

Place in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Red Pony*

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This thesis examines the literary places in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) and *The Red Pony* (1933). In the thesis, I analyze how literary places, such as the ones in these two aforementioned novels, are created. The creation of these places is divided into three main categories: creating the place through physicality, forming it through cultural or social references and creating it through a personal connection or individual affect. These categories are used in the analysis that focuses on *The Grapes of Wrath*.

In this thesis, I argue that the use of *imagery* and *chronotope* create the physical place. In addition, the cultural and social place is created through the shifting focalization that reveals differing cultural values and significance. Furthermore, place is also envisioned through personal relationship or attachment, for example memory and identity. These three categories are based on the theory of analyzing place by the ecocritic Lawrence Buell. His theory and texts on environment and place work as the basis of the analysis. The thesis also examines place attachment in *The Red Pony* through Mikhail Bakhtin's *chronotope* and Martin Heidegger's concept of *Being*.

The approach of the thesis is ecocritical, and its focus is also to discuss the human-nature relationship in Steinbeck's fiction as well as argue that examining place-centered literature can prove to be meaningful in understanding the role of humans within their environment. The thesis also briefly examines the ideas of representing and constructing nature in relation to ecocriticism and nature writing.

Keywords: place, ecocriticism, nature, narrative, chronotope, John Steinbeck

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1 Introduction

Environment is not an other to us. It is not a collection of things that we encounter. Rather, it is a part of our being. It is the locus of our existence and identity. We cannot and do not exist apart from it.
(Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 566)

For if the entire history of landscape in the West is indeed just a mindless race towards a machine-driven universe, uncomplicated by myth, metaphor, and allegory, where measurement, not memory, is the absolute arbiter of value, where our ingenuity is our tragedy, then we are indeed trapped in the engine of our self-destruction.
(Schama 1995, 14)

In this thesis I examine the narrative ways *place* is created, portrayed and experienced in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939, henceforth referred to as *GW*). In my analysis I will examine the different ways land, landscape and nature are used in Steinbeck's fiction, in relation to the characters sense of identity and their connection to a specific *place*. What I am interested to study, in addition to the aforementioned, is the way nature is represented and *constructed* in Steinbeck's literature. The approach of this thesis is *ecocritical* and I will adapt ecocritical theorist's terminology and ideas. The main ecocritical theorist whose ideas I will use to guide my analysis is Lawrence Buell. I will also use Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of *chronotope* to discuss how the literary form connects with nature. In addition, I will examine place-attachment in *The Red Pony* (1937, henceforth referred to as *RP*). In addition, in order to understand this form of place-attachment, I will adapt Martin Heidegger's concept of *Being*. My main statements are:

- 1) The sense of *place* is created through physical, cultural and emotional descriptions of place. In affect, place is formed through the concepts of *land*, *landscape* and *nature*. The use of the *chronotope* builds the sense of place and adds a fourth dimension to place in the novel.
- 2) Nature is represented, not constructed, in *GW*. The distinction between *representation* and *construction* of environment stems from the division between nature and culture, which is questioned in *GW* by portraying human characters as a part of the natural realm.
- 3) The characters connection to their place and environment in *RP* is portrayed through *place-attachment*, and the use of *chronotope* supports their attachment.

The way land, landscape and nature are intertwined in the characters experiences, lives and identities in Steinbeck's novels is what first drew me in to the topic of this thesis. The intricacies of feeling attached to a certain place are narrated in such simple yet multifaceted ways that the act of reading these places created in Steinbeck's literature makes one awaken to their own surroundings as well. Furthermore, being able to relate to a story of a novel written in the 1930s United States of America describes the timelessness and universality of the topic. The connection to the environment is at the same time a global and a local matter, and extremely important, whether we distance ourselves from it or not. Human culture is dependent on the environment and on nature, and despite of the steady progress of technological advancements and modern culture, the separation from our physical environment is impossible.

The place, which is formed of land, landscape and nature, cannot be categorized only as a setting. The environment in the *GW* exists on its own terms and has agency that evades the role of a typical literary setting or a background location, but works as a vivid, phenomenal existence that surrounds the characters and forms a place in its own right. It is equally important to note that the place provides a home, a place to belong to, and a place to link memories to. I will first introduce the terminology and theory and then move on to analyzing *GW* and *RP* in the light of these theories.

My focus is to argue that the representations of and the references to land, landscape and nature are included in the creation of a literary *place*. I will focus on portraying the textual world created by the narrator in Steinbeck's *GW* but I will also mention its references the actual 'real' (non-textual) life place as much as it is necessary. In addition to this, I will discuss the concept of *nature* and examine whether it is constructed or represented through the texts of ecocritics Lawrence Buell and Dana Phillips. I question the concept of nature throughout the thesis and provide an ecocritical insight in examining places as part of nature. Furthermore, I claim that humans are a part of Steinbeck's understanding of nature. In Chapter 2, I will briefly introduce the author and the two novels of my focus and then define the theory I use in more detail.

2 On John Steinbeck

In this chapter I discuss the author John Steinbeck to the amount that is necessary in order to introduce the effect of place connectedness in literary works. Although Steinbeck as a writer is not the main focus of this thesis, I will briefly introduce his character in relation to California, as I consider his background and his connectedness to his home region relevant to the content matter of the thesis. My focus is on understanding his character as a place-centered author as a native of California, the location he most often wrote about.

2.1 Introducing John Steinbeck, the California Native

Steinbeck's home region proved to be an infinite source of inspiration for the novels that defined him as a writer: "As a region [California ...] contains such polar extremes as the hard materialism of Salinas and the bohemianism of the Peninsula. Both have obviously been important in Steinbeck's writing, but Salinas came first and is most apparent" (Champney 1972, 21). As this quote shows, as a California native Steinbeck wrote mainly about his own home state. He grew up in California that, as a location, is well known for readers of Steinbeck from several novels including *GW*, *RP*, and *East of Eden* (where the reader is briefly faced with young John Steinbeck himself).

California, through Steinbeck, is a place of hope and possibilities as well as a location that is torn apart by its contrasting features; the beautiful land is often overworked and not open for outsiders, be they tourists (*GW* and *Travels with Charley*), migrants (*GW*), unemployed people (*GW*, *Cannery Row*, *Sweet Thursday*) or working class agitators (*GW*, *In Dubious Battle*). In addition to that Champney (1972, 26) writes that "Steinbeck's California contains little fragments of the American character, detached from the whole and dragged over the mountains and the desert with the other immigrant baggage and overdeveloped by the golden sun and the ache of homesickness." This element is also present in several of Steinbeck's texts. His works often discuss many of the aforementioned social issues, delving into the personal psyche of the people in certain social classes. An important note to understand about the works of Steinbeck is that he examines his subjects often from a certain distance, although often basing his examination within his own home state of California. He offers his own ideas by emphasizing the importance of

communal spirit and supporting one another, especially in relation to working class groups (e.g. in novels such as *In Dubious Battle* and *Cannery Row*, which both discuss lower class groups of men, the former mainly from a political point of view) but without underestimating the reader's own ability to come to a certain end result. Some critics argue that Steinbeck's writing had an agenda: "Steinbeck's writing stood not just as a protest, but as a call for social reform" (Jakle & Sculle 2011, 22).

Many of Steinbeck's novels derive their inspiration from California, and from the conditions of the land, as Champney explains: "[M]ore perhaps than any important contemporary American writer, except William Faulkner, his writing has grown out of a special region" (Champney 1972, 21). He continues to analyze the specific meaning of the California environment on Steinbeck's fiction: "The cultural climate of the Salinas Valley is typical of California agriculture. A tradition of personal individualism goes along with a strongly collectivized economy" (ibid.). With this Champney showcases the uniqueness of the Salinas cultural landscape whilst also underlining its function as an example of the statewide culture. The California region that is now also known as "Steinbeck Country" offered several ideas for writing for the aspiring author, as it was, and perhaps still is a "economically, socially, and culturally [...] an ugly state of affairs" (ibid.) and at the same time a land of natural grandeur and beauty, filled with farms, orchards and fields as well as rivers, valleys, mountain ranges and specific coastal region. For example, the idea for *GW* came from direct experience; as a California resident Steinbeck had witnessed the effect of the Dust Bowl on his home state. This made him so interested that he followed the migrants from Oklahoma back to California, lived on camps and picked cotton (Lisca 1972, 75). In addition, Brian Railsback writes about Steinbeck's involvement in the matters he wrote about, and his consistent aim for realism: "Serious research for *Grapes of Wrath* began with Steinbeck's San Francisco News assignment to write a series of articles about migrant farm labor in California, which required observing conditions at various labor camps" (2013, 218).

Steinbeck was, thus, involved with not only the political, cultural and ecological changes of his own state, but also his own country. This connection that Steinbeck shared with his home state is also transferred onto the readers through his writing, according to author Melody Graulich. She writes about the connection that she shared with the land of California: "Steinbeck's representation of the landscapes we knew and treasured allowed us to read with a personal recognition and understanding" (Graulich 2007, 37). Finding something as personal as a

connection to one's home region in a text allows one to understand the region in a different light and with a certain depth that might not be achieved through a non-locals writing. This does not mean that one has to be a California native to understand Steinbeck, quite the contrary. Reading place connected and place focused literature can offer a structure or a model through which one can find a meaningful connection to their own local places or allow them to better understand California as a place.

Therefore, Steinbeck's own personal relationship and connection with his native California proves to be an essential source for his realist although often ideological writing (Champney 1972, 29). Although I am not focusing on Steinbeck as an author behind the narration, I consider his connection with his land an important aspect that deserves to be acknowledged when considering place-centered writing, especially when understanding it from an ecocritical perspective.

2.2 Reading John Steinbeck as a Nature Writer

John Steinbeck has not commonly been considered as a nature writer. He is best known for his political commentary in several novels such as *GW*, *In Dubious Battle* and *Of Mice and Men*. Steinbeck's writing often focuses on social injustice and societies or groups within political turmoil. Examining Steinbeck's writing with the focus on nature opens up another aspect of Steinbeck that I claim has not received enough attention. Several of Steinbeck's novels are focused on the connection between humans and their environment. Railsback comments that "Steinbeck wrote his best work from an environmental perspective before the word 'ecocriticism' was coined" (Railsback 2013, 217). Being and existing within the natural world is a recurring theme in the Steinbeckian fiction. The landscape and the physicality of it is at the same time a concrete *thing* that provides sensory satisfaction and a deep physical connection to nature and the world around, as well as a mystified, distant realm of nostalgia and longing. In order to explore Steinbeck as a nature writer I first define what is nature writing.

Nature writing is usually defined along the terms of "literary nonfiction that offers scientific scrutiny of the world [...], explores the private experience of the individual human observer of the world, or reflects upon the political and philosophical implications of the relationships among human beings and the larger planet" (Slovic in Buell 2005, 144). This definition describes Steinbeck's fiction well. Although Steinbeck is most often remembered as a

political writer, some scholars consider him as an “ecologically minded fiction writer” (Railsback 2013, 216). Steinbeck reflects on “the political and philosophical implications” (ibid.) and discusses the relations that humans have with their environment, although perhaps not as explicitly as some other writers, e.g. Henry David Thoreau or Leslie Marmon Silko. In *GW* and *RP*, in addition to novels such as *In Dubious Battle* and *Cannery Row*, Steinbeck delves into moral issues relating to human relations with their environment.

Furthermore, I claim that Steinbeck’s fiction can be beneficial for understanding humans and their connection with their environment through analyzing the novels through place. For example, *GW* provides a form, a structure to understanding the climate crisis, climate refugees and land use patterns. Christopher Salter writes about *GW* “as providing focus for instruction in migration, settlement forms, economic systems, cultural dualism, agricultural land use patterns” (Salter in Buell 1981, 156–57). Similarly, Karen E. Waldron and Rob Friedman suggest that studying literary places reveals human relationship to their environment:

We argue that *all* literature has and reflects place, humans as well as environments in relation to each other, and that the material referenced in literary texts therefore always includes, as Lawrence Buell has insistently argued, nature and culture, the biotic and the body, the entire matter of the world, in some form that can be read through representations of place. (2013, ix; emphasis original)

In this sense, understanding place and place attachment in literary texts allows the reader to examine the real world and one’s own role as well as the communal position humans have within their ecological surroundings.

In fact, by discussing the political problems that arise from exploiting the people, Steinbeck also questions the relationship between humans and their environment. In *GW*, the narrator condemns the actions of the California fruit farmers and underlines the arbitrary ridiculousness of owning land and exploiting its resources. This following quote exemplifies the distorted relationship with their environment as well as their fellow countrymen a person can have: “The fertile earth, the straight tree rows, the sturdy trunks, and the ripe fruit. And children dying of pellagra must die because a profit cannot be taken from an orange” (*GW* 385). This image of the unfortunate tragedy is a heavy statement against the immoral actions of the California fruit farmers. The narrator continues: “And coroners must fill in the certificate -- died of malnutrition – because the food must rot, must be forced to rot” (*GW* 385). By viewing the environment as a source for

profit, the farmers fail to understand the absolute connectedness humans have with their environment.

Furthermore, reading literary texts from decades ago (i.e. the 1930s), that focus on places and environments that differ greatly from the reader's current spatial and temporal existence (such as California's Salinas Valley, a specific bioregion with native wildlife and fauna, or the Great Plains' specific weather patterns and climate) can support the attempt to understand the same patterns that make our current place and space what it is, or what it appears to be.

In addition to this environment-focused aspect, Steinbeck maps out the process of a man alongside nature and delves into the ways humans interact with their surroundings. I use the word man in this context to mean the whole of mankind, but I acknowledge the fact that the idea Steinbeck's fiction express of mankind is a very masculine one. Examining the masculinity and omission of the active female counterpart would be an intriguing matter to study, although to my current topic irrelevant due to my focus. Instead of appreciating and admiring nature from a certain intellectual distance, Steinbeck writes from within nature, from the point of view of a man, who is invested in the land, claims ownership of the land and abuses the land but has no other way of existing except within and in deep connection with the land. This quote from Steinbeck's 1932 journal exemplifies his holistic perception: "The trees the muscled mountains are the world—but not the world apart from man—the world and man—the one inseparable unit man and his environment. Why they should ever have been understood as being separate I do not know" (Steinbeck in Shillinglaw 1994, 9). As the quote exemplifies, Steinbeck's style of writing nature is at the same time *realistic* and ideological.

As a writer Steinbeck delves into the everyday of man within nature, without distancing the nature into something that is "out there." In Steinbeck's fiction nature is "here." It is present all around, as the soil under the characters feet and as the dust on their hands. The characters live and breathe the land and are constantly affected by it, by the changes and the instability of nature and land. Steinbeck's fiction offers a realistic and holistic idea of nature instead of an ideal image, to the extent that is possible in literary form. Disregarding the emphasis of land, landscape and nature in Steinbeck's fiction would mean leaving out an important part of what makes Steinbeck a sharp commentator of the world. Therefore, I have chosen my topic as something that will reveal a previously largely disregarded side of Steinbeck's fiction.

One aim of my thesis is to show how Steinbeck underlines that humans are a part of nature. In his fiction, Steinbeck includes human existence in the world *within* the natural by narrating human existence within nature's existence. By using narrative ways such as descriptive language to suggest that humans are in deep coexistence with the non-human world, Steinbeck portrays his understanding of human's role in the world. Despite the distinction between man-made culture and wild non-human nature that is evident in Steinbeck's writing, man *is*, at the same time, a physically inseparable part of nature.

2.3 Introduction to *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Red Pony*

In this section I will briefly introduce the two novels by Steinbeck that I am going to analyze: *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Red Pony*. Critic Robert Murray Davis writes about the form of *GW* and comments that "structural patterns in Steinbeck's novels are clear, they are almost blindingly obvious: the Exodus analogy in *The Grapes of Wrath*, combined with interchapters whose function is always quite clear" (1972, 4). At the time of its publishing, the novel "did not have a chance of being accepted and evaluated as a piece of fiction" whilst causing a "social-political-economic controversy" (Lisca 1972, 79). Despite the aforementioned, the role of *GW* in the American literary history as well as political realist fiction is secure, which also sets challenges to examining it.

