

## Chapter 1

### Arguments of Ethos:

#### (Part A)

#### The Myth of the American Frontier and the Rhetoric of the Primitive Savior

***1A.1--Introduction: How do Cooper, Melville, and Hawthorne use the myth of the American frontier to create dramatic tension and empower the rhetoric of the primitive-as-savior tradition in their novels?***

Michael Bell's study on primitivism identifies "two major primitivist features of the American literary tradition," the myth of the Frontier—"the sense of a natural world somehow more vast and untamed than that of Europe," and the myth of the Native American—exploring "themes of the interrelation between the white man and the older races of the continent" (Bell, Primitivism 79). This section (part A) examines the first of these two primitivist features addressed by Bell—the myth of the American frontier. The next section (part B) examines the second primitivist feature—the myth of the Native-American.

Cooper's The Deerslayer, Melville's Moby Dick, and Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter and The Blithedale Romance each develop distinct interpretations of the American frontier myth. Each novel provides an individual interpretation of the frontier myth, and applies certain ethical qualities of vice or virtue to the natural world. These qualities of vice or virtue, by default are associated with each novel's primitive characters—as they are considered closer to nature than the heroic characters. Rhetorically this process is an argument of ethos, because each author relies on his moral representation of the frontier to color his readers' expectations for his primitive character's moral qualities.

Although scholars such as Edward Fussell in his Frontier: American Literature and the American West and Richard Slotkin with his The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization 1800-1890, analyze the frontier myth in such American novels, few scholars look at the rhetorical implications of the frontier myth. This chapter looks at how the rhetoric of the frontier myth is relevant to primitivism. As a literary device, the frontier myth is rhetorical. Cooper, Melville, and Hawthorne personify the frontier. This personification has consequences. Readers consider representations of the frontier as synonymous with those of the natural world. Primitive characters are often associated with the natural world and thus expected to embody its moral qualities.

Readers' expect primitive characters to be more natural and instinctive than civilized characters. As a result, the morals and personality of primitive characters are associated with their novelist's personification of the frontier. This personification of the frontier to influence an audience's first perception of a primitive-as-savior figure's morals and personality qualifies the argument as one of ethos. An argument of ethos is a persuasive technique that motivates an audience by attacking or praising a subject's personality or moral character (Corbett 50). Cooper, Melville, and Hawthorne use this rhetoric of ethos enabled by the myth of the American frontier to raise dramatic tension between each novel's primitive and heroic character.

In its most basic form the myth of the American frontier, is one contrasting the newly settled and unexplored regions of the American continent, to the established civilizations of Europe.

The most common form of the myth depicts America as a "regenerative new world Eden" at the expense of the older, violent, and corrupt European civilization. Novelists in adapting the myth of the American frontier usually will embrace the myth of Eden-like frontier or exploit the myth's falsehood (Bradbury 5). How Cooper, Melville, and Hawthorne portray the American frontier's moral condition (as good, neutral, or evil) directly impacts their readers' expectations for the moral condition and personality of the primitive-as-savior figure even before that primitive character's introduction.

Cooper, Melville, and Hawthorne in the selected works of this study, all depict the frontier that is somehow more vast and untamed than any in Europe. This notion of the frontier is vital to works of the primitive-as-savior tradition, as it allows the development of contrast between the natural realm of the frontier, and the modern realm of towns, colonies, and cities. Cooper does this by setting the action of The Deerslayer on and around the unsettled shores of Lake Glimmerglass, during the 1740s when upstate New York is still largely unsettled and unmapped by colonists. Melville establishes this contrast by setting the majority of the action in Moby Dick in the vastness of the ocean. The settings of Hawthorne's novels are also about small groups of individuals isolated from society. In The Scarlet Letter Hester and her daughter Pearl live on the fringes of Boston, on the edge of a forest frontier that Hawthorne characterizes as wild and dark. In The Blithedale Romance most of the novel's action takes place on the grounds of the Blithedale community.

The majority of people living in Blithedale aspire to create a utopian community, fleeing an outside world that they believe degrading. Although the world outside Blithedale is not a frontier in the traditional sense of the word, the colony's aspirations of social isolation, and the skepticism and bitterness of the outside community towards the utopian experiment, arguably represents a barrier similar to the psychological isolation found in the ocean or the woods.

