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No Love in Alaska

Contemporary “mythology” may be defined as beliefs held by one group about itself or others, ambiguous in their degree of truth. *No Love in Alaska* is as an assessment of social and political mythologies of modern America. However, rather than attempting to deconstruct and clarify, this project merges myths of opposing groups to create a reconciliatory fictitious reality that still exists within the uncertain realm of myth. Depicted in this photo series are the characters of this imagined setting. With these characters *No Love in Alaska* aims to analyze and destabilize the myths through recontextualization. By superimposing these myths on symbols of our identities, the project functions as a self-portrait.





THE CONFRONTATION OF NATURE; THE "MANIFESTATION OF FEARS," IS INHERENT IN THE GLORY OF EXPANSION AND THE CONQUERING - BASED LOGIC THAT, THOUGH VEILED, LIES AT THE ROOTS OF MANY AMERICAN TRANSSCENDENTALIST IDEALS.

For no one who wholeheartedly shares in a given sensibility can analyze it; he can only, whatever his intention, exhibit it. To name a sensibility, to draw its contours and to recount its history, requires a deep sympathy modified by revulsion.

Fuller has many Gothic moments in her visit to Niagara Falls and to the Great Lakes, but in some ways, her journey, though ostensibly outward, is really a journey inward so she is often blinded to the reality of nature by her ego.

The destruction of nature and landscape verging on an ecological catastrophe is presented by Fuller in the perspective of the Gothic, as a price for the technological development driven by the capitalist economy. The Gothic character of *Summer on the Lakes* derives from the mental condition of the writer and a pessimistic vision arising from the debunking of the myth of America as a virgin land.

The EcoGothic panic ensues from the clash between a primordial vision of the frontier—both the land and the Native American inhabitants—and a pragmatic philosophy of capitalist profits and expansionist dynamics that would eradicate any sense of the mystical that Fuller might wish to retain.

In so doing, though, Fuller is ultimately haunted by a national consciousness and feeling of guilt more frightening than the sense of an isolated individual engulfed in grief.

And Fuller's EcoGothic vision also provides us with a terrifying glimpse of an America that for Fuller can no longer exist, that has, in fact, only existed in a mythologized version of the past.

adventurism was a component of that expansion

reaffirm that Manifest

Destiny had a violent and brutal dimension.

As a literary construct, romanticism was a celebration of the past and provided hope for the future. It embraced passion and imagination. It was escapism and inspired nationalism and adventurism.

The land was a rugged hill country deep in the trans-Ohio outcropping of the Allegheny Plateau. The hills were densely forested by mixed hardwoods including beech, elm, chestnut, and a variety of oaks. One local observer described the terrain as having a "romantic appearance ... there are no valleys but those shut in and surrounded by other hills, and this makes the whole scene one of beauty and charm to the passer-by."

The Texas Revolution exhibited characteristics unique to a western perspective. The western states of Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Louisiana, Mississippi, and the trans-montane regions of Virginia and Pennsylvania were ardent in their support; and their cities, New Orleans, Natchez, Louisville, Cincinnati, Wheeling, and Pittsburgh were crucial centers of supply and recruitment.

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Capitalist cultural production relies on social norms and instabilities to sell itself; from calls to patriotism following the September 11, 2001 attacks, to vaguely threatening initiatives like the Department of Homeland Security's color coded alert system, to the constant references to murder, child abuse, kidnapping, and other violent crime in popular news and fiction, capitalism offers us an opportunity to locate a specific form of consciousness and contradiction.⁴ By producing binding mythologies that are successfully marketed *in contradiction*, it sells us our public and private spheres. Marketing programs that rely on aporia or cognitive dissonance are strategically significant in contemporary U.S. politics, and have begun to accentuate the internal instabilities of liberal or conservative ideology within neoliberal and neoconservative agendas.⁵

Besides transforming pilots into cowboys, the "skyboy narrative" also "westernizes" the Alaska landscape (hence "*the Last Frontier*"), often portraying it as an uninhabited, menacing foe—a natural barrier to overcome and be conquered. Pilots in the Wrangell Mountains commonly landed on and took off from glaciers, mudflats, and even active volcanoes. Maverick behavior or adventure seeking, however, were not their motivations—it was the success or failure of their commercial enterprises that drove these early flyers to take such risks.

