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THE REPRESENTATION OF THE SAVAGE IN
SELECTED WORKS OF JAMES FENIMORE COOPER
AND HERMAN MELVILLE

by

ANNA KRAUTHAMMER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
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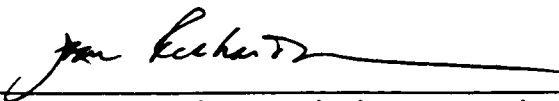
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Abstract

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE SAVAGE IN
SELECTED WORKS OF JAMES FENIMORE COOPER
AND HERMAN MELVILLE

by

Anna Krauthammer

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Since the seventeenth century, ethnicity has been the central issue in the American search for a national identity. The issue, which had first been defined by the Puritans within a religious context, had, by the nineteenth century, come to be defined within secularized economic, political, and cultural contexts as America became a republic. The dichotomy of savagery and civilization was used in political and literary discourses to articulate this issue.

The works of James Fenimore Cooper and Herman Melville are essential to those discourses because they are linked thematically and narratively. Furthermore, the works of these writers represent stages in a process of marginal-

ization of non-white others that began with Puritan texts that created a fictive existence for Indians which defined them as either noble or evil savages and led to Indian stereotypes that were used in the Frontier Romance genre of the nineteenth century. However, Cooper, in The Leatherstocking Tales, and Melville in Benito Cereno, Typee, Moby Dick, and The Confidence Man, manipulated these same images to question the validity of defining ethnicity by the dichotomy of savagery and civilization. This manipulation is evident in an examination of these paired characters: Magua and Babo, Chingachcook and Queequeg, Natty Bumpo and Tom.

While Cooper and Melville understood and were able to demonstrate in their works the fallacy and brutality of the dichotomy, they unavoidably abetted the marginalization and silencing of non-white others in their texts by using them and white treatment of them to expose the hypocrisy and ambivalence of white attitudes toward non-white others. Furthermore, as both writers show in their works, these attitudes were derived from the EuroAmerican ambivalence toward nature and a belief that the non-white other embodied both attractive and repulsive aspects of the environment on the American continent.

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Chapter 1 - Magua and Babo: The Ignoble Savage

One of the ways in which the literary discourse of the nineteenth century attempted to address representation of the savage other was the creation of the ignoble savage. This type exemplified all the negative characteristics attributed to non-white others by EuroAmericans. Furthermore, it was this type that was used as a rationale for their extermination in the political discourse of the time. Magua, in Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans and Babo, in Melville's Benito Cereno are both ignoble savage types. But both writers use these characters to subvert the stereotypical image and examine the EuroAmerican's ambivalence toward the savage other.

In History, Ideology and Myth in American Fiction, Sacvan Bercovitch suggests: "Cooper's difficulties and achievements in representing the Indian can . . . be seen not as a minor aspect of his work to which they have often been relegated but as one of the points which his works engage most clearly with the fundamental issues of the period. Notable among these issues are the concept of civilization, the legitimacy of territorial expansion and the production of wealth from the land."¹ This observation is clear from Cooper's depiction of Magua and suggests that more open readings of Cooper's Indian characters might provide new

¹ Sacvan Bercovitch, in History, Ideology and Myth in American Fiction, 1823-1852. Robert Clark, ed., (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1894) 96.

analyses of not only Cooper's treatment of race, but also his social and political views.

Many Cooper critics, such as Wayne Fields and Kay House have labeled Magua in The Last of the Mohicans an example of the ignoble savage, one half of the noble/ignoble savage dichotomy that came to be used to represent Indians and other non-whites in nineteenth-century literary and political discourses.² Comparisons of Magua to Milton's Satan and contrasts of Magua with Uncas and Chingachcook (as representatives of the noble savage type) have been traditionally used to support this interpretation. After relegating Magua to this one-dimensional interpretation, critics usually turn to larger issues of nationalism and American identity. However, a close analysis of Magua's rhetoric (freed from the restrictions of the ignoble savage stereotype) and a comparison with Milton's Satan reveal a complex and troubling character that at once displays the characteristics of the ignoble savage and at the same time subverts them. Thus, the character illustrates Cooper's ambivalence toward the literary and political representations of Indians and other non-whites in his time and mirrors as well the ambivalent attitudes toward these peoples that characterized the larger American discourses on national identity.

Like Cooper, Melville recognized the importance of non-white others to the American national identity and understood

² Wayne Fields, ed., James Fenimore Cooper: Critical Essays. (New York: Vision, 1985).

that the way in which they were represented revealed American ambivalence toward the definition of that identity. As a result of his contact with non-Indian non-white others in his travels and of the intensity of his concern with the slavery issue, Melville concentrated on the representation of Polynesians and blacks. And like Cooper, he used his non-white characters to reveal his views on social and political issues. As an example, through the character of Babo in Benito Cereno, Melville examines the issues of black slavery, human rights, racism, and the literary marginalization of non-white others.

Babo has also been characterized as a savage and a diabolical, Satanic presence that is ultimately unfathomable. Unlike Magua, who is voluble by comparison, Babo hardly speaks, leading some critics to consider him (and the tale) primarily a vehicle for Melville's comments on slavery and its effects. However, an analysis of Babo in terms of both Delano's and Cereno's perceptions reveals a character, who, like Magua, seems to embody many of the savage characteristics ascribed to blacks, Indians and other non-whites during the same time period, but also subverts them by both embodying and subverting stereotypes. Melville has us view, through Babo, the critical and problematic role race played in the American discourse on national identity and the importance of slavery as an issue in American history and culture. Richard Sundquist notes: "The great power of Benito Cereno . . . lay in Melville's apprehension of the scope and

intricacy of slavery's contending forces which were entangled in the ethos of revolution that defined America from its beginning . . . more specifically Melville saw the centrality of slavery and revolution in antebellum American political and cultural life" . . . Sundquist then says of Benito Cereno: "By reconfiguring the machinery of slavery as a masquerade . . . Melville suggested that there were no future . . . for the experiment of American democracy so long as the paralysis of inequality continued."³

The concept of the savage originated in feudal Europe and was used to describe non-Christian, tribal, (and usually non-white) others. By definition, the savage was considered both antithetical to (and therefore inferior to) the white European. This concept was used as a pretext by the Crusaders and later conquering forces to subjugate and kill. Francis Jennings points out that the roots of aggression against the savage other in Europe stemmed from religion: "When racism later emerged as the dominant principle of European conquest, it grew naturally by easy stages out of feudal religiosity."⁴

Jennings goes on to say that this rationalization for conquest was a legacy of Renaissance Europe. He notes that conquest in the name of Christianity became the single most important reason for subjugation of others, both on the continent (as in the case of the English conquest of Ireland)

³ Richard Sundquist, To Wake the Nations. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) 29,139.

⁴ Francis Jennings, The Invasion of America. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975) 6.

and abroad. This legacy was transplanted to America, where it rooted in Puritan attitudes, actions, and writings.

Therefore, the text for the relationship between whites and Indians was written in Europe and the language that would characterize that relationship and create an identity for the Indian was part of that text. The Puritans extended and embellished text and terminology as they created the typology for their task in America. For the Puritans and the Euro-Americans who succeeded them, the acceptance of Christianity and its secular implications were the primary measure of an individual's degree of civilization, and the rejection of the same his degree of savagery, a characteristic that doomed him. Therefore, when conversion of the savage (and later, acculturation) failed, extinction became for the EuroAmerican (as it had for the feudal European) a viable and inevitable alternative.

Robert Berkhofer points out that the French and Italians as well as the English used a variant of the word savage which originated from the Latin *silvaticus*, meaning a man of the forest). He notes that English usage switched from the word "savage" to "Indian" as a general term for the native inhabitants of the American continent in the seventeenth century. In all cases, however, the term "savage" with its implication of wildness "came to represent all that eluded Christian norms and the established framework of Christian society."⁵ All Europeans came to the New World with a pre-

⁵ Robert F. Berkhofer, The White Man's Indian. (New York: Vintage, 1979) 13.

established standard and vocabulary with which to define the people they saw and used both to measure how different, inferior, and threatening these people were. While some accounts of the early European explorers and the English colonists were somewhat positive (using more benign primitivist descriptions), for most accounts the savage was an ignoble being, and antithetical to everything the (civilized) European was.

Berkhofer suggests that the Puritans saw their arrival and existence in America as a drama in which Puritanism, wilderness, and savagery were divine metaphors. In this drama they saw themselves as chosen by God to build a new Zion in America. The Indian held meaning for them in terms of this drama and their place in it. In this context the Indian was a tool of God designed to help or hinder their plight and future salvation. When a hindrance, the Indian was seen as an agent of Satan (81). Thus, the identification of the Indian with Satan in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when he fought against EuroAmerican expansion, was a logical extension of this image. It is not surprising that within this Puritan context, the Indian was defined as an aspect of European experience and world view as the savage had been thus defined in Europe, or that the manner in which non-European others were defined in the Old World continued unbroken in the New World and thus resonated in American literature and in the political rhetoric of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Edward Said

maintains in Orientalism, this definition of non-European others as aspects of European experience and world view had always been a salient characteristic of the European colonial enterprise.⁶

Puritan writing of the seventeenth century, consisting predominantly of sermons, journals, and captivity narratives recorded and interpreted the Puritan experience and mission in the New World. This literature contained the imagery that would provide a legacy for writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as they defined the relationship between savage and civilized. Although the context of the relationship became more secularized as the "city on the hill" became a republic, the Puritan conceptualization of the Indian would influence later generations of writers and thinkers. It was in Puritan writing that the Indian became a metaphor and he continued to be so for the writers of the nineteenth century. Arguably, the ignoble savage stereotype had its roots in the Puritan concept of the Indian as an agent of Satan. Furthermore, the use of specific metaphors to define the New World and its native inhabitants shaped the literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and defined the Indian and other non-whites in images that suited the political discourses of those periods. As Werner Sollors has pointed out, it was no accident that at the height of the most brutal removal and extermination policies, scientific theories that supported the inherent

⁶ Edward Said, Orientalism. (New York: Random House, 1979).

inferiority and ferocity of the Indian and literature that proposed that the Indian was doomed by his nature were prolific and popular.⁷ It was at this time, for example, that the vanishing noble chieftain and the doomed Indian princess characters appeared in popular stage dramas. Cooper's novels reveal the influences of his contemporary writers, especially those who created the genre of the Frontier Romance. Novels of the "dark and bloody ground" Romantic sub-genre such as Nick of the Woods contain the ignoble savage images embodied by Magua. On the other hand, novels such as Hobomok and The Yemassee contain the vanishing noble savage images that inform the creation of Uncas and Chingachcook.

But in literature, while the Indian as metaphor was pervasive, Indians as realistic characters were marginalized. Lucy Maddox, in Removals, suggests Indians (and other non-whites) were silenced, written over by white writers, even though they became subjects of books or characters in novels.⁸ They were stereotyped as noble or ignoble and became objects of pity or fear, interpretations which reached their height in the development of the Frontier Romance genre. Early on, fiction accounts of life among the Indians, such as those by Francis Parkman in The Oregon Trail, used common stereotypes to describe Indian life.⁹ Therefore, both Cooper and Melville were heirs to a whole body of literature

⁷ Werner Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁸ Lucy Maddox, Removals. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁹ Francis Parkman, The Oregon Trail. (New York: Penguin, 1985).

that created Indians and other non-white characters based totally on white misperceptions. Paradoxically, this literature demonstrated an extraordinary concern with the savage other and his role in American society and coupled it with an equally extraordinary effort to erase the reality of his existence. It is primarily this paradox that Cooper and Melville engage in their writings as they manipulate the positive and negative emblematic qualities of Magua and Babo respectively and therefore demonstrate how troubling was the issue of ethnicity to the nineteenth-century American discourse on national identity.

While the Puritans left their conceptual imprint and rhetoric upon later writers, the context for the representation of non-white others changed as America expanded to form a republic. In terms of the religious legacy, Bercovitch describes it thus: "The Protestant clergy . . . substituted a regional for a biblical past, consecrated the American movement from promise to fulfillment and translated fulfillment, from its meaning within the closed system of sacred history into a metaphor of limitless secular improvement"(147). The concept of Manifest Destiny embodied what Bercovitch describes as transformation of the concept of a sacred past to a sacred future filled with progress and expansion because it implied the inevitability of the takeover of the American continent by a people whose antecedents believed themselves chosen by God to fulfill His will in the New World. The sacred elements of the Puritan

"errand into the wilderness" echoed in the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny as it rationalized American expansion westward in the nineteenth century. The progress envisioned by the Puritans as work toward a better Christian state became in the nineteenth century progress toward a stronger, growing nation/state. Jennings describes the political and social implications of this transformation: "The nineteenth-century historian Francis Parkman maintained New England primacy, but he secularized the basic myth by transforming the author of Election from divinity to nature and converting the triumph of the Chosen to survival of the fittest. Frederick Jackson Turner extended the myth to carry it through the nineteenth century and across the continent finding a name for the survival of the fittest - he called it democracy"(11). And democracy came to be identified as a uniquely white American institution (as distinct from Indian tribal or European class systems). Furthermore, racial theories of the time "proved" the superiority of the white American culture and therefore its fitness to rule the American continent. With this transformed secular ideology and rhetoric, the savage, who was first defined as anti-Christian, now became anti-American.

Both images were utilized in nineteenth-century political and literary discourses to make the savage appear to be a threat to the established order of American society: there was no place for the savage in American society if he wished to retain his original culture. However, by mani-

pulating these images, Cooper and Melville were able to show that Magua and Babo, defined as savages within the above context, were uniquely American creations and represented uniquely American problems. First, each character is a complex mixture of noble and ignoble characteristics, making his actions open to a number of interpretations. Secondly, each is shown to be a product of white racism and thus functions as an indictment of white attitudes toward the non-white other. Each writer thus subverts the traditional American images of the savage other that he was heir to.

The characteristics of the ignoble savage were distinct and circumscribed by Cooper's time. Most importantly, the appellations of noble or ignoble were determined by the relationship of the Indian to the whites: to what extent the Indian accepted the white agenda and agreed to assimilate. Just as the Puritans defined the evil savage as one who would not convert and hindered their mission, and described him as Satanic, so, too, the Americans of the nineteenth century viewed as Satanic those Indians who blocked expansion and rebelled against removal and extinction. On the other hand, the noble savage was one who accepted the inevitability of white dominance and his own extinction. The former was represented by Magua, the latter by Uncas and Chingachcook. Cooper, from the outset, made Magua a complex character, subverting the ignoble savage definition; a close reading of Magua reveals he has many of the characteristics of Uncas and Chingachcook. John McWilliams observes: "The contrast Cooper

establishes between his gentle noble savage (Uncas) and his brutal Satanic villain (Magua) proves not to be so total as first appears." He notes that in describing their battle Cooper suggests their bodies seemed merged.¹⁰ In fact, Magua bears a number of striking similarities to the noble savage characters. What distinguishes him from Uncas and Chingachcook seems to be his inordinate rage, his desire for revenge and his contempt for whites. But these are not inherent characteristics; they result primarily from his experiences with Munro, who mistreated and punished him.

Readers of the time and many later critics, however, saw in Magua primarily the negative attributes of the ignoble savage, mainly because in the novel he poses a threat to the established order and, by extension, represents all Indians who rebel against white domination and the social and political order. But Magua is a survivor; he does not want to vanish. He does not accept his role as mandated by whites (as Chingachcook seems to). It is clear from the narrative that white contact had to a great degree made him what he is, bringing out his negative characteristics. The novel, read in this light, poses the question of the justification of Magua's desire for revenge. From this we begin to see the need for a more complex evaluation of Magua's character, one that the ignoble savage appellation and its attendant, fixed characteristics will not supply.

¹⁰ John McWilliams, "Red Satan: Cooper and the American Indian Epic," James Fenimore Cooper: New Critical Essays. Robert Clark, Ed., (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1984) 155.

Cooper is suggesting that Magua is justified. By so doing, he is undermining the rationale used to support the ignoble savage thesis of inherent evil. Instead, with his novel he opens the question of justifiable rebellion against unjust rule. Magua's words express the rhetoric of resistance not only against domination, but also for Indian unity: "Justice is the master of the redskin. Why should they sharpen their knives against each other?" (288). Magua refuses to be bound by a text, political or literary. As Indian he refuses to vanish without a struggle; as character he is not contained by the definition of ignoble savage. Cooper has undermined both stereotypes by allowing Magua to resist political and narrative authority. Paradigm becomes paradox: Magua's resistance, while seemingly bad, seems justified, making the concepts of good and bad savages relative rather than absolute. Magua's resistance, the refusal to be marginalized, is the sub-text that drives the narrative. He is the voice of the other, the voice that Maddox states has always been written out or over in mainstream American discourse. He is the marginalized other through which EuroAmerican culture has historically defined itself. But by making him central to the plot, Cooper brilliantly removes him from literary marginalization. He becomes a character who is more than an extension of the European conceptualization of the world. By transcending the literary conventions of the time, Magua anticipates Babo and the Confidence Man, both of whom illustrate Melville's

attempt to use historically and fictively marginalized people to destabilize texts in order to foreground the influence of non-white others in American culture and literature.

There are a number of ways that Cooper tries to subvert the characteristics of the ignoble savage in *Magua*. One is the recurrent idea of Indian degradation because of white contact. This naturally equivocates the idea of inherent evil as well as contradicts the arguments that Christianity and assimilation will save the savage. Rather, the opposite is made explicit: the savage becomes ignoble as a product of white civilization. That is, "savage" is created in fact and then a rhetoric is created that blames the savage for his savagery. *Magua*, therefore, represents an indictment of civilization. The incompatibility between red and white seems inevitable, and the effects permanently destructive. *Magua* will always be filled with rage and a sense of loss and his tribal ties will never be the same; he cannot regain his place.

Another characteristic Cooper subverts is *Magua's* brutality; not by denying it, but, as William Kelly and others have pointed out, by demonstrating that brutality was a characteristic of the period and all of the major characters possessed it.¹¹ Cooper, in his opening description of the land, describes the scale and horror of the conflict by describing the harshness of the land. Clearly, the land

¹¹ William Kelly, *Plotting America's Past: Fenimore Cooper and the Leatherstocking Tales*. (Carbondale: SIU Press, 1983).

itself hardened not only the original inhabitants, but also the Europeans who wanted to possess it. Both Richard Slotkin and D.H. Lawrence suggest that violence characterized all frontier life, the lives of the white frontiersmen as well as the lives of the Indians.¹² Lawrence labels Natty a killer, and Slotkin suggests that the Boone character after whom Natty is fashioned was also a man of violence. Violence alone does not therefore define Magua as evil.

In addition to violence, lack of control or wildness was always cited as a characteristic of the ignoble savage in the popular fiction of the period. Cooper subverts this as well: while Magua is subject to bouts of rage, there are many more instances of his self-control. His behavior is frequently appropriate to the situation. When Duncan, Cora, and Alice are captured at the falls, Magua contains his composure while his men range about, tossing around the supplies. When he enters the camp of Tamenund, he is watchful, respectful and diplomatic: "Magua was a silent and respectful listener. The subtle savage had recovered his artifice and self-command and now proceeded toward his object with his customary command and skill"(281). There are a number of other instances that demonstrate his control as when he argues with Duncan and Cora. He listens carefully and presents his points with force, reason and patience. And he is always in control in those situations and in control of his men. He is brave, but not intemperate. He takes risks, but they are calculated.

¹² Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence. (Hanover: Wesleyan Press, 1973).

Language, especially spoken language, is of primary importance in the novel. Stephen Powers Blakemore observes that the novel is wholly about language and specifically speaks of Cooper using a pre-lapsarian language for the Delawares and a fallen language for the English and the French.¹³ Furthermore, Magua's rhetorical powers are stressed throughout the novel, allowing him to make a convincing statement that both indicts white language and what it has done to the Indian while suggesting Cooper's enterprise in his text: "The palefaces have two words for each thing while the redskin makes the sound of his voice speak for him" (91). The obvious meaning is that white men are dishonest and use language for their duplicity. Magua is referring to Montcalm's ambivalence in calling the English both enemies and friends and Munro's calling Magua's flogging (which Magua sees as unfair) justified. However, he is also indicting written language (text) which Magua implies is less honest than oral Indian) language. Clearly, this statement is Cooper's indictment of the destructive force of white literary and political discourse. But in addition, Magua's words reveal a complexity of character that Cooper has presented in order to open up analyses and allow for a variety of readings. There is a sub-text which suggests to the reader that different interpretations of the book are possible.

¹³ Steven Blakemore, "Strange Tongues: Cooper's Fiction of Language in The Last of the Mohicans," Early American Literature 19 (Spring, 1984) 23.

The traditional critical interpretation of Magua lies in the parallel between him and Milton's Satan in Paradise Lost. Many critics argue that Cooper meant Magua to be the ignoble, Satanic savage imagined in Puritan literature. There are a number of parallels that justify this argument. Magua's assembling his warriors in Chapter XI is similar to Satan's rallying of his forces in Book II. Magua, as Satan, appeals to his followers' anger, pride and need for victory. Like Satan, Magua is persuasive. Cooper calls him an "artful and dreaded chief"(6), and his words "dangerous and artful eloquence"(248). There are other examples to support similarity. Magua is a proud, isolated rebel against authority, who eventually falls into an abyss (from Hawkeye's shot). Like Satan, Magua is filled with hate, a need for revenge, and a feeling of displacement. Like Satan, he wants to build an alternate (Indian) kingdom with himself as head.

But Keith Stavely suggests another interpretation of Satan, one that derives from Milton's social and political views. He suggests a secular dimension to the poem: that it was written as a criticism of what Milton saw as the degeneration of Protestant values into authoritarianism and capitalism. This means that for Milton, the original Protestant goal of laboring for God was transformed into laboring for personal good and gain. Stavely notes: "Milton's devil anticipates to a very considerable extent what would result from the secularization of the Puritan commitment to

sanctification."¹⁴ Milton was contemptuous of the materialism Protestantism came to generate.

The secularization of Puritan values did take place in America. The acquisition of land and money drove western expansion and the creation of empire. Cooper was contemptuous of these changes, seeing them as clearly destructive to the land and to the Indians who depended on the land for sustenance and for their way of life. This is demonstrated in the conflict between Natty and Chingachcook and Judge Temple in The Pioneers. Magua's rebellion against European rule thus could be read to represent Cooper's criticism of the destruction of the land as Satan's rebellion depicts Milton's criticism of materialism. Both are outcries against degeneration.

Stavely extends his analysis of Milton's Satan by labeling him a victim of the system he wants to destroy. He observes that eventually Satan is transformed from rebel to imperial policymaker who wants to establish his own brand of authoritarianism. Like Satan, Magua also is victimized by the system he wants to destroy. Not only is his tribal link destroyed, making him an isolate; he is also obsessed by the need to destroy what exists and to establish his own power base. He has adopted the worst aspects of the policies of his "Canadian fathers."

If Magua is interpreted only within the religious context, then he is the image of the Satanic, ignoble savage

¹⁴ Keith Stavely, Puritan Legacies. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 41.

of the Puritans. It is clear, however, from Cooper's other writings, (other novels within the Leatherstocking saga) and as well as from the complexity of Magua's character that Cooper was creating a character that symbolizes problematic aspects of American culture as Cooper perceived them. Thus, Magua can also be seen as a rebel fighting to preserve his culture against racist EuroAmerican onslaught. Magua, therefore, is comparable to Milton's Satan in two senses since Satan can be interpreted either as an agent of evil or as a justified rebel fighting against the decaying system that eventually absorbs him. Therefore, Magua represents a complex political statement by Cooper in addition to representing Cooper's attempt to destabilize a literary stereotype.

These dual and seemingly opposed readings of Magua not only demonstrate the idiosyncrasies of differing interpretations of his character, but also the complexities and ambiguities with which Cooper invested Magua. The Puritans saw the Indian as evil. For Cooper Magua was more than an evil being attacking the advent of civilization in the New World. It is with the creation of Magua, the ignoble savage who has noble aspects, that Cooper seeks to examine, manipulate and finally destabilize the savagery/civilization dichotomy that characterized representation of Indians in American political and literary discourses. He forces his readers to reconsider the meaning of ignoble and noble savage appellations. Cooper's work enlarges the discourse on

ethnicity and national identity.

Like Cooper, Melville recognized that American national identity was intrinsically connected to the relationship between the EuroAmerican and the non-white other. However, for Melville, white racism defined the nature of this relationship. With the creation of Babo, he chooses the issue of slavery to foreground the moral and political dilemmas created by racism and examines the marginalization of non-whites that resulted from it.

While blacks were marginalized in American life and literature from the seventeenth century onward, the rationale and the rhetoric in political and literary discourses were not analogous to those used to marginalize the Indian. There were a number of reasons for this. First, blacks were not native to this continent and did not hold title to the land, thus they were not seen by early settlers as important to American expansion and identity. Secondly, as slaves, they represented nothing that whites valued. As Wai-chee Dimock suggests, the Indian represented freedom, whereas blacks represented total lack of freedom. They owned nothing, not even their own bodies.¹⁵ Furthermore, nineteenth-century racial theorists doomed blacks to slavery as they doomed Indians to death. However, each race was doomed for different reasons. Brian Dippie, in describing the arguments, cites Alexis de Toqueville's comments on both races: "The servility of one dooms him to slavery; the pride of the other dooms him

¹⁵ Wai-chee Dimock, Empire for Liberty. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) 41.

to death."¹⁶ Blacks were perceived as simple, docile, entertaining beings who were happy as slaves. And a number of nineteenth-century scholars advanced theories that purportedly proved that slavery was an appropriate, natural state for blacks. At best, blacks were viewed with either pity or contempt; whereas Indians assumed a metaphorical identity from first contact. Indian symbols such as the eagle, arrows, and feathers were used as national symbols for the new American republic. And in fact, Jefferson, and Washington expressed admiration for Indian forms of government. From the beginning of contact, then, American whites made Indians an integral part of the American discourse on national identity. Blacks were not metaphorized to this degree, and entered American literature as part of larger social and political discussions that evolved when slavery became a national issue.

The Indian was important to the discourse because of the early EuroAmerican's need to break with a European past and establish a new, aboriginally linked past on the American continent. This new past would presumably grant the Euro-American title to the continent. This need was expressed paradoxically: through an identification with the Indian as literary metaphor and a drive to exterminate the Indian as a living being.

Blacks were included in a major way in the literary discourse of the nineteenth century when slavery became

¹⁶ See Brian Dippie, The Vanishing American. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1982) 86.

central as a political and moral issue. It became more central as slave revolts proliferated throughout the Western Hemisphere and the Abolitionist movement gained momentum. The revolt in San Domingo figured prominently. Sundquist notes that this revolt "...became a primary point of reference for both proslavery and antislavery forces in the United States" (131). Toussaint L'Overture became a heroic figure through this revolt.

At the same time, the slave revolts both in the United States and in other parts of the hemisphere evoked ambivalent responses from proslavery and antislavery forces. On the one hand, leaders such as Toussaint were seen as heroes who were guided by the same impulse for freedom as were the Founding Fathers. The revolts were compared to the American Revolution with its principles of human rights. On the other hand, there were fears of chaos and carnage; these fears were fueled by horror stories by fleeing plantation owners. So that while the revolts were admired in theory, they were feared in actuality. This attraction and repulsion mirrored the EuroAmerican ambivalence toward the Indian and was therefore emblematic of an overall attitude toward non-white others.

Melville also reflected this ambivalence, perhaps recognizing that revolution is by nature violent and often results in chaos. This is shown in his creation of Babo, who, like Magua is a strong mixture of positive and negative characteristics. Furthermore, the creation of several

different accounts of the revolt in Benito Cereno also illustrate his own reservations and those of his contemporaries about obtaining freedom through violence.

It was during the nineteenth century that racial theories were developed to rationalize the unequal position of all races in the country and demonstrate that blacks were naturally suited to slavery. These theories, Carolyn Karcher suggests, fell into three categories: pro-slavery ideology, scientific racism, and the notion of innate character.¹⁷ All were used by slavery advocates to support their position. According to the first argument, blacks were predisposed to be slaves and no other condition would suit them. They could not improve their condition even with white influence, nor did they aspire to do so. They were by nature docile and loved their masters. Therefore, it was reasoned, slavery provided a civilizing influence and release would foment a race war. This theory also stated that blacks were physically suited to hot climates and hard labor. "Scientific" bases for slavery were provided by scholars who compared the organic structure of the races, and their moral and physical attributes. They theorized that there had been racial differentiation from the creation of mankind and if human races could be placed on a social scale, whites were on top and blacks on the bottom, as determined by God. (Indians fell in the middle).

¹⁷ Carolyn Karcher, Shadow Over the Promised Land. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979) 3.

Out of these theories came the notion of the innate inferiority of blacks, making them objects of both pity and contempt. This idea posited that blacks lacked the competitive spirit of whites and could never succeed in white society. Blacks needed care; freedom was no improvement over slavery, which was defined as benign paternalism. This enabled the pro-slavery advocates to conceptualize the relationship between master and slave as familial. While seemingly less malignant than the other theories, it, too, supported the pro-slavery argument and was used against the abolitionists.