***1A.2--Cooper's Frontier Myth as a Rhetoric of Ethos in The Deerslayer:***

Descriptors such as virtuous, innocent, pristine, and virgin, categorize how Cooper personifies his mythic frontier in The Deerslayer. Cooper's frontier in The Deerslayer is set in upper state New York around Lake Ostwego, called Glimmerglass in the novel. Cooper's The Deerslayer includes many vivid passages describing the Eden-like natural world. At times, the work seems more a hymn to elemental nature than a discussion of Native American-White relations. Cooper's portrayal of the frontier in the Deerslayer as a moral absolute of beauty and innocence, works rhetorically by enabling readers later in the novel to accept the primitive characters of Chingachgook and Hetty as absolutes of moral virtue.

Panoramic descriptions of the natural world, help readers imagine the Eden-like qualities that the frontier surrounding Lake Glimmerglass embodies. While Cooper includes many panoramic descriptions of nature in The Deerslayer, the following example from the novel's first chapter exemplifies Cooper's rhetorical use of the frontier myth.

Deerslayer ... stood leaning on his rifle, gazing at the

view which so much delighted him. The reader is not to suppose, however, that it was the picturesque alone which so strongly attracted his attention. The spot was very lovely, of a truth, and it was then seen in one of its most favorable moments, the surface of the lake being as smooth as glass, and as limpid as pure air, throwing back the mountains, clothed in dark pines, along the whole of its eastern boundary, the points thrusting forward their trees even to nearly horizontal lines, while the bays were seen glittering through an occasional arch beneath, left by a vault fretted with branches and leaves. It was the air of deep repose -- the solitudes, that spoke of scenes and forests un-touched by the hands of man-- the reign of nature, in a word, that gave so much pure delight to one of his habits and turn of mind. Still, he felt, though it was unconsciously, like a poet also. If he found a pleasure in studying this large, and, to him, unusual opening into the mysteries and forms of the woods, as one is gratified in getting broader views of any subject that has long occupied his thoughts, he was not insensible to the innate loveliness of such a landscape neither, but felt a portion of that soothing of the spirit which is a common attendant of a scene so thoroughly per-vaded by the holy calm of nature. [my underlining] (Cooper, DS, 36).

In this passage Cooper's narrator directly addresses the reader. The underlined terms in this section illustrate Cooper's virtuous description and personification of nature. Nature is "lovely," "of a truth," "pure." Cooper personifies nature as a monarch whose reign extends over the lands untouched by man. Cooper personifies nature as "clothed in dark pines"(Cooper 36). The novel's hero Natty Bumppo views nature as a poet. The air "spoke of scenes and forests un-touched by the hands of man" (Cooper 36). Cooper also personifies nature as a mystic healer who soothes the spirit with the "holy calm of nature" (Cooper 36).

In their separate studies looking at Cooper's novelistic use of the Frontier myth, Richard Slotkin and Edwin Fussell observe the dramatic tension Cooper creates in The Deerslayer by writing the novel as the final work of his five-volume saga of the Leather Stocking Tales (Fussell 60, Slotkin 87). The novels that together form the collection of The Leatherstocking Tales are The Pioneers (1823), The Last of the Mohicans (1826), The Prairie

(1827), The Pathfinder (1840), and The Deerslayer (1841). After the publication of The Deerslayer all five of Cooper's novels were frequently published in a combined volume entitled The Leatherstocking Tales. The Deerslayer is the last novel in the order of publications, but the first chronologically in depicting the relationship between the hero Natty Bumppo and his primitive savior Chingachgook.

The Deerslayer's chronological placement is rhetorically significant as readers approach the novel, and the novel's characters, from within the context of the ideas expressed in the first four published novels of the series. Daniel Peck observes, "The Deerslayer renders an authentic sense of the permanence of childhood, the permanence of immobile time" (Peck 159). Cooper achieves this effect by presenting the reader with a youthful hero Natty Bumppo on his first warpath with the youthful Native-American Chingachgook, for the purpose of rescuing Chingachgook's betrothed love, Wah-ta!-Wah.

