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From Fear to Reverie:

Incidents in Isolation in the American Wilderness.

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Introduction

The wilderness is at the center of Americas identity. It is frequently depicted as an antagonist in works such as *The True History of his Captivity* (1557) by Hans Staden and *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682) by Mary Rowlandson. These works left negative and even traumatic impressions in American culture. The strongest representations of these impressions are found in early nineteenth century American Literature in works such as *Edgar Huntly* (1799) by Charles Brockden Brown and "Young Goodman Brown" (1835) by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The first impressions of Americas wilderness were by the colonists of Jamestown and Massachusetts who arrived at North America in the seventeenth century. *The Oxford Dictionary* shows that these colonists perceived the wilderness as a "a wild or uncultivated region or tract of land, uninhabited, or inhabited only by wild animals." When the European colonists encountered Native Americans, they found out that they were not the first inhabitants. They saw profit in the abundance of the forest, land, and animals; they exploited these resources and tamed the wilderness.

The eastern forests were still vast and when Lewis and Clark broke through them in their 1804 expedition. They found the American prairie, which was unlike anything in Europe. Though it resembled meadows, its expansiveness transfixed travelers creating uncertainty and fear. According to Wayne Fields, a scholar of 19th Century literature, Europeans were unfamiliar with the prairie and were uncertain if they could cultivate it. The economic promise of the prairie was not something they could understand since they measured wealth by trees they could harvest.[1] They began to transform the wild landscape into a pastoral environment, cultivating it

and making it hospitable.[2] Planting wheat made the land familiar. It also resulted in the destruction of the prairies beauty and of its ecosystem by the mid-19th Century.

As a border between it's settled or inhabited regions and the wilderness, the prairie became to be known as the frontier.[3] Literature scholars, such as Earle Leighton Rudolph called it a "meeting point between savagery and civilization" (Rudolph 78). According to Jay B. Hubbell this frontier gave American writers an abundance of new material, backgrounds, characters, and points of views that led to the development of American national literature, inspiring such classics as *Moby-Dick*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.[4]

Herman Melville recognized more than one frontier. The sea was also a frontier. He noted the similarity of the sea and the prairie. Both environments caused a person to reflect into the inner-self. As Wayne Fields points out, Melville's work shows the power the sea has on the human psyche using the prairie imagery (10).[5] Melville was aware that the frontier was moving and the wilderness was being tamed. Earl Rudolph in his essay "The Frontier in American Literature" considers the views and associations people had of America's wilderness. One of these views was shared by Melville, who considered the wilderness the "embryo of civilization" or more commonly as a Garden of Eden.[6]

The frontier did not remain stationary; starting in the 1800's it progressed west over time until it reached the Pacific Ocean in the 1830's. Dorothy Dondore, one of the earliest scholars of 19th Century American Literature, reaffirms the idea of a changing frontier. She identifies the American frontier with the prairie at the beginning of the 19th Century. The frontier was redefined as Americans moved west; first as the plains, than the mountains, and finally the sea. [7] By the time Edgar Allan Poe published *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* in 1838, the

frontier had moved to encompass the Arctic sea, with sailors exploring the north and south poles. These expeditions added to global knowledge by eliminating most the unknown places on earth. Written accounts of these expeditions removed the reader's doubts and fears of the unknown world. Instead of focusing on the unknown, travel narratives such as *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* focused on the inner-self.

The image of the wilderness in American society carries a duality. John Canup, a historian, gives an account of the moral challenges the Puritans faced in the wilderness of the forest when they first arrived in the new world in 1630 (Canup 47).[8] Some Puritans disagreed with the strict laws the colonies imposed and reverted to primitive lifestyle in the forest. Though some Puritans maintained their Christian lifestyles in exile from the colonies, others shed them and embraced sin. The Puritans focused on cultivating the land, harvesting the forest, and creating villages, towns, and cities (54).[9] Native Americans were forced to either convert to Christianity or leave their land. Charles Brockden Brown depicted a forced migration of the Native Americans: some left for the west to escape the encroachment of civilization, while others remained in the wilderness such as Old Deb in *Edgar Huntly*, and the rest chose to integrate into civilized society.

Today, Puritan ideas and thinking of the wilderness still dwell in American literature. Sarah Rivett, who explores Puritan origins and their effect on the emerging nation, depicts captivity narratives to consist of a series of "removes." During these removes, the text cycles between suffering caused by captors and comfort provided by scripture (392).[10] Such cyclical writing strategy provides insight into the "inner landscape" of an individual as well as of the captors' culture (397). In other words, captivity narratives bring out the inner wilderness of the

narrators to create sympathy in the reader. They also use this moment to show the clashing of cultures.

Captivity narratives embody the beliefs of the Puritans. Mary Rowlandson's account is the best known one. In Mary Rowlandson's, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682), she recalls her experience as a captive of Native Americans for three months of 1676 in the wilderness of modern day Massachusetts. Upon her capture, Native Americans burned down the whole village of Lancaster taking some of the villagers captive and slaughtering the rest. The captives were sold as slaves and so was Rowlandson who had to adjust to the savage non-Christian life. However, she did not lose hope in God and obtained a bible to keep her spirits up until she was freed. Rowlandson's account is representative of Puritan writing strategy. It reflects Puritan values and is structured as a devotion depicting removal from society with interchanges of suffering and comfort (392).

The narrative gives the reader insight into the psyche of Mary Rowlandson. In the example below, she develops anxious restlessness as a result of her captivity.

> I can remember the time, when I used to sleep quietly without working in my thoughts, whole nights together, but now it is other ways with me…Oh the wonderful power of God that mine eyes have seen, affording matter enough for my thoughts to ruin in, that when others are sleeping mine are weeping (Rowlandson 175).

This passage shows Rowlandson's psychological trauma manifest in insomnia. She has trouble understanding why God let the town of Lancaster be massacred, and why he would cause her to experience savage life. One of Rowlandson's main struggles in the wilderness was adjusting to a

diet of nuts, berries, peas, and raw meat. Her repulsion of the Native American fare shows in her contentedness to eat bread for the rest of her life.

Adjusting to life on the frontier was a struggle for Rowlandson. In his essay “The Indian Captivity Narrative as Ritual,” Richard Vanderbeets, a scholar who studies Native American captivity, elaborates on the rituals that Native American use when they take captives. Vanderbeets shows that such struggle is part of the transition process, which he outlines in three steps: initiation to a new society, accommodation to customs of said society, and an adoption into the new culture (554).[11] In the above passage, Rowlandson’s diet is part of the phase of “gradual accommodation.” According to Vanderbeets, captives go through several stages of loathing before they compromise to eat after they reach a point of great hunger, and then completely adopt the foreign fare (555).[12] Rowlandson’s experience is a typical example of the process an individual goes through in captivity.

Another way Rowlandson obtains psychological relief in captivity is through sewing. In his essay “The Power of the Pin: Sewing as an Act of Rootedness in American Literature” Ozzie Mayer’s points out that sewing is a form of self-reflection and introspection (667). Sewing lets Rowlandson examine her inner-self and become lost in thought. This lets her take her mind off her captivity, letting her overcome difficult moments such as adjusting to the Indian fare. While Rowlandson sews, she meditates on scripture. This elevates her sprits and gives her hope that one day she can return to civilized society.

Conversion and adventure narratives that are set in the wilderness or on the frontier feature similar qualities of adaptation and self-examination. In conversion and adventure narratives the main character voluntarily converts to Christianity or leaves society. In an

adventure narrative such as *Moby Dick* or *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, the main character undergoes a great ordeal and eventually returns to society with a greater understanding.

This thesis will look at American adventure narratives to examine the psychological effects of characters who are exposed to the wilderness. The works selected are: "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) by Washington Irving, *Edgar Huntly* (1798) by Charles Brockden Brown, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838) by Edgar Alan Poe, "Circumstance" (1860) by Harriet Spofford, *The Scarlett Letter* (1850) by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and *Moby-Dick* (1851) by Herman Melville. In these works:

(1) All characters leave their home and go into the wilderness, whether it is a day trip in "Rip Van Winkle", a mystery to be solved in *Edgar Huntly (1799)*, a trip home in a "Circumstance", Hester's exile in *The Scarlett Letter*, or a whaling journey in *Moby-Dick*. These characters enter unfamiliar landscape by doing so. Authors show these characters to struggle with uncertainty in their adventure.

(2) While these characters are in the wilderness, the authors do one of the three things: the character becomes unconscious in the wilderness, such as Pym in the hold of the ship; the character becomes lost, like Rip does in the Catskill Mountains; the character has an encounter with an individual or animal, like the woman in "Circumstance".

(3) Eventually, these characters return home. The wilderness is overpowering and the characters cannot handle the uncertainty of the wilderness.

Washington Irving takes his readers to the wilderness and shows the tug of war between the self and the wilderness. He depicts the wilderness as a key to the self, but it comes with a warning of the unknown. In other words, Irving tells his readers that the reward for time spent in the wilderness will outweigh what it takes away.

Charles Brockden Brown shows the wilderness as the best sanctuary for the mind. He shows that in nature, as in the mind, there needs to be a balance. He represents this in the division between the wilderness and civilization, concluding that spending too much time in the inner-self creates irreversible madness.

Frederick Douglass shows the difficult struggle he has with the wilderness. Though he enjoys its sublime qualities, he cannot truly enjoy them. The further he goes into the wilderness, the more he sees his inner-self, and the soul killing effects that slaves experienced.

Edgar Allan Poe struggles with the unknown at sea. He takes his character Pym on a adventure to new worlds, which brings out in Pym a new nature. The madness he suffers provides him with a new perspective on life, giving him the persistence to go into the wilderness towards the unknown human figure.

Harriet Prescott Spofford depicts the wilderness to work in strange ways that are linked with the unpredictability of God. The wilderness brings her a spiritual transformation, connecting her to her childhood through self-reflection. In herself, she also finds a human figure; the unknown that she fears. This figure becomes her savior. It is represented to be the spirit of the wilderness.

Ralph Waldo Emerson provided the foundation of Transcendentalism. An individual can connect with the wilderness by finding one’s childhood innocence within, disappearing into the wilderness, and joining the spirit.

Nathaniel Hawthorne brings Emerson’s understanding of innocence to the spirit of the wilderness of Pearl. Hawthorne does not limit the wilderness to the forest and shows that the mind is another wilderness through Hester Prynne.

Herman Melville shows the spirit of the wilderness on land and at sea. He establishes that the sea is not conquerable and that it will restore order to the grand scheme of things. This same wilderness exists within individuals as well. It takes the form of a madness that can drive them, like it drove Ahab, to extinction. To avoid such madness, Irving urges the reader to walk in the wilderness, and to disappear with the prairies grasses.

Henry David Thoreau shows from his own experience how cyclical the connection with the wilderness is in the Massachusetts woods. He urges his readers to saunter for the therapeutic qualities; to connect with the spirit because it will reveal the inner-self. Thoreau ascribes immortality to the wilderness. He shows that the wilderness does not change, all the change that individuals see in it comes from within themselves.

Collectively, these 19th Century authors depict the wilderness as uniquely American. They emphasize its power as positive on the human psyche; it is as restorative, inward-looking, and divine. And explore its role in Americans identity to set it apart from its European roots. Overall, they portray the wilderness as a protagonist that needs to be preserved in an expanding America.

Chapter I: Views from the precipice in "Rip Van Winkle"

Washington Irving (1783 – 1859) has written extensively about the wilderness, from its forests in stories like "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) to the American prairie in his expedition *A Tour of the Prairies* (1835). Irving traveled to Europe between the publication of these works, and his perception changed from the haunted and mysterious American wilderness of "Rip Van Winkle" to a wilderness that is gentler and welcoming in *The Tour*. Despite this change in the characterization of the wilderness, Irving consistently creates a conflict between man and nature. This conflict is both physical and psychological. This tug of war with the wilderness brings out the inner-self of his characters. It takes the form of fear, innocence, and reverie. When Rip was stripped of his gun, dog, and time, the haunting spirit instills fear in him as well.

In "Rip Van Winkle," Rip seeks escape from the tolls of daily life, such as working on the farm, and from his wife. He finds joy in retreating to the wilderness, into the Catskill mountains, being in the woods, and shooting his gun. Rip's retreat into the woods shows his lack of responsibility and brings out youthful joy in him. He gives up the complexities of agriculture for the simplicity of hunting squirrels, a chair for the foot of a tree, and human companionship for companionship with his dog Wolf.

> Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative, to escape from the labor of the farm and clamor of his wife, was to take gun in hand and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution (para. 16).

Irving integrates Rip into the woods. Gazing into the sublime nature of the American wilderness makes Rip lose his sense of time. This is the time machine in the story. It takes the form of time

lost in reverie when in nature. Irving interlaces folklore into his story to make nature seem mystical and spiritual. The Hudson is a cradle when Rip sees a ship "sleeping on the glassy bottom". Rip loses himself "in the blue highlands" just like the ship (para. 17). The use of the word "bark" for the ship correlates the ship to the woods, a piece of a larger wood. The lagging of the ship, foreshadows the rest of the story, as Rip lags in time, the ship lags in the river; hence, the river is associated with time.

One way Irving integrates Rip into the woods is through alcohol. Given that Rip is "a naturally thirsty soul," he becomes intoxicated from the flagon and loses his senses. Irving writes that Rips "eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep" (para. 34). The alcohol helps Rip relax in the woods; a dangerous environment where one needs to stay alert in. The warnings of the wilderness echo throughout the story. Rip's daughter hints at his being carried away by Native Americans and in the postscript Irving himself states that the mountains are haunted (para. 51 and 58). The alcohol makes him loose consciousness and on his awakening Rip believes that there is some sort of sorcery at work. Everything has decayed around Rip, and he has lost all that he had; his gun, his dog, his house, his wife, his friends, his watering hole, his time, and his country.

As Rip returns from the wilderness, he learns that he has missed two decades of his life. Irving gives Rip purpose in his story by making him the village story teller, who perpetuates the mysticism behind the mountains. He no longer must labor in the fields, nor listen to the clamor of his wife. For Rip, this journey into the wilderness was liberating and therapeutic.

Daniel Plung, in his article "Rip Van Winkle: Metempsychosis and his quest for Self-Reliance," reaffirms this liberation at the end of the novel. Rip no longer needs to disobey, he has full control over his life. For Plung, Rip is "representative of the American individual" of the 19th

century who seeks social mobility (78).[13] Rip breaks free from the tyrannies forced upon him by Dame Van Winkle and by his society. However, Irving shows this liberation to come from Rips childhood innocence. Though Rip envies Nicholas Vedder's idleness and position as a political leader of the town, his marriage and agricultural duties prevent him from having a leisurely life. Rips' innocence breaks the tyranny of his wife and the society. It leads him to the woods where he reconnects with his inner-self, and the primitive life prior to the hierarchy of society.

Rip's innocence can be better understood through Emersonian Transcendentalism. Rip's connection to the mountains is childlike. The association with folklore and visiting the mountains is an adventure for Rip. A Transcendentalist reading implies that Rip has connections to the spirit that roams the woods. This adventure results in gaining happiness. Daniel Plung looks at the role of mountains in Irving's story and concludes that Irving is not focusing on the primitive ideas of the wilderness. He "juxtaposes two ideas of the mountains of his tale, as the world of daydreams and a place of physical discomfort" (72). Plung points out that both ideas have a temporary effect on Rip. He also believes that Rip's innocence ends when he enters the woods. The forest causes him "physical discomfort" that changes and matures Rip's perception of the wilderness (73).[14] This essay argues otherwise. After his stay in the mountains, Rip maintains his childlike innocence. This can be seen at the end of the story when he becomes a story teller. The mountains provide him with a story to tell, landing him a comfortable position in the post-revolutionary American society.

Another scholar, Marvin Mengeling, agrees with the childhood likeness of Rip. He characterizes Rip to be simple minded from his poor communication skills and comments that "his imagination is that of a child based on stories of 'ghosts, witches, and Indians'" (644). Given such a fault in character, Mengeling concludes that "Rip is more of a misfit than ever

before" and does not fit into the old or the new society (646). Indeed, Rip does not fit into either society because he represents his own individuality, as Plung pointed out in his essay.

However, there is fault in Mengeling's interpretation as well. He concludes that Rip never receives any comfort from the mountains because throughout the story Dame Van Winkle is on his mind (645)[15]. Mengeling goes on to paint the mountains as a negative place because their wilderness takes away from Rip the longer he stays there, "Rip lies there robbed of his dog and twenty years of life" (645). However, Irving took away Rip's gun and dog to relinquish his images as a hunter and as a frontiers man. Rip returns to a primitive state from his stay in the mountains, without worry or responsibility, which liberates him from his oppressors. He gains far more in his new status as a free individual and patriarch within the society than he loses in the mountains. Clearly, the mountains are giving him more than they are taking away.

According to a legend surrounding the Catskill Mountains, Hendrick Hudson kept watch over the Hudson river. Irving draws on this legend in his story, but in the postscript, he relates to it a Native American legend. This legend is about a spirit living in the forest and the formation of a stream called Kaaterskill. The wilderness that the Americans enter is different from the forests of Europe. The American Wilderness is filled with spirits and the unknown. The Native American spirits in the Catskill mountains he alludes to are actively haunting.

> In old times, say the Indian traditions, there was a kind of Manitou or Spirit, who kept about the wildest recesses of the Catskill Mountains, and took a mischievous pleasure in wreaking all kinds of evils and vexations upon the red men.
> Sometimes he would assume the form of a bear, a panther, or a deer, lead the bewildered hunter a weary chase through tangled forests and among ragged rocks;

> and then spring off with a loud ho! ho! leaving him aghast on the brink of a beetling precipice or raging torrent (67).

The spirit haunting the Catskills is the wilderness itself since it can morph into other animals. The spirit is also misleading and mischievous because it strands and threatens hunters. Irving implies that the wilderness is active and ancestral, but the European settlers do not know the scope of it.