According to Michael Paul Rogin, "The emergence of the controversy over slavery paralyzed American politics because it caused the greatest threat to the country."¹⁸ By the time Melville wrote Benito Cereno, slavery had become the central American issue because it encompassed social, historical, political, economic, religious and scientific issues as abolitionists and pro-slavery forces used each type of argument to defend their positions. The slavery issue was central not only because it polarized American society at the time, but because it was also the sieve through which all other issues could be and were strained.

A major abolitionist argument was that man had natural rights and therefore a natural right to choose to be free. Abolitionists defended their position constitutionally and cited the American Revolution as an exercise of natural

¹⁸ Michael Paul Rogin, Subversive Genealogy. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979) 127.

rights. Pro-slavery forces argued that the master-slave relationship was less exploitive than the capitalism of the North which valued labor and not person. They also argued that the master exercised Christian charity when caring for slaves, and that the master slave-relationship was, while unequal, a familial bond. In Benito Cereno, Melville clearly criticizes the pro-slavery argument, but is not totally supportive of violent rebellion; Babo's actions are merciless. Karcher perceives a basic ambivalence in Melville's attitude toward slavery and the appropriate response to it: "Melville betrays the same qualms about endorsing violent rebellion in all his works, be the rebels white or black. At the same time he consistently exhibits tyranny as unbearable and resistance to it essential . . . By temperament Melville seems to have been a refractory conformist and a reluctant rebel"(3).

Marius Bewley suggests the reason for Melville's ambivalence may not have lain in personal experience or political ideology only, but rather in larger problems he thought were posed by rebellion. In comparing Melville to Cooper, Hawthorne, and James he writes: "The rift in American experience which Cooper, James, and Hawthorne dealt with pragmatically was approached more directly by Melville who struck at the metaphysical heart of the dilemma . . . what paradoxically confronted him was not a polarity between good and evil, . . . but a tragic confusion in which good and evil

were indistinguishable."¹⁹ Melville articulates this view in Benito Cereno by making Babo, Delano, and Cereno both victims and victimizers. But this does not dilute his criticism of slavery; he clearly introduces the evils of slavery. He also shows slavery to be the product of racism and shows that racism, as any tyranny, intrinsically carries within it the seeds of rebellion. Therefore, the horror that is Babo is part of a larger horror created by Delano and Cereno, who thus are responsible for their own victimization.

Once he is seen as a product of white racism, Babo cannot be analyzed apart from Delano and Cereno. Melville's premise is that he is their creation. They are therefore linked in the narrative as are, by implication, all black slaves linked to their masters both as objects and products of white racism. Thus Babo, as character, represents Melville's thesis that Europeans and Americans created images of non-white others to represent their perception of their relationship to the non-EuroAmerican world. Babo's rebellion underscores the fallacy and tragedy inherent in this creation. Furthermore, Babo, as the traditionally marginalized non-white other, like Magua, becomes crucial to the work, and so centralizes Delano and Cereno because of their intrinsic link to him: creators to creation. This interdependence is crucial to the understanding of Benito Cereno as a work about racism, a work that parodies slavery in order

¹⁹ Marius Bewley, "Melville and the Democratic Experience," Melville: A Collection of Critical Essays. Richard Chase, ed., (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1983) 94.

to examine white racism. Traditionally, criticism of Babo has polarized around the question of whether he is evil or not, and the answer is used to show Melville as either for or against slavery. Critics such as F.O. Matthiessen and Richard Fogle see Babo as evil, suggesting that Melville ignored the immorality of slavery.²⁰ But others such as Joseph Schiffman and Allen Guttman find Babo to be the hero of the piece, suggesting Melville's anti-slavery stance.²¹ These critics apparently use the question of evil to frame their examination of the novel as a political statement. However, if this novel is seen as an examination of white racism, the question of evil is not germane. Rather the question is: In what ways does Babo support or subvert the nineteenth-century white representation of blacks? The answer reveals Melville's politics as well as his understanding of the relationship of white and non-whites in America. In addition, if the question of evil is not central to an analysis of Babo's character, then Delano's problem is not that he cannot or refuses to recognize evil; rather it is that he is unable or refuses to recognize Babo as a being independent of white representation of blacks, and therefore cannot see that Babo is a product of white racism. So that Delano, too, must be analyzed within a social and political framework; Delano personifies the racist theories of the time.

Babo subverts the racial theories of the time in a

²⁰ See Charles Nicol, "The Iconography of Good and Evil in Benito Cereno," in Studies in the Minor and Later Works of Melville. Raymona Hill, ed., (Hartford: Transcendental, 1970) 23.

²¹ See Richard Ray, "Benito Cereno' Babo as Leader," Studies. . . 33.

number of ways. Like Magua he exhibits the qualities of rage, leadership, control and intelligence - all of which racial theorists of the time said blacks were lacking as an argument to support the "natural" condition of slavery for blacks. Babo's rage is quite evident. Furthermore, the revolt, the cruelty toward the whites, and the attempt on Delano's life clearly show the slaves' lack of satisfaction with their "natural" state and their hatred for their masters. They desire revenge as well as freedom. Moreover, Babo's leadership is clearly demonstrated by the control he has over Atufal and the others, by his willingness to take risks by placing himself in the middle of the encounter with Delano, and by his direct control of Cereno. In his essay "Benito Cereno: Babo As Leader," Richard E. Ray states: "Like all leaders, Babo is a man with an end in mind, an illegal end to be sure, but hardly a morally wrong one."²² Ray goes on to label Babo's killing of Aranda and others on board as cruel, but necessary under the circumstances; that is, Babo maintains order by impressing the other slaves and the whites with his resolve and his ability to do whatever is necessary to accomplish his goal of escape. Ray maintains that since Babo cannot chain the sailors because he needs them for navigation, he has to maintain control through intimidation. Babo is in fact acting like a captain, doing his duty. He maintains his self-control in the face of the danger of discovery (which Delano represents) and in his ability to

²² Richard Ray, "'Benito Cereno' Babo as Leader," Studies. . . .35.

stage manage the masquerade of being a servant to Cereno. The manipulation of Cereno, his control of himself as he shaves Cereno in Delano's presence (showing his contempt of them by use of the flag - an action he knows Delano will probably misconstrue) also demonstrate his intelligence.

And it is Babo's intelligence that is the overriding factor enabling him almost to succeed. His intelligence is manifested in the plan itself and in the use of the slave/master masquerade, demonstrating that he reads Delano perfectly and understands the racism of the time. He knows he can succeed as long as he can convince Delano that he is indeed still a slave. He needs Delano's inability to see or refusal to see the real balance of power on the ship. He knows Delano, as a white, will suppose his version of reality is reality. He knows that Delano will repress the truth; admitting to it would mean the whole system of black-white relationships upon which Delano's sense of authority is based is bogus and thus would be destroyed. His intelligence and the exercise of his knowledge of white rationalizations are articulated when he is described as sculpting Cereno's head during the shaving scene and when his own head is called a "hive of subtlety" at the end when he is decapitated and his head is placed on a pole.

The shaving scene is the scene most emblematic of the inversion of the master/slave relationship and as such represents Melville's political statement on racism and slavery and their relationship: the scene encompasses

Delano's lack of understanding and Babo's masquerade as he controls the scene while acting as a slave. By "hiding in plain sight," Babo seems to preserve while actually denigrating the master/slave relationship. He demonstrates the power and threat of intimacy and servility; he wields the razor to serve, although it could just as easily become a weapon. Here Melville demonstrates how slavery within it carries the seeds of revolt, a revolt made possible by the intimacy and knowledge slaves had of their masters. He also illustrates that the paternalism which pro-slavery apologists claimed for slavery is actually a perversion of the family in that the relationship is based on violence, fear and suppression, all of which make rebellion and murder inevitable. Melville suggests that it is the intimacy of the master/slave relationship that makes rebellion most possible and most horrible. This is why Babo's subservience is a parody. Furthermore, by inverting the master/slave relationship and subverting the white conceptualization of blacks, Babo is also a threat to the established order and, like Magua, represents chaos. Thus, this work is Melville's cautionary tale to the America of his time. Delano's inability to recognize the truth of the balance of power on the ship is a result of his inability to accept that blacks are intelligent enough to plan and execute such a revolt. As such, he is the personification of the racial theories that were used by the pro-slavery apologists. Although Delano sees all, he sees nothing. He is unable to penetrate beneath the surface of

appearance and when he feels there is something amiss, he more readily blames Cereno or the other Spaniards of some sinister plan. He represses his doubts. He is not unlike the slave owners of the time who assumed the revolts were either led by outside agitators or were the result of an aberration in the nature of blacks. So that Babo's subversion also undermines the social and political structure of the time by exposing and then undercutting Delano's assumptions.

When Delano sees Babo ministering to Cereno, he thinks: "Most negroes are natural valets and hairdressers . . ." And also says of Babo that he exhibits "the docility arising from the unaspiring contentment of a limited mind . . ." and has "the susceptibility of blind attachment . . ." He sees Babo as a docile inferior, incapable of hatred or rebellion. But Carolyn Karcher sees a more sinister aspect in the way in which he perceives the Blacks, imputing to him an "unmistakable sexual attraction toward the naked nature he sees in the Negro . . ." (134). There is an aspect of self-indulgence, in private fantasy, in his attitude as well as a need to preserve the order on which his own identity depends. In either case, his attitude is not a result of naivete or intellectual vapidty; if anything it stems from a posture of self-defense and a fear of deviation or disorder.

It is the need for order that is a primary motivation for Delano. Bewley suggests that in order to succeed, democracy needs the idea of an ordered universe and that implies an absoluteness of certain norms and goals (18).

Delano needs that absoluteness, even after the revolt, as he sits speaking with Cereno: "But the past is passed; why moralize upon it? See yon bright sun has forgotten it and the blue sea and the blue sky have all turned over new leaves . . ." This is Delano's attempt to restore order to see a natural order to which he has become accustomed. He tries to forget the previous chaos because to admit to it would allow a disruption of his world from which he could not recover. In effect, he would have to admit to a new order, one that would no longer marginalize blacks and others, and thus one that would threaten his identity. (This is exactly how the end of slavery would affect nineteenth-century America's struggle for a national identity.) Therefore, it is here in his text that Melville's literary discourse and nineteenth-century America's political discourse meet. Fictively, this is what Babo forces through his actions.

Delano's need for order and a belief that it is possible to restore it stem from a conceptualization of the universe as a place of order, planned by God, yet ultimately comprehensible to man. Like the Puritans, he believes that the world is a text which only the faithful can interpret. These faithful, according to Puritan belief, are the Chosen People. And in his time, as in the time before him, the Chosen People are white. But in Delano's time it is Manifest Destiny that provides the ideological basis for his interpretation of the world. This view of America also negates the Old World legacy that Cereno represents: the marginalization of the savage

other. Therefore, it negates his tie to Cereno, even though in fact they can be seen as co-conspirators in the perpetuation of slavery: Delano by his lack of perception and Cereno by participation in the slave trade. In Going Under, Marvin Fisher states: "The New World faith was expressed in expectation, not recollection."²³ He describes Delano as: "An historical amnesiac, untroubled by the past . . ."

Delano's relationship to Cereno and Babo is illustrated in the scene in which he holds Cereno with his arm and traps the slave under his foot. This tableau symbolizes the continuity of tyranny in the New World that Delano will abet and thus Delano's link to Cereno. But Delano is not aware of its significance. Delano escapes unscathed, but unenlightened, unaware of the importance of what he has experienced in terms of its implications for the future. He has experienced the legacy of the EuroAmerican past conflated with a vision of the American future: "All this with what preceded and what followed occurred with such involutions of rapidity that past, present and future seemed one." But he does not understand its significance. Richard Chase describes this scene as a representation of "a universe poised upon a present that continually merges with the opulent debris of a dying past and reaches into a vacant and terrifying future."²⁴ Delano's world is this universe; the text expresses a historical moment of crisis for America. In that

²³ John Fisher, Going Under. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977) 112.

²⁴ Richard Chase, "Melville and Moby Dick," Melville: A Collection of Critical Essays. Richard Chase, ed., (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963) 137.

scene there is a conflation of the greatest polarization of forces and their closest contact, suggesting the inevitability of conflict. This scene represents the polarization created by the issue of slavery and illustrates Melville's evaluation of its impact.

If the foregoing analysis describes the relationship of Delano to Babo as one in which the former personifies racial theories of the black other, and the latter subverts them, what is Cereno's relationship to Babo? Fisher has suggested he represents the Old World that is weak and decaying, destroyed by the result of its own tyranny, yet very much a part of New World slavery. He, like Babo, is a shadow - over the New World. But Karcher sees him as representing the effete, aristocratic Southern slave owners who had the "escapist attitude all Southerners took for all Black violence" (137). She calls his claim of being a victim a self-pitying and self-righteous one, a rationalization for his complicity in a cruel, dehumanizing condition for which he shows no remorse or understanding. He is not victim, but perpetrator. He will never accept emancipation unless it is forced on him. His escapism finally leads him, a broken man, to his death in a monastery. Like Delano, he learns nothing.

Delano may represent to what ends the theoretical basis of racism leads, but Cereno represents the reality of slavery and a culture that perpetuated it but also carries within it the seeds of its own destruction. As a member of the Old World, he represents the weakness and decay of a system whose

desire for riches and empire has rotted it from within, creating a moral vacuum that is paralyzing. Melville implies that Cereno is what America may become if it continues to deal in human lives on the way to establishing its own empire. He is Spain's imperial past, sapped of strength, rather than rejuvenated in the New World. If indeed he is also like the American Southerner, then the Southerner is trapped by a system of his own creation, sapped from within and morally bankrupt, betrayed by the fiction of the benign paternalism of slavery, yet unable to change. By a conflation of both Europe and America, Cereno is prequel and possible sequel; himself a conflation of the past and a possible American future in which America is overwhelmed by its own dreams of empire.

Melville's work, like Cereno himself, reveals a multiplicity of sub-texts mirroring the relationships in the work, illustrating the manner in which the relationships destabilize each other. There are four accounts of the revolt: Delano's, Cereno's in the deposition, Cereno's and Delano's in conversation; and Babo's, whose account is a text of silence, an absence of language representing the voicelessness of the non-white other in America of Melville's time. The masquerade on the ship cuts through all accounts providing a sub-text for all four. Each account destabilizes the others as it reveals or obscures facts based on each man's perception of the revolt. The truth for the reader is strained through each character's perceptions or lack of

them. Unlike Cooper who sets his characters in opposition (Magua and Chingachcook) and then destabilizes the differences by muting them and establishing similarities, Melville sets up competing discourses that can be contradictory or complementary, depending upon which account of the revolt is accepted as true. In effect, each account overwrites or undermines the others, and it is Babo's final silence that underlines the accounts of Delano and Cereno because only by speaking, by revealing himself and his motives can he provide the truth and create closure. Without this, Delano's and Cereno's accounts take on the fictive quality that Melville suggests characterizes the EuroAmerican perception of the savage other.

In describing Melville's enterprise in Benito Cereno and in other works, Karcher states: "The characters Melville creates in these tales . . . all contradict the baneful stereotypes of master and slave, black and white, that were blinding Melville's contemporaries to the apocalyptic retribution they were bringing on themselves. All expose the master class's racial categories and hierarchies as arbitrary fictions that do more violence to human nature than the vengeful passions designed to obliterate them. Whatever the pessimism with which he regarded his compatriots, white and black alike, he never wavered in his commitment to a unitary view of the human race"(159). Herein lie the moral and metaphysical aspects of his representation of nineteenth-century America. Cooper's vision was more limited, confining

itself to Indian-white relations within the parameters of a developing republic. However, Cooper and Melville examined the roles of the two marginalized groups that were most important in the shaping of an American national identity: Indians and blacks. And more importantly they successfully demonstrated their marginalization and the consequences to American society within literary texts that subverted the racism of their time through the creation of characters that attacked the stereotyping of both groups. The works of both writers then are indispensable to understanding the role ethnicity played in nineteenth-century America.

Magua and Babo are remarkably similar. They are intelligent leaders, keenly aware of the racism of their time. And they are products of this racism. Magua through speech and Babo, through the withholding of speech, demonstrate their importance to the texts and the importance of the voiceless others who are absent in the political and discourses of their time. They are emblematic of both writers' social criticism. And through them, the criticism extends to a consideration of the nature of the democratic enterprise in America, the influence of Europe, the mythic quality of American history, the interplay of history and fiction in American literature, and the role of the writer as a mediator between history and myth. Cooper and Melville both use actual events in their works, but they change details in order to create new texts of those events. Benito Cereno is based on an actual shipboard slave revolt. And the conflicts

between the British and the French and the incident at Fort William Henry are also historically accurate.

Finally, for both Magua and Babo it is striking that there exist two major critical threads; one that reads them as malevolent and another that reads them as justified rebels. Cooper and Melville created characters that are ambiguous to both encompass the ignoble/noble savage dichotomy that was used to define all non-white others and also undermine it.

Chapter 2 - Natty and Tom: The White Savage

The EuroAmerican attitude toward the aboriginal savage other on this continent was at best ambivalent. Cooper and Melville address this ambivalence through the creation of Natty in The Leatherstocking Tales and Tom in Typee, both of whom try to live the life of the savage other - as literary white savages. Analyzed individually, each character possesses the conflicting emotions of attraction and repulsion that have characterized the attitudes of Euro-Americans toward the savage other on this continent since Colonial contact. However, when compared, these two characters represent a progression in nineteenth-century fictive representations of the savage other. This progression begins with the traditional Romantic discourses most fully realized by Cooper in his Leatherstocking Tales, in which he sought to remove the American link to Europe and establish a new link to North America through the construction of a mythic history. It continues with the more complex, pre-modern Romantic discourse of Melville, which represented the savage other as a projection of the unsolvable psychological conflicts between desire and denial, expression and repression, and suggested the fluidity of individual identity. This movement from a fixed identity that is historically linked to a more fluid identity that is both historical and psychological will be the context for analysis of these two characters as white savages.

Cooper and Melville had rich legacies from which to draw as their work depicted whites who had come to live with non-whites. Cooper's novels, like those of many of his contemporaries, were preceded by journals of Colonial ministers, explorers and politicians, captivity narratives by men and women, and various Daniel Boone biographies. Melville however, drew from his own sojourns and from the travels of other seamen among the Polynesians and from the noble savage concepts of Montaigne and Rousseau. Natty and Tom, as they gaze on the savage other, are precariously poised between fear and desire, and therefore symbolize a literary tradition that represented the savage other as an object of curiosity, attraction, and revulsion. It was this tradition that first marginalized and then overwrote non-white others.

Natty Bumppo, immortalized in The Leatherstocking Tales, bears an enormous mythic burden by embodying images gleaned from both the Boone legend and the archetypal American frontiersman that dominated successive Western romances of the nineteenth century and influenced the Western novels and films of the twentieth. Unlike Tom, he is a mediating figure in American literature, not only because he appears to commingle Indian and white, but also because he embodies the West's past and future. As Henry Nash Smith states: "The character of Leatherstocking is by far the most important symbol of national experience across the continent."¹ He is the hunter, the scout, the woodsman, and in each of these

¹ Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950) 61.

roles he is always on the move, symbolizing paradoxically the initial freedom in open space characteristic of early settlement and the restriction of that freedom and space as towns and settlements expanded West. Paradox is the defining characteristic of Natty and the Tales, and is most prominently illustrated by Cooper's image of Natty as a white Indian or a Christian noble savage, an image Cooper constantly deconstructs throughout the series, rendering Natty's identity ambiguously, as Natty shifts between red and white value systems.

Richard Slotkin and Robert Drinnon, among other historians, have commented on the similarities between Natty and Daniel Boone, who, by the time Cooper was writing, had become a mythic figure. The mythic dimension was created by artists and writers who mythologized Boone biographically as well as fictively². Drinnon summarizes his fictive image in the Western romance and its "dark and bloody ground" sub-genre thus: ". . . Simms saw in him a great discoverer and a strangely gentle empire-builder. Less amiable Paulding cast him as Ambrose Bushfield, an unrestrained Indian hater. Then a novelist with still greater inner tensions . . . created . . . one of the nearly great characters in American fiction, a mutilated Boone, who became . . . a demonical killer . . . an Old Nick loose in the woods".³ William Gilmore Simms, in his essay on Boone, also lauds him as a trailblazer and

² Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence. (Hanover: Wesleyan Press, 1973).

³ Richard Drinnon, Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian Hating and Empire Building. (New York: Schocken, 1980) 151.

characterizes him as a Balboa-like figure gazing at Kentucky as Balboa gazed when he first beheld the Pacific.⁴ But rather than only reveal each writer's personal concern, the divergent fictive embodiments of Boone also reveal divergent attitudes towards Indians. These differed over time and from region to region, depending on the stage of expansion and the part of the country in which it took place. The evolution of the fictive Boone image to Indian hater illustrates the nineteenth century view of the Indian as a dangerous and disruptive obstacle to expansion. Drinnon also makes a case for Boone as Indian killer by using Filson's biography: "While Filson included Boone's Crusoe-like adventures and captivity episodes, the body of his famous appendix was in the tradition of the Colonial war narratives and Boone in the tradition of the Indian war heroes of old . . . Boone went in for body counts"(150).

In addition to John Filson's The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucky, Boone's most influential and comprehensive biography, many other works were written which seem to conserve his legendary status, but also include a number of contradictory aspects of his life. Daniel Bryan's The Adventures Of Daniel Boone portrays him as divinely chosen to lead the settlers into Kentucky. Timothy Flint's biography stresses the pastoral side of Boone, a lover of the wilderness and nature who nevertheless rejoices in their

⁴ William Gilmore Simms, Views and Reviews in American Literature, History and Fiction. Hugh Holman, ed., (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

settlement.⁵ On the other hand, Charles Perkins, in the North American Review in 1846, called Boone a "white Indian." At the same time, popular anecdotes had Boone fleeing civilization because he could not tolerate the press of neighbors. Boone was variously described as an Indian killer, a white Indian, an empire-builder, a trailblazer.

Slotkin, consonant with his own definition of myth, credits Filson with creating the Boone myth: "Ultimately, Filson's tale would have to dramatize convincingly the interdependence of Boone's destiny, the historical mission of the American people, and the destiny appointed for the wilderness by natural law and divine Providence. The evidence suggests that the Boone legend first put before the American public by Filson did in fact fulfill these requirements"(269). If indeed Filson's text is an example of the creation of an American myth, it lacks an essential part of that myth: an Indian presence that is more than marginalized. It could be argued conversely, however, that in fact, this marginalization was part of American culture, and so could be validated in American texts. This marginalization of Indians resulted from the EuroAmerican's need to think of himself either as first on the continent or as the legitimate inheritor of the continent. However, even if Filson's mythic creation paints Boone as an expression of EuroAmerican need or wish fulfillment, and thus grafts a psychological element

⁵ Timothy Flint, Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone: The First Settler of Kentucky: Interspersed with Incidents in the Early Annals of the Country. James Folsom, ed., (New Haven: College and University Press, 1967).

unto the making of the myth, (as Leslie Fiedler does in his analysis of Natty Bumppo), a foregrounded Indian presence is still necessary. Indians had been part of the American scene since long before Colonial contact and played a central, albeit symbolic, role in American literary discourse that defined them as savage others.

The Leatherstocking Tales provides this Indian presence and continues the Boone myth, but shows the latter's historical inaccuracy. After all, Kentucky was not uninhabited land, and Boone was not the first hunter. Furthermore, Natty, though a solitary creature by habit, is never alone; there are always Indians near or around him. Slotkin notes: "These later writers (Cooper, Longfellow, Melville and others) reached back to the only sources of truly primary American myth - American aborigines"(17). He then goes on to say that American mythmakers sought to "reacheive the mythopoetic consciousness that the Indian possessed" and stresses the intrinsic cultural connection between frontier and national identity that was essential to the American sense of nationhood and national purpose. Thus, while Boone is multidimensional, existing in reality as well as myth, and perhaps representing the EuroAmerican expansion across the continent in ideal terms, Natty Bumppo however, in his ever-present contact with Indians and his own ambiguous fictive identity, represents more realistically the omnipresence of Indians and the ambivalence of EuroAmerican attitudes toward the Indian and to the roots of identity on this continent. As

Slotkin suggests, the Indian is the only source of a uniquely American mythology. Cooper recognized this.

Fiedler notes about Natty and Chingachook:

These two between them postulate a third myth, an archetypal relationship which also haunts the American psyche; two lonely men, one dark-skinned and one white bend together over a carefully guarded fire in the virgin American wilderness; they have forsaken all others for the sake of the austere, almost inarticulate love which binds them to each other and to the world of nature which they have preferred to civilization.⁶

This statement may accurately describe Cooper's understanding of the intrinsic, continuous relationship of Indians and whites on this continent and perhaps Cooper's wish for a reconciliation between the two races. But Joel Porte suggests Cooper had a personal reason: his "deep yearning to unite in himself the best qualities of the white man and the beau ideal of the redskin - his yearning to exchange his humble self for Natty Bumppo."⁷ While this passage may even be an accurate description of EuroAmerican wish fulfillment, this archetypal relationship lacks historical and cultural accuracy. Western romances were written at the height of removal and extermination. It was at this time also that the symbolic representation of Indians in literary discourses far outweighed any real historical or ethnological accounts. As they had from Colonial times forward, Indians during Cooper's period embodied symbolically whatever conflicts or moral polarities Americans associated with non-white others.

⁶ Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel. (New York: Doubleday, 1960) 192.

⁷ Joel Porte, The Romance in America. (Middleton: Wesleyan Press, 1969) 20.

Arguably, the Indian's existence as a symbol since Colonial contact outweighed his real, historical existence in the Euro-American mind. Fiedler himself labels Cooper's subconscious as the Indian in him and then states that Cooper "projected in the natural man, a myth, an archetypal embodiment of a psychological truth"(196). The dark-skinned man represents the *id*, that which must be controlled (or repressed, as Fiedler suggests), and thus the Natty-Chingachcook tableau harks back to the Puritan representation of the Indian as Satan, as tempter, and in this way is a projection of the dark side of man. Chingachcook is The Great Serpent, maintaining the Satanic link. There is no room in Cooper's work or in any Western romance for real Indians, even if they try to adapt to white life. Moreover, Chingachcook is weak and degraded as John Mohegan. He regains stature in death, dying as an Indian. The only acceptable Indian in Cooper's work is the white Indian, a better, Christian version of the original, having the ability to survive in the forest (the natural man) and the morality of a white man. Richard Chase refers to such a man as "a killer with natural piety."⁸ Natty is such a man. He can survive in the forest, yet retain his "white gifts." He is thus a "man without a cross." The white Indian can justify the EuroAmerican claim to the continent because of his ability to survive on it as a white man. More importantly, in his survival as a white Indian he symbolically dominates the *id*

⁸ Richard Chase, The American Novel and its Tradition. (New York: Doubleday, 1957) 63.

that the Indian represents. Natty thus illustrates white superiority, an idea used by Euro-Americans to justify taking possession of the continent. In the same way Tom shows dominance of the *id* by going back to the ship. In both cases, while the *id* can never be completely destroyed, it must be controlled. In the Tales and in Typee, only the white savage can do this.

The Boone legend portrayed him as a settler of uninhabited land. The conceptualization of America as a vacant land justified not only possession of the land, but also facilitated the legitimacy for that possession. Furthermore, the myth of emptiness included conceptualizing the continent as virgin territory, a *tabula rasa* on which the settlers could imprint with their own experiences and therefore create if not a new Eden, then a new world. In this world the land and nature could be written into (and the Indian out of) a uniquely American myth of origin, growth and national ethnic identity built on Christian principles and driven by the concept of Manifest Destiny. Out of this myth Cooper created the white Indian: the paradox that is Natty Bumppo.

Accompanying the desire to create a new world was the desire to create a new sense of time and therefore history, thus abandoning the past: ". . . the American myth saw life and history as just beginning. It described the world as starting up again under fresh initiative . . . The new habits to be engendered on the new American scene were suggested by the image of a radically new personality, the hero of the new

adventure: an individual emancipated from history . . . self-reliant and self-propelling . . ." ⁹ This hero is W.R.B. Lewis' American Adam, facing presumably a new world, free of the European, past but imbued with the violence of the wilderness that the new world contains. Similarly, it is de Crevecoeur's American, a new type of human being, who can reinvent himself on this new continent. ¹⁰ And it is also Natty. An abandonment of the past, a European past, presents the opportunity for the creation of a new past, a new history, that commences on the American continent. It is a second chance for the EuroAmerican to shape his own history and recreate his identity, to reinvent himself. Consonant with this concept of newness, D.H. Lawrence describes the Tales as "progressing" backward to Natty's youth, back to the time of settlement of the continent and the supremacy of the hunter. Lawrence describes this progression as: "going backwards from old age to golden youth. That is the true myth of America. She starts old, old, wrinkled and writhing in an old skin. And there is a gradual sloughing of the old skin towards a new youth. This is the myth of America." ¹¹ Lawrence is suggesting that by a return to the past, there is also a return to a frontier, a new land to be resettled, which allows the American to reimagine himself in a constant process of rebirth, allowing unlimited growth and potential and many "second chances." Wai-chee Dimock, in Empire For

⁹ R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955) 5.