Yet he

describes such transformative and progressive change using nostalgic expressions. He calls the bush pilot "the unsung hero of the north," who, by overcoming mountains, glaciers, frigid temperatures and blinding blizzards, became "the stuff of legends." "These 'Cowboys of the Sky,'" insists Levi, "make Alaska what it still is today."²³ To Alaskans everywhere, aviation was a natural extension of the pioneering days of the gold rushes; indeed, Alaska's own manifest destiny. AM. EXPANSIONISM.

Discovered in the 1870's by local color writers who used it as a neutral ground against which to set their stories of upper-class romance and lower-class passion, by the end of the century Appalachia had come to seem a stubborn outpost of that quintessentially American way of life which industrialism and urbanism were destroying. Indeed, Appalachia was unique among the "little corners" of the nation which came to the public's attention via the local color movement, in that its peculiarities, although identified as characteristic of the American past, were observed in the American present. The tendency to glorify America's past, which has been the typical accompaniment of our most assiduous efforts to abandon that past, gave the peculiarities of Appalachian life a rather special meaning

In the literature of Appalachia, as a consequence, metaphor characteristically did the work of exposition. Because it was more interesting, the "as if" was preferred to the "is," and came eventually to be identified as reality.

Since the late 1970s, Appalachian scholars have known that Appalachia is an idea.

The isolation of southern Highlanders in their valleys and hollows has been a staple of the core Appalachian stereotype since publication of Harney's "A Strange Land and a Peculiar People."

writers dealing in local color, journalists, and academics who, over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, created myths about the people who lived, and live, in the core Appalachian region.

a modern society to people America believed lived in "poverty and ignorance ... and a way of life culturally out of step with America's new industrialization and urbanization" (p. 192).

Story after story in national publications, datelined from the poorest parts of Appalachia, painted scenes of poverty and desperation

The stories were tiresomely similar and superficial. Many of them relied on cliche, portraying Appalachia as a one-dimensional wasteland of desperate unemployment and addiction. They included little about aspects of Appalachia that didn't fit that narrative.

This myth-making does Appalachians no favors.

It makes Appalachia into the Other.





I. What Does Moore Refer to by the Phrase “Naturalistic Fallacy”?

An examination of Moore's explicit statements³ suggests the following characterization:

- (a) the word “good” denotes an object—in particular, an object of thought;
- (b) this object is simple, i.e., not complex, not capable of being analyzed into parts;
- (c) this object is unique, i.e., not identical with the object denoted by any other word;
- (d) this object is, however, often identified with the complex object denoted by some expression, or with the simple or complex object denoted by some other word;
- (e) this identification is expressed by the claim that the word “good” has the same meaning as the other word or expression; i.e., that the other word or expression provides a definition of “good”;
- (f) this identification is the naturalistic fallacy.

If (e) is false, then “good” denotes an object denoted by some other term. Moore expresses this possibility in a manner which critics have understandably found misleading; he says that *good* “means nothing at all, and there is no such subject as Ethics” (p. 15). But his discussion makes amply clear that he means that “good” has no distinct meaning, that “good” does not stand for a unique object or property. Further, in saying that there is no such object as Ethics, Moore means that there is no distinctive subject; if, for example, the object denoted by “good” is the object denoted by “pleasure,” then Ethics is a part of psychology.

The human being is present in the form of projects, which are however not projects geared towards death, but towards certain ends. Sartre had demonstrated that the human being is not a fixed being, as are objects and therefore the human being simply “is” not, but in every moment has to create himself through his self-projects.¹³¹ All these occupations that the human being is engaged in, for example, hunting, fishing, writing books etc., are not distractions, nor an escape as seen by Heidegger, but rather moves towards Being: “man has to create himself, in order to be. He must transcend because he *is* not, but transcendence must be understood as plenitude too, because he wants to be: in the finite object that he finds, man finds a solidified reflection of his transcendence.”¹³²

THE SAME FALLACY
APPLIES TO USE
OF THE WORD “EVIL”