This haunting technique of the spirit is similar to the hunting techniques Native Americans use to hunt buffalo; the Native Americans corner the animal to the edge of a cliff causing the buffalo to commit involuntary suicide. Lewis and Clark describe this technique during their expedition in journal entry on Wednesday, May 29th, 1805.

> On the north we passed a precipice about one hundred and twenty feet high, under which lay scattered the fragments of at least one hundred carcases of buffaloes, although the water which had washed away the lower part of the hill must have carried off many of the dead. These buffaloes were chased down the precipice in a way very common on the Missouri, and by which cast herds are destroyed in a moment. […] The Indians then select as much meat as they wish, and the rest is abandoned to the wolves, and creates the most dreadful stench. The wolves who had been feasting on these carcases were very fat, and so gentle that one of them was killed with a spontoon (103-104).

Irving is practicing an early form of ecocriticism by describing the Native Americans' hunting techniques as destructive to the ecosystem of the prairie. At the same time, he praises western civilization for using guns to hunt as it is more humane. Irving adapts this method of hunting buffalo in his story to frighten the visitors of the forest.

Lewis and Clark show the devastating fate of the buffalo. The buffalo herds are chased off cliffs, leaving odorous pits of carcasses at the bottom. The hunting techniques are wasteful because they disrupt the environment to the point where the wolves were no longer predators. With their extinction, the buffalo become martyrs of the land and the spirit of American wilderness.

Washington Irving's account portrays the same gloomy fate of the buffalo in the *Tour of the Prairie*. Though Native Americans are hunting for food, not for sport, the readers from both descriptions of the scene can understand the excitement of the hunt.

> Now that the excitement was over, I could not but look with commiseration upon the poor animal that lay struggling and bleeding at my feet. His very size and importance, which had before inspired me with eagerness, now increased my compunction. It seemed as if I had inflicted pain in proportion to the bulk of my victim, and as if it were a hundred-fold greater waste of life than there would have been in the destruction of an animal of inferior size (Tour 176).

Irving speaks of the excitement that he received from participating in the sport. He was excited by the chase and the status he would have from telling about the buffalo he hunted. Since Irving achieved his goal, his mind is no longer excited nor driven by the primitive instincts. He can think rationally, feel pain, and sympathize with the buffalo. He realizes how wasteful it is to kill such a large animal just for sport. However, the wolves and the ravens will scavenge pieces of the buffalo to satisfy their hunger. Lewis and Clark's account shows this to be detrimental to the ecosystem. Given the frequency of the hunt, the wolves became too fat to be predators.

The horses did not want to go near the buffaloes. They are conditioned to know the smell of the buffalo which they associate with fear. This shows that the power lies with the buffalo in

the prairies. They are the symbol of the prairies, and if they disappear, so will the prairie. When the horse smells the buffalo, its instinct tells it to retreat. Humans, however, overcome fear and try to hunt the buffalo because weapons give them confidence and the chase gives them thrill.

> We had the advantage, therefore, and gained rapidly upon the fugitives [the buffalo], though it was difficult to get our horses to approach them, their very scent inspiring them with terror (Tour 172).

Irving also shows the buffalo as a resource used by Native Americans; the hide is used for carrying and transporting. "At the Osage village which we had passed a day or two before, they had procured a dried buffalo skin. This was now produced; cords were passed through a number of small eyelet holes with which it was bordered, and it was drawn up until it formed a kind of deep trough" (Tour 70). Irving lets himself be carried on the buffalo skin across the river by Native Americans as a passenger. He is deprived of control and describes this situation as an experience where nature is fully in control of him.

> It was with a sensation, half serious, half comic, that I found myself thus afloat, on the skin of a buffalo, in the midst of a wild river, surrounded by wilderness, and towed along by a half savage, whooping and yelling like a devil incarnate. To please the vanity of little Toitish, I discharged the double-barrelled gun to the right and left, when in the centre of the stream. The report echoed along the woody shores, and was answered by shouts from some of the rangers, to the great exultation of the little Frenchman, who took to himself the whole glory of this Indian mode of navigation (72).

Irving's actions show him to cede control of his agency when he is on the buffalo skin. This contradicts the warnings he placed in "Rip Van Winkle" about not letting oneself

become comfortable in nature. Hence, the amiability of nature is not something one can resist.

Analyzing Irving's impressions of America after his return from Europe, Guy Reynolds points out the subliminal aspects of Irving's narrative, which represent the wilderness as amiable. Reynolds says that Irving's journey from beginning to the end of the prairie shows a progression from a tamed and lived landscape, to a wild landscape. For Reynolds, Irving uses subtle imagery of abandoned Native American settlement to hint at the western expansion and to make the reader sympathize or grieve for the prairie and its forthcoming cultivation (Reynolds 99).[16]

Though Irving here gives into nature on the buffalo skin raft, as he goes deeper and deeper into the wilderness, he doesn't resist it but lets himself be fully engulfed in it. This shows the therapeutic qualities of the wilderness. Irving later becomes even more relaxed, letting himself be carried away by the prairies wilderness. This can be seen when he lays daydreaming in the grasses of the prairie.

> For my own part, I lay on the grass under the trees, and built castles in the clouds, and indulged in the very luxury of rural repose. Indeed, I can scarcely conceive a kind of life more calculated to put both mind and body in a healthful tone. A morning's ride of several hours, diversified by hunting incidents; an encampment in the afternoon under some noble grove on the borders of a stream; an evening banquet of venison fresh killed, roasted, or broiled on the coals; turkeys just from the thickets, and wild honey from the trees; and all relished with an appetite unknown to the gourmands of the cities. And then at night— such sweet sleeping

> in the open air; or waking and gazing at the moon and stars, shining between the branches of the trees! (Tour 85).

He describes the prairie as lonely despite having companions; its vastness causes his loss of imagination and brings him to the reality that there is no other individual or city within reach. He searches unsuccessfully for a landmark to ground his perspective on. He compares the prairie to the forest. The forests are viewed as the opposite of the prairie. There are trees intruding the eyes. Wherever the eyes focus, one cannot know how large the forest is, nor what is beyond it, nor who is in it.

> To one unaccustomed to it, there is something inexpressibly lonely in the solitude of a prairie. The loneliness of a forest seems noting to it. There the view is shut in by trees, and the imagination is left free to picture some livelier scene beyond. But here we have an immense extent of landscape without a sign of human existence. We have the consciousness of being far, far beyond the bounds of human habitation; we feel as if moving in the midst of a desert world (Tour 175-176).

The wilderness is merely a reflection inside the "human figure." According to Guy Reynolds, Irving's descriptions of the wilderness offers an insight into his private self, by reflecting his inner-self onto the description of the landscape around him. He is expressing his most inner self in these situations, painting scenes of his unconscious (Reynolds 58).[17]

The hazy quality of the prairie can symbolize the unconscious. It obstructs perception and adds uncertainty to the mind. Irving transitions from the tall grass prairie to the short grass prairie; the grand prairie or the buffalo hunting grounds are other names for these sites. These conditions are dangerous due to the presence of Native American hunters. They also depict uncertainty, and its effects on the human psyche.

> The prairies of these great hunting-regions differed in the character of their vegetation from those through which I had hitherto passed. Instead of a profusion of tall flowering plants, and long flaunting grasses, they were covered with a shorter growth of herbage called buffalo grass, somewhat coarse, but, at the proper seasons, affording excellent and abundant pasturage. At' present it was growing Wiry, and in many places was too much parched for grazing. The weather was verging into that serene bat somewhat arid season, called the Indian summer. There was a smoky haze in the atmosphere that tempered the brightness of the sunshine into a golden tint, softening the features of the landscape, and giving a vagueness to the outlines of distant objects. This haziness was daily increasing, and was attributed to the burning of distant prairies by the Indian hunting parties (Tour 106).

Such effects on the human psyche are found earlier in the *Tour of the Prairies* when Irving speaks of traversing the tall grass prairie. The prairie is compared with the sea; when a sailor sees a sail in the distance, he freezes in his tracks and investigates whether it is a pirate or a friendly fleet. Though the prairie is amiable and comforting, Irving comments that one should not forget that it is a wilderness; one must not lose awareness of the surroundings.

> There is something exciting to the imagination and stirring to the feelings, while traversing these hostile plains, in seeing a horseman prowling along the horizon. It is like descrying a sail at sea in time of war, when it may be either a privateer or a pirate. Our conjectures were soon set at rest, by reconnoitering the two horsemen through a small spy-glass, when they proved to be two of the men we had left at the camp, who had set out to rejoin us, and had wandered from the track (84).

This uncertainty causes unrest in Irving. This discomfort is similar to one found in “Rip Van Winkle” when Rip becomes relaxed in the woods. The Native Americans are described as being stealthy like creatures. Irving transfers onto them qualities of wolves, who stalk their pray before killing it.

> At night they would lurk round an encampment, crawling through the grass, and imitating the movements of a wolf, so as to deceive the sentinel on the outpost, until, having arrived sufficiently near, they would speed an arrow through his heart, and retreat undiscovered (Tour 94).

This description shows Native Americans are close with Nature. They use the grasses of the prairies as a means of concealment. Irving depicts them as animals protecting their territory from invasion. Though there is a constant need to be aware of Native Americans, the greater threat is nature itself. This unrest is transposed into nature; into the form of thunder and stories of Native American legends.

> A thunder-storm on a prairie, as upon the ocean, derives grandeur and sublimity from the wild and boundless haste over which it rages and bellows. It is not surprising that these awful phenomena of nature should be objects of su-perstitious reverence to the poor savages, aud that they should consider the thunder the angry voice of the Great Spirit. As our half-breeds sat gossiping round the fire, I drew from them some of the notions entertained on the subject by their Indian friends. The latter declare that extinguished thunderbolts are sometimes picked up by hunters on the prairies, who use them for the heads of arrows and lances; and that any warrior thus armed is invincible. Should a thunder storm

> occur, however, during battle, he is liable to be carried away by the thunder, and never heard of more (Tour 108).

For Irving, thunder is the voice of a spirit that Native Americans fear, and a natural power that is harnessed for battle. The morning after is inviting and filled with hope. After the thunderstorm, Irving felt integrated into the wilderness. He shows this by contrasting the dark and light aspects of the prairie and its effects on his encampment.

> After a gloomy and unruly night, the morning dawned bright and clear, and a glorious sunrise transformed the whole landscape as if by magic. The late dreary wilderness brightened into a fine open country, with stately groves and clumps of oaks of a gigantic size; some of which stood singly, as if planted for ornament and shade in the midst of rich meadows; while our horses, scattered about and grazing under them, gave to the whole the air of noble parks. It was difficult to realise the fact that we were so far in the wilds beyond the residence of man. Our encampment alone had a savage appearance, with its rude tents of skins and blankets, and its columns of blue smoke rising among the trees (Tour 105).

Far from civilization, Irving makes distinctions between the grasslands of Europe and America. Irving considers this wilderness to be true because there are no signs of human presence, such as castles and mansions that peek through the trees, the tall grasses, and the hills. The lack of human structures prevents the mind from geographically locating itself in the prairie, leaving the stars to be the only navigational markers. Irving shows the prairie to be inviting, wanting people to enter it. It takes on some qualities of the Garden of Eden and Irving's own description gives it a religious meaning.

> The prairies bordering on the rivers are always varied in this way with woodlands, so beautifully interspersed as to appear to have been laid out by the hand of taste; and they only want, here and there, a village spire, the battlements of a castle, or the turrets of an old family mansion rising from among the trees, to rival the most ornamental scenery of Europe (Tour 108).

Irving's portrayal of the prairie as "laid out by a hand of taste" and created by the hand of God hints at Irving's early adoption of Transcendentalism. Fifteen years separate the publication of Irving's two works. It is likely that Emerson's ideas spread from his speeches prior to his publication of "Nature" in 1836. This is a year after the *Tour of the Prairies* was published. Irving's narration conveys a Transcendental perspective of nature reflected in the shift from Native American superstitions to religious representations.

The idea of mankind as the center of the wilderness can be found prior to Irving's *Tour of the Prairies* in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly.* However, Irving is one of the few authors who brings the experience of the wilderness to the readers through his journey to the prairie. Irving depicts the tug of war in the mind between the self and the wilderness. In the prairie, this gives him uncertainty which he relates to a sailor on the open sea.

Irving relates the wilderness with uncertainty. Like the horse's fear of the buffalo, humans fear uncertainty. It causes them to hide in their unconscious. This fear drives western expansion. Irving uses this fear in "Rip Van Winkle" to drive the story (in the form of the spirit) and in *The Tour of the Prairies* to progress his journey (in the form of uncertainty). Ultimately, the wilderness brings out the characters' inner fear and projects it onto the environment.

Chapter II: *Edgar Huntly* steps into the wilderness

Just like Irving, Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810) uses the wilderness to bring out the inner self of his characters through a tug of war. He personifies the wilderness as the unconscious, by having his characters bury things in it and by using the idea of borders between the wilderness and civilization. In Browns *Edgar Huntly* (1799), the contrast between the wilderness and civilization emphasizes people's fear of the wilderness. Through characterization and personification of the wilderness he depicts the fear of attack by Native Americans that haunt Americans. He uses a servant class character, Clithero, to depict this divide. He roots the American identity in the wilderness, depicting it as a sanctuary for the mind.

In *Edgar Huntly*, Charles Brockden Brown builds a tension between civilization and the wilderness by dividing his novel into two parts. In the first half society is being imposed on by the wilderness, and Native Americans disrupt regular day to day life. In the second half, the wilderness is encroached on by society, and Edgar disturbs the natural process by cutting down trees and killing Panthers. Brown balances the two settings, like eye-for-eye ethics. When nature imposes itself on society, society must impose back to restore order. In other words, Brown shows balance. This balancing force pulls his character from one setting to the other, and then restores them to their rightful setting.

The disturbance of the balance is the premise of *Edgar Huntly*. Edgar investigates the murder of Waldgrave, his fiance's brother, whose body was found by a tree. Edgar's suspicion arises when he sees a person digging by the tree, so he begins to investigate. His investigation eventually finds Waldgrave's death to be a lone-wolf attack by a Native American, who does not obey Queen Mab's orders and decides to carry out an attack to satisfy his anger.

> He left his associates and penetrated by night into Solebury, resolving to attack the first human being whom he should meet. It was the fate of thy unhappy brother to encounter this ruffian, whose sagacity made him forebear to tear away the usual trophy from the head, least he should afford grounds for suspicion as to the authors of the evil. (886)

Waldegrave's death an example of Native American society imposing itself on American society in the novel, and acts as a catalyst to propel the rest of the story. In this scene, the wilderness is quite restrained, only one casualty occurs without much commotion and the Native American does not even scalp Waldegrave's head to avoid being identified. The word choice of "penetrated" suggests that there is a clear border in the village or that the village is guarded from the wilderness. Brown treats this scene like a mild interruption for the life of the villagers and makes it look like an accident that could have been avoided when compared with the destruction of and massacre at Edgar Huntly's father's house, "Eight of these assassins assailed it at the dead of night. My parents and an infant child were murdered in their beds; the house was pillaged, and then burn to the ground" (791). In this scene, Native Americans symbolically had restored the wilderness by burning down the house. These actions can be found in Harriet Spoffords "Circumstance" as well. "Their actions are driven by the dislocation American society has brought on the Native Americans in the wilderness.

Civilized society also imposes itself onto the wilderness, as can be seen by the story of Old Deb (also referred to as Queen Mab). "This woman originally belonged to the tribe of Delawares or Lennilennapee. All these districts were once comprised within the dominions of that nation. About thirty years ago, in consequence of perpetual encroachments of the English colonist, they abandoned their ancient seats and retired to the banks of Wabash and Muskingum"

(820). This imposition by the English into Native American territory is told with no violence or conflict. Brown depicts civilized society as welcoming and positive for the wilderness. The narration innacurately suggests that the Native Americans left the land by choice and did not want to be part of colonial society. When Edgar tries to reach Clithero in the cavern he feels the need to chop down a tree to make a bridge instead of finding an alternate route by which Clithero came, "Casting my eyes upward, I noted that the tree at the root of which I was standing. I compared the breadth of the gulf with the length of the trunk of this tree, and it appeared very suitable for a bridge" (732). Bridges are an invention of civilized society, by which Edgar imposes onto this wilderness that he has just discovered. By doing so, Brown shows the lack of restraint on the destruction of the wilderness and the means by which civilized society will spread.

Brown depicts Edgar as a romantic explorer of the wilderness. To appeal to the audience, Brown provides Edgar with abundant knowledge on survival, creating a travelogue like narration. Edgar's descriptions of nature, trees, and rivers appeal to the 18th century reader due to their limited access to the American wilderness at the time. Edgar chases Clithero, he finds a cavern in the backyard of his countryside and gives an account of it.

> A sort of sanctity and awe environed it, owing to the consciousness of absolute and utter loneliness. It was probable that human feet had never before gained this recess, that human eyes had never been fixed upon these gushing waters. The aboriginal inhabitants had no motives to lead them into caves like this, and ponder on the verge of such precipice. Their successors were still less likely to have wandered hither. Since the birth of the continent, I was probably the first who had deviated thus remotely from the customary paths of men (729).[18]

Edgar' account of undisturbed nature tells the reader of a land that is undiscovered, and may still contain a Garden of Eden; however, this account also suggests fear of remote wilderness. [19] Edgar implies that Native Americans are too busy with their primitive lifestyles to be able to discover and understand beauty. Only a man of civilized society can experience the beauty of remote wilderness; however, such a man would most likely overlook this beauty to make way for houses and farmland. Brown depicts Edgar as an educated servant, an intermediary in status between a Native American and a civilized man, who is able to discover and appreciate the wilderness. Paul Downes, who looks at post-revolutionary ties to sleep walking in his article, suggests that Edgar's character is an image of the post-revolutionary youth who seeks to establish economic stability and looks to the wilderness to discover his identity (Downes 415).[20]

In his essay, "Edgar Huntly's Savage Awakening," Jared Gardner shows Edgar's boastfulness from his discovery of sublime nature is temporary. When he wakes up in a cave and finds Native Americans present Edgars boastfulness disappears. (Gardner 442). Though Edgar claims superiority when he is on top of a precipice overlooking the wilderness, Garner shows him to be "routinely baffled by the unfamiliar landscape and by the uncanny ability of Clithero to navigate an impossible wilderness" (Gardner 442). This ability to navigate the wilderness results from Clithero's commitment to a life in the wilderness. This choice turns Clithero savage. Similarly, Edgar develops savage qualities the further he wanders in the wilderness.

