

THE FRONTIER MYTH AND THE FRONTIER THESIS IN CONTEMPORARY
GENRE FICTION

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Introduction

Richard Slotkin, in *Regeneration Through Violence*, investigates how the myth of America evolved and gained credence and power. Slotkin's diagnosis on America's adherence to this myth—the conception of America as a “wide-open land of unlimited opportunity of the strong, ambitious, self-reliant individual to thrust his way to the top” (5)—captures the very essence of the myth of America. Illustrating the frontier myth, David Mogen has commented that within the myth “The Old World and the New World archetypes generate an expandable set of opposing terms, adaptable to any time and any scale” that “has been evoked by the settlement and the wilderness” (24). Moreover, Mogen interpreted that the myth “utilize[s] this inherent symbolic environment as a background for [a] narrative” (25) which features a frontier hero “from the Old World journey to the New World in the hope of rejuvenation and the regaining of innocence, trying to return to a time before the Fall, to become . . . the American Adam” (27). According to the myth, the New World was conceived to be a “gateway through which one might escape from time into space, from bounds to boundlessness, and from the works of corrupt and corrupting humanity to works of God in uncorrupted nature” (Mogen, Busby and Bryant 6). David Nobel likewise recognizes that the “central tradition in American historical writings has been the assumption that the United States, unlike the European nations, has a covenant that makes Americans a chosen people who have escaped from the terror of historical change to live in timeless harmony with nature” (ix). He further argues that “the drama of American intellectual history has been the hope of the European emigrants in coming to the New World: they could there undergo a

religious experience of rebirth which would allow them to transcend the tension of the historical communities of the Old World” (x).

Most scholars, in particular, will agree with Mogen’s and Nobel’s analyses of the frontier archetype: the opposition between the Old World (civilization) and the New World (frontier/nature/wilderness) and the process in which God’s chosen people escape from the limitations of the Old World and venture into the New World in the hope for regeneration and rebirth that results in the triumph of progress and the metamorphosis of the frontier figure. There is nothing new to the fact that the “Judeo-Christian tradition constituted . . . [a] powerful formative influence on the attitude toward [the] wilderness of the Europeans who discovered and colonized the New World” (Nash 13). In fact, the “discovery of the New World rekindled the traditional European notion that an earthly paradise lay somewhere to the west” (Nash 25). Seconding Henry Nash’s view, Sacvan Bercovitch suggested that “New England evolved from its own origins into the American Way . . . by the concept of an errand into the wilderness” known not simply as a migration “from one place to another, but from a depraved Old World to a New Canaan” (8). As Annette Kolodny correctly noted, “Eden, Paradise, the Golden Age, and the idyllic garden, in short, all the backdrops for European literary pastoral, were subsumed in the image of an America” (*The Lay of the Land* 6).

Since the publication of Frederick J. Turner’s *The Frontier in American History*, many scholars, regardless of their acceptance to or disapproval of Turner’s frontier thesis, have commonly treated the American frontier as “the meeting point between savagery and civilization” (Turner 2) and an “area of free land” (Turner 22) unjustifiably defined by Turner himself. Defined in this binary paradigm, the American frontier seems to be a

place of ambivalence: a place where savagery and chaos exist side by side with civilization and order. Regardless whether scholars embraced or disapproved of such a notion, commentators on the frontier and frontier experience still fall into two parties—those who claim that the historicity of the frontier resulted in creating an unique American myth as a positive force that fosters the evolution and maturation of the American spirit and those who consider this to be somewhat mythical or illusionary. If the Turnerian assumption is accurate—if the wilderness, or realities of the American landscape, enables the settlers to “acquire certain elements or qualities distinctively derived from and suited to that environment” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 26)—then why would the frontier myth not be the same as, or at least similar to, the myth of aboriginal Indians? Obviously, despite sharing common features of the frontier environment, the frontier myth developed differently between that of Euro-Americans and native Indians. Yet, the question raised here does not attempt to disprove the arguments made by the first camp. Indeed, it is hard to deny the colonist’s physical and psychological situation—“the wilderness of the land, its blending of unmitigated harshness and tremendous potential fertility; the absence of strong European culture on the borders; and the eternal presence of the native people of the woods, and the psychological anxieties attended on the tearing up of home roots for wide wandering outward in space and, apparently, back in time” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 18)—that shaped the mythology of America. However, such a myth cannot be the sole product of reality “drawn from history” that “dramatize[s] the world vision and historical sense of a people, culture, reducing centuries of experience into a constellation of compelling metaphors” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 6). What scholars like

