH FORNWHUR and reader. H[SHULHQV  
/LNHZLVH DQ LPDJH ZLOO QRW ZLWK DQ\ FHUWDLQW\ F

as seen in nature. Yet for some, photography in particular helps translate this terrifyingly beautiful and majestic landscape so as to ensure its preservation. He takes the reader a long way on the journey with his words, and tries to lead them to the summit with images.

The 1911 publication of *My First Summer in the Sierra* was sprinkled with twelve photographs by Herbert W. Gleason and twenty-one sketches by John Muir taken from the original journal. Photos are highly persuasive in a way that words cannot be, in a

VHQVH EHRPLQJ VBRPWRKHWKLF HQWRHDQWV WKDW FOLQJ  
 enough inasmuch as they situate the work in its world and thus determine the whole

PHDQLQJIXOQHVV WKDW LW RULJLQDOO\ SRVVHVHVG´ \*

\*OHDVRQ¶V FDUHHU ZDV KLV ZRUN IRU WKH 1DWLRQDO

early national parks and wilderness areas that were under consideration for national park status (Handling). Clearly possessing an eye for the sublime, his photos had been used for the very purpose of pleading the case for nature in other venues. Muir knew his work to possess aesthetic quality, and Gleason likewise knew the preservationist intentions of

OXLU DV KH FDSWXUHG WKH UHJLRQV UHSUHVHQQWHG LG

was the American public rather than Congress, but both parties were deciding the same

issues. This technical ad GLWLRQ DV PFK DV DQ\ RWKHU SRLQWV

of his text in a persuasive framework.

\$ORQJ ZLWK WKHVH SKRWRJUDSKV OXLU¶V VNHWFK

places in the journey, as well as a personal connection and credibility to the storyteller. In

a passage taken from his time in Yosemite Valley, Muir acknowledges that, like his

words, his sketches fall far short of capturing what his eyes see. At the same time his

hints that he was considering an audience for his work establishes accountability for an

accurate representation of the Valley and a general validity to his work.

The use of imagery appealed to the cultured and opinionated masses of

PRGHUQLW¶V 3URJUHVVLYH HUD LQ D ZD\ WKDW QR RW

Combining the waning influences of Romantic natural depictions with the edges of scientific knowledge, public policy, and a modern form of art, Muir successfully mediated the cultural gap between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Piling device upon device in an attempt to re- F U H D W H W K H V X E O L P H O X L U F R Q F H G H appreciate any one feature is beaten down by the overwhelming influence of all the R W K H U V ´

O X L U ¶ V W K L U G V L J Q L I L F D Q W W H F K Q L T X H Z D V W D N L popularity and respect in order to alienate anyone who disagreed with his land ethic. In so doing, he established a land ethic dichotomy of right and wrong, forcing a fact-dependent D Q G S R O L W L F D O O \ S U R J U H V V L Y H V R F L H W \ W H P L E H L W K H U G H V W U R \ H U V ´ 7 K H U H L V Q R W K L Q J L Q W K H W H [ W L W V H C V X J J H V W L R Q R I O X L U ¶ V I X W X U H I D P H Z K L F K S D Q G H K L V Z D V D K R X V H K R O G Q D P H D Q G K H Z D V ¶ Z D U H R I W K H resulting added trust with, the public. In fact, the Houghton Mifflin publication of the full text was postponed by about a year to allow for Atlantic Monthly to first print it in a series of installments, a strategy acknowledged in personal letters between Muir and his publisher as an even greater opportunity for its cultural saturation ( John Muir Correspondence, ´June 9, 1910). Thus the timing of its publication was a calculated technique of sorts on the macroscopic level as he sought environmental justice for the Sierras and nature in general. His popularity and respect as an expert had never been higher, and the release of such a text would never possess more potential sway than S U H F L V H O \ Z K H Q L W Z D V S X E O L V K H G \$ W o f W K H P R P H Q W

and the national philosophy of preservation began to take shape in both Washington and the minds of its citizens, *My First Summer in the Sierras* did all it could to argue his case.

As it has been established, Muir had a captive audience in 1911. The indisputable tone of scientific expertise through a taxonomic diction was an adjunct to his fame and influence, establishing his argument as informed and all others as sophomoric. In an almost off the cuff manner, he demonstrates his depth of knowledge of the flora in the 6 L H U U D V Q R W L Q J <sup>3</sup> 6 D z y. M o s t o f t h e f e r n s a n d t h e c o m m o n P t e r i s a q u i n a w o o d w a r d i a a s p i d i u m w o o d s i a a l o n g t h e s t r e a m b a n k s a n d t h e c o m m o n P t e r i s a q u i n a o n s a n d y f l a t s . T h i s l a s t , h o w e v e r c o m m o n , i s h e r e m a k i n g s h o w s o f s t r o n g , e x u b e r a n t , a b o u n d i n g b e a u t y t o V H W W K H E R W D Q L V W Z L O G Z L W K D G P L U D W L R Q ' 7 K F and species assignments, they are impressed by the fact that such things appear as common knowledge to Muir. Their appreciation of the diversity and beauty of the Sierras correlates with his as they assume his admiration for the setting.

This concept of being a rightful and humble expert plays itself out in terms of his disdain for the insensitive pilgrims previously described, analogous to his political battles with the utilitarian perspectives of Gifford Pinchot, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. Certainly there are readers who would be just as out of place in Yosemite as these tourists, and are perhaps on a differentiated journey with the text. However, such passages as this one invite the reader to align with the intimacy and union with which Muir functions in nature, explicitly revealing a falseness to the perspective that man and nature must be adversaries, or hierarchically controlled and subservient to humanity. Likewise, he works the Progressive bent in the minds of the populace, declaring in his

supplementary texts that the Sierras are firstly a park IRU \$PHULFD¶V SHRSOH UD another natural resource to be plundered by the mining, logging, and transportation profiteers of the Gilded Age. He shapes a negative opinion of people who interact with nature on such dislocated and calculating terms, requiring each reader to consider his attitude toward the natural world. By not excluding himself and his destructive sheep run of 1869 from this censure, he further aligns himself with the reader as a fellow pilgrim seeking transformation and establishes the trust required to win them over.

Clearly, by the time he was an older statesman of the forest, he was revered as the preeminent figure in environmental affairs. His writings and peripheral work all point to activism rather than art, making his intentions FOH DU \$V QRWHG LQ 'HYDOO D Deep Ecology 3D\QH REVHUYHV WKDW ³PRGHUQ DGYRFDWHV R forced to use the language of resource economists in making the case for wilderness protection. So was Muir, but despite this impediment he never fell into the trap of confining his argument to a cost- EHQHILW DQDO\VLV RI ZOOV SHUQHVV S did he strictly spiritualize nature, but rather wrote moving descriptive narratives combining the two rationales. Politically immersed, skilled in rhetoric, and perceptive to the pulse of the American mind, Muir placed this lovely narrative in the hands of the nation as a radical and subversive form of protest. He addressed the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual tendencies of turn of the century America in a way that no one had before, changing policy and public perceptions of his era and establishing a legacy of protest that has reached far beyond his last words.

7KH 5HFHSWLRQ DQG (IIHFWV RI 0XLU¶V :ULWLQJ

In considering the effectiveness with which Muir accomplished his intended goals, I examine the degree to which the California Dream itself was altered in the also that of natural, or wild, places everywhere. Again, this effect was driven by his three main intentions: alter the relationship with nature from adversarial to friendly by depicting it as sacred, reveal its inspirational potential and unique beauty for the sake of preservation, and recruit advocates in the defense of natural places. These intentions have been well established, as have his techniques in pursuing them. What remains is the need to consider the level of success accomplished through this act of literary protest. Did he reshape the way America thought of California, thus attaining a greater environmental justice? This question is answered in three parts: the effects and reception of *My First*

*Summer in the Sierra* in the 19th century and California and the location of wilderness in the national psyche.

There is a limited amount of data recording the reception of the text, but enough biographical and publishing records to make some very strong assertions concerning the range of audience he reached. He had long since established a devout and informed

eighteen-seventies. Most of these were published in the *Overland Monthly* of San Francisco, but a number appeared in *My First Summer in the Sierra* was his fourth full-length book,

all of which had a clear slant toward the celebration of geographic diversity and preservation. By this time in his respected career, Muir certainly had a captive audience that was keenly aware of his agenda.

Information that reflects the reception of the limited. Looking back, the scholar is left mostly with conjecture and small pieces of history that must be liberally interpolated. One provocative theory regarding the ways in which his work was received by readers is explored by Leigh Zisler in her book *John Muir: A Biography* (1997). She argues that the reviews and advertisements of the day, clearly reflecting name recognition and a label of greatness to his previous book which laid out his preservationist philosophy for all to adhere. It also appears that his bucolic text offered readers an alternative to the industrial revolution. His goal was to bring people to the Sierras, or perhaps bring the Sierras to the people, by means of literature and for the purpose of persuasion. Nearly a century later, in the introduction to *The Sierra Club* (1908), the club's first president, David P. Brainerd, wrote that Muir's work was "the most important book of the century." This is a testament to the impact of Muir's work on the American psyche and the preservationist movement. The club's early focus on the Sierra Nevada mountains was a direct result of Muir's influence. The club's first president, David P. Brainerd, wrote that Muir's work was "the most important book of the century." This is a testament to the impact of Muir's work on the American psyche and the preservationist movement. The club's early focus on the Sierra Nevada mountains was a direct result of Muir's influence.

record of *My First Summer in the Sierra* seem to suggest that it effectively captured the imagination of the reader, thus planting a sequoia-sized seed of love for Yosemite in the hearts of the readers.

The critics and reviewers of the text seem to support its beauty and relevance, as the text to persuade without the peripheral impediments of authorial obscurity or harsh reviews. As advertised in the *New York Times* in June of 1911, the brief description of the classic, now publishes his diary of the summer of 18

the *New York Times* again gave the book a charming review, warming the reading

charged with the awe that dwells in mountain silences

December of 1911, the *New York Times* advertised the text for sale, this time quoting a

mountain spirit.

It is very hard to disprove that *My First Summer in the Sierra* was placed firmly in the minds of the masses as another philosophical inquiry into the place of wilderness in the American mind. In discussing early 20<sup>th</sup> century American culture, the renowned



HQYLURQPHQWDO KLVWRULDQ 5RGHULFN 1DVK QRWHV  
 IRU ZLOGHUQHVV > « @ E\ WKH HDUO\ WZHQLHWK FHQW  
 QDWLRQDQ) For which Muir was the eminent icon. The centrality of nature as a  
 public concern was certainly a general victory for Muir, one he would not trade for any  
 single environmental cause. Yet, saving Hetch Hetchy Valley may have come close.  
 However, the rhetoric developed in the debate over this ultimately doomed valley may  
 have been the catalyst for a greater public self- FRQVFLRXVQHVV DERXW \$PHUL  
 It was the turning of the tide which, though begun in defeat, ultimately developed into a  
 tangible change. William Everson describes this historical moment as the point at which  
 ³WKH LPSOLFLW UHOLJLRXV DWWLWXGHV RI WKH SHRSO  
 of reflex America violated its conscience, dammed the Hetch Hetchy, opted for the norms  
 of the past rather than those of the future, a blow that sent Muir to his grave, nevertheless  
 WKH FRUQHU ZDV LQ IDFW WXUQH ,Q WKLV WXUQLQJ  
 (53). Paradoxically, Hetch Hetchy was lost, but a new land ethic based in preservation  
 and ecological justice was gained.

OXLU¶V PHVVDJH FRQWLQXH WR LQIOXHQFH \$PHUL  
 thousands of copies annually through publishers like the Sierra Club. He is also widely  
 anthologized in middle school through university-level textbooks. Reading a Muir text  
 today carries with it all of the associations it did in 1911, as well as the legacy of his  
 efforts which have extended now nearly a century after his death. This is a significant  
 point in terms of reception. The 21<sup>st</sup> century reader lives in the midst of an  
 environmentally aware society, by and large instigated by the life and legacy of Muir.  
 While his contemporary readers and the many generations throughout the twentieth

century were still developing a new land ethic that leaned more towards preservationist

WKDQ XWLOLWDULDQ SULQFLSOHV WRGD\¶V VRFLHW\ L

ethic that continues to advance as environmental awareness grows. Basic lifestyle

concepts such as recycling, carpooling, energy conservation, vehicle emissions standards,

and the obsolescence of aerosol products containing chlorofluorocarbons would be

foreign to American culture a century ago. In light of this generally increased

consciousness toward environmental responsibility, the text of *My First Summer in the*

Sierra ZRXOG EH D YHU\ GLIIHUHQW H[SHULHQFH IRU WRGD

1RW RQO\ DUH 0XLU¶V SKLORVRSKLHV FHQWUDO WF

movement since his death, but the strategies of mainstream environmentalism have also

aligned with his. Kevin Starr places Muir in an historical context as an ageless interpreter

RI WKH PRXQWDLQV <sup>3</sup>\$W WKH WXUQ RI WKH FHQWXU\ \$I

as a prophet and propagandist, and after his death they continued to need him as a

UHPLQGHU RI ZKDW VRUW RI UHODWLRQVKLS WR WKH 6

7KH IROORZLQJ LV WKH FKURQRORJLFDO OHJDF\ RI

significant voices and events that were specifically inspired by his life and writings and

have continued his activism by constructing the contemporary environmental ethic.

Indeed, it was not simply a philosophical battle Muir was fighting, but a battle of

constructing a nature-conscious civilization requiring a fundamental shift in the way

KXPDLW\ HQFRXQWHUHG LW <sup>3</sup>:KLOH WKH OHJDF\ RI WH

measured surely by its legislative achievements, so too will it surely be judged by its

ability to persuade average Americans to back up their words with action and to change

WKHLU YRWLQJ SDWWHUQV EX\LQJ KDELWV DQG OLIHV

WR WKH SUDFWLFWH RI HQYLURQPHQWDO DFWLYLVP E\ 'H  
influence.

During the ten years following his death in 1914, books, articles, and journals of  
0XLU¶V ZHUH IUHTXHQWO\ SXEOLVKHG <HW DFFRUGLQJ  
that were established in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (such as the Sierra Club) avoided overt  
political involvement throughout the first half of the century, with the exception of  
0XLU¶V IDLOHG HIIRUW WR VDYH WKH +HWFK +HWFK\ 9D  
being dammed (45). The literature did its job, but the movement lacked a dynamic leader  
XQWLO 'DYL G %fURZHU to top the XLFH of Echo Park in Utah, which  
OHG LQWR WKH 3\*ROGHQ \$JH'RI SUHVHUYDWLRQ DFWLY  
HQYLURQPHQWDO FRQIOLFWV LQYROYHG WKH SKLORVR  
outdoorsmen<sup>2</sup> hunters, trappers, fishermen, hikers, bikers, and campers<sup>2</sup> as well as  
those of loggers, miners, and ranchers, who would profit financially from a Pinchot-  
formulated multiple- XVH SROLF\ UHFRQFLOLQJ SUHVHUYDWLRQ R  
ecological values with carefully managed DQG FRQWUROOHG H[SORLWDWLR  
(Miller 6). In 1938 the John Muir Trail was completed, forever associating his life and  
SKLORVRSK\ ZLWK WKH 6LHUUDV :RRG 7KDW VDPH \HD  
joined the campaign for the protection of the Giant Sequoias of Redwood Mountain  
\*URYH LQ .LQJV &DQ\RQ \$QVHO \$GDPV SXEOLVKHG KLV  
0XLU 7UDLO' LQ H[SDQGLQJ 0XLU¶V LQIOXHQFH LQV  
(Wood). American forester Aldo Leopold VWDUWHG ZULWLQJ LQ WKH ¶V  
his work as a benchmark for modern nature writing. He possessed preservationist values  
PXFK OLNH 0XLU DQG WHUPH EDµHIF R SIFRWF DROU FORLQ M FILLQ D

PDQLIROG IRUPV ´ 7R W K H U A L Y H O W M P H Q W I D O S W \ D Q  
 movement, Leopold added hard-edged scientific and ethical principles rooted in ecology.

+LV VLP SOH \HW ZLVH µODQG HWKLF ¶ FRXOG Y-HU\ ZHO  
 ³D WKLQJ LV ULJK W ZKHQ W, WHQG V W R S U  
 FRPPXQLW\ ,W LV ZURQJ ZKHQ LW WHQGV RWKHUZLVH ´

In 1940, Kings Canyon National Park was established, dropping the original title, "John Muir-Kings Canyon National Park" contained in the 1939 bill and incorporating much of the area that Muir had originally proposed for the park decades earlier. Linnie Marsh Wolfe published *Son of the Wilderness* in 1945, a Pulitzer-prize winning biography of Muir that once again brought his eccentric and eco-centric views into the public eye and celebrated a life and philosophy that continued to shape a nation. Three years later Ansel Adams published *Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada*, which contains Adams' photographs and selections from the works of John Muir, and a brief biography of John Muir by the book's editor, Charlotte E. Mauk (Wood). Within the artistic and literary world, Muir never went long without some form of prestigious recognition or being the direct source of inspiration.

The post-WWII era is a dead zone of environmental advocacy, perhaps due to the industrializing of the nation at break-neck speed. A couple of events, however, continued the discussion of a preservationist ethic. In 1955 the Sierra Club made the film *Two Yosemite*, which compares the damming of Hetch Hetchy to plans to dam Dinosaur National Monument. A year later the John Muir Memorial Association was organized in Martinez, California, its purposes being "to perpetuate the memory of John Muir and his contributions to mankind, to apply his principles to the conservation of our natural

resources, to cause his home in Martinez to become a public shrine and to educate school children and adults in the love of nature, [and] to preserve and protect the forests, streams, and mountains of America" (Wood). This invited the philosophies of Muir into the public education system and furthered their advancement into the symbolic national understanding and formation of a wilderness ethic.

Perhaps it is this almost complete lack of representation for two decades that

UHTXLUHG VXFk DQ LQWHQVH UHVSQRQVH IURP WKH

waste, pesticides, and ozone depletion caused a growing ambivalence toward technology.

However, according to Andrew Glenn Kirk, the majority of Americans during this time

SHULRG <sup>3</sup>UHPDLQH G HGLFDWHG WR WKH LGHDO RI SUR

WHFKQRORJ\` 7KLV SKLORVRSKLFDO FKDVP LQ WKH

advocacy of nature preservation and a utilitarian view of natural resources created an

ever-growing need for reconciliation between the two sides. If a balance could not be

struck, nature was sure to be the victim and the environmental movement would be in an

irrev HUVLEOH FULVLV \$V .LUN FKDUDFWHULJHG WKH ¶

[conservation vs. preservation] . . . tended to obscure more than it illuminated. The

majority of people who dedicated themselves to the protection of the nonhuman world fit

neit KHU WKH VWULFW XWLOLWDULDQLVP RI 3LQFKRW QRU

+D\ JRHV HYHQ IXUWKHU LQ GLVWLQJXLVKLQJ WKH DFW

OXLU VXJJHVWLQJ WKDW <sup>3</sup>>W@KH PHPEHUVKdfSe RI WKH

late 1960s and early 1970s . . . had virtually no familiarity with Muir and Thoreau, and

hence cannot be said to be the lineal heirs to the traditions of these men. . . . [T]hey have

been discovered post factoby people seeking a theory for a scientifically inspired

PRYHPHQW ERUQ ODUJHO\ LQ D VRFLDO WKHRU\ YDFXXF  
 , GLVDJUHH ZLWK WKLW DQDO\VLV DUJXLQJ WKDW

pervasive part of the American environmental ethic by this time, explicitly shaping the thoughts and actions of a rejuvenated movement. Though Hay and others argue that

WRGD\¶V OLQHDJH VWDUWV ZLWKSied Spring 1962 Dev RQ¶V LQ

foundation laid by Muir at the turn of the century stands as the inspiration, however long

dorm DQW RI D QHZO\ NLQGOHG DGYRDFD\ RI QDWXUH & D

benchmark text of the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s, but she stands

on the shoulders of an earlier naturalist sounding a similar alarm. Another significant

event of WKH VL[WLHV WKD WreX Jull 1964 was the passage of HU

the U.S. Wilderness Act in which the John Muir Wilderness Area was established as one

of fifty-four wilderness areas (Wood).

This same generation established Earth Day in 1970 DQG <sup>3</sup>LQ WKH JHQHUDV has passed since the first Earth Day in 1970, environmentalism has become woven into

WKH IDEULF RI \$PHULFDQ OLIH´ \*XEHU ,W LV QRZ F

birthday, April 21, which is only fitting since he is WKH IDWKHU DQG VRXUFH RI

SUHVHUYDWLRQLVW HIIRUWV <sup>3</sup>6LQFH VXUYH\V KDY

concern for a growing list of environmental problems, including air and water pollution,

nuclear power, energy conservation, deforestation, and urban sprawl. Public opinion polls

show that the environmental movement has likewise earned the sympathetic support of a

large majority of Americans, many of whom claim the label environmentalists their

RZQ´ \*XEHU 6LQFH WKH QDWKHV W Keres Groups such as the Sierra Club have LQ

become significant players in the political election process through donations to

SDUWLFXODU FDQGLGDWHV 'XIII\ 0XLU¶V OHJDF\ WR  
 LQ WKH V DV VHHQ on the environmental group ZKHQ 1990s. The last one-  
 WKLUG RI FRQJUHVVLRQDO UDFHV DV ZHOO DV LQ PDQ\

study conducted by Robert Lowry estimates that among the largest national environmental groups, each was spending an average of \$17 million a year on lobbying and related activities [by] the early 1990s (Duffy 48).

Muir was also changing the way other nations viewed wilderness. In his last year of life, Muir influenced Ryozo Azuma to become a conservationist and mountaineer,

FRQVLGHUHG WRGD\ DV 37KH -RKQ 0XLU RI -DSDQ´ :RRQ  
 founded the John Muir Trust in 1983, an organization dedicated to the conservation of

ZLOG ODQG 7KH -RKQ 0XLU 7UXVW PDGH LWV ILUVW SX  
 acres at Li and Coire Dhorrcail in Knoydart, on the wild shores of Loch Hourn, including

WKH VXPPLW RI /DGKDU %KHLQQ Fife. Muir UHV´ :RRG  
 6HFUHWDU\ 'RQ +RGHO SURSRVHG WHDULQJ GRZQ 2¶6KH  
 Hetch\ WR LWV SULVWLQH VWDWH LQ DQ KLVWRULF U

(Wood). And in the spirit of Ansel Adams, who revered Muir as the literary equivalent to his photographic lens, Galen Rowell published *The Yosemite* in 1989, combining his photographs and Muir's words from his text *The Yosemite* (Wood).

The 1990s was a watershed decade for land preservation in Scotland through the John Muir Trust, purchasing approximately 31,000 acres of land to be forever protected (Wood). Not only that, but in 1995 Dunbar's John Muir Association established the John Muir Centre as Scotland's leading institute for environmental education and sustainability

(Wood). The Sierra Club did its part in educating the next generation of Americans by publishing the John Muir Study Guide, a curriculum targeted at k-12 learning (Wood).