Over the five novels, there is a distinct change in Cooper's moral coloring of the frontier, and in the frontier's location. The Deerslayer was the last novel written in The Leatherstocking Tales but the first in order of events. The Deerslayer takes place in 1740 when the British govern America, and the lands of upstate New York constitute part of the unsettled frontier. The novel's hero Natty is in his twenties. The Last of the Mohicans and The Pathfinder are set during the French-Indian war around 1757, both with events occurring in upstate New York. The Pioneers setting also occurs in upstate New York in 1793 almost two decades after the American Revolution. Natty is an elderly man in his seventies. Natty's fails to save his primitive

companion Chingachgook from perishing in a forest fire. The Prairie takes place in 1804 when Natty is in his eighties. The action of the novel surrounds a group of settlers who are traveling in a wagon train to the West Coast of the United States. Natty dies at the end of the novel and is buried in Oregon facing the Pacific Ocean. Natty's reaching the West Coast symbolizes the end of the frontier (Slotkin 106).

Richard Slotkin believes that the frontier myth is a powerful source of irony in Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales. The irony arises from the reader's awareness that the frontier where Natty Bumppo wishes to spend his days is fated to disappear as American society expands across the West (Slotkin 106). Slotkin writes that Cooper always treats the Frontier as belonging to a time and condition of life that have passed or are passing away" (106). Cooper's "novels are filled with nostalgia-now nobly sad, now bitterly angry-for a heroic age that is no more (Slotkin 106)."

Edwin Fussell asserts that Cooper's moral coloring of the frontier changed from his first novel of the series The Pioneers (1823) to his last novel The Deerslayer (1841) (Fussell 30). In The Pioneers the white settlers are given a higher moral status than Native American's or the wilderness. Cooper expresses excitement in The Pioneers about the settlement and Christianization of the frontier. Fussell notes that The Pioneers opens with an optimistic view of the American expansion:

The whole district is hourly exhibiting how much can be done, in even a rugged country, and with a severe climate, under the dominion of mild laws, and where everyman feels a direct interest in the prosperity of the commonwealth, of which he knows himself to form a distinct and independent part. . . . Only forty years have passed since the whole territory was wilderness. (Cooper, The Pioneers qtd. by Fussell 31)

Cooper's tone in describing the American frontier and frontier settlers in The Pioneers contrasts sharply with his more pessimistic attitude toward the settlement of the frontier in the conclusion of The Deerslayer. In the final chapter of The Deerslayer Natty ends expressing a view of the western expansion that is far less optimistic than that of The Pioneers.

We live in a world of transgressions and selfishness, and no pictures that represent us otherwise can be true; though, happily for human nature, gleamings of that pure Spirit in whose likeness man has been fashioned, are to be seen relieving its deformities, and mitigating, if not excusing, its crimes. (Cooper, DS 548)

Over the two decades in which Cooper developed the Leatherstocking Tales, the moral roles of nature and of the western settlers undergo a reversal. In The Pioneers the frontier is vilified as an object to be conquered (Fussell 30). In The Deerslayer, the last novel Cooper wrote of the series, the frontier takes on virtuous qualities, as does the relationship of Natty and Chingachgook. The reader's prior knowledge of the certain demise of Natty and Chingachgook in the later novels of The Leather Stocking Tales is an important source of dramatic irony. Cooper describes the frontier and his hero with a nostalgic tone, as he and his readers encounter the story with prior knowledge of the fate that befalls the frontier and its hero later in the saga (Slotkin 106).

**1A.3--Melville's use of Frontier Myth as a Rhetoric of Ethos in Moby Dick:**

Descriptors such as vast, mystical, apathetic, and maddening illustrate Melville's vision of the ocean as an American frontier. For Melville, the ocean is a frontier that shares many similarities with the mythic frontier of the American West. As

Natty Bumppo of The Deerslayer, looks into the forest frontier and "finds pleasure in studying the large ... unusual opening into the mysteries and forms of the woods ... attracted and often meditating" on the poetry of the forest, Ishmael describes experiencing a similar attraction to the ocean (Cooper 46). Ishmael describes "meditation and water as wedded forever." (Melville 13).

Melville describes the water as a hypnotic force that attracts common office, store, and factory workers to the edge of the land to gaze into the ocean's waters.

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago-never mind how long precisely-having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. ... This is my substitute for pistol and ball. ... If they but new it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings toward the ocean with me (Melville 12).

...

...

There now is your insular city of the Manhattoes, belted round by wharves as Indian isles by coral reefs ... Look at the crowds of water-gazers there.

...