The plot of *GW* is a relatively straightforward. The novel begins with a long description of the land, providing the reader a clear image of what is happening in Oklahoma of the 1930s. Tom Joad, one of the main characters, is released from prison and finds his family as they prepare to leave their home in Sallisaw, Oklahoma. The family is forced to leave their home due to the worsening environmental condition, which makes the banks that own the land, evict the tenants who farm on the poor, over-cultivated land. The novel follows the family's arduous journey, commenting on the political situation of the land, the effects it has on the people, places and the whole nation. The family of the Joads is used to represent the wider community of migrant workers and is discussed side by side with the nameless group of the 'Okies' in the interchapters. The interchapters connect the individual family's experience to the nationwide struggle. Ecocritic Lawrence Buell summarizes *GW*'s political plotline as follows: "Ironically, the Okies undertook their hazardous odysseys only to find a more ruthless agribusiness establishment than the one that dispossessed them" (Buell 2014, 163). The conditions that the 'Okies' (derogatory term for the

migrant workers) escape are only the start for their struggle, as life in California is not as uncomplicated as they are led to believe.

The novel's main characters are Tom and Ma Joad, and the former preacher Jim Casy. Out of these three characters, Tom Joad represents the collective power that humans have when they work together, as his famous monologue at the end of the novel reveals:

Wherever there is a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever there is a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there I'll be in the way kids laugh when they're hungry and they know supper's ready. An' when our folk eat the stuff they raise an' live in the houses they build—why, I'll be there. (*GW* 463)

Similarly, the former preacher Casy functions as a character who provides a valuable insight to the way nature and humans are understood as one spiritual entity: "all that lives is holy" (*GW* 157). In addition to Tom and Casy, the head of the 11-person family, Ma Joad becomes a meaningful character in the course of the novel. She is a provider of temporal knowledge, of family history in relation to places. She also provides a feminine perspective, as a caretaker who bears the mental load in the family's migration from one place to another. These three are the main characters whose perspectives are narrated through focalization.

In contrast to *GW*, Steinbeck's early novel *RP* (1933) did not cause a similar uproar as the *GW* due to its non-political focus, but is mainly considered as young adults', or children's fiction. The novel tells the story of a young boy, Jody, living on a farm near Salinas, California. The novel is divided in four sections: the Gift, the Great Mountains, the Promise and the Leader of the People. These sections structure the novel by focusing on a meaningful event to Jody, one at a time. In the first section, Jody receives a red colt, which unfortunately later on dies, as a present from his father. In the second section Jody is faced with a man who steals his father old horse to ride to the distant and mysterious mountains. The third section refers to a promise that the farm hand Billy Buck makes to Jody about a new colt, and the last section introduces a previous generation's perspective on the landscape through Jody's grandfather, who shares stories about 'Westering'. The novel therefore follows the young boy as he navigates through early adolescence and attempts to find his own place in relation to his parents, grandfather and his surroundings e.g. the mountains, which become an important factor for his personal growth. Furthermore, the pony represents freedom

and responsibility, and for a while forms a center that Jody's life revolves around. In the following section, I discuss the functions of nature in realistic literature.

2.4 Nature in Realist Literature

In this section I will briefly introduce the ways nature and landscapes have been represented in literature and what functions nature has served in literary writing. My focus is on realist and naturalist writing because these are the literary movements Steinbeck's writing is most often considered to be a part of. Waldron writes that in the naturalist/realist period writing focused on especially "the complex ecology of the human/nature connection in *places and spaces*" (2013, xvii; emphasis original). She underlines the importance of examining places in more depth than merely a background for the main action: "That complex ecology is critical for literary study [...]: mere discussion of *setting* barely scratches the surface of what literary works portray and wrestle with when depicting the *nature of places*" (ibid.).

Delving deeper into the literary places allows us to better understand the interconnected meaning of the characters situated existence in their environment. The meaning of nature in the above quote "is dual, even multiple" because it "describes both physical surroundings and character, a force that is other and a force within" (ibid.) whilst reminding us that these two are "impacting [each] other in ways we constantly try to understand and categorize but will never know or be able to name completely" (ibid.). This description outlines the multifaceted role of nature. To understand the role of places and nature (these can be understood in several different ways, for example nature in building a place or nature as a place) one is required to understand the ways nature and places have been understood previously in literature, and what are the factors that affect these understandings. Furthermore, to truly understand the meaning of place (or nature) focused reading, one must attain knowledge of the benefits that nature/place-focused reading might obtain. I continue to explain not only how nature is perceived in literature and how it takes part in creating places, but I will also convey the benefits of reading literary texts with nature, place or ecocritical focus in mind.

When discussed in literary texts, the natural world is often simplified into two differing categories, as either "a place of idyllic simplicity, of 'harmony' with nature, or of hard scrabbling against natural forces" (Waldron 2013, xxii). Within the naturalist and realist periods, nature was

used to examine the “viability of the American dream and the use of nature, especially if and when the pursuit of riches became part of the mix” (ibid.). In addition, Waldron continues by stating that “[r]ealist and naturalist texts probed the *dialectic* of nature in an overt way” (2013, xxii) by asking the also currently relevant question: “What should the human relation to the environment be?” (ibid.). The way nature has been discussed in the realist period offers ways of examining the human relationship with nature by introducing ideas of different ways of understanding nature and connecting to it.

In this same sense, Steinbeck’s literary texts discuss the relationship between humans and their environment. The moral questions that Steinbeck raises for example in *GW* are political and relate to human conditions within their environment: “Steinbeck, an earth-centered writer, tended to observe things more in terms of science than ideology. However, in the 1950s and into the 1960s, Steinbeck moved toward a moralistic consideration of reality. As a result, his environmental standpoint became more overt and political” (Railsback 2013, 230). Steinbeck’s realist fiction, therefore, can be used as an example of literature that encompasses the human realm in deep connection with the surrounding environment.

In regard to this, Waldron writes that in the American realist and naturalist writing “landscape, geography and location were of primary aesthetic, cultural, and political importance, their biotic realities vivid, varied, and complexly interesting” (2003, xv). This writing did not focus only on “social reality and environmental determinism” but also discussed “places, spaces, and a straining concept of nation that would, could, and should include geographic, biotic, and cultural diversity” (ibid.). As I previously commented, this description of realist writing that is both nature-sensitive yet political describes Steinbeck’s novels aptly: “The work of literary scholars, anthropologists, cultural historians, and critical theorists over the past several decades has yielded abundant evidence that ‘nature’ is not nearly as natural as it seems. Instead it is a profoundly human construction” (Cronon 1995, 25). William Cronon explains that it does not mean that “the nonhuman world is somehow unreal” (ibid.) but it suggests that the world is “entangled with our own values and assumptions” that separating the mode of perceiving the world from the actual world is practically impossible. These definitions provide a meaningful background to discussing Steinbeck’s fiction along the same lines.

3 Ecocritical Theory and Terminology

The focus of my thesis is ecocritical, as I delve into the representations on nature and the existence of humans within the environment, more specifically, within a place. Ecocritical standpoint relates to this topic because it “asks us to examine ourselves and the world around us critiquing the way that we represent, interact with, and construct the environment, both “natural” and manmade (Purdue OWL, n.d.). The way places are created, examined and represented reveal a great deal of how humans connect to their environment, as ecocritic Lawrence Buell writes about the connections between the “word-world” and the “actual world” (2005, 30) in the following way: “All inquiry into artistic rendition of physical environment must sooner or later reckon with the meta-question of how to construe the relation between the world of text and the world of lived or historical experience” (ibid.). This definition exemplifies my primary focus in this thesis, as my interest is to examine how “world of lived experience” within place is created in literary texts.

Moreover, Scott Slovic defines ecocriticism through nature-centered art: “environmental art is a mode of human communication that explores and describes human relationships to nature in beautiful or aestheticized ways” (Slovic 2013, 4). He then defines the field based on the previous definition: “ecocriticism is the mode of scholarship that seeks to explain or contextualize this art” (ibid.). Consequently, I will use the ecocritical approach to examine John Steinbeck’s *GW* and *RP*. Although the texts that I have chosen as my primary focus are not commonly considered ‘environmental art’, they still are texts that discuss the mode of human existence within the natural realm. Therefore, my attempt is to examine the novel’s representation of the human-place connection.

3.1 Defining *Nature, Landscape and Land*

In this section, I will briefly define the terms I use throughout this thesis. The main terms are *nature*, *landscape* and *land*. Out of these four terms, nature is the largest, which in a sense encompasses all other three. In a contrasting thought, place can also be understood to include nature within itself. However, the terms land and landscape remain concepts that are part of nature. For the purpose of my thesis I define the function of land, landscape and nature as creators of place.

Defining the word *nature* has proved to be a difficult task due to the ambiguous everyday use of the word. For example, Terry Gifford explains the difficulties of defining nature as follows: “notions of nature are, of course, socially constructed and determine our perception of our direct experiences, which, in turn, determine our communications about them” (2000, 174). Here Gifford focuses on the ideas of nature that are socially constructed. Laurence Coupe is along the same lines: “The common assumption has been that what we call ‘nature’ exists primarily as a term within a cultural discourse, apart from which it has no being or meaning” (2000, 2). He continues by stating that nature needs to mean more “than a linguistic construct” (Coupe 2000, 3). I agree with Coupe’s understanding of nature and share the opinion that nature does need to have a meaning as an entity of its own right outside of human language and culture. Referring to that meaning, then again, is a challenge, if one must distance oneself from “linguistic constructs” (ibid.).

As another example, a realist understanding of the word nature is that nature is “real” objectively confirmed physical realm. Nature continues to exist as such as it has without the terminology that human cultures relate to it. What literature and writing about nature joins in to do is to *discuss*, to build, an *idea* of nature, a perceived, ideological, sometimes practical but often transcendental idea or view of the world outside of the constructed society. Often this idea of nature encompasses only the natural things outside of our human realm. It might entail plants, animals, the weather, forests and the land. According to William Harmon and C. Hugh Holman, “realists center their attention to a remarkable degree on the immediate, the here and now, the specific action, and the verifiable consequence” (1996, 428).

This is exactly what Steinbeck does. He invests in exploring the everyday of the now, the events and actions that shape the reality of his characters and show the in the now within their physical and cultural environment. His nature understanding is realist, as he does not portray the nature as an ideal but as real observations including different versions and aspects of nature within his understanding without failing to notice the intricacies of real life. This definition fits also with the way nature is defined in *GW* and *RP*. For example, in *GW* (14), the nature and the plants are a “sleeping life waiting to be spread and dispersed, every seed armed with an appliance of dispersal.” In contrast, *landscape* is a less debated term than nature, as it is usually considered as a part of nature with the exception that it includes ma- made artifacts within its definition. Michael J. McDowell writes about the difficulties of defining landscape and nature:

Whereas in popular usage nature is ‘out there’ somewhere, landscape is unavoidable; it’s all around us and under our feet. The term landscape, I hope, suggests inevitable interaction and mutual influencing of humans and the nonhuman world in ways the term nature doesn’t. (1996, 388)

As contrast to the idea and term *nature*, *landscape* includes within itself man-made culture and buildings. In *GW* the landscape is where the family of Joads is physically located in, and in action: ”They lay in the water and looked across at the sharp peaks called Needles, and the white rock mountains of Arizona [...]. ‘We come through them’” (*GW* 223). The landscape is mainly a sight to view, but also a place of action and existence. Furthermore, landscape and nature overlap, as fields are considered as part of nature due to them being combinations of plants and soil, although they are often man made. Buildings, houses and roads connect the nature within the human cultural realm of the environment forming a landscape, something to be seen and to be a part of. Furthermore, Kay Milton’s definition focuses on viewing the landscape from a visual standpoint: landscape’s “definitive feature is a place’s appearance or look” (Milton in Urry 2005, 77). I will examine landscape mainly as a portrayal of cultural values. What makes this thesis at the same time interesting and possibly difficult to follow, is the use of terminology that seems to overlap but contains several specific meaning differences. Also, the terminology I use is very familiar and often used in colloquial language; therefore, some of its meanings derive from everyday usage. However, these multiple meanings only reveal the difficult nature of the ways that humans refer to their environmental surroundings that hide behind their everydayness.

The third one of these difficult, ambiguous terms is *land*. It is a term I use frequently, and one that has special meaning not only in *GW* but possibly also to every individual reader. Land might evoke feelings of patriotism to some, or memories of childhood to others. I will mainly use John Urry’s definition of the term. He defines land as “a physical tangible resource that can be ploughed, sown, grazed and built upon. Land is a place of work, conceived functionally” (Urry 2005, 77). He continues by defining land in connection to humans: “land is bought and sold, inherited and left to children” (*ibid.*). His definition fits my usage well as I understand land as a combination of materials that together form a ground to walk, live and practice one’s livelihood on. This is also how land is perceived in the *GW* and in *RP*, “tractors turning the multiple furrows of the vacant land” (*GW* 166). The land is something that can be full or empty, red or black, and

can attach many meanings to it mainly because of its importance to the people. In relation to *GW*, land often refers as something that can be defined as cultural landscape that can be viewed economically or politically, or in another sense it relates to individual connection, which can also be seen as affected by cultural values and perceptions. This practical and anthropocentric definition represents the less theorized aspect of agricultural nature in literary texts.

3.2 Defining Place

In this section I will introduce the concepts of *place* in relation to environmental understanding and discuss different definitions of this term. I will mainly use Buell's ideas of understanding place. Buell uses Carter, Donald and Squire's words to define place as "space to which meaning has been ascribed" (Buell 2005, 63). These definitions differ drastically. Space can attain any form within the natural or supernatural realm, lacking all value judgment and emotion. A place can be, similarly to space, small or large, and solely an unfamiliar geographical location, but it differs from space with its specificity.

Furthermore, place is *somewhere* and *something* that has value to a person, a community or a nation. According to Buell, "the concept of place also gestures in at least three directions at once – toward environmental materiality, toward social perception or construction, and toward individual affect or bond" (ibid.). Similarly, examining the idea of place more closely reveals to us a sensory connection as described by Eugene V. Walter: "A place is seen, heard, smelled, imagined, loved, hated, feared, revered" (Walter in Buell 2005, 63). A place is at the same time a concrete physical location where a person can exist and live, relate social value to and have a special bond to. Hence, a place can be defined through the physicality of it, through its socially constructed nature or through the value one individual, community or a nation relates to it.

Along the same lines are Marcel Hunziker, Matthias Buchecker and Terry Hartig who define place through the experiences, values and achievements that connect humans to a place. In this sense, space is seen biologically and place socially, serving different functions based on human perception (Hunziker et al. 2007, 49). They reference in defining the concept of place:

Transforming spaces into places is existential activity, as through the creation of places people visualise, memorise and thus stabilise constitutive human goods such as the sense

of belonging, social integration, purposes that give meaning to life (values) and the sense of self (Williams et al. 1992). (Hunziker et al. 2007, 47)

In a similar way, a place can be regarded to be more than a geographical location; depending on the cultural and social context, a place can be a socially perceived area or a spot that has certain values, protocols and symbols connected to it. For example, a certain hill or a landmark along route 87 in Arizona can be a valuable place to the Hopi Nation in the area, although it can also be perceived in a different way according to another community or an individual. Or as an example from *GW*, an insignificant place to some can be meaningful to others: “the barn where Pa got gored to death by a bull” (*GW* 48).

Furthermore, in order to understand places one must understand the different ways these places can be examined and how places are created: “the emergence of contemporary environmental criticism” narrates “an evolution from imaging toward an understanding of place-making as a culturally inflected process” highlighting the fact that “nature and culture must be seen as a mutuality rather than as separable domains” (Buell 2005, 67). This is a fascinating observation about the role of place-making in creating and understanding nature.

Building places within the environment and the physical world is a combination that uses both nature and culture as building blocks. Forming a place within the world requires that the culture shapes the nature and nature shapes the culture. Shaping does not mean only physical shaping but also shaping the ideas of places: “But since subjects are never completely free agents with unlimited options, place must also be thought of more extrinsically, as an artifact socially produced by the channeling effects of social position as well as by canonical mappings of space” (Buell 2005, 74). Here Buell makes an intriguing point about place as “a produced artifact,” as something that is harder to define than the physical form of it. Furthermore, Buell defines place by using social geographer John Agnew’s theory of reading of a place in the following way: “‘place’ can be conceived as a matter of (social) ‘locale’, (geographical) ‘location’, and a ‘sense of place’” (Buell 2001, 60). Examining place can be difficult due to its everyday nature. As Buell states, “place is all the harder to conceptualize for being so often taken for granted in lived experience” (2001, 61). What often goes unnoticed in understanding place is “the complex network of sensations and value commitments that tie people to the locales they care about” (ibid.). Buell highlights the elusiveness of place with terms of “place obliviousness” and “environmental unconscious” (ibid.) that refer to the difficult *nature* of nature. As something that we are so

accustomed to living in up to the point of not acknowledging it any more nature definitely has a difficult position. To summarize, a place can invite feelings of belonging, of attachment and ideas of an identity in connection to it. I will explore the idea of place in more detail in connection to Steinbeck's *GW* and *RP* in my analysis.