¹⁰ St. Jean de Crevecoeur, Letters from An American Farmer. (New York: Doubleday, 1961).

¹¹ D.H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature. (New York: Penguin, 1977).

Liberty, suggests that the American need for growth overseas was based on the premise that an expanding (and therefore borderless) frontier would prevent the cyclical rise and fall that beset European nations.¹²

This political ideology posited a conflation of space and time. This progression to the past also allows Cooper a way to establish a counter-discourse, a myth that works against the changes that he thought were degrading the society of his time. David Reynolds speaks of this as Cooper's reform discourse: "Cooper, reacting to what he saw as a mass culture of moral chaos and linguistic distortion had converted Leatherstocking into a mythic figure of honesty and calm virtue."¹³ Cooper's return to the past included the creation of the hunter in the form of Hawkeye, but also had to include Indians. So Deerslayer's rebirth as Hawkeye is accomplished by being renamed by an Indian:

"What we call him?"

"Deerslayer is the name I bear now."

"That good name for boy - poor name for warrior. He get better quick. No fear there" - the savage had strength sufficient under the strong excitement he felt to raise a hand and tap the young on his breast - "eye sartain-finger lightning-aim, death-great warrior soon. No Deerslayer-Hawkeye-Hawk-eye-Hawk-eye. Shake hand."(123). In this scene, Natty is reborn as a warrior. It represents the mythic youth

¹² Wai-chee Dimock, Empire for Liberty. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

¹³ David S. Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

of the American wilderness. But what is most significant his rebirth, but its context and manner. Gaining the respect and a new name - a kind of baptism by fire - from the same Indian he has wounded contains all the ambivalencies and wish-fulfillment fantasies that have characterized the Colonial and frontier heroes. Natty is the white man who has proven himself to be better than an Indian within the wilderness, e.g. a better Indian. Furthermore, he has killed the traditional adversary and yet has been forgiven by him. This passage encapsulates the essence of EuroAmerican ambivalence toward the Indian and is meant to prove that whites are worthy inheritors of the continent. The white Indian, the Christian savage, is born in this passage. Yet, while Natty exhibits ethics and behaviors of both races, he insists that he is completely white. So that in addition to subverting the stereotypical savagery/civilization dichotomy through the creation of a character that blends races yet criticizes both, Cooper also subverts the same character.

This subversion is necessary as it illustrates the inherent contradiction in the concept of a uniquely American identity described by Lewis. In order to break with Europe and establish a new identity, there must be a link to a continental past - which is an aboriginal past: (American) Adam becomes Indian. But this is culturally unacceptable, given America's Puritan legacy. Natty embodies this dilemma. In order for him to be either de Crevecoeur's "New American" or Lewis' American Adam, he would have to break with both the

European and aboriginal American past. Natty can do neither completely. So that the white savage is obsolete as a model for an American identity; he represents primarily an intermediate stage in its formation.

The creation of the white Indian is consistent with Cooper's view of the passing of the Indian as a central focus in American history. Moreover, Cooper believed Indians, as racially inferior, were doomed to vanish. John McWilliams notes: "In Notions of the Americas Cooper justifies Indian removal on humane grounds because the Indian represents a lower stage of human development . . ." ¹⁴ And in The Last of the Mohicans this sentiment is placed within the context of a natural inevitability that the Indian accepts: "Why should Tamenund stay? The palefaces are masters of the earth and the time of the Red Man has not yet come again. My day is too long . . ." (373). Natty himself represents only a phase in the development of a national identity. He is intermediary between red and white at best, and he recognizes this at the time of his own death when he states that he is the last of his race. The hunter must give way to the farmer and the townsman.

While alive, Natty is a borderer. Fiedler compares him to Scott's Rob Roy, who characterized the Romantic rebel living in the Highlands beyond traditional society. But Natty as borderer is both romanticized and marginalized, - just as Indians were in the Western romance. He is not only the white

¹⁴ John McWilliams, Political Justice in a Republic. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Indian, but also the Indian in the text. At the end he is marginalized completely, dying as a relic, facing West; finally, albeit metaphorically, destroyed by advancing civilization. However, the Tales can be read in two ways: in the order in which they were written back to Natty's youth or in the order of Natty's aging; that is, symbolically or realistically or both. Both readings are mirror images of each other: deconstructing each other yet establishing opposites that are both true reflections of the paradoxical American self-image as it embodied both the romanticization and destruction of the frontier and the Indian. Cooper's romance combined both, translating history into myth, thus including Adam and Boone.

These dual readings illustrate Cooper's ambivalence toward the social changes he was seeing, and represent an effort to reconstruct a past and thus a different present and future. It is not Cooper's desire to destroy the myth of youth, but to set up the polarities of myth and history as they shape the American past, and illustrate the tension between the two. By doing this he reveals the polarities that shaped the American cultural identity as the EuroAmerican imagined his past on this continent. In order for this to be comprehensible, the Tales must be read both ways.

Natty always considers himself white in nature. He uses the term "gifts" to make a distinction between what he is born with racially and what he has acquired from culture and environment. As Porte points out, this distinction is crucial

because of its moral implications: "whiteness is . . . part of an archetypal distinction between good and evil upon which the moral being of the American hero itself seems to depend"(20). Natty must remain white and if he is to retain what he thinks is his moral center. However, he is often forced to exhibit "red gifts" to stay alive in the forest, setting up an internal struggle and an ambivalence that are illustrated by his pride in his names and his insistence that he is "a man without a cross." His position against intermarriage is an articulation of his fear of losing his own whiteness.

The tie between color and morality is illustrated in Natty's distinction between red and white "gifts." Red "gifts" include scalping and revenge killing. And when he sees white behaviors that are similar, as those of the Hutterers and Bushes, he admonishes them. So that the nature of what is moral for each race is a constant sub-text in the Tales and can be used as a measure with which to gauge to what extent Natty as a denizen of the forest becomes the Christian savage or white Indian. This measure of the degree of Natty's savagery (or civilization) is essential to support the premise of the inevitability of the conquest by civilization of the savage as perceived during Cooper's time.

This is true of Tom as well, as Melville carefully plots his journey into the primitive and his gradual escape from it. By this process both writers reprise the pattern of the earlier captivity narratives in which the white captive,

through faith and whatever vestiges of civilization survive, escapes captivity and returns to the white world. As in the earlier captivity narrative, the survival of Natty and Tom as white men reaffirms a communal, cultural belief in the ability of the EuroAmerican to withstand and triumph against the savage. Cooper sets the forest, with its intrinsic violence and dangers, as the context for Natty's behavior, thus recognizing the wilderness as the most important influence on the shaping of an American identity. Natty's behavior is a response to that wilderness in that he attempts to survive in it - alone. However, within this wilderness framework Cooper places Natty in opposition to Indian and white, frontier and town. For Natty, the wilderness becomes, as it did for the Puritans, a type of test and a symbol of the wildness inherent in all men. Natty must master the wilderness without while not succumbing to the wilderness within himself. This requires being both Christian and savage. However, Natty's solution derives not from the moral structure represented by Judge, Temple but from his experiences in the forest.

McWilliams skirts the polarities of red and white, Christian and savage, by placing Natty within a different ethical context; he calls him an example of Locke's "just man in nature" (102) to describe his ethical system. For Natty the laws of nature are a reflection of divine laws-as he perceives them. Therefore, often in defense of his position and in opposition to civil law, Natty refers to the laws of

God as superceding the laws of men (as represented by civil law). To Natty, the laws of nature supercede the need for social order. In this case, therefore, Natty represents a disruptive force to Judge Temple and Templeton and is punished as much for this reason as for his shooting the deer. Eventually, he has to leave Templeton and the confines of the town to seek another forest. Within McWilliams' analytical framework, Natty is the marginalized Indian. He cannot fit into Templeton's and therefore civilization's moral and social structures. To Judge Temple, Natty's desire to obey the laws of nature is as disruptive and threatening as that of the Indian who was seen as an extension of nature (itself emblematic of what was wild and uncontrollable).

It is the act of killing both animals and men that Cooper uses to examine conflicting red and white moral systems in Natty. Natty kills frequently, and in each novel in the series and in a variety of conditions ranging from war to self-defense. It is this act which reveals Natty's ambivalence toward killing as it is or is not consistent with his white "gifts." For it is with this act that he comes closest to his "red gifts" and the life of the savage because he recognizes the need for killing. In Deerslayer when Natty becomes a warrior after killing a Huron, he explains killing in this way to Hetty when she questions his act: "Ah, Hetty that may do among the missionaries, but t'would make an unsartin life in the woods . . . t'would have been a'gin natur' not to raise a hand in such a trial and t'would have

done discredit to my training and my gifts"(373). Still later he says to Harry March: "Revenge is an injin gift and forgiveness a white man's. Overlook all you can is what's meant, not revenge all you can" (91). Natty sees things as they are, not as he wants them to be; he is a realist. So for Natty, killing may be necessary and thus justifiable. Killing is a reality in the forest; it is neither red nor white to engage in it. If the Tales end with a type of birth - that of Natty's as a hunter-warrior, then it is also the birth of Lawrence's killer-isolate living on the edge of two moralities.

There are a number of times when Natty kills and they occur in each novel in the series. He relishes killing Magua and he kills Mingoes with no remorse. But Natty has not absorbed "red gifts" as much as he struggles against betrayal of his "white gifts" by his actions and those of other whites. For Natty the Indian cannot change, but his own moral center must shift in order for him to survive. Natty lives the life of a white Indian or Christian savage although he does not define himself as such. The problem is that such a creature can exist only in the wilderness and once the wilderness is tamed there is no place for him. Thus, Natty becomes an anachronism by the time he dies. Natty represents the historical demise of the mountain man, the scout, the frontiersman who disappeared as the frontier faded. As a literary character he represents the American Adam, but he is frozen in the American past Cooper creates through him.

Through Natty, Cooper accomplishes the release from a European past and creates a new American one, springing from this continent, a product of the wilderness - as the Indian was. But to Cooper wilderness is not Eden, Natty is not innocent, and a white savage cannot be a part of the American future. Perhaps that is why Melville has Tom take to the sea: to discover if Eden is still possible for Western man.

In Typee, Melville also uses the white savage motif in an examination of the dichotomy between savagism and civilization as it applies to non-white others in the South Seas. He recognizes that the Typee, to Americans bent on empire building, represented another type of Indian. However, his examination includes a very critical evaluation of Western civilization. Reynolds, in Beneath the American Renaissance, notes the reform discourse that permeates Typee: "Typee is notable for the sheer variety of its reform voices from antiprostitution to temperance. In its heterogeneity it was more broadly inclusive of variegated reform attitudes than any other novel written to date"(139). In Typee, the reform discourse takes shape in Melville's criticism of the Church for destroying Polynesian native beliefs, EuroAmerican culture for corrupting Polynesian culture, and the navy for brutalizing men and limiting personal freedom. Melville's method of foregrounding what he considers to be the failures of EuroAmerican civilization is to set up, through Tom's narrative, the dichotomy of savagery/civilization and to subvert stereotypes of both by illustrating the civilization

within the savage and the savage within civilization. Thus, in addition to expressing what Melville saw as major weaknesses in EuroAmerican culture as it was developing as an empire, Typee also illustrates the attractiveness of the primitive, and serves as a rationale for Tom's attempt (and perhaps Melville's attempt) to live with and live as the savage other. Seen from these perspectives, Tom's need for personal freedom in a life that is stripped to essential realities and his desire to experience an original, primitive source of life away from a culture driven by wealth and empire are comprehensible. William Sedgewick places Melville's reform stance within a more specific context as he refers to Melville's contemporaries, Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman and Poe: "Melville and these others were at odds with America. That is, they were at odds with the nineteenth-century America of the industrial revolution which was spreading its rigor mortis of standardization and gentility over the face of the land."¹⁵ Cooper saw this happening as well, but was more alarmed by the economic and political implications stemming from an expanding capitalistic society that commodified land and brought power to the middle merchant class. As Vernon Parrington describes it: "In The American Democrat he laid down the principle that 'A government founded on the representation of property, however direct or indirect is radically vicious. . . .it is the

¹⁵ William Elery Sedgewick, Typee. Critical Essays on Herman Melville's Typee. Milton Stern, ed. (Boston: G.K. Hall: 1982) 91.

proper business of government to resist the corruptions of money. . . ." ¹⁶

Cooper, in reaction to what he saw happening socially, chose to look back to the past with a sentimentalized romanticism that mythologized the struggles involved in the development of an American culture: the struggles with France and England, the struggles with the Indians to gain control of the continent, and the class conflicts produced by the rise of a market economy as it shaped social and political aspects of expansion. Melville, on the other hand, looked to the complexity and ambiguity of his present and the possible future it engendered as he confronted the moral implications for American culture as expansion at home and abroad transformed that culture. Therefore, his discourse in Typee resonates with - although it is not completely congruent with - the reform discourse written at the time. Melville went further, seeking the roots of Western man's attraction to the primitive in a general exploration of the psychology of the relationship (and interdependence) of savagery and civilization. This relationship and its concomitant repression was to become more fully developed in Moby Dick. While the bulk of Melville's work focuses on non-African others, Benito Cereno clearly illustrates Melville's understanding of the need to include blacks in his critical consideration of the role of the savagery/civilization

¹⁶ Louis Parrington, ed., Main Currents in American Thought. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987) 227.

dichotomy in American culture.

In Typee, the Westerner's attraction to primitivism and his need to suppress this attraction are complexly depicted in the narrative of Tom's sojourn among the Typee. So that while the novel is an indictment of Western mores and politics, it is also an examination of deeper personal and cultural drives that motivate Western colonialism. For Melville then, issues of identity, history, and Western psychology contextualize the political, social, and moral discourses that permeate Typee. This is a major factor that separates his work from that of Cooper and signals a progression toward more complex analyses of the savagery/civilization dichotomy that characterizes Melville's representation of non-white others in the body of his work.

Melville's indictment of the larger EuroAmerican culture is reflected in his description of the licentious behavior of the sailors on the ship approaching the island: "Our ship was now wholly given up to every species of riot and debauchery. . . . Alas for the poor savages who were exposed to the influence of these polluting examples!" (34). The description suggests that Western civilization is a kind of disease against which the Typee have no defense; they are the victims of a corrupt society. To highlight what he sees as immoral behavior, he contrasts this sexuality with the innocent (albeit free and almost amoral) sexual mores of the Typee as he observes several of the islanders making love and as he describes Fayaway's attitude toward sexual morality and

behavior. This emphasis on sexual behavior is used to reveal Melville's view of the hypocritical repression of his society.

If Melville is hard on Western sexual mores, he is just as hard on the Church's efforts to convert the islanders: ". . . The magnanimous French will proclaim to the world that the Marquesas Islands have been converted to Christianity! and this the Catholic world will doubtless consider as a glorious event. Heaven help the Isles of the South Seas! The sympathy which Christendom feels for them has alas! in too many instances proved their bane"(45). And he accurately foresees a future for them that brings with it destruction of their way of life. The destructive influence of Western culture is also metaphorically expressed by the contrast between the aging ship with no fresh food or water and the lush, growing, green of Typee. But while Melville decries what he sees the missionaries have actually done to the Polynesians and compares it to what has been done to the Indians, he also suggests the possibility of civilizing them without destroying them: "Let the savages be civilised, but civilise them with benefits and not with evils; and let heathenism be destroyed without destroying the heathen . . ."(58). These lines suggest a discourse that contains two strands that are evident throughout the narrative: one that praises the Typee and by comparison condemns the West; and one that qualifies total praise or condemnation. That is, Melville recognizes the possibility of Christianity to

convert without destroying and the desirability of civilizing the savage. This statement is not unlike the goal of "killing the Indian, but saving the man" belief that motivated efforts toward assimilation of the Indian through forced boarding school education for Indian children. Melville must have been aware of these sentiments because he also writes: "The Anglo-Saxon hive has extirpated Paganism from the greater part of the North American continent; but with it they have likewise extirpated the greater portion of the Red race"(47).

At best these lines show a Melville in conflict over rejection of his own culture, an attraction to the Typee and an ambivalence about the concept of savage. These lines also reflect EuroAmerican attitudes toward the savage other which Melville shared with other writers of the time, who not only espoused reform, but also began to examine the role of nature in nineteenth-century America. These writers included Thoreau, Emerson and Whitman. Melville cannot reconcile the two strands and this becomes as evident as the narrative develops. While both strands are woven closely together at the beginning of the novel, they become more and more separate and less equal in degree, building narrative tension that culminates in Tom's violent rejection of the Typee and his return to the ship, having become horrified by that which he had defended and become enthralled with. His last instruction to Fayaway: "cover yourself" reveals the extent of his rejection of that which he had embraced: the woman, their relationship, the culture she represents, his own

acceptance of that culture. His murder of Mow-Mow ensures furthermore that he will never (can never) return. This murder represents the archetypal murder of the other, that savage (evil) other which pursues civilized men and is embodied by Satan. The murder is as powerful as are the killings of Magua or Moby Dick, because all three resonate with the defeat of Satan in Paradise Lost.

As his stay on Typee lengthens, Tom becomes more unwilling to surrender both his ties to his culture and his perception of the Typee as noble savages. It is in his interest to cling to both because he is unable to surrender either one. He cannot conceive of becoming a Typee himself, but his own personal quest for Eden, for choice, for freedom and for a respite from a culture that is cruel and repressive is as necessary to him as not losing his own culture completely and becoming absorbed by the Typee. By the end of the novel it is apparent to him and to the reader that there can be no compromise. Tom cannot maintain both cultures, nor can he negotiate a compromise; he is unlike Natty who can negotiate both. It is clear that these two cultures are incompatible, and Tom himself either cannot find or refuses to find a way to negotiate both; he cannot remain "on the marge" indefinitely. The Typee will not allow this stance. What begins as enthrallment ends as imprisonment because Tom's commitment to Typee culture is a matter of security as well as politics. By the end of the narrative, Tom's own rhetoric abandons him; he can no longer accept the

cannibalism and refuses to be tattooed (which would imply acceptance) and escapes, thus joining action, experience, and narrative in a single act of rejection of Eden and the noble savage as hollow inventions and projections of Western desire. This part of the narrative ends as the traditional captivity narrative does: with violent, premeditated escape: "I did all in my power to appear composed and cheerful." Ironically, Tom has to develop a dual identity on the island at precisely the time when he realizes he cannot become a Typee and must return. It is when he is most sure of the former that he must mask it in order to escape and therefore maintain his Western identity. His use of pretense is a classic ruse that effects captivity narrative escapes. Furthermore, this use of masking is repeated in several of Melville's works, notably The Confidence Man and in Benito Cereno, and underscores Melville's premise that cultural identity is fluid and often ambiguous.

The problematic aspects of Tom's experience are foregrounded as the narrative progresses, making the difference between savagery and civilization more pronounced as Tom's perceptions change. This also undermines the reader's view of the Edenic quality of Typee as originally described and, by extension, makes the possibility of a return to a state of pre-lapsarian innocence a troubling one. It also questions the innocence of the noble savage and the nature of innocence in Eden.

One aspect of Melville's representation of the savage

other is the way in which he qualifies the noble savage image he borrowed from Rousseau and Montaigne. Thomas Scorza points out that Melville's description of the Typee is a corrective for the ideas of his predecessors:

In all, the Typean state of nature is political, hierarchical, and restrained by law. Melville's poetic visit to the state of nature shows that in certain decisive respects, Montaigne, Gonzalo, and especially Rousseau, had erred in describing the natural state of man. Along with his three predecessors Melville sees original nature as both abundant and beneficent, but he claims nature authorizes a political hierarchy among men and to the simple life of Montaigne's cannibals, Gonzalo's Utopians and Rousseau's savages, adds a political¹⁷ and legal structure worthy of Lycurgus' Sparta.

Melville's emphasis on hierarchy and authority illustrates his concern with authoritarianism and personal freedom in his own life and they are treated in many of his sea novels. Tom's citing authoritarianism as the reason for his mutiny accounts for his attraction to the Typean way of life, which he perceives to be as free as that of Rousseau's natural man. Conversely, when the Typee seem to exhibit more of the authoritarianism and restrictions Tom abhors (taboos, restriction on his movement), he plans to leave. So that it is not only the savagery/civilization dichotomy that drives Tom's degree of attraction and revulsion for the Typee, but also the conflict between personal freedom and communal restrictions or authority that shapes his perceptions and motivates his actions.

¹⁷ Thomas Scorza, "Tragedy in the State of Nature," Critical Essays . . . 237.

By echoing Montaigne and Rousseau, Melville establishes a link to European images of the savage other and, by editing this image, he undermines this European link and establishes an American perspective. Furthermore, by doing both concurrently in the narrative, Melville suggests that the image of natural man as noble savage is a creation of the West, a projection of Western need or desire. For the European it is a reaction against scientific, legalistic theories of the Enlightenment; for the American, it is the embodiment of freedom in an increasingly industrialized, urbanized world. It is evident that when the Typee are not the ideal Tom first imagines them to be (especially when he first perceives them as better than what he has experienced on the ship), his desire to return to the ship increases. That is, when he is faced with the reality of how they really live, they lose their appeal. But the question that Melville seems to pose is ambiguous: is Tom fleeing reality, his fantasy or both - in view of the fact that his perceptions of the Typee change as he comes to know them better.

In Melville's novel the Typee embody freedom; for Cooper it is Natty who embodies freedom. What remains, however, in Melville's deconstructed noble savage is the cannibalism and the tattooing, both of which are repulsive to white civilization; therefore, Melville's savages are still ignoble, and must be either killed or converted. Both are demonstrated in the novel. It is significant that toward the end of the narrative, prior to his escape, Tom mentions that

the burden of the Fall rests lightly upon Typee, suggesting that the Typee lack a consciousness of sin. At this point what he sees is no longer colored by his own needs. He has become judgmental in terms of his own culture's values. In addition, this illustrates that he once again is asserting his link to his own culture and using the language of that culture's religion to interpret his experience on Typee. He has in fact triumphantly returned to his religion, his captivity having tested and tempted him, like that of the captives in the Colonial captivity narratives. Furthermore, the use of the term "Fall" demonstrates what Tom has looked for all along, but has not revealed in the text: a link to Eden. Ironically, this also demonstrates the failure of the search; because having established this link, he can also establish that the life of the Typee, the noble savages who are not noble, is a complete contradiction to that of Christianity. Therefore, Tom must leave because he cannot remain white and Christian, and he will not become Typee. He leaves to save his life. Natty cannot do this; he has only the forest and the American continent. He can hide and/or try to adapt - and he can become Lawrence's solitary killer or Melville's Indian hater. While Natty may be freer in movement than Tom, he cannot return to civilization.

At first Tom feels lost; this is because he is in a transitional stage. He is letting go of an identity defined by his culture and assuming a new one defined by Typee culture. This results in a change in Tom's consciousness. He

feels that he is in a dreamlike state of wakefulness. Not only is there a change in consciousness of self, but also a return to a childlike state of dependence in which there is no stress and no sense of guilt. Moreover, the Typee support his behavior by carrying him about and feeding him poi. He is in a remote, protected environment, a place located back in "uncreate past"(369). It is a racial passage back to a more primitive time as well as a personal passage back to childhood. The return is cultural and psychological. The passage into the valley is dark and damp, closely resembling a womb or birth canal.

The emphasis on the remaking of the self culturally and psychologically is a major focus in this novel. Melville suggests the need to return to a primitive state in this process of remaking, and concomitantly a return to a historical past. In Tom's case they are not the same, but Tom needs to discover this and when he does, he realizes he cannot remain on Typee.

Tom does not actually "go native," but his own identity and his identification with his own culture are loosened sufficiently so that Robert Abrams can describe him as "afloat in the self," also describing this state as Melville's attempt to explore the bottomlessness of the self."¹⁸ Therefore, the question of identity in Typee is not simply one of remaking or exchanging identities, but rather

¹⁸ Robert Abrams, Typee and Omoo: Herman Melville's Ungraspable Phantom of Identity. Critical Essays ... 201.

the nature of identity itself. But in this struggle for definition there is conflict, symbolized by the foot that will not heal and aches whenever Tom thinks about leaving.

Lawrence suggests that Tom "writhes" as Western man must writhe because conflict is essential to Western culture. Tom's writhing is a product of both his desire to stay on Typee and his recognition that he cannot. Lawrence clarifies Tom's conflict by stating that Western man cannot go back to the uncreate past, to the "sleeping primitive" (369). Lawrence is partially correct; Tom can go back, but he cannot stay. And Tom himself supplies the reasons why: unending hilarity, boredom, a concentration on the purely physical, the cannibalism and the tattooing. Tom gradually feels himself overwhelmed as the life on Typee lulls him. And rather than becoming more enchanted, he becomes more agitated as time goes on. He ultimately notices that while it goes on, he has lost track of time, so that he also gradually becomes conscious of the effect of Typee life on him. Arguably, Tom is returning to an earlier consciousness which makes him aware of the differences between himself and the culture of the other as represented by Typee, a culture which originally attracted him so much because it was so different from his own. The tattooing is the final, public step in the process of assimilation; it is the articulation of it both to the Typee and to Tom, and to him it is also the subconscious fear of loss of identity becoming reality. The tattooing will make him one of them and not an enemy, but while allowing him to

live, it will destroy his identity. It is a type of cannibalization. On the other hand, he will be cannibalized actually if he does not become a member of the Typee community. Both are related because both will destroy him; ironically, both will also make him part of Typee. As he gradually becomes aware of these conditions of his life on Typee, it becomes obvious to him that he must leave.

In Tom's description of the Typee he emphasizes their simplicity, joy, sexuality and primitivism. Critics, in analyzing the reasons for Tom's return to civilization, not only stress these aspects, but also set up a contrast between Typee and the West that breaks along the lines of a culture less advanced than the other. Lawrence himself refers to Tom's journey as "going back" to a primitive time. This tack is similar to the literary and political discourses of the nineteenth century which, as Roy Harvey Pearce points out, represented the savage other (Indian) as childlike and primitive.¹⁹ The premise assumed a progressive and linear view of time, history and human development as a step ladder. This reasoning was used by proponents of Manifest Destiny to rationalize the extermination of the Indian as inevitable. By including other non-whites such as the Polynesians in this theory of white superiority, Tom's escape from Typee is inevitable and his murder of Mow-Mow is justifiable.

Lawrence seems to support this view of the Typee by calling them primitive and placing them back in time. Thus,

¹⁹ Roy Harvey Pearce, Savagism and Civilization. (Baltimore: John's Hopkins Press, 1953).

he is also supporting a linear, progressive view of time and evolution. Tom's inability to tolerate Typee culture indicates that Melville may see the Typee the same way and that Tom's return to the ship is a return to the future, his future, because within this theoretical construct of time, Western man must go forward in time, presumably moving to a higher level of development. The implication is also that the Typee are frozen in time because there is no sense of time passing.

Timelessness on Typee bothers Tom. He needs time, or rather a sense of time. His stay on Typee binds him in a timelessness that leaves him without a past and therefore without a history. Tom cannot remain in Eden because it is timeless; time and history for Western man begin with the Fall. Therefore, a pre-lapsarian world is intolerable. For Tom, living in such a world is impossible because he must destroy time in order to do so. Therefore, he must deny the Fall, live like the Typee and become pagan. This is impossible because his sense of morality does not originate from a personal code or from a concept of natural rights, but from a religious code, and it is ultimately that code that makes it impossible for him to be other - except as myth or wish fulfillment. Sedgewick calls Typee "Melville's most adequately symbolized study of the past"(97). If so, then it is a paradoxical one; while Tom desires to enter a primitive archaic, impersonal past which may be childlike (but not innocent) he cannot escape his personal, cultural past which

is what sustains his identity. Perhaps the dichotomy is between the moral code of Tom (man's conduct) and the Typee's (the conduct of men); Melville makes a distinction between mankind's past and the pasts of men. Tom cannot remain afloat; he cannot lose his past without losing himself. But when his identity does assert itself in the form of his desire to leave, his foot aches, and it never completely heals on Typee, despite the healthfulness of the environment. The pain and the leg that does not heal are symbolic of Western man's desire to go back either to a pagan primitivism or Eden and his inability to do so. Therefore, not only is this work a "symbolized study of the past," it is also a study of the importance of a particular past to an individual's identity.

When Tom uncovers the shrunken heads, his perceptions of the Typee are also uncovered, stripped away to reveal a truth Tom refused to face. We then see Tom's stay on Typee as a projection of his needs and his perception of the Typee a creation to justify that stay. His disillusionment with and fear of the savage other is that of the EuroAmerican who is both attracted and repulsed, especially when there is an opportunity to lose the self in primitivism. After all, the Typee do offer Tom the opportunity to become one of them.