Brown's description of the remote wilderness lacks human expression and is minimalist. George Toles shows that Brown does not use radiant imagery or devotes time to small details; rather, Brown tells of the wilderness's "gushing waters" and does not show the wilderness in its beauty (Toles 134).[21] By doing so, Brown adds a gothic aspect to his work which distinguishes him from travel writers of the time and. This gothic feel is represented in Browns choice of

vocabulary. According to E.H. Foster, the most common terms at that time to describe the wilderness were beautiful, picturesque, and sublime (Foster 14).[22] The difference in use of these terms pertained to the varied complexity and scale of the landscape. Brown's description of the waterfall would have fallen into the category of sublime, as it was most commonly used to describe the grandeur of Niagara Falls. Brown is more inclined to show the historical beauty of the American wilderness rather than its superficial beauty.

In *Edgar Huntly,* Old Deb's hut is the only source of historical beauty is in the novel. This hut along with its land would rather be considered a ruin of Native American society.

> The dwelling was suited to the poverty and desolation which surrounded it. It consisted of a few unhewn logs laid upon each other, to the height of eight or ten feet, including a quadrangular space of similar dimension, and covered by thatch. There was no window, light being sufficiently admitted into the crevices between the logs. These had formerly been plastered with clay, but air and rain had crumbled and washed the greater part of this rude cement away. Somewhat like a chimney, built of half burnt bricks, was perceived at one corner. The door was fastened by a leathern thong, tied to a peg (800).

Brown's description of the hut is filled with negative imagery of rot and decay. Its architectural style is depicted as primitive in construction; "unhewn logs", "no windows", and "the door was…tied to a peg." Incorporation of such a structure by Brown mimics the castles and palaces of Europe, and foretells how such ruins become travel destinations. Forster writes that such archaic structures in Europe are associated with the past, but America has no past because it is still a newly discovered continent; hence, its landscape represents the future (Foster 18).[23] At the time Native American structures did not contrive permanent structures. Their wigwams were

mobile. The American landscape was yet to be "conquered" at the time when Brown was writing. Travel writers of the time referred to revolutionary war accounts and encounters with Native Americans and the British as a resource for information on Americas landscape (Foster 17).[24] Janie Hinds who explores animal and Indian imagery in her article, alludes to these conflicts as being reciprocal in *Edgar Huntly.* Brown's depictions of Old Deb's "territorialism [becomes] merely the mirror image of English colonial land-grabbing" (335). In fact, much of Brown's understanding of the wilderness is manifested in Edgar's metamorphosis in the wilderness.

> My legs, my neck, my bosom were bare, and their native hue were exchanged for the livid marks of bruises and scarifications. A horrid scar upon my cheek, and my uncombed locks; hollow eyes, made ghastly by abstinence and cold, and the ruthless passions of which my mind had been the theater, added to the musquet which I carried in my hand, would prepossess them with the notion of a maniac or ruffian (846-7).

Edgar kills and eats panthers, saves a farmer's daughter, kills four Native Americans, and walks many miles through rugged terrain. This struggle is evident in Edgar's physical transformation as he now looks like a savage. Brown uses such a transformation to signify the degenerative effect of the wilderness. Jared Gardner, who explores Edgar's transformation in his article, states that given Edgar's physical and mental condition, the hunter "has become the savage" and upon realization of this low state, Edgar begins his journey back to civilization (Gardner 444).[25] Edgars stay in the wilderness stripped him of his civilized self and restored him to a primitive state. In "Rip Van Winkle" Irving also emphasizes that the wilderness takes away from its visitors, because its liberation of stress that is placed on the mind by civilization comes at a cost.

For Rip this cost was his gun, dog, and musket, while for Edgar this cost is his sanity and humanity, as reflected by consuming raw animals.

Edgar's sanity becomes more and more questionable the longer he stays in the wilderness. Edgar reverts Brown to the primitive stops short of cannibalism, with consumption of raw meat and an instinct of killing for survival. Janie Hinds points out that animals in *Edgar Huntly* "have been read … as symbolic extensions of Edgars psychological state" (Hinds 330). With every animal encounter he becomes more "animal-like" transgressing physically and psychologically "from a self-proclaimed nonviolent soul to a man who can kill both animals and Indians with only a twinge of guilt and, in the case of the panther, with appetite that is not merely physical" (Hinds 331-332). In Chapter 16, the psychological degeneration can be seen in Edgar's thoughts when his hunger forces him to eat his shirt, and chew on his arm, while his mind craves raw animal and blood.[26] Such projections of dark thoughts are typical of his isolation.

By contrast, as the novel progresses not only do Edgars thoughts become positive, but Brown's representation of the wilderness becomes more optimistic. The idea of the American wilderness as a sanctuary is predominantly depicted through Clithero, the European exile who exiles himself multiple times. When Edgar is chasing him, Clithero hides in a womb-like cave. "The passage opened into a kind of chamber or pit…My first glance lighted on the very being of whom I was in search. Stretched upon a bed of moss, at a distance of a few feet from my station, I beheld Clithero" (735). The bed of moss represents the hospitabile kindness of nature. Escaping to a cavern, Clithero guaranteed himself isolation from the outside world. However, Edgar finds Clithero and brings him provisions that lead to the salvation of Clithero's life. Brown states that "Clithero believed his solitude to be unapproachable," but in even the remotest of places Edgar was able to find him.

Edgar is even able to find Clithero's manuscript, which sleepwalking Clithero buried at the base of a tree in the opening scene of the book. Clithero's trunk, was empty when Edgar opened it. Brown suggests that the wilderness is a better sanctuary than manmade objects or dwellings. The use of sanctuaries is a metaphor for the psychological state of both Edgar and Clithero who are sleepwalkers. George Toles shows that these secret places and sanctuaries are reflective of the characters' identity (Toles 146).[27] The "root" of the tree comes to represent the self, and the manuscript buried near the root is the inner-self; which causes a disturbance in Clithero and triggers in his sleepwalking.

Clithero's sleepwalking originates from the psychological trauma of his attempt to murder his patroness Mrs. Lorimer. Unlike Edgar, he is aware of his sleepwalking. "I was not aware, for some time, of my perturbed sleep. No wonder that sleep cannot soothe miseries like mine: that I am alike infested by memory in wakefulness and slumber" (716) According to Clithero, the only thing that soothes his thoughts is the wilderness and living in the cave where he is isolated from society. "Its mountainous asperities supply me with images of desolation and seclusion, and its headlong streams lull me into temporary forgetfulness of mankind" (716).

Edgars sleep walking originates from the trauma of the slaughtering of his family by Native Americans. "You will not be surprised that the fate of my parents and the sight of the body of one of this savage band, who in the pursuit that was made after them, was overtaken and killed, should produce lasting and terrific images in my fancy" (792).

Brown uses doubling to emphasize sleepwalking as not just a phenomenon but result of trauma that causes an individual to degenerate into an animal like state. Brown brings Clithero and Edgar close to a state of natural wilderness. As Clithero joins the wilderness, Edgar is soon to follow. George Toles states that for Edgar, this happens merely by accident because he is

attempting to prevent Clithero from going beyond the point of no return (151).[28] A better reading would suggests that Edgar's conversion is the result of his trying to revenge his parents, and heal an unconscious wound that Waldragve's death opened up in him. Edgar is trying to restore the balance of his childhood.

Clithero is forever lost to the wilderness, never to return to civilized life. Hence, Clithero becomes an alternative image of Edgar. Clithero becomes too consumed with revenge to return to society. For Jared Gardner, given Edgar's past, the Native Americans are also representations of an internal personal struggle. Brown uses them as figures that Edgar must battle to reclaim his "civilized self" (429). As for Rip Van Winkle, Edgar's journey into the wilderness acts as a release into his psyche. Just as Rip was alleviated of the burdens of his life, so is Edgar alleviated of his sleepwalking condition. The novel comes full circle when the mystery behind Waldgrave's death is solved. Given the structure of Brown's novel, it is possible that Clithero tarried too long in the wilderness; his psyche became irreversibly altered, and reverted to primitive thinking. Though this contrasts the nurturing image of the wilderness earlier associated with Clithero's residency in the cave, Brown links Clithero's madness to originate prior to his migration to America. It originates with his attempt to murder Mrs. Lorimer. Hence, Clithero's stay in the wilderness has accelerated his madness to a point of no return.

Charles Brockden Brown foregrounds the divide between civilized society and the wilderness. Through development of an educated servant characters Brown was able to explore this issue. These characters appealed to the public because they travel across civilized society and the wilderness. This gave intellectual insight into the conflicts between Native American and American societies. Brown is helping the nation establish an American identity in post-revolutionary America, which had roots in both European and Native American cultures. Edgar

Huntly is placed in the center between the Native Americans and the Europeans. He is influenced by both cultures and is being pulled at from both sides. Sarsefield pulls him towards intellectual pursuits of European culture, while the quest to answer Waldgrave's death pulls him towards the Native Americans in the wilderness. Brown shows that these influences, along with his freedom to roam the landscape, identify him as American.

The Puritans feared the wilderness would lead to the degeneration of their society when they arrived to the new world. Brown dispels these fears of the wilderness and shows it to be a sanctuary that must be protected. He shows that roaming in the wilderness has positive effects on the mind; it can be nurturing and protective. He links the wilderness to the mind, both the mind and the wilderness have secrets. In the end of *Edgar Huntly*, the American wilderness embodies a bright future for anyone who will explore it.[29] Brown shows this to be a defining characteristic of everything American. He shows that Americans are outward looking and that the future is in the wilderness and to the west.

Frederick Douglass and the dual perception of the wilderness

Slavery narratives are a form of captivity narratives that recurrently feature isolated characters in the wilderness. This motif is found in works such as *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (1845).* Frederick Douglass's firsthand account as a slave shows the complexities of American wilderness for African Americans. The wilderness takes the form of fear, hope, power, and salvation. Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) urges the reader to go into the wilderness and isolate one self, as it is a means of looking into the self. Douglass does not limit the wilderness to introspection, he also uses it as a means of navigation at night during his escape to the north. This associates the wilderness with salvation, a positive image and not an antagonistic one.

In literature, African Americans' relationship with American wilderness is more complex and contradictory compared than for European adventurers. African American writers do not depict the wilderness through the leisurely descriptions that Transcendentalist writers developed in the nineteenth century. Rather, it functions as the exact opposite, as a fearful place. This can be seen through the use of personification, interception, and apperception by authors such as Douglass.

The wilderness takes on a double role for African Americans. They were removed from their homes in Africa and were forced to enter America as slaves. An ocean away, the unfamiliar land they were brought to was a wilderness to them, and at the same time it contained a wildness unknown to mankind. As slaves, African Americans saw the wilderness as a place of escape and refuge, and at the same time as a threat. Michael Bennett, who studies anti-pastoralism in African American literature, reaffirms this duality by looking at Frederick Douglass' book, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.* He indicates the associations slaves had with nature are

opposite that of whites; the pastoral is identified with plantation life, and the city with salvation and freedom (Bennett 198).

Part of this complex relationship with the wilderness comes from African American's status as slaves, who were considered property on the same or lower level than of animals. Their dehumanization in society, prevented them from seeing the wilderness in the same positive light as the white settlers, who saw it as a retreat from the stress of city life. David Smith, who in his article looks at the role of African American literature, reaffirms this by looking at various works where "the white man, in other words is defined in terms of his mind, whereas the black man is associated with nature" (Smith 1005).

The wilderness was a refuge when slaves escaped and ran through the wilderness to go north. Though there are descriptions of flora and fauna, they are not those found in travel narratives such as *The Tour of the Pairies* that try to capture the beauty, the sublime, and the danger of Americas wilderness. Rather, as Ian Finseth shows, African American authors portrayed the wilderness as a "marker" for the slave, to indicate the path traveled, and the path untraveled. Finseth, who studies nature in American literature, illustrates this through James Williams, a slave who in the process of escaping from the south became lost and turned around. He did not notice he was far until the following night when he looked up at the sky, "A dreadful though came over me that I had been travelling out of my way. I turned around and saw the North Star, which had been shining upon my back. I then knew that I had been travelling away from freedom, and towards the place of my captivity" (Williams 92).[30] While escaping, the unconscious is projected onto the landscape and because of heightened senses, the fears of the character come out. Finseth shows Wiliams' experience to depict cognitive survival skills, such as perception, and not communicate the means of escape. These perceptive skills help an

individual locate oneself in a forest or given environment. A piece of the self is projected onto the environment at the same time when these skills are used (Finseth 259).[31]

Finseth shows that authors such as Frederick Douglass, who depict the complexities of nature in their writing, also used similar perception skills. In his first narrative, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,* Douglass opposed the wilderness and used negative imagery to describe it, while in his second narrative, *My Bondage My Freedom,* Douglass depicts it as a place of retreat for the psyche.

> In thinking of America, I sometimes find myself admiring her bright blue sky, her grand old woods, her fertile fields, her beautiful rivers, her mighty lakes, and star-crowned mountains. But my rapture is soon checked, my joy is soon turned to mourning. When I remember that all is cursed with the infernal spirit of slaveholding, robbery, and wrong; when I remember that with the waters of her noblest rivers, the tears of my brethren are borne to the ocean, disregarded and forgotten, and that her most fertile fields drink daily of the warm blood of my outraged sisters; I am filled with unutterable loathing, and led to reproach myself that anything could fall from my lips in praise of such a land. America will not allow her children to love her (369).[32]

Douglass voices the relationship between African Americans and America in this passage, and highlights the complexities through the use of a parental analogy between the country and its persons. Though Frederick Douglass appreciates the aesthetic beauty of nature and understands its use as a retreat for the psyche, he cannot accept it on the same terms as a white man because of the dehumanized perspective slaveholding has left on him.

The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass connects Douglass's inner-self to the woods around him. The woods are a resource for Douglass; he obtains power from them and uses them as a directional marker. Douglass indicates that isolation will let an individual understand one-self by looking inside one-self. He also provides the means for doing so, by going into the woods. In the following passage, Douglass talks about the effects of slavery on an individual. Slavery robs one of the soul, and in solitude it can be found again.

> If any one wishes to be impressed with the soul-killing effects of slavery, let him go to Colonel Lloyd's plantation, and, on allowance-day, place himself in the deep pine woods, and there let him, in silence, analyze the sounds that shall pass through the chambers of his soul,—and if he is not thus impressed, it will only be because "there is no flesh in his obdurate heart" (Chapter 2).

Putting oneself into isolation by going into the woods connects one with the "soul" to investigate their inner self. Hence, in the wilderness one can connect with their spiritual or religious self as the wilderness isolates an individual from social values. Douglass's use of isolation exemplifies the effects of slavery on the human body and the human psyche. He implies that slavery leaves individuals spiritless and soulless; an empty vessel waiting to be filled.

In Chapter 10, Douglass uses the wilderness as a tool, to show that wilderness gave him power. The root that Douglass obtains and carries with him in Chapter 10 can be interpreted to represent his confidence, his understanding of his role as a human being and his wanting to be treated like one. When Douglass carries the root and goes to see Covey, the connection to the wilderness gives him confidence that Covey senses and does not challenge.

> He told me, with great solemnity, I must go back to Covey; but that before I went, I must go with him into another part of the woods, where there was a certain root,

> which, if I would take some of it with me, carrying it always on my right side, would render it impossible for Mr. Covey, or any other white man, to whip me. He said he had carried it for years; and since he had done so, he had never received a blow, and never expected to while he carried it (Chapter 10).

Though Douglass does not indicate any personal involvement with African religions in his narrative, the symbolic representation of the root –as a symbol of the wilderness, of his soul, of God, of salvation– is commonly used by indigenous peoples. Douglass is connecting to Native Americans, the other sufferers of the American continent, to gain strength. Douglass's root is a weapon. With this root he indicates that he is American too, that this is his country, and that he will not stand for slavery.

Douglass also personifies nature when he speaks of his plan to escape north. He personifies nature as positive and inviting through his contrast to the North and the South.

> On the one hand, there stood slavery, a stern reality, glaring frightfully upon us, —its robes already crimsoned with the blood of millions, and even now feasting itself greedily upon our own flesh. On the other hand, away back in the dim distance, under the flickering light of the north star, behind some craggy hill or snow-covered mountain, stood a doubtful freedom—half frozen—beckoning us to come and share its hospitality (Chapter 10).

Freedom in this quote is exemplified by the North Star since that is the direction away from slavery. The use of the North Star is also used in James Williams's narrative. Though Douglass does not disclose his methods of escaping to the north, his original plan consisted of going up the river. However, he envisions encountering guards "at every gate through which we were to pass, we saw a watchman—at every ferry a guard—on every bridge a sentinel—and in every wood a

patrol. We were hemmed in upon every side" (Chapter 10). And even if he is able to get through to the north, there are still kidnappers lurking in the wilderness, waiting to return him to his master, "I was afraid to speak to any one for fear of speaking to the wrong one, and thereby falling into the hands of money-loving kidnappers, whose business it was to lie in wait for the panting fugitive, as the ferocious beasts of the forest lie in wait for their prey" (Chapter 11). The animal imagery Douglass uses here is of the panther that lurks in Americans wilderness. The panther alludes to Native Americans who were nicknamed the "Indian Devil" at the time. Douglass here uses the fears of white Americans, who understand the dangers of the wilderness from their Puritanical upbringing, to sympathize with his readers. Douglass shows the true feelings of a slave's condition, of joy and sadness, to come out in the wilderness. In addition to the safe space that the forest provides, Douglass here connects his characters to the wilderness by amplifying their song and absorbing their sorrow. The wilderness carries their voices, bringing relief to their souls.