3.3 Mikhail Bakhtin's *Chronotope* and Martin Heidegger's *Being*

In order to describe the connection between the literary form and the way nature is represented through literary devices in Steinbeck's writings, I use Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of *chronotope*. I will use it in my analysis in the later part of the thesis. The Russian literary critic and thinker Mikhail Bakhtin has had a meaningful influence in the literary studies, especially due to his concept that connect time and place, which is known as the chronotope.

According to Liisa Steinby, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of chronotope is applied widely to literature from different periods, although it is not quite clear what Bakhtin originally meant with the concept (Steinby 2013, 106). In his essay Bakhtin began by defining chronotope as the connectedness of time and space in artistic literary: "We will give the name chronotope (literally, 'time space') to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (2008, 84). The difficulty comes with finding ways to use this term chronotope to examine literary texts. In examining a piece of literature or writing through the scope of chronotope, we have to read the subtle forms of how existence within a certain place and time is created. Steinby continues to define the way of understanding chronotope as "a concept referring first of all to temporal-spatial forms of cognition, secondly to the representation of this cognition or experience in literature (in the novel)" (2013, 106). However, the ways the "representation" of the "temporal-spatial forms of cognition" remain unidentified. For my thesis, these "ways" are the ways and words temporal and spatial aspects are referred to in the narrative. How does the use of chronotope create a sense of place?

Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of the chronotope is relevant to Steinbeck's writing in the sense that the chronotope *is* where everything happens in Steinbeck's novels. According to Michael J. McDowell, Bakhtin's "ideal form to represent reality is a dialogical form, one in which multiple voices or points of view interact" (1996, 372). As McDowell writes, "landscape writers often enable the nonhuman elements of an ecosystem to take on the qualities of a society, with

hierarchies, differing values” (ibid.). Bakhtin’s focus is that by examining the specific language and way of writing can result in to understanding “the writer’s perception” of for example “the mountains’ or animals’ relationships with other parts of the landscape and with humans” (ibid, 373). In *GW* and *RP*, the chronotope is used to create a place and is used as follows; “And then the leaves break out on the trees, and the petals drop from the fruit trees and carpet the earth with pink and white” (ibid., 382). I will later on argue that the chronotope creates the place by bringing in *nature* and its inevitable companion *time* within the narrative.

In addition, I will briefly define the concept of *Being*, which I will use in my analysis of *RP*. Due to the limitations of this thesis my introduction will be relatively short. German philosopher Martin Heidegger’s *Being* is a concept that contains ideas of existence within a place and a time, therefore it is understood in both temporal and spatial terms. In a sense, as everything is experienced within “Being” one cannot define what is outside of it, but it includes our understanding of an existence within this mode of life that coexists and from which we reflect our “Being-in-a-world” (Heidegger 1962, 131) from. As Being is not “an entity” (Heidegger 1962, 23) it eludes definition yet “is self-evident” (ibid.) as it conveys life’s actuality and totality. Christopher Tilley defines Being and Being-in-the-world as recognizing one’s existence as a part of the world and attempting to connect to it “through perception [...] bodily actions [...] remembrance and evaluation” (1994, 12). I use this concept in defining the main character Jody’s place-attached existence in *RP*.

3.4 Representing the ‘Real’ in Literature

One interest that I have in regard to nature writing, environmental literature or place-focused writing is the distinction between constructed nature versus the ‘real’ nature. When one writes about nature, the laws and boundaries of human language inescapably bind them. By referring to a material object, humans automatically distance it to *something* that can be referred to, as has happened with nature. According to journalist and writer Riikka Kaihovaara, the separation of nature and human culture derives from the 18th century (2019, 10). This has led to a constructed understanding of nature as something that is *there* instead of *here* or *everywhere*. Kaihovaara argues that “the image of a wild nature and the right kind of nature experience is so strong, that it rather distances us from nature instead of connecting us to it” (2019, 57). She continues to state

that “the bare, physical nature is disappearing behind the meanings that are given to it” (ibid.; my translations). Similarly, construction or deconstruction works in the same sense, by hiding the reality behind the constructed idea, as Kate Soper writes, “it is not language which has a hole in the ozone layer” (1995, 33) reminding us of the somewhat dangerous implications of constructivist thinking. This quote exemplifies that by distancing the nature from human culture has at the same time made it possible for us to recreate it through text or construct an idea of it, as well as represent it in a textual form.

The differentiation that I have between these terms is that by construction I mean the postmodern idea of a textual construction of a real-life existing item that in a way allows constructed objects to “exist” in a world of their own. By representation I mean that the object is not specifically recreated, but referred to in textual form, whilst acknowledging its secondary value in relation to the real-life existing referent. The following quote from Simon Pugh (in Buell 2000, 175) exemplifies how nature has become to be understood as constructed: “‘nature’ is a recipient of social values and becomes a social construct. What nature *really is*, is not in question. The implications of this for a world fast on the way to destroying its environment is (sic) self-evident” (ibid.). This makes one question what is the most authentic way to represent nature ethically, in a way that reveals the ‘true’ or ‘real’ *nature* of nature without subjecting it to constructed values. If there cannot be any writing or real actual participation by nature without representation or human attempt to construct a piece of the real environment, what then is the real form? Gifford writes about this problem as follows: “Any reference will implicitly or explicitly express a notion of nature that relates to culturally developed assumptions about metaphysics, aesthetics, politics, and status – that is in many case, ideologies [...] in literature nature is culture” (2000, 176).

According to his view, nature *is* culture. What if that were turned upside down and one would claim that culture is nature? In this sense, Steinbeck’s works, especially *GW*, can be understood as writing the human culture within nature. By his way of examining humans as a species and his unique ability to highlight the role of nature without romanticizing it using it merely as a setting, Steinbeck represents nature truthfully and as a whole. My reason to delve into the distinctions between constructing nature and representing nature stems from my desire to understand how Steinbeck’s style of portraying the environmental world locates itself in the spectrum of representing and constructing nature in addition to understanding the division between nature and culture that has been necessary for the natural realm to be represented in the first place.

3.4.1 Understanding the real, non-textual environment through textual representations

In this section I discuss the division between the postmodern constructivist perspective of viewing nature as a social and cultural construct as a comparison to the ecocritical perspective of viewing nature as an existing realm which, although it needs to be referred to in literary form via mimesis, does not mean that the idea of it is therefore somehow ‘unreal’. This section offers valuable context to the content matter of the thesis by revealing some of the ongoing debates within ecocriticism and ecological thinking.

Buell, the main theorist that I apply in my thesis, writes in his article “Representing the Environment” about the ways nature and the ‘real’ physical environment are portrayed in literature. He argues that often nature is reduced merely to a function of a setting, especially considering fiction writing: “it deprecates what it denotes, implying that the physical environment serves for artistic purposes merely as a backdrop, ancillary to the main event” (Buell 2000, 177). Whilst making a statement of this common usage of nature as a mere background for various purposes, he uses the term *literary naturescape*. This literary naturescape, Buell argues, is limited to few “ideological or symbolic usages” (ibid.) and fails to receive the attention that it rightly deserves. Consequently, Buell desires a more authentic representation of nature. He insists on reminding the readers that nature cannot be used solely as a means of providing emphasis on the main actions in a literary text, but that it needs to be appreciated as ‘real’, as a main actor itself and not only as a stage that the events happen upon, or a backdrop that sets the mood for ideological banter.

What follows from this is the question of representing the real in a literary or any form for that matter. Even the word ‘represent’ reminds us of the problem, as the two parts of the word, ‘re’ (again) and ‘present’ (to provide, show), or even in dwelling deeper into the words, present as in “occurring now” (OED, s.v. represent, present). As nature is something that is at the same time not only temporal and spatial, but always changing, representing it in the written form provides us and the author with a dilemma; how to most truthfully represent something that is by its very nature a changing, constantly living or growing sum of different organisms that cannot have a voice of their own. Claiming that there is one way of representing this is simply unnecessary. Moreover, this leads to constructivism and to the problem of representing nature from always a cultural subjective

point of view instead of an objective point of view. Again, as Soper maintains, “it is not language that has a hole in the ozone layer; and the real thing continues to be polluted and degraded even as we refine our deconstructive insights at the level of the signifier” (1995, 151). In relation to this, Buell argues that:

We have derived our critical skepticism or disdain for the notion that literature does or can represent physical reality from the idea of writing as a construct, whether this idea takes the form of the old-fashioned formalist theory of the literary work as artifact or the contemporary theory of writing as discourse. (2000, 178)

Here Buell questions the process of representing nature, claiming that despite its origin, theorists have understood the problems that derive from attempting to capture something non-literary in a literary, discursive mode. The problem that Buell perceives in this is not perhaps the impossibility of capturing a non-textual life in textual form but the lack of attempt or, some might say respect, for the non-literary vital, existing, all powering force of nature.

Furthermore, Buell claims that the modern theorists have continued to value structural – “structure, text(uality), ideology” (2000, 86) – usage of nature over a more realistic usage of nature – “factual reality” (ibid.). In addition to this, Buell continues to criticize formalism, structuralism and poststructuralism for distancing the natural environment even further by not connecting “literary discourse to the world” (ibid.) but combining “all verbal artifacts within a more spacious domain of textuality” (ibid.). The problem that arises is that by creating a world of textuality there is a chance that the non-textual world suffers in respect. In this sense, understanding how nature and the real environments are represented or constructed in literary works such as *GW* can prove to provide us powerful insight into the matter of how reality and especially the natural environment, are or ‘should’ be narrated or represented in literary form.

Although Buell’s critique reaches also realism, he does not categorize *GW* as “stylized ideological or psycho-historical artifact that we have sloppily agreed to call realistic” (2000, 87) but uses it as an example of perhaps a ‘correct’ or authentic representation of the natural reality. This authentic representation that Buell argues for is evidently almost impossible to achieve in nature writing, as textual discourse and human communication of ideas are bound by certain inevitable factors that by their very nature force a certain distance between the writer or observer and their object of interest, the ‘real world’. Although Buell uses *GW* as an example of realistic

representation of the environment, he does not go deeper into detail in discussing the novel's unique nature image.

In addition to the aforementioned, Buell claims that when it comes to details, fiction writing has settled for a less truthful and detailed representation of the environment even when it is the matter at hand. Buell bases this on the fact that in the main American environmental writing forms, wilderness romance and the lyric meditation the "literary naturescape exists for its formal or symbolic or ideological properties rather than as a place of literal reference or as an object of retrieval or contemplation for its own sake" (2000, 178). In this sense, nature and the naturescape are present only as functions that support another form or serve another role in the text instead of existing as self-serving valuable items or forms on their own. Although the symbolic and ideological usage can certainly be traced in *GW*, as natural things work as symbols, I claim that nature, land and landscape are not demoted to only a symbolic status. Although the "narrator's famous image of the land turtle" as "the most extensive metaphor for the migrant worker" (Railsback 2013, 220) as they struggle across the continent, the usage of the turtle in a symbolic function does not necessarily take away the value of the turtle as a natural element in its own right, and the sequence could be read as an attempt to connect the human culture with the natural world, instead of as an attempt to foreshadow the human characters struggle. However, elements of nature rarely are in the focus for their own non-human related values but work to serve different story or character related functions in literature.

The symbolic and ideological function of natural environments lowers its value from standalone meaningful actor into a tool that can be dispensed when no longer needed. This raises the question of appreciating and valuing nature on its own, without it being a reference point, a supporting character, a piece of imagery, background or part of the textual form. What else could nature in literature be, or what should it be? In relation to Buell's ideas of nature in literature, critic and writer Dana Phillips asks: "But why environmental literature should be deputized to make the presence and reality of the natural world available by proxy, when that world lies waiting to be explored by bookworms and bold adventurers alike" (2003, 7). This quote introduces a new perspective to viewing nature-centered writing that Buell has not taken into account, at least in his critique towards literary theorists. Phillips's question is interesting: why is mimesis of the natural realm so thought provoking to Buell?

In relation to this debate about the question of authentic representation, I claim that the relevance of nature writing is not to create a version of something that is emphasized from or by a distance, either geographical or temporal. Nature writing should, to some extent, strive towards authentic representation and have an ethical focus to it, by which I mean that there should be a moral intent in representing the natural world most authentically and in ways that benefit a common cause (beneficial to all living things) instead of an ideological or romanticized focus that might lead to mistreatment or misunderstanding of the natural environment. The way nature is represented in *GW* and *RP* serves ideological functions, yet it still offers a realistic image of the natural environment, giving it enough focus and space to stand as a valuable existing actor in its own right. For example, nature does serve an ideological function, as the nature and the humans in *GW* reveal a unison that forms an ideological narrative of humans within nature. By structuring the natural elements around the actions of the characters and connecting the humans into the land through interactivity and dependence the narrator forms an ideology of a coherent yet unpredictable whole. However, the role of nature in *GW* is multifaceted and complex, as opposed to the function that nature often serves as a setting.

When providing a realist understanding of natural elements, one might resort to detailed mimesis, that quickly serves only its own function. The drawback of attempting lifelike, realist imitation of nature or the surrounding real environment is that one might forget that there is no outsider's seat one can analyze and study the world from, as the natural reality, the physical environment is *where* we exist. In addition, author Leslie Marmon Silko writes in relation to literature's attempt of capturing living things, "lifelike rendering of an elk is too restrictive" (Silko in Buell 1995, 92). The text might serve its function more honestly if it does not strive towards a restricting authenticity that can hinder its artistic merit as well as its message, if it has one. Although attempting to recreate life most honestly can hinder the cause, to Steinbeck striving towards the truth and realistic depiction is central: "Steinbeck tried to work inductively and with objectivity in order to discover what was true" (Railsback 2013, 217). This is the case in both representing social issues as well as the natural environment. As an example I use a description of the surrounding life that the narrator observes: "Gradually the skittering life of the ground, of holes and burrows, of the brush, began again: the gophers moved, and the rabbits crept to green things, the mice scampered over clods, and the winged hunters moved soundlessly overhead" (*GW* 65). This brief observation does not go into specific detail of the ways the animals move and behave,

but it lists them in relation to the existing world, with a clear focus that lacks value judgment or romanticization.

These lifeforms are and are shown in relation to the existing world, not to the humans. This observatory quote brings us back to Phillip's idea of rendering the non-textual world into a textual world; to the question why is it necessary to create the world of 'out there' in the textual form, I find clear answers by examining *GW* and *RP* as sources of important cultural, ecological and place-centered knowledge. The importance of reading for example *GW* as nature or environmental writing is only magnified by the fact that we who live in the late 2010s (early 2020s) in the Anthropocene era will experience an increasing number of environmental disasters in the near future.

Reading literature that discusses nature and landscapes within different regions and across times has a crucial role in transmitting nature and place related knowledge onwards. If for example, the notes about landscape and the land were omitted from *GW*, the reader today would find it difficult mapping out the surroundings, the physical contextual meanings and the relevance of the landscape in the daily life of the people of the area and era. Similarly, according to Buell, documenting or capturing 'real life', even "unremarkable acts such as sawing wood or planting trees" can work as a means to "stretch the horizons of regional and environmental memory decades or even centuries into the past" (Buell 2015, 0:11:37). What Buell says about Aldo Leopold's text *San County Almanac* can be said also about Steinbeck's *GW* and *RP*; the textual representation of land use, bioregional vegetation and place specific action can act as "carriers of environmental memory over against the inertial [...] *generational environmental amnesia*" (ibid., 0:24:00; here Buell uses psychologist Peter Kahn Jr.'s term). This transmittance of place-centered knowledge that has a sensitive focus to nature reveals a connection, and a way of perceiving the world as well as a temporal-spatial reading of a certain environment, which is valuable in understanding the world and our role in it despite the text's somewhat inevitable subjectivity. In connection to this, Buell quotes Christopher Salter who writes about *GW* as a text which provides a "'focus for [...] agricultural land use patterns [...]'; as well as a 'window on geographic phenomena broadly ranging from mental maps to economic infrastructures'" (Salter in Buell 2000, 179). This realistic rendition of a real world can be read as both fiction and non-fiction, as it is a fictive text that is based on real events and even published in a time period that allowed it to be read as a reportative text. In relation to this, Buell writes that "I certainly would not argue that classical realism is the

only way or even the best way of restoring the object-world for art, for imagination, and for human life” (2000, 92). Although Buell discusses several factors that characterize an authentic artistic rendition of the real world, he concludes by stating that representing the real world can be done respectfully and showing great focus even when the factual information is slightly distorted with artistic creativity.