Tom goes back to the ship, presumably to find other islands and others and to experience both the desire and repulsion all over again, to travel back in forth in time to experience desire and suppress it, and to writhe, as Lawrence

puts it, in a conflict that Lawrence suggests is characteristic of the relationship between the EuroAmerican and the savage other (real and metaphorical, internal and external). It is this conflict which primarily distinguishes Tom from Natty and frees Tom from the Romantic, mythic/historic framework that characterizes The Leatherstocking Tales of Cooper. Thus, it places him and Melville's other protagonists within the existential view of the restless, anti-heroic modern hero, whose identity is defined not only by a cultural past, but also by his personal experiences. As such, Tom's sense of identity is much more fluid than that of Natty, who can separate the red and white parts of himself and thus can more easily negotiate influences of the savage.

Milton Stern states: ". . . individual identity is contingent upon the individual's place in the human community of his own history."²⁰ For Tom that is the West. Tattooing will provide him with a new community and a new history to go with it. He will have a new identity and Tom knows this. His tattooed face will be a public announcement to the West he is no longer one of them and to the Typee that he is a Typee. It is a visual commitment. When he becomes consciously aware of this, knowledge joins with act in the escape and murder of Mow-Mow. This act symbolizes his return to time, linear time, an abandonment of the possibility of a life in the primitive past and a suppression of desire or *id*, which is what the Typee, like the Indian, represents to the EuroAmerican. Tom

²⁰ Milton Stern, "Typee" Critical Essays . . . 23-4.

cannot live "on the marge," be a borderer, like Natty. The choice of an alternative lifestyle is an illusion for Tom, as the nobility and innocence of the Typee are illusions; they are projections of Tom's needs and desires. Therefore, for him, primitivism is not a corrective to civilization. It, too, is a EuroAmerican invention. Typee is a modern version of the captivity narrative in which Tom is held captive, is tempted to become savage, but then escapes after recalling his Christian values which sustained him during his captivity. But the experience of the savage life will always remain with him.

Therefore, Stern is only partially correct in his observation. While Tom can return to his past, the Typee experience is now part of it. His escape from Typee only symbolically extirpates whatever savagery was part of him. This is an echo of the experience of the Puritans who saw the captivity narrative not only as a representation of triumph over a real savage other, but also a triumph over what was evil in the self. But in the modern version there is attraction to the other as well as repulsion. And Tom presumably will continue to sail to far, savage, exotic places and have the same experiences of desire and repression, expression and extirpation, trapped in a cycle of moral ambiguity which separates Melville's tale from its traditional captivity narrative sources, places it within a modern context, and overrides its romantic vestiges of the travel narrative. In these ways Typee illustrates a

progression from Cooper's works in not only the representation of the savage, but also in the concept of internalization of the savage. This concept will be most fully realized with the creation of Ahab. For Melville, unlike for Cooper, the savage is not a relic of the American past, it is embedded within an individual. And while it is dormant, it is never dead.

Tom, unlike Natty, is not a mythic character, even though Tom symbolizes the ambivalence of the EuroAmerican toward the other in his search for Eden. That status is created by Melville for Ahab and Moby Dick who together represent the modern counter-myth of the return to Eden: the destruction of Eden. In the counter-myth Ahab seeks to destroy a nature that is threatening because it is unknowable and thus he cannot live in harmony with it. The rage that results from his estrangement from nature and the violence that Ahab uses to express his rage posit an adversarial attitude toward nature and all that is natural. For Melville this attitude is embedded in the American psyche as the companion of the return to Eden quest, and thus also characterizes American expansion across the American continent and across the seas. Tom can still dream of Eden, but Ahab cannot. Yet it is Ahab, who, for Melville, is the defining symbol of modern man's problematic connection to nature and the reverse image of Natty: the hunter gone mad.

Both Natty and Tom can be described as American Adams. They seek open spaces to start anew; they wish to abandon the

past and reinvent themselves. As reinventions, they become savage; however, as literary white savages they suggest both Cooper's and Melville's belief that Western civilization, while imperfect and often destructive, will supercede that of the savage other. Moreover, they are not innocents and both the American wilderness and Typee Valley are filled with danger and violence. Eden for both characters is an illusion; loss of innocence is the price that the wilderness exacts from all its inhabitants: white, Indian, Polynesian. Furthermore, there is a major difference between these two Adams: Natty is frozen in time - as all myths must be because they create a past. Tom, on the other hand, moves in a sea of time, experiencing both primitive timelessness and a time-bound cultural past, and travels in a linear progression towards an unfixed future. Tom does not carry Natty's mythic burden, rather he bears the burden of modern existential man for whom nothing is fixed and questing is a condition of his existence. His identity is not tied to a cultural past only; it is fluid because the potential for the internal savage to assert itself always exists. Thus, Melville's characters, unlike those of Cooper, are free of a Romantic context and instead confront a more problematic, ambiguous, pre-modern sense of identity.

Chapter 3 - Chingachcook and Queequeg: The Noble Savage

Like the ignoble savage image, the noble savage image was used to define the other in relation to the EuroAmerican in the attempt to create the myth of a uniquely American past on this continent, and as Gordon Sayre points out, a uniquely American future, thus constituting a break from a European legacy.¹ It was a complex image, employing a wide range of characteristics. According to Sayre, the noble savage included two types: the dialectical and the Romantic noble savage. The former included both civilized and savage characteristics, thus enabling colonial writers both to admire the Indian while at the same time hate him as their foe (126). The latter was characterized as a stoic chief mourning his people's demise while accepting it as destiny, thus providing an image of inevitability for Indian extinction (127). Both types were an integral part of American literary discourse, although each served a different function.

Louise Barnett, in The Ignoble Savage, posits another image that is akin to, though not a subdivision of the noble savage: the good Indian. According to Barnett, the noble savage is a progenitor of the good Indian: "The good Indian had become good primarily through intercourse with whites, and his goodness is expressed chiefly by services to them."²

¹ Gordon Sayre, Les Savages Américains. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997) 129.

² Louise K. Barnett, The Ignoble Savage. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1989) 91.

The good Indian's attributes are aspects embodied in the creation of both Chingachcook and Queequeg and exhibited in their pseudo-familial relationships with Natty and Ishmael.

The term noble savage, therefore, often used by literary critics to describe both Chingachcook and Queequeg, really encompasses a number of images. This subversion of the noble savage as a unitary term connects the works of Cooper and Melville as they explore the dichotomy between savagery and civilization through the relationships of these savages to their civilized partners, Natty and Ishmael. It is within the context of this subversion that these two characters will be analyzed because it is with this subversion that both writers reveal their understanding of EuroAmerican ambivalence toward the savage other and thus of the nature of EuroAmerican identity.

Natty and Ishmael are illustrative of this ambivalence as they find themselves both attracted and repelled by the savage other. Werner Sollors describes the political context of this ambivalence: "The American revolutionaries found themselves in a double role as republicans on the one hand who usurped and overthrew Indian legitimacy - perceived in European terms as the doomed rule of the aristocratic nobility of chieftains - on the other hand, they defied the parental authority of the mother country by invoking the spirit of the Indian by symbolically acting Indian in clothing and military strategy."³ The ambivalence toward the

³ Werner Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) 102.

savage other, then, is also the ambivalence of an American identity as it became shaped by the Colonial experience.

Europe symbolized a parental authority that had to be broken, but it was replaced by another authority: the Romantic noble savage, for as Sollors continues: "Whether it appears as a blessing or a curse . . . the Indian speech functions as the departing chieftain's last will and testament to his paleface successors and resembles a parent's last wish for a child . . . the dying Indian speeches and songs cast the Indian chief as a parent figure and adopted ancestor . . . who could choose successors, which makes these successors chosen people"(123). The use of the term "chosen" by Sollors is significant, resonating as it does with the Puritans' concept of being the Chosen People, and clearly illustrate the evolution from religious to secular authority as the country moved from a religious to a secular state. Thus, the creation of the Romantic noble savage in literary discourse functioned to assuage white guilt for the takeover of Indian lands by creating a line of succession, which at the same time legitimized Indian extinction.

The rationale for the necessity and inevitability of extinction was provided by nineteenth-century scholars who posited the Indian's innate inferiority and inability to progress. As a corollary, they supported a "natural" supplanting of savage culture by the more advanced and therefore superior EuroAmerican culture. Wai-chee Dimock proposes a political reason for this rationale: "Imaged in

developmental terms as the succession of 'childhood' by 'maturity,' the conflict between whites and Indians over land possession ceased to appear as conflict and became instead a painless process of growth . . . In short, to depict it as a sequence rather than an opposition was to obviate not only the concept of conflict but the idea of victim. It was the Indians' destiny to die out, the formula went. Stuck in their anachronistic 'childhood,' they ended up being the victims of progress itself. And if they were victims of progress they were by definition nobody else's victim, certainly not the white man's."⁴ This rationale also supported the creation of the noble savage as a doomed creature, providing the drama and tragedy that were the usual characteristics of nineteenth century works with noble savage characters or Indian themes. Cooper, however, subverts this rationale in several instances as Chingachcook mentions the use of whiskey as an aid in the destruction of his people, and himself exhibits the deleterious effects of drink and life in the settlement. So that while Chingachcook is the stereotypical Romantic noble savage in the Tales, it is clear that contact with white civilization rather than innate inferiority has helped to destroy him. This portrait illustrates Cooper's own ambivalence toward white progress as a destructive encroachment upon the land, an attitude that it is fully explored in The Pioneers.

The Romantic noble savage as parental figure substitutes

⁴ Wai-chee Dimock, Empire for Liberty. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) 18.

an Indian legacy for a European one. What makes this development complex is the familial relationship that is posited by the creation of the figure. This is illustrated clearly in Chingachcook's farewell to Elizabeth in The Pioneers: "Stand here, daughter where you can see the great spring, the wigwams of your father and the land on the crooked river"(401). It is also illustrated by the quasi-fraternal relationship between Chingachcook and Natty, and by extension, Natty's tie to Uncas and the Delawares. Uncas says definitively: "I will stay . . . To fight with his father's brother and die with the friend of the Delawares" (287). And Natty himself expresses the same feeling for Uncas. But in Cooper's Tales the white/red tie is not and can never be one of blood because Natty is always the man without a cross - as are in fact both Chingachcook and Uncas. They are as isolated from their communities as he is from his. All three are borderers.

The Romantic noble savage usually has a metaphorical familial relationship. It is a mythic relationship, which, as both Leslie Fiedler and D.H. Lawrence suggest, has been fantasized about, but is never realized.⁵ It is always out of reach, like the mystery of Moby Dick for Ahab. It is an unfulfilled longing that must remain unfulfilled in order to retain its mythic quality. Lawrence pinpoints this quality as he describes the relationship between Natty and Chingachcook:

⁵ Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel. (New York: Doubleday, 1960), and D.H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature. New York, Penguin, 1977.

"So that the Natty and Chingachcook myth must remain a myth. It is wish fulfillment, an evasion of reality . . . The fold of the Great Serpent would have been heavy, very heavy, too heavy on any white man, unless the white man was a true renegade . . ." (57). And he suggests why it must be a myth: "The American landscape has never been at one with the white man. And white men have probably never felt so bitter as here in America where the very landscape in its beauty seems a bit devilish and grinning, opposed to us" (61). In developing this thesis, Lawrence connects the land and natural environment of America with the Indian, recognizing the American conflict with nature as the Puritan conflict with the Indian who represents the land - and thus wilderness. In this equation, the wilderness becomes both external force and internal temptation. He accurately sees the Indian as the personification of that wilderness in a continued line of imagery that defines the EuroAmerican attitude toward the Indian.

In his analysis, Lawrence defines the Indian in terms of white experience and sees Chingachcook in terms of his relationship to Natty. Cooper also did this in his Tales, and the majority of critics do this as well when they analyze Chingachcook. So that while Lawrence apprehends fully the attraction and repulsion for the savage other, he, too, overwrites him as an adjunct to Natty, thus marginalizing Chingachcook critically as Cooper did fictively.

Fiedler analyzes the Indian the same way, although he

delves deeper into the relationship, emphasizing its mythic aspect as a necessary correlative of the Romantic noble savage character. Fiedler goes as far as to establish an identity between Natty and Chingachcook, calling the former the "Christian noble savage" and Chingachcook the "pagan noble savage." By so doing, he sets them up as images of one another or even two aspects of the same thing: an American savage. At the same time he sets Natty up as the embodiment of the wish fulfillment Lawrence proposes: "But these two between them postulate a third myth, an archetypal relationship which also haunts the American psyche: two lonely men, one dark skinned, one white, bend together over a carefully guarded fire in the virgin wilderness of America . . . with an "unquestioned love which binds them together and to the world of nature that they have preferred to civilization"(192). In this scene, he also underlines the right of succession, the right of whites to live in the forest as the Indian does. Moreover, he recognizes the inherent ambivalence in the Romantic noble savage myth as a projection of the ambivalence Americans feel toward the natural: "From the beginning of our literature the question has been posed: is the "natural" a source of spontaneous goodness, instinctive nobility, untutored piety? Or is it the breeding ground for a black demonic destructive force hostile to our salvation? Or the common spring of two conflicting impulses one positive, one negative?"(199). In the violence of Chingachcook, his scalping of the enemy, and finally his

inability to accept Christianity as he dies, there is Cooper's representation of the American dilemma Fiedler poses as these negative traits coexist with the Indian's noble ones.

Finally, there is the loyalty and fraternity between Natty and Chingachcook that go beyond ordinary limits to exhibit a timelessness characteristic of myth: ". . . whether there be one heaven or two there is a path in the other world by which honest men may come together again"(370). Natty will be at Chingachcook's side throughout life: "The boy has left us for a time; but Sagamore you are not alone"(373) and also after death. This eternal tie between the two men will overcome color. They of course do live together through time as the archetypes of countless novels and films which reprise an interracial male warrior friendship. This relationship actually encompasses American past and future, embodying the Colonial legacy of ambivalence toward the savage other and the tropes that expressed it in nineteenth and post-nineteenth-century literature.

The linking of the noble savage to a white character allows the former no independent existence, seen as he is through his role in the relationship. So that throughout the Tales, Natty is always explaining Indian behavior to other whites. Natty's narrative overwrites that of Chingachcook and Uncas and Magua and all other Indians. An example of this type of overwriting occurs in his discussion with Chingachcook about the Delawares' history, which also provides a

rationale for the white perspective of history and Euro-American progress: "But everything depends on what scale you look at things" (23). This concept of relativism uttered by Natty provides a frame of reference for Cooper's attempts to subvert stereotypical depictions of the noble savage as well as a paradigm for analyzing EuroAmerican ambivalence toward the savage other. When Natty is not directly overwriting the Indian, Cooper is doing so through his use of classical allusions in his physical descriptions. He describes Uncas: "The ingenious Alice gazed at his free air and proud carriage as she would have looked upon some precious relic of the Grecian chisel . . . while Heyward . . . openly expressed his admiration at such an unblemished specimen of the noblest proportions of man"(47). Thus, Cooper places Uncas in the Classical past, making him an anachronism.

But the close relationship between Chingachcook and Natty is self-limiting; that is, neither has descendants. This relationship has no future except in heaven. The idea of family is subverted twice: once by Cooper's fear of miscegenation, thus avoiding a true equality among races, and then by the fact that there is no issue for either character, thus ensuring a discontinuity of this ideal state of equality for men who care about each other. Cooper undermines his own myth by bowing to the dominant one that states the Indian though noble, must die, and by extension any other like him, e.g. Natty. This desire for a tie with the savage that must never be realized is the tension in Cooper's and Melville's

works as their characters are both attracted to and repelled by savage others. This corresponds to the Puritan idea of America as both garden and wilderness. Furthermore, any family in the Tales is adoptive by nature: Uncas and HardHeart are metaphorical sons for Natty. Natty never marries; Uncas dies and presumably Chingachcook never has neither time nor opportunity to find a new wife after Hist dies. Any familial/feminine tie is illustrated by Uncas and Chingachcook in The Last of the Mohicans: "Chingachcook commenced speaking to his son in the soft and playful tones of affection . . . The eyes of the father followed the plastic and ingenious movements of the son with open delight" (201).

As Gaile McGregor suggests, Chingachcook is, of all of Cooper's noble savages, the most complex and perfect: "Cooper did in fact create a memorable perhaps definitive noble savage for America."⁶ Chingachcook is developed over the Tales in three aspects: as a youth, in middle age, and finally old age and death, allowing Cooper fully to explore the noble savage type in its dialectical and Romantic modes. Furthermore, he replicates the Romantic noble savage in Uncas and Tamenund and provides elements of nobility in Magua, allowing a greater depth of analysis through contrast and comparison.

The depiction of Chingachcook contains elements of

⁶ Gaile McGregor, The Noble Savage in the New World Garden. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967).

ambivalence. With a strong Romantic overlay. It is, after all, Chingachcook who is the last of the Mohicans, not Uncas. This is because Cooper could not ignore the reality of advancing extinction (although the Mohicans - actually Mohegans - still survive), nor ignore the literary conventions of his time; he himself had no extended contact with Indians. Furthermore, Cooper's main interest was primarily in examining the Indian/white relationship, not Indians themselves.

The characteristics of Chingachcook are the same as those for all fictive Indians in Cooper's novels and their antecedents: stoicism, excellent physical condition and stature, a gift for rhetoric, wilderness skills, bravery. What makes him noble is an elevation of these elements to Greco-Roman warrior status, loyalty to white men, a recognition of and acceptance of his race's passing and a state of harmony with nature uncorrupted by white culture. Barnett also mentions the necessity of the placement of the noble savage in a past, Edenic setting outside of white progress in order for the savage to be noble and not merely savage. He has to exist out of real time, in a mythic space separate from historical reality. To use Leo Marx's metaphor, it is a time when there was no machine in the garden.⁷ This is illustrated by Chingachcook in his identity as John Mohegan. When he comes into the settlement, he comes out of

⁷ Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral in America. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

mythic time and is degraded. So is Natty, who appears as an old bumbling man, shamed by being put in stocks. As long as both remain in the forest, they can both retain their mythic identities. So that the forest has an almost magical quality that allows time to stand still, to preserve them both, to make them timeless and make them children of nature in the Rousseauian sense.

While Chingachcook's degradation in The Pioneers is critically analyzed as resulting from contact with Christianity and alcohol, it is really caused by being out of time, out of myth, out of the past. In the wrong time, Chingachock cannot be noble. The wrong time for him is the time of American expansion, growth, and settlement. It is linear, progressive time. The "Romantic savage" must by definition belong to America's past because he cannot be part of her future as savage and he cannot be civilized without injury. When at the time of his death, John Mohegan chooses to die as Chingachcook, he becomes Indian again and noble again. But he has to return to a past way of life, a primitive way of life and die in accordance with that way: "Hawk-eye! my fathers call me to the happy hunting grounds! The path is clear and the eyes of Mohegan grow young. I look - but I can see no whiteskins; there are none to be seen but kind and brave Indians. Farewell, Hawk-eye! you shall go with the Fire Eater and the Young Eagle to the whiteman's heaven, but I go after my fathers. Let the bow and tomahawk and pipe and wampum of Mohegan be laid in his grave; for when he

starts t'will night and like a warrior on a war party and cannot stop to seek them"(421). This death scene ennobles Chingachcook again because he dies bravely, as an Indian and accepts his death as one. In addition, he dies on a hill, and with a blessing, both literary noble savage characteristics according to Sollors. The mention of a separate heaven, however, undermines Natty's belief that they will meet again in eternity and upholds the savage/civilized dichotomy of the time.

Richard Slotkin reads Chingachcook's consensual death by fire as a sacrifice:

In the archetypal myth when the king of the woods becomes impotent through age or disease, the land suffers through him. Only if the king surrenders his blood to the soil in sacrifice and passes his power to a successor can the homeopathic relationship between the people and their land be profitably maintained. Chingachcook has lost the power and dignity of kingship . . . As the fire consumes the hill on which he sits, Chingachcook casts off the vestiges of Christianity and submits to his mutilation and sacrifice . . . Chingachcook chooses the way of his fathers and for him the pain is nothing. Indeed he revels in his torment . . . because his ability to bear pain proves his manhood and gives value to his sacrifice . . .⁸

The sacrifice "serves as symbolic confirmation of the termination of Chingachcook's kingly powers and the passing of the power of the soil to a new and better lord Oliver Edwards/Effingham"(492). But the sacrifice is in vain; except for the recovery of his own dignity and identity; he cannot save the land from white encroachment and he will have no descendants either.

Chingachcook's act is a declaration of self, of volition; he no longer sees himself as a victim and is no longer seen by the reader as one. It is at his death that Chingachcook separates himself from Natty and other whites, undermining the concepts of eternal brotherhood in heaven that Natty espouses earlier, thus establishing independence and returning to his savage roots. It is in this act with which Cooper narratively undermines Natty's attempt to overwrite Chingachcook. Natty says the Indian thinks he will be young again, missing the significance of the act and the words. The reader, though, is not misled as Chingachcook clearly separates himself from Natty, thereby illustrating the impassable gulf between whites and Indians, even though they may live closely together. This death scene both subverts and supports the literary conventions of the time, demonstrating Cooper's ambivalence as part of a larger cultural ambivalence toward the savage other. In addition, with this act, Chingachcook regains his tragic nobility and becomes again the Romantic noble savage. Even though he refers to himself as John Mohegan, this only serves to underscore the rejection of the name and all it represents because it contrasts with his act. It is precisely the return to his savage roots, in the forest, that make it possible for him to be noble again.

It is unlikely that Cooper purposefully pursued the myth to the extent that Slotkin suggests it exists in the text;

⁸ Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence. (Hanover: Wesleyan Press, 1973) 92.

however, the role of hunter is essential and constant in the development of both Natty and Chingachcook and sets them apart and sustains them as separate from whites. It is the killing of the deer in Templeton that illustrates the fundamental moral differences between Natty and Chingachcook and the white community. The hunter lives the morality of the forest, not the town and its man-made laws. In addition, however, Cooper is aware of the Romantic noble savage convention as he places Chingachcook on a hill, symbolically named "The Vision." As such, Chingachcook embodies a eulogy for his people as Tamenund did in The Last of the Mohicans. Furthermore, his act is a prophetic one, suggesting white succession to Indian soil. If his is a sacrifice in which his body will replenish the earth, it is an earth that whites will inherit, and it will replenish them, not his descendants.

Chingachcook's death signals his return to his primitive roots, and resonates with the primitivist idea of natural man proposed by Rousseau and other French writers and philosophers, namely Montaigne and Chateaubriand. Rousseau's natural man was a being of reason and existed in an ideal state of harmony with nature. But Rousseau was also an inheritor of the traditional myths of Arcadia and Eden which described lands faraway in which peoples inhabited an ideal climate and landscape and lived in harmony with nature. These ideas influenced perceptions of the indigenous people of the New World by explorers and missionaries. Robert Berkhofer states:

"As information about the inhabitants of the New world became better known in the Old, Native Americans entered the literary and imaginative works of European writers particularly the French. In this way, the American Indian became part of the *bon savage* or noble savage tradition, so long an accompaniment of the Golden Age or Paradaisical mythology of the Western civilization."⁹ The idea of the noble savage as a criticism of social institutions and their deleterious effects reached its height in France during the Enlightenment. The primitivist philosophy posited the state of nature as a natural stage of human growth that was desirable and achievable. It was a state of goodness and reason.

Berkhofer also describes a fundamental shift in the noble savage concept by the end of the eighteenth century: "Equally clear in the noble savage convention by the end of the 18th century was the transformation of the literary primitive from a man of reason and good sense into a man of emotion and instinct"(78). He cites as the major reason the French and American revolutions and the development of Romanticism which stressed the exotic and emotional apprehension of nature. The end of the eighteenth century in Europe saw the exhaustion of this image, but it was revived and it flourished in nineteenth-century American literature.

David Spurr locates the demise of the noble savage in a reaction to Rousseau's philosophy, but he also implies that

⁹ Robert F. Berkhofer, The White Man's Indian. (New York: Vintage, 1975) 73.

within this philosophy were the seeds of this reaction, dividing as it did nature and culture, savagery and civilization. He discusses John Stuart Mill's concept of nature as negative, a force that must be controlled: "For Mill human progress is the history of triumph of great art over nature."¹⁰ For Mill "the ways of nature are to be conquered, not obeyed"(20). Spurr goes on to discuss Mill's concept of the duty of man to amend other men and the natural world as a rationale for the European to colonize the non-European nations who have not freed themselves from nature's power. This concept exported to America served as a rationalization for the conquest of the American Indian. For as Francis Jennings points out, the English never subscribed to the noble savage concept as strongly as did the French.¹¹

Instead, the English firmly believed in Mill's position that nature had to be conquered; by extrapolation, then, the Indian as a creature of nature had to be conquered as well. Furthermore, Darwin's theory that societies intervened with each other as part of a social evolutionary process was used to abet the development of the concept of the inevitability of indigenous extinction. The idea of inevitability of extinction produced the doomed, tragic - therefore Romantic - noble savage of nineteenth-century American fiction.

The most pertinent observation of Spurr occurs in his discussion of Foucault's idea of the post-Renaissance view of

¹⁰ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993) 157.

¹¹ Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975) 59.

nature. "Man no longer stands in the center of the natural world in a microcosmic relationship to the universe. Rather human history is now distinct from natural history although its origin lies in natural phenomena . . . human history in other words, follows natural laws while progressing away from natural origins. The inconsistencies of a discourse which alternately idealizes and reviles the savage may be seen as part of this larger ambivalence surrounding the concepts of nature and man"(159). It is this ambivalence that shaped the dialectical noble savage for Americans, and made him a contradiction as well. This contradiction was resolved by his transformation into the Romantic noble savage who eliminated the contradiction by his extinction. The ambivalence toward nature could not be resolved directly; it could be dealt with indirectly through the elimination of nature's embodiment: the savage.

The real dilemma of the noble savage image however is that at bottom he is a savage (and he must be) and is therefore, by definition, inferior. (It is the revival of Chingachcook's primitive roots that in fact elevate his sacrifice and reinstate his dignity). Jennings' description of this is precise: "The term savage underwent considerable alteration of meaning as different colonists pursued their varied ends. One aspect of the term remained constant however; the savage was always inferior," and Jennings goes on to describe the formula for conquest thus:

The conquest myth postulated that America was

virgin land or wilderness inhabited by non - people called savages; that the savages were creatures sometimes defined as demons, sometimes beasts in the shape of men; that their mode of existence and cast of mind were such as to make them incapable of civilization and of full humanity; that civilization was required by divine sanction or the imperative of progress to conquer the wilderness and make it a garden; that the savage creatures of the wilderness being unable to adapt to any environment other than the wild stubbornly and viciously resisted God or fate and thereby incurred their suicidal extinction; that civilization and its bearers were refined and ennobled in their contest with the dark powers of the wilderness and it was all inevitable. (15)

How then was it possible for a noble savage to exist in the American imagination? Barnett credits American guilt, the influence of European Romanticism and a belief in the admirable qualities of pre-Columbian Indian life(86). But the actual reasons may lie elsewhere. First it must be considered that the in EuroAmerican ambivalence toward the savage other, is a reflection of ambivalence toward the nature of civilization (not savagery). Furthermore, this ambivalence also encompasses the EuroAmerican attitude toward nature, not the savage. The savage basically became a metaphor for nature almost from first contact. The creation of the noble savage to be sure had a political source, but it was bolstered by American Romanticism, Transcendentalism, and a whole new consideration of man's relationship to nature. But this consideration historically was simply another manifestation of an ongoing preoccupation with the land, a discomfort with its centrality, and ambivalence as to its role in the American experience.

Perhaps in reality there was no noble savage, only a savage less savage than others. What makes Chingachcook noble is his doomed savagery, but all of his bravery and loyalty to Natty do not eradicate his penchant for revenge, killing, and scalping. At his death, he mentions going on a war party; his self-concept remains that of a warrior, and even as John Mohegan, Chingachcook's savagery surfaces in the tavern at Templeton: "Without heeding Richard he continued to sing a kind of wild melancholy air that rose at times in sudden elevated notes and then fell again . . . "Why do you sing of your battles, Chingachcook and of the warriors you have slain . . .?" "Hawkeye . . . I am the Great Snake of the Delawares; I can track the Mingoes like an adder that is stealing on the whippoorwill's eggs and strike them . . . "(164-5). John Mohegan is still Chingachcook and paradoxically it is when he is half-drunk that he declares it. The term noble savage is an oxymoron, a paradox, since the term savage has always connoted negative otherness and opposition to civilization. However, in America it became a viable term, and in certain respects a necessary one. Cooper's work uneasily swings between ignoble and noble savage, revealing the fundamental attraction and repulsion of the EuroAmerican toward the savage other. The creation of Chingachcook uncovers the admiration and fear that reflect the idealization and denigration of Rousseau's child of nature that have haunted American literary discourse since Puritan contact. Whether in fact Chingachcook is noble or not is secondary to Cooper's

understanding and treatment of the dichotomy of savagery and civilization as it shaped American history and identity. Chingachcook is symbolic of this ideology.