Freedom also takes the form of singing in the woods in slavery narratives. Michael Bennett writes that Douglass depicted song to freely express the thoughts of slaves when they are cloaked by the forest. Such songs sung by slaves depict the wilderness as a place of refuge and spiritual nourishment, and also as a place of terror and loneliness (Bennett 196). While these songs connect individuals spiritually, they also disclose the unconscious aspects of the mind,

> While on their way, they would make the dense old woods, for miles around, reverberate with their wild songs, revealing at once the highest joy and the deepest sadness. They would compose and sing as they went along, consulting neither time nor tune. (Chapter 2)

In the narrative, Douglass does not experience joy until the very end. He relates his struggle to that of a sailor rescued by a ship from the hands of pirates and compares it to escaping a “den of hungry lions” (Chapter 11)[33]. In both analogies, the significance of Frederick Douglass’ narrative is amplified by the wilderness. Douglass uses the wilderness to connect his audience to his struggle by depicting it as a spiritual place and relating it to the wilderness that Jesus walked in for forty days and forty nights.

Overall, Douglass’ use of the wilderness carries a duality that cannot be ignored. The perception of the wilderness by African Americans as a refuge and a threat gives a new reading American literature. Though Frederick Douglass uses common tropes found in captivity and travel narratives, Douglass’ personification of the wilderness is unique in its projection of the inner-self. By understanding this duality with the wilderness, one can better understand the struggle of African Americans with the country around them.

Chapter III: The human figure in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*

The duality of the wilderness is especially important in narratives of the sea where it is both a resource and a threat. The sailors seek to obtain livelihood in it, but storms torment their ships, and sharks hunt for human flesh. Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) writes about the wilderness of the sea in his novel *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838). His character, Pym, seeks adventure as a stowaway on a ship called "The Grampus," where his friend Augustus hides him in the hold until the ship gains enough distance from land. This hold is central in the first half of the book. It gives the story its Gothic resonance, and through various events and actions lets readers into Pym's unconscious. Pym resides inside a shipping crate during his stay in the hold. Augustus provided him with provisions, entertainment, and a means of navigation in the form of a rope that leads to the trapdoor of the hold. Pym navigates this passage in the darkness of the hold, which has many twists and turns. At the end of this journey he retrieves a watch Augustus left him so he could track time and not lose his sanity. The characters are aware of the physical and mental effects from staying in the hold, but their efforts to fight them are futile. Poe isolates Pym constantly, and every time Pym is isolated, Poe adds different effects onto his mind. This same subjugation causes Pym to see a "human figure" at the end of the novel; a personification of Pym's fear of the unknown.

Pym is utterly confused after his nap, his mind gloomy, his limbs sore, his stomach filled with hunger and his lungs gasping for air. He forgot to wind his watch and lost the sense of time. His panicked awakening shows a change in his perspective on the journey to come. Though he remains positive, his dreams tell a different story.

> My dreams were of the most terrific description. Every species of calamity and horror befell me. Among other miseries, I was smothered to death between huge

> pillows, by demons of the most ghastly and ferocious aspect. Immense serpents held me in their embrace, and looked earnestly in my face with their fearfully shining eyes. Then deserts, limitless, and of the most forlorn and awe-inspiring character, spread themselves out before me. Immensely tall trunks of trees, gray and leafless, rose up in endless succession as far as the eye could reach. Their roots were concealed in wide-spreading morasses, whose dreary water lay intensely black, still, and altogether terrible, beneath (16).

Pym dreams of being attacked and trapped in the wilderness, which is not far from his current condition of hiding in the hold of the ship. His mind is trying to ground itself as a reaction to being at sea. At the same time Pym compares the vastness of the sea to the vastness of the desert or the thickness of a forest. Such environments are hard for the mind to comprehend as there is no single point of focus. Poe is conveying the harshness of the wilderness, that one cannot simply enjoy oneself in it because it puts the mind in a constant panic. In this dream Pym's fears are depicted through dark imagery. The use of vastness has the same effects as seeing too much. Though Pym is at no present danger, he hopes to be freed from his stay in the hold.

Poe alludes to Jonah's entrapment in the whale by using the hold. He uses this metaphor to depict the hold as protective for Pym. Poe also uses the hold as a place of spiritual and psychological transformation. In the hold, Pym is still considered a moral individual but by the end of the novel his psyche changes and he is considered immoral because of his cannibalism. His perception of nature also changes throughout the novel, it goes from destructive to nurturing. Pym's isolation at sea brings positive images to his mind. These images can be seen when Pym loses consciousness during a storm, where Peter, Augustus, Parker, and Pym strap themselves to the windlass to survive it.

> Shortly after this period I fell into a state of partial insensibility, during which the most pleasing images floated in my imagination; such as green trees, waving meadows of ripe grain, processions of dancing girls, troops of cavalry, and other phantasies. I now remember that, in all which passed before my mind's eye, motion was a predominant idea. Thus, I never fancied any stationary object, such as a house, a mountain, or anything of that kind; but windmills, ships, large birds, balloons, people on horseback, carriages driving furiously, and similar moving objects, presented themselves in endless succession (59).

Pym's unconsciousness here shows positive images of nature and life. These images are not stationary, indicating that Pym's unconscious is aware of the moving ship. Pym's unconscious shows his desires to return to land by playing scenes with things found on land or have a connection to the land. This also indicates Pym's distress with his current condition during the storm. Poe's contrast of peaceful and violent images of nature shows this distress indicating that Pym's mind projects opposite images to the situation one finds oneself in for balance.

This is not the first moment of despair that Poe depicts. In Chapter One when the Ariel collides with The Penguin, both Pym and Augustus became delusional when they were stranded at sea. Augustus's episode is shown to be the most severe.

> Just before he was discovered by Mr. Henderson, he had been obliged to relax his hold through exhaustion, and, falling into the sea, had given himself up for lost. During the whole period of his struggles he had not the faintest recollection of the Ariel, nor of any matters in connexion with the source of his disaster. A vague feeling of terror and despair had taken entire possession of his faculties. When he was finally picked up, every power of his mind had failed him; and, as before

> said, it was nearly an hour after getting on board the Penguin before he became fully aware of his condition (9).

It takes Augustus some time to recover from being stranded at sea. He was discovered in a state of shock, not being able to speak, move, or comprehend anything. Poe writes that Augustus had accepted death by the time he was found and that his mental state was similar to Pym's unconsciousness from when Pym was rescued from the sea in the subsequent paragraph.

> My visions were of shipwreck and famine; of death or captivity among barbarian hordes; of a lifetime dragged out in sorrow and tears, upon some gray and desolate rock, in an ocean unapproachable and unknown. Such visions or desires—for they amounted to desires—are common, I have since been assured, to the whole numerous race of the melancholy among men—at the time of which I speak I regarded them only as prophetic glimpses of a destiny which I felt myself in a measure bound to fulfill (10).

Though Pym here relates to other sailors' sensibilities regarding sea life, this description foreshadows the events throughout the rest of the novel, the desolate rock being the remains of the ship. Likewise, Pym's visions are both of fear and desire. For one to wish such a condition onto oneself is suicidal and can only be done by a character who seeks death and adventure. His vision of shipwreck, famine, death, and captivity are not his destiny, but his desire. Desiring such events shows his reckless nature.

Poe alludes to Pym's mind as unstable. It is like the hold of the ship with unsecured articles moving during times of turbulence. Pym implies that the mind at sea needs to be grounded or one will become mad.

> Only those who have encountered a violent gale of wind, or, rather, who have experienced the rolling of a vessel in a sudden calm after the gale, can form an idea of the tremendous force of the plunges, and of the consequent terrible impetus given to all loose articles in the vessel. It is then that the necessity of a cautious stowage, when there is a partial cargo, becomes obvious. (40)

Poe also alludes to restraint when Pym is physically tied to the windlass of the ship during a storm. When he is tied down, his mind wanders, and when the storm passes Pym's mind is grounded. However, the crew is left stranded at sea. Pym's sanity does not last long as isolation contributes to the crew's madness.

The madness takes the form of blackness at the end of the novel. Poe uses black water to signify fear in Pym's mind. This use is contradictory, the water is black yet clear. Though Pym's mind understands that it is water, it cannot fully comprehend its color. Hence, he tries to justify it as some sort of invention, but upon closer inspection he concludes it as an allusion to the human eye, the water consisting of multiple shades of purple. Poe creates distress through an unknown object in the wilderness in this scene. Though some things may look similar to ones found in his everyday life, in the wilderness they can appear different.

> At first sight, and especially in cases where little declivity was found, it bore resemblance, as regards consistency, to a thick infusion of gum Arabic in common water. But this was only the least remarkable of its extraordinary qualities. It was not colourless, nor was it of any one uniform colour—presenting to the eye, as it flowed, every possible shade of purple, like the hues of a changeable silk. This variation in shade was produced in a manner which excited

> as profound astonishment in the minds of our party as the mirror had done in the case of Too-wit (110).

This unfamiliarity is seen even in the last scene of the novel when Pym encounters a human figure. Is Pym's mind exaggerating this figures size? Is the human-like snow covered figure actually there? Or is it a projection of Pym's mind?

> And now we rushed into the embraces of the cataract, where a chasm threw itself open to receive us. But there arose in our pathway a shrouded human figure, very far larger in its proportions than any dweller among men. And the hue of the skin of the figure was of the perfect whiteness of the snow (142).

Scholars have attempted to understand the significance of the white human figure at the end of the novel. The strongest consensus correlates the human figure as the penguin that Pym encounters earlier in the novel. Simply, this human figure can be viewed as a projection of the human mind. Since Pym's mind cannot comprehend this unknown object, it substitutes the form of something known, like the human figure. Pym's suggestion, as indicated by his analysis of the black water, is that one needs to have a closer look to understand what the human figure is because he is aware that the mind can be deceiving. However, Poe does not provide his audience with a closer inspection. As a result, it is only possible to infer it to be a product of his mind. Poe tells us that by unknown means Pym returns home.

The wilderness in the novel subjects Pym to many harsh conditions. When he encounters a hurricane and becomes stranded at sea, he continues on another voyage. When the wilderness took his dog and his friend he persisted. This adventurous spirit drives him towards the unknown at the end of the novel, despite the suffering that he faces. This adventurous spirit continues to place Pym in isolation, resulting in physical and mental stress. Poe focuses on Pym's mental

stress, which can be seen in his creation of the "human figure," his acceptance of cannibalism, and the understanding of the black water. Poe uses such images and events to show fear in Pym's mind. Therefore, Poe associates isolation in the wilderness with fear of the unknown.

Chapter IV: The real hero in Harriet Spofford's "Circumstance"

For Harriet Elizabeth Prescott Spofford (1835-1921) the fear of the unknown begins at the frontier with the wilderness. In her story, living at the edge of civilization affects the human psyche and how isolation in the wilderness causes visions and hallucinations. In her story "Circumstance" (1860), a woman is attacked by a panther on her way home through a forest. Through-out the story the wilderness is a negative force because of the panther's actions. However, at the end, the reader is left with a more challenging interpretation: was the wilderness the savior of this family, was their salvation pure chance, or was it God? This essay will address Spofford's ending to show that she presents the wilderness as a positive force. Given the salvation of the family, the panther's role is considered a form of Deus-Ex-Machina. As the panther, referred to as "The Indian Devil," prepares to mutilate her, she cries out. She notices that her voice soothes the panther and in turn begins to sing hymns and melodies, which bring the beast to a slumber. The next morning when her husband comes to find her, her singing stops and the panther begins to attack her again. Her husband shoots the panther, saves her, and they return home. However, when they return home they find their house burned down. The irony presented in the ending of "Circumstance" has been interpreted in multiple ways (Gaul 35). By taking another look at "Circumstance," this story offers more from its psychological interpretations as from its action. Spofford uses the motif of the human figure to tackle the unknown by letting the reader into the woman's inner-self using the wilderness to find her physical and spiritual desires. Spofford explores the woman's inner wilderness in New England's woods.

The story begins with the description of the woods to give the reader an understanding of the proximity of the family to the wilderness. The wilderness begins a few yards from the rear of

their house. “The woods being a fringe on the skirts of the great forests that stretch far away into the North. That home was one of a dozen log-houses lying a few furlongs apart from each other, with their half-cleared demesnes separating them at the rear from a wilderness untrodden save by stealthy native or deadly panther tribes” (para 1). This community has no fence or barrier protecting it from the attack of the Native Americans or wild animals even though it lies near the edge of the wilderness. However, the spatial proximity of the houses to one another brings the dwellers comfort and safety.

Spofford creates an impression of the forest on the reader’s mind by spatially relating it to other settlers. The image of the sparse density of the housing being encroached by the forest makes the reader feel uncomfortable and uncertain. This builds suspense and mystery as the story advances. The forest has a dual role, it is vast and hard to comprehend with the human eye and it uses foliage to conceal and limit the access of light. Such impairment aids the “stealth[y]” Native Americans and the panthers that roam the forest. However, light breaks through the forest foliage in the story when “moonbeams splinter[ing] in the wood” (para 10), and “the broad rays here and there broke through the dense covert of shade” (para 15). This motif comes to represent the insight into the woman’s mind throughout the story. Hence, Spofford correlates the wilderness with the mind and the light with the divine.

In his essay, “Literary and Metaphoric Harmony with Nature: Ecofeminism and Harriet Prescott Spofford’s ‘Circumstance’” Ian Marshall examines the role of nature in Spofford’s story. He indicates that the woman in the story has a strong connection to the wilderness.

> Before the panther attack, the woman enjoys an innocent sort of communion with nature. Walking in the woods she senses "companion-ship" and "the sweet homefeeling of a young and tender wintry wood." If the wood is a friend and a

> home of sorts for her, it is also a source of sustenance and sensory pleasure; as she walks, she chews on "a bit of spicy birch." Her attitude is environmentally sensitive and knowledgeable; she appreciates natural beauty, and she knows how to make use of it to enhance the pleasures of her life (Marshall 50).

This connection to the wilderness represents her youthful innocence, which brings her joy and nourishment. Singing also connects her to the wilderness, it takes the form of an echo in the story. The woman's singing reverberates against the forest and soothes the panther, "It must have been the echo, most musical, most resonant, repeated and yet repeated, dying with long sighs of sweet sound, vibrated from rock to river and back again from depth to depth of cave and cliff" (para 4). Though the woman is in a state of fear, she knows that the forest is the panther's domain and does not fight against it. When she does scream, the panther is mesmerized by the echo reverberating in the woods. The woman understands this and begins to sing, charming the panther not to attack her. This song brings relief to her psyche and distracts her from her condition. Spofford compares the woman in the forest to a sailor at sea. They are both without a path to follow. Singing ends their uncertainty and brings calm thoughts to their minds.[34] The song even relaxes the woman, but she realizes that she cannot stop singing or the panther will take her life.

Luckily, her song attracts a human figure, which leads to her salvation. The human figure is a motif in the story. It first appears in the beginning of the story with a ghost.

> Walking rapidly now, and with her eyes wide-opened, she distinctly saw in the air before her what was no there a moment ago, a winding-sheet, –cold, white, and ghastly, waved by the likeness of four wan hands, –that rose with a long inflation, and fell in rigid folds while a voice, shaping itself from the hollowness above

> spectral and melancholy, sighed –“The Lord have mercy on the people! The Lord have mercy on the people!” Three times the sheet with its corpse covering outline waved beneath the pale hands, and the voice, awful in its solemn and mysterious depth, sighed, “The Lord have mercy on the people!” Then all was gone, the place was clear again (para. 2).

This human figure is in the form of a ghost, represented by “winding sheets” which are used for burial of the human body. This ghost can be interpreted in various ways. It could be an omen to signify her death by the hands of the panther or given the words that are spoken, the figure foreshadows the burning of the village at the end of the story. Spofford’s character is not fazed by this encounter. Her courage comes from living on the frontier, indicating that she is ready to defend herself (para 3). The woman dismisses this as a “hallucination” caused by her mind because of her stressful day. This human figure Spofford suggests is a product of her imagination.

The second time the human figure appears is when her husband shows up to rescue her from the panther.

> A remote crash of brushwood told of some other beast on his depredations, or some night-belated traveller groping his way through the narrow path. Still she chanted on. The far, faint echoes of the chanticleers died into distance, –the crashing of the branches grew nearer. No wild beast that, but a man's step, –a man's form in the moonlight, stalwart and strong, –on one arm slept a little child, in the other hand he held his gun (para. 17).

This human figure is placed on the backdrop of a moon making it appear as a shadow. This is the exact opposite of how the human figure is depicted at the end of *The Narrative of Arhur Gordon*

Pym. The white figure in *Pym* represents the unknown. The shadowed figure in "Circumstance" represents the known. The known figure is the woman's husband and he is shown as nurturing and protective from his description of having a child in one hand and a gun in the other.

The third time Spofford depicts a human figure is at the end, when her husband discovers the fate of their home.

> The husband proceeds a step or two in advance; the wife lingers over a singular foot-print in the snow, stoops and examines it, then looks up with a hurried word. Her husband stands alone on the hill, his arms folded across the babe, his gun fallen, –stands defined as a silhouette against the pallid sky. What is there in their home, lying below and yellowing in the light, to fix him with such a stare? She springs to his side. There is no home there (para. 21).

The shadow covers the husband again; however, since the woman knows that it is her husband, the shadows must represent the return of uncertainty to his mind. He is struck with terror witnessing the burning home and drops his gun. Spofford no longer represents him as a protective figure. The man now is a nurturing figure only. The home, the sanctuary for his body and thought, is no longer there. His new home is the wilderness, freshly covered in snow, and in it trod the Native Americans whose footprints mark the snow. The family is now part of the wilderness. Though the wilderness takes away their home, the panther protects them from death.