Contrary to Buell's ecocritical writing, Phillips writes in her article “*Expostulations and replies*” about certain ecocritics (e.g. Lawrence Buell and Frank Stewart) tendencies of viewing the world of nature writing. She criticizes Buell’s desire to view the ‘real world’ and the textual world in a deeper connection between each other. Interestingly, she also argues that “we need to cure ecocriticism of its fundamentalist fixation on literal representation” (Phillips 2003, 7). In this sense, Phillips is not one of the postmodern theorists Buell openly criticizes for turning everything “plastic” (Buell 2001, 86), but one that understands that there is a “pragmatic” (ibid.) matter that requires focus, which means that instead of focusing on the text versus world division, ecocritics need to understand that “the world” is “both word and things (2003, 11). However, “every human attempt to know the phenomenal world is filtered through a human value system” (McDowell, 1996, 386). The work that the writers and readers must do is to “analyze the values that a particular writer has allowed to adhere in (their) descriptions and narrations” as well as identify “an integral relationship between value and landscape” (ibid). Acknowledging these facts is therefore beneficial in understanding the problems and shortcomings as well as the possibilities of analyzing nature writing and examining literature ecocritically.

As a conclusion, the problem of the textual recreation of nature, environment or non-textual reality continues to provide dilemmas to ecocritical and ecological thinking. Although the question of authentic representation of the natural world is valid, its importance is in secondary status in relation to the sensitivity and function of the text that attempts to render real life. Steinbeck’s *GW* and *RP* represent the natural world in ways that I claim as authentic, appreciative and thought evoking, despite the ideological and symbolic usage. Representation of the environment, whether it is scientifically precise and, in that way, most authentic in relation to its origin, or subjective with artistic freedom, works to raise awareness and give focus to environmental issues, including place and human interaction with it. Out of these ways to define the attempt to refer to the non-literary world, mentioned above, Steinbeck’s writing situates to the category of realistic representation of nature and the environment, with occasional symbolic or ideological usage. In

the next section I will discuss the representations of nature, landscape and land in relation to creating physical, cultural and personal levels of place.

4 Analyzing Place in *The Grapes of Wrath*

In *GW* the place is created through the nature-focused imagery, the narration and the ways the text reveals how the characters experience their surroundings. The realist language filled with imagery used by the narrator to describe the land, landscape and nature works to create the literary place. This observing narrator is in large is the source for the representations of the three aforementioned that create a sense of an existing place that has a physical existence as well as a cultural side to it, not to mention the sense of place that is created through emotional connection (Buell, 2000). According to Buell, “the concept of *place* [...] gestures in at least three directions at once – toward environmental materiality, toward social perception or construction, and toward individual affect or bond” (2001, 63).

Although there is overlap in these categories, I define that nature (as determined in the theory section) creates mainly environmental materiality of the place (physical), landscape the “social perception” (cultural) place and land the “individual affect” (ibid.) (personal) place. This model of examining a literary place is the focus of my analysis and the basis on which I base my reading to. In addition, I use Bakhtin’s *chronotope* to examine the physical creation of places in *GW*. Therefore, in this chapter I will examine the language and the ways literary techniques are used to create the place and the connections the characters have to it. Physicality is a crucial feature of place creation as the role of the material environment in *GW* reveals. One feature of this thesis is that the subject matter eludes definite categorization, and I happily allow it, as I acknowledge the living and wild essence of place, not to mention the constantly changing and negotiated meanings related to it.

4.1 Creating a Physical Place in *The Grapes of Wrath*

The place in *GW* can be divided into two different locations: Oklahoma and California. I will examine these two locations with the three-way model of place. Due to limited space I have omitted discussing the road as a third place, although I recognize its validity as a meaningful place. Clear categories of nature, land and landscape as well as separation between for example cultural and personal places can be ambiguous due to slight overlap in all sections. As a result, studying place proves to be challenging. This is mainly due to the fact that “places are not clear and obvious

entities” (Urry 1995, 1). Also, most quotes that I will examine could be analyzed under many categories, for example either as a sign of a social or cultural construct or as an example of an individual’s connection. Some examples could therefore work to prove several different readings. This only exemplifies the difficult nature of examining concepts that are interconnected and that also fall under the everyday disguise that allows them to elude analysis. My focus is to examine the connection that Buell has also pointed out:” Steinbeck’s attentiveness to the reciprocity between people and place” (2014, 418) whilst understanding the literary place as a multifaceted and complex creation. First, I will analyze the place through its physicality, second through cultural perception and third through individual attachment.

First, I begin by describing the physical place of *GW*. In both non-textual and textual reality, the 1930’s Oklahoma is a dry, unfruitful country under a large-scale change. The environmental phenomena known as the *Dust Bowl* covers the land, fields and houses with centimeters of dry dust. I will use the non-textual reality as a starting point for understanding the textual reality and physicality of a place. In reality, the area was an environment shaped by the natural forces alongside with the man-made land changes. The area has “special [...] cycles of weather and climate, of drought and rainfall, their grassland ecosystems as a force for moderating and buffering those cycles” (Worster 2001, 350). The area is a specific bioregion that expands over state lines and forms a unique area of specific weather conditions and soil. Knowing the realities of the non-textual physical place aids our understanding of the physical place as created through narrative and literary means in the novel. The significance of understanding literary places is expressed by Waldron: “the material referenced in literary texts” encompasses within itself “nature and culture, the biotic and the body, the entire matter of the world, in some form that can be read through representations of place” (2013, xviii).

4.1.1 Imagery

From the very first page, it is clear that land, landscape and nature are crucial to the theme of the novel. These three form a physical place that serves as the setting, and the physical world for the characters of the novel as well as the *place*. Out of these three, nature and the references to it work as the most prominent feature that creates the physical place. I examine the physical place through two different features: nature related imagery and chronotope.

The heterodiegetic narrator of *GW* is a meticulous observer of nature and the changes of it, which allows the reader to obtain precise information of the physical place. Nature focused writer Raymond Williams would perhaps call the narrator “a self-conscious observer” (1985, 121), someone who realizes their own act of observing. In contrast to what Williams suggests, the narrator of *GW* does not divide their “observations into ‘practical’ and ‘aesthetic’” (ibid.) but combines these both without value judgement forming an observation that is realistic. This is evident in the following quote from the very first page of the novel. The novel begins with a long description of the land;

To the red country and part of the gray country of Oklahoma, the last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth. The plows crossed and recrossed the rivulet marks. The last rains lifted the corn quickly and scattered the weed colonies and grass along the sides of the roads so that the gray country and the dark red country began to disappear under a green cover. (*GW* 1)

The first lines set the tone for the first chapter and for the whole novel, introducing the readers to the premise of the novel with a long description of the land. The whole first chapter is a description of the land and nature during the changes of the season and weather. The physicality of the place is evident in the imagery the narrator uses. By using mostly visual, tactile and olfactory imagery, the narrator creates a multifaceted place that can be seen, felt and heard. In the aforementioned quote, the place is constructed of nature that is active, growing, protecting, breaking and forming. The land is alive with “dark green bayonet,” “young corn” and “gophers and ant lions” (*GW* 1). This visual imagery acts as a powerful creator of the vivid nature.

The most powerful symbolic imagery is the use of dust to underline the interactivity between nature and humans: “And at last he moved up the road, shooting the dust ahead of him, making a cloud that hung to the ground behind him” (*GW* 17). In this example, the way the narrator brings in the interactive and physical relationship humans have with their land reminds us of the inescapable connection that humans have with their surroundings. Although the connection is brief and one that might easily go unnoticed, it forces the reader to include the ground into their idea of the world within the *GW*. The reader might not consciously pause to think of the land and the rising dust, but with the unconscious mind the reader imagines the dust arising. Dust is a powerful image and has a very specific role in the *GW* as it connects to the phenomenon of the Dust Bowl, but here especially it highlights the inevitable relation humans have with their environment.

By existing with his physical body in motion on top of the physical location of land, Tom Joad sets on an active reaction within the land. Later in the same chapter, the visual imagery of the dust is repeated: “dragging his cloud of dust behind him” (*GW* 17). This repetition of the dust that follows and arises underlines the interactive relationship even further, whilst reminding of the detrimental effect the agricultural abuse on the land had. By these descriptions of natural forces, animals and vegetation, the narrator creates a world that consists of life in its entirety. The whole place, including the plants, land, humans and animals are affected by the Dust Bowl: “The yellowing, dusty, afternoon light put a golden color on the land. The cornstalks looked golden.” Here the dust has colored every living being. The dusty, hot physicality of the natural world becomes evident through the imagery: “the cornstalks threw grey shadows sideways now, and the raw smell of hot dust was in the air” (*GW* 28). Even the tactile and olfactory imagery reveals the significance of dust as a place creator: “But the smell of burned dust was in the air, and the air was dry, so that mucus in the nose dried to a crust, and the eyes watered to keep the eyeballs from drying out.” (*GW* 28). This intensive and repetitive imagery immerses the reader into the same physical place as the main characters and creates a physical place one can see, feel, touch and smell.

Furthermore, the natural forces presented in the novel provide an understanding of the place as a world consisted of biological organisms under a destructive uncontrollable element of nature: “The rain beat steadily. And the streams and the little rivers edged up to the bank sides and worked at willows and trees roots, bent the willows deep in the current, cut out the roots of cottonwoods, and brought down the trees” (*GW* 477). In this sense, nature is a force that cannot be altered. The natural forces (rain, drought, weather, time) that shape the physical place inevitably affect humans as well. According to Brian Railsback, “the novel presents a large picture in which humans are only a small part” by showing that humans are part of the “great natural scheme of sky, land, rain, wind, and dust” and struggle in the same way as other living beings: “they suffer with the teams of horses and the dying corn—all life-forms are helpless in this huge canvas of natural machinations” (2013, 220). In this sense, the nature that creates the physical place can be understood to consist also of humans as part of the biodiversity, as a species that struggles to survive in the changing biosphere. Similarly, author Tim Cresswell writes that “elements of nature (elemental forces)” are an essential part of “place, as a phenomenological-experiential entity” (1996, 157). This crucial feature of nature is also an integral part of the chronotope, as I will later

in this section. This phenomenal imagery of the physical surroundings creates a sense of a physical place and by describing the weather and nature in detail creates a round dimension that equals to the place.

What is noteworthy in the nature-related imagery is that it is active and does not serve only a symbolic function. Neither does nature exist only as a setting but it inhabits the place as an active and equal part of the narrative. In the case of *GW*, it is evident that “the physical environment” does not serve “for artistic purposes merely as a backdrop” (Buell 2000, 177). The nature in the *GW* is full of life and potential, a whole world of its own. For instance, nature exists without humans experiencing, moderating or viewing it. In the third chapter the land is filled with life: “in the shade under the grass the insects moved ants and ant lions to set traps for them, grasshoppers to jump into the air” (*GW* 14). The insects are seen in connection to each other and to the plants, as free agents of their own right. The “sow bugs” trudge “restlessly on many tender feet” (*GW* 14) in the grass on the roadside. In relation to this, John Agnew argues that “place connotes not simply bounded and meaningful location but also dynamic process, including the shaping of place by outside as well as internal influences” (1987, 28–37). The living organisms that are part of the physical environment can be seen as affecting this process from within. As the places are influenced by natural forces from within, as well as from the outside, and are constantly in motion, they evidently function as something that is beyond a stable ‘location’ or a ‘setting’. These observations of vital existence within nature, inside and above the land and within the landscape, create a sense of physical place by giving focus and agency to these different forms of life. The physical place is not static or one dimensional; it is formed by active participants within nature, by animals, plants, weather and time (the inevitable force which imposes the temporality upon *all* things). Through this active energy that these natural organisms entail, the physical place is created as a living realm that escapes the confinements of setting.

4.1.2 Chronotope

In addition to the imagery discussed in the previous section, another meaningful method of narration that creates the physical place in *GW* is the chronotope. Bakhtin’s term chronotope refers to a narrative portrayal of time and place that function as a means to bring the textual place into life in the narrative. The description of the weather (wind, rain, sun) in connection to the surface

(soil, land, field) and the plants (corn, grass, willow) maps out a three-dimensional physical location. The chronotope combines these spatial levels with a temporal level, forming a four-dimensional, round totality of a place. In this section I will define the features of the chronotope and explain how it works to create the physicality of a literary place.

The chronotope becomes evident in the narration that describes the places and events in *GW*. Through connecting the temporality of the action of either the human characters or animals or plants to the elemental physical place, the chronotope functions as “the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied (Bakhtin 1981, 250). This following quote exemplifies the creation of a physical place through chronotope: “Where the dooryard had been pounded hard by the bare feet of children and by stamping horses’ hooves and by the broad wagon wheels, it was cultivated now, and the dark green, dusty cotton grew” (*GW* 41). The quote reveals the effect of not only temporal action but a regular, quotidian action that stretches the physical place’s history by portraying the place in deeper level that includes the effect of natural forces, habitual human and animal effect and the agency of the natural realm to claim back forgotten or abandoned material forms. The quote therefore works as an example to portray several different features in the narrative that create a sense of place.

The chronotope that is formed by the simultaneous passing of time and the presence of place is one essential narrative method used by the narrator that forms the four-dimensional place. As scholar Sabina Perrino writes, “chronotope was a way to draw attention to the inseparability of space (I would call this place) and time” (2015, 142) and in addition “the way the entanglement of the two are constructed in different literary materials” (ibid). This entangled connection that combines place and time “makes narrative events concrete” (Bakhtin 1981, 434) as can be seen in the following quote from *GW*: “And at first the dry earth sucked the moisture down and blackened. For two days the earth drank the rain, until the earth was full” (477). Here, time is evident through the past tense, in the duration of the action and its limitation in relation to the physical world. The action is affected by time and natural forces. The material environment (dry earth) receives the temporal action (rain) and changes because of it (becomes full and black). This intersection of time and place creates intensity into the narrative, creating a place that is multidimensional, active and animate.

Furthermore, Bakhtin says that chronotope “makes them (narrative events) take on flesh” (2004, 42) which can be seen in the way the narrator describes the Joads as they are forced to

abandon their home in Sallisaw: “They saw the house and the barn and a little smoke *still* rising from the chimney. They saw the windows reddening under the first color of the sun. [...] And then *the hill cut them off*” (*GW* 125; emphases added). Without the temporal aspect that is implemented through the tense and the word ‘still’, this event would lack its intensity and vitality. Similarly, without spatiality this quote would be less effective. Everything that happens in this particular narrative event is affected by the chronotope, as it works to create the depth of the place through the immediacy of temporality and spatiality. The movement in time that distances the Joads from their former home one second at a time is portrayed by the change in the sun as its rays hit the windows, until finally their line of vision is blocked by the topographical land forms. The chronotope here is something that in Bakhtin’s opinion a novel should illustrate as well: “an integrated picture of the world and life, [...] the *entire* world and *all* of life” (2004, 43; emphases original). To represent the actual world in literary text is of course impossible, but what Bakhtin means here is that the chronotope reveals the world as it is as a round, immersive existence that extends to reach sensory levels, concrete materiality and the elusive and often invisible layer of time. According to Bakhtin, “in the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought out, concrete whole” (1981, 84). In this sense, the chronotope in the *GW* is exactly what Bakhtin claimed a novel should have.

The corn field ended and dark green cotton took its place, dark green leaves through a film of dust, and the bolls forming. It was spotty cotton, thick in the low places where water had stood, and bare on the high places. The plants strove against the sun. And distance, toward the horizon, was tan to invisibility. The dust road stretched out ahead of them, waving up and down. The willows of a stream lined across the west, and to the northwest a fallow section was going back to sparse brush. (*GW* 28)

This long passage in the first half of the novel where Tom Joad has not met his family yet, is a good example of the way the physical location is created and how the landscape is mapped in the textual realm. This passage is in motion within temporality, and in it “time as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible” (Bakhtin 1981, 2). The fields “end” and other fields “take their place” (*GW* 28). The land is mapped as far as the eye can see, until it blurs into “invisibility” (*GW* 28). In addition, through this description, “space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history” (*GW* 28). This is evident through the way the land is perceived and describes as Tom and Casy walk: the “dust road stretches” in front of

them, moving “up and down” (*GW* 28). Although the road is in actuality stable, the way the narrator describes it as “waving up and down” hints the idea of movement. The active form the landscape and nature take in this passage, as well as throughout the whole novel suggests that the whole environment and nature react to the passing of time, in ways that fill the place with life and vitality, providing the nature also agency through the chronotope.