Circumambulate the city of a dreamy Sabbath afternoon. ... What do you see?--Posted like silent sentinels all around the town, stand thousands upon thousands of mortal men fixed in ocean reveries.

...

But these are all landsmen; of week days pent up in lath and plaster--tied to counters, nailed to benches, clinched to desks. How then is this? Are the green fields gone? What do they here?

...

But look! here come more crowds, pacing straight for the water, and seemingly bound for a dive. Strange! Nothing will content them but the extremist limit of the land; loitering under the shady lee of yonder warehouses will not suffice. No. They must get just as nigh the water as they possibly can without falling in. And there they stand--miles of them--leagues. Inlanders all, they come from lanes and alleys, streets and avenues,--north, east, south, and west. Yet here they all unite.

... Yes as everyone knows, meditation and water are wedded forever. (Melville 13)

In this passage, Ishmael not only expresses his belief in the hypnotic quality of water, but he also expresses his belief

that is it a human need to seek out the ocean as a type of frontier. Ishmael in describing the travels of city workers to the ocean's edge asks, "Are all the green fields gone?" (Melville 13). This passage suggests that the ocean is a type of psychological substitute for the vanishing frontier of the American west, or the vanishing forest, both of which are rapidly disappearing. From the view of Ishmael it is a basic human need for every individual to escape the confines of the city (or civilization in general) and travel into an isolated frontier where one can achieve a sense of solace and be spiritually renewed.

While Ishmael initially describes to readers the ocean's hypnotic qualities to those trapped in the confines of the city, Melville's characterization of the ocean is more complex than to merely depict the ocean as a mystical element of hypnotic attraction. In Moby Dick the ocean is an ironic force, embodying the powers of hypnotic attraction, and apathetic abandonment. For the land locked, or indoor working city dweller, the ocean seems a desirable source of escape from the trials of civilization. To the sailor who has spent a considerable time working in the isolation in the ocean, the ocean feels uncaring and isolated. For this individual, the isolation and loneliness of the ocean can inspire a new desire to reconnect with civilization.

For Pip, an African-American cabin boy, who finds himself abandoned alone in the ocean after falling from his whaling vessel, the experience of the ocean's isolation is maddening. Pip's experience suggests that Melville believes that venturing too deep into the frontier's isolation, can cause psychological

change. In the case of Pip, to the average sailor, he appears to have gone mad, to be detached from his own humanity, but, as the novel develops, and as the last paragraph of the section below suggests, Pip gains a mystic consciousness when he experiences the psychological horror of isolation. Pip is described as hearing the primal voice of the creator; and in doing so embodies the consciousness of the mystic.

... Pip was left behind on the sea, like a hurried traveler's trunk. ... Stubb's inexorable back was turned upon him; and the whale was winged. In three minutes, a whole mile of shoreless ocean was between Pip and Stubb. Out from the centre of the sea, poor Pip turned his crisp, curling, black head to the sun, another lonely castaway, though the loftiest and the brightest.

Now, in calm weather, to swim in the open ocean is as easy to the practiced swimmer as to ride in a spring-carriage ashore. But the awful lonesomeness is intolerable. The intense concentration of self in the middle of such a heartless immensity, my God! Who can tell it? Mark, how when sailors in a dead calm bathe in the open sea--mark how closely they hug their ship and only coast along her sides.

... Pip's ringed horizon began to expand around him miserably. By the merest chance the ship itself at last rescued him; but from that hour the little Negro went about the deck an idiot; such, at least, they said he was. The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul.

Not drowned entirely, though. Rather carried down alive to wondrous depths, where strange shapes of the unwarped primal world glided to and fro before his passive eyes; and the miser-merman, Wisdom, revealed his hoarded heaps; and among the joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities, Pip saw the multitudinous, God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the firmament of waters heaved the colossal orbs. He saw God's foot upon the treadle of the loom, and spoke it; and therefore his shipmates called him mad. So man's insanity is heaven's sense; and wandering from all mortal reason, man comes at last to that celestial thought, which, to reason, is absurd and frantic; and weal or woe, feels then uncompromised, indifferent as his God. (Melville 347)

Melville's ironic characterization of the ocean as being hypnotically attractive, yet emotionally devoid prepares the reader for Ishmael's final abandonment at the novel's conclusion--the moment when Ishmael's ship, the Pequod sinks, leaving Ishmael floating alone in the Ocean. In Moby Dick the frontier of the

ocean can offer the individual seeking escape from civilization either rebirth or madness. Those who escape the maddening effects of the ocean's isolation, those who suffer this extreme isolation for humanity, can return from the voyage inspired, valuing their humanity and feeling a greater need for human connectedness.