5.1.1. Perpetuation of white “Self” and “red (native) Other”

The manipulation and sanitization of history

Although Disney's *Pocahontas* does not necessarily aim for historical accuracy, its “selective oblivion” has sparked controversy. The film creates what Chow calls “a phantom history,” where Western cultural critics tend to turn the native into an object that is “manageable and comforting” through the manipulation of history.⁴ This kind of critic's project demonstrates how “difference” is tamed and consumed. A similar treatment of the native image in Disney's *Pocahontas* leads to the process of myth making that generates a “transparent” relationship between colonizers and natives, based on Disney's general rule of “sanitization” and appropriation of the tragic aspects of history. For example, omitted elements include Pocahontas' abduction by the English, her subsequent conversion to Christianity, her name being changed to Lady Rebecca Rolfe because of her marriage to settler John Rolfe, and her death from tuberculosis at the age of twenty-one in England. As the above quote by Disney's personnel indicates, the production team of *Pocahontas* claim

⁴ Chow, p. 37.

that substantial research was conducted on Pocahontas' life; however, the film still ends up simply as an escapist entertainment, with a predictable narrative devoid of disturbance, in which the viewer can “safely” experience “otherness.” What is highlighted instead is the romantic bonding between Pocahontas and John Smith, even though many consider their relationship hardly plausible in reality, given the fact that she was twelve years old and he was twenty-seven when they met.⁵

That is, the historical maneuvering of

Pocahontas brings about conflicts not only between white Disney and the native, but also between whites: British and Americans. Criticism from these communities underscore the film's simplified depictions, founded upon a binary between “self” and “other,” rather than showing plurality within each of them.

What is intriguing about the reception of Disney's *Pocahontas* lies in the two perceptions between natives and Anglo communities, both of which criticize the film for unfairly representing their respective cultures.





the members of a group of people (a) have something in common with each other, which (b) distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups. ‘Community’ thus seems to imply simultaneously both similarity and difference. The word thus expresses a *relational* idea: the opposition of one community to others or to other social entities. Indeed, it will be argued that the use of the word is only occasioned by the desire or need to express such a distinction. It seems appropriate, therefore, to focus our examination of the nature of community on the element which embodies this sense of discrimination, namely, the *boundary*.

But why is such marking necessary? The simple answer is that the boundary encapsulates the identity of the community and, like the identity of an individual, is called into being by the exigencies of social interaction. Boundaries are marked because communities interact in some way or other with entities from which they are, or wish to be, distinguished (see Barth, 1969). The manner in which they are marked depends entirely upon the specific community in question. Some, like national or administrative boundaries, may be statutory and enshrined in law. Some may be physical, expressed, perhaps, by a mountain range or a sea. Some may be racial or linguistic or religious. But not all boundaries, and not *all* the components of *any* boundary, are so objectively apparent. They may be thought of, rather, as existing in the minds of their beholders. This being so, the boundary may be perceived in rather different terms, not only by people on opposite *sides* of it, but also by people on the same side.

Community is just such a boundary-expressing symbol. As a symbol, it is held in common by its members; but its meaning varies with its members' unique orientations to it. In the face of this variability of meaning, the consciousness of community has to be kept alive through manipulation of its symbols. The reality and efficacy of the community's boundary – and, therefore, of the community itself – depends upon its symbolic construction and embellishment.

CONSTRUCTED
THROUGH SYMBOLIC
INTERACTION

This symbolic equipment might be compared to vocabulary. Learning words, acquiring the components of language, gives you the capacity to communicate with other people, but does not tell you *what* to communicate. Similarly with symbols: they do not tell us *what* to mean, but give us the capacity to make meaning. Culture, constituted by symbols, does not impose itself in such a way as to determine that all its adherents should make the same sense of the world. Rather, it merely gives them the capacity to make sense and, if they tend to make a similar kind of sense it is not because of any deterministic influence but because they are doing so with the same symbols. The quintessential referent of community is that its members make, or believe they make, a similar sense of things either generally or with respect to specific and significant interests, and, further, that they think that that sense may differ from one made elsewhere. The reality of community in people's experience thus inheres in their attachment or commitment to a common body of symbols. Much of the boundary-maintaining process we shall look at later is concerned with maintaining and further developing this commonality of symbol.

HOW CAN SYMBOLS USED TO DEFINE
OPPOSING COMMUNITIES BE RE-ORIENTED/
RELATED TO DECONSTRUCT COMMUNITY DEFINING/
DIVIDING BOUNDARIES

Later work, by critical ethnographers like Paul Willis, “demonstrated that rather than being places where culture and ideologies are imposed on students, schools are the sites where these things are produced” (Apple 1985: 26). By opening up the black box of education, critical ethnographers revealed that education is a system of production as well as reproduction. Furthermore, they discovered that stu-

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dents aren't simply shaped by their experiences, but actively “assert their own experience and contest or resist the ideological and material forces imposed upon them” (Weiler 1988:11).