The transformation of the woman is another benefit of the wilderness. The woman's innocence is brought out by the wilderness of the forest, a quality Emerson talks about in his Transcendentalist teachings. It brings the woman into maturity in her relationship with nature and God. Spofford initially depicts the woman as brave, partially because she lives near the frontier. Her maternal instincts to see her child add to her bravery. "If she had been imaginative,

she would have hesitated at her first step into a region whose dangers were not visionary; but I suppose that the thought of a little child at home would conquer that propensity in the most habituated. So, biting a bit of spicy birch, she went along" (para 3).

When the woman is attacked by the panther "she did not think … to call upon God. She called upon her husband" instead (para 4). The whole night as she soothed the panther to sleep she pictured in her mind her husband getting ready to come and rescue her. However, when she fell asleep and her song ended, the panther resumed mutilating her. She awoke with new thought and fear, which caused her to plead for the Lord.

> She remembered the winding-sheet, and for the first time in her life shivered with spiritual fear. Was it hers? She asked herself, as she sang, what sins she had committed, what life she had led, to find her punishment so soon and in these pangs, –and then she sought eagerly for some reason why her husband was not up and abroad to find her. He failed her, –her one sole hope in life; and without being aware of it, her voice forsook the songs of suffering and sorrow for old Covenanting hymns, –hymns with which her mother had lulled her, which the class-leader pitched in the chimney-corners, –grand and sweet Methodist hymns (para 14).

She depicts this new spirituality through her songs. She proclaims the wilderness as the Lord's church and renews her commitment to God by emphasizing her closeness to nature (para 16). Though she begs for her salvation, she fully understands that God provides for both "man and beast." As a result, she accepts her "circumstance" and is willing to part with the world (para 14). Carol Holly in her essay explores the use of hymns in Spofford's story and indicates that the woman in the story makes a connection to her childhood self. This connection expedites her

transformation. Holly states that it is the woman's upbringing, her memorization of scripture and song as a child that allows her to turn to God and transform in adulthood (156). Emerson deems this connection to youth as necessary to establish a connection with the spiritual world. Hence the woman in the wilderness makes a connection with her inner self, and her inner self is represented in the songs that she sings.

In conclusion, Harriet Spofford creates a complex relationship in the wilderness, a spiritual and parental relationship. The wilderness of the woods brings out the woman's own fears onto the wilderness. This indicates that Spofford associates fear with the wilderness. Through the motif of the human figure she tackles the understanding of the unknown like Edgar Allan Poe before her. However, Spofford further develops this distinction though the use of shadows, which indicate the known and the earthly. The light that creates these shadows defines the divine and spiritual. Spofford's portrayal of the wilderness is romantic and takes on Transcendental qualities through the spiritual transcendence that the woman experiences in the woods. Overall, her use of isolation in the wilderness causes Spofford's character to reflect into her inner-self, to understand the wilderness and to find physical and spiritual salvation.

Emerson and the ideas of Transcendentalism

To better understand Harriet Spofford's use of innocence, it is helpful to look consider Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson's (1803–1882) view of the wilderness. For Emerson, individuals can gain spiritual salvation through Transcendentalism. In his essay "Nature" (1836), he introduces new religious concepts and new ways of thinking about nature during the 19th century. His essay begins by relating nature to the idea of innocence within an individual. This idea emerges from the biblical representation of Adam and Eve, who were the first humans on earth, and did not possess necessary knowledge at the time of their creation. After they eat the fruit, they are expelled from Eden, and their innocence is lost. Emerson's understanding of innocence dwells in the heart. It is lost as individuals mature; as an individual's senses become skewed by the values of society. Emerson implies that society is a burden: "To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society" (5). Worldly problems begin to disappear when an individual leaves society; the focus becomes on the self. Consistent with the romantic notions of the time, Emerson depicts nature as inviting, –"Nature never wears a mean appearance"– and emphasizes God's artistic quality as a creator (5). American authors such as Hawthorne and Melville embraced Emerson's concepts of innocence and transparency, not only to embrace the wilderness, but also to capture the wilderness before it is gone.

Speaking of the self, Emerson implies that one must investigate their inner-self in order to understand nature. He emphasizes that there is a need to connect with one's childhood innocence.

> To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature...Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is

> he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood (5).

Emerson shuns societal values of currency and rank. He emphasizes nature in Christianity as a remedy from societal values; to clear one's thoughts from societal values an individual must isolate oneself and leave civilization to obtain solitude, "In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, –no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes) which nature cannot repair" (6).

Emerson finds security in nature and he connects the wilderness with the primeval. Humans came out of the wilderness, which is ultimately God's. Hence, humans are part of God, and the wilderness is also part of God.[35] For Emerson, nature contains the holy spirit.[36] It is the product of God's paintbrush.[37] Nature provides clothes for individuals[38] and also heals them of their ailments.[39]

Emerson states that there is a direct relationship between the spiritual world and the physical world. "Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact, every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of the mind can only be described by presenting the natural appearance as picture" (16). This direct relationship helps understand an individual's state of mind, but the image needs to be translated to a new medium for interpretation. For Emerson, the mind processes images and he provides his readers with a guide for interpretation. "Light and darkness are our familiar expressions for knowledge and ignorance; the heat for love. Visible distance behind and before us, its respectively our image of memory and hope" (17). The wilderness is the canvas of the mind for Emerson; hence, works that represent the wilderness present the character's psyche.

Various scholars have provided insight into how readers should understand Emerson's Transcendentalist concepts and influence on 19th Century literature. Laurence Buell, in his book *Literary Transcendentalism, Style and Vision in the American Renaissance* looks at the Unitarian roots of the Transcendentalist movement and asserts that nature was of secondary importance. It was a means by which believers could develop a relationship between themselves and God (Buell 146).[40] Buell goes on to describe the evolution of Transcendentalists from the Puritans. By the 19th Century, Native Americans were driven west, the land was cultivated, and Transcendentalists did not need to perceive the wilderness as dangerous. Transcendentalists viewed Christianity as ever-present, living, and interactive and not as a series of historical events. For Transcendentalists, nature was God. The wilderness is linked to God because it was God's first creation; it came before man. As a result, Transcendentalists trusted it because they saw God in it (146-147).[41]

The taming of the wilderness through westward expansion, starting in the 1830's, changed the public's perception of it. Nineteenth century authors speak and write of the wilderness in romantic terms. The Transcendentalists, applied this romantic representation to their understanding of the spiritual and divine. Unlike the Puritans, Transcendentalists wrote literatures that depicted spirituality poetically. Buell provides additional insight into the poetical and symbolical representations of nature by Transcendentalists. He states that nature and the spirit inspire Transcendentalist writing. Since it is not ground upon historical Christian facts it is depicted poetically.

> The poet follows the method of nature herself: he is guided by inspiration rather than logic, and expresses his thoughts in the form of images, in the same way that nature expresses spirit. A good literary work is therefore not an artificial conduct,

> but a "second nature," growing out of the poet's mind as naturally as the leaf of a tree (Buell 149).

Transcendentalists established a reciprocal relationship between the spirit, poetry, and nature where poetical imagery and symbols provide a better insight into the spiritual world. Likewise, the images and symbols of the spiritual world can provide a better insight into the self. This can be seen from Emerson's understanding of the sublime.

Harold Bloom, in the introduction to *The American Renaissance,* investigates Emerson's journals to better understand the American sublime. He mentions key concepts that Transcendentalists have associated with the sublime; unconsciousness, rebirth, and transparency. The unconscious in Emerson is a form of repression that evades being defined. It comes to represent something other than that which is being evaded. That something is propelled by the past, a sort of instinct that one follows (Bloom 6-7).[42] The past, or the anterior, takes on a more important role in the American sublime where the old experience is overwritten by the new experience, as a form of rebirth of the self (Bloom 8).[43] By forgetting everything that is of the past, the self is forgotten, and becomes transparent (Bloom 11)[44]. By doing so, the power of the past is surrendered to give power to the new self (Bloom 8).[45] Bloom compares how this appears in writing of Emerson and of Whitman, "Where Emerson urges forgetfulness of anteriority, Whitman more sternly does forget it, though at considerable cost. –Emerson says I and the Abyss, Whitman says The abyss and myself, the second statement is necessarily more sublime, and alas, even more American" (25). Whitman's use of "myself" indicates that he considers himself to be secondary when it comes to nature. He idolizes it and suggests that he is part of something greater. In other words, Emerson puts his self above nature. Though he forgets about

the past, he does not forget his identity that was shaped by the past. However, this does not stop him from obtaining transparency in nature, which brings him closer to the divine.

This use of transparency can be applied to understand American wilderness, and the experiences associated with it in literature such as Washington Irving's account in the *Tour of the Prairies,* when Irving becomes one with the wilderness when he daydreams laying in the grass,[46] or *Moby- Dick* when Pip is stranded at sea and becomes part of it like a piece of driftwood.[47] Other aspects of Transcendentalism, such as the innocence associated with seeing the wilderness, can be seen in Hawthorne's *The Scarlett Letter*, thorough his description of Pearl and the way she interacts with the wilderness.[48] Such tropes can be found in other works of mid-nineteenth century American literature, where each writer is not only trying to understand the American wilderness, but is also trying to capture the experiences for the reader before it disappears.

Chapter V: Innocence in the *Scarlett Letter*

Ralph Waldo Emerson's understanding of innocence underlies Nathaniel Hawthorne's (1804-1864) novel *The Scarlett Letter* (1850). Hawthorne portrays the American wilderness in moral terms by creating a division between the Massachusetts colony and the forest. What is moral stays inside the colony, what is immoral dwells in the woods. Hester Prynne is one of the few individuals who can cross the border because of the scarlet letter and she inhabits both sides of the town. Though Hester is shunned by the town, her mind liberates her. Her mind is representative of the wilderness and Hawthorne uses this connection to depict the wilderness as positive and optimistic.

Hawthorne characterizes Hester as a rebel against the man-made institutions and laws, showing these things to be of little importance to her. He attributes this to her wondering mind, which seeks intellectual growth and freedom. Hawthorne shows the duality of Hester Prynne's condition.

> But Hester Prynne, with a mind of native courage and activity, and for so long a period not merely estranged, but outlawed, from society, had habituated herself to such latitude of speculation as was altogether foreign to the clergyman. She had wandered, without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness; as vast, as intricate and shadowy, as the untamed forest, amid the gloom of which they were now holding a colloquy that was to decide their fate. Her intellect and heart had their home, as it were, in desert places, where she roamed as freely as the wild Indian in his woods…The scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread. Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teachers, –stern and wild ones, –and they had made her strong, but taught her much amiss (183).

Although she is marked with a scarlet letter and is isolated from the town for her sinful actions, a new door opens to her intellectually and physically. First, she realizes her mistakes and finds within herself moral ground. Second, she casts away common worries of women of the time such as finding companionship and being shamed, this lifts her misery. Hester already went through the worst type of punishment, public shaming, which made her emotionally stronger. Third, since the scarlet letter exiles from society she is no longer bound by the towns boarders; she can freely go where she pleases, such as the forest.

Hester uses her habitat to her advantage. She uses the night as a cloak so she can roam around the town, "the passes of the dark", and the "inscrutable forest", to hide her during the day (71).[49] If she dare pass through the forest she can start life anew with the Native Americans, but if she does not want to live the savage life she can return to Europe. Hester is presented here with opportunities. She does not have to stay in the town that marked her as a sinner.

Though Hester is exiled from the rest of society, she remains in the colony. When Hester moves to the cottage, she is on the edge of the wilderness. She is between civilization and wilderness. The cottage that she lives in evokes the Puritans who lived there. Its location near the sea shows that the Puritans have advanced further inland. At the same time, this cottage is on sterile land. Nothing can be grown there as it is too close to the sea (73).[50] Hawthorne sets this cottage to represent a midpoint between the wilderness and civilization. Ironically, Hester does settle there, and is able to raise her daughter, Pearl. Hester's residency in a cottage on the outskirts of the town recalls Old Deb in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly* and the exile of Native Americans. Hester's cottage faces west, to the forest, where there is opportunity for freedom and escape.

Hawthorne uses irony in naming Pearl after a treasure of nature. A Pearl is a treasure. Within Puritanic culture, Pearl was considered a wild child born out of wedlock. Hence, Hawthorne depicts Pearl as “wild”, but concurrently he describes her in a positive light, beautiful like a “tropical bird” and free “ready to take flight” (100).[51] Hence, Pearl, like Hester, has a dual nature. When Hester takes Pearl to the forest to meet Arthur Dimmesdale, Hawthorne’s forest recognizes this “wild” nature in Pearl.

> The great black forest --stern as it showed itself to those who brought the guilt and troubles of the world into its bosom--became the playmate of the lonely infant, as well as it knew how. Sombre as it was, it put on the kindest of its moods to welcome her … The truth seems to be, however, that the mother-forest, and these wild things which it nourished, all recognized a kindred wildness in the human child (188).

Hawthorne depicts the forest as welcoming. Whether individuals come to it with burdened hearts or gleeful ones, it will cheer them up. This personification of the forest shows it as redeeming and caring. The wild life of the forest such as the fox and the wolf do not endanger the child’s life. Rather, they submit to her. Hawthorne is using this moment to show that Pearl cannot continue to remain in the forest, and she needs to return to civilization. This return to civilization is a much longer scene. It begins in Chapter Eighteen with Hester’s call to Pearl and spans the whole of Chapter Nineteen with Pearl’s inability to cross the brook.

In this brook Pearl sees an image of herself in a pool of water, which is more “refined and spiritualized than the reality” and she notices a hint of “shadowy and intangible quality” (190). This shadowy quality that is reflected in her is the sin that Hester carries. Pearl does not only

reflect into herself in this pool in the forest, but in the pool at the beach scene in Chapter Fourteen and Fifteen as well,

> At first, as already told, she had flirted fancifully with her own image in a pool of water, beckoning the phantom forth, and--as it declined to venture--seeking a passage for herself into its sphere of impalpable earth and unattainable sky. Soon finding, however, that either she or the image was unreal, she turned elsewhere for better pastime (161).

Though she attempts to play with her reflection, she realized that it is not “real” and anything in it is “unattainable”. The same can be said for the reflection scene in the forest. Hawthorne depicts Pearl as pure in the eyes of nature. This contrasts the image of lustful desire the town perceives.

While in the forest, the world splits into two, the joyous one of Pearl and the somber one of Hester and Arthur Dimmesdale: “It was strange, the way in which Pearl stood, looking so steadfastly at them through the dim medium of the forest-gloom; herself, meanwhile, all glorified with a ray of sunshine, that was attracted thitherward as by a certain sympathy” (190). Arthur Dimmesdale assigns this scene to the old folklore, calling the brook a “boundary between two worlds” and referring to Pearl as an “elfish spirit, who … is forbidden to cross a running stream” (190). Arthur Dimmesdale’s description is accurate as the brook does prevent her from crossing the stream. Uncertainty and unfamiliarity of her mother without the scarlet letter also prevent Pearl from crossing the stream. Pearl has associated Hester with the scarlet letter all her life. Hawthorne implies that the scarlet letter is deeply rooted in Hester and it is part of her identity. Hester attempts to leave her past behind by leaving the scarlet letter in the forest, but her

connection to it is so strong that she is not able to break the link between the scarlet letter and her. Hawthorne implies that she would have to throw it into the ocean (193).

Hawthorne depicts the forest to have cathartic qualities in lifting the burden from Hester Prynne.

> Such was the sympathy of Nature--that wild, heathen Nature of the forest, never subjugated by human law, nor illumined by higher truth--with the bliss of these two spirits! Love, whether newly born, or aroused from a deathlike slumber, must always create a sunshine, filling the heart so full of radiance, that it overflows upon the outward world. Had the forest still kept its gloom, it would have been bright in Hester's eyes, and bright in Arthur Dimmesdale's! (186).

Hawthorne here establishes two things. First, he is personifying nature giving it emotions and freedom. Second, he is declaring that nature is a safe ground, or a protector from human and divine law. Only in such a place Hester and Dimmesdale can meet. Hawthorne’s romanticism indicates that nature is a psychological haven; it removes worry and constraint from an individual’s mind, providing a state of primitive blissfulness.

Nature is shown to influence Arthur Dimmesdale too, who is transformed by the forest. In his case transfiguration happens near brooks and streams, "I am not the man for whom you take me! I left him yonder in the forest, withdrawn into a secret dell, by a mossy tree-trunk, and near a melancholy brook!” (199). In fact, Hawthorne teaches the reader to read the forest as a place of secrets, “All these giant trees and boulders of granite seemed intent on making a mystery of the course of this small brook; fearing, perhaps, that, with its never-ceasing loquacity, it should whisper tales out of the heart of the old forest whence it flowed, or mirror its revelations on the smooth surface of a pool” (170). The brooks and streams talk and reveal

secrets, while the trees and rocks keep them from escaping. By confessing their sins in the forest, Hester and Arthur are cleansed of their burdens. Hence, Hawthorne merges the forest with the mind and implies that both places are good for storing secrets. This is similar to what Charles Brockden Brown does in *Edgar Huntly*.

The other wilderness Hawthorne mentions in *The Scarlett Letter* is found inside Hester Prynne's mind. Upon her exile, Hester matures from a sensible to a stoic woman. Hawthorne attributes this to her growth in intellect from her isolation. Though she is shunned by society for her actions, thoughts liberated her. However, Hawthorne shows that Hester also has depressing thoughts and she needs to be careful with which ones she chooses to follow.

> Much of the marble coldness of Hester's impression was to be attributed to the circumstance that her life had turned, in a great measure, from passion and feeling, to thought…The world's law was no law for her mind. It was an age in which the human intellect, newly emancipated, had taken a more active and a wider range than for many centuries before…In her lonesome cottage, by the sea-shore, thoughts visited her, such as dared to enter no other dwelling in New England; shadowy guests, that would have been as perilous as demons to their entertainer, could they have been seen so much as knocking at her door (148).