Bakhtin writes in his essay “The Bildungsroman” about place in Goethe’s world that is alive:

Everything -- from an abstract idea to a piece of rock on the bank of a stream -- bears the stamp of time, is saturated with time and assumes its form and meaning in time. Therefore, everything is intensive [...] it contains no inanimate, immobile, petrified places, no immutable background that does not participate in action and emergence (in events), no decorations or sets. (1986, 42)

In the same way I argue that in Steinbeck’s writing there is no “inanimate” or stable view of nature as a mere setting, but that it is a vivid, lively and inherently essential world that is given a focus throughout the novel, with specific meaning and value as part of the action and narrative, as I have shown throughout this section. Consequently, Bakhtin’s views on Goethe’s world – “everything in this world is a time-space, a true chronotope” – relate to *GW*, as nothing in the novel is external or outside of the time-space created by the narrator. The events are all “related in an essential way to the particular spatial place of their occurrence” (Bakhtin 2004, 42). Although this “essential way” remains relatively unclear, I read it as referring to the close inseparable connection of the events to the world around them.

To conclude, the physical place is created mainly through nature related imagery and the use of chronotope. Especially phenomenal imagery i.e. visual, olfactory and tactile imagery create a sense of a vivid, active and colorful physical place that can be sensed. In addition, the description of the active nature and the elemental forces of nature underline the role of nature as an integral part of the narrative, as opposed to the traditional function of a setting. Furthermore, the elemental forces emphasize the position of humans as part of nature due to their inevitable status as co-sufferers with other biological beings. The chronotope has an essential role in building a sense of place that is not stable but a living spatio-temporal realm. These narrative ways create the physical location of a place in *GW*.

4.2 From Place Defined by Physicality to Culturally Valued Landscape

According to Buell, “meaningful place is bound to be constructed in part by collective standards as well as by physical terrain and personal proclivity” (2001, 60). In this section I discuss the subtle change from envisioning place through its physicality to creating it culturally and socially, or, as Buell words it, “by collective standards” (ibid.). I consider the interchapters as crucial to understanding the novel’s cultural and physical location. A vast majority of the narrative creation of a place is done in the interchapters, yet these physical notes are connected to cultural values. The interchapters connect the smaller sphere of the Joad family’s struggle into the wider picture of the almost nationwide crisis. In that same sense, the interchapters tie the physical place of the intermediate surrounding into the wider realm of a larger physical place. It is in the interchapters where the narration changes from first person point of view (e.g. chapter 7) to third person point of view providing a different perspective (e.g. chapter 25) to understanding place by changing focalization. The cultural, social and economic values that humans attach to the land shape it and shape the understanding of the land and the understanding of the role of humans within that land and place. *GW* allows us to examine the land and landscape and its products through the lens of different (and sometimes starkly contrasting) value systems. The narrator reveals differing ways to experience the land through the lens of these different values by changing focalization between different characters (e.g. the Joads, the car salesman) and by describing scenes where the differing value-systems lead to direct conflict. This section explores how different cultural/value lenses affect the understanding of the land and the humans’ role within it. First, I examine the place seen through cultural significance, second through economic and capitalist interests, third through agricultural values and finally through social wellbeing.

4.2.1 Place-making Viewed Socio-culturally

Studying a place as a cultural construct allows us to examine the different values that the narrator transmits through the narrative. According to scholars Iain Robertson and Penny Richards, examining cultural landscapes reveals meanings, values and ideas of the dominant culture and “this recognition of symbolic meaning in landscape leads to a consideration of the political dimensions of the world (and what we see around us and inhabit)” (2003, 4). This forces us to

view the landscape in *GW* differently; the physical landscape of the Dust Bowl or California region cannot be separated into a purely physical form as the values related to landscape transform its material form. The landscape in *GW* is inherently part of the American culture and contains decades of political and cultural history within it. The politics of land use are evident in the narrative: the land is abused to produce profit without much regard to the needs or well-being of either the environment or the people living on the land. In addition, the focus on narrating the landscape through a car salesman, the California fruit farmers and the Oklahoma bank representatives reveals their economic interest. As a contrast to this, the shift in focalization to the Joads reveals positive values and expectations of the landscape, in both agricultural terms and in relation to social well-being.

4.2.2 Cultural Significance

First, I will examine the place through cultural significance. Chapter sixteen reveals meaningful cultural knowledge, by turning the physical environment into “culturally significant sites” (Tilley 1994, 18) through place names. The chapter begins with a description of driving along the Highway 66, which is well known for being ‘*the road*’ for migrant families during the Dust Bowl era, through areas that are listed as names, sign passing by as the family drives on: “El Reno and Bridgeport, Clinton, Elk City, Sayre, and Texola. There’s the border, and Oklahoma was behind” (*GW* 178). The list continues, and through this listing of the names the narrator underlines the vast amount of connection that people have with their places, contrasting it to the speed that they are passing them with. These names listed carry cultural and personal meaning and value to people who know them: “through an act of naming [...] places become invested with meaning and significance” (Tilley, 1994, 18). Similarly, they are carriers of information, of cultural and social history (Gelling 1984, 1), that are often easily passed without acknowledging their importance. By focusing on the names of places, the narrator creates a sense of place that derives from cultural and communal history. These signs remind us of the “universal compulsion for humans to seek to connect themselves with specific places of settlement” (Buell 2001, 74). These “specific places of settlement” (*ibid.*) can be found anywhere, with signs pointing to them with names that sometimes to understand them require one to be culturally and spatially attuned to the specific region. These places that the Joads pass are filled with people with equally important cultural spatial connection

and place attachment. In this sense, the narrator's focus on the surroundings that can be read as a culturally meaningful creates the place in *GW*.

4.2.1.2 Economic and Capitalist Interest

Secondly, I examine the place through economic and capitalist interests. The narrator reveals a different way of perceiving landscape in interchapter seven through shifting the focalization from Joads to the car salesman. This perception is also related to mobility and therefore culturally significant. According to John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, the rise of automobility in the 1930s changed the way landscape was seen and landscapes of automobility derived from deep-seated American values (2011, 6), mainly freedom, social mobility and economic possibilities. Therefore, the way of imagining a landscape through automobility is connected to economic values as well as cultural ones.

The narrator describes the crossroads of the American roadside culture and agricultural small towns, "in the towns, on the edges of the towns, in fields, in vacant lots, the used-car yards, the wreckers' yards, the garages with blazoned signs" (*GW* 65). The chapter is narrated from the salesman's point of view, in short sentences that exemplify his frustration towards the current situation: "those sons-of-bitches over there ain't buying" (*GW* 66). By changing the focalization, the way the place is envisioned changes. Therefore, this section adds another level on how a place is created, as the landscape is envisioned socio-culturally with new values attached to it. These values define the landscape through cars and mobility: "I got to get a car. We're going to California" (*GW* 69). This way of perceiving the landscape means that the physical place is envisioned through a culturally specific, socio-economic interest. In chapter seven, the focus shifts from the active role of the landscape into a mere placeholder for items for profit, such as cars. The space is envisioned through what it can hold: "A lot and a house large enough for a desk and a chair and a blue book" (*GW* 65) further underlining an economic interest. This focus on narrating the place through socially and culturally specific interests provides a realistic insight to the world of 1930's Oklahoma that did not consist solely of animals, dust and plants but of land and nature that formed a landscape of manmade fields, car lots and houses amongst the wilder natural realm. The following quote underlines both the interactive relationship humans share with their place as well as the meanings and expectations they relate to it:

The land in which we live both shapes us and we shape it, physically by means of *cultivation* and building, and imaginatively by projecting onto it our *aspirations and fantasies of wealth, refuge, well-being, awe, danger and consolation*. (Robertson & Richards 2003, 1)

In the light of this quote, the fruitful land of California, which can be seen as a contrast to the decaying landscape of Oklahoma, works as a prime example of a land (or landscape) that conveys all these different levels mentioned in the quote above. Firstly, California is strictly controlled, “shaped by us” (ibid.) since the land is fenced and the fields are patrolled. As a result, the landscape turns culturally meaningful in differing ways: the fruit and produce becomes to denote a symbol of power, money and control. These meanings change depending on the viewer: for example for the Joads, every piece of fruit is a step closer to survival, and every bruised fruit a step closer to starvation. To the owners of the fruit farm, the fruit are only a means to make profit. These two modes of perception reveal values that affect the way the landscape is understood and ‘read’. For example, Paul and Helen Hadella write that “though the Okies express close connection to the land, working the land is viewed in economic rather than in spiritual terms (2002, 92). Although this is true, the Hadellas fail to acknowledge the multifacetedness of perceiving the land. The economy focused perception of the land is mostly narrated through the fruit farmers, not the ‘Okie’ settlers; although their survival is dependent on the produce, they see the landscape as entailing living organisms instead of numbers.

The distorted economic interest of the farmers is most evident in the immoral destroying of the produce: the excess fruit is destroyed in order to keep the prices up, and in doing so the fruit has lost its meaning as an edible food to the owners: “The people come with nets to fish the potatoes in the river [...] they come in rattling cars to get the dumped oranges, but kerosene is sprayed” (*GW* 385). Furthermore, to the starving workers the fruit is a symbol of a ridiculous use of power over the working poor. This offers an alternative way of perceiving nature and place through contradictory economic and cultural meanings. The way the farmers relate to the landscape and to the produce is in contrast to the way the Joads relate to them; the landowners control, cultivate, improve and select, whereas the pickers and consumers desire, appreciate and devour. In this sense the way the landscape and its bearings convey the differences between envisioning a place through

differing values. Through the economic interest the landscape is a “capitalist western space” (Tilley 1994, 21).

In addition to this, the landscape is also perceived through technological, economic and capitalist approach. This envisioning of landscape is exemplified in interchapter twenty-five:

Behind the fruitfulness are men of understanding and knowledge, and skill, men who experiment with seed, endlessly developing the techniques for greater crops of plants whose roots will resist the million enemies of the earth: the molds, the insects, the rusts, the blights. (*GW* 383)

This reveals the landscape as “a product of dynamic processes of interaction” (Robertson & Richards 2003, 10). The plants, fruits, the whole natural realm is an experiment to these nameless farmers, in the same way the land is a surface to cut for the tractor drivers who work for the banks and corporations in Oklahoma. Both of these groups of people see the land or fruit of the land from a neutral, scientific distance. The fruit and plants are studied by “men of chemistry” and “doctors of preventive medicine” (*GW* 382) with “surgeon’s hands and surgeon’s heart” (*GW* 383). These medical terms underline the detachment that exists between the owners and the landscape they control. The narrator subtly mocks these petty men with their God-like experiments and attempts: “And the men are proud [...] They have transformed the world with their knowledge” (*GW* 383). As these men force “the earth to produce” (*GW* 383) so do the banks drive the lands into despair.

What is noteworthy in these depictions is that the narrator clearly regards the settlers’ way better in comparison to the owners’ way of understanding the land. The way the ‘Okies’ and landowners refer to their landscape reveals cultural and social values (McDowell 1996, 386), especially capitalist values where profit and private ownership are valued higher than environmental sustainability. This also highlights what Robertson and Richards point out: “landscapes are [...] cultural images that often hide the processes that have made them – social, political, economic, spiritual – behind a placid and familiar surface” (2003, 4). In the same way as in California the fruit farmers are portrayed as emotionally and physically distanced from the land, so are the owners in Oklahoma. The representatives of the banks have no deep connection with the land, but hide behind “closed cars” (*GW* 32) and sit “in their cars to talk out of windows” (*ibid.*) whilst the settlers “squatted on their hams and found sticks with which to mark the dust” (*GW* 32). The representatives’ relationship with the land is purely technical and unemotional, as their life does not depend on it (at least in theory). When the representatives feel the land, they feel produce

and profit, not dust, or life and death. This is evident in the way the narrator describes the interactions with the land; “ more often a spokesman for the owners came [...] they felt the dry earth with their fingers, and sometimes they drove big earth augers into the ground for soil tests “ (*GW* 32) This economic interest distances them from the actuality of the place, as the narration in the interchapter reveals: “They farmed on paper; and they forgot the land, the smell, the feel of it, and remembered only that they owned it, remembered only what they gained and lost by it” (*GW* 256). According to Sackman, “[f]or Steinbeck, capitalism is a wedge alienating people from the land and thus themselves” (2005, 270). The capitalist approach to the land and landscape is clear throughout the novel, especially the interchapter mentioned here.

To understand the place more deeply, I delve into envisioning it through agricultural interests. Although discussed separately, it is evident that these interests cannot be separated from the economic or political interests. In contrast to this view, the settlers are portrayed as in a close connection that borders inexpressible: the settlers are inseparable from their place and their interaction with their land is perceived as more sensitive: “when there is a visceral connection between farmer and land, the earth becomes a growing and living being that is part of the community” (Sackman 2005, 271). One of the clearest factors that separates the landowners from the settlers is their use of machinery and technology (cars, tractors, fertilizers) which is perceived as detrimental to the land, and a sign of an ‘evil’ force of the capitalist economy that ruins the small time farmers and their land by forcing the lands to produce over their natural abilities: “but under conditions of mechanical reproduction, the land becomes a thing, its soil dead pan” (*ibid.*). This has, at the same time, some truth to it but in reality, the situation was not as straightforward as it is conveyed in *GW*.

According to Harry McDean, Steinbeck’s main characters were not such working class heroes as they maybe were accepted as, “in fact it was Stein’s and Steinbeck’s “victims” who did the victimizing; at least some of them helped form the farming culture that created the ecological disaster called the Dust Bowl” (2001, 370). Although the ‘Okies’ understanding of the land is perhaps better than the landowners understanding, they still fail to notice the erosion and ignore the inevitable future by believing in better years to come: “Maybe the next year will be a good year. God knows how much cotton next year” (*GW* 33). Tom Joad is the only one who acknowledges the lie that the farmers have based their livelihood on: “Ever’ year I can remember, we had a good crop comin’ an’ it never come. Grampa says she was good the first five plowin’s,

while the wild grass was still in her” (*GW* 29). These references to the condition of the land are in line with what the Dust Bowl historians claim: “the destruction by plow of the grass cover on vulnerable lands [...] has been the leading reason for the devastating scale of dust storms in the twentieth century” (Worster 2001, 352). This highlights that although “an awakened sense of physical location and of belonging to some sort of place-based community have a great deal to do with activating environmental concern” (Buell 2001, 56), it does necessarily also mean that one is incapable of mistreating it (Buell 2001, 77) as can be seen in *GW*.

4.2.1.3 Social Well-being

As a final point in this chapter, I focus on landscape in relation to “*aspirations and fantasies of wealth, refuge, well-being, awe*” (Robertson & Richards 2003, 1). California can be compared to the Promised Land in the Joads migrant Exodus, as a desired place for social wellbeing. The imagined California is a place they have heard much about that they are not even sure if they are willing to believe that it exists. Ma Joad is first unsure and afraid: “it’d be nice under the trees, workin’ in the shade. I’m scared of stuff so nice. I ain’t got faith. I’m scared somepin ain’t so nice about it” (*GW* 97). Whilst traveling towards west, they make simple plans that are too hopeful; “We’ll get out west and’ we’ll get work an’ we’ll get a piece a growin’ land with water” (*GW* 207). The promised land of orange trees growing in every street corner proves to be completely different from what they had hoped for. Rosasharn, the oldest daughter of the family dreams of a family life in a town instead of the farm, living in a little house with new white things, going to the “hospiddle” (*GW* 180) to have her baby and to the “pitchers whenever” (*GW* 180).

These expectations create an idea of the place, which is beautiful, green and lush, but in reality, also strictly controlled and culturally different. The farms, orchards and fields are protected, owned, measured and mapped. Despite the fact that these expectations are not met, the act of dreaming and imagining another place is an important part of survival in a situation of displacement. Even when one knows it is not real – “Ma suddenly seemed to know it was all a dream” (*GW* 181) –, it still is valuable as a coping mechanism if nothing else. The dream of California helps the Joads and the ‘Okies’ survive the journey to the other side of the continent. According to sociologist Anthony D. Smith “land of dreams is far more significant than any actual terrain” (Smith in Buell 2001, 72). Envisioning California as the land of possibilities is the dream

that becomes the reason to endure the pain of leaving home and the poor treatment the ‘Okies’ get on their way there. In relation to the Joads understanding of California as the answer to their desires and salvation to their troubles: “the fact that the imaginer hasn’t been there or maybe never will hardly lessens the intensity of such storied or imaged places to induce longing and loyalty” (Buell 2005, 73). Sometimes these “imaged places” (ibid.) can be more defining and valuable than one’s own immediate place. This is especially true when the place acts as a projection of hope in displaced survival. The literary landscape is therefore created also through these projections of the Joads.