The importance of these critical ethnographies to symbolic interaction is the suggestion, carried forward in education, that ethnography must be consciously *ideological* and can be both “transformative,” that is, can “help create the possibility of transforming such institutions as schools—through a process of negative critique” (Brodkey 1987:67), and “empowering” so long as it rests upon the assumption that “each person [has the] ability to understand and critique his or her own experience and the social reality ‘out there’” (Weiler 1988:23).

Weis has defined Othering as “that process which serves to mark and name those thought to be different from oneself.”⁹(p18) Yet, according to Charon, “It is through others that we come to see and define self, and it is our ability to role take that allows us to see ourselves through others.”¹⁰(p107)

The self is only known through Others, and how Others are “marked” and “named” depends on the role taking of the self. How the Other is perceived, and how this role taking is enacted, has consequences for how the Other is defined.

Inability to role take or inaccurate role taking often occurs when persons have limited experiences with various individuals and various roles.¹⁰ Without role-taking opportunities, or with resistance to such opportunities, individuals often fail to gain an understanding of the meaning others attribute to their world. Subsequently, persons rely on *stereotypes* and *myths* rather than on an understanding of the Other's perspective.





CHARACTERIZATION OF THE SITE

All 12 caves were tested, but only two, Cave 2 and Cave 9, revealed signs of any but the most recent habitation. In Cave 2 only were there found any artifacts older than mid-Holocene age. Located downstream from Cave 9, Cave 2 is situated about 27 m above the creek level. The cave is a narrow tunnel, 21.4 m long, rising slightly at the rear. The height before excavation ranged from 60 cm to 140 cm.

The deposits in the two excavated caves are best

characterized as "cave breccia," a poorly sorted gravel-sand-silt mixture derived from weathering of cave walls and roof. In Cave 2, four stratigraphic levels were distinguished, primarily on the basis of color. These were traced, with some difficulty, from the front about 7 m into the back of the cave, and profiles were taken at each meter. From this point back to the 12-m profile, only three layers were distinguished, with layers I and II merging. From the 12-m point to the rear of the cave, only the lowest layer was discernible.

In the rather sparse upper levels were found remains attributed to Denbigh, Choris, and later Eskimo horizons. Only in Cave 2 were there found evidences of early occupation.

CAVE 2 ARTIFACT ASSEMBLAGE

Two hundred and fifty-three lithic and osseous artifacts were recovered from the two caves. In addition, there were found 8 small irregular flakes, the only indication of flaking in the cave. Of this total, only 4 microblades and 7 antler points were considered to pertain to the oldest occupation. These were found in Cave 2, layer III, in the first 5 m from the cave mouth where stratigraphy was most clearly seen. A microblade and an antler point were found in close proximity to each other at a depth of 90 cm. Two antler points found in layer II were probably displaced by ground squirrel activity. A fragment of a chalcedony point was found in the lowest layer (below layer III) outside Cave 2 at 110 cm below surface.

Microblades (4) Four microblade fragments were found in Cave 2 (Fig. 11-1: *a-d*). All are of grey chert. They range in length from 44.5 mm to 17 mm; in width, from 8 to 5 mm. Two are 2 mm thick and the other two 1.5 mm. With one exception they have a straight longitudinal axis, are more or less rectangular in outline,

Alienation is an individual's general experience of unacceptance by others. It can be described as the lack of identity with, or the rejection of, prevalent social values by the individual. It is expressed as a lack of relatedness with society, and a concomitant isolation from the general culture, and is experienced as unacceptance of the individual by others (Belcher, 1973).

Alienation is distinguished from anomie in that anomie indicates a lack of knowledge about the norms or behaviors that will gain acceptance or be positively reinforced. In alienation the individual knows what behaviors will be positively reinforced, but refuses to engage in those behaviors.

SIMILITUDE.

FROM GOETHE.

ON every mountain-crest
Is rest:
In every vale beneath,
No breath
Stirs in the quietude:
The little birds are silent in the wood.
Soon, patient, weary breast,
Thou too wilt rest.

EMMA LAZARUS.

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