ORUH UHFHQWO\ IRUPHU 3UHVLGKQW & QLQWRQ SUP  
 National Monument, believed by many at the time to have effectively completed John Muir's dream of preserving all the Giant Sequoia Groves between the Kings River to the Kern River of the southern Sierra. National Monuments can be created by the President without Congressional approval, as specified by the Antiquities Act of 1906. John Muir was instrumental in urging President Theodore Roosevelt nearly a century ago to protect \$PHULFD V WUHDVXUHV XQGHU WKLV DFW :RRG 0XLU  
 honored in 2004 with his likeness placed on the California State quarter, becoming the defining symbol of a state rich in history and culture. On nearly any given day, the UHVLGXDO HIIHFWV RI 0XLU¶V UHOHQWOHVV GeHIHQVH R FXUUHQW LVVXHV RI WKH HQYLURQPHQW VKDSLQJ KXP philosophy, activism, literature, and legislation. Truly, his legacy continues to grow.

0XLU HVWDEOLVKHG OHJDO SUHFHGHQW IRU QHDUO a lens through which all land development and cultural norms have to be viewed and considered. The environment is now even a central election topic of which candidates must often stake a strong preservationist claim if they plan on being elected. His legacy DOVR VWUHWFKHV EH\RQG VRFLDO DQG OHJDO LQIOXHG elements of his natural theology (particularly those consonant with an ecological paradigm) have influenced generations of nature writers and, through them, the shape of env LURQPHQWDO WKLQNLQJ WRGD\ 7DOOPDGJH +LV which he befriends the reader is also a fairly standardized technique that has been carried



on in the works of those who have followed. Art has always been a tool for celebrating life or influencing a change in the way it is viewed, and Muir joins a short list of names such as Thoreau and Emerson which have shaped the stylistic and philosophical landscape of American environmental rhetoric.

In spite of the current elevated awareness of environmental concerns in general, biotic makeup continue to be mythologized as endlessly and uniformly perfect.

Therefore, a text such as *My First Summer in the Sierra* still holds value today for the

modern reader is not aware of the original historical and cultural context of this text, thus is unbiased by the environmental battles that surrounded it in 1911. The biases held by

come a long way since the turn of the century. As Gadamer explains, it is the

induce us to take up a moral or religious stance towards it, and presents it solely by itself

readers that encounter his text outside of the context in which it was originally presented.

Thus, the modern reader is only moved by the beauty of the text, which in the case of *My First Summer in the Sierra* still points him/her towards a symbiotic and spiritually

inspiration of the art, and the art outside of the context in which it was created, requires the artist to infuse the art with universal constructs that will point the participant in the intended direction regardless of spatial, temporal, or cultural displacement. This is

particularly necessary when the art in question is intended to influence its audience in a particular manner. This is what it still does <sup>2</sup> provokes an assignment of spiritual agency and influence from the modern reader.

It is not reasonable to suggest that the current environmental ethic was directly transplanted from the soul of John Muir, but it is fair to interpret his philosophies as

<sup>3</sup> UHWROG´ DQG EYLQW XSW on the early 20th century. Oral stories and songs are passed from one generation to the next, some of the content is altered about the fringes, but the body

RI WKH VWRU\ UHPDLQV WKH VDPH 6R WRR GRHV WKH

WRGD\ environmentalist community. In trying to understand the origins of public opinion

RQ HQYLURQPHQWDO LVVXHV \* XEHU FLWHV 9DQ /LHUH

FRQVLGHUDEOH GLVVHQVXV ZLWK UHVSHFW WR ERWK W

(10). This ambiguity is likely attributed to who is doing the research, who is interpreting

it, and what they want the research to say. My sources of evidence for tracing the

LQIOXHGFH RI 0XLU RQ WRGD\ V HQYLURQPHQWDO HWK

and logical correlation. In speaking of John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, and Theodore

Roosevelt, for example, Philip Shabecoff writes in *Earth Rising: American*

*Environmentalism of the 21st Century* WKDW <sup>3</sup> RYHU WLPH PDQ\ LI QRW P

informed and prodded by the environmentalists, came to understand and integrate their

YDOXH V > « @ \$ PHULFDQ HQYLURQPHQWDO QDWLYW was

essentially a child of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Muir, Pinchot, and Roosevelt were

indispensable in its c UHDW-3) RQ here continue to be many creative approaches by

HQYLURQPHQWDO DGYRFDV\ JURXSV WR PRUH DFFXUDW

wilderness in order to better market a healthy perspective of nature. Many of these groups model their efforts after Muir.

2 Q H V X F K J U R X S N Q R Z Q D V W K H % L R G L Y H U V L W \ 3 U  
organizations craft and implement communications and education strategies on issues that promote smart growth, wilderness protection, endangered species, and habitat loss.

, W V J R D O L V W R K H O S L W V S D U W Q H U V G H Y H O R S D F O H I  
H Q Y L U R Q P H Q W D O L V V X H V L Q R U G H U W R G H V L J Q P R U H P  
' X I I \ 7 K H L U G H V L U H L V W R F U H D I V B A S E D O N S X E O L F H G X I  
reaching people through messages that speak to their core values, defined as those deeply

K H O G E H O L H I V W K D W I R U P W K H I R X Q G D W L R Q V R I S H R S O  
R W K H U Z R U G V V R P H D F W L Y L V W W D W K G H H N L E R I X W R Q D W D  
identifying their core values and speaking to them in a meaningful way, and it is my

D V V H U W L R Q W K D W W K H 3 F R P S H O O L Q J D Q G F R Q V L V W H Q V  
E D V H G O D U J H O \ D U R X Q G W K H L G H D V R R O D W I X U H \ V L Q Q  
6 S H D N L Q J W R W K H K H D U W V R I W K H S H R S O H Z D V D O V R O

I R U W K H V D P H S X U S R V H V 7 K L V G H V L U H W R L Q F U H D V H  
P L V V L R Q V W D W H P H Q W R I W K H G L H U H D 8 O X E 3 \$ P H U L F D  
J U D V V U R R W V H Q Y L U R S P R A Q W I D O L B U P I D Q L L D W I L R Q W R 3 ([ S

and protect the wild places of the earth, 2. Practice and promote the responsible use of the  
H D U W K \ V H F R V \ V W H P C A R E O F G E N E R A T I O N S T O P R O T E C T A N D R E S T O R E  
quality of the natural and human environment, and 4. Use all lawful means to carry out

W K H V H R E S T O R E W L Y H V ^

There is historical evidence suggesting that the Sierra Club has held on to the founding principles set forth by John Muir and other co-founders. One such example is found in the actions of David Brower. As president of the Sierra Club from 1952-1969, KH <sup>3</sup> PDLQWDLQHG SXUVXLW RI LWV KLVWRULFDQ DO PLVVL

Dinosaur Monument and Point Reyes, establish North Cascades and Redwoods National Parks, block the construction of two hydroelectric dams in the Grand Canyon, and, most notably, promote the enactment of the Wilderness Act in 1964. The tactics he employed LQ WKHVH HIIRUWV KRZHYHU ZHUH GLVWLQFWO\ PRUH

John Muir (Miller 93). This political emphasis is due to the lesser literary efforts of Brower, the diffusion of a reading public, and a radicalized social era rooted in public protest. Though the approach to activism and change on behalf of the environment has HYROYHG LQWR PRUH RID SROLWLFDO UHDOP WKDQ D

IXOILOOHG +LV OHJDF\ DV LGHQWLYHG: LQ WRGD\ V HC

activists have adopted his philosophies and use political maneuvering to promote them, while the activists in the world of literary environmentalism continue to promote his philosophy through literary techniques established by Muir. By looking at one of his lost FDPDLJQV IRU SUHVHUYDWLRQ SURKLELWLQJ WKH EX

valuable learning experience for the Sierra Club and other preservationists, and served to galvanize public opinion regarding such depredations on the national parks. Perhaps even more important in the long run was the skillful way in which Muir brought spiritual and ethical issues into the debate over environmental reform, and brought the assumptions regarding the anthropocentric view of t KH ZRUOG LQWR TXHVWLRQ´ 3D\QH

simply a debate of science, nor of spirit only, but a complex dialogue happening both in

Washington D.C. and in publishing houses around the world in large part due to John Muir.

Robert Gottlieb notes in his book *Forcing the Spring* that Martin Melosi, president of the Environmental History Association, suggests the contemporary version of environmental history is heavily influenced by the environmental movement of the late 1960s. Environmental historians seem to share the same values of the movement such as an ecocentric world view and a belief in the intrinsic value of nature. This is also the

GLVWLQFW SHUVSHFWLYH RI 0XLU VXJJHVWLQJ D SKLO

those approaches had broadened to begin to integrate urban, public health, and industrial themes as part of an environmental history previously dominated by its focus on wilderness. By the 1990s, issues of race and justice had come to preoccupy both

movement V DQG KLVWRULDQV DOLNH FKDQLQJ WKH YHU\ C

(44). I would again suggest that these broadening terms of environmentalism align with

0XLU V SKLORVRSK\ QR-Wholesome workbooks about the dangers DQWL

of industry on the living conditions of both humanity and wilderness. This version of environmental history that Melosi speaks of tremendously affects the way in which the contemporary perspectives of nature are shaped. In the post-modern industrialized and

ur EDQLJHG ZRUOG D VKLIW LV WDNLQJ SODFH LQ WKH IF

environmental history and its various historical movements within the context of an

HYROYLQJ XUEDQ DQG LQG XVWULDO RUGHU ism\* RWWOLH

KDV EURDGHQHG IURP ZLOGHUQHVV WR JOREDQ FRQFHS

VKLIW IURP 0 X place when referring to environmental issues, but there is very

little difference in the philosophical response to these issues between Muir and his

modern day peers. Just as Muir realized that the salvation of nature rested on the hope

WKDW SHRSOH ZRXOG FKDQJH WKH ZD\ WKH\ WKRXJKW

environmentalists. Before people move into action in defense of a noble idea, they must

DOO EH XQLWHG RQ ZKDW LW LV WKH\ DUH GHIHQGLQJ  
 HQYLURQPHQWDO PRYHPHQW ZLOO KDYH WR IDFH ´ 6KD  
 ZRUOG EXW LQVLGH WKH KHDGV RI WKH \$PHULFDQ SHR

California scholar Jack Hicks explains one of the most significant psychological

FRQVWUXFWV WKDW SUREOHPDWLJHV D IXOO\ UHDOLJHO

still plays its role <sup>2</sup> with the Pacific shoreline as the Western edge, and the massive Sierra

Nevada range rising to the east <sup>2</sup> the physical boundaries that shape the place on the map

KDYH FRPH WR FRQWDLQ D VLQJXODU DQG DOZD\ VHG

monolithic perspective is dangerous. It correlates to the dangers of the good intentioned

but fundamentally destructive cultural assimilationist perspective prevalent in the 1980s,

DV ZHOO DV WKH SDWWHUQV RI JOREDOLJDWLRQ VLQFH  
 KXPdq UDFH´ ZKLOH VLPXOWDQHRXVO\ LPSO\LQJ D GHY

traditions. In terms of California, which is arguably the most socially and

environmentally diverse region in the world, this singularity in associative identity hides

WKH UHDOLWLHV RI WKH GLYHUVH PDVVHV ZKR KDYH OI

This means that not only the diverse beauty of the state and its people often go

unacknowledged, but more frighteningly oppressive trends to the land and its people go

XQVHHQ +LFNV LV ZLVH LQ GHVFULELQJ &DOLIRUQLD¶V

<sup>3</sup> VHG XFWLWLVH the beautiful images that portray it, but it is also this convenient

lack of displayed hardships that comforts the general public. As Muir crossed through

these neighboring regions from valley to peak, he highlighted their distinct uniquenesses from one another. One hundred years later, his voice proves to be as relevant as it ever was, while the socially constructed mainstream identity of a culturally and economically progressive state remains riveted to misleading and dangerously perfect narratives.

Muir has reshaped the way in which modern Americans view their relationship to nature more than any other single entity, ironically using the influences of the archetypal

GUHDP , Q ZULWLQJ WKH LQWURGXFWRORWR 0XLU¶V FR

³ 7KRXVDQGV DQG WKRXVDQGV KHUHDIWHU ZKR JR WR

California will choose to see them through the eyes of John Muir, and they will see more

GHHSO\ EHFDXVH WKH \xi. This is also the first time that the word "Sierra" is used to describe the

California in the pages of *My First Summer in the Sierra*, experiencing its endangered

beauty and fragile diversity. There is a potentially harmful paradox in his preservationist

HIIRUVV WKDW SRUWUD\ & DO LIRUO D V QDWXUDO SODF

the incredible diversity of landscape and climate throughout California, the perpetuated

myth of the state as a land unilaterally beautiful and balanced can override the many

significant environmental concerns of the lesser celebrated regions, keeping them from

surfacing or gaining traction due to the deeply pervasive idealized associations. When

this happens, social and environmental injustices go unchecked. When environmental

issues swell large enough to gain a national audience, the perception may be that it is but

a temporary and isolated blemish on an otherwise perfect landscape.

As cited from *John of the Mountains* ³ 7KH SHRSOH DUH QRZ DURXVH

near and far show that almost every good man and good woman is with us. Therefore be

of good cheer, wa WFK DQG SUD (37) DQGLW JKW

\$PHULFD KDG EHHQ HQOLJKWHQH G UHJDUGLQJ KXPDLV  
 degree that the world would never be the same. He, I believe, was also discerning enough  
 to understand that much of this awakening to the need for such advocacy came from his  
 own writings, his own spirit. In reminiscing upon his good friends Joseph and John  
 LeConte, Muir may have best described his own influence on th H ZRUOG VD\LQJ <sup>3</sup>, Q  
 mind they still stand together, a blessed pair, twin stars of purest light. Their writings  
 brought them world-wide renown, and their names will live, but far more important is the  
 inspiring, uplifting, enlightening influence they exerted on their students and the  
 community, which, spreading from mind to mind, heart to heart, age to age, in ever  
 ZLGHQLQJ FLUFOHV ~~Reminiscences~~ .RQ IRUHYHU'

As Muir descended the mountain and again entered the expansive plain of the  
 Great & HQWUDO 9DOOH\ LQ KH EHJDQ KLV RZQ FRQFH  
 XQGHUVWDQGLQJ RI QDWXUH DQG WKH &DOLIRUQLD 'UH  
 ZLGHQLQJ FLUFOHV' RI HQYLURQPHQWDO DQG VRFLDO  
 finally rupture there seventy years later, but he saw the origins of it when he described  
 the Valley of 1894 to his readers in *The Mountains of California* <sup>3</sup> WKH DWWHQWLRQ F  
 fortune-seekers--not home-seekers--was, in great part, turned away from the mines to the  
 IHUWLOH SODLQV DQG PDQ\ EHJDQ H[SHULPHQWV LQ D  
 7KXV D UDQFK ZDV HVWDEOLVKHG >«@ FHQWHUV RI GH  
 environmental conflict ultimately clashed in the Central Valley, and seventy years after  
 6WHLQEHFN¶V SURWHVW WKLV UHJLRQ VWLOO ILQGV L  
 reality. The well-being of humanity and the land that provides for it hangs in the balance.



7KH ³&DOLIRUQLD 'UHDP´ RU WKH DUWLFXODWLRQ RI \$  
DSSOLHG WR WKH -not only: ³&DOLIRUQLD WUWKH HQGOHV  
expansive place to start over and find prosperity and  
FRQVHFUDWHG ODQG ZLOO DOZD\ UHVXOW LQ IXOILOO

³,Q ILFWLRQ , WKLQN ZH VKRXOG KDYH QR DJHQGD EXW

±Wallace Stegner

³The Grapes of Wrath is arguably the most significant indictment ever made of the myth  
of California as a PrP LVHG /DQG´

±Robert DeMott

³7KLV DLQ¶W QR ODQ¶ RI PLON DQ¶ KRQH\ OLNH WKH SU

±Tom Joad

John Steinbeck successfully counters the myth of California as the perfect place  
for new beginnings and answered dreams, a misperception which instigates and conceals  
the pervasive social injustices of Central Californian farm labor. The pages that follow  
examine 6 WHLQEHN¶V LQ The Grapes of Wrath the technique used Q J  
WRZDUG DFFRPSOLVKLQJ WKRVH Hion and Hion LRV DQG WK  
\$PHULS¶¶V HSWLRQV RI WKH &HQWUDO 9DOOH\ DQG WKH

omnipresent opportunity and answered dreams. Each of these sections reveal a dominating spirit of change and point to the value and success of literature as a shaper of justice in American society.

' H V S L W H 6 The Grapes of Wrath being wildly popular, it is clear from the perspective of a seventy year span that its positive effects on the plight of the California farm worker were not permanent. < H W W K L V G R H V Q R W P H D Q W efforts as a literary activist failed. Like most circumstances in culture, the farm labor issue swings back and forth on the pendulums of justice, social concern, and exposure. From its publication in 1939 to the attack on Pearl Harbor, it established new limits on the spectra of justice, concern, and exposure for the humanitarian crisis centered around California farm labor. Emotions and legislation about the rights of farm laborers subsided as the war in the Pacific surged, but the legacy of this text reaches beyond its era and continues to be the representative icon of an issue that, never having gone away completely, finds itself as a central social concern in the 21st century. Relevant and hauntingly prophetic, this text maintains its validity and power as the pendulum again rocks full-tilt toward conflict. The Grapes of Wrath continues to be read in classrooms around the world for its literary, historical, and contemporary value. As the culture of the Valley shifts atop a seemingly immovable agricultural industry committed to the status quo, this perspective is as relevant and provocative as it has ever been.

Attention shifted to the concerns of the war soon after original publication, which had just as significant an impact on changing the lives of the American farm workers as any literary or social movement. As the military industrial complex exploded, particularly along the Pacific seaboard, so did the opportunity for acquiring well-paying government-

funded factory jobs, which were largely filled by the newest wave of white settlers. While this provided financial stability for thousands of white Americans, it only further indentured the fate of the farm-laboring minorities and migrant workers that replaced them. This, of course, never made the headlines or the best sellers list. While one group of dreamers found an avenue toward the life they were looking for, albeit in a factory rather than a field, another cross section of dreamers found themselves bound from such a fate while ironically immersed in the western soil thought to free them. This page of history reinforced the time-honored American tradition of classism by color while also allowing the salvific California Dream to live on. California literature scholar Jack Hicks addresses the psycho-geographical mythology of renewal and how it is so frequently acted out in California by the global community:

It is a frequent situation, in writing from the far West, that a

FKDUDFWHU¶V SUHVHQW ZLOOEH SOD\HG DJDL

region, or another country: the East Coast, or the South, or Mexico, or China. [ . . . ] It has been a feature of the West Coast that people arrive continually from somewhere else, with high hopes or no hopes, to start over or to play the final card. The edge of the continent looms as a kind of psychospiritual border, so that the dialogue between California and the realms left behind is among several recurring themes. (Hicks 5-6)

Just as Marx and Kolodny assisted in explaining the foundational psychological trajectory of the California Dream, and Turner and Limerick revealed the decomposition of it near the end of the nineteenth century, Steinbeck held that myth up to the 1939

readership as both a failed endeavor and yet a principle worthy of continued pursuit. The entire nation was afflicted with some form of hardship during the Depression years, but the injustices being done to the migrant farm families from the Midwest and South went beyond hardship and landed squarely in the realm of injustice. It was a time for the nation to draw inward and hold on to its core principles of identity, the very thing Steinbeck asserted was being torn away from the proud and colonial-spirited Central Valley migrants. He believed that the American people still held enough enduring idealism and national identity in the spirit of Manifest Destiny that such injustices being done to their fellow citizens would generate a public outcry leading to immediate and decisive change. By revealing the California Dream a V P D Q L S X O D W H G D Q G K R O O R Z K H F desire for such an idea to be true, to stay true, or to once and for all be made true. This literary engagement of a critical mass in the name of social justice stands as one of the most effective exampl HV R I S U R W H V W O L W H U D W X U H L Q \$ P H U L F D reflects to his readers the paradox of what a fulfilling place California could be and what a violent manipulation of its idealized form it is in reality. This juxtaposing of hope and victimization began with the first wave of westering settlers, and seems today to have no end in sight.

6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V L Q The Grapes of Wrath Clezr. A h W e L a D e, his desire was to challenge the California Dream in the imaginations of the nation, revealing it as a false and dangerous promise ironically leading to social injustice. His second intention was a response to the first <sup>2</sup> replace the old Dream with a new one, achieving a philosophical transformation of a state and national identity by invoking a new land ethic based on interdependence rather than profits. Essentially, he deconstructs

the myth and offers an alternative. Louis Owens notes the significance of this momentous

HIIRUW LQ OLWHUDU\ KLVWRU\ an literature an Rul WksH utL U V W W L

not only to demonstrate the fatal delusion implied in the Eden myth in America, but,

more significantly, to replace that myth with a more constructive and attainable dream (. .

.)<sup>2</sup> WR SODFH DQG WR KDQNL QGRZWKHQZKRONHONV ZDEOH ¶

129- ,W LV UHSUHVHQWHG DPRQJ PDQ\ RWKHU PRPHQ

eventual transformation from self-centered passivity to communal action. Finally, it was

his intention to bring swift humanitarian aid to the victims of the myth, and political

change which would reshape an infrastructure of injustice.

Many of the techniques used by Steinbeck are obvious, such as the use of traditional rhetorical strategies like facts and statistics, personal testimony, generalization,

and appeals to logic, ethics, emotion, and authority. However, in the analysis of the

fictional *The Grapes of Wrath* there are a number of more nuanced techniques also at

work on the minds of the reader. Among them, Steinbeck implements character tropes,

stylized plots, and associative imagery and allusion from various genres of literature

familiar to the American reader. The combined effect of these techniques provokes

LQWHQG HG FKDQJHV LQ WKH UH DGHUJKULS ¶ V SHUVSHFW

practices. Ultimately, Steinbeck used whatever technical means necessary to make his

intended message come to life.

The reception and effects of literature on society establishes the degree to which

his intentions were met, and the California Dream challenged. The text catalyzed legal

and philosophical changes that shaped the immediate experience of Central California. It

also received a positive literary reception from the academic and popular communities in

general and was immediately translated into a cinematic success, furthering the

Z L G H V S U H D G V R F L D O V D W X U D W L R Q \$ P H U L F D ¶ V S H U F H S

forever altered. Yet, while many of these effects were immediate and tangible, the long-

term reshaping of personal philosophies and national identities has been an unending

process. I suggest that the novel stands as an unparalleled model of literary protest for the

generations which follow.

6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V , Q W H Q W L R Q V

³ 7 K H \$ P H U L F D Q P \ W K R I W K H ( G H Q ~~changes of the myth~~ Z H V W

H [ S R V H G ´

--Louis Owens

- R K Q 6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V ~~The Grapes of Wrath~~ ~~psychological~~ L Q J

philosophical, and social immediacy, all of which were necessary victories if his purpose

was to be fully realized. That is, he attacked the false myth, the broken land ethic, and the

G H I L F L H Q W O H J D O U L J K W V L Q & D O L I R U Q L D , W Z D V Q ¶ W

clean water to the squatters in the rancid Hoovervilles, or federally funding the expansion

of government managed migrant labor camps. These responses, while necessary, were

temporary. Steinbeck also desired a long-term change in what America sees when it looks

L Q W K H P L U U R U R U O R R N V Z H V W D W G D \ ¶ V H Q G D Q G I D

opportunity just on the other side of the mountains. He sought to engage a national

audience in the exercise of reconsidering the foundational myth of America that is

granted so much power over the ways in which we perceive others. He also asked

America to reevaluate the ways in which democracy was understood and lived out among

L W V F L W L ] H Q V \$ Q G R I F R X U V H K H L Q W H Q G H G R Q D L G L

and misled perceptions of itself through the conduits of humanitarianism and legal

recourse. The clear V W L Q G L F D W R U R I 6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V L Q W H Q W L R

biographical evidence in his memoirs and correspondence bolster this view of his aim.