Hester becomes lost in these thoughts. She cannot exit her mind's wilderness. She projects these thoughts onto the forest, which "stood so black and dense on either side, and disclosed such imperfect glimpses of the sky above, that, to Hester's mind, it imaged not amiss the moral wilderness in which she had so long been wandering" (167). Similar thoughts can be found among other Puritan settlers at the time. Hawthorne reflects this in the "Black Man" superstition that Pearl hears about, "this scarlet letter was the Black Man's mark on thee, and that it glows

like a red flame when thou meetest him at midnight, here in the dark wood" (168). Much like the story of "Young Goodman Brown" there is a perception of the devil in the forest. Though this idea comes from European folklore, its use by Hawthorne is representative of Native Americans or African Americans, and in this scenario it is attributed to Hester's desire and passions.

Hester's thoughts grow suicidal and murderous as she struggles with the morality of her situation. Hawthorne depicts this through imagery of Hester's expansive mind, as mountains and valleys.

> Thus, Hester Prynne, whose heart had lost its regular and healthy throb, wandered without a clew in the dark labyrinth of mind; now turned aside by an insurmountable precipice; now starting back from a deep chasm. There was wild and ghastly scenery all around her, and a home and comfort nowhere. At times, a fearful doubt strove to possess her soul, whether it were not better to send Pearl at once to heaven, and go herself to such futurity as Eternal Justice should provide (150).

The imagery of nature here is associated with fear rather than with the picturesque. Hawthorne paints Hester's emotions in the form of gothic elements such as a labyrinth, a precipice, and the chasm. She feels miserable, where one would be elated by the picturesque and the sublime. Hester stands on a precipice not only in her mind, but in reality too. In a notable precipice in the story, she stands on the platform of the scaffold. Though she is being shamed and judged by the town's people, she gives a picturesque view of the town that outlines the generational history of her life, "the scaffold of the pillory was a point of view that revealed to Hester Prynne the entire track along which she had been treading since her happy infancy" (52).

The second time she is on this same platform, she is with Arthur Dimmesdale and another picturesque moment occurs when a meteor falls to the earth. Hawthorne depicts it as a moment of enlightenment for his characters.

> So powerful was its radiance, that it thoroughly illuminated the dense medium of cloud betwixt the cloud and the earth. The great vault brightened, like the dome of an immense lamp. It showed the familiar scene of the street, with the distinctness of midday, but also with an awfulness that is always imparted to familiar objects by an unaccustomed light...that seemed to give another moral interpretation to the things of this world that they had ever borne before (139).

This meteor shower produced a larger letter “A” in the sky that the villagers talked about the following day (143). This “A” illuminated the town, revealing all of the towns shadows and secrets, among them Roger Chillingworth, who is assumed to be the same person Hester saw from the pillory the first time as well. In this scene, Arthur, Hester, and Roger are woven together into a trinity, which Hawthorne depicts as unbreakable.

The third time Hester visits the platform this trinity is broken with Dimmesdale’s confession, “The sun, but little past its meridian, shone down upon the clergyman and gave a distinctness to his figure, as he stood out from all the earth to put in his plea of guilty at the bar of eternal justice” (233). With this confession, all is illuminated and revealed, removing Hester from the precipice physically and mentally.

The introduction of the *Scarlett Letter* frames the story as a legend, or myth. Hawthorne begins his novel by establishing the distance in time since the original settlers came to America. This distance acts as a reflection on the state of his current society and establishes his authority

through lineage. His ancestors came to America when it was still a "wild and forest-bordered settlement" (8). Hence, he asserts authority on knowledge of things past. His depictions of Hester Prynne and her time are regarded as accurate, though he has found out the details from hear-say, stories from his ancestors, and relies on his imagination. He grounds his family and the story in the roots of the soil of the country.

Hawthorne is conscious of the conflicts with Native Americans and acknowledges that this same soil has a longer history than the west; it carries dark secrets and a fear of Native Americans. These dark secrets are literally very close to Hawthorne, "I used to pick up Indian arrow-heads in the field near the Old Manse" (26). Old Manse was the name of his residence. In the introduction, when Hawthorne looks at the portraits of the Custom House, he describes one of the generals who had "slain men with his own hand, for aught I know; –certainly, they had fallen, like blades of grass at the sweep of the scythe, before the charge to which his spirit imparted its triumphant energy; –but, be that as it might, there was never in his heart so much cruelty as would have brushed the down off a butterfly's wing" (20). The imagery of the scythe represents the magnitude of the killings of Native Americans, in the early conflicts between the settlers and the natives. It also shows a religious duty of the settlers to cultivate the land. Hence, the oxymoronic description of this man, who kills and yet is gentle and not cruel.

Hawthorne's perception of Nature is a positive one. It gives him energy and stimulates his intellectual capacity. "I bestirred myself to seek that invigorating charm of Nature, which used to give me such freshness and activity of thought, the moment that I stepped across the threshold of the Old Manse" (32). This stimulation is excitement, when stepping into the wilderness. This feeling of primitive happiness engulfs him. When he returns home from his

walks, he is left in deep reverie from his experience as he sits in his sitting room thinking of scenes for his story.

At the end of the *Scarlett Letter*, Hawthorne brings all isolated characters together by transfiguring nature into a human. Pearl is a promising light for America's future.

> She ran and looked the wild Indian in the face; and he grew conscious of a nature wilder than his own. Thence, with native audacity, but still with a reserve as characteristic, she flew into the midst of a group of mariners, the swarthy-cheeked wild men of the ocean, as the Indians were of the land; and they gazed wonderingly and admiringly at Pearl, as if a flake of the sea-foam had taken the shape of a little maid, and were gifted with a soul of the sea-fire, that flashes beneath the prow in the night-time (224).

Whether in the wilderness of the forest or the sea, Hawthorne portrays the spirit of the wilderness as a positive and optimistic force that the nation must preserve as it industrializes and expands westward.

Chapter VI: *Moby-Dick* and the mind at sea

Herman Melville (1819-1891) is also concerned for the future of the nation when he depicts the wilderness as the livelihood of the nation through the whaling industry and sets it out to disappear at sea. *Moby-Dick, or The Whale* (1851) is the story of Ishmael, who out of curiosity and detection decides to travel the world. His journey evokes the American prairie to show that the sea is not far removed from the land. The sea voyage of *Moby-Dick* paints a positive picture of the American landscape. Melville shows the crippling effects of expansionism on American society and on the prairie. Moby Dick has the same psychological effects on the mind as the American wilderness; both are indecipherable to the human mind and cause fear. By giving the prairie and the whale a voice, he depicts the wilderness as a powerful force. Melville's novel is an ode to the wilderness. At the end of the novel he assures the reader that when humanity ends all will be restored to nature.

The prairie was both a wilderness and the frontier when Melville wrote *Moby-Dick.* The sea was a frontier as well. In *Moby-Dick*, Melville focused on the similarity of the prairie and the sea because they revealed something about the self. Wayne Fields shows that transcendentalist ideas of the self are central to Melville's work. Fields emphasizes that Melville uses prairie imagery to show the sea's power and sea imagery to emphasize the prairie's power, and shows their effects on the human psyche (10).[52]

Melville evokes the prairie in the very beginning of the novel when Ishmael is still in New York City. He refers to a dangerous recreational activity, "pistol and ball", as being his substitute for the sea.[53] "Pistol and ball" can refer to hunting, dueling, or shooting targets, which occur in the wilderness. Ishmael believes that he can find the same satisfaction at sea, as in the wilderness of the land. The satisfaction gained from such activities depicts him as a suicidal

character who is not afraid to risk his life in such environments. Even though he is forced to jump “like a grasshopper in a May meadow” on the ship, he can find enjoyment in gazing out at the sea (10).[54] The city dwellers he calls “water-gazers” are missing this excitement. Melville ironically suggests that these individuals are chained to offices in such places is because the green fields are gone. Ironically this was true, since the prairie had been cut down by *Moby-Dick’s* publication in 1851. This left the sea as the only escape from city life and civilization (8).[55]

Ishmael even challenges the reader to go for a walk in the prairie. It will entrance them in thought, and the body will naturally find water (8).[56] Ishmael is depicting the solitude of the beautyof the prairie. There is no civilization there, nor any obstacles. It is a plain grassy meadow. All an individual can do there is become lost in thought and possibly find oneself and view the tiger-lily. Though it is an arid environment, the prairie can bloom flowers, and the tiger-lily can be interpreted as a symbol of protection. In other words, there are none of the dangers of the forest in the prairie, which puts the mind at ease.

This idea that a person can become lost in thought prevails throughout the novel. One such instance is in Chapter 132, when Ahab converses with Starbuck he leans over the ships rail and begins to reminisce of the past and about his family. When the ship sails closer to land a scent of fresh cut grass evokes Ahab’s memory of the prairie. He speaks of it as an innocent time, reminiscing about sleeping in the fields.

> But it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild looking sky; and the air smells now, as if it blew from a far-away meadow; they have been making hay somewhere under the slopes of the Andes, Starbuck, and the mowers are sleeping among the new-mown hay. Sleeping? Aye, toil we how we may, we all sleep at last on the field. Sleep?

> Aye, and rust amid greenness; as last year's scythes flung down, and left in the half-cut swaths (509).

This is the same feeling that Melville is trying to convey about the prairie in *Moby-Dick* by alluding to the rusting scythes in the field. However, Melville's analogies are filled with duplicity. The scythe is symbolic of death, and its imagery in the scene not only depicts the death of the prairie by cultivation, but death from the special dangers lurking in the prairie. The prairie here conquers not only the tool of its destruction, but also the people.

Life at sea is just as carefree as life on the prairie. Melville elaborates on the enchantment of the sea, and on the specific emotions sailors have when they are cruising the sea. In Chapter 35, at the top of the masthead the grandeur of the sea causes Ishmael to become lost within himself and engage in deep reverie. His imagery of the ocean and the boat is that of a mother cradling a child, helping it fall asleep.

> There you stand, lost in the infinite series of the sea, with nothing ruffled but the waves. The tranced ship indolently rolls; the drowsy trade winds blow; everything resolves you into languor. For the most part, in this tropic whaling life, a sublime uneventfulness invests you; you hear no news; read no gazettes; extras with startling accounts of commonplaces never delude you into unnecessary excitements; you hear of no domestic afflictions; bankrupt securities; fall of stocks; are never troubled with the thought of what you shall have for dinner—for all your meals for three years and more are snugly stowed in casks, and your bill of fare is immutable (151).

Both environments show the benefits of escaping city life. Gorman Beaucamp calls such environments as an "escapist utopia" that "embodies man's dream of an innocent, playful

existence" portraying nature as a caretaker and worrier (Beaucamp 7). These portrayals of languor show the vulnerability of humans at sea; from the uncertainty and danger of the wilderness. This danger lurks beneath the bottom of the ship as sharks and whales. Whales are depicted in *Moby-Dick* as mowers whose lower jaw is "sickle shaped" alluding to the shape of a scythe. This image of whales cutting is the most powerful when Moby Dick reaps away Ahab's leg.[57] Ishmael shows that Moby Dick did this with ease like a mower reaping grass. He shows the power of sperm whales.

The closest thing onboard the Pequod to a scythe was Queequeg's harpoon, which Ishmael describes as "deeply intimate with the hearts of whales".[58] Queequeg is shown to have a close relationship with this harpoon. Like the reapers and movers, he brings his own harpoons to work because he knows he can trust his instrument to carry out the job. At the entry of The Spouter Inn, Ishmael describes the whaler's tools in unromantic language, and refers to the tools as "monstrous clubs and spears" used for "death harvesting". [59]

Melville continues to show the similarities between the prairie and the sea through the imagery of whales as mowers. In Chapter 58, when the Pequod encounters "vast meadows of brit", which are the feeding grounds of the Right Whale, Ishmael depicts this experience as "sailing through boundless fields of ripe and golden wheat" watching mowers "advance their scythes" making a "cutting sound".[60] It is like walking through a prairie given that the brit is the same color as wheat. The whales are like bison grazing in the field. Melville depicts the ocean as an ecosystem. Underneath the ocean is a habitat filled with whales, sharks, fish, and crustaceans. Underneath a prairie is a habitat of burrowed owls, snakes, rodents, and prairie dogs. In both locations, there is life that cannot be seen.

For Melville, there is life and also death underneath. He develops this into a motif in *Moby-Dick* by describing the sea[61] and the prairie[62] as "tombs" and "graves" to make these habitats synonymous with death. The dead buried beneath prairie grass is evotive of Native Americans who were slaughtered during the expansion. The bloodshed is represented in the tiger-lily, which is red, its beauty covering the hidden secrets of the prairie. The sea as a tomb is representative of all the ships sunk at sea, and all the sailors who died at sea. There is so much space underneath, that no one will ever know what is there.

Melville witnessed the extinction of the bison, and he documents it in *Moby-Dick*. The bison is the dominant mammal of the prairie just as the whale is the dominant mammal of the ocean. Elizabeth Shultz writes that "the bison verified the prairies boundlessness, its abundance, and wilderness" (Shultz 35). As they began to disappear, so was the prairie transformed form "an American Eden into an American grid," from a wilderness into fields that provided "National bounty" (Shultz 33 and 35). The Adam who strolled the prairie was replaced by "the realtor and the banker".[63] In Chapter 105, Melville compares the hunting of the buffalo to the hunting of the whale. He asserts the survival of the whales, but also shows the difference in hunting technology between the American whalers and the Canadian and Indian hunters. On land, 40 men can slaughter 40,000 buffalos, whereas at sea 40 men can slaughter 40 whales in the same period. Melville emphasizes the rate of extinction is far greater on land than at sea. Melville also compares the horses to the ships. Ships are costly to build and maintain, whereas horses be found roaming the prairie. The buffalo too roam the prairie. Melville provides a description of their natural habitat and behavior,

> Comparing the humped herds of whales with the humped herds of buffalo, which, not forty years ago, overspread by tens of thousands the prairies of Illinois and

> Missouri, and shook their iron manes and scowled with their thunder-clotted brows upon the sites of populous river-capitals, where now the polite broker sells you land at a dollar an inch. […] The far different nature of the whale-hunt peremptorily forbids so inglorious an end to the Leviathan. Forty men in one ship hunting the Sperm Whale for forty-eight months think they have done extremely well, and thank God, if at last they carry home the oil of forty fish. Whereas, in the days of the old Canadian and Indian hunters and trappers of the West, when the far west (in whose sunset suns still rise) was a wilderness and a virgin, the same number of moccasined men, for the same number of months, mounted on horses instead of sailing in ships, would have slain not forty, but forty thousand and more buffaloes; a fact that, if need were, could be statistically stated (436).

The sea is depicted as the livelihood of the nation. The whales are the primary resource, and they are harvested for their oil and spermaceti. However, the sea cannot be transformed into a pastoral landscape like the prairie. If the whale signifies the oceanic wilderness, then it is too wild to be tamed, as the whales can learn and hide from the hunters. Melville speculates that the only way for the ocean to be tamed is by drying it out.

For Melville, Moby Dick represents both the wilderness of the ocean and Americas wilderness. Chapter 79, titled “The Prairie,” compares the foreheads of multiple animals for signs of intelligence.[64] The brow of the sperm whale is the biggest and the most majestic. The sperm whale’s eyes are so far apart that they are like the east and west coasts of America. The whale’s brow lies in between and signifies the American prairie enclosed between two mountainous ridges; the Rocky and Appalachian Mountains. Elizabeth Shultz in her article on

Melville's evolving perspective of the frontiers understands the whale's brow similarly as "vast, indecipherable, mystical as a prairie" (Shultz 34).

> But in the great Sperm Whale, this high and mighty god-like dignity inherent in the brow is so immensely amplified, that gazing on it, in that full front view, you feel the Deity and the dread powers more forcibly than in beholding any other object in living nature. For you see no one point precisely; not one distinct feature is revealed; no nose, eyes, ears, or mouth; no face; he has none, proper; nothing but that one broad firmament of a forehead, pleated with riddles; dumbly lowering with the doom of boats, and ships, and men. Nor, in profile, does this wondrous brow diminish; though that way viewed, its grandeur does not domineer upon you so. In profile, you plainly perceive that horizontal, semicrescentic depression in the forehead's middle, which, in man, is Lavater's mark of genius (Melville 339).

The whale's forehead is indecipherable and filled with riddles. The whale's intelligence aids its preservation. This description alludes to the image of the prairie and shows how shocking the whale's forehead and the prairie are for individuals. Simply stated, there is too much in front of the individual, and so there is no marker for a person to focus on. Like the prairie, the forehead is prominent no matter from which point of view it is seen; the east, west, north, or south. At the center is the horizon. The absence of features is very much like the absence of civilization in the prairie. This absence creates fear in an individual.

Another thing that associates Moby Dick with fear is its white color. This absence of the grey color, which whales usually possess, represents uncertainty, illness, and death. Like Moby Dick, the prairie is bare as it lost its green grasses and red flowers. Though the prairie will be

sowed with wheat, it loses its beauty. Melville considers all such options of absence in Chapter 42.

> Thus, then, the muffled rollings of a milky sea; the bleak rustlings of the festooned frosts of mountains; the desolate shiftings of the windrowed snows of prairies; all these, to Ishmael, are as the shaking of that buffalo robe to the frightened colt! … Or is it, that as in essence whiteness is not so much a colour as the visible absence of colour, and at the same time the concrete of all colours; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows—a colourless, all-colour of atheism from which we shrink? (188)

The "windrow snows of the prairie" are rows of cut grass, left to dry under the sun and turn into hay. Ishmael imagines the whole prairie covered in windrows. In this chapter about whiteness, "The Whiteness of the Whale," mowing these grasses removes the color from the landscape. This whiteness is left behind, it is a void that brings fear to individuals. This is the same void that defines the prairie and the sea. They are both sublime and terrifying in their grandeur.