***1A.4--Hawthorne's Frontier Myth as a Rhetoric of Ethos in The Scarlet Letter:***

David Fussell writes, "The locale of the The Scarlet Letter owes more to the Leatherstocking Tales than to any seventeenth-century view of the American situation" (92). Like Cooper, Hawthorne represents the American frontier as somehow more vast and untamed than that of Europe. The opening scene in the The Scarlet Letter is set in the month of June 1642, about a century before the date Cooper chooses for the action of The Deerslayer. Hawthorne is very conscious of the Niagara region in which Cooper's sets his novel, as an important area in the history of the frontier. In "The Custom House" which is critically regarded as the introduction to the The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne references the stalwart soldier of the Niagara frontier-the man of true and simple energy ... breathing the soul and spirit of New England hardihood, comprehending all perils and encountering all" (Hawthorne SL, 19).

Although the forest frontier that Hawthorne discusses in The Scarlet Letter is the same one as that of Cooper's Deerslayer both artists represent the nature of this wilderness differently. Both Cooper and Hawthorne see the wilderness as vast and untamed, but, whereas Cooper saw nature untouched by human hands as representative of perfect innocence, Hawthorne approaches the forest with a Puritan distrust. In The Scarlet Letter Hawthorne

describes the frontier of the forest outside the Boston colony as posing a danger to the human soul. According to R.W.B. Lewis, in the forest of Hawthorne "possibility was unbounded; but just because of that, evil inclination was unchecked, and witches could flourish there" (Lewis 114).

The forest in The Scarlet Letter encompasses the freedom to breathe that Cooper values in the opening of The Deerslayer. "Here is room to breathe in!" (Cooper, DS 17). It is a place from which Hester contemplates escape to "the alternatives of an Indian wigwam" but preferring flight to Europe, rather than sustaining the "hardships of forest life" (Hawthorne, SL 145). Hawthorne contrasts the forest frontier with that of the ocean, by having Hester and Dimmesdale decide to flee back to Europe. The couple prefers the old world of the East suggested by the ocean, to the new world of the West suggested by the forest (Fussell 92). According to Fussell,

The Scarlet Letter is naturally less concerned with the ocean of the past than with the forest of the future. Like the future, the forest is a free image, indeterminate and pluralistic, suggesting the wildest range of personal and cultural possibilities. ... Inescapably [Dimmesdale] humanizes the forest by projecting upon it his own desires, fears, and torments; filled with false elation, Dimmesdale returns to the settlements after his secret interview with Hester, and 'the pathway along the woods seemed wilder, more uncouth with its rude natural obstacles, and less trodden by man than he had remembered it on his outward journey.' (Fussell 96)

Like Pip's maddening experience of isolation in the ocean, Hawthorne writes of the forest's isolation as equally challenging to human psychology. Dimmesdale is affected merely by entering the forest. He comments, "Here it is "woefully visible, in this intense seclusion of the forest, which would in itself have been

a heavy trial to the spirits" (Hawthorne 119). Hawthorne uses the uncharted frontier of the forest to exploit the subconscious fears and desires of his readers.

Paradoxically, it is this seclusion and intense isolation of the forest where from the gloom of the forest the radiance of love (and this hope) can arise. While Hawthorne does not view the forest in the innocent light of Cooper, the forest presents challenges that are necessary for the development of moral growth (Lewis 105). Hawthorne anthropomorphizes nature as having a sense of sympathy, where out of sin, great goodness can arise. Out of the adultery of Hester and Dimmesdale arises hope.

Such was the sympathy of Nature—that wild, heathen Nature of the forest, never subjugated by human law, nor illuminated by higher truth—with the bliss of these two spirits! Love, whether newly born, or aroused from a deathlike slumber, must always create a sunshine, filling the heart with radiance, that it overflows upon the outward world. Had the forest still kept its gloom, it would have been bright in Hester's eyes, and bright in Arthur Dimmesdale's! (Hawthorne 138)

The forest that provided the cover for Pearl's conception brings about guilt and suffering to her parents, Hester Prynne and the Reverend Dimmesdale—forcing them to face the challenges of truth and love, and providing the opportunity for salvation.