His artistic instruction of a nation was aimed at their minds and hearts, and he knew that

moving just one or the other would fall short of accomplishing the shifts necessary for

long-term change. Put simply, there was a big problem with a good system, and

Steinbeck sought to enlighten its citizens and motivate them toward a solution.

6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V t e n k i o n c o n a t e s o n t h e o v e r a l l t r a j e c t o r y o f m y  
 argument <sup>2</sup> he sought to deconstruct the myth of the Golden State as a land of new

beginnings that leads to certain prosperity. Debunking the mythical California Dream had

to be a success or failure on a psychological warfront as much as in the fields themselves.

+ R Z H Y H U 6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V D S S U R D F K Z D V Q ¶ W V L P S O \ D S

found in the larger American idea. He believed in the power of hope and the potential in

the land to produce it, yet he argued for an informed and realistic perspective to be held

by citizens at large, rather than a blind and ignorant belief in the long-idealized

philosophy of Manifest Destiny. The American Dream can exist, he would argue, but

does not currently offer itself in the western landscape because of an antiquated paradigm

perpetuated by greedy individuals.

Western scholar Louis Owens describes this paradox of hope and hard realities as

K H V X J J H V W V R Q H R I W K H F H Q W U D O w o r k i n g w a n t e d L R Q V R I Q

\$ P H U L F D <sup>3</sup> W R V H H W K H X J O \ U H D O L W \ E H Q H D W K W K H I D

D Q G Q R X U L V K D E H O N L B A ) S U C A W I K E T I D X S W E Y U H a s e d i n  
 philosophical transformation with an application of practical changes, and suggests that  
 the reader/citizen is ultimately the one responsible for the deprivations of thousands of  
 families due to their mythological idealism. It places the responsibility of change also on  
 the shoulders of the citizen-- the individual-- rather than solely on the government, the  
 large land owners, or the victims who have been demoralized beyond recovery. The  
 industrial agriculturalists consistently rejected any personal accountability, feigning  
 ignorance and lack of choice in the matter as they pass the buck to the inanimate and  
 H O X V L Y H P R Q V W H U N Q R Z Q R Q O \ D V <sup>3</sup> W K H E D Q N ' 7 K H W  
 have no say in the management of the land or the shaping of an agrarian-based culture.  
 Rather, this right is monopolized exclusively by the banks and big owners, characterized  
 as impersonal and monstrous. The owners tell the tenants <sup>2 3</sup> , W ¶ V Q R W X V L W ¶ V W K  
 E D Q N L V Q ¶ W O L N H D P D Q 2 U D Q R Z Q H U Z L W K I L I W \ W K F  
 7 K D W ¶ V W K G r a p e s . T h i s r e l a t e s t o t h e d i s p l a c e d f a r m e r w h i l e e v i c t i n g  
 him, Steinbeck shows the unwillingness of the parties involved to be held accountable for  
 the displacement of an entire region of farmers.

Furthering the process of scapegoating and victimization, Steinbeck has the land  
 owners perpetuate the very myths that degraded the soils of the Midwest. The owners  
 consciously lie to the tenants and send them deeper into an irrevocable poverty as they  
 V X J J H V W <sup>3</sup> : K \ G R Q ¶ W \ R X J R R Q Z H V W W R & D Q L I R U Q L D "  
 F R O G : K \ \ R X F D Q U H D F K R X W D Q \ Z K H U H D Q G S L F N D Q  
 N L Q G R I F U R S W R Z R U R W K # K H G R I Q ¶ W \ R X  
 they plan to monocrop the land until it gives out, the owners reveal the destructive land



ethic that not only uprooted the tenant farm family, but that they will use again to

PDQLSXODWH RWKHU IDPLOLHV LQ WKH (DVW ZKR DOVR

The tenant farmers protest for the sake of their soil,

<sup>3</sup> % XW \RX ¶OO NLOO WKH ODQG ZLWK FRWWRQ ´

.....  
<sup>3</sup>:H NQRZ :H ¶YH JRW WR WDNH FRWWRQ TXLFN EHIF

the land. Lots of families in the east would like to own a p LHFH R44QD.QG ´

By simply showing the actual events and mentality of both the perpetrators and the victims of the Dust Bowl and the drought-stricken Central Valley fields, readers have nowhere to avert their eyes and no choice but to reevaluate their long-held

misperceptions of the California Dream and their role in it. This <sup>3</sup>UHYROWLQJ´ WHQVLI

KLJKOLJKWHG LQ WKH QRYHO ¶V WLWOH WDNHQ IURP W

KLPVHOI ZURWH WR KLV OLWHUDU\ DJHQW (OL]DEHWK 2

and this book is a kind of march <sup>2</sup> because it is in our own revolutionary tradition and

EHFDXVH LQ UHIHUHQFH WR WKLV ERFDWLRQ WIIKIDV D ODUJ

FRQILGHQFH WKDW \$PHULFD ¶V LQQDWH VSLULW RI SUR

myopic dreams of a salvational landscape was immense, noted in a book title that alluded to revolution and negatively contextualized the harvest of the land.

Believing that the reading public would at least be open to the concept that the promises of the California Dream need to be reconsidered, Steinbeck was keenly aware that he would have to provide a new vision in which the people could believe. This new perspective had to be made clear to everyone, be accessible by everyone, and be waiting for them to adopt at the moment they decided to do so. Pointing out the faults of a system has limited power both as literature and as a catalyst of social change. It must be

coupled with viable and clear alternatives, which Steinbeck did with some success. He was tempted by the personally therapeutic qualities of writing a rabble-rousing and myopic attack on the powers that be. In fact, he acted on those desires when he wrote the *SOD*<sup>3</sup>/<sub>¶</sub>\$IIDLUH /HWWXFHEHUJ ´ EXW GHVWUR\HG WKH C of the poison that tainted his ability to craft a meaningful work of art with more objective

repute<sup>9</sup>. Instead, Steinbeck turned to *The Grapes of Wrath* where, as Owens wrote, his amended dream sought to awaken America to the need for a truly just perspective still grounded in individual prosperity w KLOH VHQVLWLYH WR RQH¶V QHLJKE 7KH <sup>3</sup>QHZ VHHLQJ´ 6WHLQEHN SURSRVHG ZRXO an American Eden, with its dangerous flaws, for the ideal of commitment<sup>2</sup> FRPPLWPHQW WR ZKDW 6WHLQEHN FDC inseparable unit man plus h LV HQYLURQPHQW ´ ,Q QHDUO\ HY or novel he wrote, Steinbeck strove to hold the failed myth up to the light of everyday reality and to stress the necessity for commitment to place and to man as a way out of the wasteland defined by writers of the twenties. (John4-5)

The whole of the writing project was derived from his first-hand interactions with the thousands of workers and families that were dispossessed by their own land and people, and this realization that each citizen was as rightful a recipient of a decent life as the next. He was personally invested, and while this certainly enhanced the passion with

ZKLFK KH ZURWH WKH EXUGHQ RI WUXWK ZRUH KHDYLC

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<sup>9</sup> ,Q -DFNVRQ %HQVRQ¶V HVVD\<sup>3</sup>7KH %The Grapes of Wrath´ WKH WKFR&QPSRVV the decision by Steinbeck to destroy the draft because it LQWHQWLRQDOO\ VRXJKW WR <sup>3</sup>FDXVH SDUWLDO XQGHUVWDQGLQJ´ DFFRUGLQJ WR 6WHLQEHN DQG ZRX subject and its victims (69-70).

DUW¶V VDNH EXW WUXO \that perceived his craft as an expression of

RI LWV FUHDWRU ,W ZDV WKLV ³HYHU\PDQ´ SKLORVRSK

more as he was increasingly exposed to and shaped by the shared humanity he found in

the squatter camps throughout the Valley. As noted by Susan Shillinglaw and Kevin

+HDUOH ³ZRUNLQJ SHRSOH DUH WKH VRXO DQG JXWV R

WR µXQGHUVWDQG¶ DQG WR KHOS UHDGHUV VHH FOHDU

WKH ZRUOG ¶ KH Revealed his home to understand men, if you

XQGHUVWDQG HDFK RWKHU \R). Ultimately there is some WR HDFK

benevolence about his aggressive intentions, a deep caring for the individual and

corporate livelihood of America. His fully realized social model believed in the fulfilling

potential of the American idea birthed out of the agrarian principles of Thomas Jefferson.

He offered his part as an artist and a voice of the people in an effort to move the nation

toward that pl DFH D FKRUH WKDW ³SXOOV QR SXQFKHV´ DQG

IRUHZRUG ZDUQLQJ VHQLVLF Wf in Let's go, SOH WR OHW LW DC

There is no doubt that Steinbeck strove to tell the truth about the Central Valley farming experience in order to facilitate a psychological revolution in the reader and to prompt social change. It seems a simple and promising task to tell the truth, yet he was intensely aware of the firestorm that awaited him upon the publication of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Many people of power in the business and agricultural sectors depended on the

SUROLIHUWLRQ RI &DOLIRUQLD¶V (GHQLF P\WK :LWKR

lose millions of dollars per year, not to mention a firm grip on the social structure of the

state which allowed them the rights and lifestyle of aristocrats while the field workers

struggled through an ostracized and subsistent existence. This utter lack of democratic

ideals made it an epic battle worth entering, and Steinbeck intended on winning it with the use of unshakable facts and indisputable realities.

In reference to government camp data collected by Tom Collins, a camp director

D Q G F O R V H D V V R F L D W H R I 6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V K H Q R W H V L C

exact and just the thing that will be used a J D L Q V W P H L I , D P Z W R R Q J ' 6 W H L C

33). The implicit tone of conflict and fear come through these ruminations loud and clear,

revealing that Steinbeck went into this dangerous venture with his eyes wide open to the

unavoidable yet necessary fallout that would ensue. In a 1938 letter to Elizabeth Otis, he

D F N Q R Z O H G J H V W K L V V D \ L Q J ³ Z K H Q , K D Y H I L Q L V K H G

Z L O O E H D I W H U L F a i n L e t t e r ( 1 9 3 8 ) . I n c o n t r o v e r t i b l e e v i d e n c e e x p o s i n g a

long-held ideal as irrevocably fallen is often the only thing that will change a

philosophical perspective as deeply rooted as a national mythology. His driving intent

was to create an accessible document that was founded on real circumstances which

could not be ignored by even the most sheltered or idealistic believers in the invincible

California Dream. His intention was not to shatter the hope of a generation or to devalue

the right to strive for a better life, but to offer these very rights to a cross section of

\$ P H U L F D W K D W Z D V U H F N O H V V O \ G H Q L H G W K H P : L W K R

understanding of its broken system, a new, more egalitarian dream would never have a

chance to flourish.

It is W H P S W L Q J W R U H J D U G 6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V L Q W H Q W L R

wanted to change the minds of Californians and therefore change the lives of its farm

workers. However, this was a national issue in terms of the psychological relocation of

the West that needed to take place. The country, not just the region or state, had to be

awakened to a new land ethic which directly dictated the social realities of its inhabitants in terms of culture and legal rights. Observing the disjunction between families and the land and perception and reality, Dorothea Lange and Paul Taylor concluded their 1939 documentary book *An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion* offering a

Q X P E H U R I S U D F W L F D O V X J J H V W L R Q V 7 K H \ W R R U H F R J

thought and action which would preserve the integrity of the individual while recognizing the value of ideals which consider the larger group:

In order to preserve what we can of a national ideal, new patterns, we believe, must be developed. Associations of tenants and small farmers for joint purchase of machinery, large-scale corporate farms under competent management with the working farmers for stockholders, and cooperative farms, are developments in the right direction. These devices conserve both the economies of machinery and organization and those elements of our national ideal which require security and a full share of the benefits for those who till the soil. (155-56)

Central California was both the ultimate realization of the myth of certain prosperity and the death of it. As the geographical edge of the continent, the issues of the

V W D W H I R U F H D F R Q I O L F W H G P H G L D W L R Q E H W Z H H Q \$ P I

and the blind idealism that created them. Reconceiving the western landscape was not

U H V H U Y H G M X V W I R U W K H U, H U L I G H Q W V R & D O L I R U Q L D †

Z K R O H / R X L V 2 Z H Q V Q R W H V W K D W W K H Q D W L R Q D W W K

Z L W K D Q G D F X W H V H Q V L W L Y L W \ W R & D O L I R U Q L D † V S O D

awareness of California as the literal and symbolic WHUPLQXV RI WKH \$PHULFDQ (John5). Steinbeck acted as the artistic mediator of this confluence of truth and myth, and offers readers a number of conflicting images that demand a response.

The text as a whole worked toward the reconfiguration of the west in the minds of the nation, but there are specific passages that directly address the ugly truths hiding behind idealized fantasies. In the mindset of the individual and of the entire region, Steinbeck reflects a corruption of the human spirit that thrives on the gullible beliefs of easterners in the guaranteed prosperity of the California Dream. A spectral pauper

UHWXUQLQJ IURP , & Ding Lost a Wife and Child to the same disease,  
 WULHV WR H[SODLQ WKH PHUFLOHVV ODERU JDPH SOD\I  
 ODERU FRQWUDFWRUUV WKURXJK PLVOHDGLQJ KDQGELO  
 VHH QRZ" 7KH PRUH IHOODVUKHDFVQ KHW59, DRQJWKS HDKXQ  
 labor supply flooding labor demand, the owners have developed yet another solution, with the help of the California Dream, to their need for cheap labor and large profits. This insular and exclusive attitude toward others valued solely on their monetary potential is shown to pervade the entire culture of the west.

6WHLQEHN UHIOHFWV WKH SUHYDOHQW KDWUHG D  
 Californians, which is a bigoted and divisive perspective, considering that many of those citizens took a similar journey under similar circumstances only one or two generations  
 HDUOLHU 37KH RZQHUV KDWHG WKHP \$QG LQ WKH WRZ  
 WKH\ KDG QR PRQH\ WR VSHQG 7KHUH LV QR VKRUWHU  
 his admirations are exactly opposite. The town men, little bankers, hated Okies because there was nothing to gain from them. They had nothing. And the laboring people hated

Okies because a hungry man must work, and if he must work, if he has to work, the wage payer automatically gives him less for his work; and then QR RQH FDQ31\$HW PRUH ' Rather than hope and brotherhood, manipulation and disdain awaited the hopeful American seeking his fortune in the wide open West. Additionally, there was no more land to EH KDG DQG LI RQH ZDV WR EH D IDUPHU LW ZRXC laborer for hardly enough money to eat on and no guarantee of work the next day. Steinbeck highlights this stark reality of labor and land in racially charged terms of slavery DOO WKH PRUH MX[WDSRVLQJ WKH LPDJLQHG ZLW industry, and the owners followed Rome, although they did not know it. They imported slaves, although they did not call them slaves: Chinese, Japanese, Mexicans, Filipinos. They liv H RQ ULFH DQG EHDQV WKH EXVLQHVV PHQ VDLG ZRXOGQ↑W NQRZ ZKDW WR GR ZLWK JRRG ZDJHV :K\ O they eat. And if they get funny <sup>2</sup> GHSRUW16W KHP '

Suddenly, white Americans of western European descent are likened to demeaned and despised slaves of foreign birth, tapping into the shock and anger that would accompany the racially segregated social structure preferred by many white Americans.

\$QG <sup>3</sup>DV ZKLWH ~~and~~ American migrants presented to California agriculture a more threatening image of the inequality and injustice of the agricultural HFRQRP\ WKDQ KDG SUHYLRXV \$VLDQ RU +LVSDQLF PLJ +HUH 6WHLQEHN VXEWO\ UDLVHQYDORW KHW W \$B WQMX UVEH complicate the issue for the American reader-- these slaves of the agricultural industry are citizens and cannot be deported or forcibly relocated. As such, they possess the same rights that every other American has, and likely possess the same heritage of pride and

protest when an injustice is done to them. For all who accepted the caveat to the California Dream that it applied only to those chosen few of the white race, even that fantasy has been deconstructed in a few deft strokes, and the reader must decide if there are still other exceptions to the dream that must be made in order to keep it intact, or must it truly be deemed a bygone truth only to be historicized.

Perhaps America psychologically needs California to be Edenic <sup>2</sup> ~~Let us prove~~ that the westward journey and its social and ecological devastation was worth it, or can at

OHDVW EH MXVWLILHG LQ WKDW D SDUDGLVH SUHYDLOH  
RI & DOLIRUQLD UHSUHVHQWV \$PHU the End of The Road VDO WR C

up destitute, a prophetic word for a nation which refuses to acknowledge a faulty ideal.

Just as each member of the Joad family sees the false front of paradise in their own time and way, so Steinbeck urges the reader to look beyond the myth and see the reality for the sake of social and environmental restitution. This is the very intention he spoke of in his

1REHO 3ULJH DFFHSWDQFH VSHHFK LQ VD\LQJ WKDV

our many grievous faults and failures, with dredging up to the light our dark and

GDQJHURXV GUHDPV IRU WKH d. S. H. S. H. RI LPSURYHHPHQ

7KH VHFRQG RI 6WHLQEHN ¶V The Grapes of Wrath LQWHQV

to achieve a philosophical transformation in light of a reconsidered mythology of

California. He prompted society to reconsider how they oriented themselves with the land

and with each other. In the midst of a global depression, Steinbeck and other artists were

NHHQO\ DZDUH RI WKH XQFHUWDLQW\ Being Only One DWLRQ ¶

thing was clear <sup>2</sup> the business of being a capitalist-driven democracy could not go on as it

DOZD\V KDG VRPHWKLQJ DW WKH IRYQGDLRQ RI \$PHU



economic stability had to change. Morris Dickstein describes how this self-conscious

GLVFRXUVH SOD\HG LWVHOI RXW LQ WKH DUWLVWLF SU  
 NLQGOHG \$PHULFD¶V VRFLDO LPDILQDWRUOLULQJ HQ  
 OLYHG KRZ WKH\ VXIIHUG LQWHUDFWHG WRRN SOHD

provide us with singular keys to its moral and emotional life, its dream life, its unguarded

IHHOLQJV DERXW WKH ZRUG's influence of the social novelists H[

of the 1930s from mere cultural historians to shapers of hope. Describing the vivid

SRUWUD\DOV RI LQMXVWLFH DV D SHUVXDVLVH WHFKQL

stop with protest, however. Having created characters modeled upon real life, they were

unwilling to say that either their protagonists or actual people were everlastingly stuck in

DQ XQMXVW ZRUG' 1HZ 'HDO SROLFLHV VXFK DV

social security system, farm subsidies, minimum wage standards, the National Labor

Relations Board, DQG SXEOLF KRXYALQJ as a philosophical prime for

these artists to engage the popular culture in much the same way as the Progressive era

did for its writers. Steinbeck was following the lead of New Deal reform, which began to

HQJDJH LQ JRYHUQPHQW LQWHUYHQWLRQ LQ WKH HFRQ

SRRU DQG WR FXUE UXWKOBYXSU.DFWLFLHV LQ ELJ EXV

A direct product of deconstructing the great American myth of opportunity is the  
 fundamental re- FRQFHSWXDOL]DWLRQ spatial realities that must take

place in its wake. Soil degradation, unemployment, and regional displacement were

WRSLFV RQ HYHU\ FLWYHNSPPLVPLQGLQJ

the devastating realities of economic and ecological losses. Steinbeck thus offered a

philosophical agenda in writing *The Grapes of Wrath* that countered the traditional

hegemony of power with a philosophy that called for greater altruism and brotherhood. In

The Harvest Gypsies 6 W H L Q E H F N G H F U L H V W K H F X U U H Q W V W D W

been stated by a large grower, our agriculture requires the creation and maintenance at

any cost of a peon class, then it is submitted that California agriculture is economically

X Q V R X Q G X Q G H U ) S o m e l i t e r a r y c r i t i c s a n d s o c i a l o p p o n e n t s c a s t t h e

specter of socialism and even communism over his version of social structuring and

philosophy, yet Steinbeck himself viewed it as possessing the greatest qualities of a

patriotic democracy engrained in the founding principles of the Union. His philosophical

intentions were such that the pride and value of individualism would no longer innately

disagree with concepts of social responsibility. A marriage of the two was possible and

necessary, he posited, in light of the social and geographical realities of 20<sup>th</sup> century

America, where the entire frontier had been staked up to the immoveable edge of the

Pacific Ocean.

One of the clearest examples from the text of this intention is seen through the

encouragement of the incarcerated preacher Casy, who teaches the others that more can

be accomplished by a group voicing concern than just one individual. This principle of

enacting change through social unity is exactly what Steinbeck hoped for from his

U H D G H U V + H K R S H G W K D W W K H L Q I R U P H G O H D G H U V R I

leading the people somewhere else but to making this place, this America, the garden it

P L J K W E H ( C u p b o r n Q M ). Steinbeck does not wish to eliminate the dream as

much as shift it from an imagined archetype to a lived-out philosophy of reconciliation.

+ H F D O O H G I R U 3 D Q H Z F R Q V F L R X V Q H V V R I F R P P L W P H Q

L Q V W H D G R I G L V S O D F H P H Q W ' 7 K H U H Z D V Q R Z K H U H

frontier allowing for withdrawal and a fresh start. We must make good with what we have and where we are, insists Steinbeck, and our greatest resources are one another and the land that we at once embrace and decimate. The symbol of the lone frontiersman such as the cowboy is replaced by a new icon of collective resilience, hinted at by Steinbeck with tableau images of community such as the government camps, square dances, Hoovervilles, and train car hovels.

This new commitment to the value of a place and its people was a move towards a

agrarianism as a way of life that would enable us to realize the full potentialities of the

damming the Columbia River, as suggested by FDR (Stein 209). Ultimately, Steinbeck

believed in the spirit of the California Dream, but not the innate guarantee of it. When

implementation of the myth from its individualistic values to the symbiotic concerns of

the land and of all people. This is a completely countercultural philosophy, yet a

necessary one in light of the ecological and social crises of the Dust Bowl. In his critical

inevitability of this change and how it counters the core principles of a centuries-old

of which had always been the promise of individual opportunity and of private property

acquisition must be replaced with a collective investment motivated by land reclamation

and shared community rewards. Ultimately, a new perspective and treatment of migrant

labor has to be achieved, and for this task Steinbeck not only had to be a gifted psychologist but a persuasive philosopher.