Similarly, Melville creates noble savages, and they reveal his understanding of the ambivalence with which the EuroAmerican viewed the savage other. He expands the type to include blacks and Polynesians to reflect his concern with slavery and the negative effects of overseas empire-building. With the creation of Queequeg, his most complex noble savage, Melville replicates the noble savage image in a number of ways, but also undermines it. One reason for undermining it is his goal of reconfiguring the savage other and his relationship with the EuroAmerican in response to the political and racial crises of pre-Civil War America. Michael Paul Rogin states:

"Moby Dick projects into imaginative space a world constructed from elements of the political discourse and social tension in which Melville was entangled . . . Moby Dick is not a symbolic text which flees history to some deeper universal pattern. Rather, it embodies the catastrophe prophesized in 1850, explores its source and comments on the effort to escape it . . . Melville began Moby Dick when the fears of disunion were greatest . . . the interracial bond between Ishmael and Queequeg introduces Moby Dick. Slavery was generating arguments for White racial superiority; Melville undercuts those arguments . . ." ¹²

Rogin, like Carolyn Karcher and David Reynolds, recognizes that political and social sensitivity spur Melville's reformist tendencies as he attempts to reconcile racially divisive issues through the relationship between Ishmael and

¹² Michael Paul Rogin, Subversive Genealogy. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979) 107.

Queequeg and through the creation of the racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse community of the Pequod.¹³ However, Rogin's focus is primarily on domestic issues while it is clear that Melville's reform drive encompasses a broader scope.

Although Moby Dick does not flee history, it is a symbolic text. It clearly deals with issues of race, economics, industrialization, but it also sets the whale as the symbolic representation of the savage other. Melville closely examines the ambivalent feelings of attraction and repulsion to otherness engendered in white America. The novel itself is written on at least two levels: there are the technical historical passages on whale hunting and the symbolic passages on Ahab's pursuit of the whale. Melville's treatment of racial issues employs what Richard Slotkin describes as the fundamental American myth - that of the hunter - developed to its archetypal extremes (539). And in so doing, Melville uncovers and examines the fundamental issue underlying American racial conflicts: the dichotomy of savagery and civilization. The hunt for the whale is symbolic of this dichotomy as Melville illustrates the elements of savagism and civilization in each crew member, and their relationship to the whale as the hunt progresses. This symbolic aspect of the novel does not mitigate its political relevance to Melville's time, but rather it provides a different, more complex context within which to analyze its

¹³ Carolyn Karcher, Shadow Over the Promised Land. (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1984).

relevance. Furthermore, the context of the hunt in which man is pitted against a force of nature which he subjugates and which subjugates him is an aspect of the hunter myth reaching back in time before Boone or Leatherstocking.

Melville's treatment of racial issues differs from that of Cooper's in focus and scale because he understands the role of ethnicity in American culture and how American identity was shaped by racial conflict. Unlike Cooper, Melville, through his service aboard ships, saw clearly and first-hand how ethnic conflict followed American expeditions overseas as they came into contact with various non-white cultures and colonized and acculturated them. As such, Melville enlarges the scale of ethnic conflict beyond that of Indians and whites. But his link to Cooper is still significant in that he recognizes that the roots of American ethnic conflict is the savagery/civilization dichotomy whose source is the Puritan conceptualization of the Indian. And, like Cooper, he uses the idea of savagery to explain the nature of civilization. Therefore, Queequeg is Melville's Indian, only more complex and troubling because he undermines the savage stereotypes which Cooper so vividly and permanently added to American literary discourse. Moreover, there is an "Indianization" of the ship and the crew at the beginning of the novel. By naming the ship the "Pequod" Melville makes a direct reference to the Pequots, a tribe nearly destroyed by the Puritans. When Ishmael sets out, he recalls "those aboriginal whale-men, the Red-men, first

sailed out in canoes to give chase to the Leviathan" (99), clearly linking the ship and its crew to an aboriginal American past. But more importantly, with these direct Indian references, Melville shows that the aboriginal link as a hunter myth survives changes in space as well as time because the original hunter was Indian; so the aboriginal link can never be lost or discarded. Lawrence speaks of the haunting of America by an aboriginal past: "When you are actually in America, America hurts because it has a powerful disintegrative influence on the white psyche. It is full of grinning unappeased aboriginal demons, too, ghosts, and it persecutes the white men like some Eumenides . . ." (150). Clearly, Melville recalls the ghosts of the Pequots to establish the link between the whale hunters of the sea and the Indian hunters of the land, but he also shows the perversion of the link by both recalling the genocide by the Puritans and the violence and monomania of Ahab and his crew as they hunt the whale. The perversion is that the Puritans and crew are not hunters but predators who do not kill for defense or for food.

Slotkin links Melville to Cooper specifically in his description of the influence of the wilderness on the American literary imagination:

The mythic characterization of the wilderness as a symbol of primal states of nature and of human consciousness had been distilled by Cooper (in the last Leatherstocking Tale) and Thoreau in the image of the lake (Glimmerglass) or pond (Walden) - bodies of water which reflect features of heroes and contain mysteries in their depths, sources of

the forests' life and repositories of death's victims. Melville's novel, *Glimmerglass/Walden* becomes ocean itself; and Cooper's oceanic prairie and forest become metaphors by which Melville defines the vastness of the ocean and the relatedness of the Pequod's hunt to the mythological adventure of Boone and Leatherstocking. (23)

But Boone and Leatherstocking were white versions of the aboriginal hunter, displacing the Indian and becoming white Indians to preserve the American hunter myth.

Slotkin then goes on to discuss how much of the imagery in Moby Dick is that of the frontier:

The object of the hunt, Moby Dick, had a forehead like "the prairie" and a hump like a buffalo. The whale's resemblance to the prairie marks him as the true avatar of the essential spirit of his element, for the sea is also called "prairie", "meadow", and "desert." As his hunter is compared with Boone, so is Moby Dick as chief of the solitary order of the bull whales compared with "moss-bearded Boone." The whalers snatch their harpoons from the crotch as quickly" as a backwoodsman swings his rifle hanging from the wall." The white whale is compared to the "white steed" in the popular fiction of Western magazines and "your true whale hunter is as much a savage as an Iroquois. (543)

So Queequeg and Chingachcook, like Leatherstocking and the mythic version of Boone, are linked in a continuum of hunter imagery in which forest and ocean are interchangeable and different racial roots of all non-white others are irrelevant. The fundamental characteristic that links Queequeg to Chingachcook is that he is a savage. In addition, like Chingachcook he is descended from a family of chiefs. However, in status and stature he is not unique nor is he as physically striking as Chingachcook. Furthermore, his

nobility, unlike that of Chingachcook's, is a function of his character. Chingachcook's nobility has two aspects: he embodies what Cooper represents as being savage (while being loyal to whites) and he is doomed. Queequeg, on the other hand, embodies the best of humanity, irrespective of ethnicity - even though he is still a pagan and a cannibal and therefore everything the civilized European is not. That is the paradox of Queequeg. That is also the corrective he provides for Cooper's savages and the way he undermines his definition of savagery. As such, he resembles Sayre's dialectical noble savage rather than Cooper's Romantic noble savage in that Melville will use him in his relationship to Ishmael to examine the nature of European values. While Queequeg has no existence apart from Ishmael and lacks his own voice, Ishmael invests him with humanity and therefore civilization:

Savage though he was, and hideously marred about the face-at least to my taste-his countenance yet had a something in it which was by no means disagreeable. You cannot hide the soul. Through all his unearthly tattooings, I thought I saw traces of a simple honest heart and in his large deep eyes, fiery black and bold, there seemed tokens of a spirit that would dare a thousand devils. He looked like a man who had never cringed and never had a creditor . . . Queequeg was George Washington cannibalistically developed. (55-56)

Queequeg's savage nature lies primarily in his difference from the EuroAmerican. As Ishmael describes him, he is a man "some twenty thousand miles from home . . . thrown on his own among people as strange to him as if he

were on the lane Jupiter . . ." (52). His differences include his dark skin, his tattoos, his cannibalism, his idol worship and his eating habits. He is everything Ishmael is not. This is not true of the relationship between Natty and Chingachcook. Natty is a version of the Indian and although Natty prides himself about being "a man without a cross," he, like the Indian, is an anachronism and both are doomed by Western expansion. Cooper's works are concerned with history, linear time, the progress of Western civilization across the American continent and the incompatibility of red and white cultures in conflict. Melville's Moby Dick, on the other hand, has as its focus the examination of the nature of American identity as it goes beyond the limits of land. As such, within the context of ocean, Melville reprises the Puritan dilemma of dealing with wilderness. Cooper chose to treat it historically; Melville chose to treat it metaphysically.

The savage, as conceptualized by the EuroAmerican, was an extension of nature, a being driven by instinct instead of reason. Furthermore, the ability to suppress or discipline instinct and use reason was an essential characteristic that for the EuroAmerican distinguished him from the savage and made him superior. Slotkin discusses the threat that instinct posed when embodied by the Indian, the original American savage: "In psychological terms, the Indian in our mythology functioned as an image or symbol of the American libido - the primal sources of sexual conceptual and creative energy that

lies below the level of consciousness . . . In the myth of the hunter this libido is variously symbolized as a brother or second (a darker self) Chingachcook, a bride . . . Ishmael's Queequeg . . . "(560). The most threatening aspect of the libido is not the sexual, but the unconscious because this means the libido cannot be consciously controlled. It is this lack of control and the potential for resulting chaos that make the libido so dangerous, the Indian therefore so threatening and nature itself so frightening. The libido then represents the wild, the uncontrollable, yet the seductive and the attractive. And these the Puritan projected onto the Indian, rendering him savage and onto other non-white others, rendering them savage as well. Slotkin then discusses the dilemma the EuroAmerican faced when confronted by instinct as embodied by the savage:

The attitude toward the libido or the unconscious expressed in myth is ambivalent. On one hand it recognizes in the symbol of the libido the source of creative life energy and of power over and in the natural wilderness . . . Yet at the same time, the myth recognizes that the full resignation of the consciousness and the will to the power of the libido and the unconscious would threaten the safety and the integrity of the conscious, the ego, the will. If the will and the conscious fail to facilitate the progressive thrust and the moral order of society and are turned from proper social objects and concerns, disintegration might follow. (561)

Individual disintegration might also follow.

This dilemma was resolved with the creation of the Romantic noble savage. Instinct in the physical form of the Indian was expressed and even glorified and then suppressed

by his death. Furthermore, this motif, once consigned to literary myth could be repeated endlessly and safely. This is perfectly illustrated in The Pioneers. Judge Temple represents law, order, civilization. Chingachcook and Natty pose a threat to his way of life because they represent the freedom of the natural, the forest, the libido, and they thus must be suppressed. So Chingachcook must die and Natty be exiled. Of the Tales this novel is the best fictive representation of Slotkin's thesis.

Spurr mentions another aspect of the savage ascribed primarily to non-white others. Spurr's premise is that Rousseau places non-white non-European peoples as closer to nature than Europeans and then places nature in opposition to culture as represented by European civilization. (158)

According to Spurr:

Rousseau conceives of a natural alliance between the Asiatic or any native of a non-European, non-Northern climate and the benevolent state of nature. The inhabitants of the tropics are closer to nature than the European in a double sense. They are literally surrounded by the fruits of the natural world, while their way of life is more natural, more immediate, more spontaneous than the European's and more governed by passion and desire (157).

This somewhat simplistic argument is applicable to the natives of the South Sea islands. And in the novel Typee the natives have these characteristics of immediacy and instinct. Tom is at first lulled by the life and feels liberated from what he considers to be the inhumanity of the ship. He, like Ishmael, wants to escape civilization.

Ishmael describes this feeling thus: "Whenever I find myself growing sour in the mouth, whenever it is a damp and drizzly November in my soul I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can"(30). Eventually, for Ishmael, the ship represents the worst of civilization. And Ishmael, like Tom, takes comfort from the savage other - and also escapes him in a violent, deadly manner. But soon Tom's freedom becomes captivity. He loses his sense of time and identity. Joy becomes threat. He is repelled by the paganism and cannibalism. He is afraid of assimilation by tattooing. It is obvious that what he desires is incompatible with what he is. Therefore, not only does he escape his deepest desires, - his libido - he kills them symbolically by killing Marnoo. Tom fears disintegration and abandonment to instinct.

In Typee are the seeds of what was to become Melville's critical look at civilization in Moby Dick. And while the Typee are childish, sensual and amoral, Queequeg is exceedingly complex. In Typee, Melville shows the Western sailors and missionaries to be corrupt and hypocritical. But he does this by outright criticism within the narrative. And while Tom returns to the ship, this is not an affirmation of Western civilization, but an acknowledgement that he cannot live among the Typee. Western man cannot live according to the dictates of libido no matter how desirable or seductive the condition. In this novel Melville stresses the differences between Western and Typee life and those differences are insurmountable. Tom has no real choice; he

cannot live among the Typee except as a Typee. In addition, the Typee seem to exhibit the simplicity, amorality and sensuality that Spurr's comments suggest. However, with the creation of Queequeg, this savagery/civilization demarcation is erased. Melville's criticism of Western values is embedded within the character of Queequeg. He appears to be more civilized than the Europeans he sails with. And he maintains this civilized stance even as the crew exhibit increasingly savage behavior as they hunt Moby Dick. They become not only less civilized, but also less human as the ship and the crew become a great machine driven by Ahab's obsession. The other whales they encounter become commodities, targets for profit. And the only manner in which the crew can relate to nature is through violence. Queequeg is able to retain his connection to nature, however - as illustrated by his patting the whales in "The Grand Armada" chapter - and to all living things, even in his role as a whaler.

Julian Markels suggests that Queequeg represents Locke's description of man in the state of nature because in Locke's description it is reason not instinct which drives natural man. Therefore, it seems to contradict Rousseau's description. He also suggests that a man in the state of nature is the most moral and the most civilized.¹⁴ Markels calls Queequeg a "boldfaced creature of Locke's state of nature" (92) and then goes on to discuss the role of reason according to Locke's Treatise on Government: "Reason, which

¹⁴ Julian Markels, Melville and the Policies of Identity. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993) 92.

is itself the law of nature does not show us merely a pragmatic need to establish government in order to protect us from our warlike propensity. Instead, reason prompts us to directly serve God even in the state of nature. Each of us is constituted so as to occupy a station and 'by like reason' to preserve others in their equal and independent stations."

Locke describes the state of nature thus: "The State of Nature has a Law of Nature to govern it which obliges everyone; and Reason which is that Law teaches all Mankind . . . that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another's Life, Health, Liberty or Possessions . . ." ¹⁵

Markels goes on to point out that Queequeg follows Locke's state of nature because "Queequeg risks his life indiscriminately for the stranger who mimics him, for his crewmate Tashtego and for his bedmate Ishamel because all these are equal in Locke's state of nature"(94). To Markels Queequeg's actions have a redemptive quality that seem to be an important aspect of Locke's argument. If that is so, then it surely applies in his relationship with Ishmael, because he teaches Ishmael about his own humanity and that of others. It is Ishmael who recognizes his own changes, from his "melting" to a desire to share Queequeg's religion, to an understanding of the universality of faith and worship. And Ishmael learns not only because of his affection for Queequeg, but because of the example Queequeg sets: "I began

¹⁵ John Locke, Locke on Politics, Religion and Education. Maurice Cranston, ed.. (New Town: MacMillan, 1954).

to be sensible of strange feelings. I felt a melting in me. No more my splintered heart and maddened hand were raised against the wolfish world. This soothing savage had redeemed it"(53). Queequeg saves Ishmael through his character as well as through his coffin.

While Markels' analysis is focused on Locke's state of nature and is used primarily to discuss various theories of governance, it is clear that for Melville Queequeg's ethics, embedded as they are within a savage nature that admittedly is both cannibalistic and pagan, are the framework within which to examine the nature of both savagery and civilization. It is apparent the Queequeg reconciles them, and furthermore the one does not mitigate the other. Neither Queequeg nor Ishmael views both aspects as antagonistic or conflicting. Moreover, neither man refrains from calling Queequeg a savage. Melville constantly reminds the reader of Queequeg's savage nature even as he makes him a moral exemplar. Nor is Queequeg set up as morally opposite; rather he is set up as opposite to Ahab and the others. If anything, Ishmael is a borderer, stuck between the world of the ship and the world he shares with Queequeg, the latter isolating and insulating him from the barbarism and monomania of Ahab. Melville's goal is to illustrate the savagery in the civilized and the civilization in the savage. His novel is like the mat Ishmael and Queequeg weave; Melville weaves in and out of savagery and civilization. And by weaving them together in the same text, he destroys the dichotomy. He

shows them to be complementary and interchangeable. It is through his relationship with Queequeg that Ishmael can try to analyze himself and those around him. And it is through Queequeg that Ahab's increasingly savage nature can be measured. This use of Queequeg in the text would follow the conventional literary use of the savage other by European and American writers to define the civilized were it not for the fact that Queequeg embodies both characteristics. This is a major departure from Cooper's depiction of the savage, even in the noble savage role. Moreover, the relationship of Queequeg and Ishmael is in direct contrast to that of Natty and Chingachcook. Natty is scrupulously aware of "red gifts" and "white gifts" and of his own white identity.

The interrelatedness of savagery and civilization is pointed out by Queequeg: "We cannibals must help these Christians"(68). It both affirms the differences between Queequeg and Ishmael and suggests their interdependence. It is also ironic that it reverses the stereotypical idea of Western superiority. It suggests Queequeg's ethical sense and his role as teacher to Ishmael. Finally, it is prophetic, foreshadowing the saving of Ishmael's life as the end of the novel. Primarily, it underscores the possibility of reconciliation of the two cultures that even in Melville's Typee could not be compatible. One reason for this is that in Moby Dick Melville creates a separate society with its own rules, one that is isolated and self-sustaining. While the ship may be a microcosm of American society, it is also its

own world. That is one reason why Ishmael escapes to it.

The kind of help Queequeg provides Ishmael is decidedly different from the help the Typee give Tom although both are liberating and life-altering. Queequeg opens up Ishmael to new experiences and at the same time provides him with an inner peace that allows him to reflect and meditate on what he observes. Moby Dick "reveals the suffocating airlessness of Ishmael's initial consciousness . . . and by the time he sails aboard the Pequod in the protective company of his beloved Queequeg, he has eliminated almost all his inherited conceptions . . . everything becomes unmoored, vulnerable, dispensable."¹⁶ Queequeg provides a sense of safety for Ishmael with which he can shed some of his old ideas and acquire new ones without fear of the loss of self - unlike Tom. His relationship with Queequeg allows him to become more rather than less of himself. But more importantly, it allows him to discover that self. Queequeg possesses a sense of peace as well, and by sharing his life, Ishmael acquires it also. Ishmael describes Queequeg as being "entirely at ease observing the utmost serenity content with his own companionship, always equal to himself" (50). But it is not an indolent state that Ishmael describes; it is what William Bryant describes as repose: "repose is not mental oblivion, but rather an active state of mind tempering anxiety and confidence."¹⁷ It is this state which appears to be a state

¹⁶ Andrew DelBanco, "Introduction," Moby Dick. (New York: Penguin, 1992) xviii.

¹⁷ John Bryant, Melville and Repose. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 90.

of unconsciousness. But yet it is one in which Ishmael is observing, analyzing, gaining insights. One such instance is the period when he weaves a mat with Queequeg:

I say so strange a dreaminess did there reign all over the ship and all over the sea . . . that it seemed as if this were the Loom of Time and I myself were a shuttle mechanically weaving and weaving away at the Fates. There lay the fixed threads of the warp subject to but one single ever-returning unchanging vibration and that vibration merely enough to admit of the crosswise interblending of the other threads with its own. This warp seemed necessity thought I and here with my open hand I ply my own shuttle and weave my own destiny into these alterable threads. Meanwhile Queequeg's impulsive indifferent threads, sometime hitting the woof slantingly or strongly or weakly as the case may be; and by this difference in the concluding blow producing a corresponding contrast in the final aspect of the completed fabric; this savage's sword thought I which thus finally shapes both warp and woof; this easy indifferent sword must be chance, free will, - necessity - no wise incompatible all interweavingly working together . . . (234)

It is significant that this insight comes to him while he is working with Queequeg and that this activity inspires a sort of dreaming wakefulness. Here "Ishmael considers the possibility of creating the pattern of his own life rather than giving himself up to the workings of the universal loom."¹⁸ But more importantly it is with the recognition of the interaction of Queequeg's sword with his own weaving that allows him to make this discover. And once again the use of the word "savage" does not allow the reader to forget that which has been defined culturally as strange and unfathomable often interacts with what is the known and the predictable to

¹⁸ John Dryden, Melville's Thematics of Form. (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1968).

form patterns in lives. So that chance can alter conscious will. This is shown at the end of the novel when by chance, Ishmael finds Queequeg's coffin which saves his life. These insights enable Ishmael not to be consumed by the hunt or be totally controlled by Ahab. For as Ishmael gains in insight he will be able to both separate himself from the ship, yet participate in its activities without being destroyed ethically.

The interdependnece of Ishmael and Queequeg is acknowledged by Ishmael in the "Monkey Rope" chapter: "So here for better or for worse we two for the time were wedded and should poor Queequeg sink to rise no more both usage and honor demanded that instead of cutting the rope it should drag me down in its wake. So then an elongated Siamese ligature united is. Queequeg was my own inseparable twin brother . . ." (349). In this description Ishmael uses both spousal and fraternal images to define his relationship with Queequeg, the second balancing the first to create a larger, more familial context. And in so doing Melville recognizes and examines the one aspect that both Lawrence and Fiedler suggest has been hinted at but repressed in the relationship between Natty and Chingachcook, so much so that the possibility for a sexual relationship with anyone is ruled out for these two once their bond is firmly established. Fiedler refers to their bond as one deeper than sex. Moreover, the use of the words "twin" and "Siamese" suggests that Queequeg is Ishmael's double, a physical impossibility,

yet one which expresses how intimately connected he feels toward the savage. (By contrast, intimacy is never attained Natty's relationship with Chingachcook because Natty always maintains his white identity). At this point in Moby Dick, the pseudo-familial bond seems greater than any racial difference. And later in the chapter Ishmael goes on to discuss how he realizes that everyone is joined in some way with everyone else. Here again in an activity with Queequeg Ishmael's world view grows and he feels connected to a larger human community.

Melville uses a number of ways to demonstrate Ishmael's growth in which the dichotomy of savagery and civilization is erased in favor of an acknowledgement of the common humanity of all men. At one point while eating with Stubbs he asks: "Who is not a cannibal?"(299). But most striking is his attitude toward religion as he decides to join Queequeg in his worship of Yojo: ". . . But what is worship? To do the will of God . . . And what is the will of God? To do to my fellow man what I would have my fellow man do to me. Now Queequeg is my fellow man . . ." (58). With these words Ishmael eliminates the boundaries that formal religious practices establish, and, by implication, the deprecation of non-Western religions by Christianity, thus acknowledging Queequeg's equality. In these examples it is through contact with Queequeg and the development of an equal, loving relationship that Ishmael gains insights. Queequeg does not actively try to change his mind except by his own behavior.

The warmth and camaraderie that Queequeg demonstrates when he invites Ishmael to worship with him are in sharp contrast to Father Marples' sermon which is critical and exclusionary in tone and content. In addition, for both Ishmael and Queequeg the Christian world is full of "civilized hypocries" and "bland deceits" and the men aboard the *Pequod*, as products of Western civilization, are weak and often ethically deficient. This is Melville's indirect criticism of Western culture and religion. Unlike the effusive commentary on Western morality in *Typee*, Ishmael's realization about the humanity in Queequeg and his own growth point out by contrast whatever reform Melville wished to see in the area of race relations. Arnold Rampersad mentions the legacy Melville left for other writers because of the relationship between Queequeg and Ishmael: "By presenting the humanity of blacks and the complexity of race and racism so acutely and generously in his text, Melville empowered Ellison to insist on a place in the American literary tradition."¹⁹

In *Moby Dick* Melville gives voice and identity to invisible non-white others who have been written over or written out in other texts. Certainly, Rampersad was not only referring to the nature of the relationship, but also to the role Queequeg plays. In many respects Queequeg is Ishmael's teacher. Rampersad goes on to say that Ishmael's education begins with his encounter with Queequeg, but he speaks

¹⁹ Arnold Rampersad, "Shadow and Veil: Melville and Modern Black Consciousness," *Melville's Evermoving Dawn*. John Bryant and Robert Milder, eds., (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1997) 173.

primarily within the context of race relations. As David Bradley points out, Ishmael learns about life on a whaler from Queequeg, calling the ship "My Yale College and my Harvard."²⁰ Bradley goes on to describe Ishmael's experience as a socialization process directed by Queequeg so that he could fit in on the ship and maintain a relationship with Queequeg. That is, Queequeg's openness is not merely due to affection, but is intentional. In his role of teacher, Queequeg reverses the role of Western superiority Ishmael first assumes. The sea is the context for this change. Queequeg is at home at sea as Chingachcook is at home in the forest. Both belong to natural settings and both are compared to animals: Queequeg to the whale, Chingachcook to a serpent.

Despite how close these two are and how much Ishmael actually does learn about Queequeg, there is still a mystery that is never resolved. It is this acknowledgement of mystery that maintains the otherness of Queequeg, joins him with the pantheon of savage others in American texts, and serves to underscore the essential ambivalence toward the savage. Ishmael mentions early on: "But savages are strange beings; at times you do not know exactly how to take them" (50). Later, the true mystery of Queequeg is mentioned in the "Queequeg in His Coffin" chapter:

And this tattooing had been the work of a departed prophet and seer of his island who by hieroglyphic marks had written out on his body a complete theory of the heavens and the earth and a mystical

²⁰ David Bradley, "Our Crowd, Their Crowd: Race, Reader and *Moby Dick*," *Melville's Evermoving Dawn*. John Bryant and Robert Milder, eds., (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1997).

treatise on the art of attaining truth so that Queequeg in his own proper person had a riddle to unfold; a wondrous work in one volume; but whose mysteries not even himself could read, though his own live heart beat against them and these mysteries were therefore destined to moulder away with the living parchment whereon they were inscribed and so be unresolved to the last . . .
(524)

Like those of the Typee, it is the tattoos that seem to be the most distinctive feature of Queequeg and they seem to possess some mysterious, almost magical information that is both profound and ultimately undecipherable. In this respect he is similar to the Romantic noble savage with his "red gifts". This suggests that he is never quite like Ishmael, but at the same time he, like all men, is never completely knowable. He can teach Ishmael a great many things and he changes him forever, but he cannot teach him about the heavens and the earth and the nature of truth, nor does he have complete self-knowledge.

Therefore, at bottom Queequeg is savage. His behavior may be Christian and civilized, but he is neither. This is also why ultimately he cannot survive and goes down with the ship. At the end of the voyage the Pequod would have to return to larger American society. At that point his relationship with Ishmael would have to change, to revert back to what it was before they boarded the ship. And Queequeg would once again assume his savage status as marginalized man. His relationship with Ishmael is an anomaly, possible and appropriate only on the Pequod, which is a type of laboratory for Melville to explore his issues.

Moreover, Queequeg's death assigns to him posthumous nobility and fulfills his role as doomed noble savage. Within the conventional formula Queequeg can never survive, but rather than see this scenario as Melville's reversion to type, it can be viewed as Melville's comment on the destruction of the non-white other in literary discourse as well as in political policy.

Queequeg is described as savage throughout the novel, yet he embodies both civilized and savage traits - and the best of both. As such, he does not illustrate completely the characteristics of the conventional noble savage type as Chingachcook does. But for both, the emphasis on their savagery brings to the fore their nobility. Their otherness is maintained and is in fact necessary for their development as characters. They are both attractive and repulsive; thus they both contain elements of Sayre's dialectical noble savage, existing in a relationship with a white partner who usually interprets his actions or explains him. In a sense therefore, Natty creates Chingachcook and the other Indians for white friends and Ishmael creates Queequeg for the reader and for himself.

An important characteristic of both men is they are extremely close to nature. Queequeg is a man of the sea as Chingachcook is a man of the forest. Thus, it is fictively appropriate that both die in their elements, in a somewhat sacrificial role. Queequeg's coffin is his surrogate, bearing his tattoos that represent his identity. Chingachcook allows

himself to be consumed by the fire, returning to the earth, as Slotkin suggests, in self-sacrifice. Together they represent the land and the sea, the two primary environments that Charles Olson suggests shaped American identity, sometimes in complementary, sometimes in opposing fashion.²¹ Queequeg, however, assumes a role Chingachcook does not. He allows Ishmael to expand his own sense of identity by making him more conscious of himself and his life. Often his actions with Ishmael provide the opportunity for Ishmael's introspection and a loosening of his unconscious. This allows his unconscious to play, to enter into his consciousness, but without a loss of control. Chingachcook has no such function in Natty's life. The libido and the unconscious are repressed. The differences between these two noble savages reflect the different concerns and goals of the two writers as they created these characters. Cooper's concern is the creation of a mythic past; his characters are relics. As such, they are frozen in time. This is symbolized by Natty's gaze as he is dying; he looks to a West he can never go to. And he acknowledges that he is the last of his race of men of the forest. The creation of an American historical past is Cooper's primary fictive goal.