Hawthorne's portrayal of the American frontier and the American city, both develop irony from the European myth of America as a regenerative New World Eden—the notion that through America's physical separation from Europe that America's settlers could escape human nature and live without sin (Noble 25). This sinless Eden however is not to be found in Hawthorne's forests, or cities. David Noble writes that the central irony in The Scarlet Letter is that of "Americans defining their independence from Europe in terms of a theological myth made in Europe (25);

what Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter reveals is that "human tragedy ... must follow any attempt of the Americans to live in alienation of the human race" (26).

***1A.5--Hawthorne's Frontier Myth as a Rhetoric of Ethos in  
The Blithedale Romance:***

Hawthorne uses the rhetoric of ethos (characterization) in The Blithedale Romance through his adaptation of the myth of the American frontier. In The Blithedale Romance the Blithedale socialist community represents a new American frontier, and the unnamed city outside of Blithedale represents the opposing force of civilization. Overall the novel's narrator Coverdale, until the final chapters, attributes virtue with the Blithedale community, and vice with the civilization of the city.

Hawthorne's intent as stated in the novel's introduction is not to promote socialism, but to use the Blithedale socialist community to "merely establish a theatre (Hawthorne, BR 1)." This theatrical outlook is one characterized by a surreal struggle between the virtuous goals of Blithedale's settlers and the innate evils inherent in city life. Coverdale asserts that the Blithedale community's members strive to create something close to "paradise ... beyond the strike of city clocks," where members share equally in the community's work and profits.

From the initiation of Coverdale's monologue, Coverdale's discussion to join the Blithedale community is about escaping the vice of the city. The novel begins with Coverdale describing his departure from the city. The city is described as claustrophobic and dirty. It is implied in Coverdale's negative description of the city that the Blithedale community is free of these problems.

As we threaded the streets, I remember how the buildings, on either side, seemed to press too closely upon us, insomuch that our mighty hearts found barely

room enough to throb between them. The snow-fall, too, looked inexpressibly dreary, (I had almost called it dingy,) coming down through an atmosphere of city-smoke, and alighting on the sidewalk, only to be moulded into the impress of somebody's patched boot or overshoe. (Hawthorne, BR 11)

Coverdale also associates the city with conventionalism. As the myth of the American frontier often emphasizes the American frontier as an escape from the old ways of European tradition, the Blithedale community is discussed by Coverdale as a new opportunity for its settlers to experience a new revolutionary way of living. Coverdale describes the city as not only being a place of old conventional ideas, but as being so creatively stale that metaphorically even the air has been breathed before.

Thus, the track of an old conventionalism was visible on what was freshest from the sky. But--when we left the pavements and our muffled hoof-tramps beat upon a desolate extent of country-road, and were effaced by the unfettered blast, as soon as stamped--then, there was better air to breathe. Air, that had not been breathed, once and again! Air, that had not been spoken into words of falsehood, formality, and error, like all the air of the dusky city! (Hawthorne, BR 11)

This section is reminiscent of Natty Bumppo's remarks at the opening of the *Deerslayer* on entering the forest, "Here is room to breath in!" (Cooper, DS 17). Hawthorne is thus characterizing the natural world of the Blithedale community as embodying the spaciousness seen in the frontier of Cooper's The Deerslayer.

Coverdale also uses examples from nature to characterize both the frontier and the city. In a scene reminiscent of Cooper nature is described as amiable to the Blithedale settlers, who are leisurely resting in the forest.

And others went a little way into the woods, and threw themselves on Mother Earth, pillowing their heads on a heap of moss, the green decay of an old log; and dropping asleep, the humblebees and mosquitoes sung and buzzed about their ears, causing the slumberers to twitch and start, without awakening (Hawthorne, BR 109).

In another example Coverdale uses nature to suggest that city living weakens the survival instincts of individuals. The passage uses the image of a hunting cat, that the author associates with being connected to the natural world, and birds who the author associates with those people raised solely in the city.

There was a cat--as there invariably is, in such places--who evidently thought herself entitled to all the privileges of forest-life, in this close heart of city-conventionalisms. I watched her creeping along the low, flat roofs of the offices, descending a flight of wooden steps, gliding among the grass, and besieging the buttonwood-tree, with murderous purpose against its feathered citizens. But, after all, they were birds of city-breeding, and doubtless knew how to guard themselves against the peculiar perils of their position. (Hawthorne, BR 138).