Beginning with a consideration of the newly shaped social perspective Steinbeck longed for, he strives to make the point that the social structures lived by and the patterns

RI WKRXJKW WKDW KDYH VKDSHG WKHP DUH VRFLHW\¶V  
IDFW WKDW \$PHULFD¶V IRUPV RI IUHHGRP DQG MXVWLF

collective choices which can be revisited and reshaped when they no longer align with or represent the people. It is as if he was reminding the reader that the agency of change is and has always been at their disposal, and society need not be led further down a path of

FODVVLVP DQG QDUFLVVLVP WKDQ LW DOUHDG\ KDV 6V

through the text DV KH VD\V <sup>3</sup>:H DOO JRW WR ILJXUH 7KHUH¶V

OLNH OLJKWQLQJ RU HDUWKTXDNHV :E¶YRGJRWK DWE¶DG

VRPHWKLQJ ZHGFDQJF KDQJH´

The social hierarchy of the Californians in the novel is built on fear and wealth. Wealth in this case can be understood to be in the form of land and property, or social status acquired over time in a given community. In his attempt to deconstruct those structures of oppression, Steinbeck forces the reader, particularly the readers of the West, to remember. He asks all of America to remember their story of migration, their move from east to west, their struggles in transit and upon arrival, and their honest intentions and character throughout the process of seeking a better life through movement. He paints the historic mural in such simple strokes that every citizen can easily connect to

WKH MRXUQH time, the squatters were no longer squatters, but owners; and their children grew up and had FKLOGUHQ RQ WKH OBRIGGV WKH <sup>3</sup>QDV

they and the Okies share an identity as squatters, separated only chronologically, and to categorically degrade their value as citizens and human beings is the ultimate insult to their own struggles for advancement in the spirit of the California Dream.

This fear of association, this shame of being cousined with such bedraggled people, is a crime against the self and the American ethic of brotherhood, as Steinbeck frames it. The persecuting locals convince themselves, albeit with subtle tones of guilt

D Q G V K D P H R I D V R F L D O K L H U D U F K \ D V D I R U P R I M X V \

the men of the towns and of the soft suburban country gathered to defend themselves; and they reassured themselves that they were good and the invaders bad, as a man must do

E H I R U H K B B 6 ) L S E K B A C N \

V W U X F W X U H I U R P D O O V L G H V Q R W R Q O \ D U H W K H <sup>3</sup> K D Y

from the migrants, but much of the middle class is also only two steps away from joining them on the road as vagrants at the hands of big business and industrial agriculture.

6 W H L Q E H F N S R U W U D \ V W K L V I H D U I X O U H D O L W \ L Q W K H

were fewer farms. The little farmers moved into town for a little while and exhausted their credit, exhausted their friends, their relatives. And then they too went on the highways. And the roads were crowded with men ravenous for work, murderous for

Z R U N ' \$ O O R I W K L V Z D V L Q W H Q G H G W R F K D Q J H S H R S

the migrants to be and how it is they came to be in such terrific straits.

& D V \ ¶ V S K L O R V R S K \ R I J U R X S D J H Q F \ D Q G X Q L I L H G

D V Q H Z \ H W <sup>3</sup> V H Q V L E O H ' L G H D V S U R P R W L Q J W K H Q R W L

everyman, can take part in shaping a new social perspective: <sup>3</sup> \$ L Q ¶ W J R W W K H F D O O

Got a lot of sinful idears <sup>2</sup> E X W W K H \ V H H P ( N ) L S E K B A C N \ H O V L E O H '   
 Steinbeck Ms. Henry Co.

with the conservative and tradition- ER XQG UH DGHUV WU\LQJ WR VDI\ WK  
WKH ZD\ WKLQJV KDYH EHHQ SHUFHLYHG DJHQ¶W QHFH

nonsense, in fact. Yet while a new view is different and coming from a source outside of  
the traditional bases of power, it can be credible. Casy notes the human tendency towards

D UHOLDQFH RQ VWDJQDQW SHUVSHFWL WinkVQZKHLW¶KH V  
KDUG WR OHDDVA¶V WKHRORJ\ PD\ EH SXW WR WDVN E\  
SKLORVRSKHU KLV DSSURDFK LV GHHSO\ GHPRFUDWLF  
LW¶V DOO PHQ DQ¶ DOO ZRPHQ ZH<sup>2</sup> ORYH in spere D E W K D W ¶

whole shebang. Maybe all men got one big soul HYU¶ERG\¶V 3D33\$ D W R I ¶

social perspective of collective accountability and concern as taught to Tom by Casy has  
no place of value in the minds of the powerful who benefit from the propagation of fear  
and segregation among the masses. As long as the masses continue to fight over a paltry  
existence, the oligarchy of power can continue to benefit from it. The contagion of hope,

however, is their greatest enemy. This is clearly shown t KURXJK WKH ORFDO¶V PX  
Casy, the hunting down of union organizers, and the attempts at destroying the

JRYHUQPHQW FDPSV 7RP H[SODLQV WKLW ³UDGLFDO´ V  
him by Casy<sup>2 3</sup> 6D\ V KH IRXQ¶ KH MXV¶ J B W D S Q L W W O H S L H F H  
ZLOGHUQHVV DLQ¶W QR JRRG µFDXVH KLV OLWWOH SLI  
t KH UHVW DQ¶ZDV ZKROH´

This social philosophy which advocates the concern for a common good above

WKH PDQLSXODWLRQ on Red-Belt Kook hold in the form of ¶ powerful  
and broadly accepted Communist Party and the near election of socialist Upton Sinclair  
as governor, to name two. Along with various forms of governmental aid throughout the

New Deal era, these entities of social welfare represented a field ready for harvest. As Ma

FDPH WR XQGHUVWDQG QH DU WKH HQG RI WKH WH[W 3  
QRZ ,W V DQ\ERG\ WRUHV PRRJH ZH60)RWW WR GR´

A picture of the United States as it had been realized is captured by Steinbeck in chapter seventeen, yet it is inverted to reflect the social realities of the Depression in California. In painting a picture of a roadside shanty town made up of homeless and starving migrants, Steinbeck demonstrates this new social perspective in action. The irony and power of the scene is of course in the fact that it is accomplished by a group of people who have nothing and have been cast aside by those who are in most unity. A strange thing happened: the twenty families became one family, the children were the children of all. The loss of home became one loss, and the golden time in the grip of the dispossession of the wanderers in the deserts of California can thrive with so little, how much more could a region and a nation thrive with a shared social philosophy of brotherhood? This is the question found between the lines of this powerful tableau.

7KH 3HYHU\PDQ´ SKLORVRSK\ DV LWDSSIO LHG WR V  
connected to the ways in which the land of the west was perceived and treated. Just as Steinbeck intended on shaping a new social perspective, he also sought to facilitate a reimagining of the land that, though fertile, was limited in its abundance to what its VHWWOHUV LQYHVWHG LQ LW \$V H[SODLQHG LQ 5REHU the Promised Land of the American people was wherever they committed to making it, rather than merely a mythic place around the next bend that burst with spontaneous and XQVXSSUHVHVG ERXQW\ 36WHLQEHN GLVFRYHUHG WKD

people toward a distant new Eden or illusory Promised Land; rather, the most heroic action was simply to learn to be present in the here and now, and to inhabit the

μ Z K H U H Y H U ¶ I X O O \ D Q G D W R Q F H ´ , Q W U R G X F W L R Q [ [ [ Y culture of rural America, and at least the perceptions of the rest of it. Yet the transient qualities of the era perfectly juxtaposed this philoso S K \ R I L Q W U L Q V L F D O O \ Y D O place. As more workers of the Midwest transitioned from planted farmers to uprooted migrants, the fate of the land they left and the land they were moving toward became increasingly eroded. A cultural identity founded in the land was giving way to an identity in mechanization and gross profits.

Due to this growing perception of the land as an organic factory, massive monocropping and industrial farming techniques abounded, furthering the development of a mechanized land ethic, rather than stewardship-based, sustainable, balanced, and

L Q W H U G H S H Q G H Q W \$ F F R U G L Q J W R & K D U O H V 6 K L Q G R ¶ V would survive by working in harmony and understanding with nature and would perish by exploiting or otherwise working against nature. This was simply the way of things.

The role of the writer, according to Steinbeck, was to educate and bring this organic understanding to the mass of people, who, in thinking that man was at the center of the universe, misunde U V W R R G P D Q ¶ V S O D F H L Q W K H J U D Q G V F K H P H D G D S W W R O L I H L Q V W H D G R I F R Q W U R O O L Q J L W ´ 0 R center of the equation allows for the development of a healthy and balanced social sphere.

As the tenant farmers emptied their homes and barns of the memories and trade tools that defined their intimate connection to the land, the very fabric of their identity



ZDV EHLQJ FKDOOHQJHG E\ WKH WUDQVLWLRQ EHWZHHQ  
 social life changed <sup>2</sup> changed as in the whole universe only man can change. And the  
 thought, the planning, the long staring silence that had gone out to the fields, went now to  
 WKH URDGV WR WKH ~~Capes~~ ~~W/D~~ ~~On~~ ~~F~~ ~~W~~ ~~R~~ ~~W~~ ~~K~~ ~~H~~ ~~W~~ ~~'~~  
 and manipulation of the soil grew on the hearts of the migrants as they moved west into a  
 region which functioned according to the post- FRORQLDO SHUVSHFWLYH RI \$ F  
 founding land ethic in which the grower is the abuser, taker, destroyer. This ethic was  
 certainly residual in the land ethic of the Midwest farmers and Great Lakes loggers even  
 before encountering the more entrepreneurial California territory, seen in the fact that  
 much of their soil had grown worthless in part by clear cut logging, overfarming, and  
 monocropping. As a culture of land degradation prevailed, the changing of the land ethic  
 in the voices of the migrants and established Californians moved from dreams of  
 prosperity to value- EDVHG RXWFRPHV <sup>3</sup> 1HYHU VHHQ R FRWWRQ  
 FRWWRQ /RQJ ILEHU EHV↑ GDPQ FRWWRQ , HYHU VHHQ  
 ZDQWV WR EX\ V'R' RQ ↑FR W'WR QHODQ↑HQW KHU 7KHQ ZKHQ  
 do ZQ PRYH VRPHS Q DFH QHZ '

To some degree the faltering land ethic of the migrants can be excused as they  
 desire any piece of land which might harvest a survival for them, hardly considering the  
 feasibility of a permanent homestead after encountering the realities of California. First  
 expelled from their farms and region they had given so much to, and then crushed by the  
 hopeless and hate-filled realities of California, it is understandable that many a migrant  
 would then view California as a place where only cunning and machine-like objectivity  
 allow for survival. This separation from the land as a nurturing provider came into being

under different circumstances, however, for the mighty land owners of the Valley. While the farmers of the Midwest had to work twice as hard for half the returns, the farmers of the Great Cent UDO 9DOOH\ GHYHORSHG D IRUJHWIXOQHVV LQ and their intimate relationship with it. They quickly went from farming in the fields to ³IDUPLQJ RQ SDSHU´ DV WKH VLJH DQG VHFUXULW\ RI WK profits:

And the hunger was gone from them, the feral hunger, the gnawing, tearing hunger for land, for water and earth and the good sky over it, for the green thrusting grass, for the swelling roots. They had these things so completely that they did not know about them any more. These things were lost, and crops were reckoned in dollars, and land was valued by principle plus interest, and crops were bought and sold before they were planted. Then crop failure, drought, and flood were no longer little deaths within life, but simple losses of money. And all their love was thinned with money, and all their fierceness dribbled away in interest until they were no longer farmers at all, but little shopkeepers of crops, little manufacturers who must sell before they can make. (315-316)

6WHLQEHN¶V LQWHQW WR UHVKDSH D QDWLRQDO LG EDVHG RQ DQ LQWLPDWH UHODWLRQVKLS ZLWK RQH¶V sensitivity to the contours and value of the land live in the principles of the yeoman farne U QRW WKH ³PDFKLQH´ IDUPHU RI WKH H[SDQVLYH 9 begs for a shift in the way America views the land, not because he was an

environmentalist or because he followed a nature-based pantheism, but because he understood the inseparable relationship between the ways in which humanity perceives its environment and its fellow men. This concept is clearly demonstrated throughout the text as the mechanized land owners of the west mutually manipulate their fields and field hands for every bit of worth they can without giving much back to them. The callous objectivity with which the land owners of the Valley perform their trade is starkly countered to the organic, somehow intuitive qualities of the relationship between the land and the migrant farmer, not yet fully deluded by the industrial way:

The man who is more than his chemistry, walking on the earth, turning his plow point for a stone, dropping his handles to slide over an outcropping, kneeling in the earth to eat his lunch; that man who is more than his elements knows the land that is more than its analysis. But the machine man, driving a dead tractor on land he does not know and love, understands only chemistry; and he is contemptuous of the land and of himself. When the corrugated iron doors are shut, he goes home, and his home is not the land. (158)

Images of spiritual death, linear isolation, and calculated greed used to capture the fallen nature of the industrial farmer are taken one step further by Steinbeck as he equates this mindless robotic interaction with the land and its people to methodical and

SDVVL RQOHVV UDSH 7KHUH LV QR SHUVRQDO FRQQHFW  
land. Everything is done to the land rather than with the land, countering both the social

and ecological ethics that represent the better principles of the American way which are needed more than ever in the midst of a catastrophic depression:

A twitch at the controls could swerv H W K H F D W ¶ E X W W K H G U L Y  
 hands could not twitch because the monster that built the tractor,  
 the monster that sent the tractor out, had somehow got into the  
 G U L Y H U ¶ V K D Q G V musc, Wa R goggl h m and L Q D Q G  
 muzzled him <sup>2</sup> goggled his mind, muzzled his speech, goggled his  
 perception, muzzled his protest. He could not see the land as it  
 was, he could not smell the land as it smelled; his feet did not  
 stamp the clods or feel the warmth and power of the earth. [. . .] He  
 loved the land no more than the bank loved the land. [. . .] Behind  
 the tractor rolled the shining disks, cutting the earth with blades <sup>2</sup>  
 not plowing but surgery, pushing the cut earth to the right where  
 the second row of disks cut it and pushed it to the left; slicing  
 blades shining, polished by the cut earth. And pulled behind the  
 disks, the harrows combing with iron teeth so that the little clods  
 broke up and the earth lay smooth. Behind the harrows, the long  
 seeders <sup>2</sup> twelve curved iron penes erected in the foundry, orgasms  
 set by gears, raping methodically, raping without passion. The  
 driver sat in his iron seat and he was proud of the straight lines he  
 did not will, proud of the tractor he did not own or love, proud of  
 the power he could not control. (48-49)

6 KLIWLQJ D QDWLRQ¶V SHUVSHFWLYH RI LWV ODQG

Steinbeck reminds the reader that we are the makers of our collective conscience, and just as a culture can be made by humanity, it can just as well be altered when necessary. He challenges the intractable determinism and traditional tendencies of the human psyche and insists that we can and must do better. Industrialized farming challenges the yeoman

IDUPHU SULQFLSOHV DQG WKH YHU\ ZD\ LQ ZKLFK D SHU  
 3&URS ODQG LVQ¶W IRU OLWWOH JX\V OLNH X¶V DQ\PRUH  
 FDQ¶W PDNH )RUGV RU EHFDXVH \RX¶UH QRW WKH WHO  
 QRZ ´ 6WHLQEHFN FKDOOHQJHV WKH QDUURZ SKLORVRS  
 HYLFWHG WHQDQW IDUPHU 31RWKLQJ WR GR DERXW LW

someplace H 7KDW¶V W KH ARQWAY ZD Interacting with people and place which promotes justice and peace is available, argues Steinbeck, yet it requires a faith in humanity and a more than monetary valuing of the land.

The third significant intention in writing *The Grapes of Wrath* called for Steinbeck to be a politician as well. His humanitarian instincts were stirred to action as he encountered thousands of homeless workers during his journalism assignments preceding the summer of 1938. The most immediate and practical purpose of the novel was of course to bring immediate necessities to the exposed and hungry families victimized by the propagated myth of opportunity, and to encourage immediate enactments of state and federal laws protecting the innocent from callous manipulation and legalized deprivation. Biographer Jackson Benson captures this shared nature in Steinbeck and camp director

DQG IULHQG 7RP &ROOLQV VD\LQJ WKDW 3WKH\ ERWK K  
 while at the same time, they both had faith that our democratic institutions, through the

pressure of an enlightened citizenry, could and would correct the inequalities which appeared at the time to be tearing the fabric of society (Steinbeck 190). *The Grapes of Wrath* is a prose version of an earlier journalism compilation titled *The Harvest Gypsies* which broadly reported on the state of affairs in the California agricultural labor industry. In his concluding piece in that series of articles, Steinbeck recommended some solutions to the philosophical and economic rift between the land owners and the laborers which would create subsistence farms, establish a migratory labor board, encourage unionization, and punish vigilante terrorism (58-61). These suggestions demonstrate the humanitarian responses and organizational structuring that Steinbeck continued to pursue in his fictional documentary.

The agricultural lobbyists in Sacramento and Washington were incredibly powerful, yet Steinbeck believed like most artists that creative representations of social injustice. If people were made aware of the shameful events in the Valley, therefore, governmental agencies and elected officials who represented them would be held to a higher, more just account for their actions. Thus, the story needed to be told in order to shift power and resource allotment. Even more immediately, Steinbeck wanted to see humanitarian aid in the form of food, medicine, and clothing expedited to the camps while legal wranglings which were sure to be accomplished at a typical bureaucratic pace in Hollywood. This unlikely adoption of benefactors put additional pressure on

brought in immediate financial aid to bankroll relief efforts in the areas hit hardest by flooding and disease.

6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ M mentions were no secret to the public; he openly communicated his discontent with the oppressive farming system in the west and revealed the altruistic perspective of his efforts. He once told San Francisco News

F R O X P Q L V W - R K G ¶ D U B U N G t o 3 H a y H a d d h a s been at the call of the common working people to the end that they may eat what they raise, use what they produce, and in every way and in completeness share in the works of their hands and

W K H L U K H D, C ¶ V ¶ O D U C T I O N C ¶ R W ¶ Charles Shindo places the civil rights of the

P L J U D Q W V D V 3 X S S H U P R V W ' L Q 6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V P L Q G

place the basic needs of the impoverished workers as his sole intention, stating that he

3 V D Z K L V U ¶ R O ¶ G R A P E S ¶ W R A T H contributing to an effort to change their immediate conditions rather than providing in addition a critique of the social and

H F R Q R P L F V W U X F W X U H V D Q G U H O D W L R Q V W K D W F U H D W

I disagree with him based on the evidence previously presented, this scholarly

L Q W H U S U H W D W L R Q K L J K O L J K W V W K H V L J Q L I L F D Q W G H J

geared toward immediate tangible relief. In a quote taken from his personal letters shortly before undertaking his great novel, he makes his working intentions and his personal sentiments clear as he reflects upon the problem. He also gives invaluable insight into the closed culture of the established Valley region and the hostilities he knew he would face:

, G R Q ¶ W N Q R Z Z K H W K H U , ¶ O O J R V R X W K R U Q R V

Four thousand families, drowned out of their tents are really starving to death. The resettlement administration of the

government asked me to write some news stories. The newspapers

Z R Q T W the stuff but they will under my byline. The locals are

I L J K W L Q J W K H J R Y H U Q P H Q W E U L Q J L Q J L Q I R R G

to try to break the story hard enough so that food and drugs can get

moving. Shame and a hatred of publicity will do the job to the

miserable local bankers. (Life in Letters159)

He saw that his already strong reputation as a writer gave him access to a large audience

and the chance to effect some good. Much of his work from 1936 to 1939 was on behalf

of the migrants. His first-hand experience and tone of urgency also gave an immediacy to

the situation, never softening the fact that people were literally starving and living in

F D U G E R D U G K R X V H V + H Z D V D O V R T X R W H G D V V D \ L Q J

proceeds for serum D Q G V L X F I K Letters159), reflecting his personal investment in

the remedy of this social injustice.

On the legal front, Steinbeck found it quite valuable to be well connected, much like

the lobbyists of the agricultural giants who were, if not causing the problems, certainly

Q R W Z R U N L Q J W R Z D U G D M X V W V R O X W L R Q < H W 6 W H L Q

assemblymen. Rather, he held personal conferences with President Franklin Roosevelt,

and just as importantly with the First Lady, Eleanor. Their support and confidence in

Steinbeck was quite public, which did wonders for his various humanitarian and legal

F D X V H V , W L V F O H D U W K D W K H L Q W H Q W L R Q D O O \ 3 V R X

authorities in California, and he appears to have been V X F F H V V I X O L Q W K L V O D V V

(Seelye 30). There is an ironic historical note regarding his connection to the presidency

and his role as a shaper of social opinion. Steinbeck served Roosevelt in the Office of



Coordinator of Information (COI), where he, among other things, gave advice on how to frame information made public during the post-collapse years (Rice 77). As an artist and perception of his generation, and was deeply aware of the potential for a piece of literature to shape the response of an entire society. He worked intently toward this end for the psychological, philosophical, and humanitarian renewal of a generation and a region victimized by its own dreams.

6WHLQEHN¶V 7HFKQLTXHV

<sup>3</sup>, I RQO\ , FRXOG GR WKL V ERRN SURSHUO\ LW ZRXC  
 D WUXO\ \$PHULFDQ ERRN %XW , DP DVVDLOHG ZLWK P\  
 have to work from a background of these. Honesty. If I ~~can~~ an honesty it is all I can  
 expect of my poor brain QHYHU WHP SHU D ZRUG WR D UHGDGHU ¶V S  
 SXWW\ IRU KLV XQGHUVWDQGLQJ ´

--John Steinbeck

The *Grapes of Wrath* has been categorized and labeled everything at various points in its critical reception, being variously complimentary or derogatory. The critical debates over its style, literary value, political intent, symbolic meaning, and social effects have continued without break since its original release in the spring of 1939. It has and has not been naturalist, modernist, documentary, propaganda, and sentimentalist, according to esteemed scholars on both sides of each debate. Steinbeck both follows and breaks the tenets of each of these literary locations according to the critical community.

Yet the best response to this debate is that it is unreasonable and unnecessary to need or

S X U V X H D Q D E V R O X W H D Q V Z H U Z K H W K H U L W E H 6 W H L C

borrowed from all of these styles and methodologies to create the product he intended.

This multiplicity of style speaks to an artistic genius rather than erudite free-

wheeling. He was not as much concerned with functioning within the confines of a pre-

selected methodology or theory as he was with seeking to appropriate techniques which

offered the best means of crafting his message into a pre-conceived end. He knew his

intent and desired effects, and the techniques used were born out of various schools as

needed to accomplish them while maintaining artistic integrity and socially defensible

truth. In particular, Steinbeck used traditional persuasive strategies such as appeals to

emotion, logic, and morality, he developed characters in such a way that they were real

and relatable to all readers, he stylized the plot and overall structure of the novel to

further promote his intended layers of meaning, and consistently implemented associative

L P D J H U \ D Q G D O O X V L R Q W R S D U D O O H O W K H V W R U \ ¶ V P

revered motifs such as found in the Bible and in foundational symbols of American

history.

Steinbeck was keenly aware of the enormity of the project he was undertaking, as

well as the demands it would place on every facet of his artistic abilities as a teller of

V W R U L H V + H Z U R W H W R K L P V H O I L Q K L V Z B U N T M R X U Q D

X Q W L O W K H Q 0 \ O L I H L V Q ¶ W Y H U \ O R Q J D Q G , P X V W J H

The others have been make shifts, experiments, practices. For the first time I am working

on a real book that is not limited and that will take every bit of experience and thought

D Q G I H H O L Q J W K D Working 26). He worked from an encyclopedic pool

of potential technique and style, knowing that a technically homogenous approach to any argument is a weak one. A multi-dimensional art and rhetoric is certainly a basic approach to communication which seeks to effect full-scale change in those exposed to it. This diversity also challenges the culture of academic criticism which insists on rigid classification of stylized literary works, and their literary and social potential, therefore.