The absence of civilization in the wilderness returns an individual to the simplicity of life.[65] Providing an escapists utopia that bring out the interior goodness in an individual.[66] R.E. Watters, who studies Melville's isolated worlds in his earlier books, points out that isolation does not bring Melville's character's happiness, but rather emphasizes their shared community experience.[67] Such shared experience can be seen aboard the Pequod when the whale is harvested, "And thus the work proceeds; the two tackles hoisting and lowering simultaneously; both whale and windlass heaving, the heavers singing, the blubber-room gentlemen coiling, the mates scarfing, the ship straining, and all hands swearing occasionally, by way of assuaging the

general friction." (291) This shared experience, the presence of company, keeps the men aboard the ship sane. This is an image of a community of men, a small civilization, in the middle of the great expanse of the sea.

Through Pip, Melville shows that one individual cannot withstand the psychological impact of isolation at sea. When Pip jumps off the boat and becomes a castaway at sea he becomes insane from the loneliness. [68] Melville shows through Pip's suffering why the seamen stay close to the mothership, "But the awful lonesomeness is intolerable. The intense concentration of self in the middle of such a heartless immensity, my God! who can tell it? Mark, how when sailors in a dead calm bathe in the open sea—mark how closely they hug their ship and only coast along her sides" (395). Earle Rudolph supports Melville's idea that the ascent into the wilderness must be gradual because "the environment is too strong for the man".[69] Exposure to such an environment leaves a person uncertain and lonely, causing him or her to return to the certainty of civilized life.

Melville concludes his novel with another absence: the void created by a vortex that drags down the Pequod to the bottom of the sea. Fortunately for Ishmael, the suction of the vortex ended with the last piece of the ship. The vortex of the sea restores the order of its wilderness, "the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago" (539). This is also possible for the prairie, and all wilderness. Melville implies that when humanity ends, all will be restored to its natural state.

In *Moby-Dick*, the prairie is like the sea. Melville finds the same motifs in both environments, and at the end celebrates their wilderness as a positive quality. He shows the psychological effects the wilderness has on the human mind and shows that the whalers are already familiar with such effects. As the nation expanded westward, Melville preserved the

image of the prairie for future generations. He showed that this environment is far more complex than what can be seen. Just like Moby Dick's brow, it is indecipherable. He gives the prairie a voice, much like he gives voice to the whale. Though Moby Dick lives at the end of the novel, the prairie faces extinction from civilization and Herman Melville bids its farewell.

Thoreau sauntering into the wilderness

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) gave a large contribution to the understanding of American wilderness. Thoreau was a student of Emerson. This is reflected in *Walden* (1854) where he sets out to live in the Massachusetts wilderness, sustained only by the environment around him. Although Emerson observed nature to witness “the spirit,” Thoreau went ahead and practiced living among “the spirit”. His connection to the “spirit” also drove him to advocate against the destruction of the wilderness. Thoreau’s isolation lets him connect with the “spirit” and transcend the physical connection. By doing so, he depicted the American consciousness of the time and he found catharsis. As the nation expanded west, Thoreau sought to preserve the wilderness for its therapeutic qualities. Through his experience in the woods, he was able to build on Emerson’s theories in “Nature” and become Emerson’s prodigy.

In *Walden*, Thoreau personifies nature, making it a romantic character that he can connect with. His connections are in various forms. One such form is through observation and attention to small details. An example of his keen awareness to detail is seen when he observes the pine needle. He describes it as a human-like object. Its motions are similar to breathing, and it gives him company,

> Every little pine needle expanded and swelled with sympathy and befriended me. I was so distinctly made aware of the presence of something kindred to me, even in scenes which we are accustomed to call wild and dreary, and also that the nearest of blood to me and humanest was not a person nor a villager, that I thought no place could ever be strange to me again (124-125).

Thoreau’s connection to the wilderness shows the “spirit” as a living thing. He shows that the wilderness is not biased like society and it welcomes all with pure intention. Another

representation of nature's hospitality is through Thoreau's perception of the sun. Thoreau implies that "the sun" gives unconditional love similar to God and the earth. The wilderness is grown by God "like a garden," with care and attention (156)[70].

Thoreau also personifies nature by correlating lakes to eyes. Lakes are natural mirrors found in the world. By looking into them, a reflection of the inner most self can be seen. Thoreau's description of lakes makes them seem human. Thoreau implies that their unconscious is stored at the bottom,

> A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature. The fluviatile trees next the shore are the slender eyelashes which fringe it, and the wooded hills and cliffs around are its overhanging brows (176).

Paul Sherman's introduction to *Walden and Civil Disobedience* shows another means of connecting with nature is through physical labor. Sherman emphasizes that Thoreau "hoed beans" while he was at Walden. He calls this a "natural process" which brought Thoreau closer to nature (117). Sherman states that farming has rejuvenating qualities. When an individual is occupied with physical labor, he or she can get lost in deep thought. This physical labor restores the unconscious mind (117). Farming is a routine and when it is practiced daily, it lets Thoreau be among the spirit by joining the natural cycle with his own cycle.[71] Thoreau's farming near the shore of the pond brings change to the landscape, which Sherman concludes is a reflection of Thoreau's inner self. Hence, the inner-self is reflected in the landscape around Thoreau, "For the pond itself, he discovered, was 'the same water which my youthful eyes fell on,' that 'all the change,' as he confessed, 'is in me.' The pond then was his own pristine, eternal self, and by cultivating the beans, by discipline, he was changing the aspect of its shore, making it more

agreeable to his imagination" (118). With such a strong connection to the wilderness, Thoreau's message progresses from spiritual growth to preservation. Through his isolation, Thoreau's connection to the wilderness grew and his interior-self became reflected in the landscape around him. Likewise, any change he made to the landscape correlated to a change within himself. Hence, his message progressed from spiritual growth to the preservation of the wilderness. Through this connection, he noticed how precious and important the wilderness was to the soul of humans.

In Walden, Thoreau builds an argument for the preservation of Nature. If all the trees are cut down, there would not be any animals to inhabit the forest (182).[72] He even emphasizes the need to stop hunting by comparing animal cries and the cries of babies (200).[73] For Thoreau, humans were once primitive and came out of the wilderness. That is their natural habitat where they can express their desires, "Grow wild according to thy nature, like these sedges and brakes, which will never become English hay" (196). Regardless of the philosophies and rationalities that humans have created for themselves, they are part of the natural cycle (206).[74]

Thoreau's observation of cycles in the wilderness gave a new perspective to Transcendentalism. Thoreau noticed that nature followed a cycle, which he witnessed with the changing seasons. As a result, he introduced a routine into his own life. First, his routines consisted of sleeping, walking, and foraging food. Paul Sherman points out that over time his routines became more integrated with nature, "he needed a longer cycle of time in order to participate in the organic process of rebuilding and renewing his world. There had to be time to clear his land, build his hut, plant his seeds, and harvest his crop" (111). Hence, Thoreau connected his cycle to the four seasons, where he noticed the constant renewal of nature. This renewal he desired within himself.

Thoreau's experience led him to see the wilderness differently. He redefined it to integrated the self. John Elder in his introduction to *Nature and Walking,* shows that Thoreau did not follow the textbook definition of wilderness. Rather, he redefined it from an "a vast, unsettled tract of land" to "a quality of awareness, an openness to the light, to the seasons, and to nature's perpetual renewal" (2). To be aware, one must open up the senses not only to take in the wilderness, but as Thoreau has shown, to understand and become part of it. It was this experience in the woods of Massachusetts that set apart Thoreau from Emerson. By building on Emerson's theories in "Nature," Thoreau become Emerson's prodigy.

In "Walking" (1862), Thoreau expands on Emerson's ideas by adding a need for physical interaction with the wilderness. Thoreau uses sauntering, walking without plan, as a means of connecting with the spirit in wilderness. He immerses himself in the wilderness, going far away from any markings of civilization and creates connections within it. John Elder shows how strong this connection is "by emphasizing not just travel, but the physical act of walking in specific, Thoreau projects a powerful image of the interaction of mind and world. Left foot/right foot, the walker moves through the landscape. Right brain/left brain, sensation and reflection flicker into the complex wholeness of human response" (Elder 2). Thoreau's sauntering and awareness generate a high spiritual connectedness when he is in the wilderness. Elder writes that through his walking Thoreau can "glimpse Elysium" or the spiritual world.[75]

Thoreau indicates the importance of walking in the wilderness through biblical analogies. Becoming a walker is equivalent to becoming a follower of Christ; an individual must give up everything in their possession and leave all their acquaintances. "If you are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and child and friends, and never see them again, —

if you have paid your debts, and made your will, and settled all your affairs, and are a free man, then you are ready for a walk" (50). Hence, the journey Thoreau describes is a spiritual one, with the possibility of no return.

Thoreau indicates that sauntering is essential to his health. It frees his mind from worry. He even condemns indoor jobs, indicating that they are detrimental to an individual's health.[76] He also condemns deforestation of the wilderness and fencing off land, claiming it as private property, "I saw the fences half consumed, their ends lost in the middle of the prairie" (54). He refers to the misers that do this as the devil's agents.[77]

For Thoreau, American wilderness has been forgotten and conquered in the Old World. His sauntering brings him closer to famous figures such as Moses, Homer, and Chaucer because the wilderness that he walks is the same one that these figures walked centuries and millennia ago (55).[78] Thoreau's overall outlook on the wilderness is positive. The natural "force" within him drives him into the wilderness, and it leads him west,

> Eastward I go only by force; but westward I go free. Thither no business leads me. It is hard for me to believe that I shall find fair landscapes or sufficient wildness and freedom behind the eastern horizon. I am not excited by the prospect of a walk thither; but I believe that the forest which I see in the western horizon stretches uninterruptedly toward the setting sun, and there are no towns nor cities in it of enough consequence to disturb me (57).

He identifies going east with history, a history that will diminish an individual's "spirit" and a history one must forget (58).[79] He also emphasizes that America is a new world of opportunity and the last means of salvation for the world (63).[80]

Thoreau advocates for the preservation of the wilderness. He alludes to the breaking of the sod as murder, and the tools of cultivations as weapons (67).[81] For Thoreau nature is aware of its destruction and as a result, hides its beauty in remote places. He emphasizes that farmers and hunters are too busy to notice natures beauty. They are more focused on taming it like Europeans conquered Native Americans, "The pines have developed their delicate blossoms on the highest twigs of the wood every summer for ages, as well over the heads of Nature's red children as of her white ones; yet scarcely a farmer or hunter in the land has ever seen them" (78).

Though Thoreau emphasized conservation, he left a sizeable contribution to the literary field as well. Works such as *Moby-Dick* and *Leaves of a Grass* use Thoreau 's ideas of the spirit in isolation to build upon America's existing genre of Captivity Narratives. Thoreau transforms nature from a setting to a protagonist. As Thoreau depicts in "Walking," the American wilderness becomes a reflection of the inner self in 19th Century literature. It is a connection to one's soul. In *Moby-Dick*, the sauntering is converted into voyage on the unknown seas. Although the voyage has a purpose and a captain to control it, the Pequod is dependent on the wild ocean to carry it to-and-fro Nantucket. Likewise, Thoreau manages to return home from his walks, but he indicates that he does not expect to; rather, he sees that one day he will merge with the wilderness and become part of the spirit.

Thoreau ends his essay on a somber note that accurately depicts the consciousness of the time. He advocated against the destruction of the wilderness, and by the time of his death, it was gone. Herman Melville emphasized this same concern in *Moby-Dick,* and activists still emphasize preservation today. Sadly, the wilderness that Thoreau walked in is no longer the one that we can saunter in today.

Conclusion

In the 19th Century as America outgrew its wilderness, the authors of the time, such as Brown, Irving, Melville, Hawthorne, Spofford, Poe, and Thoreau advocated for its preservation. Regardless of its form, the wilderness of the prairie, the forest, or the sea had a lasting effect on the culture, the mind, and the inner-self.

In the end, these selected authors focus on the wilderness to show that it is the origin of American identity. In the wilderness they lead their characters to find a spiritual connection. This connection might be with the self, as depicted by Hawthorne, or with the divine, as depicted by Spofford. In other words, they reveal their characters' soul, and depict the wilderness as a mirror that reflects the character's inner-self. Their connection to the wilderness returns the characters to simpler times before societal pressure. The authors find the wilderness therapeutic for the soul and as a result they advocate for the preservation of the wilderness. Collectively, the selected works depict the wilderness as positive antagonist indicating that the authors of the early 19th Century see the wilderness as a protagonist.

Collectively, Irving, Brown, Douglass, Poe, Spofford, Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, and Thoreau depict the wilderness as uniquely American. Through various instances of isolation, they portray the power of the wilderness on the human psyche. Its vastness causes fear, its solitude restores the mind, and its beauty illustrates the divine. The wilderness acts as a mirror onto the soul, revealing an individual's identity. It brings out the childlike innocence in the individual and the primitive within oneself. These effects are overall positive indicating that the authors of the early 19th Century saw the wilderness as a protagonist that needs to be preserved in an expanding America.

NOTES

[1] “Here there was all too much space, too much sky, too much light. What farther east had been precious for its rarity now became a waste of abundance. Precisely because those early arrivals had spent their lives in a culture carved from timber, there was nothing here to tell them who or where they were, nothing to measure themselves against, no obvious way to take possession. Not surprisingly, they declared it a nonplace, an absence rather than a presence, and hurried the course of empire westward, returning to their civilizing work when they reached new trees to cut” (Fields 4).
[2] "pastoral, n. and adj." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2016. Web. 30 November 2016.
[3] "frontier, n. and adj." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2016. Web. 6 December 2016.
[4] “The frontier gave to American literature... two very important things. It gave our writers a vast field of unexploited literary material, new backgrounds, new types of character, a wealth of romantic incident. It gave them also a new point of view. The frontier furnished the chief nationalizing influence in literature which is too often considered only a minor branch of English literature” (Hubell 85).
[5] “For Americans entering the continents interior at a time when Transcendentalism was declaring all of nature a window to the self, what one saw and what one was might well be indistinguishable. Melville placed this conjunction at the heart of his work and, in a wonderful reversal in *Moby-Dick*, illuminated the power the sea holds on the human psyche with allusions to the prairie. In both it is the same, what the Bible termed "the abomination of desolation", the fear not of immediate but of ultimate vacancy” (Fields 10).
[6] “Here we have the concept of the fluidity of the frontier, the concept of the frontier, as an embryo of civilization which goes through the various stages of development (Rudolph 84).
[7] “Different phases of the frontier — the First, The Prairies, the Plains, the Mountains, and the Sea (Dondore 8).
[8] “The Puritan shepherds knew that America provided ample opportunity to withdraw from society and degenerate, perhaps into wild beasts or monsters” (Canup 47).
[9] “The colonists of New England…also struggled with their environment and applied their reason toward adjusting their land to fit their material needs…Though some of them verged on bestial degeneration, society as a whole drew back from its oblivion. And when they encountered the native peoples of America, they accepted the challenge of converting them into docile Fridays who could understand the meaning of English civility, the English God, and the word ‘Master’” (Canup 54).
[10] “Adhering both to the same structural sequence of removes and the comfort of Christian prayer in moments of greatest despair. Formally and Rhetorically, the Puritans are in fact alive and well in our society” (392).
[11] “This process of transformation in the captivity experience involves first, a ritual initiatory ordeal, followed by a gradual accommodation of Indian modes and customs, especially those relating to food, and finally a highly ritualized adoption into the new culture" (554).
[12] “In narrative after narrative, captives describe an initial loathing of Indian fare, then a partial compromise of that disgust under extreme hunger, and ultimately a complete accommodation and, in many cases, even relish of the Indian diet” (555).