Slotkin ignore is the fact that (the frontier) myth is simultaneously shaped by a culture's (frontier) consciousness—an illusionary or imaginary vision of the world. According to Roland Barthes, myth is “constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things” (142) and its function is “to empty reality” (143).

While many scholars use the term “myth” in many different ways, in this paper, the word is used to indicate an imaginary story or popular misconception which supports a particular culture's ideology and world view. Relying on Roland Barthes, my position to myth, particularly with the frontier myth, is that it is a product of socio-economic and political apparatuses performing a very specific function—a function that drains reality, hiding its mythological fullness. Thus, diverting from the second camp but relying on Barthes, I suggest that the myth of the frontier, rather, informs an American consciousness and worldview veiling its own socio-economic-political agendas. To sum, in this paper, I content that the frontier myth, implicitly, necessitates the imperative of transfiguring a chaotic, mysterious, and savage wilderness (the New World) into an ordered civilization (the Old World). Thus, borne out of this contest between the wilderness/chaos and civilization/order, is a frontier figure. The frontier figure, as the new American Adam, transforms the wilderness into a civilization, finds innovative ways to solve problems, and establishes order in the midst of chaos. This figure, as a devout believer and practitioner of the American Dream, in order to accomplish this errand into the wilderness, needed to possess a self-made personality and rugged individuality. Furthermore, I argue that finite opportunities promoted by a new land (frontier) not only result in class stratification between captains of industry and underprivileged groups of men but also causes unequal distribution of capital among them. The frontier myth allows

the upper class (or capitalists) to justifiably take and exploit the frontier resources while precluding other classes to participate in this capitalistic venture. In addition, considering the fact that the frontier myth frequently uses metaphors to associate mythology of the past with the present reality of the frontier, by synchronizing myth with reality, the myth re-creates a new kind of myth-reality that seeks to re-define itself in terms of the American Dream, arguing that it has and will always be about the subjunctive.

While Slotkin acknowledges that the commonality between Euro-American and aboriginal Indian culture is the American landscape where “the process of adjusting” (26) to the wilderness takes place, it is worthwhile to investigate how and why many scholars would, nevertheless, posit that the frontier experience resulted in the creation of a unique American ethos without considering the Euro-American historical and cultural views that impacted the American ethos. Although many scholars may agree with Mogen’s frontier paradigm—as an “ironic drama” that includes “the conflict between an Old World and a New World” with a “theme of wilderness metamorphosis” “and “ironic triumph of progress” (9)—this paradigm requires deeper inspection because the frontier paradigm, as suggested by the second camp, is a mythical trope for America’s superiority. Terms frequently used in the myth to denote Americanness such as “self-directing” “negotiating,” “metamorphosis,” and “progress” are likely to belie the myth’s romantic or mythic characteristics. As Cawelti has noted, “in the history of American culture, the [frontier] possessed these mysterious mythical qualities” (*The Six-Gun Mystique* 11).

In the frontier consciousness, the world is nicely subsumed into a binary location, either the Old World (Europe) or the New World (America). These two distinctive worlds, accordingly, are thought to possess two distinctive and incompatible

characteristics. It is perceived that the progress of history invariably flows from the Old World to the New World. Through the intervention of frontier figures, social progress is achieved as the frontier (the New World) develops into a new civilization (the Old World). Once a frontier landscape terraforms into a civilization, then this process replays itself out in another frontier landscape. What is fascinating about this conception is the fact that this is perceived to be the universal progress of mankind of all ages and locations. It is as if “progress” would exclusively suggest, for instance, the development of towns and cities from the harsh conditions of wilderness and nature.