/LNHZLVH 6WHLQEHN¶V GHFLVLRQ WR KRYHU RYHU PD

many ink bowls, as it were, models to the contemporary writer how literary art, particularly that which is intended to invoke an elevated social consciousness, can be most effectively created and broadly received. Is a piece of art not more effective when it elicits more power and meaning through panoply of devices? The answer, in this case, is found in the overwhelming social response to this literary classic.

Steinbeck uses many persuasive techniques with a deft assurance that they would

PRYH WKH UHDGHU LQWR D QHZ GDUNHU UHDOLW\ RI &

meaningful action and change in the individual and the nation. One of the most overt

WHFKQLTXHV LV KLV DSSHDO WR WKH UHDGHU¶V HPRWL

reader and character as the one experiences the injustices of the other. In *The Figure of*

*Theater* ODUVKDOO REVHUYH with sympathy, they remain SHFWDWRUV

spectators. If they grant sympathy <sup>2</sup> if they enter into the sentiments of the person they are beholding, if they become in some measure the same person as him, identify

themselves with him through a transfer of persons and characters <sup>2</sup> then they stop being

VSHFWDWRUV ' %\ WDNLQJ WKH UHDGHUV WR WKH

Hoovervilles, by placing dead mothers and stillborns in their arms, and by forcing them out of their homes and off of the land they love, Steinbeck goes far in accomplishing his

intentions of both bringing aid and change to the immediate scene and developing a new social and ecological perspective in the American psyche.

The textual examples just mentioned are but a few of the most memorable and powerful. Certainly the traumatic experiences of death, relocation, and violence have the greatest frequency of transference between individuals and therefore create the greatest impact, but Steinbeck couples these overt and perhaps even expected scenes with moments which capture a more subtle emotional devastation. He attacks the full range of

WKH UH DGHU ¶ V HPRWLRQV ZLWK VRIWHU VFHQHV RI LQ

life that everyone can relate to. As Ma goes through her shoebox of memories, Steinbeck places the sacred keepings of each female reader before her and asks them to cherish those trinkets of family history and identity before pushing all but a select few into the

ILUH \$V H[SODLQHG E\ -RKQ 6HHO\H We sympathize with VFHQHV RI O

the reader/viewer for Ma Joad, and through her for all of the women who were displaced by the godawful Dust Bowl depression and forced to join the westward moving army of the kinds of people we

Q R Z F D O O W K H). The full effects of seeing someone recount sacred memories in familiar objects is a universal experience. By extension, as Seelye explains, the loss and sacrifice of every woman relocated from the

'XVW %RZO LV PDGH PRUH WDQJLEOH, LQ, what UH DGHU

SHUVRQ QDUUDWRU DFWLQJ DV OD ¶ V LQWHUQDO YRLFH

+RZ ZLOO ZH NQRZ LW ¶ V Gapes ZDWEKRXW RYUNSDVW " ´

begins, Ma knows innately that the California Dream will not be magical enough to

UHSODFH WKH IDPLO\ ¶ V LGHQWLW\

Seelye further considers the persuasive value in accessing the emotions of the mother figure in the story, connecting readers not only by gender and experience, but also by class. Many Americans would be classified with Ma and the Joads in terms of a family trying to make ends meet any way they can in the midst of the merciless Depression.

<sup>3</sup> 0 X F K D V + D U U L H W % H o t t o k o u c h t h e W a r s o f t h e U n d e r - K a s , G  
white women readers by asking them if they had ever lost a child <sup>2</sup> not to slavery, of course, but to death <sup>2</sup> so Steinbeck is playing the same tune, albeit in a minor key, which

in a protest novel in the United States must be gauged to harmonized with the values of the great American middle class, always the instrument of change then and now in this

F R X Q W U \ ' 7 K H S U H V H Q F H R I 0 D L Q Q H D U O \ H Y H U \ H  
coincidence. Her stoic endurance and steely defense of the family coupled with moments

R I Y X O Q H U D E L O L W \ D Q G O R V V P H D V X U H G W K H I X O O O H  
her and who she represented. As she swaddled the corpse of Granma Joad through the

twilight and wrestled with the impossible circumstance of a hungry family and starving Hooverville kids yet only one small pot of stew, many readers come to know her, or be

K H U L Q D V P D O O E X W Y H U \ S R Z H U I X O Z D \ 7 K X V W K H C  
imagination is likewise challenged as the California Dream increasingly proves to be a

false promise for Ma.

This emotional connection to the victimized circumstances of the Okies also goes beyond the individual character and matriarchal instincts of Ma. In many of the intercalary chapters, Steinbeck creates scenes which depict the generic Okie and the common patterns of loss experienced by them. These events generally reflect the specific circumstances of the journeying Joad family, but it should be remembered that they too

represent an extended metaphor of the mass of humanity moving west in search of a better life. There are frequent depictions of the Okies being victimized by every sector of the market place and in every region they pass through, whether it is buying a freshly painted jalopy from an Oklahoman used car dealer, getting hustled by a junk broker from

WKH VDPH UHJLRQ RU WKH SULFH JRXJLQJ LQ D &DOLIH  
SDUWLFXODUO\ JULSSLQJ DSSHDOV RQ WKH UHJLGHU V

victimized children. An early image of this is seen when a junk broker makes a quick buck on the misfortunes of the dispossessed tenant farmers forced to sell their farm

HTXLSPHQW DQG DQLPDOV IRU SHQQLHV RQ WKH GROOD  
<RX UH EX\LQJ D OLWWOH JLUO SODLWLQJ WKH IRUHOR  
VWDQGLQJ EDFN KHDG FRFNHG UXEELQJ WKH VRIW QR

of work, toil in the sun; \RX UH EVRURD WKDM)FDQW DON ´

grouping of images not only suggests a taking away of an irreplaceable child-like innocence from an entire generation of Midwestern children by means of petty theft, but

LW DOVR EHJLQV WR FRPPXQLFDW HGWHLQJ EN V MXV

victims with each layer of abuse.

A second scene which evokes powerful emotional response through character association is painted by the spectral pauper in the roadside campgrounds, returning from the west after his wife and child starved to death. As Pa and Tom Joad listen in, he warns

WKH ZHVWHULQJ SLOJULPV RI ZKDW DZDLWV WKHP ZLW  
VHQVHV ³ μ, FDQW WHOO \D DERXW WKHP OLWWOH IHO  
RXW DQ QMRO WNLU ERQH V DQ VKLYHULQ DQ ZKLQ  
DURXQ WU\LQWR IRHWP BUN QRW IRU ZDJHV KH VKF

IRU D FXS D IORXU DQ¶ D VSRRQ D ODUG \$Q¶ WKHQ WK  
heart fai OXUH ´ KH VDLG 3XW LWWKQ\KZDVSDSQ¶UWKKILYHEHLO

OLNH D SLJ6E.O.D.G.G.H.U.J. There is no doubt sourced in the tragic scenes  
witnessed first-hand by Steinbeck in the years preceding the summer of 1938 as he  
traveled the Valley roads as a journalist writing articles about the ever-worsening crisis.

Even the most disbelieving and emotionally sterile reader is forced to see such striking  
images and acknowledge the possibility of such inhumane happenings in the Golden

6WDWH RI &DOLIRUQLD VXUURXQG HG E\ PLOH XSRQ PL  
agricultural produce. While the dark irony of this scene certainly confounds the mind, the  
sickening inhumanity of it overwhelms WKH VWRPDFK DQG WKH KHDUW 7

California obviously begin to reshape the California Dream and promote public outcry  
leading to humanitarian aid and political change.

An analysis considering the emotional appeals of the text would be incomplete

ZLWKRXW D PHQWLRQ RI QR VDWKZEDMHWLQWLOERUQ  
FRQVLGHUHG E\ PRVW WR EH WKH VXPPDWLYH V\PEROL  
\HW PRYLQJ HXORJ\ IRU WKH FKLOG EULQJV WKH PLJUD

with a deep meaning and a final emotional confrontation between the reader and his  
conscience. Steinbeck sets up a social dichotomy here which makes anyone not living in

D PLJUDQW FDPS D SDUW RI WKH RSSUHVVLQJ FROOHFV  
require the sight of a nameless decomposing infant corpse to be awakened to the realities  
in the fields. As the fruit box holding the corpse (a telling symbol of a harvest of death)

floats away and turns over to release the body into the stream, Uncle John delivers the  
blow to the UHDGHU DV KH DGGUHVHV WKH EDE\ ³ µ \* R GRZC





Rhetorical techniques also sought to change the way citizens viewed their fellow man, and inspired immediate response to the basic needs of the victims. In so doing, they also revealed the dark realities of the idealized California Dream for what they really were. As Steinbeck used the rhetorical strategy of appealing to the intellect of the reader and the enlightening patterns of history, it is clear that his intention of de-mything the state became his primary goal. By revealing past and present actions and attitudes of Californians, guilt is assigned to them. While not every land owner was corrupt nor citizen exclusionary, Steinbeck used the broad strokes of history to inform the public that the spirit of brotherhood does not abound in the Golden State as the fruit on the trees does.

artistic product of the documentary-focused period, citing the objective intentions

truthful because it strives to emulate documentary genres: case study, informant

narrative, travel report, photo-text. Steinbeck wanted his migrant book to be honest and

while it is happening and I d R Q ¶ W Z D Q W W B. Steinbeck Biography Jay

Depression-era novels, in particular, possess a distinctly journalistic flavor and might be

Steinbeck alludes to philosophers of revolutions to invoke the magnitude of the situation and to grant greater credence to his argument through association. A new social perspective is only fully realized when it is embraced by all classes, yet he suggests that

the power of the ruling class has and can again be overruled by the sheer magnitude of  
 WKH FROOHFWLYH things that people must have could understand this,  
 you might preserve yourself. If you could separate causes from results, if you could know  
 that Paine, Marx, Jefferson, Lenin, were results, not causes, you might survive. But that  
 you cannot know. For the TXDOLW\ RI RZQLQJ IUHHJHV \RX IRUHYHU  
 IRUHYHU IURCrapes K μZKH SUHVHGFH RI 6WHLQEHN V  
 cautionary outrage escalates as the text progresses. He continues to develop an argument  
 of inevitable revolution while maintaining that it is the wealthy few who reflexively draw  
 inward with their resources that are to blame for their own eventual undoing. This  
 technique, if not frightening, inspires a self-absorbed populace toward philosophical  
 UHYLVLRQ the great owners, who must lose their land in an upheaval, the great  
 owners with access to history, with eyes to read history and to know the great fact: when  
 property accumulates in too few hands it is taken away. And that companion fact: when a  
 majority of the people are hungry and cold they will take by force what they need. And  
 the little screaming fact that sounds through all history: repression works only to  
 strengthen and knit the repressed. The great owners ignored the WKUHH FULHV RI KLVV  
 (324).

As a final example of the use of logic to deconstruct the California Dream,  
 Steinbeck depicts the logical yet myopic defense of the residents of California against the  
 Okies. As they reflect upon the effects of the migrant influx on their stability, Steinbeck  
 reveals to the reader that the mindset of the residents of California is also built upon  
 logical deduction; however, their paradigm of who is involved is much too small. They  
 see the livelihood or collapse of only their family, and fail to recognize that a national

intervention of both governmental and social revision is the only means by which they will keep from going under. Rather than standing together for a larger change, each household stands alone against a tide of dispossession far too powerful and momentous to stop. The paradox of Americans having a sense of security only through mutual debt reveals the passive and visionless citizenship that Steinbeck warns against. It is all the more ironic that the Okies are debt free yet seen as lower-class citizens by Californians,

D V Z H O O D V V W D U Y L Q J W R G H D W K ³ \$ Q G W K H F O H U N V Z  
 little storekeepers possessed only a drawerful of debts. But even a debt is something.

Even a job is something. The clerk thought, I get fi l W H H Q G R O O D U V D Z H H N 6 ¶  
 goddamn Okie would work for twelve? And the little storekeeper thought, How could I

compet H Z L W K D G H B 8 6 ) C H V W P D O  
 The urban prosperity can still live in the

American imagination, he asserts, but not a prosperity in isolation. It is acquired and retained collectively. This explicitly argued perspective likely affected the readers whose emotions were not moved by character association and imagery.

Steinbeck worked both the emotions and the mind of the reader, giving him no way out but through the gauntlet of the text, hopefully breaking down ill-fated traditions and uninformed myths while building up a more conscientious citizen willing to look beyond himself and toward the greater democratic principles which make him fully human. Much of his technique in accomplishing these ends is demonstrated above, but he continues to challenge the reader through the use of characterization, developing polarized character W \ S H V R I J R R G D Q G H Y L O W K D W L Q V L V W R Q V  
 or the other. As readers engage the cynicism of the natives and the enduring hope of the migrants, they find themselves wrapped in a literary experience in which their moral

integrity and patriotic alliance hang in the balance. They must maintain an unjust ethic from traditional mythology, or transform their ethic into one which promotes greater social justice. Steinbeck realized that one of the most effective ways to convince mainstream society that the Okies were of the same fundamental caste as them, despite the regional separation, was to demonstrate a parallel history and perspective between the two. This is accomplished through characterization that confirms the hard-working and well-intentioned nature of the Okies while simultaneously castigating the philosophy and actions of the industrial-size land owners.

the migrants in California was originally published as a series of articles in the San Francisco News in 1936 titled *The Harvest Gypsies*. At the outset he strives to make it clear to the reader that his subjects were good people of the same stock as the land-owning citizens of California, only they had suffered the loss of land and security due to widespread drought. He tells their story in such a way that it communicates their

3 \$ P H U L F D Q Q H V V '

They are small farmers who have lost their farms, or farm hands who lived with the family in the old American way. They are men who have worked hard on their own farms and have felt the pride of possessing and living in close touch with the land. They are resourceful and intelligent Americans who have gone through the hell of the drouth, have seen their lands wither and die and the top soil blow away; and this, to a man who has owned his land, is a

F X U L R X V D Q G W H e n a n e o t h e r m i g r a n t s > « @ 7

indicate that they are of English, German and Scandinavian descent. There are Munns, Holbrooks, Hansens, Schmidts. (22-23)

Steinbeck calls on the traits of land ownership, ethnicity, and ingenuity in depicting these victims of circumstance. He uses this same technique in characterizing the Joads as well, hoping that readers would adopt them as their own. *The Harvest Gypsies* likewise parallels *The Grapes of Wrath* in that it reveals the worst of the monopolistic land owners to be utterly contemptible, abusing the democratic rights of the individual to such a degree that they infringe on the abilities of others to likewise acquire liberty through land.

The persuasive technique of associative characterization is obviously limited to the subjective genre of fiction. It allows the artist to heighten reality rather than suppress it, accomplishing through detail and omniscience what is often there yet overlooked in

the essentially one-dimensional world of non-fiction.

Mother of Literature: Journalism and *The Grapes of Wrath*

FKRLFH WR XVH D ILFWLRQDO PHGLXP re<sup>3</sup>at all, for

truthful. In fiction he could fabricate at will, making up people and events by splicing and

reshaping materials JDWKH UHG E \ UH+VHUUHU FIDUWIXO´ VKRXOG QRV

synonymous with fictional, but rather an elevated or creative form of reality which

potentially furthers the intended effect. Howarth describes this creative tension for

6WHLQE HFN DV EHLQJ <sup>3</sup>FDXJKW EHWZHHQ OLWHUDU\ DQ

SRLQW 6WHLQE HFN EHOLHYHG KH FRYOG EHYW <sup>3</sup>SXW D

DUH UHVSQRVLEOH IRU WKLVLife in Letters (2), *McKibben*, LQ QHZVS

while good, did not allow for the complete development of the human story and could not

reach the wide audience a novel could. By working so FORVHO\ ZLWK \$UYLQ¶V JR

camp director Tom Collins, and through his engagement with countless migrants,

<sup>3</sup> 6 WHLQE HFN VXPPRQH G DOO WKH FRQFUHWH GHWDLOV

that ensure artistic verisimilitude, as well as the subtler imaginative nuances of dialect,

LGLRV\QFUDWLF WLFV KDELWV DQG JHVWXUHV WKDW

Introduction xxxii). This associative characterization connecting the reader to the migrant

is implemented immediately in the text, establishing a shared internal tension that is

VXVWDLQHG WKURXJK WKH ILQDO SDJH <sup>3</sup>\$IWHU D ZKLO

bemused perplexity and became hard and angry and resistant. Then the women knew that

they were safe and that there was no break. . . . Women and children knew deep in

WKHPVHOYHV WKDW QR PLVIRUWXQH ZDV ~~Map 6~~-JUHDW W

7). This attention to physical detail throughout the novel coupled with omniscient

commentary in the intercalary chapters makes these fictional figures real people with

realities comparable to those of the readers. They can now better imagine the real

nightmares occurring in California.

Tom Joad is also immediately implemented as an intermediary between

6 WHLQE HFN ¶¶ and the reader ¶¶ ~~Map 6~~ California as a place of antagonism

UDWKHU WKDQ RSSRUWXQLW\ DQG UHDOLJQLQJ WKH S

an appeal to class consciousness. He connects himself with middle-class Americans-- the

average citizen-- ZKR KH FKDUDFWHULJHV DV EHLQJ SXVKHG DU

DUJXPHQW LV SRZHUIXO WR WKH WUXFN GULYHU ZKR Z

WDNHV KLP DORQJ 6 WHLQE HFN FRXQWV RQ KLV DXGLH

guys ¶¶ WRR KH ¶WUDSV¶¶ WKHP MXVW DV 7RP WUDSV WKH

undertones of class-consciousness <sup>2</sup> 7RP FDVWV KLPVHOI DQG WKH GULY

EDVWDUGV¶´ :DUIRUG 6RRQ WKH HQWLUH -RDG IDP

character immersed in the national story, allowing all Americans to relate as citizens of a shared history. This is true for white citizens which made up the popular majority, the only people group in the history of America not to be racially discriminated against.

6WHLQEHN NQHZ WKDW WKH UDFLDO PDNHXS RI WKH -

them. Indeed, the racial alignment in the hearts of America, whether overtly expressed or not, was a time-proven cultural construct that Steinbeck was counting on in order to convict the hearts and offend the principles of the popular readership.

This intelligently implemented technique of portraying the issue through a racial lens

LURQLFDOO\ SOD\V RQ \$PHULFD¶V UDFLVP DQG SULGH I

DQG SKLORVRSKLFDO FKDQJH \*UHJJ &DPILHOG VWDWHV

that have moved a nation toward a democratic ideal have been catalyzed by the problem

RI UDFH DV DUWLFXODWHG LQ VHQWLPHQWDO WHUPV´

America as he reveals the hardships of the white Okies, suggesting the potential for more widespread victimization among whites and catalyzing a race-centered prideful resistance to the forces of oppression. More or less silent in the midst of Mexican, Chinese, Native American, Japanese, and Filipino abuses throughout the development of the West, white

\$PHULFD ZDV VXGGHQO\ IDFHG ZLWK SDWKRORJLFDO DE

and had too much at stake to remain unmoved.

Steinbeck also considered his readership and era as he developed an approach to characterization that would prove most effective in influencing his audience toward a new social and ecological ethic. In his study of the proletarian novels of the same decade,

scholar Jon-Ch ULVWLDQ 6XJJV DVVHUWV WKDW <sup>3</sup>EHWZHHQ

read romances and mysteries, and looked for big books, historical novels epic in range and filled with many strong typical characters in support of one or two romantically conceived c H Q W U D O I L J X U H V ' The Grapes of Wrath in W K H V H G D many ways a product of the times, catering to what would be appealing and therefore popular in order to acquire a larger readership and exposure.

Both genders have significant weight in the book in terms of meaningful roles and their influence in the story. While the agrarian principles of identity call out to male readers through the thoughts and actions of male characters such as Tom and Pa Joad, the female reader often finds women as the center of moral code. Ma Joad is the true center of the family, either sacrificing or fighting for its stability depending upon whichever U H V S R Q V H Z D V F D O O H G I R U L Q W K H P R P H Q W 2 I F R X U V scene is by far the most provocative moment in the novel, placing the burden of sacrifice and sustenance again on the females of the novel. These gender-normed symbolic characterizations are explained by Janet Casey, who identifies the synergy of meaning between the farming men D Q G Z R P H Q R I W K H ' X V W % R Z O ³ % \ W K H C had long been established as the virtual embodiment of the American way, ensuring that the displacement of the Okies would carry a symbolic weight that could not be approached by parallel Depression narratives of urban impoverishment. And if the farmer epitomized Jeffersonian ideals of autonomy, nobility, virtue, and thrift, then his wife became the ground upon which such ideals w H U H U H D O N L a w G made to be the noble family leader. Steinbeck grants her significant power as the role of matriarch, the organic and roughshod American goddess making the Joads normal and relatable, especially to other women: ³ + H U K D ] H O H \ H V V H H P H G W R K D Y H H [ S H U



tragedy and to have mounted pain and suffering like steps into a high calm and a superhuman understanding. She seemed to know, to accept, to welcome her position, the FLWDGHO RI WKH IDPLO\ WKH VWGRPELDS, and this was now a novel for men or women, but rather a novel for the American citizen.

While the characterization of the Okies did much to influence the benevolence of the reader, the portrayal of native Californians held equal power in inciting outrage and indignation concerning labor practices and social injustices in general. With each expression of hate delivered from a native Californian, the reader is drawn into a deeper alliance with the Okies, whom they have come to know as good folks from American VWRFN 7KH -RDGV¶ XQXJOL 00FIRP0VHWRHLQFD00DVLV¶ O

Divisive epithets begin at the border of California, where the men and Ma simultaneously experience them in separate settings. As the Joad men soak in the Colorado River near the Arizona/California border, a migrant and his son heading back to the Midwest try to explain the new identity that awaits the Joads as they enter the much dreamed of Golden 6WDWH 3:HOO 2NLH XVH¶ WD PHDQ \RX ZDV IURP 2NOD son-of-a- ELWFK 2NLH PHDQRQR¶W¶PHHDQF0¶WMLKH ZDVVMKH\LV L W80). Meanwhile, Ma attempts to rest under the tarp but is harassed by a state official:

3\$ EUR00HG PDQ EHQW RYHU DQG ORRNHG LQ μ,I \ UXQ \RX LQ DQ00QR¶W ZRI \RX VHWWOLQ¶ GRZQ KHUH ZH GRQ¶W ZDQW 2NKHJR00VW0010¶GRZQ¶

acts of indecency is a direct attack on the character of state officials of many ranks and jurisdictions. Steinbeck reveals the corruption within official entities run at the state and

local levels, callously following through with their unlawful agreements to maintain abusive social hierarchies and the exclusion of basic human rights.

Once in California, the author L W L H V ¶ E R O G G L V U H J D U G I R U K X P D Q L point a police officer clears out a Hooverville with the threat of violence when the P L J U D Q W V G L G Q ¶ W D F T X L H V F H W R W K H µ O D E R W E R I Q D W U D J R R G L G H D U W R H J W K L Q H V P D O G Z T K V E D F N R Q K L V I D F H ¶ J R W W R F O H D Q R X W W K L V F D P S \$ Q ¶ L P w h y J H W V D U R X C V R P H E R G \ P L J (360). The Wenkaxing ¶ V g a n c e and corruption in every depiction of public servants of peace brings fear to the reader as they consider the threat W R W U X H G H P R F U D F \ E \ V X F K D F W L R Q V : K D W ¶ V P R U H to be the source of corruption and antagonism, paying off local police, encouraging vigilantism, and seeking to incite a riot in the government camps so that local officials could enter and destroy it.