Melville, on the other hand, is concerned with his own present and the social issues that are relevant to his time. But more importantly, Melville wishes to examine the

²¹ Charles Olson, "Call Me Ishmael," Melville: Modern Critical Interpretations. Harold Bloom ed., (New York: Chelsea House, 1986).

collective unconscious fear of the savage other that motivates the abuses of the Northern factory system, slavery, colonization abroad and which haunts America the way in which Moby Dick haunts Ahab.

Taken together, Queequeg and Chingachcook illustrate white ambivalence toward the savage other as it existed in American literary discourse. They also represent two stages of a larger examination of how ethnicity shaped American identity. Taken separately as embodiments of the noble savage, these characters illustrate that the term, though useful as a critical tool, includes a wide range of representations of the savage other and that this range should be considered within the context of each writer's works.

Chapter 4 - Civilization and the Savage

This and the following chapter will examine how Melville and Cooper used EuroAmerican perceptions of the savage other to depict the ambivalence of EuroAmerican culture toward the savage other. This chapter shall examine how Cooper, in The Pioneers, and Melville, in The Confidence Man, fictively use the savage other to examine the workings of EuroAmerican culture as it marginalized the savage other by placing Indians and other non-white characters in either confrontational or complementary relationships with whites. Ironically to this end, both writers use the savage other the same way traditional European and Puritan literary discourses do: as an example of what the civilized EuroAmerican is not; that is, as an image that defines the EuroAmerican as much as it defines the savage. In so doing, both writers do not deride savage nature as did the Puritans, who used savage nature as one would use the negative in a photograph, but rather use it like a mirror whose reversed image suggests the link between savage and civilized and the ease with which they share characteristics. This is a major theme for both Cooper and Melville and one that links both works. Although Cooper chose to look at the American past and Melville was primarily engaged with the political issues of his time, what they both suggest is that the EuroAmerican institutions they examine in these two works are incompatible with and often inimical to nature, and are dehumanizing to all who come into

contact with them. While the sentiment that civilization despoils nature was a popular one for many nineteenth-century writers and artists as America experienced expansion and growth, it is evident that both writers were concerned with more than nostalgia for a disappearing past. They were concerned with examining fundamental changes in American culture, more specifically the loss of its moral center. For both writers, then, the relationship between savagery and civilization must be analyzed within a moral framework. This is clear in Cooper's examination of the conflict between civil and natural law in The Pioneers and in Melville's examination of American hypocrisy regarding racism and slavery in The Confidence Man.

John McWilliams, in Political Justice in a Republic, states that the primary question Cooper wanted to explore was who should inherit the continent and that his main concern was whites not Indians.¹ However, as stated earlier, by the time Cooper was writing, Indians were no longer a primary concern or threat to American society; their culture was fading. Therefore, the issue of who would inherit the continent was resolved. Rather the issue for Cooper was the moral nature of the culture that did not so much inherit the continent but subdue it (inevitably) through force. Cooper uses Natty Bumppo, a man of the forest, as surrogate Indian to confront Judge Temple in The Pioneers. As such, Natty's values are contrasted with those of Temple's, the man of the

¹ John McWilliams, Political Justice in A Republic. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) 11.

settlement. Their conflict over the interpretation of hunting laws mirrors the larger conflict between hunter and settler and Indian and EuroAmerican as American civilization evolved through its stages of development. Using this conflict, Cooper raises serious issues about the nature and role of law in American culture. The primary issue Cooper raises concerns the price of progress. The title of the novel itself suggests Cooper's ambivalence toward American culture, because it can refer to both Natty and Temple as ground breakers. The former, however, is subverted by the latter, whose idea of taming the land amounts to destroying natural laws of survival. In this way, Cooper presents the larger issue of the destructiveness of Western civilization as it encounters nature and the Indian.

It is with the death of Chingachcook, as John Mohegan, that Cooper acknowledges the incompatibility of white and Indian cultures. And while Cooper suggests the inevitability of the death of the latter, he also validates the Indian view of land use and the Indian relationship to nature through Natty's response to Temple. As indicated earlier, Natty is a surrogate Indian, and in this role he challenges white values. Natty engages with Temple in both action and dialogue to challenge the rule of EuroAmerican civil law. It is through Natty that Cooper expresses his own analysis of that law. Having lived in the forest, Natty can present the Indian view of land use and man's relationship to the natural world. In The Deerslayer, for example, Natty comes of age and is

given his name by the Indians because of his prowess as a hunter and warrior by the Indians. Moreover, as Donald Ringe points out, whenever he is given an opportunity to live among whites in settlements (in each Tale), he prefers to live in the forest.² In The Prairie Natty acknowledges that he is a race apart from whites, neither white nor Indian, and that he is the last of this race. While his Christian upbringing does not permit him the sacrifice of Chingachcook, and in fact he never identifies himself as an Indian, his attitude toward the land is compatible with that of Indians. That is to say, his criticism of the "wasty ways" of Temple is based on a view of a relationship with animals that is one of the hunter who hunts for food only. This is Natty's law of conservation. Moreover, he recognizes the role of the hunter and his prey as part of a natural order. Christopher Vecsey, as he describes the religious aspect of the Indian's link to nature, also describes the basic attitude that Natty's behavior reflects, although it is not verbalized as such by Natty: "Humans depended on nature for survival. However, nature in all its aspects was not invulnerable. It could run down and needed humans to maintain its cycles with seasonal rituals. It could suffer and thus humans had the ethical responsibility to protect it and not harm it."³ Natty's law of conservation includes the protection from the waste of the hunt, a waste that he feels is permitted or ignored by

² Donald Ringe, James Fenimore Cooper. (New York: Twayne, 1962.)

³ Christopher Vecsey, "American Indian Environmental Religions," American Indian Environments. Christopher Vecsey and Robert Venables, eds., (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980) 22.

Temple.

Natty bases his right to hunt on the land as he wishes on a belief that he is following natural law, something that he considers to be superior to man-made law because it is closer to God's law. Thus he resembles Locke's description of man in a state of nature because in such a state man attempts to live in accordance with divine law and nature is a reflection of the power and works of God. It is because of his belief that Natty systematically becomes marginalized and finally excluded, after he is humiliated in the stocks. He no longer fits in the white community which believes in the superiority of man to nature and does not recognize that divine law is demonstrated by life in the forest. In The Pioneers Natty is reduced from his heroic stature in the other Tales to a tired, anachronistic old man. There is no room for nature (and Natty) in Templeton because they are incompatible with the march of civilization which must dominate nature in order to progress.

Natty's insistence on following what he believes to be God's law and his dependence on the words of the Bible reveal his Christian roots, making his attitude a combination of Indian, Lockean, and Moravian values. What results are attitude and actions that justify his right to hunt, do not restrict another man's right to hunt, and oppose what he considers to be an unjust law - one that does not conform to divine law as reflected in nature. To Natty, law is not abstract but personal, experiential, and moral. It is based

on relationships between men, men and God, and men and nature. Above all, it applies to living, fallible beings. But it is not legitimized by writing or by contracts. This fundamental schism between his view of law and Temple's view is aptly summed up by Robert Venables' description of the differences between tribal and European societies as the first reflects *gemeinschaft* and the second *geshelshaft*:

GEMEINSHAFT

Moral bonds

Common interests

Symbols

Reciprocity

Community

GESELLSHAFT

Legal contracts

Self-interests

Definitions

Profit

Society⁴

This construct underlines Natty and Temple's fundamentally different ways of looking at the relationship between men and between men and society. It is these differences that each man's law supports. Judge Temple's law represents institutional, formal, contractual relationships that characterize EuroAmerican civilization. Natty's law represents the informal, communal law that characterizes tribal culture - one that includes nature within the structure of human community. It is these basic differences that are the source of conflict between Natty and Temple and demonstrate that of all the Tales this novel most clearly emphasizes the importance of the land to both Indians and

⁴ Robert Venables "Iroquois Environments and 'We the People of the United States'," in American Indian Environments . . . 83.

whites. The Pioneers also shows the degree to which their different attitudes toward the land determine who is to live on the land and who has the right to hunt on it.

The conflict over the right to hunt at any time has its roots in the difference between the way Temple views man's relationship to nature and the way Natty views the same relationship. For Temple the relationship has two aspects, both of which are foreign to Natty: a man's right to own land and all that is on it and a man's right to govern natural cycles. For the first, land is a property and a commodity. One can buy it, trade it and have title to it. This is clear in two scenes in the novel: the opening one in which Temple wants to know who owns the deer and the trial in which Effingham claims title to the land. For the second, man is superior to nature and may control it. This is clear in Temple's attempt to decide when a man may hunt and how much may be killed. In this way he tries to offset the cycle of conservation; that is, one in which men hunt for food only and when the animals are plentiful. It is not necessarily seasonal, but it is governed by natural need, not want. These concepts of Temple are unacceptable to Natty because he believes instinct does not have to be regulated by law, following as it does the natural laws that govern the behavior of hunter and prey: hunger and threat. Moreover, Natty sees his relationship to the land as stewardship, not ownership. Land to him is not a commodity; thus he feels a responsibility for its prudent use. The scene in which Natty

kills the deer on the lake illustrates how he views his relationship to nature: it is one of instinct, one of natural law to kill an animal whose role is to provide food for man: "While he was talking, Natty had instinctively employed himself in fastening the inner end of the bark rope . . . and rising suddenly on his legs said . . . 'Strike out John, let her go! The creature's a fool to tempt a man this way'"(296). He kills the deer out of season, violating Temple's law of conservation. Moreover, his belief in the supremacy of divine law suggests a belief in communal ownership of land, so that his killing of the deer is a rejection of the premise of nature as part of personal property. But to Temple, Natty's action symbolizes lawlessness. Temple wishes to conserve the land, but he also wants to advance progress. Furthermore, he realizes that progress itself can be dangerous without control. In recognition of this he establishes hunting laws which are uniform for all men. While he understands that Natty is a moral individual, he recognizes that men are fallible and need controls because they are not governed by Natty's morality and the efficiency of that control depends on its uniformity. For this reason the law snares Natty when he hunts out of season, regardless of his justification. For Temple civilization requires order and order is established through laws that are acknowledged by all and obeyed by all.

The Pioneers is a novel of polarities: Temple represents the institutionalization of social norms and social authority; Natty represents individuality and individual

freedom. Above all, it is a book about the establishment of a new order upon the land as represented by a EuroAmericann system of laws. When Temple speaks of taming the forest it is through the imposition of an order by law as it impinges on individual will. He feels also that law is what separates men from savages. Temple's views are rooted in Puritan perceptions that the land and its inhabitants are wild, and anything wild is, by nature, lawless. Natty, on the other hand, believes the wilderness has laws of its own that are divinely ordained, that men may learn from. Stephen Railton notes that what is right for Natty is not law but conscience, "open to God in communion with nature and humbled by the awe of His work."⁵ On the other hand, Temple's attitude is expressed in what Carolyn Merchant calls the recovery narrative in American history: "The recovery plot is the long slow process of returning humans to the Garden of Eden through labor in the earth Three subplots organize its argument: Christian religion, modern science and capitalism . . ."⁶ In describing the settlement of the continent, Merchant states EuroAmericans are men who "as fallen Adams became the heroic agents who transformed and redeemed fallen nature by subduing wilderness and replenishing the earth"(140). Temple is the embodiment of these fallen Adams. Indeed, The Pioneers is an illustration of the recovery narrative in Merchant's terms, but it is also one which

⁵ Stephen Railton, Fenimore Cooper. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.

⁶ Carolyn Merchant, "Reinventing Eden: Western Culture as Recovery Narrative," Uncommon Ground. William Cronon ed., (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995) 133.

reveals the aboriginal narrative it displaced, the one in which the earth is still a garden, and the EuroAmericans the agents by which it becomes a wilderness through their wasteful ways. Cooper thus pits two texts - two origin narratives - against each other in his novel. The Indian text is represented by Natty and the EuroAmerican text is represented by Temple. It is ironic that according to Merchant it is Temple not Natty who is the American Adam. This classification suggests not only a disparity between the critical analyses of Carolyn Merchant and W.R.B. Lewis,⁷ but also indicates the built-in ambiguity of Cooper's novel.

The characters can be read in more than one way. This is true of many of the characters in The Leatherstocking Tales such as Magua, Chingachcook, and Harry March. This ambiguity demonstrates not only Cooper's own ambivalence toward the savage/civilized dichotomy, but also represents his goal of examining the EuroAmerican ambivalence toward the dichotomy as well. In this he approaches Melville who, in The Confidence Man, posits the idea that identity is a matter of perception, a fluid concept, rather than a fixed characteristic. Moreover, by loosening the fixed definitions of savage and civilized identities, both writers suggest the necessity to consider the moral implications of fixing and making fluid the identity of EuroAmericans and non-whites.

But Temple is not as heroic or as sympathetic a character as Natty, who nevertheless always retains a

⁷ W.R.B. Lewis, The American Adam. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

semblance of the Romantic, Rob Roy-like renegade figure. This is an aspect which also makes him a sympathetic vanishing noble savage-like figure. While it is Natty who must leave Templeton - as he must leave all settlements - his moral purity and consistency, buttressed by his faith appears to be if not stronger at least more attractive than the moral codes of his white antagonists. Natty is a man of forest as much as Chingachcook is, and therefore his refusal to obey the laws of the settlement is to Temple an indictment of him and all savage others and of wilderness life, which, for Temple, represents a lack of restraint. Nevertheless, Stephen Railton suggests Natty is the moral center of the novel although Cooper seems to support Temple. The tension throughout the novel is the conflict between natural and man-made law. Natty subverts Temple, but he loses. And he has to leave Templeton because for him, as for all Indians like John Mohegan, settlement life is corrosive. But he leaves as a heroic if tragic figure, a white, almost chivalric, version of a dying Indian chief. Natty's farewell to Elizabeth resembles what Werner Sollors has identified as the tragic benediction characteristic of all vanishing noble savages.⁸ But it is also a subversive benediction about the law that suggests true justice abides only in heaven: "I pray that the Lord will keep you in mind - the Lord that lives in clearings as well as in the wilderness - and bless you and all that belong to you from this time till the great day when the whites

⁸ Werner Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

shall meet the red-skin in judgment and justice shall be the law, not power"(504). Cooper in this passage recognizes the triumph of white power but suggests its triumph is not due to its moral superiority. Compared to Chingachcook's farewell, it is ironically less compromising, suggesting that the surrogate Indian is more critical than the actual Indian, perhaps representing more closely Cooper's view of expansion and progress. It also demonstrates the degree to which actual Indian characters are marginalized even in Cooper's novels.

Although Natty seems to represent the moral high ground, this representation of Natty is also ambivalent, in that Natty is a loner; he has lived among tribes but is not a member. He is asked to join the white community, which he rejects also. He is a race apart, as he acknowledges in The Prairie. He lives on the margin of both cultures; he is a borderer and a marginalized man therefore, always just beyond the progress of the settlements, rejecting tribalization for either race.

Although Temple and Natty appear to be incompatible, several critics such as Ringe have suggested they are not antithetical. Ringe implies that The Pioneers is a novel of settlement and Natty and Temple represent two stages of a developing EuroAmerican civilization, suggesting the relationship between Natty and Temple is one of succession, not conflict. This critical analysis is not unlike the political analysis of the period that saw white dominance as a process of natural, inevitable progression. What Ringe sees

is the concomitant fictive representation of this view of EuroAmerican expansion. According to Ringe, Temple wants to bring moral law in accord with civil law, necessitating individual restraints and thus the marginalization of Natty's way of life. Temple's law requires that all men are treated equally, thus it restricts any one individual because it does not recognize that an individual may be morally superior to others and not need the same laws as other men, (as seems to be the case with Natty). This is because Temple perceives the law of the forest as not only incompatible with the law of settlement, but also inferior to it. Therefore within the structure of the novel, the two men see each other as opposites, as Cooper intended them to be.

It is significant that Temple is landlord and judge, land ownership being the key to the conflict between him and Natty. Natty does not own the land, yet he feels he has a right to hunt as he pleases. He also feels prior living on the land gives him hunting rights. Natty's claim is older than Temple's but because it is based on natural law; to him it is actually timeless. Temple also feels he has a historical claim to the land but his is based on a contract, a bill of sale. But his law establishes limits on not only title but also time, so while Temple considers his claim legitimate, it is limited in time and so not as old as Natty's in accordance with the way Natty perceives time: as limitless or at least governed by nature. These different concepts of time are but another expression of their

fundamental conflict that has coalesced around law. Natty's view is the traditional hunter's view. Temple's title is the essence of EuroAmerican legality and his law is the law of the land literally as well as figuratively. This conflict is not merely timely for Cooper but prophetic as well, anticipating the use of later treaties to secure Indian land and the ensuing problems caused by adherence to a written contractual form of law that is natural to one signatory and foreign to the other.

The establishment of law by Temple has as its greater goal to advance the development of civilization and eradicate savagery. He feels that without law there is no civilization. On the other hand, Cooper undermines this goal, as Charles Adams points out, by showing the gap between law and life, which is what Adams calls the distinction between "the law's forms and the human condition they are meant to govern". He suggests that the law is a depersonalizing instrument, disrupting both individual and communal identity, the latter resulting from the former.⁹ For Natty this is a dehumanizing instrument as well, robbing him of what he believes makes him human: to live harmoniously with God's laws as demonstrated by life in the forest, which is God's creation. For Natty then, Temple's law disrupts his relationship with nature, and therefore affects as well his sense of his own identity.

For Temple the law envisions things as they should be

⁹ Charles Adams, "The Guardian of the Law" Authority and Identity in James Fenimore Cooper. (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1990).

for all men; Natty's law envisions things as they are. They are incompatible. But Temple's law may also be corrupted by unscrupulous men. Natty does not presume to make laws for other men; that is precisely Temple's goal. He must codify a law for the whole community; that is the tenet of community living, but Natty is a loner. Adams suggests that it is the law that makes the men incompatible, but it is actually the law each man follows that make them incompatible. There are two different moral systems at work here based on different world views. And Cooper makes as strong a case for Natty's law as he does for Temple. When at the beginning of the novel there is some question as to who actually shot the deer, the Judge wants proof of the shot to determine who the deer belongs to. For Natty it is food and it is enough that it is dead; the duty is to eat it and use it, not claim it as prize. The deer is meat, not emblematic of anything, and of no other significance. It exists in relation to the hunter and to a cycle of nature that Natty obeys. The judge's questions are irrelevant to Natty and are illustrative of the law's "twisty "ways: "Here are two hurts, one through the neck and the other directly through the heart. It is by no means certain, Natty but I gave him one of the two." "Let who kill him," said the hunter rather surlily, "I suppose the creature is to be eaten"(21). The deer, for the judge, represents an opportunity to apply law of ownership. Therefore it is important that the Judge ascertain who shot it. Later, the Judge offers money for the deer as payment for

the meat and Natty refuses it. Thus the deer becomes something different from what it is. The law makes it an abstraction, which is exactly what happens when the land becomes property; it becomes lifeless. The law fragments identity in this way.

According to Adams, the law fragments Natty's identity by interpreting his behavior apart from its source(59). Natty's actions result from his beliefs. By judging them separately from the principles that guide them, the law destroys Natty's whole system of values and his moral identity. Adams goes on to prove this also destroys communal bonds because men cannot know each other as whole human beings. This destruction of wholeness is also destructive to tribal life, depending as it does on communal bonds. This evaluation echoes Magua's bitterness as he recounts how he was torn from his tribal life once he decided to follow the path and the laws of the "Canadian fathers."

In this way, Adams, like a number of critics, analyzes Natty's conflict as that of the individual confronting an institution. But in The Pioneers there is a conflation of Natty's individualism and his savagery and both aspects of his personality are marginalized, unable to live by Temple's law. Moreover, it is evident that Natty's individualism stems from a desire to live as a man of nature, closer to the savage than the civilized. So that his individualism fictively grows out of his role as surrogate Indian, and in opposition to Temple's law. Cooper is delineating the

EuroAmerican concept that social order is achieved through the institutionalization of civil law because Indian (or natural) laws create chaos - which is lack of social control. Temple's system of laws also implies the creation of a non-divine hierarchy of authority which Natty cannot ascribe to. Ironically, both Natty and Temple want conservation, but Natty's way must yield to Temple's way in the same way as historically the Indian yielded to the advance of White civilization. That is, natural must yield to civil law fictively as it did historically. Cooper's fiction thus bears verisimilitude to American history. As McWilliams states: "The qualities of Natty Bumppo must seemingly be sacrificed before Templeton can truly become a stable or ordered society. Natty Bumppo and Judge Temple each represent a great but conflicting principle and cannot forever remain within the same social framework"(127). Because Natty tries to follow natural law within Templeton, he incurs the penalties of civil law. His attempt at mediation fails, suggesting that his role as borderer or mediator between savagism and civilization is untenable. Perhaps John Mohegan/Chingachcook understood this better than Natty did. Leslie Fiedler's Christian savage of The Last of the Mohicans is an oxymoron in The Pioneers. Natural law, then, has no place in Templeton. On the other hand, Cooper shows how civil law may be perverted when Natty's hut is broken into and when the pigeons are slaughtered wantonly. In these ways Cooper clearly illustrates he recognizes the inevitability of a

dichotomy between natural and civil law and by extension between nature and civilization. The dialogues between Natty and Temple are therefore oppositional discourses.

A major element is Natty's belief system is his Christianity, which he has linked to his understanding of natural law and is consistent with Locke's description of the natural state of man. Natty's belief in natural law has as its premise that natural law is rooted in divine law, not only demonstrated through God's works but also through the Bible. But his faith is not a mitigating factor in his alienation from Templeton either to him or Temple, nor does it become a major factor in critical commentaries. Whatever ties he may have to Christianity, they are not enough to outweigh his tie to the forest. In this respect Natty embodies the Puritan belief in the wildness of nature (and implied tie to Paganism) that buttresses the dichotomy of savagery/civilization. Natty's tie to nature is too close.

In The Pioneers, civilization, as it is represented by codified law, triumphs over the savage, represented first by John Mohegan and then by Natty Bumppo. As such, Cooper, constrained by and compliant with history, accurately reflects the progress of the EuroAmerican settlements across the continent. But the morality of that progress is the issue in this novel. While the dominance of Temple's law, is inevitable, Natty's law, grounded in a consistent, unshakable set of personal ethics appears to be morally superior. Natty sees God in the wilderness; and does not see, therefore, an

opposition between nature and God. Temple clearly does not; he cannot trust the wilderness and his goal is dominance. William Cronon, in his essay "The Trouble With Wilderness: Or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," suggests that both attitudes were encompassed in the Puritan view of wilderness and illustrate a traditional, historic ambivalence toward wilderness.¹⁰ Cooper's novel encompasses and grapples with this through the conflict between Natty and Temple. However, by supporting Natty, Cooper undermines the rationale for Temple's dominance. Cooper does this by numerous confrontations that pit Natty and Temple in a series of dialogues that place their conflict into relief and examine the larger issue of the relation of law to morality. It is significant that Cooper uses noble savage imagery embodied by Natty and Chingachcook to provide the contrast to Temple as he embodies settlement life. In so doing the novel becomes a metaphor for the savagery/civilization dichotomy that was the catalyst for the struggle between Indians and whites for the American continent. And it makes clear that the institutions of civilization are inimical to those of the savage other, especially as he is linked to nature because the relationship between civilization and nature is oppositional.

By placing Natty and Temple in oppositional stances, Cooper suggests that when EuroAmerican culture separates itself from nature's laws, its morality changes. What ensues

¹⁰ William Cronon, "The Trouble With Wilderness; Or Going Back to the Wrong Nature," Uncommon Ground. William Cronon, ed., (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995).

is a marginalization of others, and a loss of autonomy by individuals. The Pioneers clearly demonstrates that Natty and Temple cannot share the same country; one way of life must dominate. Natty is the individual whose conscience is shaped by natural law as it reveals divine law. For him this provides the order for human life. Temple sees natural law as the law of wilderness: chaotic and causal. It is a law that man must shape. In this shaping, nature is objectified, and becomes other-in the same way that Natty and the Indians become others because they are marginalized by the progress of civilization.

While in The Pioneers Cooper examines EuroAmerican law as it facilitated the eradication of Indian culture (and rationalized its eradication), Melville, in The Confidence Man, examines both the institutionalization of slavery and the institutionalization of Indian hating. Slavery and Indian hating to Melville separate man from nature. They are equally destructive and in his novel they both symbolize the marginalization and destruction of otherness that results from racism. Thus Melville, like Cooper, suggests a loss of morality as America encountered and attempted to deal with non-white others in the nineteenth century.

Slavery is an issue treated by Melville in a number of his works, but it is in The Confidence Man that Melville examines the range of American racism and its implications as it shapes American identity, thus involving the two groups that played the most important roles in shaping American

ethnic discourse as they embodied the savage other: Indians and blacks.

In a work in which the central character's identity constantly shifts, Melville illustrates the futility of establishing race to establish identity. In so doing, Melville's work is a powerful political and moral indictment of the relationship between whites and non-white others. Carolyn Karcher, in Shadow Over the Promised Land, suggests the social importance of the work: "The Confidence Man emerges as Melville's most powerful indictment of nineteenth-century America - a nation that was bringing God's judgment on itself by enslaving and massacring its non-white citizens while posing as a religious and political haven."¹¹ Her reference to the religious aspect of Melville's indictment of slavery is well-supported by his use of religious imagery throughout the work as is his implication that Christianity was complicit in maintaining the institution of slavery.

The theme of slavery is immediately introduced with the destination of the ship: New Orleans, a major slave-trading city. Furthermore, the name "Black Guinea" links money and race. It is this link of man and money that underscores an element that cuts through the racial theme: the commodification of human beings - indeed the commodification of American society. For Melville, slavery converts humans into property for the sake of profit. It is this commodification that concerned Cooper as well as land became property and

¹¹ Carolyn Karcher, Shadow Over the Promised Land. (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1984).

with this concept the displacement of the Indian as an obstacle to ownership of the land.

The importance of money is primary in many of the exchanges between characters. Black Guinea begs for money, behaving like the dog he has been made to resemble through America's racism. Moreover, while the money he gets represents white charity, it also is a reminder of the trafficking in human beings whose worth is measured in profit and loss. With this it is clear that the idea of charity especially as expressed by money is hypocritical. And white hypocrisy will be shown throughout the novel in white relationships with non-white others.

Hypocrisy is suggested early in the lines of the mute in contrast with those of the barber ("No Trust"): "Charity thinketh no evil;" "Charity suffereth long and is kind;" "Charity endureth all things;" "Charity believeth all things;" "Charity never faileth."(2-3). All of these will be disproved in the novel as charity fails as a result of lack of trust, or as charity itself becomes suspect.

The importance of the shaving imagery to Melville's discussion of hypocrisy can be seen not only in The Confidence Man, but also in Benito Cereno. Shaving may be extended to mean to strip or clean in the sense of stripping someone not only of his beard, but also of his possessions. In this case, the barber may be said to be stripping his onlookers of the illusion of trust and thus undermining the reality or truth of what will transpire on the ship. "No

"Trust" is in direct opposition to the name of the ship: "Fidele." Likewise, Melville works to strip the mask of racial hypocrisy of American culture and strip the reader of any illusion he has. The shaving scene in Benito Cereno is more ominous in terms of the switching of roles between Cereno and Babo, but it is one in which there is the same sense of stripping, this time of Cereno's power, and the potential of stripping him of his life. It is also one in which there is a masquerade both during the shaving scene and as well as throughout the journey as Babo plays a confidence game with Delano. So that the use of masquerades and its link to confidence - or trust - recurs in Melville's work as he struggles to define the reality of race relations, while at the same time undermines the concept of race. To Melville, race, like the symbolic meaning of Moby Dick, is a matter of perception. But these perceptions have at their center a moral value systems that devalues others. It is for this reason that just as Delano and Cereno are indispensable for an understanding of Babo, the white characters aboard the *Fidele* are indispensable for the understanding of the identity and role of Black Guinea. They represent the racism that makes him who he is. Therefore, to de-emphasize critically their symbolic value would neutralize Melville's anti-slavery argument. For Melville, slavery, like Indian hating, exists not because there are savage others but because there are whites.

This may be another reason for Babo's silence. Melville

wishes to illustrate that the savage other is unknowable, especially when in Lucy Maddox' words he is overwritten or written out of American political and literary discourses.¹² Babo as other exists as mystery the way all marginalized people do because of the fact of their marginalization. And thus they are easily defined by the mainstream which, by virtue of wanting to make them knowable, first strips them of identity then creates new ones as a substitute. Delano's inability to recognize what is really going on is a product of his perception of Negro nature which to him is docile and dull. Likewise, the merchant in The Confidence Man cannot recognize Black Guinea in his guises as a white man for the same reason: his assumptions about black and white identity based on color. In The Confidence Man, Melville chooses to have Black Guinea engage in confrontational dialogues to illustrate the above but also to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the charity extended to him. And his subversion is masked in his personal appearance and servile behavior. Like Babo, he uses a masquerade to hide his rebellion, but unlike that of Babo, it is never unmasked in the text.