To conclude, the place that consists of the land, landscape and nature, with their cultural, physical and emotional forms is a conveyor of a variation of different meanings and values that deserve notice. The land does not stand only to serve one function or to receive a meaning through culture and through people, but it is a combination of several different processes that shape it to be what it is. It reflects what we project to it, and at the same time, it is a living realm that continues to be shaped by the natural forces that are in constant motion as well as changing cultural values. In this sense “landscapes are active and dynamic” (Robertson & Richards 2003, 7). These values that humans attach to landscape shape not only the physical environment but also the way the landscape is perceived, and the way humans relate their own existence with it. Therefore, understanding a place is not straightforward, but a process that must be given attention to. By providing an insight to these aforementioned differing perceptions of the land, the narrator functions as a creator of a multifaceted, multifunctional and well-rounded place that has economic, cultural, political and agricultural values related to it.

4.3 Personal Affect or Bond, and Identity

At the end of the previous chapter I discussed the concept of “imaged places” (Buell 2005, 73) in relation to cultural aspirations. As cultural and personal are often tightly connected, the same idea can be used to proceed to understanding place in terms of “individual affect or bond” (Buell 2005, 63). In this section I will discuss the third perception for understanding place: individual connection. In *GW*, the attachment to place is revealed through dialogue between the characters and through the narrator who shifts focalization to convey the characters personal feelings towards a place. Although the attachment to a place is most evident through the dialogue between the

characters, some characters connection is revealed through the narration. This relates to the indescribable nature of place-attachment. Buell writes that when describing a sense of place people tend to use words that insufficient in explaining the “complex network of sensations and value commitments that tie people to the locales they care about” (Buell 2001, 61). As the novel’s plot surrounds the story of Tom Joad who returns from prison back home to Oklahoma only to find out that his family is preparing to leave the land they have lived on, the social and personal connection to the land is mostly experienced through Tom or the Joads as a collective. Therefore, their experience is narrated through either the Joads or the unnamed families in the interchapters. As the personal experience and understanding of a place can be based on a social understanding, some distinctions between personal and communal/social/cultural remain blurry. According to Buell, the “reinventions” of identities in relation to experienced places are “always on some sort of continuum between the personal and the collective” (2001, 71). Firstly, I examine the creation of a literary place by studying the personal bond that becomes evident through memory in cases of displacement. Secondly, I analyze the places as meaningful for identity.

4.3.1 Memory as a Conveyor of Place-attachment

In interchapter nine, leaving one’s place is portrayed through the items and memories one has in a set location. These items one is attached to; memorabilia, family traditions, identifiers, forms of nature, define both the place and the person. The focalization shifts to the unnamed group of ‘Okies’: “How can we live without our lives? How can we live without our past?” (*GW* 96) The narrator voices the answer: “No, leave it. Burn it” (*GW* 96). In relation to the landscape, the visual and physical world that is one’s place, the narrator asks: “How’ll it be not knowing what land is outside the door? How if you wake up in the night and know --- and *know* the willow tree is not there?” (*GW* 96). These markers, items of importance and reflectors of existence are the things that make one who one is, and confirm one’s existence by reminding about the connection to a place, or by existing as a structure that becomes so innate that one does not need to even think about it. Interestingly, Buell writes about the presence of these “past places” (Buell 2001, 70) in the following way; “the past places that stay with a person or a people as an accumulated part of identity get reinvented in the process of absorption” (ibid). This is evident in the *GW*, in the aforementioned example as well as in the cases of Grampa Joad, Muley Graves and Ma & Joad I

will discuss in the following section. The absorbed places are a part of a person, although they often are not referred to. By knowing that the willow tree is not there one is required to actively think about it, but when the surroundings and the place forms a template that one belongs to, the surroundings no longer require active acknowledgement, their existence requires no consciousness. According to Buell, no longer thinking about one's immediate environment may be due to "laziness or a desire for security, we tend to lapse into comfortable inattentiveness toward the details of our surroundings as we go about our daily business" (1995, 261). It is when the surroundings change, or become compromised, that one begins to notice them. Knowing one's surroundings therefore provides a sense of security, and comfort that remains only in the unconscious mind until one is forced to acknowledge it either due to change of place or a change in place.

Furthermore, in relation to the idea of "imaged places" (ibid.), Buell writes that "absence may strengthen loyalty to place and sense of entitlement" (2001, 72). This emphasized bond to a place that is created through absence is also the case in *GW*, although the Joads appear to be coping with their loss because they have no other choice. Although they try to forget: "It ain't our home no more. Wisht I'd forget it" (*GW* 378), they do occasionally reminisce their home with sentiment: "I can remember the choppin' block back home with a feather caught on it, all criss-crossed with cuts, an' black with chicken blood" (*GW* 357). This specific memory reveals a deep level of place-attachment that exemplifies the meaningfulness of one's relationship to their place. To Ma Joad, these memories come back only when they have survived the long arduous journey to California and lost four family members on the way. She allows herself to think about the lost home only after they have reached California. It is also then, when her mourning for the lost members of the family is revealed: "I can remember how them mountains was, sharp as ol' teeth beside the river where Noah walked. I can remember how the stubble was on the groun' where Grampa lie" (*GW* 357).

These memories have clearly attached to the physical surroundings of the places the events occurred. To Pa Joad, reaching California brings back spatial memories that are in connection with their surroundings; he and Ma reminisce the days back home and their habits that they did not acknowledge then but that now bring a warm sense of familiarity to an odd new place: "'Remember what we'd always say at home? Winter's a-comin' early,' we said, when the ducks flew. Always said that, an' winter come when it was ready to come" (*GW* 357). These familiar things, that

perhaps went unnoticed in the old home, become carriers of important spatial, temporal and cultural knowledge. In addition, this aforementioned quote underlines the importance of personal experience and interactivity between people and places. Furthermore, these mental images and memories of places remain essential even in displacement. Hay explains the connectedness to place with a certain feeling-based understanding of it: “‘sense of place’: the feeling that one is affectively bonded to and thus fundamentally connected with a place” (Hay in Jakle & Sculle 2011, 20). He continues to define it in connection to belonging: “It is a kind of attachment to place where one feels comfortable if not ‘at home.’ Such feelings of place-rootedness strongly reinforce personal if not collective identity” (ibid.). This form of identifying in connection to a place that Hay talks about is evident in *GW*, as these excerpts reveal. In a similar way, the meanings and memories humans relate to a particular place create a certain time specific place memory, which author Christopher Tilley calls “the spirit of a place [...] the social and individual times of memory” (1994, 26, 27). These memories shared by Ma and Pa Joad reveal these place specific, individual but communal moments that create the literary place in the novel. As I have shown, places and environments evoke feelings, memories and invite a certain attachment to them through familiarity.

Consequently, familiarity and memories are inseparable from attachment and only the as can be seen in several instances in the novel. The importance of place and the difficulty of leaving it is underlined in several instances in the novel. As we have seen, the characters attach to buildings, equipment and belongings. These items “turn into powerful symbols” (Slyomovics in Buell 2001, 72). In order to afford to leave their home, the ‘Okies’ are forced to sell their belongings. The items that they sell are “their belongings and the belongings of their fathers and of their grandfathers” (*GW* 93). These items are not free from personal meaning: “you’re buying years of work, toil in the sun; you’re buying a sorrow that can’t talk” (*GW* 94). The amount of time and effort that one has spent on obtaining a piece of furniture or the importance of an inherited family clock is immeasurable, as well is the value of these aforementioned things. These items invite remembrance and offer a chance to feel tied to a place. They work as identity markers that absorb meanings from the past and evoke temporal and spatial narratives; “That plow, that harrow, remember in the war we planted mustard?” (*GW* 93) that have meaning beyond their function or value, and through displacement, their meaning is duplicated. Therefore, the materiality of the place as well as its natural elements invite memories and emotions to attach to it.

Furthermore, the individual connection to one's surroundings is portrayed in short simple passages as the people pass the places and think about their own existence within that place in connection to a certain item or a piece of the natural realm. Before leaving his family home, Tom walks around looking at his familiar surroundings once more: "He visited the places he remembered – the red bank where the swallows nested, the willow tree over the pig pen" (*GW* 97). This connection is at the same time nostalgic, as Tom has not visited his home for four years, and questioning. Tom visits the places "he remembered", not the places that exist in the present tense in front of him. His connection to his home is in the past, and his way of examining his surroundings mainly nostalgic. In this sense, Tom's former home is already a 'past place' for him. Also, this reveals the temporality of a place as "places have histories" (Buell 2001, 67). His remembering is brief, and his emotional ties cut off because he has already detached himself from the place. Tom's years in prison have prepared him for the inevitable displacement, and due to his interrupted connection with his place, he is more equipped than the rest of the family to survive the forced move. He visits the places of his childhood when (or where) his "place template" was formed (Buell 2001, 69). By this Buell means the first understanding of a place that continues to define a person, as a starting ground on which the other meaningful places can add to. Through Tom the place is seen in a nostalgic sense, complementing the way the interchapters create the place. According to Buell, "the infant landscape" (*ibid.*) does not "need to be a happy one for it to have profound long-term impact" (*ibid.*), although based on Tom's recollection, the place evokes no negative memories. Consequently, Tom's perception and environmental temporal imagination complements the concept of place making it personal and providing a sense of personal history into the place.

The connection that the humans, whether in the interchapters (unnamed characters) or in the main chapters (the Joads, named characters) share with their surroundings creates the sense of place by adding an emotional, nostalgic and historical element to it. Most of the characters have grown attached to their place, some of them even see themselves, and are portrayed, as the place. Muley Graves's and Grampa Joad's identities are dependent on their physical location to the point that leaving their place equals death, and in Grampa Joad's case death correlates with leaving the place which "is him." To some characters, place is mainly nostalgic (Tom) and to others leaving is difficult and although they survive displacement, they experience longing and look back on their former place with sentiment (Ma and Pa Joad). To all these characters, the place is not onefold or

simple, but it is a combination of the land (soil, livelihood) landscape (visual scenery, buildings, items of existence) and nature (willow trees, weather, fauna). This memory related place is conveyed by Kevin Ryden:

For those who have developed a sense of place, then, it is as though there is an unseen layer of usage, memory, and significance-an invisible landscape, if you will, of imaginative landmarks-superimposed upon the geographical surface and the two-dimensional map. (1993, 40)

Ryden's description of an unseen landscape that consists of mental images, ideas, emotions and memories describes the landscapes of Tom, Ma and Pa Joad as well as any collective landscape that includes place specific information and history. Ryden continues by saying that "to passing observers [...] that landscape will remain invisible unless it is somehow called to their attention" (ibid). This understanding of a place with its complicated and often invisible history that includes changes in the weather cycles, land use traditions, ideas, personal emotions and meanings related to a certain place, easily disappears into history or is ignored due to its everydayness. In *GW*, the narrator has a specific focus on the intricacies of nature, land and landscape that reveals the place as a full, multifaceted realm with several overlapping levels.

4.3.2 Identity in Connection to Place

As my second category, I will examine the place through individual identity. I begin by using the same example as in the previous section, to provide a thorough analysis. The repeated phrase used by Ma and Pa: "winter's a-comin' early" (*GW* 357) is one example of spatial form of identity building. A phrase as simple as "winter's a-comin' early" brings back memories, connects the individual to a certain place and reinforces their personal and cultural identity by reminding them about their spatial past, a place that was theirs but that is now gone. As a phrase used within a group of people, the people create and recreate their cultural identity in connection to a place in the past and bring back that comforting familiar feeling to the new place. The importance of place as a defining feature in one's identity is explained well by Buell: "past places [...] stay with a person as an accumulated part of identity" (2001, 70). This negotiation between places and times creates new multifaceted identities as well as culturally rich places. Understanding this process of enforcing one's cultural identity in connection to a past place alongside a new place can be arduous

due to the elusive nature of the subject, but once captured it can prove to be beneficial in understanding how places and identities are created and recreated.

Interestingly, the character who experiences the deepest form of place attachment in *GW*, Muley Graves, is in a minor role appearing only briefly in the very beginning of the story. Nevertheless, his deep connection to the land that he grew up on is nearly incomparable with the others. The character of Muley Graves is the epitome of what it means to belong, as his descriptive name might hint; Muley refers to his stubbornness (stubborn as a mule) and Graves to his final resting place, which evidently must be his home in Oklahoma. Muley's close connection to his place can be difficult to understand in the modern globalized world where specific places and place-attachment are often ignored: "modernization has rendered place-attachment nugatory and obsolete" (Buell 2005, 64–65). The following quote from *GW* conveys the uniqueness of Muley's place attachment:

I been goin' to aroun' the *places where stuff happened*. Like there's a place over by our forty; in a gully they's a bush. Fust time I ever laid with a girl was *there*.--- An' there's the place down by the barn where Pa got gored to death by a bull. An' his blood is right in that groun', right now. [...] An' I put my han' on that groun' where my own pa's blood is part of it. --- An' I went in the room where Joe was born. --- Joe come to life right there (*GW* 48).

These places that Muley goes through all have a distinctive meaning to Muley and define his identity. The place connects to life and death; it serves as a structure for life, in addition to being, a physical structure for him to exist in. As an identity defining location the place in *GW* is built through the character of Muley in relation to his emotional attachment.

According to Jakle and Sculle, "place conceptualization (is) emotionally charged rather than strictly rational" (2011, 12). This is especially true in Muley's case. The rational action to take would be to leave the land, as his family has done. There is nothing left, except memories and the worsening drought. He acknowledges the ridiculousness of his illogical emotional attachment; "There ain't nothin' to look after. [...] I'm jus' wanderin' aroun' like a damn ol' graveyard ghos'" (*GW* 54). This reveals the difficulties of leaving a place that has become to mean everything: "An' all them things is true, an' they're right in the place they happened. Joe came to life right there" (*GW* 55). The past and present are connected through this reference to *there*. Muley's idea of his place is not conceptualized through rationale, but instead his emotional connection to the place. In

this sense his attachment to his location creates the place as a personally important and socio-culturally specific combination of built environment, land, landscape and nature.

In addition, Muley's strong place-attachment affects Grampa Joad as well; "I'm stayin' [...] This here's my country. I b'long here. And I don't give a goddamn if they's oranges an' grapes crowdin' a fella outa bed even" (*GW* 121). Even the hope of a brighter future in California and the knowledge of the poor condition of the land in Oklahoma does not change his mind: "This country ain't no good, but it's my country. [...] I stay right here where I b'long" (*GW* 121). This reveals that similarly to Muley, Grampa Joad is also strongly attached to his place. His place is created through the events of the past, and the stories that he tells about them. These also form his sense of identity. Jakle and Sculle write about the meaning of place in constructing identity in the following way:

it is the stories that we tell ourselves about our past, whether personal or public, that enable us to construct and maintain a sense of identity. Such storytelling is fully interwoven into life's "symbolic interactions" whereby meaning— place meaning included— is constantly being negotiated through communication with others. (2011, 17)

Although the Joads force Grampa Joad to leave by drugging him, Muley Graves's connection to the land prevents him from leaving even though staying means almost certain death. To Grampa, death comes surprisingly quickly after leaving Oklahoma; his existence is portrayed as inseparable from the land that he lived on.

The former reverend Jim Casy understands Grampa's connection to the land and connects the forced displacement with his sudden death: "An' Grampa didn' die tonight. He died the minute you took 'im off the place" (*GW* 160). Casy continues to philosophize; "he was that place [...]. He's just stayin' with the land. He couldn' leave it" (*GW* 160). This tragic incident that the Joads suffer emphasizes the powerful emotional relationship one has with one's place and exemplifies the importance of place in identity building. In the case of Grampa Joad, the place is essential to his character and his own sense of self as Casy continuously reminds the Joads and the readers; "Grampa an' the old place, they was jus' the same thing" (*GW* 159). In the case of Grampa, his own place is a defining feature that prohibits his existence in any other place. It is evident that in this sense "place-connectedness" (Buell, 2001,76–77) leads to vulnerability making Grampa "impotent and maladaptive" (*ibid.*) in an unfamiliar place. This inability to change provides a grim

future, as in order to live one must endure change, as literary critic Robert Murray Davis writes that “man, as individual and as species, must change and adapt; but change denies or seems to deny absolutes, and men fear change, as do(es) Muley Graves in *The Grapes of Wrath*” (1972, 12).