The representation of a pervasive hate for the Okies by the native citizens reveals the bigotry of the people and highlights the culture of racism projected onto every other minority group in the history of America. despite the Okies being white. Their bigotry proves the invented nature of the California Dream, which promises a bountiful Eden in which all may find paradise. Viewed as either animals or machines by the locals, Steinbeck demonstrates the inescapable social stratum the Okies find themselves in, promoting responses such as the pursuit of legal rights, humanitarian aid, and the individual consideration of how one should view his fellow Americans. Two brief quotes that capture the bigotry of the Californians are seen here, the first from a service station

E R \ D S S U D L V L Q J W K H 2 N L H V ³ µ 7 K H P J R G G D P Q 2 N L H V J

DLQ¶W KXPDQ \$ KXPDQ EHLQJ ZRXOGQ¶W OLYH OLNH W  
WR EH VR GLUW\ DQG PLVHU E EOW H7K MKKDILQ¶FRUDOKHDOV¶  
RWKHU VXFFLQFW H[DPSOH FRPHV IURP WKH -RDGV¶ ILU

where to first seek their fortunes. They come upon a vigilante group at the county line

DQG DUH WROG ³<RX WXUQ ULJKW DULRXLQG DW¶H KFRDVGW¶  
UHD 32). While the native citizens of California regard the Okies as animals or

machines, Steinbeck likewise characterizes local law, farmers, and businessmen by the  
same terms. They methodically perpetrate a social and land ethic which harvests hatred,

GLYLVLRQ DQG SDWKRORJLFDO DEXVH 6WHLQEHN¶V I  
reorders the social hierarchy to inspire the pursuit of justice.

A third technique implemented by Steinbeck to accomplish his intentions of  
reshaping the perceptions of the west in the minds of the readers is his structural  
approach to the novel and the plot as a whole. At the most general level, the tale mirrors  
the devastating realities of the Okies as life becomes worse for them in California than it  
was in the barren plains of the Midwest. Steinbeck delivers a plot that communicates in  
no uncertain terms what the Joads and the people they metaphorically represent really  
walked into: unemployment, homelessness, starvation, political corruption, economic  
polarity, anger, and classism. He fleshes out this dystopic tale through a plot which  
steadily descends from optimism to devastation, and a structure that alternates between  
general portrayals of the WHVW¶V UHVSQRVH WR, WKH DQG DQG LW  
QDUUDWLYH FKDSWHUV ZKLFK FKDUDFWHUL]H WKH LVV)  
believed that he took the medium of the novel as far as he could through this structural  
PHWKRQ FRUUHVSRQGH QZR WRH SIWK H GGRYH Q take

it. I never did think much of it <sup>2</sup> D F O X P V \ Y H K L F O H D W E H V W \$ Q G , G F  
 the new but I know there is a new which will be adequate and shaped by the new  
 W K L Q N i f e @ J l e t t e r s 1 9 4 ). An American version of fiction, of prose, is most  
 appropriately democratic, free to move and change and represent many styles  
 interchangeably, to experiment and challenge old orders, and to borrow from the past  
 what is necessitated in the present. This is the philosophy with which Steinbeck  
 attempted to create a truly American product. In naming *The Grapes of Wrath* and Frank  
 1 R U T h e O f t o p u s D V H [ D P S O H V 5 L F K D U G / H K D Q D V V H U W V W K I  
 previous narrative forms in new modes. Elements of both the romance and  
 transcendentalism can be found in the realist/naturalist novel <sup>2</sup> especially the American  
 Y H U V L R Q ' % \ Z R U N L Q J D F U R V V V W \ O L V W L F E R X Q G D  
 narrative structure that most effectively promoted his intentions of change.

Th H V L Q J O H P R V W D Q D O \ ] H G D V S H F W T h e G r a p e s L Q E H F N  
 of *Wrath* is the presence of general, or intercalary, chapters between the traditionally  
 dramatic chapters about the Joad family. He uses an expanding and contracting rhythm  
 betwe H Q W K H J H Q H U D O D Q G V S H F L I L F F K D S W H U V Z R U N L Q  
 view of the plight of the migrants followed by a close-up of the plight of representative  
 L Q G L Y L G X D O V W J o h n 1 3 R . R o b e r t D e M o r t i e s  
 R I W K H J H Q H U D O F K D S W H U V L Q W H U M F K J D S W H D S L T S > Z K L F K @  
 of recognition by expressing an atemporal, universal, synoptic view of the migrant  
 F R Q G L W L R , O n t h e I n t r o d u c t i o n R i w w e  
 influence which shaped the pendulum- O L N H I R U P D W L R Q R I W K H E R R N ¶ V V

To execute *The Grapes of Wrath* he drew on the jump-cut technique of John Dos Passos U.S.A. trilogy (1937), the narrative tempo of Pare / R U H Q W ] ¶ V U D G L R G U D P D ( F F H + R P R D C sequential quality of such Lorentz films as *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936) and *The River* (1937), the stark visual effects of Doroth H D / D Q J H ¶ V S K R W B W U D S K A n R I ' X V W California migrant life, the timbre of the Greek epics, the rhythms of the King James Bible, the refrains of American folk music, and the biological impetus of his an G ( G Z D U G 5 L F N H W W V ¶ V H F R O R , phalanx, or group-man, theory.

While some scholars K D Y H O D E H O H G 6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V X V H R I W I remark o Q K L V <sup>3</sup> F R Q Y L F W L R Q W K D W W K H P L J U D Q W V ¶ F X O W X G L U H F W H G X F D W L R Q L Q W K H U R O H R I D G H P R F U D W L F J 57) most critics assign these chapters as structural genius. Steinbeck is praised for his willingness to draw from all genres of artistic communication in order to express his message, and was also engaged in his artistic and humanitarian work with like-minded yet stylistically diverse artists. There is no debate that *The Grapes of Wrath* ¶ ¶ M i m a r y V W \ O L V W L F L Q I O X H Q F H L V M R X U Q D O L V P : L O O L D P + R Z D Mother of Literature: Journalism and *The Grapes of Wrath* Z K H Q K H V W D W H V <sup>3</sup> 7 K I was evident to Joseph Henry Jackson, who in 1940 first noted how *The Grapes of Wrath* borrowed its techniques from newsreel, photo-text, radio drama, and proletarian fiction <sup>2</sup> the peculiar hybrid forms of art, journalism, and propaganda that James Boylan calls Depressionreportage' + L V M R X U Q D O L V W W e s t G y p s i e s is a strong

example of how this method was an entrenched one for him in terms of both communicating the issue and personalizing it. He had also experienced widespread success and acquired influence over the readership through this method, encouraging him to create *The Grapes of Wrath* in a similar style. Steinbeck spent in professional journalism and his obvious gifts for observation and reporting that account for his skill as an ethnographer and for his ability to write novels

Biographical evidence suggests that there was significant influence on the stylistic qualities of *The Grapes of Wrath* from cinematic sources. Steinbeck had a close personal friendship with Pare Lorentz, the most influential maker of documentaries during the Depression era, and they were known to have discussed style and intention. With or without this creative resource, Howarth suggests that Steinbeck would still have accessed various cinematic techniques due to his engagement with such a culturally transformative Steinbeck had absorbed enough movies to recognize their enormous power to move and

The alternating effect of thematic and dramatic chapters is clearly the most significant byproduct of the cinematic influence. The varying close-up personal portraits and panning landscape shots, much like those seen in the documentaries named, suggest an equivalent or parallel between the personal and the national (Howarth 74). The

WKH LQWHUFDODU\ FKDSWHUV <sup>3</sup>FRPPHQW RQ DQG H[SRV  
 the Joad family must face. Conceptually, the purpose of these chapters is, as in U.S.A, to  
 broaden the scope of the novel, to allegorize the Joad family saga by placing it in the  
 ODUJHU FRQWH[W RI \$PHULFDQ FXOWXUH DQG HFRQRPL  
 Steinbeck trusted that while the issues at a national level may seem too overwhelming,  
 complicated, or distant for the average citizen to understand, coupling this information  
 with a personal story which intimately demonstrates the effects of the problem would  
 make it both real, comprehensible, and important to the common reader.<sup>10</sup>

Without the technical pairing of the macroscopic and microscopic realities of the  
 California migrant, *The Grapes of Wrath* may not have reached the nation to be the  
 cultural shockwave that it was. Steinbeck once explained that the interchapters were  
 exp UHVVO\ GHVLJQH G WR <sup>3</sup>KLW WKH UHDGHU EHORZ WKH  
 poetry one can get into a reader <sup>2</sup> open him up and while he is open introduce things on a  
 [sic] intellectual level which he would not or could not receive unless he were opened  
 X S ´ ' H, CRWW (Introduction xi). While other techniques worked on the reader through the  
 dramatic story of the Joads, the structure and style of the thematic chapters diversified the  
 reception of the text in order to accomplish a greater range of impact. This synergy  
 consistently delivers a one-two punch aimed at hardened assumptions and false  
 mythologies, ultimately leading to transformed perspectives.

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<sup>10</sup> Louis Owens takes the opposite stand in his consideration of the effects of the intercalary  
 FKDSWHUV RQ WKH UHDGHU , Q KLV HVVD\ <sup>3</sup>7KH & XOSDEOH - RDGV  
 VXJJHVWV WKDW WKH LQWHUFKDSWHUV HFRQRPLK WKH 'LQVWLDEOLVK  
 withdrawal between reader and characters (109). He goes on to suggest that if the reader is aware of the  
 larger concerns at the national or global level, it is difficult to become overwhelmed by the singular person  
 (110).

In closing my analysis of plot and structure as a technique implemented to affect specific change, it is necessary to consider why he closes the text the way he does. To many readers, the final tableau of Rosasharn breastfeeding the starving stranger while every other strand of the story remains frayed is unsatisfying in that it avoids closure. Steinbeck plays on the fact that readers have been trained to anticipate and desire a tidy ending, a technical manipulation at work on the emotions and expectations of the reader. The final moment reflects a greater alignment with reality in that life does not happen in clean chapters but perpetually folds one scene into the next. In this case, it is the California Dream yet to be fulfilled. Secondly, it causes either moral or narrative angst in the reader, and by extrapolation threatens worse things to come. This is also a rare instance in prose in which the structure of the story, in this case the freeze-frame nature of the closing scene, demands such a powerful emotional response. This is more frequently accomplished through the plight of a character or images of loss, but in this case the very fact that the story ends with such alarming open-endedness and moral ambiguity creates sympathy, or sentiment, in the reader.

In *The Sentimental Education of the Novels*, Margaret Cohen defines the nature

D Q G H I I H F W R I W K H W D E O H D X L Q Z R U N V S R V V H V V L Q J V

tableau occurs when the two conflicting moral imperatives confront each other with full

I R U F H L Q W K H S U R W I D O N Q I n y W I J W R X O \$ W W K L

stages the confrontation with gesture, and solicits sympathy not only with the intensity of

K L V R U K H U U H D F W L R Q E X W E \ V D F U L I L F L Q J L Q G L Y L G X D

The striking alignment between her description and the final scene in *The Grapes of*

*Wrath* indicates that, whether or not the entire text was sentimental in nature, the final



scene likely engenders a powerful emotional response from the reader. These emotions may not be able to be articulated clearly in some readers, other than to say that a deep resonance of sustained emotion lingers. Such unreconciled emotions promote philosophical provocation, precisely what Steinbeck desired in his readers as they turned the last page only to realize that they were forced to then reconcile for themselves the gap between myth and reality.

The fourth significant technique which shattered the myth of the western Eden<sup>2</sup> symbolic allusion-- challenged the social and ecological patterns of thought and inspired legal and humanitarian responses. Steinbeck calls on the subconscious and culturally embedded associations to pioneering Americana, the Bible as the primary textual shaper of American culture, and the industrial takeover of agrarian culture. The conjuring of allusions connected to the founding and shaping principles of America at large and the West in particular establishes an epic tone and likewise grants the message of the text with a significance that acknowledges the cultural weight and primacy of these allusions. In presenting and then deconstructing the pioneering, biblical, and industrial structures of American culture, Steinbeck attempts to communicate the idea that the traditional views (and contemporary versions) are old patterns forced upon 20<sup>th</sup> century America. He

FKDOOHQJHV WKH &DOLIRUQLD 'UHDP E\ EULQJLQJ LW V

showing its errant and even damaging effects, and demanding a re-visioning of land and humanity.

I have no desire to revisit the clouded debate over the degree to which The

Grapesof Wrath LV D VHQWLPHQWDO ZRUN EXW DP LQGHEWHG

consideration of how associations must be presented to the reader as I attempt to explain

6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ Seditionist Dark Samiel Clemens in a Maze of Moral

Philosophy & D P I L H O G D V V H U W V ³ > ) @ R U V H Q W L P H Q W D O O L V

P X V W U H F U H D W H L Q W K H U H D G H U ¶ V P L Q G D V H Q V H R I S

shared associations and sympathy. Still, such sentimental reactions are easily upset by

conflicting associations and by anything that might impede sympathy. Thus, by these

standards, a writer must purify representations of external reality in order to evoke pure,

L G H D O P R U D O O \ X S O L I W L Q J U H Y S R O W H Y 6 W H L Q E H

D V V R F L D W L R Q V R I W K H \$ P H U L F D Q U H D G H U E \ G L V P D Q W

been presented. Accordingly, the response of his readers is not pure, ideal, or morally

uplifting, but rather indignant, anxious, and self-conscious. Ironically, this wrath is the

³ L G H D O ´ K D U Y H V W K H Z D V O R R N L Q J I R U N Q R Z L Q J W K D V

comes about in the form of psychological and social transformation.

The age of modernity so fundamentally shifted the human experience that the old

Y L H Z V R I W K H Z R U O G D Q G K X P D Q L W \ ¶ V S O D F H L Q L W Z H

5 L F K D U G / H K D Q F D S W X U H V O L W H U D W X U H \ ¶ V W U H D W P H Q

that, just as cultural perspectives needed to change, literary expressions of the human

experience likewise needed new approaches. The preceding pages of this chapter discuss

K R Z 6 W H L Q E H F N G L G M X V W W K D W ³ 7 K H G H D W K R I D Q D

industrial one produced a change both in the subject matter and technique of the novel.

The heroic was diminished; the capacity for unqualified good was questioned; conflict

could no longer be resolved by sentiment; the banal competed with the extraordinary;

F R Q W U D G L F W L R Q V S U H Y D L O H G 6 W H L Q E H F N Z D V D Z

culture, and placed its oldest and dearest philosophies at the crux of his story and style in

order to rewrite them into a brave new world in such a way that they would remain revolutionary. Robert DeMott identifies many of these qualities in *The Grapes of Wrath*

ODEHOLQJ LW <sup>3</sup>SDUW QDWXUDOLVWLF HSLF SDUW MHU  
SDUW WUDQVFHQGHQWDO JRVSHO´ , QWURGXFWRQ [ WURSHV KDYH VKD

asks the reader to reconsider the integrity of these anachronistic molds.

The first and most prevalent association examined is that of the pioneering American family, whose lineage of sacrifice and patriotism trace back to Puritans and plantations of the seventeenth century. Steinbeck consistently aligns the history of the Okie families with these images of the American ideal in an effort to humanize them and connect their fate with the readers. They are of the same bloodlines that originated in a western European culture, cleared forests and expanded west, and fought in the

Revolutionary and Civil Wars: <sup>3</sup> : H DLQ¶W IRUHLJQ 6HYHQ JHQHUDWLF and beyond that Irish, Scotch, English, German. One o I RXU IRONV LQ WKH 5HYR they was lots of our folks in the Civil War <sup>2</sup> ERWK VLGHV 31\$-P18)UheDQV´

irrevocable passports into full citizenship and commonality stamped by the investment of their blood and sweat strike a deep chord with readers of like history. Suddenly there is a kinship, if only through shared sacrifices, with these dispossessed families. Steinbeck continues to tap into the heritage of colonization that defines the proud American ethic of

Manifest Destiny and the sovereign right to own land. Arguing his case for the right to VW D\ RQ KLV 2NODKRPDQ KRPHVWHDG 6WHLQE HFN¶V U <sup>3</sup> \* UDPSD WRRN XS WKH ODQ GQ V D Q G K H G UKIDYH 45WPK N P O O Z DMK

is a proud declaration rather than a shameful confession, yet it begins to develop an ironic

negative association to this American ideal as the white man is now the one being

³ N L O O H G ´ G U L Y H Q D Z D \ E \ W K H V D P H R S S U H V V R U 7 K H

safe to simply be white and have an historical connection to the land. The reader begins to see that if these citizens are having everything taken from them, nothing will prevent such a thing from happening to them.

Steinbeck continues to warp and satirize the traditionally idealized image of the American pioneering settler. At the end of chapter five, he implements a tableau of the American prairie family in which the virile and confident frontiersman takes from the earth what he sees fit. However, this picture shows the man to be emasculated and mute. His powerless rifle hangs limp and his dreams are crushed as land is seized from him

rather than by K L P ³ 7 K H W U D F W R U F X W D V W U D L J K W O L Q H R Q

with its thunder. The tenant man stared after it, his rifle in his hand. His wife was beside him, and the quiet children behind. And all of them st D U H G D I W H U 5 3 W K H W U D F W R U

inverted experience of victimization rather than appropriation again startles the reader as

W K H L P D J H D Q G W K H R X W F R P H G R Q I W

Steinbeck warns his generation that the forces now shaping the land and culture will not swerve to avoid a rifle or an individual family. Every middle-class citizen is in danger of having his American Dream plowed under. A final example of this westering narrative being demythologized is depicted with a somewhat sardonic tone. The plantation-like social hierarchy that developed among the migrants, though on an incomparably lower scale, reflects just how bad their conditions were even under the best possible

F L U F X P V W D Q F H V ³ 7 K H - R D G V K D G E H H Q O X F N \ 7 K H \ J R

the boxcars. Now the tents of the late-comers filled the little flat, and those who had the

boxcars were old-timers, an G L Q D Z D \ D559. R A W R F a d E i W o v i n g the  
 brave and adventurous characterizations of the American settler, Steinbeck soils it with  
 irony and loss.

These nostalgic associations to national identity and pride did not act alone in  
 rewriting the California Dream. They were joined by the religious representations that  
 K D G W U D G L W L R Q D O O \ M X V W L I L H G W K H D F W L R Q V R I \$ P H

abound throughout *The Grapes of Wrath* both a structural level and in specific  
 moments. There are a number of Biblical allusions which allow for the entire novel to be  
 read as an extended spiritual metaphor. The story stretches across Route 66, paralleling  
 the Christian journey told through the sixty-six books in the bible. A parallel epic of  
 dispossession and sacrificial redemption, the Joads travel through a desert to a Promised

Land which ultimately remains a contested space between old and new tribes only to be  
 U H G H H P H G E \ P X W X D O K R S H 7 K L V L V u d u e u h i d i s H F W L R Q R I  
 modeled on Old Testament Jewish history and the fallen yet redeemed philosophy of the  
 Christian faith. Having fallen as far as possible, the final scene reflects a glimmer of hope

L Q 5 R V D V K D U Q ¶ V V D F U L I L F L D O V D Y L Q J R I D Q R W K H U O L

Specific characterizations and allusions to well known biblical passages and  
 principles abound. The somewhat overt and overused symbol of the Christ figure is  
 created in the old preacher Casy, intending his words and actions to hold prophetic  
 sanctity. This is particularly true when the Christ figure is martyred for being a

E H Q H Y R O H Q W U H Y R O X W L R Q D U \ 7 K L V L V & D V \ ¶ V I D W H  
 W K D W F U X V K H V K L V V N X O O K H S D U D S K U D V H V - H V X V & K  
 kn R Z Z K D W a - C R X ¶ Q ¶ ' 7 K H P H V V H Q J H U R I W K H S H U V H F X W H

dead baby, acted as Moses as it floated off between the reeds toward town to convict the hearts of the oppressors and announce the rights of the captives. Tom is also projected to become a disciple and voice of hope for the oppressed. Ultimately, this line of allusions makes the plight of the Okies a spiritual matter. As they align with the chosen people of God, the reader develops a moral obligation to take their side in the social battle or face the guilt of aligning with sinners. The effect of choosing earthly wealth and power over living in grace with others is made explicitly clear at one point as a swindled farmer

Wn goes with the p  
of junk and the bay horses <sup>2</sup> so beautiful <sup>2</sup> a packet of bitterness to grow in your house and to flower, some day. We could have saved you, but you cut us down, and soon you

Z L O O E H F X W G R Z Q Q B Q R G W K H W R P O Y E H \ Q X ´

I Q 5 L F K D U G / Realism and Naturalism: The Novel in an Age of Transition  
he notes in his introduction that literary naturalism, a classification placed on The Grapes

of Wrath E \ P D Q \ V F K R O D U V U H Y H D O V W K D W <sup>3</sup> F L Y L O L ] D W L R  
G L V J X L V H ´ [ [ L L L 7 K L V L V D U H I H U H Q F H W R W K H I X Q G D  
V H W W O H U V R Q D Q µ H U U D Q G L Q W R W K H Z L O G H U Q H V V ¶ V

national psyche is so reinforced and powerful, it is difficult to overwrite this valued myth of expansion with a more democratized and informed view. This is why Steinbeck brings them to the surface and then alters their direction, rather than attempting to rewrite

\$ P H U L F D ¶ V X Q G H U V W D Q G L Q J R I D p k H D I O W K I D Q G V X V W D

perspective of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the boundless potential found in industrialization has replaced the expansive geographic landscape, yet Steinbeck warns that to go as far as industry allows would be a mistake. He highlights the spiritual connection between

humanity and land in an agrarian construct that is utterly lost in the industrial market.

This cunning manipulation of a spiritual calling to the land which effectively equates to

W K H <sup>3</sup> H U U D Q G L Q W R W K H ~~Zerely spiritual connection to land~~ S H L S H W X D W H V

while downplaying the righteous classism associated with it. Again, Steinbeck finds it easier to alter the dream rather than wholly condemn it.

The tractoring under of the family farms of the Dust Bowl symbolize the coldness of mechanization and the men that drive it. These tractors are the icon of the system and

philosophy that perpetuate a further separation between haves and have-nots. They are

F K D U D F W H U L J H G D V ~~Based on Dust, raising the dust and striking~~ E

their snouts into it, straight down the country, across the country, through fences, through dooryards, in and out of gul O L H V L Q V W 47) This image of the Q in a

objective advancement demonstrates the total lack of consideration for the contours of reality. Other associative images of war assigned to the tractors, such as the correlation

made between them and tanks (Grapes205), play off of escalating concerns with the war in Europe and align industrial force with aggression and violence. Steinbeck also reveals

how the most important symbol of the American family, once the hearth of the home, has been replaced by the automobile. Industrialization acts as a catalyst of the cultural shift

from grounded stability to movement. No longer able to sink roots and connect to a place, the nomadic family now gathers around the car they so deeply depend on to transport

them into a new identity: <sup>3</sup> 7 K H I D P L O \ P H W D W W K H P R V W L P S R U W D C

The house was dead, and the fields were dead; but this truck was the active thing, the

living principle. . . . this was the new hearth, the livin J F H Q W H U R I 136-136. I D P L O \ '

By association, Steinbeck places every reader into the same circumstance, eliminating the

safety and tradition of the American home and pushing every family out on the highway in search of the American dream which had now become a moving target.