The example suggests that an understanding of laws of nature is essential for the individual's survival in the world. The laws of the city are artificial and thus knowledge of these rules is not sufficient for the individual's growth.

This characterization of the city reflects on Priscilla's character as an embodiment of the primitive mode of existence. Priscilla represents the lowest class of the city dweller. She is a poor seamstress, a manual laborer. Her family origins are unknown to those in the Blithedale community. Her desperate state, history of impoverishment, and characterization as a seamstress needing shelter from her life in the city, suggests the possibility of sexual scandal, possibly even prostitution.

Priscilla lacks the formal education of Coverdale--the poet, of Zenobia--the feminist magazine editor and heiress, or of Hollingsworth--the philanthropist. Unlike these three founding members of the Blithedale community, Priscilla comes from a career based on physical labor--a career opposed to and considered lower than the intellectual careers of Coverdale, Zenobia, and

Hollingsworth. Priscilla's qualifies as a primitive because of her lack of formal education, and her career as a seamstress, and her mysterious past. Her lack of formal education suggests to readers that her actions will be less reasoned and more instinctive. Her career as a seamstress suggests she will be more physically than intellectually oriented. Her mysterious past, makes her a mystery to readers as are the pasts of racial primitives such as Chingachgook and Queequeg.

As a member of the city's lowest class, readers can only assume Priscilla's character will embody the least favorable qualities of the city described by Coverdale. Hawthorne sets up his reader to have low expectations for morality of Priscilla's primitive character and high expectations for the frontier community of Blithedale as an escape from the city. The irony of the novel arises from the reversal of these two expectations. Priscilla proves herself virtuous, and the frontier of the Blithedale community proves itself as vulnerable to the same vices of human nature suffered by city dwellers-this being the individual's obsession with one's own benefit over the needs of his or her community.

## (Part B)

**The Myth of the Native American and the  
Rhetoric of the Primitive Savior**

***1B.1--Introduction: How does an author's references to myths of America's indigenous and non-white peoples influence a reader's perception of a primitive character's personal qualities and ethics?***

Much as an author's characterization of the frontier's moral nature directly influences how an audience will perceive the primitive-as-savior character, an author's moral adaptation of myths of the Native American or other non-white races viewed as primitives as inherently good or evil, directly impacts the ethics that readers anticipate when each novel's primitive-as-savior characters are introduced. The novels of Cooper, Melville, and Hawthorne analyzed in this study all contain references to the moral conduct of non-white peoples. In rhetorical terms these references to a primitive's moral character may be considered an argument of ethos. These references influence readers' expectations for the ethical conduct of primitive-as-savior characters—often before they are even introduced into the novel's story.

In looking at the references of Cooper, Melville, and Hawthorne to non-white races it is important to recognize the widespread racism and xenophobia embodied by many in their reading audiences. It is common knowledge that during the time all four novels of this study were written, African-American's were enslaved in the American southern states, that scalping and relocating of Native Americans was supported by the federal government, and that even white women were denied the right to vote, to attend college, and lost rights to the ownership of all

their earthly possessions on marriage. What is not as commonly appreciated is how this racist philosophy was institutionalized through the grade school education system in New England. One popular grade school text for example that was still in use almost a decade after Hawthorne published The Blithedale Romance was Mitchell's New School Geography (1865). The text covers not only physical geography, but also lessons in what is termed "political geography." In one chapter entitled the States of Society the text declares that there are only two states of society the savage and the civilized. Non-white cultures are all grouped into the savage class.

Into what two classes may mankind be divided in respect to their social condition? Mankind may be divided into two great classes, viz., the Savage and the Civilized. The first includes all those tribes who have no permanent dwelling, but roam from place to place with their flocks and herds, or in quest of game. Civilized nations build cities and towns, have durable and comfortable houses, and enjoy the blessings conferred by order, industry, morality, and religion. (Mitchell 35)

Equally discouraging is the grade school texts deplorable section entitled "The Races of Mankind."