In addition to Grampa and Muley Graves, there are also other instances where this stubborn place-connectedness is portrayed as essential to one’s identity. In interchapter nine, a group of farmers who have heard they have to leave, are packing up. The narrator describes their feelings of frustration in their attempt to understand the reality of having to abandon home that was supposed to be home for life: “This land, this red land, is us; and the flood years and the dust years and the drought are us. We can’t start again” (*GW* 95). In the same sense as Grampa and Muley Graves are perceived as one with the land and place, the family in the interchapter view themselves as inseparable from the understanding of the land. Their perception of the events is seemingly bitter and referred to as such: “And when the owner men told us to go, that’s us; and when the tractor hit the house, that’s us until we’re dead” (*GW* 95). This is one essential way of creating a place through the importance of the place as a provider of physical existence that becomes an essential identity creator for its inhabitants.

In contrast, the connection between place and identity is not as straightforward as it may seem to be in *GW*, according to Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997, 13). They argue that the creation of place “involves a construction” and that the identities linked with places do not appear as “naturally” as it may be portrayed and seen (*ibid.*). Forming place-connected identities include aspect of culture and power that are often given little notice. For example, Graves’s identity forming might not be as simple as the land evoking feelings of connectedness, as it is clear that the prior inhabitants of the land could not claim that the land belongs to them due to their place-connectedness. In relation to the concept of identity, Gupta and Ferguson write further that “identity and alterity are [...] produced simultaneously in the formation of ‘locality’ and ‘community’” (1997, 13). This matter of claiming ownership to land due to one’s place-centered identity can lead to viewing the place as “a matter of possession” instead of a “a matter of belonging” (Buell 1995, 78). This problem is also evident in the *GW*, as the tenants in Oklahoma attempt to justify their right to stay: “But it’s our land. We measured it and broke it up. We were born on it, and we got killed on it, died on it. Even if it’s no good, it’s still ours. That’s what makes it ours -- being born on it, working on it, dying on it” (*GW* 35).

These cultural and social values that are projected on a place become political and connected to one's identity through claiming ownership. According to Buell, "place-attachment can itself become pathological: can abet possessiveness, ethnocentrism, xenophobia" (2001, 76). This connects to culturally defined places and through that to place-centered identities, exemplifying that forming identities based on places always centers on politics and power relations. According to Stuart Hall, landscapes [...] form a part of the medium through which we make sense of things and through which meaning is produced and exchanged (Hall in Brace 2003, 121). In this way of connecting cultural, political and social values within a landscape, with experiences of possession and identity, become an integral part of our perception of the world and of us in it. In relation to this, Tilley argues that the way "identities are produced and sustained needs to be understood within frameworks of power relations [...] and their relation to different kinds of knowledge, 'western' and 'indigenous'" (1994, 15). This reminds us that one needs to be aware of reading places and identities as 'natural', as they are constructed, mediated and reveal several power relations. Unfortunately, the 'Okies' suffer due to their place-connected identity, as I have discussed in relation to Grampa, Muley and the unnamed farmers. Therefore, a strong connection to a certain place can also prove to be detrimental.

4.3.3 Experiencing Place in the Everyday

As a final point here, I will briefly examine the place as an everyday realm connected to practical life and phenomenal experience. This section combines several features of the categories discussed in this thesis and therefore works as a brief summary. The way the tenants of Oklahoma perceive the land and their connection to it is practical and realist. As the land is the provider of food and livelihood, it is a provider of existence. The place where they live combines work, personal and family life all in one place. The days are filled with actions in place (farm chores such as chopping wood, carrying water, harvesting, plowing) and the people define themselves through what they do, how they act and where these actions take place. This relates to the idea of place as "a deeply personal phenomenon founded on one's life world and everyday practices" (Paasi 1986, 131). In this sense, the way the place is perceived in one's everyday life, adds to the understanding of a place as a meaningful whole.

What is noteworthy is that the sensory perceptions are highlighted as crucial in experiencing a place. Experiencing place with one's senses is crucial in obtaining a full sense of what that place is and in order to connect to it. Anyone who has walked in a dense spruce forest after rain in autumn or walked through a field in the spring can imagine the importance of sensory perception in not only experiencing place but also connecting to it. In order to have a connection, a deep sense of bond to a place, one is required to have phenomenal experience of it. In relation to this sense of understanding place, Buell writes about Edward Casey's analysis in the following way: "'places', Edward Casey observes, 'are not so much the direct objects of sight or thought or recollection as what we feel *with* and *around*, *under* and *above*, *before* and *behind*' ourselves'" (2001, 61). This reminds us of the complexity of a place that expands beyond its physical location and temporality, yet one that in its totality surrounds humans within itself. In the everyday existence the way places are experienced derives from the immediate surroundings and sensory experience in the totality of the surrounding world. This immersive interactivity with the physical place becomes evident through the narration of the characters' action: "they slowed for the rise, moving their feet in the deep soft dust, feeling the earth with their feet" (*GW* 30). In this sense, the literary place created in the *GW* is created through the personal and individual bond that derives from interaction with the surroundings and sensory experiences.

Furthermore, the narrator enhances the physical relationship that leads to emotional attachment due to dependence and tactile connection. This quote describes the change in agriculture from living human and horse power to machinery: "And when that crop grew and was harvested, no man had *crumbled* a hot clod in his fingers and let the earth sift past his *fingertips*. No man had *touched* the seed, or *lusted* for the growth. Men ate what they had not *raised*, had *no connection with the bread*" (*GW* 38, my emphases). This highlights the connectedness of place and individual bond and exemplifies the inevitable relationship all three levels of envisioning place, form. Unlike the men behind these machines, the tenants are dependent on the condition of their place because it affects them directly. This quote conveys the level of dependence; the 'Okies' are emotionally and physically invested with their whole lives, in ways that the bank representatives fail to understand. The narrator emphasizes the physical act of touching, in an interactive sense. The closer one is to the source of their livelihood, the better their connection to their place is. The narrator seemingly agrees with John Urry's simple but essential observation in relation to rural life: "there is a lack of distance between people and things" (1995, 77). This

physical immediacy and closeness to one's source of food, livelihood and home becomes clear through the references to the phenomenal world.

5 Place-attachment in *The Red Pony*

In this chapter I examine existence within and connection to *place* in Steinbeck's *The Red Pony*. I apply Lawrence Buell's theory of *place-attachment* in order to understand the characters' attachment to their places. In addition, I use Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of *chronotope* to analyze the contrasting ways in which place is imagined through the characters of Jody and his grandfather. I will also briefly argue that the place that the characters in *RP* inhabit can be read as a specific *bioregion*, or a *lifeplace* (Lynch et al. 2012, 3). The focus of bioregionalism is to use a specific locale; *bioregion*, as a starting point in understanding the relationships of humans with nature. Furthermore, I use Heidegger's concept of *Being* to examine Jody's experience of involvement within the place. While I only briefly touch upon this issue, I consider it a valuable contribution to understanding the versatile places portrayed in Steinbeck's fiction and therefore include as a part of my thesis.

First of all, it needs to be acknowledged that existing includes in itself existence within a *place*. For example, in the German philosopher Heidegger's concept of *being* within a certain time one key concept is place, as existence cannot happen outside of a space or a place. As Buell paraphrases Heidegger, "being means being-there" (2005, 65). Therefore, we cannot begin to analyze what it means to exist without acknowledging the fact that we exist within an environment and in a space or a place of some kind. This existence within a place, or "Being-in-the-world" (Heidegger 1962, 181), and especially growing up within a place creates strong emotional ties to that specific location. Buell writes, paraphrasing Edith Cobbs and Nathan & Trimble that "some believe that, as with much else, childhood is when *that place template* is formed" (Buell 2001, 69, my emphasis). With "that place template" Buell means the subjective view that is created through the landscape and the environment that a person first learns to know as a child, and which continues to shape that person's view and experience of the world for their life to come. This mental and individual sense of place structures the way they imagine, understand and experience places. In Steinbeck's *The Red Pony*, a child's first innate place map is clearly evident through the character of Jody. I focus on analyzing it in the following section.

In *RP* the main character, Jody, a 10-year-old boy, has a special relationship with the place he lives. Jody lives on a farm in a valley near the town of Salinas, with his parents and two dogs, Doubletree Mutt and Smasher. The farm is located in a valley that is surrounded by mountain

ranges, the Gabilan Mountains and another mountain range that goes unmentioned but is most likely the same as in *East of Eden* (1952), the Santa Lucias. The family leads a simple country life and Jody's days are filled with chores; he gathers wood, feeds the chickens and takes care of his dear red pony. Jody's existence is tied to the land and his natural surroundings. He covers ground by walking to school, which is the farthest he goes when he leaves the farm. The physical place that Jody inhabits can be classified as a bioregion, or a *lifeplace*, a place that is not bound by national or other manmade boundaries, but by natural boundaries, such as mountain ranges, or a coastal zone (Lynch et al. 2012, 3). The farm ground is structured by a cypress tree, a water well with moss, and the grass line. All these have specific meanings to Jody and serve a certain function in his emotional and physical life. In addition, the place as a bioregion is formed through these meaningful place markers, such as the sage brush: "they smelled of the sweet sage they had brushed through" (*RP* 20), the cypress tree "where the pigs were scalded" (*RP* 6). Jody's direct experience of Being and existing is dependent on the nature around him. According to Lynch et al., specific bioregions can entail a variety of different local specialties, such as native flora and fauna, or land formations that affect the community living in the area in ways that can be difficult to express to non-locals, but which give a valuable insight to understanding the human connection with nature, and help explain in what ways nature and place shapes humans and communities (2012, 3). In this sense, the bioregional place can be marked to be influential in relation to Jody's place-attachment and sense of Being, as the bioregion provides the place for him to exist in. Through Jody's experience with the landscape and the natural surroundings, the reader enters a specific region and moment in time that exists for Jody.

In order to understand Jody's surroundings and his relation to these surroundings, I will map out his home and his physical place with the structure provided by Buell:

The most traditional and still prevalent (mental mapping) might be imaged as concentric circles of diminishingly strong emotional identification (and increasing anxiety and fear of the unknown) fanning out from the home base or home range close to which most of one's life is led. (2005, 72)

Jody's lifeplace can be structured based on this series of concentric circles; the center of his lifeplace is the house where he and his parents live: "low, whitewashed house girded with red geraniums" (*RP* 6). Here, all things are known and familiar.

The second circle is the farm including the yard and barn “he usually ran the last little way to the barn” (*RP* 15), which is almost as close and intimate to him as the house where he lives, but which lies outside the innermost circle due to the separation of private and bound (home) from open and free (yard and farm). The sage brush and the mossy tub mark the beginning of the third circle, which is the place for Jody himself:

Sometimes Jody led him up to the brush line and let drink from the round green tub, and sometimes he led him up through the stubble-field to the hilltop from which it was possible to see the white town of Salinas and the geometric fields of the great valley, and the oak trees clipped by the sheep. Now and then they broke through the brush and came to the little cleared circles so hedged in that the world was gone and only the sky and the circle of brush were left from the old life. (*RP* 20)

The third circle is the space between his home, where he is under his parents’ jurisdiction, and the distant mountains, which he inhabits only in imagination. This circle, however, excludes his school and the town of Salinas due to their status as social institutions. This in-between world is accessed only by Jody and the red pony, allowing adventures and imagination to meander. This is also the place where Jody experiments with life and its boundaries. In addition to the place serving a physical existence for Jody in *RP*, he understands his own Being-in-the world (Heidegger 1962, 131) through his actions, and through his experience within the natural surroundings. and its boundaries. It is not merely a physical space for him to inhabit, but a rich environment in which he can explore his own personality, his growth as a human being, his moral landscape and role as an ethical being within the world. The surrounding world provides a realm where he exists with his own consciousness, testing his human abilities in relation to the world;

In the shade of the sagebrush the little birds were working, scratching in the leaves, flying restlessly a few feet and scratching again. [...] When he was twenty feet away, he carefully raised the sling and aimed. [...] And down the little bird went with a broken head. (*RP* 37)

This type of moral experimentation is common in youth, and in *RP*’s case it highlights the importance of the natural environment for Jody’s Being-in-the-world which connects him to his surroundings, as an interactive Being, one form of existence within a nature that similarly to him lives, exists (and dies).

This bodily and sensory interaction is an “attempt to bridge” (Tilley 1962, 12) the space between human experiencer (i.e Jody) and the world around them. Jody experiments with life within nature and is nurtured and terrified by it. His wildest dreams come to life within the place: “the brush along the road stirred restively under a new and unexpected population of grey tigers and grey bears” (*RP* 53), and so do his worst nightmares: “below, in one of the little clearings of the brush, lay the red pony” (*RP* 35).

Furthermore, the landscape in *RP* offers possibilities but includes limitations. The fourth and furthest outer circle is in the mountains, which represent at the same time the dream world of possibilities and the feared unknown: “it made the mountains dear to him, and terrible” (*RP* 39). To Jody, the valley is his whole world, and only imagination can reveal what lies beyond his world. The furthest circle of his place-attachment provides possibilities for his imagination; the mountains mark the unachievable yet dangerous. The specialness of the mountains becomes evident in the naming of the red pony after the mountains: “he thought of the grandest and prettiest things he knew” (*RP* 11). Although their beauty pleases Jody, he simultaneously fears them: “curious secret mountains; he thought of the little he knew about them” (*RP* 38). These mountains are “something very wonderful” (*RP* 38) to Jody, especially due to their “secret and mysterious” (*RP* 38) nature. Jody’s place template is shaped by the imagined presence of the mountains; “He thought often of the miles of ridge after ridge until at last there was the sea” (*RP* 39). Through their spatial form they also provide a temporal way of understanding the world and existence within it: “When the peaks were pink in the morning they invited him among them: and when the sun had gone over the edge in the evening and the mountains were a purple-like despair, then Jody was afraid of them” (*RP* 39). The mountains provide structure for Jody’s existence. First, they map the furthest distance in his physical existence, providing a surrounding shape for the bioregion. They also form a central part of his personal identity as a young man, by representing a desired yet feared entity, much like the West represented to his grandfather. In addition, they provide an inspiration and a reference against which Jody imagines his life’s experiences, as can be seen in relation to the red pony, Gabilan.

By organizing Jody’s physical environment as Buell suggests, using concentric circles to represent “diminishingly strong emotional identification (and increasing anxiety and fear of the unknown)” (Buell 2005, 72), we better understand the role of place in the formation of the character of Jody. In particular, if “Being means Being-there,” Jody’s experience of Being is

dependent of his concentric circles of existence, that all function in different yet meaningful ways providing valuable interaction and space for Jody to experience Being-in-the-world. Viewing a place through place-attachment allows us to analyze a “place as subjective horizon: its significance for lived experience, and for artistic renditions as such” (Buell 2005,74). In *RP*, this “subjective horizon” (ibid.) is portrayed through Jody, as the place is narrated with a focus on Jody’s sense of existence within it.

Another meaningful factor related to place and place-attachment is the concept of chronotope, as I previously mentioned. As Beaton explains, “the chronotope is to be understood as the distinctive configuration of time and space that defines ‘reality’ within the world of the text, as conceptualized within the world itself” (Beaton 2010, 62, in Steinby 2013). To exemplify how I perceive the chronotope’s appearance in textual form, I use a quote from the *RP*: “The pony’s tracks were plain enough, dragging through the frostlike dew on the young grass, tired tracks with little lines between them where the hoofs had dragged” (*RP* 35). Here the temporal and spatial are in inseparable connection and described through concrete realistic means; the steps the pony took have left marks behind on the ground, creating a physical realm with the visual picture. The temporality is both in the words and in the content matter; the “dew on the young grass” (*RP* 35) hints to early morning, a time of day that quickly passes and the tracks hint to the past, to the action the pony had taken before the present moment. The chronotope can be identified as the means through which the sense of place is created.