Steinbeck was always aware of the form, aware of its power over the reading experience. He consciously crafted his writing with a variety of devices, chosen as needed to accomplish his intentions. A combination of techniques drawn from varying genres makes for the most influential and effective novel, taking the benefits of each and artfully weaving them together to have the most impact. It speaks to a broader cross section of sensibilities among the readership, and functions in universals, reading beyond the cultural and stylistic specifics of its point of creation. This universal quality grants it the potential to be larger and more powerful than what its immediate reception offers it. The highly charged literary and cultural reception of *The Grapes of Wrath* and its lasting effects on the mythology of the West, both seventy years ago and still today, is the most conclusive evidence that his technical approach to the novel was highly effective.

7KH 5HFHSWLRQ DQG (IIHF:WV RI 6WHLQEHN¶V :ULWLQJ

6KHOWHU OLQH VWUHWFKLQ¶ μURXQG WKH FRUQHU

Welcome to the new world order

)DPLOLHV VOHHSLQ¶ LQ WKHLU FDUV LQ WKH VRXW

No homøno job no peace no rest



The highway is alive tonight

% X W Q R E R G \ ¶ V N L G G L Q ¶ Q R E R G \ D E R X W Z K H U H L W  
 , ¶ P V L W W L Q ¶ G R Z Q K H U H L Q W K H F D P S I L U H O L J K W  
 6 H D U F K L Q ¶ I R U W K H J K R V W R I 7 R P - R D G

--Bruce Springsteen, 1995

At the beginning of this chapter I emphasized three specific intentions of Steinbeck in writing *The Grapes of Wrath*. As I now consider the reception and effects of the text on society and their perceptions of the California Dream, it is worth naming them here again in order to identify the degree to which his efforts were successful. The primary and overarching intent was to expose the Edenic myth of California as false and dangerous. This myth is articulated in this study as: California is the endlessly bountiful and expansive place to start over and find prosperity; hard work on its beautiful and consecrated land will always result in fulfillment. As I now consider the reception and effects of the text on society and their perceptions of the California Dream, it is worth naming them here again in order to identify the degree to which his efforts were successful. The perspectives of their relationship to one another and to the land, and bring humanitarian aid and legal change for the victims of the migrant situation. Obviously these are not small tasks. Likewise, *The Grapes of Wrath* proved to be a work of art not easily

GLVPLVHGG , GLYLGHWKH DQDO\VLV RI WKH ERRN ¶ V U  
 1) the literary and cultural reception and saturation of the text, 2) its effects on the culture and farming practices in California, Oklahoma, and the U.S.A. in general, and 3) the QDWLRQ ¶ V RYHUDOO SHUFH SWLRQ RI WKH & DQ LIRUQLD  
 third, which is the central query yet most difficult to assess in quantitative terms.

It goes without saying that the effect of *The Grapes of Wrath* on the nation was profound, surprising even Steinbeck, who in his charming humility was sure it would not

EH D ³ SRSX O'Dib'LetterRIR3N It inspired stories in national newspapers and magazines, prompted tours of the migrant camps by Eleanor Roosevelt and Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, instigated congressional hearings, and inspired a wildly successful Hollywood movie. Carey McWilliams took middle-class benevolence workers

RQ WRXUV RI WKH PLJUDQW FDPSV VR WKH\ FRXOG VHH lived; and after her trip to California, Eleanor Roosevelt famously testified that she never thought *The Grapes of Wrath* Z D V H [ D J Life in Letters (2002). The novel also

SURPSWHG 3UHV LGHQW 5RRVHYHOW WR GHFODUH ³, ZR devoted to the care of the 500,000 people represent HG LQ μ \*UDSHV RI :UDWK¶ Introduction 3). Even Upton Sinclair, the modern prophet of literary protest, proclaimed,

³, UHPHPEHU KRZ (OLMDK SXW KLV PDQWOH RQ WKH VK KDYH P\ ROG PDQWOH LI KH KDV DQ\ XVH in the LW´ 6WHL WKDW WR VRPH QRWDEOH GHJUHH DOO WKUHH RI 6WH

The most measurable means of assessing the effectiveness of *The Grapes of Wrath* as a tool for change is by looking at its literary and cultural reception and VDWXUDWLRQ ,W ZRXOG QRW EHFRPH D EHVW VHOOHU readers, nor would it or its author be selected for prestigious literary awards unless it held merit. Yet this was exactly its fate. Soon after its official publication in April of 1939,

*The Grapes of Wrath* was the top selling novel and remained so for nearly a year. After mid- ³ \$PHULFDQV FRXOG QR ORQJHU in the KH ZRUG

- R D G V ' 6 W H L Q , W V S R S X O D U L W \ D Q G Z L G H V S U H D G

National Book Award and Steinbeck winning the 1940 Pulitzer Prize.

The work of John Steinbeck was furthered greatly when the book was adapted into a movie, thoroughly saturating society with its message of injustice and its plea for change. Produced by Darryl Zanuck and directed by John Ford in 1940, it was wildly popular and made the harsh realities of the symbolic Joad family common knowledge. It earned Ford an Oscar for Best Director, and was nominated as Picture of the Year for

1940. It was later selected (1989) for preservation in the National Film Registry for its

K L V W R U L F D Q G F X O W X U D California and the Dust Bowl Migration H U 6 W H  
K H Z U L W H V W K D W 3 U H V L G H Q W V R I W K H Y D O O H \ W R Z Q V

version of the novel was second only to Gone With The Wind in box-office attraction in

the San Joaquin Valley in 1939 and 1940. Camp managers reported that The Grapes of

Wrath was producing a vintage of sympathy for the migrants, and local newspapers

H F K R H G W K D W 4 F R G F O Y M L R G Woody Guthrie also wrote a song

W L W O H G 3 7 R P - R D G ' W K H Q L J K W K H V D Z W K H I L O P D G G

F R P P X Q L F D W L R Q W K U R X J K Z K L F K 6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V P H V V D

E \ F D X V H V D Q G R U J D Q L J D W L R Q V W K D W G L G Q ¶ W D O L J Q

text and the social influence that came with it without authorial permission.

In light of the widespread popularity of the novel and the film which followed, the

cultural reception of TheGrapesof Wrathwas assimilated into many perspectives. While

3 U H Y L O H G D V F R P P X Q L V W S U R S D J D Q G D D Q G W D S U R P R W

also considered a pamphlet for socialism and a stirring expose of the economic royalists

R I & D O L I R U Q L D ' , W Z D V D O V R V X S S R U W H G E \ D F R X S O H

(Fossey 27). It makes sense that social and political movements hustled to posture their views in context to *The Grapes of Wrath*, knowing that it was a cultural conduit through which nearly every American was processing the issues at hand. Ultimately, what is important from a rhetorical perspective is that the general public perceived the novel to be an accurate portrayal of the situation. Wheeler Mayo, the editor of the Sequoyah County Times RI 6DOOLVDZ 2NODKRPD WKH -RDGV¶ KRPHWRZ if the Joads were actual residents of his county (Starr, *Endangered Dreams* 257-58).

-RXUQDOLVWV¶ DQG SROLWFLDQV¶ SUDFWLFH RI LQYR whole quickly became common. That even FDR referred to them in a Fireside Chat as if they were real people indicates the rhetorical success of the novel (Starr, *Endangered Dreams* 258-59). Making light of the magnitude to which *The Grapes of Wrath* had

JURZQ VRPHWKLQJ WKDW EXUGHQHG 6WHLQEHN KH Z the head of the list to second place out here and about time too. It is far too far when Jack %HQQ\ PHQWLRQV LW LQ KLV SURJUDP´ :DUIRUG

There is little doubt that the generally positive book reviews for *The Grapes of Wrath* LQIOXHQFHG WKH SXEOLF¶V UHFHSWLRQ RI WKH ER relationship that occurs between the reader and the critic <sup>2</sup> as the masses embraced it more and more (making it a best seller), edgier reviews softened in light of the unsuppressible supportive critical mass. The same mechanism of influence that shaped WKH SXEOLF¶V UHFHSWLRQ of the book applied pressure on literary scholars as well, polarizing the more liberal worlds of academia and the media from those of the farmers and the states involved. Another major influence on the reception of the work was the significant critical and popular success previously attained by Steinbeck. His general

popularity was largely solidified by his bestseller *Of Mice and Men* in 1937, but his reputation as a sympathizer of the people and an informed voice on the issue preceded him, especially with works *In Dubious Battle* and *The Harvest Gypsies* as well as countless newspaper and magazine articles. Having a well established readership, therefore, gave him clout as an authoritative voice and artistic master.

, ¶ YH SODFHG D FKURQRORJLFDO FRPSLODWLRQ RI  
 brief comments. The chronology allows for the identification of critical patterns over time and, as each review notes the site of publication, demonstrates the likely slant and  
 s L]H RI HDFK UHYLHZ ¶ V UH DGHUVKLS \$Q H[KDXVWLYH F  
 XQWR LWVHOI WKXV , ¶ YH VHOHFWHG UHYLHZV WKDW D  
 stated, this is an enlightening, although subjective, method of analysis in measuring the effects of *The Grapes of Wrath* on society at large. While this measurement of reception is particularly academic in nature, I argue that public sentiment likewise influenced the presentation of the text by the reviewers. Ultimately, a cross section of these documents of reception can be trusted as a fair means of representing the collective reader.

Its reception in literary and public circles was clearly positive. The most common exceptions were of course regionally centered in the Valley and Oklahoma. This is looked at more closely below, but in simple terms the local publications deplored the novel as untruthful propaganda that was philosophically dangerous. While these objections centered on socialist accusations and on the depiction of Oklahomans and  
 & DOLIRUQLD IDUPHUV RWKHU FRPPXQLWLHV DQG LQGL  
 its vulgar language. This reflects the culturally conservative nature of the country at the  
 WLPH ,W ZHQW VR IDU WKDW <sup>3</sup>RQ 1 Bay Home East FRSLHV

6 W / R X L V , O O L Q R L V > @ R J & H U Q W L F F D O V D P I F H S W I H R Q P T  
Introduction 2).

Besides mostly raving reviews, Steinbeck also certainly benefited from the creation of other contemporary works of documentary art which helped tell the story of the migrants and deliver images which powerfully coupled with the words. Among them Z H U H ' R U R W K H D / D Q J A m e r i c a G e s e t s O 7 D D O R G U \$ V U H / R U H Q W J films The Plow that Broke the Plains (1936) and The River & D U H \ 0 F : L O O L D P V research-oriented book Factories in the Field served as perhaps the single most complimentary work of art which validated and empowered The Grapes of Wrath

The cumulative effects of these works of art appeared to be the impetus for change that California farm culture had long needed. The nation was informed and involved with the harsh realities of the state as never before, but that focus of energy was soon shifted to issues of global significance as the war in Europe escalate G D Q G \$ P H U L F D T L Q Y R O Y H P H Q W L Q L W D O V R L Q F U H D V H G \$ V H [ S O D L Q H G 5 H S R U W D F R Q J U H V V L R Q D O L Q Y H V W L J D W L R Q R Q W K H P already lost its rhetorical occasion, as the nation was more concerned with the impending war. The war ended the crisis in an unexpected way, with migrants gratefully filling the sudden demand for factory labor and becoming permanent residents of California, though Q R W L Q W K H Z D \ 6 W H L Q E H F N K D G s o n t h e m i g r a n t i s s u e 7 K H became all the more the case once the white Americans in the fields got the factory jobs that surfaced in response to global warfare. The transition of labor groups from pre-Depression ethnic to Depression-era white, and then back to an ethnic-based labor class defined by the Bracero Program in war time and beyond, all occurred in about a decade.

Many of the same disturbing practices of industrial agriculture continued as before, yet since the victims were not Americans of western European descent, it no longer concerned the white majority as it had before. Sadly, attention to these injustices did not resurface on the national stage until the protests of the United Field Workers beginning in the 1960s, led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta.

Despite being a preeminent literary example of the ability of art to persuade in the name of justice, its legacy is based in literary achievement as much as social

W U D Q V I R U P D W L R Q \$ E X V H V L Q W K H D J U L F X I Q W X U D O L Q C

work in the minds and hearts of a nation that could not have come this far without it. The

Grapes of Wrath Z D V W K H F R U Q H U V W R Q H R I 1962 and has recently N ¶ V 1 R E

as 1995, % U X F H 6 S U L Q J T h e W G h o s C o f T o n D J o a n X i R u e s to reflect the

mainstream presence of this iconic novel. It is one of the most widely read texts in

American high schools and colleges. Thus, while it does not stand as the historical

marker at which the factories in the fields were dismantled, The Grapes of Wrath created

long-term conceptual change and established a precedent for th H Z R U n e b l u i n ¶ V

three decades later.

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, many legal and social effects

that aided the well-being of the farm worker took place in response to The Grapes of

Wrath D Q G R W K H U G R F X P H Q W D U \ D U W W K D W L Q I R U P H G \$ P

There was the inclusion of farm workers in the National Labor Relations Act, the

& D O L I R U Q L D 6 X S U H P H & R X U W V W U l l a n i m i g r a n t C a r z Q W K H V W D

1941, and the recruitment of migrant families into war-time industrial jobs (DeMott,

, Q W U R G X F W L R Q [ O L 7 K H 6 H Q D W H ¶ V / D ) o n Q o t t e H W W & R P P

Valley farms. And President Roosevelt was personally inspired, wanting to designate the reclaimed Columbia Basin as land to be developed by the migrants (Wyatt, Introduction 3).

Ultimately, not enough changed about the Californian farm culture to ensure lasting effects. Walter Stein discusses this far too narrow window of attention, explaining WKDW ³QRW XQWLO GLG WKH VSHFLILF SUREOHP RI receive serious interest from Congress or the President and then only after the publication of The Grapes of Wrath had made the condition of the Okies a blatant fact of American OLIH´ :KDW¶V PRUH WKH 8 6 ¶V LQYROYHPHQW LQ scenario for the workers than did law or perceptual change, unfortunately. In the case of the white workers, World War II was a good change. But for minorities, it stifled the momentum that could have, for the first time in the history of the state, altered the ways in which minority laborers were treated.

The third and most significant consideration in assessing the effects of The Grapes of Wrath is that of the general location of the western myth in the minds of America. His intent was to move the locations of identity and place in the minds of the readers from mythological and hierarchical to a place of justice for the western landscape and people. The idea that California is the place to start over and find prosperity, a place where hard work always results in fulfilled dreams, was no longer an accurate or reasonable perspective. The granting of innately bountiful and beneficent qualities to any place allows for misrepresentations and unacknowledged abuses of the land and its people. This philosophical PHVV DJH ZDV 6WHLQEHFNa¶V FOLQW UDO LQ readers who held on to the more overt layers of meaning aligned with social protest.



These messages were victories, to be sure, but within a couple of years the white migrants from the Southwest and Midwest found long-term and well-paying jobs in the wartime economy. Mexicans once again predominated as agricultural migrants, and the problem lost its urgency in Anglo-

Each generation has had to pick up where *The Grapes of Wrath* left off, seemingly only breaking even in making up the lost ground between its efforts and those that have come before. Expressions of activism that stand for generations as the consummate solution to the problem are rare or even nonexistent. It is the job of each generation of artists and citizens to build on and invoke the voices which have laid the foundation for justice. This has happened in every generation in California and across America through various expressions. The formation of the National Farmworkers Association (now the United Farm Workers, or UFW) in 1962, under the leadership of Cesar Chavez, is the most notable product against racial prejudices and labor injustice birthed to some degree out of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*: better wages, working conditions, and collective representation ever since, making great strides through its values of non-violence and empowerment.

*The Grapes of Wrath* ineffective means of protest and transformation since these social and psychological patterns still exist? It is not fair to place these expectations on any one body of work; the pursuits of social injustices never tire, but it is the role of the artist to lessen the strain of inequality on humanity. *The Grapes of Wrath* changed its generation and continues to be a metaphor through which people, John Steinbeck represents a significant advocate for justice against the social ills

born out of broken dreams. It can be well argued that voices such as Muir and Steinbeck would not have the power today that they had over their contemporary audiences due to their homogenous racial trajectory of a multicultural problem. But just as cultural representation in America has progressed, a diverse body of literary voices representing them has likewise grown. Voices of protest change radically over time, both in who and what they defend and the stylistic means through which they do so. Just as the cultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s called for a certain style of protest, so does the 21st century as it faces new versions of the same social and environmental injustices which challenge an equitable pursuit of happiness.

3 < R X F D O O V R P H S O D F H S D U D G L V H N L V V L W J R R G E \ H

± ' R Q + H Q T O H L a s t R e s o r t ' H o t e l C a l i f o r n i a

According to an article in the Fresno Bee G D W H G \$ S U L O

3 D & K R Z

police officer was checking on a rented van that contained methamphetamine-related chemicals when he noticed a man wearing only a plastic bag around his waist. The 22-year-old man claimed to be the devil and Jesus Christ. He led authorities to a large methamphetamine laboratory capable of producing 50 pounds at a time on a farm in Madera County ( Chowchilla ). This bizarre and almost comical news story taken from the Central Valley reflects one product of social and environmental injustices founded in utopian dreams, yet the regularity of such disturbing events is a sobering reality. The Y L F W L P V D Q G P H D Q V R I Y L F W L P L ] D W L R Q Y D U \ J U H D W O \ heartland, but each headline is a telling metaphor of the perceptual and physical patterns of failed endeavors which oppress much of this land and its people. Valley residents are all too aware of the many forms of victimization that plague their region, but the battle for ownership of the larger public perception of the California Dream is still alive and well among protest writers and propagandists.

The methamphetamine epidemic is one of the most devastating contemporary counter-narratives of the California Dream, exposing both the social and ecological tolls paid. Its dangerous effects on low-income users and the labor force exemplify a drug epidemic birthed out of the pursuit of happiness. The fact that it is such a powerful and

dangerous drug, and that its use is so widespread throughout the state among the lower and middle class and minorities, reflects the hollow reality of the California Dream. It ultimately serves as a means of sustaining the myth, a means of altering reality that temporarily evaporates hardships. The extreme nature of its highs and lows perfectly

P D W F K W K H Y D X Q W H G P \ W K R I & D O L I R U Q L D O L N H Z L V H

Demographic data on meth makers and users is hard to come by; incarceration and rehabilitation data may be the best indicators, but much of that information is not available : K D W L V N Q R Z Q L V W K D W P D N L Q J P H W K L V D P H D made by traditional means, and is the method so many disillusioned Californians choose to escape their realities. Whether it is the profit to be made by its sale or the escapist effects of the drug itself, meth represents the new lows to which the dream has fallen.

<sup>3</sup> 7 K H r e c k d a n d y P R X Q W D L Q <sup>st</sup> F R I Q W K H U \ : H V W L V Q ¶ W M X V W D Q I fantasy, but a very real social and environmental toxin.

Most of the methamphetamine in California is produced in the Central Valley, once an idyllic rural cover for the manufacture of a deadly drug, and a region flush with expendable makers and disillusioned users. However, it has become a well-known epicenter since the late 1990s. Despite millions of dollars and thousands of man-hours annually invested by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, its presence continues to increasingly pervade the Valley. Its social abuses are horrifying. Not only does it destroy the lives of its users, made up primarily of the spectrum of ethnicities in W K H O R Z H U F O D V V E X W W K L V W R [ L F <sup>3</sup> S R R U P D Q ¶ V F R F I who are often illegal immigrant farm laborers hired on by powerful drug trafficking organizations (DTOs). As an ironic microcosm of the California Dream, DTOs

(representative of the traditional power structure, or profiteers) offer their makers and dealers access to the good life by working for them. Yet much like their economic identity within the farm labor industry, these poor workers are often viewed as

<sup>3</sup> H [ S H Q G D E O H '

This deadly perspective is matched by the health risks at the hands of the F K H P L F D O V W K H P V H O Y H V Z K L F K D U H G H D G O C h L I E U H D W more caustic than the muriatic acid used in swimming pools, eats through not only skin but concrete. If inhaled, its fumes cause chemical pneumonia, which can bring a quick, S D L Q I X O G H a n d W o r k m a n . S u c c i d e d i n t o t h e p r o d u c t i o n p r o c e s s , t h e y o f t e n find themselves quickly trapped, having told the Mexican DTOs to who and where to send their earnings back in Mexico. Ringleaders then confirm a family connection, which all but enslaves the workers to these drug lords out of the fear that a lack of acquiescence or loyalty will lead to the death of a wife, child, or other relative. "Farm labor is a dangerous occupation," said Merced County Sheriff's Detective Mario Anaya.

"Unfortunately, they are trading that job for an even more dangerous one" (Arax and Gorman). Other cultural effects of meth include its significantly higher rate of use in rural rather than urban areas (a general description of population dispersal in the Valley), its renown as the single greatest drug threat throughout the region<sup>11</sup>, and the fact that most

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<sup>11</sup> 87.3 percent of state and local law enforcement agencies in the Pacific Region (dominated statistically by the Central Valley) characterize methamphetamine as the greatest drug threat in their jurisdictions, compared with 29.4 percent of agencies nationwide (National March 4, 2010).

violent and property crime in the Valley is meth-related, including domestic violence, child abuse, and homicide induced by its side effects<sup>12</sup>.

This heartless cycle of injustice to humanity confirms again that wherever social injustice is, environmental injustice abounds also. The ecological damage incurred by production burden the same land that holds the water tables and grows food for the nation. The production of one pound of methamphetamine yields approximately five pounds of waste chemicals such as lye, red phosphorus, hydriodic acid, and iodine that contaminate land, streams, rivers, irrigation canals, public sewer systems, and the walls and furnishings of homes and businesses. Based on estimated production and cleanup quantities, California alone has anywhere from 77,000 pounds to 1.75 million pounds of toxic waste dumped into these same waterways and topsoils<sup>13</sup>. In California, farmers use an annual total of twenty million pounds of carcinogenic pesticides ( Pesticide ). Though this is a far greater amount of chemicals distributed on California fields compared to meth dumping, it is done so in a highly regulated, distributed, and scrutinized manner. The toxins of meth production, in contrast, are added directly into water, soil, and air systems in large quantities and concentrated doses, not to mention that they are a

<sup>12</sup> These patterns, as well as the environmental data that follows, are recorded in a number of reports (2001-2009). Domestic violence is also a result of meth manufacture, but more a product of gang culture than the use of meth.

<sup>13</sup> The low number is based on the amount of meth seized in recent years (National Meth Threat Assessment, 2009) and multiplied by ten to account for all unconfiscated meth (Arax). Not only is it likely that more than ten times the meth production hits the streets than is confiscated, but according to a 2002 study, the number of pollutants per sight being 47 pounds (39). This adds up to roughly 350,000 pounds of toxic waste found per year, which could be multiplied by ten to account for undiscovered labs (3.5 million pounds). Roughly half of these removals occur in California (1.75 million pounds).

commingling of unstable chemicals which react in a volatile manner with one another. Somehow the worse of two evils seems to be meth pollution.