The human family, now spread over the Earth in various races and nationalities, all sprang from the first created pair. ...  
 [Question] In what ways do various races differ?  
 [Answer] The various races differ in color, form, feature, and mental capacity. ...  
 [Question] To how many races may they be reduced?  
 [Answer] The races may be reduced to five in number: the Caucasian, or White race; the Mongolian, or Yellow race; the Malay, or Brown race; and the American, or Red race. (Mitchell 32)

It is possible then that readers approach the texts of Cooper, Melville, and Hawthorne with the following views of different races that Mitchell's text provides. Of the Caucasian, or white race Mitchell writes: "They are the most intelligent of the human family, and seem capable of attaining the highest degree of

progress and civilization. ... [T]he white inhabitants of America are included in this division of mankind. This is also called the European race.

Of the Native American race of which Cooper's primitive-savior character Chingachgook is a part, and who are represented or referred to in various degrees in Hawthorne's and Melville's novels, Mitchell writes the following:

The American or Red race are of copper color, with straight black hair, tall and well formed, but revengeful and warlike. They are fast disappearing before the progress of white civilization. (34).

Of the Malay race of which Melville's character Queequeg is a part, Mitchell writes:

The Malay race are of dark brown complexion, fierce and revengeful in disposition, and have made but little progress in civilization. ... There are many pirates among the Malays (34). ... Some savages are cannibals and eat human flesh. (35)

Mitchell's assessment of African Americans, a racial group that Melville represents in Moby Dick is equally stupefying:

The Black race are of dark complexion, varying from a coffee color to deep coal-black. Generally, they are of a strong and active body, but indolent in habit, and have not attained any high degree of civilization. They inhabit nearly all the districts of Africa, ... and are found also in America, whither they are carried as slaves. (34)

These sections from Mitchell's New School Geography suggest that Cooper, Melville, and Hawthorne in writing about non-white races are addressing a reading public whose opinion of non-white races may be extremely influenced by racist educational philosophies, and myths such as that of Pocahontas discussed previously in the introduction. Each author's depiction of non-white races, whether positive or negative, undoubtedly shapes how readers perceive each author's primitive-as-savior characters. This section examines how the myth of the Native American is used

as an argument of ethos in Cooper's *Deerslayer*. For additional examples of this argument in the novels of Melville and Hawthorne see Appendix 1.

***1B.2--Cooper's Myth of the Native-American as an Argument of Ethos in The Deerslayer:***

The five novels of Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales are among the earliest works of American Literature to depict a symbiotic relationship between a white hero and his primitive companion (Fiedler, Return 12). These five novels detail the relationship of the white hero Natty Bumppo (also known as *Deerslayer*, *Hawkeye*, and *Pathfinder*) and his Native-American companion Chingachgook. When Cooper first published The Deerslayer his readers were profoundly influenced by their past encounters with the hero and primitive from his previously published novels. While the previous novels of The Leatherstocking Tales lead readers to assume that Chingachgook's character will continue to be that of a virtuous Native-American, Cooper develops a secondary argument of ethos when preparing his readers for their encounter with Native American peoples who function as minor or secondary characters in the work. Cooper's system is one that categorizes Native Americans as having virtuous or immoral personal qualities based on their tribal affiliation.

Warren Walker in his critical study of Cooper asserts that when Cooper published his first novel of Leatherstocking saga-The Pioneers in the 1820's discussion of the Native American peoples was divided into two philosophical camps the Primitivists and the Anti-Primitivists (Walker 46). According to Walker the Primitivists were those led by "wistful intellects who championed the ideas of Roseau's Noble Savage" (Walker 46). The Anti-

Primitivists were those whose views on the Native Americans were "based on the reality of the by then old but still growing conflict between the advancing tide of white civilization and the original inhabitants of the continent" (Walker 45).

Cooper creates tension by playing both sides of the controversy. He presents opposing Native American characters that either exemplify the mythic golden age, or exemplify the horrors of pagan savagery (Walker 46). Cooper directly engages the myth of the Native American in The Deerslayer by characterizing his Native Americans as models of absolute virtue or vice based on tribal affiliation. According to Cooper scholar Warren Walker Cooper romanticizes the Delaware, Mohican, and Pawnee tribes as Noble Savages, and demonizes the Huron, Mingoe, and Sioux (Walker 46). By establishing a rhetorical system that depicts Native American's as virtuous or wicked based on their tribal affiliation, Cooper can impassion in his readers specific attitudes and expectations of a Native-American character merely by referencing his or her tribal affiliation.