In *RP*, chronotope is created primarily through various references to the weather and through the use of visual imagery. Observations of weather patterns include within them temporality and the inescapable force of nature. Changes in the weather convey the passing of time, the alteration in nature or season, e.g. “the brown earth turned dark” (*RP* 21). Changes in the weather also convey changes in the atmosphere of the place, for example when the red pony is left in the soaking rain: “the rain slanted and swirled under a gold and gusty wind” (*RP* 22), underlining the devastating effect of the rain. While references to the weather help create chronotope, other visual imagery also help create a sense of a place in time, e.g. “the hills lost their straw color and blackened under the water, and the winter streams scrambled noisily down the canyons” (*RP* 67). The passage of time is evident through the past tense, evoking temporality that contributes to creating the chronotope. These references to weather highlight the totality of the temporal and spatial place where Jody exists.

Several different chronotopes may exist simultaneously “for different views of the world and different social situations” (Steinby 2013, 107). In *RP* another simultaneously existing chronotope is conveyed through Jody’s grandfather’s experience. Although his appearance is brief, his effect on Jody and the novel is meaningful. Through Jody’s grandfather, the world the readers came to know through the young boy’s place template, changes into an old man’s spatial and temporal realm where time is stopped in one action or timeframe: “When we saw the mountains at last, we cried – all of us. But it wasn’t getting there that mattered, it was the movement of westering” (*RP* 91). The chronotope which is meaningful to Jody’s grandfather is not in the present time but in the past.

Ecosensitive scholar William Cronon distinguishes the importance of Manifest Destiny in relation to grandfather’s place-attachment: “Here Steinbeck captures in a few words the whole story of westward expansion” (Cronon 1993 257). The desire of ‘getting to a place’ that stays within a person as an unquenched longing for a place that no longer exists, is narrated through Jody’s grandfather’s chronotope. The place in California, where *RP* is set, is the furthest point of Westward expansion, a reminiscence of a time when there were still places left for pioneers and settlers to go to, and land untamed. As a contrast to seeing the land and place through westward expansion, is seeing the place as a starting point for Jody. To Jody’s grandfather, the land is what he aimed for (although he remains stuck in his mode of “westering” as one of the “old men along the shore hating the ocean because it stopped them” (*RP* 91) but to Jody it is his home and place of origin. The landscape that they both share is an “inherited landscape” of “myths and memories” that shapes national identities, according to Simon Schama (1995, 15). In this sense, the generational temporality exists within the place and affects the way it is perceived in *RP*. The stable and nostalgic chronotope that exists for Jody’s grandfather differs greatly from the vivid, playful and active chronotope that the novel depicts for Jody.

Jody’s grandfather’s chronotope can be classified as an omitted “chronotope of the road” (Perrino 2015, 142). On one hand, grandfather’s chronotope is stable, as it is in the past. On the other hand, his imagined mental chronotope is in constant action as a process that does not conform to standard concepts of time and place. This chronotope’s time is circular, not linear as Jody’s experience of chronotope, where the place changes due to the passing of time as well as the place that has agency within the chronotope, mainly through nature, for example birds and plants. These chronotopes are the simultaneous occurrences of place and time that form the sense of an active

place in which the characters exist, act, and experience their being in an environmental physical realm. The place-attachment that the characters experience is connected to the depiction of chronotope, as the characters reflect their existence through and in relation to chronotopic elements such as the weather and other features that mark the passing of time in spatial form. The two clearest distinctions are Jody's chronotope that highlights active, present time and place, and as a contrast to it is Jody's grandfather experience of a circular but stable chronotope.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have discussed that representations of physical environment, cultural values and personal affect all create a literary place in *The Grapes of Wrath*, into which temporality connects mainly through chronotope. First, I have shown that the physicality of the literary place is created through nature related imagery and by the use of chronotope. These two create a sense of a physical place that is seen and sensed as an environment that surrounds the characters yet does not function only in relation to them. In the second section, I examined the cultural and social values related to the place and came to the conclusion that the place is created through differing values that are revealed through the narration by changing focalization. The place therefore consists of economic, agricultural and social values that shape the way the landscape is perceived. Finally, I examined the place created through personal connection. The ways the characters, in particular Muley Graves, portray their attachment to their place reveal their deep-rooted appreciation towards their place and surroundings, which is an inseparable part of their identity. In addition, memory and materiality connects the individual to the place, making the place a multifaceted and complex realm with several individual connections that define and shape its meaning. In addition to these, I discussed the forms of place-attachment in the *Red Pony*. According to my analysis, the place in *RP* is formed through the main character's place-attachment, and through chronotope, which provides a spatio-temporal understanding to the concept of place in *RP*. In addition, Jody's experience of Being in a place, creates the place.

To conclude, the literary place in the *GW* is a realistic representation of an existing place, in the sense that it portrays the place as a multifaceted, vivid realm that is four dimensional and phenomenal. Similarly, the literary place in *RP* that is mostly experienced and narrated through the character of Jody, is a complex location created through Jody's place-attachment. Understanding and examining literary places, such as the places discussed in this thesis, reveals a great deal of the ways humans shape their surroundings, how they relate to them and value them. Consequently, understanding place-attachment can lead to viewing the environment more sensitively, which might lead to a more holistic and ecologically conscious way of living. In this way literature, and especially examining literary places ecocritically, can function as a meaningful instrument in environmental action.

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Appendix

Finnish Summary

Tutkielmassani keskityn analysoimaan, millä tavoin paikka (*place*) rakentuu John Steinbeckin romaaneissa *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939; suom. *Vihan hedelmät*, Alex Matson, 1944) ja *The Red Pony* (1933; suom. *Punainen poni*, Veli Sundell, 1960). Ensin mainittua romaania käsitellessäni keskityn osoittamaan, kuinka paikka rakentuu narratiivisin keinoin fyysisenä, kulttuurisena ja henkilökohtaisen kiintymyksen kautta. Käytän tähän tarkoitukseen ekokriitikko Lawrence Buellin kolmitasoista luokittelua, jonka avulla puran tekstiä ja siinä ilmenevää paikan käsitystä. *The Red Ponyssa* keskityn tutkimaan eritoten kiintymystä tiettyyn paikkaan (*place-attachment*) lähinnä päähenkilö Jodyn kautta. Osoitan kuinka Jody kokee ympäristönsä, paikkansa ja kotinsa saarekkeisesti, ja miten hänen kokemuksensa olemassaolosta ilmentää paikkaa narratiivissa.

Molemmissa käsittelemissäni teoksissa paikka on merkittävässä ja huomionarvoisessa osassa. *Vihan hedelmissä* paikka voidaan jakaa kahteen eri alueeseen, Oklahomaan ja Kaliforniaan. Käsitelen tutkielmassani näitä kahta paikkaa, ja niiden rakentumista fyysisenä, kulttuurisena ja henkilökohtaisena paikkana. Myös tie (*road*) voi käsitykseni mukaan olla ymmärrettävissä yhtenä tärkeänä paikkana *Vihan hedelmissä*, mutta tilanpuutteen takia rajaan huomion vain kahteen kategoriaan. Tutkielmassani väitän, että luonto (*nature*), maa (*land*) ja maisema (*landscape*) osallistuvat paikan luomiseen ja ovat erottamattomalla tavalla yhteydessä toisiinsa. Jaan nämä kolme osa-alueetta erillisiin kategorioihin, vaikkakin niissä esiintyy hyvinkin paljon päällekkäisyyttä.

Kannattelen tutkielman läpi ajatusta siitä, että paikkakeskeisyys tai paikkasensitiivisyys voi osaltaan edesauttaa löytämään ekologisempaa ja eettisempää tapaa olla olemassa, sillä Buellin mukaan paikkatietoisuus voi herättää huolen ympäristöstä. Totean, että kirjallisia tekstejä tulisi tutkia kriittisemmin, ja että tutkimalla paikkakeskeisiä teoksia tarkemmin voimme tutkia eri tapoja elää tiedostaen paikkamme maailmassa. Analyysissäni tulen siihen tulokseen, että vaikkakin Steinbeckin rakentama maailma pohjaa todelliseen, tekstuaalisen todellisuuden ulkopuoliseen maailmaan, se siitä huolimatta on oma paikkansa ja luettavissa oleva narratiivi maailmasta.

Steinbeekin luomassa maailmassa ihminen on ymmärrettävissä joko osana ympäristöään ja luontoa tai myöskin sen ulkopuolisena.

Tutkielmassani tulen siihen tulokseen, että paikkaa rakentavat omalta osaltaan fyysinen taso (*physical*), kulttuurinen ja sosiaalinen taso (*cultural/social*) ja yksilön henkilökohtainen side tai kiintymys (*personal individual affect/bond*). Tämä kolmijako pohjautuu ekokriitikko Lawrence Buellin ja maantieteilijä John Agnewin käsitykseen paikasta. Esimerkkien perusteella jaan fyysisen paikan rakentumisen kahteen eri kategoriaan. Totean että fyysistä paikkaa rakentaa eritoten kertojan käyttämä kuvakieli sekä kronotooppi (*chronotope*), joka myöskin liittyy vahvasti kertojaan. Luontoon, eläimiin ja fyysiseen todellisuuteen pohjaava ja viittaava kuvakieli on oleellinen osa tarinankerrontaa, ja suuressa määrin vastuussa fyysisen paikan luomisesta. Esimerkiksi tomulla (*dust*) on tärkeä rooli paikkakeskeisessä kuvakielessä. Myöskin kronotooppi, eli ajan ja paikan yhtäaikainen ilmentymä kiinnittää tarinan ja tarinankerronnan fyysiseen todellisuuteen.

Tutkielmassani siirryn seuraavaksi fyysisestä paikasta kulttuuriseen paikan rakentumiseen. Ehdotan, että kulttuurinen ja sosiaalinen paikka rakentuu suhteessa yhteisön kulttuurisiin ja sosiaalisiin arvoihin. Käytän muun muassa Penny Richardsonin ja Iain Robertsonin teoriaa kulttuurisesta maisemasta analysoidessani miten maisema ja paikka rakentuu kulttuurisesti ja sosiaalisesti *Vihan hedelmissä*. Myöskin paikannimet kertovat tietyn paikan historiasta ja kulttuurisesta kontekstista. Eritoten kapitalistinen ja taloudellinen intressi tulee hyvin esille paikkaa rakentavana voimana *Vihan hedelmissä*. Osoittamalla miten maisema ja paikka näyttäytyy eri ihmisten ja heidän arvojensa kautta, kertoja rakentaa monipuolista sosio-kulttuurista paikkaa. Kertoja rakentaa paikkaa myöskin sosiaalisen hyvinvoinnin kautta, osoittamalla että eri ihmiset hahmottavat paikan eri tavoin, heidän intresseistään ja taustastaan riippuen. Tällä tavoin paikka rakentuu myöskin kulttuurisena ja sosiaalisena.

Kolmantena kategoriana käsittelen paikkaa henkilökohtaisen kiintymyksen kautta. Ensin käsittelen paikkaa suhteessa muistoihin. Paikalla on erityinen asema ihmisen muistoissa, ja sen merkitys korostuu eritoten pakotetussa muutossa (*displacement*). Osoitan miten eri hahmot kokevat menetetyn paikan muistelemalla, ja millä tavoin tämä ilmentää henkilökohtaista suhdetta paikkaan samalla rakentaen kirjallista paikkaa (*literary place*). Käytän tähän tarkoitukseen muun muassa Lawrence Buellin ja Kevin Rydenin teorioita menneistä paikoista ja muistoista. Käsittelen myöskin paikan merkitystä identiteetinmuodostuksessa. Useamman romaanihahmon identiteetti

on vahvasti sidoksissa heidän fyysiseen lokaatioonsa ja paikkaansa, ja tällä tavoin heidän suhteensa tiettyyn paikkaan rakentaa tätä tiettyä paikkaa. Esimerkiksi Muley Graves ja Grampa Joad ovat vahvasti kiinnittyneitä kotipaikkoihinsa Oklahomassa. Heidän henkilökohtainen suhteensa ja paikkaan sidoksissa oleva identiteettinsä muodostavat monitahoisemman ja kokonaisvaltaisemman käsityksen paikasta. Paikka ei täten ole vain fyysinen lokaatio, vaan monimutkainen yhdistelmä erinäisiä niin ihmisten välisiä kuin kulttuuristen arvojen ja luonnon välisiä suhteita.

Totean useaan otteeseen, että paikka on vaikeasti käsiteltävä ja tutkittava aihe muun muassa paikan arkipäiväisyyden takia. Myöskin termin monikäyttöisyys ja limittäisyys tekee siitä haastavan analysoitavan. Esimerkiksi sosiaalinen ja henkilökohtainen side ovat yhteydessä toisiinsa, ja saattavat hankaloittaa analysoimista suhteessa tiettyyn paikkaan. Samalla tavalla fyysinen paikka itsessään on tulkinnanvarainen, sillä tapaamme ymmärtää paikkaa voi vaikuttaa samalla materiaalisessa paikassa itsessään olevat, ja sen konkreettiseen materiaaliin yhdistetyt ajatukset ja sosiaaliset odotukset. Vaikka teoksessa päähenkilöt esitetään hyvin suurelta osin olevan paikkakiintyneitä ja tiedostavan ympäristönsä merkityksen, he silti ovat tietämättömiä alueensa paikallisesta bioalueesta (*bioregion*) ja ottavat omalla tavallaan osaa paikkansa tuhoamiseen. Totean myös, että paikkasidonnaiset tekstit voivat osaltaan avittaa ymmärrystämme ympäröivästä maailmasta ja niitä voi käyttää tutkimusmateriaalina jonka avulla voi tutkia miten kulttuuriset käsitykset luonnosta, ympäristöstä ja paikasta rakentuvat sekä millä tavoin ne vaikuttavat tärkeiden paikkojen luomiseen. Totean että luontokäsityksemme on konstruktoitu; tapa, jolla tuotamme ajatuksia luonnosta, käsittelemme luontoa ja paikkaa on pakostakin ihmiskeskeinen.

Tutkielmassani käsittelen myös paikkasidonnaisuutta (*place-attachment*) John Steinbeckin romaanissa *The Red Pony* (1933). Tässä kyseisessä teoksessa keskityn analysoimaan, miten paikka rakentuu päähenkilö Jodyn kiintymyksen kautta. Käytän Jodyn paikkasuhdetta tutkiessani Lawrence Buellin ehdottamaa samankeskeisten ympyröiden (*concentric circles*) mallia, jonka avulla paikka analysoidaan henkilön kiintymyssuhteen mukaan tutuimmasta ja lähimmästä ympyrästä kaukaisimpaan ympyrään. Teoksessa koko paikka näyttäytyy Jodyn näkökulmasta, poikkeuksena hänen isoisänsä, joka tuo paikkaan historian tuntua kertomalla tarinoita nuoruutensa länteen suuntautuneesta liikkeestä (*Westering*), ja hänen omakohtainen kokemuksensa olemassaolosta ympäristössään näyttäytyy novellissa. Tätä analysoin lyhyesti käyttämällä Martin

Heideggerin käsitettä *Being*. Käsittelen paikkaa myös ajallisesta näkökulmasta, käyttäen Mikhail Bakhtinin ajatusta kronotoopista (*chronotope*, aikapaikallisuus). Tämän avulla tuon esiin, miten tietty paikka on vuorovaikutuksessa niin ajan (*temporal*) kuin materian (*spatial*) kanssa, ja vaikuttaa yhdessä luoden paikallistuneen paikan, joka kronotoopin avulla luo myös tekstuaalisen paikan. Jody ja hänen isoisänsä kokevat paikan eri kronotooppien kautta, mikä auttaa meitä ymmärtämään samaan paikkaan historian ja nykyhetken kautta, muuttuvana tilana.

Tutkielmassani tulen siihen tulokseen, että paikkakeskeinen kirjallisuus voi omalta osaltaan edesauttaa ymmärtämään ihmisen suhdetta ympäristöönsä, ja ymmärtämään miten luonto ja ympäristö on edustettuna kirjallisuudessa. Tapa, jolla luonto esitetään kirjallisuudessa paljastaa myös, miten luonto ja ympäristö ymmärretään tietystä paikasta, kulttuurista ja ajasta käsin. Luonto ja paikka ovat osittain samankaltaisia käsitteitä, sillä ne eivät itsessään ole yksiselitteisiä, vaan monitasoisia, monitulkintaisia ja mutkikkaita, jota käyttämällä voi havaita eri arvomaailmoja ja vaikutussuhteita eri teksteistä. Steinbeckin romaanit edustavat realistista ja luontoa hienovaraisesti käsittelevää kirjallisuutta, joka ei niinkään vain hyödynnä luontoa symbolisena tai esteettisenä funktiona vaan pyrkii myös esittämään todellisen maailman mahdollisimman todenmukaisesti ja antaen sille toimijuuden.