[13] "Originally, Rip was incapable of countering the forces represented by Dame Van Winkle; now he is successful in denying these forces; he is also successful in succeeding Nicholas Vedder as village patriarch, the position he most envied … Rip, as he is displayed in his final conquest, is representative of the American individual; he has managed to establish his 'undisputed empire.' He is in control of his life, having social interaction only with that select group he admits into his private universe" (78).
[14] "The mountains play a mode of temporary relief and not eternal salvation. The temporary relief is depicted as innocence through a child's eyes, which fades as 'Rip makes his ascent' up the mountains" (73).
[15] "And even after twenty years of what should have been soothing sleep, his first awakening considerations are of the wrath of the evil Dame" (645).
[16] "At the start of the journey, we see the landscape of parks and settlement; towards the end, we see a wilder landscape with its vanishing Indians. This is Irving's version of that typical journey from settlement to wilderness. A familiar point has been made about the historical inevitability of westward progress, but Irving's light touch has made the articulation of that idea a pleasing and almost subliminal process" (Reynolds 99).
[17] "Irving created the literary parallel to the domestic sketches of George Catlin. The focus of Irving's scenes tends to be intimate and confined; these are vignettes rather than vistas. The human figure is at the centre, not landscape. Typical paragraphs sketch colourful scenes where the Indians, rangers, and travellers stand around a camp-fire, or against a green backdrop" (Reynolds 58).
[18] Brown, Charles Brockden. "Edgar Huntly" *Three Gothic Novels*. New York: Penguin Putnam Inc, 1984. Print.
[19] "The authors…have found no Garden of Eden in the West, and they remind the readers, particularly those who think that the better life is on the Pacific side of the continent, that no part of the world is altogether a paradise. Whatever advantages one region has, they conclude, are balanced equally by defects" (Foster 27).
[20] "Edgar Huntly cuts an ambiguous figure in the political landscape of postrevolutionary America. As one who moves between the city and the Indian border country and as an educated artisan (carpenter) with no independent wealth, Edgar would seem to have been constructed to defy quick categorization of his likely political sympathies. His desire for financial independence in order to marry Mary Waldegrave constructs him as the hero of Brown's epistolary novel" (415).
[21] "Brown's depiction of the wilderness is almost entirely devoid of expressive details, and the more general features that he describes or calls attention to exist only in bare outline, as intangible presences struggling to assume concrete form…Brown's relation to his environment is exactly the reverse of Whitman's. For Whitman…nature swarms with living images, each invested with a private radiance and poignancy, each demanding a fresh response, a different quality of acknowledgment" (Toles 134).
[22] "'Beautiful' was often used by nineteenth-century American travelers and writers to describe pastoral landscapes…while 'picturesque' was used for landscapes which were varied, rough, rocky, irregular in outline…The difference between the picturesque and the sublime was basically then a matter of scale" (Foster 14).
[23]"No matter how effectively one argued that American landscapes could indeed be associated with the past and with legend or literature, the fact was that Europe simply offered more of these

associations. However, it was always possible to argue that American associations were with the future rather than the past" (Foster 18).
[24] "Historical novelists…discovered materials for their works in episodes of the revolutionary war and in colonial conflicts with the Indians, and these two aspects of American history were firmly associated with various American landscapes" (Foster 17).
[25] "Edgar finds himself devouring its [the panthers] body raw. The American in his hunt for the alien, has become the savage his narrative has made of Clithero. Having spontaneously degenerated to this lowest state of savagery …. Edgar turns in disgust and begins his long journey back to civilization. It is the project of the second half of the novel to bring Edgar back to his rightful place in society and to demonstrate how and why he ca make this journey of return while Clithero cannot" (444).
[26] "My hunger speedily became ferocious. I tore the linen of my shirt between my teeth and swallowed the fragments. I felt a strong propensity to bite the flesh from my arm. My heart overflowed with cruelty, and I pondered on the delight I should experience in rending some living animal to pieces, and drinking its blood and grinding its quivering fibres between my teeth" (Chapter 16).
[27] "The mysteries of the forest ultimately prove to be the mysteries of one's own identity. The amount of secrecy one encounters in external reality is comparable in extent to the submerged areas of one's being" (Toles 146).
[28] "The recurrent image of Clithero receding into the wilderness functions most meaningfully at this level; what Edgar sees, half-consciously, is his life flowing away without him, and himself, like Clithero, standing isolated, at a barren extremity, with nothing to hold on to. By seeking out Clithero's dwelling place and attempting to restore him to a balanced state of mind, Huntly hopes to eliminate this spectre of madness from his own path. Ironically, it is through his desperate efforts to find and preserve Clithero that he gradually loses himself, and crosses over into that empty, darkened realm of being he was so determined to avoid" (Toles 151).
[29] "There was plenty of wilderness, old or new growth, available to the individual willing to exercise his legs" (Worster 8).
[30] Williams, James. *The Narrative of James Williams an American Slave, who was for several years a driver on a cotton plantation in Alabama.* American Anti-Slavery Society. New York. 1838. Print.
[31] "Such conscientiousness seems motivated less by a desire to share with an imagined readership the methods and routes if escape than by the impulse to communicate something of the narrator's craftiness, or geographic fitness, as we might term it – their quintessentially human ability to adapt to, survive in, even master a given environment. That fitness, crucially, is mental as well as physical. It depends on not only bodily but also emotional stamina, and cognitively it involves the minds apperception, processing, and retention of important features of the landscape. During a fugitive slave's passage through unknown or unfamiliar territory, the sensory, analytical, and memory-making functions of the mind all cooperate in generating interior representations of the external world" (Finseth 259).
[32] Douglass, Frederick. *My Bondage and My Freedom.* Miller, Orton, and Mulligan. 1855. Print.
[33] "I suppose I felt as one may imagine the unarmed mariner to feel when he is rescued by a friendly man-of-war from the pursuit of a pirate. In writing to a dear friend, immediately after my arrival at New York, I said I felt like one who had escaped a den of hungry lions" (Chapter 11).

[34] "She had heard that music charmed wild beasts, —just this point between life and death intensified every faculty, — and when she opened her lips the third time, it was not for shrieking, but for singing […] A song sprang to her lips, a wild sea-song, such as some sailor might be singing far out on trackless blue water that night, the shrouds whistling with frost and the sheets glued in ice" (para 6).
[35] "I see all the currents of the universal being circulate through me, I am part or particle of God" (Emerson 6).
[36] "Nature always wears the colors of the spirit" (Emerson 7).
[37] "As the eye is the best composer, so light is the first painter" (Emerson 10).
[38] "Nature is medicinal. The tradesman, the attorney comes out of the din and craft of the street, and sees the sky and the woods, and is a man again" (Emerson 10).
[39] "When the bark of Columbus nears the shore of America; --before it, the beach lined with savages, fleeing out of all their huts of cane; the sea behind; and the purple mountains of Indian Archipelago around, can we separate the man from the living picture? Does not the New World clothe his form with the palm-groves and savannahs as foot drapery?" (Emerson 13).
[40] "The deliberate appraisals of nature made by all the Transcendentalists fall between these two degrees of qualification. The central preoccupation of the movement was the relationship between self and God; compared to this, nature was of secondary importance" (Buell 146).
[41] "But though the Transcendentalists were primarily children of the Puritans rather than children of nature, their reverence for the natural creation surpassed their ancestors', and with reason. To begin with, nature was no longer a threat or obstacle to survival. Whereas for the Puritans the 'howling wilderness' was a hostile force, for the Transcendentalists it could serve as a sentimentally attractive image of the vigor and spontaneity lacking in their more comfortable existence. Beyond this, their distrust of historical Christianity made them attach an unusually high theoretical value to nature as evidence and analogue of man's relation to God" (146-147).
[42] "Emerson's version of the unconscious is a purer instance of poetic or hyperbolical repression...I think that Emersonian "Spontaneity or Instinct" is structured like a rhetoric, that is, is both a system of tropes and also a mode of persuasion...it is augmented by fresh and purposeful forgettings, by evasions by that are performed in order to present something other than that something that is being evaded...in Emerson the something must take the name of a single drive, the thrust of anteriority, the mystifying strength of the past. which is profoundly objectionable to Emersons prime ego-ideal, Self-Reliance" (Bloom 6-7).
[43] "Not merely rebirth, but the even more hyperbolical trope of self-rebegetting, is the starting point of the last Western Sublime, the great sunset of selfhood in the Evening Land" (Bloom 8).
[44] "The Emersonian repressiveness attains to a discontinuity with everything that is anterior, and in doing so it accomplishes or prepares for reversal in which the self is forgotten ("I am nothing") and yet through seeing introjects the fathering force of anteriority. By seeing the transparency, the poet of the American Sublime contains the father-god, and so augments the poetic self even as he remembers to forget that self" (Bloom 11).
[45] "This hyperbolical figuration is a rather complex theory of representation, because the son or, later poem initially needs to forget the autonomy of its own power in order to express any continuity of power" (Bloom 9).
[46] "For my own part, I lay on the grass under the trees, and built castles in the clouds, and indulged in the very luxury of rural repose. Indeed, I can scarcely conceive a kind of life more calculated to put both mind and body in a healthful tone" (84).

[47] "The sea had leeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul. Not drowned entirely, though. Rather carried down alive to wondrous depths, where strange shapes of the unwarped primal world glided to and fro before his passive eyes; and the miser-merman, Wisdom, revealed his hoarded heaps; and among the joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities, Pip saw the multitudinous, God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the firmament of waters heaved the colossal orbs. He saw God's foot upon the treadle of the loom, and spoke it; and therefore his shipmates called him mad. So man's insanity is heaven's sense; and wandering from all mortal reason, man comes at last to that celestial thought, which, to reason, is absurd and frantic; and weal or woe, feels then uncompromised, indifferent as his God" (395).
[48] "The great black forest--stern as it showed itself to those who brought the guilt and troubles of the world into its bosom--became the playmate of the lonely infant, as well as it knew how. Sombre as it was, it put on the kindest of its moods to welcome her … The truth seems to be, however, that the mother-forest, and these wild things which it nourished, all recognized a kindred wildness in the human child" (188).
[49] "It may seem marvellous, that, with the world before her,--kept by no restrictive clause of her condemnation within the limits of the Puritan settlement, so remote and so obscure,--free to return to her birthplace, or to any other European land, and there hide her character and identity under a new exterior, as completely as if emerging into another state of being,--and having also the passes of the dark, inscrutable forest open to her, where the wildness of her nature might assimilate itself with a people whose customs and life were alien from the law that had condemned her" (71)
[50] "Hester Prynne, therefore, did not flee. On the outskirts of the town, within the verge of the peninsula, but not in close vicinity to any other habitation, there was a small thatched cottage. It had been built by an earlier settler, and abandoned, because the soil about it was too sterile for cultivation, while its comparative remoteness put it out of the sphere of that social activity which already marked the habits of the emigrants. It stood on the shore, looking across a basin of the sea at the forest-covered hills, towards the west" (73)
[51] "The old minister seated himself in an arm-chair, and made an effort to draw Pearl betwixt his knees. But the child, unaccustomed to the touch or familiarity of any but her mother, escaped through the open window and stood on the upper step, looking like a wild, tropical bird, of rich plumage, ready to take flight into the upper air" (100).
[52] "For Americans entering the continents interior at a time when Transcendentalism was declaring all of nature a window to the self, what one saw and what one was might well be indistinguishable. Melville placed this conjunction at the heart of his work and, in a wonderful reversal in *Moby-Dick*, illuminated the power the sea holds on the human psyche with allusions to the prairie. In both it is the same, what the Bible termed "the abomination of desolation", the fear not of immediate but of ultimate vacancy." (Fields 10)
[53] "I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball" (7).
[54] "No, when I go to sea, I go as a simple sailor, right before the mast, plumb down into the forecastle, aloft there to the royal masthead. True, they rather order me about some, and make me jump from spar to spar, like a grasshopper in a May meadow" (10).
[55] "Some leaning against the spiles; some seated upon the pier-heads; some looking over the bulwarks of ships from China; some high aloft in the rigging, as if striving to get a still better seaward peep. But these are all landsmen; of week days pent up in lath and plaster—tied to

counters, nailed to benches, clinched to desks. How then is this? Are the green fields gone? What do they here?" (8).
[56]"Say, you are in the country; in some high land of lakes. Take almost any path you please, and ten to one it carries you down in a dale, and leaves you there by a pool in the stream. There is magic in it. Let the most absent-minded of men be plunged in his deepest reveries—stand that man on his legs, set his feet a-going, and he will infallibly lead you to water, if water there be in all that region. Should you ever be athirst in the great American desert, try this experiment, if your caravan happen to be supplied with a metaphysical professor (8)
[57] "And then it was, that suddenly sweeping his sickle-shaped lower jaw beneath him, Moby Dick had reaped away Ahab's leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field" (176).
[58] "To this, in substance, he replied, that though what I hinted was true enough, yet he had a particular affection for his own harpoon, because it was of assured stuff, well tried in many a mortal combat, and deeply intimate with the hearts of whales. In short, like many inland reapers and mowers, who go into the farmers' meadows armed with their own scythes—though in no wise obliged to furnish them—even so, Queequeg, for his own private reasons, preferred his own harpoon" (60)
[59] "The opposite wall of this entry was hung all over with a heathenish array of monstrous clubs and spears. Some were thickly set with glittering teeth resembling ivory saws; others were tufted with knots of human hair; and one was sickle-shaped, with a vast handle sweeping round like the segment made in the new-mown grass by a long-armed mower. You shuddered as you gazed, and wondered what monstrous cannibal and savage could ever have gone a death-harvesting with such a hacking, horrifying implement. Mixed with these were rusty old whaling lances and harpoons all broken and deformed" (17).
[60] "Steering north-eastward from the Crozetts, we fell in with vast meadows of brit, the minute, yellow substance, upon which the Right Whale largely feeds. For leagues and leagues it undulated round us, so that we seemed to be sailing through boundless fields of ripe and golden wheat. As morning mowers, who side by side slowly and seethingly advance their scythes through the long wet grass of marshy meads; even so these monsters swam, making a strange, grassy, cutting sound; and leaving behind them endless swaths of blue upon the yellow sea […] That part of the sea known among whalemen as the 'Brazil Banks' does not bear that name as the Banks of Newfoundland do, because of there being shallows and soundings there, but because of this remarkable meadow-like appearance, caused by the vast drifts of brit continually floating in those latitudes, where the Right Whale is often chased" (262)
[61] "I bury but one of five stout men, who were alive only yesterday; but were dead ere night. Only that one I bury; the rest were buried before they died; you sail upon their tomb" (505).
[62] "Oh! ye whose dead lie buried beneath the green grass; who standing among flowers can say—here, here lies my beloved; ye know not the desolation that broods in bosoms like these" (39).
[63] "The Adam whom Melville imagine in Moby-Dick, striding in the unbounded Prairies, " Majestic as god", and in countering the equally "Majestic white Steed" is now replaced by the realtor and the banker" (39).
[64] "In the repose of the pasture, the curled brow of the bull has a touch of the grand in it. Pushing heavy cannon up mountain defiles, the elephant's brow is majestic. Human or animal, the mystical brow is as that great golden seal affixed by the German emperors to their decrees. It signifies—" God: done this day by my hand." But in most creatures, nay in man himself, very

often the brow is but a mere strip of alpine land lying along the snow line. Few are the foreheads which like Shakespeare's or Melancthon's rise so high, and descend so low, that the eyes themselves seem clear, eternal, tideless mountain lakes; and all above them in the forehead's wrinkles, you seem to track the antlered thoughts descending there to drink, as the Highland hunters track the snow prints of the deer" (331).
[65] "If used effectively, the wilderness theme plumbs the depths; it takes the reader back to profound basics" (Dean 68).
[66] "In its primitivistic rejection of civilization's arbitrary coercions, the escapist utopia emphasizes man's innate goodness, his naturalness—as opposed to the artificial sophistications of civilized man—and his saving simplicity" (Beaucamp 7).
[67] "Melville displayed his belief that happiness is not obtainable by the individual in isolation, but may be found in shared experiences—in a community of thought and action and purpose" (Watters 1148).
[68] "Pip, who was deserted for many hours after his jump from the whaleboat, went insane less from fear than from his discovery, as a 'lonely castaway' in the 'shoreless ocean' that 'the awful lonesomeness is intolerable" (Watters 1146).
[69] "The most significant thing about the American frontier is that it lies at the hither edge of free land. […] at first the environment is too strong for the man -- he must fit himself to the frontier conditions or perish, so he follows the Indian trails and uses the Indian clearings. o he little by little transforms the wilderness and is himself transformed into a new product, the American" (Rudolph 78).
[70] "We are wont to forget that the sun looks on our cultivated fields and on the prairies and forests without distinction. They all reflect and absorb his rays alike, and the former make but a small part of the glorious picture which he beholds in his daily course. In his view the earth is all equally cultivated like a garden. Therefore we should receive the benefit of his light and heat with a corresponding trust and magnanimity" (156).
[71] "During the Walden period he had, of course, hoed beans, but solely for the purpose of paying his way; from the vantage of his later years, however, this labor became the discipline by means of which he participated in the natural process and renewed his intimacy with Nature… The value of farming, or of any unspecialized vocation in Nature, he also found, was that it helped one catch Nature unaware, that it restored unconsciousness and permitted one to see out of the side of the eye" (117).
[72] "How can you expect the birds to sing when their groves are cut down?" (Walden 182)
[73] "No humane being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature which holds its life by the same tenure that he does. The hare in its extremity cries like a child. I warn you, mothers, that my sympathies do not always make the usual philanthropic distinctions" (200).
[74] "We are conscious of an animal in us, which awakens in proportion as our higher nature slumbers. It is reptile and sensual, and perhaps cannot be wholly expelled; like the worms which, even in life and health, occupy our bodies" (206).
[75] "Thoreau is walking, not standing, crossing rolling terrain in the season of "withered grass and leaves." Thoreau, the flute player of Walden, is highly sensitive to the sounds of nature as well as to its visual impressions. The silence of this flood of light, a current "without a ripple or a murmur," is thus a remarkable fact for him. 'The boundary of Elysium' is also more than simply a literary allusion. Unlike Emerson, for whom visionary experiences were the gates through

which to leave nature behind, Thoreau writes in "Walking" that "with regard to Nature I lead a sort of border life …" He could glimpse Elysium, but only as he walked along" (2).
[76] "I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least, — and it is commonly more than that, — sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements. You may safely say, A penny for your thoughts, or a thousand pounds. When sometimes I am reminded that the mechanics and shopkeepers stay in their shops not only all the forenoon, but all the afternoon too, sitting with crossed legs, so many of them, — as if the legs were made to sit upon, and not to stand or walk upon, — I think that they deserve some credit for not having all committed suicide long ago" (51).
[77] "Nowadays almost all man's improvements, so called, as the building of houses, and the cutting down of the forest and of all large trees, simply deform the landscape, and make it more and more tame and cheap. A people who would begin by burning the fences and let the forest stand! I saw the fences half consumed, their ends lost in the middle of the prairie, and some worldly miser with a surveyor looking after his bounds, while heaven had taken place around him, and he did not see the angels going to and fro, but was looking for an old post-hole in the midst of paradise. I looked again, and saw him standing in the middle of a boggy stygian fen, surrounded by devils, and he had found his bounds without a doubt, three little stones, where a stake had been driven, and looking nearer, I saw the Prince of Darkness was his surveyor" (54).
[78] "I walk out into a Nature such as the old prophets and poets, Menu, Moses, Homer, Chaucer, walked in. You may name it America, but it is not America; neither Americus Vespucius, nor Columbus, nor the rest were the discoverers of it. There is a truer account of it in mythology than in any history of America, so called, that I have seen" (55).
[79] "We go eastward to realize history and study the works of art and literature, retracing the steps of the race; we go westward as into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure. The Atlantic is a Lethean stream, in our passage over which we have had an opportunity to forget the Old World and its institutions. If we do not succeed this time, there is perhaps one more chance for the race left before it arrives on the banks of the Styx; and that is in the Lethe of the Pacific, which is three times as wide" (58).
[80] "Wildness is the preservation of the World" (Walking 63)
[81] "The weapons with which we have gained our most important victories, which should be handed down as heirlooms from father to son, are not the sword and the lance, but the bushwhack, the turf-cutter, the spade, and the bog-hoe, rusted with the blood of many a meadow, and begrimed with the dust of many a hard-fought field" (67).

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