Structurally, The Confidence Man is similar to a game of Cat's Cradle; one cannot pull out one strand without pulling out one or two others. So that there is no beginning and no end; when all the strands are pulled out, they are all connected. Therefore the allegory and satire that are part of the critical analysis of the white characters are essential

¹² Lucy Maddox, Removals. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

to an understanding of the whole novel and its indictment of slavery because it is the white characters who must take responsibility for the condition of Black Guinea. And all are complicit, those who actually buy and sell slaves and those who are sympathetic but do nothing. This includes the Church and the Northern merchants. Thus, to analyze The Confidence Man only as a political or social tract is reductive.

In order to accomplish his purpose of undermining the idea of race as identity and show it to be a product of perception, Melville incarnates Black Guinea in a number of other characters; (and Black Guinea lists them as proof of his identity when he is challenged by the cripple: the weed man, herb doctor, soldier, man with a gray coat, man with a yellow vest, man with a violet robe, man with a big book, man with a brass plate). He identifies all by an article of clothing or by their profession, and does not therefore give them each personal identities, much like what he is denied by white culture. But Black Guinea also bears a resemblance to the mute, who has been variously described as both a Christ-like and a Satanic figure. And he confronts passengers with words that question their character and their ability to be trusted (as each passenger will mistrust both the mute and Black Guinea) as revealed by their ability to be charitable. In this respect, Black Guinea is both victim and victimizer as Babo and the mute are, seemingly innocent and demonic. This demonic quality echoes the threat the slave is to America as Melville thought that slavery would end in a

conflagration - perhaps a revolt on a large scale.

Black Guinea confronts four major characters relevant to Melville's consideration of the morality of a nation which makes slavery legal. And one of the ways he constructs the argument is by demonstrating how dehumanizing slavery is by portraying Black Guinea as canine-like, reduced to an animal and a caricature of a minstrel, an entertainer in blackface begging for pennies and depending on the goodwill of his white audience for his livelihood and his life.

The first character Black Guinea engages in conversation is the drover who seems to be overly concerned with his welfare: "But where do you live? . . . Where do you sleep there of nights?"(7). And then he proceeds to suggest that the life of a free Black man might be worse than that of a slave: "Dogs without masters fare hard"(7). This was the common pro-slavery argument that suggested the charitable paternalism of a system that, in addition to its actual cruelty, reduced slaves to children or worse: animals for whom creature comforts were the most important. In the drover's pro-slavery argument is embedded therefore a fundamental dehumanization that reduces blacks to the level of animals and stresses their inferiority and dependence. (Not unlike Delano who sees the "negreses" on deck as animals as they tend to their young). Black Guinea deflects the drover's suggestions, indicating his ability to survive through natural charity the grace of the sun, which presumably follows divine laws.

He then confronts a merchant who extends to him some alms, albeit self-consciously. This is a key confrontation in that the merchant represents the moneyed interests who are responsible for the trafficking of slaves and the wage slavery of the factory workers of the North that Melville also condemned. While speaking to Black Guinea, the merchant drops his business card, using an opportunity for charity to further his own interests and therefore his hypocrisy. In a later encounter with the weed man, one of Guinea's masks, and with the Black Rapids Coal Company Man who sells shares in mining - symbolizing Hell - the merchant's racism and suggested damnation are delineated. Later the merchant meets the weed man and they engage in a dialogue in which the weed man, who is a version of Black Guinea (as they both incarnate The Confidence Man), insists the merchant knows him:

"Don't you know me?"

"No, certainly."

"Don't you recall me now? Look harder."

Later, after the merchant demurs, he adds: "Can I be so changed? Look at me" (15). In this exchange after the merchant still doubts his own memory he says: "Doubt not that we are all well acquainted"(16). This last comment links all non-white others to all whites as a comment on how familiar non-whites are with white racism. In this eerie confrontation scene. Melville examines the concept of recognition as it is related to perception. The merchant cannot recognize Black Guinea when he is in "whiteface". Thus, Melville underscores

American racism as it identifies people only by color, and at the same time illustrates the relativity of color as this scene suggests the possibility of a black man in a white body. By implication, there is the possibility of a white man in a black body, exactly what Black Guinea was accused of being to begin with. Melville is suggesting in this scene that all men are potentially slaves, the merchant being a slave to his perception of what the other is supposed to look like and responding accordingly. Melville is underlining the fact that Americans see identity as a function of color; therefore, the change in color makes the other unrecognizable. Furthermore, identification based color depersonalizes, and in the case of blacks and Indians dehumanizes as well.

Later, when the merchant meets the man from the Black Rapids Coal Company and buys shares, it is evident he is buying into the slave system and into the Hell the mines represent. It is both an indictment of his participation in the slave trade and a suggestion that he is buying into Hell and will be damned for it. For Melville, slavery is a sin - even by association - even when one is just an observer if not a slaveholder. As he demonstrates with the introduction of the clergy, those who do nothing about slavery are as guilty as the slavers.

Black Guinea is later confronted by two ministers who sympathize with him, but do not in fact give him any money. The first is an Episcopalian and the second a Methodist. But

while they defend him against the accusations of the drover and the changing attitudes of the crowd, they give him nothing. Karcher suggests this is Melville's indictment of the clergy who knew about slavery but either accepted it as part of a grander divine scheme or took pains to convert slaves and attempted to help them adjust to their condition (203-4). This is evidenced by the fact that their support of Black Guinea is primarily verbal and is not sympathetic to his plight. He is an object of pity to them, an opportunity to sermonize. There are a number of examples which Melville uses to suggest the hypocrisy of both clergymen. The "triumvirate of innocence, tenderness and good sense" suggest the trinity and the connection of faith and hope charity - none of which are connected on the *Fidèle*. The phrase "suing word to action" as the Episcopalian hurries off to find a witness to support Black Guinea's claims is ironic, since Melville is indicting the inaction of the church against slavery, whose doctrine did not espouse slavery. Finally, the accusations against the Methodist suggests the contradiction of the term charity as used by the Methodist and clearly underscores Melville's theme: "Looks are one thing and facts are another. . . here on earth true charity dotes and false charity plots"(11). It is the Black Guinea character that serves as the catalyst for dialogues between many characters either as the subject of a discussion or as an actual presence that challenges each character's racial attitudes.

Melville uses otherness as a mask that reveals racism inherent in American culture. Black Guinea wears a mask of a minstrel, but he is also masked especially to whites who don't recognize his equality or humanity because of his color. In this disguise, he also unmask their racism, knowing showing them for what they are, while they remain hidden to themselves. The non-white other as foil is used by Melville to advance his argument for the reader; the characters cannot see themselves even as they behold what their racism has created. Once Black Guinea is physically off the ship, his incarnations continue his role. Furthermore, his character demonstrates Melville's concept of the relationship between charity and confidence, thus uniting economics and religion as either causing or complicit in slavery. This is a logical relationship because Melville sees the institution of slavery as sinful. Throughout the text money and religion play key and recurring roles either together or separately as economic motives are masked by piety and charity has pecuniary goals.

The confidence game that the Confidence Man plays in his various disguises is one which the characters play on each other and on themselves as each character repeats the illusion of equality which is part of the masquerade America uses to deny its racist character. In this book, Melville suggests that racism is played as one big confidence game in that American delude themselves and then reveal themselves as a nation of confidence men, who cannot however see their own

racism. They are victims of their own confidence game. It is essential for Black Guinea to assume other identities in order to reveal this racism in that the white characters express their feelings with other whites. Melville also suggests the constant presence of the non-white other even in disguise and as such by this presence reveals the true nature of American whites. Therefore, the presence of the other is ubiquitous even in disguise and even in absence. Black Guinea in his masks unmask whites who cannot see blacks. They are all Delanos. However, ironically it is the other who for Melville and for Cooper, that reveals who the EuroAmerican really is. This is an inversion of the traditional Puritan use of the savage other to define what the EuroAmerican was not. In all cases, however, the savage other is used emblematically, thus erasing a personal identity. Ironically then, both writers overwrite the other as well, giving him a fictive generic identity in order to advance their arguments.

What Melville does in the novel is create sub-texts to complement Black Guinea's in various masks. Black Guinea's dialogue, as text, is a confidence game in all his masks, so the reader, like each character who encounters Black Guinea, must decide what he really is. His duality constantly undermines even the readers' sympathy for him, placing the reader in the same position of the passengers on the ship. Thus the marginalized other becomes central in the text and even as he disappears he is still there through the dialogue of other characters as they interact with his masks and with

each other. Melville's use of religious allusions also runs counter to the main text, as they do in the Indian Hater section. They are a sub-text which turns on itself as the hypocrisy of religion is revealed. This use of sub-text becomes even more evident in the Indian hater section in which it runs counter to Western romance novels, including those of Cooper.

In this novel, the question of race is turned on its head as Melville shows the interchangeability of racial categories ". . .the huge Fidele still receives additional passengers in exchange for those who disembark . . . so though always full of strangers she replaces them with strangers still more strange. . ." (5). This is also a reference to the various masks that replace the mute or Black Guinea as confidence men. But he counters this with an examination of the various social political and economic institutions that sanctioned slavery based on color. Because of the relevance of money to charity and the negative and positive relationships of charity to confidence. Melville implies that slavery as an institution destroys morality and undermines the fabric of American society, reducing it to a con game. Slavery dehumanizes the slaveholder as well as the slave.

Black Guinea's true identity is left a mystery; as such, Melville stresses the unknowability of the other and subverts the definition of the other by EuroAmerican terms. But he refuses to marginalize him, recognizing his central role in

the discourse and in EuroAmerican culture. What Black Guinea declares about himself is also suspect in the text. As such he is like Babo, who, although he is silent, - or because he is silent - accomplishes the same textual purpose: to illustrate that the identity of the non-white other is an invention, a projection of white perceptions. The masquerade in this novel refers to the gap between what is espoused and what really is: the difference between "looks" and "facts." As such the novel is an indictment of the attitudes toward and treatment of non-white others in American culture.

To Melville, Indians as well as blacks were victims of racism. Narratively the Indians are linked to the Confidence Man (and thus also to Black Guinea and his other incarnations) in the section on charity for the Seminole Widows and Orphan's Home. The name itself is ironic because it recalls that the Seminoles were widowed and orphaned through the action of the U.S. government during Removal and escaped to the swamps of Florida. Charity for them within this context is a hypocritical gesture, as it was for Black Guinea, and it is after the fact. True charity would have been to allow their husbands and fathers live. Thus this section also is a reminder of the drover's words as he impugns the charity on the *Fidele* as false.

Moreover, the proliferation of Indian allusions throughout the novel illustrates that Indians and blacks are central to Melville's discourse on race relations, although historically as Wai-chee Dimock points out, each group

symbolized different things to the EuroAmerican: the Indian represented freedom and the Black represented the lack of it."¹³ By bringing them together in the same text, Melville is equalizing their importance by conflating the present and the past in one continuous line of EuroAmerican racism. In so doing he shows through the hideous actions of the Indian Hater how race hatred results in the destruction of the character of the hater in the same way that slavery damns the slave holder or trader and, by extension, the morality of a country that condones both. In addition, by centralizing both groups in his discourse by either actual presence or by implication, he is demarginalizing two groups that have been traditionally been written over or out of American political and literary discourses. He is also centralizing the issue of ethnicity to the discourses. As stated earlier, D.H. Lawrence describes America as being haunted by "grinning unappeased aboriginal demons."¹⁴ it is an image that could well describe Black Guinea, or Babo.

Jonathan Cook notes that the centrality of "The Metaphysics of Indian Hating" in the novel points to Melville's view of the centrality to American culture of the myth of the American frontier.¹⁵ In fact, the Indian hater figure has its genesis in a tradition of literary discourse beginning with Puritan sermons and continuing on through captivity narratives, the legends of the Boone figure and

¹³ Wai-chee Dimock, *Empire for Liberty*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) 47.

¹⁴ D.H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*. (New York: Penguin, 1977) 318.

¹⁵ Jonathan Cook, *Satirical Apocalypse*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996) 187.

finally the "dark and bloody ground" sub-genre of the Western romance. In each there is the tradition of EuroAmerican man who must conquer the savage other for EuroAmerican civilization to advance. Michael Paul Rogin compares the role of the Indian hater to the man who does the dirty work for others so that they may keep their hands clean. Specifically, he does whatever is necessary to advance the progress of civilization. Rogin labels the Indian hater as the "captain of the vanguard of conquering civilization, a pathfinder in the literal as well as figurative sense who will cleanse the West of its savage inhabitants."¹⁶ In this typology, and in the literary discourses that develop it, the Indian is polar opposite to his representation as the noble savage who was doomed to die as a result of evolution. The Indian hater is the embodiment of the settling of the West through violent means. What the Indian hater represents is the rebirth of civilization through murder. This is what Melville sees as the true story of the frontier, in Richard Slotkin's phrase, regeneration through violence.¹⁷

While Melville purportedly created Moredock from an account in James Hall's The Wilderness and the Warpath, Moredock also closely resembles Nick in Bird's Nick of the Woods. Nick is the Indian hater par excellence. A Quaker whose family was murdered by Indians, Nick is a phantom killer who resides in the forest and pursues and kills

¹⁶ Michael Paul Rogin, Subversive Genealogy. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979) 246.

¹⁷ Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence. (Hanover: Wesleyan Press, 1993).

Indians. Unlike Moredock, he is pure killer, in that he does not have a family nor does he socialize with other whites. He is solitary and totally single-minded. He is a man without a community and embodies both love and hate, illustrating how one can beget the other after contact with the savage. But unlike Moredock who can both love and hate and is therefore an imperfect Indian hater according to Charles Noble, Nick can only hate and is therefore the perfect Indian hater in his singlemindedness of purpose. However, Noble's description of the Indian hater can apply to both Nick, and Moredock: "He broods on his injury in nature's solitude and seeks revenge . . . his desire for vengeance removes him from normal social intercourse . . . he has no use for philanthropy"(245).

The Indian hater *par excellence* and Moredock, his imperfect clone, are characters that embody contradiction. In this respect they also embody the paradoxical nature of the novel, which is full of contradictions and masquerades: "As human oxymoron the Indian hater manages to be . . . both lover and hater . . . John Moredock for instance is an example of something apparently self-contradicting . . . namely that all Indian haters have at bottom loving hearts" (Dimock 181-82). Dimock also discusses another contradiction that is not only relevant to Moredock but also to every Indian hater: they are both victims and victimizers. They are targets of violence and they commit violence. They are both conquerors and avengers. But these characteristics do not in this novel stem from each other. In this section, Noble

points out that Indian violence has almost ceased so that the role Moredock plays is not justifiable. What Noble is suggesting therefore, is that there is a tradition of Indian hating that is passed along from generation to generation "with mother's milk" as part of a cultural discourse, and Moredock is recipient and actor for the discourse. And while he has in fact suffered personal injury, the act of punishing all Indians is racial, not personal. His vengeance is a throwback to the Puritan concept of the evil savage other. So that each Indian is metonymic, representing all Indians, and embodies a race that itself embodies evil and threatens civilization. In wiping one out he is wiping them all out. He is making the frontier safe. And in so doing he is fulfilling a cultural and historical role that overrides personal injury.

The roots of this role lie in the Boone figure. So that Moredock must be seen not only as an individual but a representative type that Melville evokes for his argument. Indian hating is seen in this novel as a tradition and it is this tradition Melville analyzes as he suggests that it has been institutionalized through literature and folklore. This type additionally can be seen not only as a victim of Indians but also a victim of his own hate, which isolates him from his community. Indian hating was not a legal institution in the way slavery was; however, it was accepted. Melville's strategy is to attack it ethically by revealing the Indian hater's irrationality and to demonstrate how the hater turns

into a being as Satanic as his target. Thus, Melville undermines Noble's justification for Indian hating, providing a counter-discourse much in the same way Black Guinea provides a counter discourse to that of the drover. Moredock himself provides the counter-discourse as it becomes apparent that his hatred and actions are extreme and irrational. At the time there were no institutions to structure Indian/white relationships other than a tradition of violence, since Indians had no legal status. It is on this premise that Melville builds his analysis of Indian hating.

Cook discusses both Moredock and the Indian hater *par excellence* as Satanic figures who "constitute Satanic antiheroes whose hatred instead of being directed at a demonized God is directed at a demonized race of men . . . they both embody Satan's heroic assertion of will . . ." (122). As such, Cook expands Dimock's assertion that the Indian hater is a living contradiction, for there is clearly a heroic aspect to Milton's antihero. That characteristic makes both Satan and Moredock at once repulsive and fascinating characters. The resemblance between Satan and the Indian hater centers on their rage, their solitariness and their desire to destroy. Furthermore, they both have extraordinary determination and a strong sense of individualism, admirable traits in terms of American culture. The result though is that their strengths are perverted. Satan is an outcast who cannot love. The Indian hater *par excellence* becomes the same and Moredock, who is a diluted form of the

latter can never integrate fully into society. He must go off periodically to kill Indians. Judge Hall considers Moredock a basically good man with a peculiar trait. And most of his story tries to explain the genesis of the Indian hater. It is a rational, legalistic argument. He cites Moreodock's love of family as a mitigating factor for his murderous propensities. In his explanation, according to William Bryant, can be seen the Judge's own racism: "the unexamined assumption beneath the original Hall argument is that if the murder of an Indian does not invalidate Moredock's professed benevolence toward fellow men, then Indians occupy a class of being lower than white men; they are not human."¹⁸

In Hall's argument there is the same fragmentation of personality Adams pointed out in his discussion of law and Natty Bumppo. Hall's argument seems on the surface to be sound, but it is not. The underlying problem is that the Judge divorces the actions of the Indian hater from the larger moral questions dealing with the preservation of human life. There is no context of total system of ethics within which to consider Moredock's actions. Hall separates him from his actions by evoking other qualities, thus setting up a dual system of morality. This is not a holistic view that incorporates the relationship of a man's actions to his principles and in fact separates Moredock from other men. The result is the separation of a man from his community - what happens to the Indian hater. Both the Indian hater par

¹⁸ John Bryant, Melville and Repose. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

excellence and Moredock can never engage fully with the larger community. Their murderous drive either keeps them separate or compels periodic separation. Ultimately the Indian hater is dehumanized - and demonized - by his actions. In this respect, Melville, like Cooper, is suggesting that EuroAmerican law permits and condones the actions of the Indian hater because it refuses to hold Moredock responsible for his actions.

One more reason for Moredock to behave with impunity is implied in another section of the chapter: the Indian had no legal standing and historically was considered a lesser form of human being. There are a number of startling similarities between Natty and Moredock. They are both solitary; they know the woods; they are strong, individualistic and private. They are both similar to Boone - all three are pathfinders and killers. Lawrence calls Natty a solitary killer, suggesting that it is this image that is the true image of the frontier hero: "The essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic and a killer"(329). Natty is sympathetic but he can be merciless. And he loses his innocence in killing; that is how he acquires his name. If Lawrence is accurate, then he is suggesting that Moredock represents an American legend as much as Natty does. Hall calls Moredock "Leatherstocking nemesis" implying a polarity, but it may be ironic; actually they may be more alike than different.

Melville is rewriting the frontier myths. He is suggesting that the killing of savage others is in the

American grain. It is significant that Noble calls Moredock an American Adam, what Lewis labels Natty. Within Lawrence's critical construct, the American Adam becomes a killer on the frontier - just as the Puritans feared. And it is his contact with Indians that turns him. The influence of nature, of everything savage, of the wilderness itself forces him to become a killer, and the same can be said of Natty. Moredock may be Natty in disguise, in keeping with the general tone of the novel, or may represent what is potential in Natty. Moredock's characteristics as representative of the violent aspect of American culture are certainly present in other novels, most notably in Moby Dick, in which they are realized in Ahab.

In this section of The Confidence Man, Melville is rewriting texts, the Boone legend, The Leatherstocking Tales, folklore; or substituting alternate readings of American cultural history to form a new discourse in which he revises our views of the frontier. This is characteristic of the whole novel as Melville integrates many other texts, especially the Bible, from which allusions are incorporated with double meanings to undermine the original allusion. His novel is a masquerade for what he considers to be an American cultural masquerade for racism. Primarily, Melville rewrites the Frontier romance, suggesting that it is what has been assumed to be a sub-genre only: the "dark and bloody ground" Western romance. Thus, he is also implying that this is also the real text of the American frontier. Melville manipulates

the text that has been American history in this section in order to show it as a confidence game American has played with itself and fallen victim to. The reality is that Moredock, not Natty is the American and he thus shows that violence has nurtured the growth of America.

In fact, Melville prefers that we see American cultural history as a text written by EuroAmericans in order to marginalize non-white others. Charles Noble tells a story about Judge Hall who tells a story about Moredock the source of which was a story by the writer James Hall who was one of Melville's sources. The Judge mentions how the story of Indian nature is passed down by parents to children. The Indian is totally fictionalized; he becomes a text; framed successively by generations who rewrite the text that came before. They become dehumanized. The Indian is framed within stories embedded in layers of discourse and thus written over by successive generations until he disappears - except as he exists fictively. And even Melville uses him to make a point. But "The Metaphysics of Indian Hating" is about white racism and the fiction about the West just as the sections on Black Guinea and his various embodiments are about white racism.

Herschel Parker examines how the section is a commentary in the "impracticability of Christianity."¹⁹ This is also the aspect of the novel which examines the nature of Christianity as it is incarnated in Christian charity and its

¹⁹ Herschel Parker, "The Metaphysics of Indian Hating." Melville: Modern Critical Views. Harold Bloom, ed.. (New York: Chelsea House, 1986).

practice. In his analysis the Indians are devils and the haters are Christians, making Christianity a religion of hate because according to Parker it is when they are hating and killing that the Indian haters are acting like Christians destroying evil and the foes of Christianity. Christianity then becomes the practice of devil hating (327). Parker quotes the Bible to support his concept of the militant aspect of Christianity but Melville's Methodist minister who attacks the cripple is a prime example as well.

Parker's interpretation runs counter to that of William Schroeder who reads the section straight, as an account of how an Indian hater is created and as an apology of Moredock's actions.²⁰ Schroeder's interpretation is in fact incompatible with the interpretation of the novel as a satire on American morality in which everything and everyone are not what they appear to be. Even if Moredock could be considered heroic, it means that Melville is elevating a killer, in itself a cruel joke. Schroeder mentions that Moredock has located evil (the Indian) in its home. Within the parodic framework of the novel, it is true. Moredock has indeed done so; it is within himself. This is Melville's message of the Indian hater section. This section is not about Indians, it is about whites and what they have done to Indians in the same way the sections on Black Guinea are about white racism.

Parker's analysis justifies the contradictory character

²⁰ John Schroeder, "Sources and Symbols for Melville's Confidence Man." (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971).

of a man who can both embody love and hate. In fact it is probably only the Indian hater who can embody such extremes in his nature. But it is not a unique construction; murder in the name of piety was the motivation of a number of Puritan massacres, notably that of the Pequots. And a major theme of the captivity narratives was the wish for swift and deadly divine retribution. But to take it to its logical conclusion, the Indian hater must become like his target, embodying as he does the murderous rage and thirst for vengeance that characterize the ignoble savage. So that he becomes the ignoble savage. This is Melville's point as the slaveholder and the slave trader lose their humanity because while they may embody Christian militance, they have lost Christian charity and thus the compassion that would have made Indian hating and slave trading impossible.

It is ultimately the lack of true charity that defines the masquerades on the *Fidèle*. Furthermore, it is the interchangeability of the Indian hater and the ignoble savage that is part of the trope of the Confidence Man for he is a person of many interchangeable disguises. It is Melville's fundamental comment that this interchangeability destroys the dichotomy between savagism and civilization making not only slavery and Indian hating reprehensible, but the slaveholders and Indian haters reprehensible as well. Moreover, he suggests the former are American traditions that will eventually destroy the fabric of American culture as they destroy the humanity of those who practice them.

Both Cooper and Melville see the price of developing American culture as a loss of a moral center. In both writer's works, non-white others are either marginalized or destroyed. And the other is primarily defined by his race, which is shown to be a questionable way of establishing identity or community. For Moredock and the white passengers on the *Fidele*, the other is black or Indian. What Cooper delineates in *The Pioneers* and Melville, in *The Confidence Man*, is that the American discourse on ethnicity is really a discourse about American morality.

Chapter 5 - Nature and the Savage

As the last four chapters illustrate, the history of the EuroAmerican's contact with the non-white savage other clearly demonstrates that the former conceptualized the latter as a metaphor that represented everything the Euro-American was not, and used the term savage to denote the difference. Moreover, the creation of the noble savage and ignoble savage types and the literary uses of the savage as a tool of social criticism demonstrate that the EuroAmerican considered the savage other both an attractive and repulsive being. In all cases, however, the savage other was identified with nature, itself an object of attraction and repulsion for EuroAmericans. It is this link between nature and savagery that Cooper destabilizes with Natty and Melville destabilizes with Ahab by illustrating through these characters that it is man's estrangement from nature that makes him savage. In so doing, they redefine the term savage and thus destabilize the savagery/civilization dichotomy invented by the EuroAmerican.

In The Conquest of America, Tzevetan Todorov suggests that with the discovery of the Indian Columbus defined the other as savage, and linked savagery to nature by describing the native inhabitants he saw as the *fauna* and *flora* of a country.¹ By so doing, Columbus created a definition of otherness that would resonate in the Puritan perception of

¹ Tzevetan Todorov, The Conquest of America: Perceiving the Other. (New York: Harper and Row, 1984) 5.

the Indian, and be applied by other EuroAmericans to other non-whites. Journals of European explorers to Africa used the same method of description for Africans. This link to nature and the primitive can be seen in Delano's description of the slaves on the ship in Benito Cereno. However, as Slotkin points out, it is the Indian who is central to the Euro-American's mythopoetic past (and his identity) because of the former's perception of the latter's freedom and link to the land.

For the Puritan (and later EuroAmericans), the Indian was part of the wilderness of the continent, both of which were invested with otherness: the Indian was Satan and the wilderness was Biblical desert. And for the Puritan both had to be either overcome or transformed: the desert had to be cultivated and the Indian removed or converted. In addition, by defining the savage other, Columbus established the dichotomy between European and other that anticipated the nature/culture dichotomy or savagery/civilization dichotomy that would inform future American literary and political discourses.

Todorov, in describing Columbus' attitude toward the other, suggests the fundamental aspects that have characterized EuroAmerican perception and treatment of the other since contact: "What is denied is the existence of a human substance truly other, something capable of being not merely an imperfect state of oneself. These two elementary figures of the experience of alterity are both grounded in

egocentrism . . . Columbus' behavior implies that he does not grant the Indians the right to have their own will that that he judges them in short, as living objects . . . The entire history of the discovery of America, the first episode of the conquest, is marked by this ambiguity: human alterity is at once revealed and rejected"(42-49). This revelation and rejection are noticeably present in the nineteenth-century literary and political discourses that favored Indian extermination while romanticizing the Indian in fiction.

Two aspects of alterity for the Puritans were the acknowledgement and fear of an internal other: the wild man in the self. This they projected onto the Indian. The recognition of an internal other by the Puritan and later generations of EuroAmericans posited the existence of a threatening, imperfect self, vulnerable to temptation, chaos, loss of judgment and reason, a self which could be controlled and perfected only through religion. This self became translated into the unconscious (or *id*) when America became a secular republic.

It is Melville who plumbs the unconscious in Ahab, Tom, and Ishmael to show how it reveals their actual and/or potential (savage) otherness. What is important is that in each case, the otherness within each character is revealed as he confronts an external other: Ahab, Moby Dick; Tom, the Typee; and Ishmael, Queequeg. It is the external savage other - mysterious, knowledgeable, sometimes silent, alternately attractive and repulsive, and always allied with the natural

(non-civilized) world - that triggers the revelation of the internal other. Thus, Melville preserves the Puritan perception of the link between the internal and external non-white, savage other (and extends it to include blacks and Polynesians) in order to subvert it. That is, it is in a confrontation with the savage other that the internal savagery of the EuroAmerican is revealed. In Babo's silence - or perhaps especially in his silence, his cruelty, and his revolt - Melville recalls the internal, intrinsic savagery of the system of slavery and those who would trade in slaves or support the trade. Additionally, Black Guinea in all his disguises as he makes the passengers respond or react to him, is a device that uncovers the internal degrees of savagery and cruelty of American racism. Moreover, in Melville's work the internal other, like the external other, may be recognizable, but is ultimately unknowable, fearful and uncontrollable; it is the essence of a universal human self that is at bottom undefinable. This is illustrated by Ahab.