The uncertainty of experts as to the exact depth and breadth of these actions only adds to the sense of danger, while the fact remains that livestock, crops, and entire waterways have been poisoned to various degrees throughout the Valley, ultimately affecting the well-being of the entire region. Water and soil remediation and quality assessment is an expensive and imperfect task, and authorities believe the damage to be

3 V X E V W D Q W U R L A S O h o w t o b e r e m e d i a t e t h e a r e a o f a l a b ( Methamphetamine ). Not even mentioned yet are the aerosol byproducts of the production of meth, consisting of multiple ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons. These

& ) & ¶ used primarily as refrigerants and industrial solvents, and when released into the air migrate into the upper atmosphere and destroy ozone, ( D U W K ¶ V Q D W X U D O S U P I U R P W K H V X Q ¶ V K D U P I X D E A a g e n t s c o n s i s t e n t l y r i c h i n t h e U S G L D W L R Q P D Q \ R I W K H V H & ) L D ¶ W L R Q & W K O Q D R E U Q \$ V S D U W s & I W K H P D meth, these chemicals are typically released directly into the atmosphere

( Businessmen ). Though much more difficult to measure than solids, the vaporous byproducts of meth production are just as dangerous. In many ways these aerosol pollutants are more harmful or of greater concern since they cannot be recovered. Remediating the ozone layer is a project beyond the auspices of just the EPA, DEA, or any other defeated acronym; when they lose, we all lose.

The public ¶ V O D E F N R t o the meth epidemic reveals the corrosive effects of the California Dream on our value of interdependence. The value system of the state and nation is still fundamentally shaped by the myth of individual rights while ignoring more

invasive issues at the ecological level which actually affect everyone. The lack of outrage and exposure to the facts over the toxic epidemic of meth is an example of this self-serving institutionalization of the myth. An attitude of advocacy in the public at large for the sake of social and environmental justice, as expressed through legal and political change, must take place in order to curb the long standing effects of such passive and dismissive responses to collective concerns. As suggested by Jan Hancock in *Environmental Human Rights: Power, Ethics, and Law* every system of values must shift from individual-centered (dominated by property rights) to community-centered (ecological rights that currently get dismissed).

The accommodation of toxic pollution in law illustrates the way in which legal concepts have been selectively interpreted and applied to protect existent relations of production, exchange and

*F R Q V X P S W L R a d m i n i s t r a t i o n b y p o l l u t i o n* has in contrast been downplayed, indeed denied by law, even though, unlike contraventions of property rights, toxic pollution incurs physical harm that can lead to diseases and even death. Law thereby focuses on and protects exchange relations at the expense of ecological concerns. (117)

This kind of activism has happened more in recent years, but usually at the grassroots level from people groups or perspectives at the fringes of society, rather than in the mainstream. This is due in part to a pattern of victimization which primarily affects underrepresented groups or those without institutionalized social agency. The story of the



Central Valley tells of a dream longed for in many forms by many people who are collectively disenchanting by the lack of returns on their sweat and sacrifice.

Ironically, the appropriated lexicon of the California Dream, though a proven myth to most residents, is the tired language with which so many Central Valley towns boost their image. It is almost as if communities hope to someday become a boomtown by not letting go of the idea; it is also a prudent and necessary marketing decision by local leaders. Associations with the Gold Rush or Yosemite, for example, sell the nostalgia of the myth in a region which is both indebted to, and oppressed by, its application. Every town on the Valley floor that has a major access road to the Sierra Nevada Mountains has branded itself with 19<sup>th</sup> century dreams, seeking both regional and depends on its tourist draw to stay afloat. Ultimately, these communities find themselves in a paradox between retaining the profitable mythology of the past and claiming the more gritty and heterogeneous realities of the present.

An attempt to express the many ways in which the myth is represented in 21<sup>st</sup> century California could fill volumes of books. The residual effects of over a century of promotion are so pervasive and second- even stand out or surprise. In that sense, the myth has succeeded in becoming the mainstream identity of California, while at the same time implying that the public has been desensitized to the magic of the myth and is thus less influenced by it. In short, the degree to which the promoted myth affects the public perception of California can be debated, but the fact is that the myth is still being widely promoted. Music, movies,

regionalized slang, representative images, the marketing of products, regional and city identifications, and an endless proliferation of the California Dream all portray the experience as flashy, healthy, or wealthy. The three dynamos of the state-- tourism, agriculture, and entertainment <sup>2</sup> offer the most representative examples of myth proliferation. Not surprisingly, these are the same perpetrators that gave the California Dream such momentum over a century ago.

The alternative messages in the literature of John Muir and John Steinbeck are philosophical crises and a false, yet thriving, myth. They engage in influential conversation with small Valley farmers losing their land, Valley farming corporations making the rules, the smog-shrouded view of the Sierras, the decrease of wild flowers and spaces, the selfish soul and myopic vision of the Valley landowner, a politicized utilitarian appropriation of its natural resources, and the senseless and destructive ways in which nearly everyone continues to invest in an idea of the place that never truly existed. They did it early and did it best, demanding that their readers engage in the collective shaping of their region and their communities.

John Muir and John Steinbeck continue to translate the angst in the hearts of the oppressed and disempowered, and demand a testimony of defense from those who continue to perpetrate injustices against the land and people of the Valley. In no uncertain terms, though in quite different styles, these men made it known that the California Dream is to be fundamentally challenged as inherently misleading and destructive. Their texts, *My First Summer in the Sierra* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, stand as an entry point into this reevaluation of California in the imagination of America and the social and

environmental application of such beliefs. They put an imaginative asterisk next to the

LGHD \*G U H Q P R N L Q J D F R Q V F L R X V Q H V Y R W K H O D Q G D C

R Q H ¶ V R Z I G. Z H Y O C. That stretched beyond the coast this region so deeply in countercultural ideas that it

still resonates in the imaginations of its residents, and acts as the muse for many writers

who have come after them. Their legacy is seen in tod D \ ¶ V F R Y H U W D Q G R Y H U W D

protests. Like Muir, many celebrate the beauty, diversity, and uniquenesses of the Valley

worthy of preservation. And like Steinbeck, many artists bring light to the darker social

realities that stem from free-market industrialization masquerading as opportunity.

Muir, Steinbeck, and likeminded artists have created works which include stirring depictions of what to fight against, what to strive toward, and how to dream

without the expressions of that dream limiting the prosp H U L W \ R I R W K H U V 7 R W D O

these writers would be a revolutionary accomplishment-- the death of a nostalgic

mythology that has resided at the core of the American and Californian identities from

their inceptions. Such a victory would also mean th D W W K H Q D W L R Q D O D U F K H W

O L I H ' Z R X O G E H U H S O D F H G Z L W K D P R U H H J D O L W D U L D C

and its land.

Ultimately, such a crisis of national and state identity would be greatly beneficial.

California historian Kevin Starr suggests that this transition away from the decayed

California Dream is well under way, yet he describes it as more of an apocalyptic crisis

than a transformative liberation. In his 2004 text *Coast of Dreams: California on the*

*Edge*, 1990/2003 he n R O R Q J H U V H H V & D O L I R U Q L D 3 W R E H I R X Q G

reality. California [has] become, rather, a reality in search of a myth that had once been

E H O L H Y H G L Q K D G E H H Q O R V W E X W Q H Y H U I X O O \ U H S

Dream being reduced to a cultural artifact are long off, but if Starr is right in his assessment of a California groping for a new identity, it will be the voices of Steinbeck and Muir that surface to serve a 21<sup>st</sup> century culture overwhelmed by social and environmental injustice. Even in the highlighted case of meth, the descendants of 6 W H L Q E H F N ¶ V b a n e l o n e y j o i n e d i n w e k i d s are among the most J H Q H U D W L R Q D O O \ Y L F W L P L J H G S H R S O H E \ W K L V G U X J L Q V S L U H V d o w R e g e n e r ¶ o f e c o l o g i c a l protection and rehabilitation from its toxic by-products. They both left a blueprint for a better way of thinking about the human place in the world.

In her essay, <sup>3</sup> & R S L Q J Z L W K , Q G X V W U L D O ([ S O R ¶ h e W D W L R Q the heart of the dominant social and environmental ethic of the West and points to a solution grounded in both action and thought. Ultimately, it is an alarmingly accurate paraphrase of the literary efforts of Muir and Steinbeck:

It must become understood that human progress in the Western world has largely been seen as synonymous with the alienation of human beings from each other and the natural world. Domination and the rise of corporate capitalism can be explained, in part, as a consequence of this alienation. Individuals and societies can no longer stand apart from nature and other people. Overcoming the divisions within society and between society and the natural world must be the goal of the environmental justice movement. Only this struggle against D O L H Q D W L R Q ¶ u n a S i t u a t i o n H U V L R Q R I ecological values can bring us closer to an alternative way of life

predicated on a healthy, just, and sustainable relationship to the natural world and each other. This must become our ultimate task.

(75)

Land and people are inseparably bound by the same imaginative constructs and thus suffer the same fate when either is abused. However, this reciprocal relationship also reflects the shared potential to move from an expressly debased status into one founded on interdependence and respect.

The contemporary voices of the Valley pursuing a new Dream are diverse <sup>2</sup> men and women of varying ethnicities and generations possessing unique opinions and histories. Yet the common thread throughout all of them is an honesty about the realities of this region: racial tensions, movement/migration, economic inequality and strife, environmental problems, migrant labor, and the cultural impact of corporate farming practices. They are working against a backdrop of a media-saturated culture fluent in the iconic language of happy cows roaming green pastures, super model beach babes,

<sup>3</sup> L P S R V W H U ´ F K L F N H Q V O R Q J L Q J W R E H & D O L I I R U Q L D ¶ V West allusions. Whether it is this version of utopian branding or a specific perspective of history that perpetuates an idealization of life in Central California, the regional writer of the 21<sup>st</sup> F H Q W X U \ L V S H U S H W X D O O \ I L J K W L Q J W R E U H D N W K onslaught of media through literature. Clearly, the literary voices are outnumbered and perhaps even using an outdated medium, prompting a call for more writers and artists to candidly and creatively tell the truth about their region for the sake of social and environmental awareness and action.

The current age of environmentalism that now influences the cultural and intellectual perspective of America is rooted in these minority discourses that call for a new ethic grounded in social and environmental stewardship. Muir, Steinbeck, and their inheritors of protest continue to invoke change in spite of their debased locations on the

V F D O H R I V R F L D O D J H Q F \ Z R U N L Q J D J D L Q V W W K H P D L Q  
 G H P R F U D W L F H [ S H U L P H Q W D Q G U H G U D Z L W V E O X H S U L Q

Every generation of writers has contemporary movements or social philosophies which either invoke a call for justice or support the voices that do. For Muir, the myth expressed through utilitarian industrialization was his nemesis while the Progressive Era was his benefactor. For Steinbeck, opposition likewise came from agribusiness while aid in the form of New Deal philosophies supported his cause for social justice. The ethnic diversity of the Central Valley in the 21<sup>st</sup> century guarantees an audience for its

contemporary writers more so than any influences from larger social epochs such as post-modernism or new-environmentalism. Thus while the parties retaining the myth are still

the same, W R G D \ ¶ V 9 D O O H \ U H V L G H Q W U H S U H V H Q W V D Y H U \  
 L Q W K H L U H U D E X W W K D W L V Q R O R Q J H U W K H F D

perspectives more fully reveals the complex realities of class, education, crime, resource degradation, and environmental hazards which directly reflect the standard of living for every group of people in the Valley. As phrased by Mark Arax in the foreword of

+LJKZD\ \$ /LWHUDU\ -RXUQH\ 7KURXJK, the Valley IRUQLD ¶  
 VWRU\ LV EHVW WROG <sup>3</sup>QRW E\ WKH ZULWHU ZLWK QRVV

Sikh or Oaxacan whose grandfather took the long road to the valley in 1980 or 1990 ´  
 (xxvii).

Room must be made for multiple Central Valleys if its social and ecological diversity is to be fully represented. This principle is in fact a point of unification among regional writers striving to reflect the complex tapestry of culture and experience. The voices of protest which follow in the footsteps of Muir and Steinbeck are likewise avoiding the codification of the Valley. Rather, they are seeking to layer together the unrepresented perspectives of the land and its people in order to effect imaginative change. This is a very functionalist perspective of literature, which can suggest that the aesthetic concerns of the writer are secondary to social effects. Yet, as noted in the introduction chapter and revealed throughout the body of this study, these two sources of intent are synergistic in nature, not any less interchangeable than social and environmental concerns and how they correlate with one another.

7KH FRQFHUQ ZLWK D OLWHUDWXUH ¶V IXQFWLRQ R  
 writers; it is the same principle of intent held by propagandists who pander the California Dream for profit or for the preservation of ideas which secure their social station. In essence, the authentic voices of the Central Valley and their ideological counterparts both use the same rhetorical tools, yet craft very different products in a battle for public perception. Muir and Steinbeck knew innately that they were in the midst of a power play against opponents who had all of the same weapons at their disposal yet also had the advantage of the engrained traditional mythologies of California on their side. This

polarized dynamic between the artist and the myth corresponds to the efforts of minority discourses starting with the mid- to late-20th century writers telling their story in spite of the oppressive omniscience of traditional narratives. These new voices also reflect the diversity that is rewriting the Central Valley today, while still in the ever-present shadow of agricultural propaganda.

As Kevin Starr considers the future realities, he remains the objective historian, not daring to project events onto this always-promised but never-fulfilled land. Rather, he identifies the mass of complexity in every aspect of its existence and wisely leaves tomorrow as an open question. I suggest that this new identity will be grounded in be the one often praised but rarely followed, as manifested in the voices of John Muir and John Steinbeck.

California continues; but where is it going and what it will become <sup>2</sup> how, that is, it will handle the diversity of its people, the confusions of its values and culture, the global-colonial nature of its economy, the trade-offs between its militant environmentalism and concern for local well-being with the demands of its industrial infrastructure, and, most important, how it deals with the possible loss of one California and the ambiguous imposition of a new and uncharted identity <sup>2</sup> re P D L Q V open question. (Coastxiii)

My boldness in asserting that the voices of Muir and Steinbeck have and will remain central lenses for regional identification rests in the realities of this place. Leaving the outer perimeter of any Valley town, you are always met by some version of roughly



the same image <sup>2</sup> a line of modern-day jalopies and port-a-potties on hitches parked along rows of artichokes or lettuce or peach trees, with long-sleeved men picking, thinning, or pruning as they sing a chorus from a corrido under the backdrop of a gray-white sky where the snow-capped Sierras used to be visible. Down the road is a sign posted by the State of California boasting of its Blossom Trail, directing tourists along miles of symmetrically planted fruit orchards with enough wild space occasionally left along the edges of cultivated fields to see the ecological remnants of a region long plowed under. In these sights and sounds I see and hear the legacy of injustice and the lingering hope for a new Dream leading to a better reality.

## Appendix:

## Chapter Three:

x <sup>3</sup>+RZ GHHS RXU VOHHS ODVW QLJKW LQ WKH PRXQW

stars, hushed by solemn-sounding waterfalls and many small soothing voices in

VZHHW DFFRUG ZKLVSHULQJ SHDFH ´

x <sup>3</sup>1HDU FDPS WKH WUHHV D UHFKR Y HUHUHU RI P OF E D Q N WR

soft subdued light, through which the young river sings and shines like a happy

OLYLQJ FUHDWXUH ´

x ,Q VSHDNLQJ RI WKH VXJDU SLQH OXLU VD\ V <sup>3</sup>DW V

it begins to acquire individuality, so that no two are alike in their prime or old age.

(YHU\ WUHH FDOOV IRU VSHFLDO DGPLUDWLRQ ´

x ,Q GHVFULELQJ WKH PRUQLQJ KH VD\ V <sup>3</sup>WKH GHZ \

every pulse beats high, every life cell rejoices, the very rocks seem to thrill with

life. The whole landscape glows like a human face in a glory of enthusiasm, and

the blue sky, pale around the horizon, bends peacefully down over all like one

YDVW IOBZ.HU ´

x ,Q GHVFULELQJ +DOI 'RPH KH VD\ V <sup>3</sup>D PR V W Q RE O I

clothed with living light, no sense of dead stone about it, all spritualized, neither

KHDY\ QRU OLJKW VWHDGIDVW-9D)Q VHUHQH VWUHQJ

x <sup>3</sup> 7KH ZKROH ZLOGHUQHVV VHHPV WR EH DOLYH DQG

stones seem talkative, sympathetic, brotherly. No wonder when we consider that

ZH DOO KDYH WKH VDPH )DWKHU DQG ORWKHU´

x <sup>3</sup> &RPSUHKHQGHG LQ JHQHUDO YLHZV WKH IHDWXUH

as harmoniously related as the features of a human face. Indeed, they look human

and radiate spiritual beauty, divine thought, however covered and concealed by

URFN DQG VQRZ´

#### Chapter Four:

x 15 April 1939, The Nation /RXLV .URQHQEJUJHU +H FDOOV LW

GLVWXUELQJ VRFLDO QRYHO RI RXU WLPH´ DQG TX

<sup>3</sup> SHUKDSV WKH JUHDWHVW VLQJOH FUHDWLYH ZRUN

DOVR LGHQWLILHV two Qualities most vital to work of the

SURWHVW JUHDW LQGLJQDWLRQ DQG JUHDW FRPSD

FRQVWUXFWLRQ ZKHQ KH VDI\ <sup>3</sup> QR QRYHO RI RXU G

genuine humanity, and none, I think, is better calculated to awaken the humanity

RI RWKHUV´ 7KLV UHYLHZHU DOVR VKDSHV WKH UH

the manipulative mass distribution of handbills, which was largely blamed on

Arizona farmers upon further investigation. <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> KDQGELOO QXUH WKH

promises of work. But the real purpose of the handbills is to flood the California

market with such a surplus of workers that the price of labor sinks to almost

QRWKLQJ´ 6WHLQEHFN¶V FKDUDFWHULJDWLRQ RI W

picturesqueness of the Joads, for example, is fine wherever it makes them live

PRUH DEXQGDQWO\ EXW IDOVH ZKHQ VLP SO\ ODLG

sentimentalism is good in bringing him close to the lives of his people, but bad

ZKHQ LW EOX (44-45) Clearly, the reviewer

thumbs up.

x 17 April 1939, Newsweek Burton Rascoe: He seems to be less impressed by the

WH[W RIIHULQJ D VRIW DWWDFN RQ 6WHLQE HFN¶V

granting no value to the content of the plot-- ³\RX KDYH WR DG PLW WKDW

his books, except in the superficiality of idiosyncratic cadence, remotely resembles

DQ\ RI KLV RWKHU ERRNV +H LV QRW D VFKRRO DV

what the book is about, except that ther H DUH µQR IURQWLHUV OHIW D

(46).

x 22 April 1939, The Boston Herald Charles Lee: Though starting the review by

DVVLJQLQJ LW DV SURSDJDQGD VD\LQJ ³:KHQ WKH

listed hereafter the name of John Steinbeck must stand with that of Stowe and

'LFNHQVKH ODWHU VD\V WKDW ³LW LV GRXEWIXO ZK

WUHPHQGRXV H[SHULHQFH ZH, ³Draedy 49) WK QRW DW LV

Ultimately, he praises it as one of the finest pieces of American literature ever. In

another review in The Boston Herald in June of the same year, Lee says,

³6WHLQE HFN¶V QRYHO LV RQH RI WKH IHZ SHUIHFW

which American literature can boast. One must go to Melville, Poe, and Whitman

for FRPSDULV, RQV '51) / This is arguably the greatest compliment

possible to the writer and the work reviewed.

x Spring 1939, *Partisan Review* Philip Rahv: The tone here is more edgy,

suggesting sentimentality and manipulation by Steinbeck. The review seems to

OLYH XS WR LWV MRXUQDO ¶V WLWOH ³7KH ERRN LV

dreadful economic conditions and a long declaration of love to the masses. [. . .]

Mr. Steinbeck spares us not a single scene, not a single sensation, that could help

to implicate us emotionally. And he is so much in earnest that a number of times

he interrupts his story in order to grapple directly with his thesis. Thus several

chapters are devoted to outright political preaching from the standpoint of a kind

of KRPHVSXQ UHYROXWL RQDU\ SRSXOLVP ´

x May 1939, *New Republic* ODOFROP &RZOH\ 2QH RI WKH PRVW

critics of the century gives *Grapes* KLJK SUDLVH DV ZHOO VD\LQJ W

very high in the category of the great angry books like 8QFOH 7R P¶aV & DELQ

KDYH URXVHG D SHRSOH WR ILJKW DJDLQVW LQWRC

reader quite clearly in the ways in which he should respond upon reading it. It is

not simply an aesthetic experience, but a catalyst of social protest.

x June 1939, *Canadian Forum* (DUOH %LUQH\ 7LWOHG ³\$ 0XVW %

insists on its high quality, but remains critical of its sentimentality<sup>2 3</sup>, ¶e

ending especially there is theatricality; pain and cruelty are sometimes

sensationalized in the manner of Faulkner and Hemingway. There are overtones

of mysticism and sentimental individualism which occasionally confuse the

dominant social philosophy. ´ , Q VSHDNLQJ RI SUROHWDULDQ OLW

³WKL V LV QR µSUROHWDULDQ QRYHQ¶s ar W LV UDWKH

can write so long as the working people of the earth . . . suffer and die like this

X Q G H U W K H L U H F R I C E R P L E F B R Y H U O R U G M communicates

how the masses should respond to the text-- 3 6 W H L Q E H F N L V Q R W V R P X F

the rich, whom he sees cannot help themselves, as arousing the poor, who can, to

F R X U D J H H Q G X U D Q F H R U J D Q L J D W L R Q U H Y R O W '

x 28 July 1939, *Commonwealth* James Vaughan: This review is complimentary of

the writing and suggestive of the appropriate reader response-- 3 + L V W D O H R I S D L

starvation, wretchedness and death, Mr. Steinbeck relates with tenderness and

even with detachment so far as the mere story is concerned. [. . .] The impact of

this book is very powerful. Whoever reads it will find he has gained a better total

grasp on the need in this country for rectification of any and all conditions which

now or hereafter may correspond in any degree with the terrible plight of the dust

E R Z O W H Q D Q W I D U P H U V '

x Summer 1939, *North American Review* Charles Angoff: Angoff places

Steinbeck among the all-time greats, supporting his artistic integrity while

debasing that of the negative critic-- 3 : L W K K L V O D W H V W Q R Y H O O U 6

joins the company of Hawthorne, Melville, Crane, and Norris, and easily leaps to

the forefront of all his contemporaries. [. . .] The book also has the proper faults . .

. faults such as can be found in the Bible, Moby-Dick, Don Quixote, and Jude the

Obscure. [. . .] The greatest artists almost never conform to the rules of their art as

V H W G R Z Q E \ W K R V H Z K R - 8 9 . R Q R W S U D F W L F H L W '

x October 1939, *Wilson Library Bulletin*, Stanley Kunitz: He notes that it is the

most popular title in libraries at the time. He then points out in a mild tone of

judgment that Kern County has banned the book and the Associated Farmers are

attempting to get it banned statewide. He also supports its truthful depictions,

V D \ L ~~Factories~~ in the Field a factual study by Carey McWilliams, ought to

convince any skeptic that Steinbeck used more than nightmarish imagination in

G H S L F W L Q J W K H S O L J K W R I W K H P L J U D W R U \ I D U P Z

V W U R Q J S X Q F K I ~~Science~~ ~~W~~ ~~K~~ ~~R~~ ~~X~~ ~~F~~ ~~O~~ ~~R~~ ~~W~~ ~~F~~ ~~R~~ ~~X~~ ] ] O H D J R R G

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( L V L Q J H U & K H V W H U ( <sup>3</sup> - H I I H U V R Q L D Q \$ h e U D i v e r s i t y Q L V P L Q  
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