EuroAmericans had to face otherness from another source in addition to Indians: the American land, which they conceptualized as wilderness. Indians were inhabitants of that wilderness, but they did not represent wilderness. Rather they represented what happens to man when he lives in the wild: he himself becomes wild. So that the Indian represented for the EuroAmerican the potential wildness in himself. In addition, nature itself had an evil, horrible aspect, an aspect that was recalled by Melville in Moby Dick,

and one which Henry Nash Smith has succinctly located thus, as he cites a line from the novel: "'Though in many of its aspects this visible world seems formed in love, the invisible sphere was formed in fright.' The native wildness of the West served him as a means of expressing one of his major intuitions."² He goes on to say: "But to Melville the wild West like nature in general came to seem in the highest degree ambiguous. It was not more certainly good than bad, yet in either case it was terrible and magnificent"(79). The intuition Smith is referring to is the horror beneath the surface of the natural world. In Melville's novel it lies beneath Moby Dick's exterior of whiteness and perhaps beneath the surface of the sea itself. This horror is also illustrated on a less universal level in Typee as Tom literally uncovers the horrible truth of cannibalism on Edenic Typee.

According to Robert Cronon, the land played a central role in American history, first as wilderness and then as frontier. But he suggests that in both cases, wilderness and frontier were American constructs of nature and were therefore artificial concepts.³ Cronon suggests that the EuroAmericans overwrote nature because nature was seen by them as another form of otherness. Cronon, in describing how nature was overwritten, also mentions the concomitant need to remove Indians in order to make possible the myth of virgin (uninhabited) wilderness, saying: "There is nothing natural

² Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1950).

³ William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness or Going Back to the Wrong Nature," Uncommon Ground. William Cronon, ed., (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995).

about the concept of wilderness: . . . it is entirely a creation of the culture that holds it dear . . ." (79). He describes the creation thus:

. . . wilderness represents a flight from history. Seen as the original garden, it is a place outside of time from which human beings had to be ejected before the fallen world could properly begin. Seen as the frontier, it is the savage world at the dawn of civilization whose transformation represents the very beginning of the national epic. Seen as the bold landscape of frontier heroism, it is the place of youth and childhood to which men could escape abandoning their pasts and enter a world of freedom where the constraints of civilization fade into memory. Seen as the sacred sublime, it is the home of a God who transcends history as standing as the one untouched and unchanged by time's arrow . . . (79)

Within this context, the Indian becomes an obstacle to this historical conceptualization of nature: he is evidence of man's ability to live with nature historically, not as metaphor or projection, but as one who actually lives off the land. Thus, he possesses his own set of myths (based on his relationship with the land) that the EuroAmerican viewed as incompatible with his own myths. The historical Indian, therefore, had no place in EuroAmerican; furthermore, he threatened the EuroAmericans' cultural necessity to create the wilderness.

Cronon states that for the Puritans "wilderness was a place to which one came against one's will and always in fear and trembling" (71). But even from the beginning, within the concept of wilderness as defined in Biblical terms lay the seeds of the later Romantic view of wilderness with its concomitant concept of the sublime that flowered in the late

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His comments also suggest the early Puritan ambivalence toward wilderness and nature that was a contributing factor to the later romanticization of nature and the Indian:

To gain such remarkable influence the concept of wildness had to become loaded with some of the deepest core values of the culture that created it and idealized it: it had to become sacred. This possibility had been present in the wilderness even in the days when it had been a place of spiritual danger and moral temptation. If Satan was there, then so was Christ who had found angels as well as beasts during His sojourn in the desert By the eighteenth century this sense of wilderness as a landscape where the supernatural lay just beneath the surface was expressed as the sublime . . . (73)

This was not surprising, since the religious element, the presence of God in nature as nature revealed His works and His order, was part of the original Puritan and later Romantic view of wilderness.

Cooper was aware of the importance of wilderness to American culture. As Perry Miller notes: "to regard only the literary scene, we must recognize that our first national novelist James Fenimore Cooper dramatized the obsessive American drama that of Nature versus civilization"⁴ He includes Melville and Emerson in this assessment and mentions this opposition as a literary major theme for the time as well. To Miller it is this opposition, not the savagery/civilization dichotomy that is a key cultural characteristic of the literary discourse of the nineteenth century. He describes Cooper as preeminent depicor of this opposition

⁴ Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1956) 5.

who "even while glorifying the forest virtue of America, also portrayed the brutal skinners in The Spy and the settlers in The Pioneers who brutally slaughter the pigeons"(214). Both novels thus clearly depict Cooper's understanding of the destructive power of civilization when it encounters nature.

Carolyn Merchant speaks of the EuroAmerican attitude toward nature and otherness as a narrative recovery text in which Puritans and later settlers saw their role on the continent as one of domination and constructed a narrative accordingly:

The Pilgrim migration, as recorded in the text by William Bradford, conforms to the six elements of the mythic narrative identified by the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp: 1. the hero's initial absence 2. his transference from one place to another 3. the combat between hero and villain 4. The hero's receipt of a gift 5. The victory and 6. The final repair of the hero's initial absence. In this case the hero William Bradford leads his people through trials and tests in the struggle to recreate the garden in the New World.⁵

This narrative is repeated in Frederick Jackson Turner's view of the settling of the West expressed as the six stages of victory:

1. the frontier is defined as the absence of settlement, civilization . . . 2. Europeans are transferred across space as the succession of the frontier line moves west . . . 3. the individual hero is in combat with the villain the wilderness, Indians, wild beasts . . . 4. the heroes recover the gift of free land 5. the encounter with the frontier transforms hero into victor 6. democracy and civilization in a perennial rebirth fill the land, liquidating the initial absence.⁶

⁵ Carolyn Merchant, "Reinventing Eden Western Culture's As Recovery Narrative," Uncommon Ground. William Cronon, ed., (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995) 140.

⁶ See Uncommon Ground. 140.

Both versions, in order to have a happy ending, implicitly rewrite Indian identity as well: the Indian becomes a threat and an obstacle that must be overcome. The goal of all these texts was to make civilization "the final goal, the telos toward which wild nature was destined. The progressive narrative undoes the declension of the Fall. The 'end of nature' is civilization. Civilization is thus nature natured, *natura naturate* - the natural order or nature ordered and tamed" (Merchant 147).

From the beginning of contact then, nature was identified with otherness, whether in its own state or as symbolized by others—who were then defined as barbaric or savage. And the New World was rewritten as a text of recovery in which the EuroAmerican had an opportunity to recreate the Garden of Eden through the taming of nature and any non-European (therefore non-Christian) others. Within this text all others became metaphors, including the land itself.

It is apparent that historically, the recovery narrative was actualized as EuroAmericans moved West, removed the Indian and cultivated the land. What Cooper and Melville do in their works is subvert the recovery narrative, but not by changing history or by escaping into the nineteenth century's conceptualization of nature which cast it in the role of Romantic sublime, mimicking the British Romantics. Rather, they both recognize nature as the quintessential other for the EuroAmerican and nature/civilization as the essential dichotomy in American culture. In this dichotomy for both

writers, the savage other is the personification of nature. For Natty the Indian plays this role; for Ahab, it is Moby Dick. And by placing both characters in a relationship with these others, Cooper and Melville explore the implications of the EuroAmerican's engagement with nature.

Natty and Ahab, in their respective attempt to deal with nature as other, represent polarities on a continuum of confrontations between EuroAmericans and nature since contact. It was a progression of harmony and aggression that followed the development of the American republic as the EuroAmerican distanced himself from nature. This distancing is illustrated by Temple's laws as he tries to regulate man's behavior and in so doing subverts the natural laws of hunter and prey. Ironically, the laws of civilization, by distancing nature, also distance man from the recreation of the sublime and sacred aspects of the Garden because the imposition of human laws implies an imperfection in natural laws that must be corrected. This seeming contradiction supports Cronon's view that the EuroAmerican attitude toward nature is at best ambivalent: seeing it as good and evil, desirable and repulsive, elevating and frightening. It follows then, that any representation or embodiment of nature, such as the Indian or the white whale, must also be the target of this ambivalence.

At the same time, the ambivalence extends to the consideration of the effects of nature on man. The Puritans feared that contact with nature would render man savage and used the Indian as evidence. Therefore, nature and the savage

had to be tamed. This idea is clearly subverted by Cooper in the creation of Natty Bumppo's moral code. On the other hand, Ahab lapses into savagery in his pursuit of Moby Dick. But Melville posits the idea that the pursuit, which assumes monomaniacal proportions and is not based on the natural law of hunter and prey, is what makes Ahab savage; that is, it is the perversion of natural laws that makes the EuroAmerican a savage. Ahab hunts the whale for revenge, not for food. So both writers not only blur the dichotomy between savagery and civilization, but also question the definition of each term as they examine the civilized in the savage and the savage in the civilized, thus clearly showing that man is capable of both.

Melville emphasizes the unnaturalness of Ahab's quest and the unnaturalness of a culture that can create an Ahab. And it is in the confrontation with a creature of nature that Melville can examine both. Likewise for Cooper, it is by placing Natty within the forest that he can demonstrate that savagery as the Puritan conceived of it is not an inevitable outcome. Both writers illustrate that it is not nature that makes the savage, but what savagery man possesses will be brought out in his encounter with nature. For Melville and Cooper then, nature provides, in the words of John McWilliams, the "neutral ground". McWilliams describes the neutral ground thus: "For it became symbolic of America and the struggle for the land."⁷ The neutral ground does not

⁷ John McWilliams, Political Justice in a Republic. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) 46.

change a man's identity or even respond to it; rather it allows a man to reveal his identity. That is, in the confrontation with nature a man reveals what he always has been. Cooper uses the neutral ground to reveal different types of Americans as they confront the wilderness, showing a range of morality in the responses to life in the forest and the treatment of the Indian. For Cooper, the forest unmask a man as for Melville the sea unmask Ahab in his quest for Moby Dick.

Natty's morality is based not only on an innate sense of right and wrong as taught by his Moravian background, but also by what he sees in the forest. It is in the forest that he believes God's laws are made manifest. He feels the forest reinforces the sense of right and wrong which he believes all men possess. While the forest is neutral ground, Natty perceives in it a correlation between divine law and natural law. It is a matter of perception. It is the ways in which Natty and Ahab perceive nature and their relationship to it that make their actions polar moralities. In a discussion with Chingachcook Natty says: ". . . the great principle of Christianity is to believe without seeing; and a man should always act up to his religion and principles . . . "That is strange for a wise nation, said the Delaware . . . "the red man looks hard that he may see and understand"(56). Natty sees the reality of nature, but believes it is driven by God's laws. He sees a purity in nature in its existence. It exists unselfconsciously, amorally. Furthermore, to Natty it

is man's laws and language that distance man from nature's purity, creating a veil between man and nature. For Natty, his experiences with nature are pure; he can recognize both beauty and terror in it, unlike Ahab, who sees only a mystery he cannot penetrate. Nature for Ahab veils itself. And the whale is the greatest mystery of all. He wants to remake nature, to make it comprehensible and he cannot. This produces his rage.

Joel Porte suggests the authenticity of Natty's experience in nature: "It is that nature itself utters the essential truth of its creation. It cannot falsify; it cannot deceive it cannot help but say precisely what it is . . . Cooper makes it clear that . . . Natty Bumpo . . . is a man whose closeness to and reverence for nature enables him to speak the true name of every created thing and thus get as close to essential truth as a man can."⁸ This is why Natty cannot live in the settlements.

But in seeing the forest as it is, Natty can also see its cruelty and recognize the necessity of violence and killing. In Smith's words, he can recognize the "sinister dynamic of nature"(78). Thus, Cooper is linked to Melville in that they both express a vision of nature that is awful as well as awesome. It is the impassiveness and inexorability of nature, especially as illustrated in the passing of the seasons and the cycles of life and death in each season, that make nature terrible as well as sublime for Natty. But the

⁸ Joel Porte, The Romance in America. (Middletown: Wesleyan Press, 1969) 32-33.

essential difference between Natty and Ahab is that while both acknowledge all aspects of nature, Natty can see God in the forest, but Ahab cannot see God in the sea; or perhaps he is afraid God does not exist in nature. Additionally, even when he acknowledges the existence of God, Ahab finds God's nature a disturbing mystery. Alfred Kazin suggests Ahab may be driven by a fear of a purposeless of life as much as a rage against the whale that maimed him.⁹

Natty may be an American Adam, but he is no innocent. He may have clarity of vision, and a strict and consistent sense of right and wrong, but he can kill without remorse when he has to. He can bring down a Mingo as easily as he can kill an eagle or a deer - once he has determined these actions conform to his code. And his code is stringently followed. What Cooper has created in Natty is man whose morality is heightened, not lessened, as he confronts the wilderness.

This heightening includes a sense of order and personal responsibility, a respect for living things, and a sense of place of man in nature that is a product of a reverence for nature as well as the divine. With Natty's moral code, Cooper undermines the Puritan concept of wilderness as an inimical force for man.

Natty's forest is no garden, but it is with the recreation of the garden via the likes of men like Temple that signal doom for Natty and all his kind. The creation of

⁹ Alfred Kazin "Introduction' to Moby Dick," Melville: A Collection of Critical Essays. Richard Chase, ed., (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962) 43.

the garden also signals a decline in the growth of the republic since domestication of the wilderness - the "end" of civilization as Merchant suggests - is achieved. Cooper recognized this as the inherent contradiction and danger in progress. Therefore, fictively he strove to preserve wilderness and thus maintain the image of a forever young, forever growing republic. Cooper subverts the recovery narrative with the creation of a saga that reverses linear time to go back in time. By going back, Natty goes back to youth; so does the land, subverting the last stage of Turner's thesis and creating the myth of an eternal American youth. Cooper knew that with the destruction of wilderness decline was inevitable. By going back in time, the land could remain wild and the task of taming remain perpetual. Therefore, for Cooper, wilderness and the EuroAmerican's link to nature had to be preserved. Thus, nature could save America from decline.

Natty, although he is surrogate Indian in the text, is clearly always a "man without a cross" and Porte suggests that he must remain white in order to prove that white civilization can dominate the wilderness and not become savage. Cooper thus refutes the great Puritan fear of the wilderness' seduction and the resulting savagery. But Natty himself does not convincingly prove the point. Cooper creates a counter-text to his own. While he cannot refute the triumph of EuroAmerican civilization, Natty believes that all men are equal in their natures; on the other hand he makes a

distinction between red and white "gifts". He implies, therefore, that there is something intrinsically different between Indian and white, noting also that he himself, although living in the forest, thinks and behaves like a white person. Cooper also undermines Natty's argument through the creation of noble Indians like Uncas and Chingchcook and ignoble white men like Harry March and Tom Hutter. Cooper seems to waver, then, between supporting the idea of an intrinsic, white civilized nature that remains consistent in spite of contact with wilderness and the lack of a link between race and degree of civilization.

A central question for Cooper is what should be the nature of the relationship between the EuroAmerican and the land. Therefore, the land is central to most of Cooper's novels. For its sheer size alone and its suggestion of limitlessness, Cooper recognizes that the land (as wilderness primarily), has exerted a continuous impact on all who come to America. It is for this reason that the distinction between savage and civilized is often a major issue in his novels. Natty is the EuroAmerican who lives in the (primitive) state of nature without becoming savage; he lives with the other without becoming other. Or perhaps he re-defines otherness and savagery, suggesting that when there is no distancing no objectification of nature; a man is elevated morally. If this is what Cooper is implying, then he is acknowledging a sympathetic link between nature and man as a necessary element in the formation of American identity on

this continent.

If Natty exemplifies the man who lives in a state of nature in that he lives harmoniously with the laws of nature, Ahab exemplifies the opposite. Ahab's megalomaniacal quest to kill Moby Dick is a product of a rage against a nature whose laws he can neither accept nor understand. To him, unlike to Natty, nature is other, and Moby Dick is the living embodiment of that other. But in his quest for domination of the whale, Ahab also becomes other, estranged even from himself: "What is it what nameless inscrutable unearthly thing is it; what cozening hidden lord and master, cruel and remorseless emperor commands me, that against all natural lovings and longings, I so keep pushing and crowding and jamming myself on all the time recklessly making me ready to do what in my own proper natural heart I durst not so much as dare? Is Ahab, Ahab? . . ." (567). Eventually he becomes as monstrous as the monster he wishes to kill, caught up in the process of the chase and a chain of events he has no control over. The duration of the hunt for the whale is the measure of Ahab's loss of whatever amount of civilization he has. He loses self-control, reason, compassion. He is consumed by his desire for revenge. Leslie Fiedler describes Ahab's last confrontation with Moby Dick thus: "'Canst thou catch Leviathan with a hook?' And does not the man who tries does not Ahab become in his alienation, his sultanism, his pride, blasphemy, and diabolism finally become more monstrous than the beast he hates? When on the last day they confront each

other which is the monster Moby Dick, in his 'gentle joyousness' his mighty mildness of repose' or Ahab screaming his mad defiance?"¹¹ Fiedler's question may be rephrased thus: Who has become the other? In this confrontation with Moby Dick, the sea becomes comparable to the neutral ground of Cooper's forest in that it reveals Ahab's savage core, something Ahab himself recognizes when he questions the nature of his drive in the "Symphony" chapter of the novel. The problem is he cannot control the drive.

Ahab's existence becomes intrinsically connected to that of the whale; he pursues not only for revenge, but to fathom a mystery. A major aspect of Moby Dick criticism has focused on the religious symbolism of the whale and the larger theological questions the novel poses. The mystery that Ahab wishes to fathom is not so much whether God exists, but the nature of God. Ahab fears the existence of an uncaring God. T. Walter Herbert, in "Moby Dick and the Religious Tradition," quotes Ishmael's description of "the demonic indifference with which the white whale tore his hunters, whether sinning or sinned against."¹⁰ He also discusses the depth of the religious questions that are posed by Ahab's conflict with Moby Dick:

Melville . . . draws us into a religious struggle. The traditional perspectives at work are biblical and theological . . . and Melville places the unresolved conflict of these perspectives at the book's own outermost horizon embracing within that

¹¹ Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel. (New York: Doubleday 1960) 385.

¹⁰ T. Walter Herbert, "Moby Dick and the Religious Tradition," New Essays on Moby Dick. Richard Brodhead, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 384.

horizon a discourse concerning final questions,
 the meaning or unmeaning of life and death . . .
 (114)

On the other hand, Fiedler refers to the "inscrutability of the created world, a mystery not to be resolved till the end of days." and Moby Dick is a symbol of this mystery. He implies that Ahab (or any human) cannot and should not seek to solve it. In this case, Ahab's similarity to Adam is evident; Ahab seeks knowledge, but unlike Adam it is his quest not the actual knowledge that leads to his Fall, his death. That is, even his quest is blasphemous and rebels against divine law. Kazin points out that Ahab's desire to kill the whale is based on fear, the fear that the world is empty and the existence of man is an accident. Therefore, he wants to remake the world: "He wants to dominate nature, to impose and inflict his will on the external world . . ."
 (43). Kazin goes on to say "Ahab is . . . trying to assert man's place in nature . . . Ahab is trying to give man, in one final awful assertion that his will does mean something a feeling of relatedness to his world." (44) The problem is that Ahab can relate to his world only through violence:

If man will strike through the mask! How can a prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through wall? To me the white whale is that wall shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me. I see in him outrageous strength with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate and be the white whale agent or be the white whale principal I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me . . . (456).

In his discussion of Ahab's quest as an attempt to find

meaning in nature (whose meaning is always elusive) Kazin implies that the whiteness of the whale is symbolic of a void, the emptiness of pure nature - without God or man in it. He suggests that this is one aspect of the horror nature can contain for man. This analysis points to a fragmented view of the world by Ahab (and Melville) in which God, nature and man can be and are separate. This view is partially a result of the social and economic changes of the period which precipitated changes in the relationship between the environment and a country that was expanding and settling the land. Moreover, this fragmented view is diametrically opposed to that of Natty, who sees the world in a holistic fashion in which God, nature, and man are intrinsically connected through the laws of nature. Nature for him can never be empty of either God or man. Pure nature to Natty reveals itself to man and therefore instructs man in the ways of a benevolent God who has constructed an ordered world in which there is natural justice.

In his essay "In Nomini Diaboli," Henry A. Murray suggests that Ahab is Lucifer and he is captain of the "culturally repressed dispositions of human nature", the *Id*.¹² In this analysis Moby Dick represents the Superego. Murray further explains that from a religious perspective Moby Dick embodies the Old Testament Calvinistic conception of an affrighting deity," and that Ahab has projected onto the white whale the image of a "God of the Old Dispensation,

¹² Henry A. Murray, "In Nomini Diaboli," Melville: A Collection of Critical Essays . . . 68-9.

who brought Jeremiah into darkness"(68-9). What is striking about Murray's analysis is his combination of discussion of the importance of otherness as a central theme in the book and how it is replicated in psychological and religious terms. He states: ". . . Captain Ahab . . . has summoned the various religions of the East to combat the one dominant religion of the West . . . Or . . . he and his followers . . . represent the horde of primitive drives, values, beliefs and practices which the Hebraic-Christian religions rejected and excluded and by threats, punishments and inquisitions forced into the unconscious mind of Western man"(68). These comments could also describe the Puritan attitude toward the Indians.

Murray's introduction of the European/non-European dichotomy aboard the ship and its implications for what the whale symbolizes resembles both Michael Paul Rogin's and D.H. Lawrence's analysis of Moby Dick in terms of ethnic themes. Lawrence states succinctly: "What then is Moby Dick? He is the deepest blood being of the white race. He is our deepest blood nature. And he is hunted by the fanaticism our white mental consciousness. We want to hunt him down, to subject him to our will . . . We get dark races and pale to help us, red yellow and black, east and west . . . The last phallic being of the white man hunted to the death of upper consciousness and the ideal will. Our blood self subjected to our will . . ."¹³

¹³ D.H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature. (New York: Penguin, 1977) 169.

While Lawrence sees the whale as the symbol of whiteness, Rogin sees it as the symbol of the power of the other, the non-white other, that Ahab covets. In this analysis Rogin draws an analogy between Ahab's quest for the whale and the EuroAmerican quest for non-white land and domination of the non-whites others on the continent: "(Ahab) reveals the rebellion and the desire for domination entangled in the wish to be free"(121). Later he continues: "The Biblical Ahab and his American counterpart coveted native land. Their greed placed them at odds with the religion of their fathers . . . it turned them . . . into the pagans they were out to replace . . ." (123). Rogin suggests that the EuroAmerican's desire for the power and freedom of the savage other (Indian) trapped him into slavery in a double sense: the slavery of the self to this desire and the slavery of others to further the economic goals of expansion "The snare into which Indians led white Americans was baited with independence; it trapped them in slavery"(126). In Rogin's analysis Moby Dick represents the traditional American savage other - the Indian - onto whom Ahab has projected the traditional American ambivalence of attraction and repulsion. He admires him for his strength beauty and freedom and wishes to acquire them (and fears them as well). At the same time, he hates him and sees him as Satanic because of these elements and because the whale is symbolic of a nature whose laws he cannot understand or accept. But Moby Dick haunts him as Lawrence says the Indian haunts the white man. Moby Dick

is Ahab's Indian; and Ahab is the vengeful, fanatic, isolated Indian hater. In this analysis the quest leads to the enslavement of the crew to Ahab's will and his own enslavement to his desire. Historically, Western expansion was also accompanied by the increase in the importance of slavery both as an economic issue and as a political issue.

What is significant about both Rogin's and Lawrence's analyses is their recognition of the importance of ethnicity and otherness as a key theme in the novel. In addition to the religious symbolism of the whiteness of the whale and the importance of race in the EuroAmerican quest for self-definition (as the terms signify the schism between savage and civilized, nature and culture, self and other) is an underlying theme cutting through the various discourses with which the novel is constructed. Ahab's quest for the identity of the white whale, like Ahab's quest of his own identity, symbolizes the quest for an American identity. For himself Ahab also quests for a place in nature and, quests to find human meaning in nature. Ahab's quest is the American's quest for place and meaning as he confronts the American land, and it is replicated in his confrontation with the sea.

Ahab's rage is a product of both his estrangement from nature and an alienation from himself. Kerry McSweeney notes:

Ahab has lost the 'low enjoying power' because of the overcultivation of his gift of high perception (i.e. speculation). In this hell of Romantic self-consciousness he has lost the power to feel one with the natural world . . . what Ahab is left to follow is the unnatural destructive path to his final purpose . . . A way out of Ahab's

psychological state would be through the recovery of the ability to feel part of the human and natural world. . .¹⁴

His inability to feel joy or delight is obvious to Ahab and he suggests it is caused by a tendency to overspeculate, to intellectualize rather than feel. What Ahab and perhaps Melville are constructing is a perceived dichotomy between thinking and feeling, and by extension, culture and nature, civilization and savage. The implication is that thinking inhibits feeling and thus the mind and the emotions are in opposition. This division does not exist for Natty or for Cooper. Reason exists in Natty's state of nature and it informs rather than inhibits his understanding of natural laws.

McSweeney goes on to discuss Ahab's alienation from himself as expounded in chapter 114: ". . . Whereas in 'Sunset' Ahab had described the Romantic predicament of his estrangement from the natural world herewith which he had been once in nourishing contact, what is suggested here is that he suffers from a prior and more fundamental exile; he is alienated from the deepest levels of his own being" (71). Ahab is at odds with himself and with the natural world. His rage emanates from this and from his recognition of it. If anything, Ahab is perceptive, aware of his drive and rage, but he cannot use his immense power of will to control his own destructive drive. His own emotions are as uncontrollable to him as is Moby Dick. And he projects his rage at his own

¹⁴ Kerry McSweeney, Moby Dick: Ishmael's Mighty Book. (Boston: 1986) 68.

feelings onto the whale.

The killing of the whale represents empowerment to Ahab as the killing of the Indian empowered the EuroAmerican who desired Indian land as well as the freedom the Indian represented. This is the regeneration through violence Richard Slotkin refers to, and it is replicated on the sea in Ahab's quest to dominate Moby Dick. This is the sinister dynamic underlying the conversion of the New World into the Garden.

Ahab's actions and attitudes are the outgrowth of what men like Judge Temple began. Ahab also embodies the worst of Cooper's fears: the American domination and commodification of nature. Ahab wants to remake the natural; he symbolizes, as Rogin points out, the triumph of capitalism, which always changes the environment. He is the hunter turned predator; he is the Natty nemesis as Moredock is the Leatherstocking nemesis); or perhaps he is what Natty would have become if Natty had placed himself in opposition to nature in the same way as Ahab does.

A major thread in the field of Moby Dick criticism is devoted to discussing Ahab's becoming like the object of the pursuit - the savage other: Moby Dick. It is true Ahab becomes savage, or rather loses whatever civilized behavior he may have started out with, but he does not become like Moby Dick. Whatever he seems to be to Ahab, as Kazin points out, the whale represents what Ahab has projected onto him. Richard Chase explains that Moby Dick may symbolize many

things - as nature itself can.¹⁵ Extending this interpretation it follows that *Moby Dick* can symbolize anything or nothing; this is what is so maddening and frightening to Ahab. This is one of the paradoxes Melville wishes the reader to consider and one of the mysteries he presents in the novel.

The root of Ahab's savagery lies in his estrangement from nature and himself. It is this estrangement and his desire to dominate nature that make him savage. He is outside nature; he has no relation to it. His relationship with nature is unnatural, perverse; he has no place within the natural world. Ahab is Melville's contribution to the American discourse on savagery and civilization. For Melville, the savage is the man who has a perverse relationship to nature. This is Ahab, and as such, he also defines civilized man as he estranges himself from nature and commodifies it for profit. Melville suggests that as civilized man distances himself from nature, he becomes increasingly savage. This is what happens to Ahab as he pursues the whale, not as hunter, but as predator and avenger.

Cooper illustrates the flip side of this process in the creation of a man who lives within the state of nature. Natty sees both himself and God in the natural world. His existence is predicated on a relationship with the natural world. And through this relationship he is able to maintain morality as defined by EuroAmerican civilization. With Natty and Ahab the

¹⁵ Richard Chase. Herman Melville: A Critical Study. (New York: MacMillan, 1949) 87.

dichotomy between savagery and civilization is undermined: it is precisely the lack of contact with nature that makes Ahab savage.

Both writers illustrate that as civilized man tries to remake, dominate, rewrite nature, he disrupts it and destroys his harmony with it. The more man distances himself from nature, objectifies it, makes it other, the more savage he becomes. If, according to Merchant, "the end of nature is civilization," then according to Cooper and Melville the end is savagery as well. Cooper and Melville thus suggest the ultimate irony of EuroAmerican identity: by civilizing nature the EuroAmerican hopes to eliminate savagery in others and in himself; instead, by doing so, he becomes savage. Therefore, civilization creates savagery.

Natty, the man who lives in the state of nature and Ahab, who lives outside nature, together embody the ambivalence that has been an intrinsic feature of the EuroAmerican's attitude toward nature and otherness as he confronted both in the New World. They also illustrate the importance of the land and the sea as they shaped American identity and as they are linked in the American imagination. Both writers' contribution to American literary discourse is their accurate foregrounding of nature in this discourse. For both, it comes down to man's relationship with nature that determines his savagery. Both writers illustrate that a man's alienation from nature makes him savage; whereas his ability to live in harmony with it makes him moral - and thus by

EuroAmerican standards - civilized. Ahab embodies the former, Natty, the latter. In this way both writers challenge the stereotypes inherent in the savagery/civilization dichotomy.

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