What fades from this scene is the symbolic-conceptual hierarchization between the two worlds (the Old and the New), and what appears is the romanticized and mythified conceptualization of the world justified and authenticated only within such terms. As Edwin Fussell notes, “the frontier was a figure of speech . . . as it assumed new functions in a new context, and thus incidentally a splendid illustration of the American progress Turner used it to describe” (17). Fussell further suggests that “what the American frontier means is its genesis: a new situation, vaguely sensed, and requiring designation, was denoted by an old world with an adaptable designation” (17). What this adaptable designation is becomes clear if we consider what the New World, conceptually, was to the Old World. The significance of the New World lies not only in its realistic or historical conditions but also, or more so, in its symbolic-mythic designations. The New World became, for the Old World, and still is, a reservoir for all sorts of dreams, fantasies, and myths. As John Cawelti points out, “[f]or a long period in the history of American culture, the West possessed . . . mythical qualities” (*The Six-Gun Mystique* 11). Likewise, Leslie Fiedler suggests that the New World “inhabits a country at once the

dream of European and a fact of history” as pioneers live “on the last horizon of an endlessly retreating vision of innocence” called “the frontier” (27). In this way, the New World is both “legendary, a fact of the imagination as well as one of history” (Fiedler 36). This is because it is sustained not only by a “sentimental and [r]omantic dream” (37)—as a “place of refuge beyond the seas, to which the hero retreats to await rebirth, a source of new life in the direction of the setting sun” (36)—but also supported by the “drive for economical power and the need for cultural autonomy” (Fiedler 32). In contrast, if the wildness was conceived to be a “realm of chaos, impinging on the ordered cosmos” and at the same time a territory that ought to be “protected by God” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 279) to the Euro-Americans, then by correlation, this suggested that the native Indians were thought to be a “fallen race, a people who have failed to realize the arcadian possibilities of the land and their own human capacity of civilized behavior” (286).

Here, Robert Berkhofer illustrates how such images of the Indians, as well as frontiersmen were, with ease, successively incorporated into the basic ingredients of the frontier myth. According to Berkhofer, the “exploration and expansion overseas” of the Europeans promoted “an overall collective vision of a Europe” (23) that contradicted with the rest of the (uncivilized) world. Under the premise that “uniform moral and intellectual attributes” correlated with “whole nationalities,” Euro-Americans not only “categorized the variety of cultures and societies as a single entity for the purpose of description and analysis” (3) but also believed that they were “the chosen of the Lord for the special purpose of bringing forth a New Zion” whereas the native Indians were thought to be uncultivated people of “savagery” (51) and “the very agents of Satan’s own

degeneracy” (37) who “held meaning for [the Euro-Americans] in terms of the larger drama and the vision of [their] own place in it” (Berkhofer 81). In this sense, “Whites overwhelmingly measured the Indian as a general category against those beliefs, values, or institutions they most cherished in themselves at the time” whereas negative images of the Indians were used to “define White identity or to prove White superiority,” just as the Puritans, for example, “project[ed] their own sins upon people they called savages” (Berkhofer 27). Robert Berkhofer further notes that the former, “[b]y classifying them as *Indians*”—as heathens, barbarians, pagans and savages—the latter became a hindrance to “the future salvation as well as earthly life” (81) of the Euro-Americans. Accordingly, naming them as savage others casts “the speaker’s cultural interlocutors in an inferior position by rendering them mere negative qualities defined by an opposition to which they do not contribute” (Jehlen 42). Analyzing Turner’s frontier thesis, Berkhofer additionally notes that for Turner “the Indian was pictured as an obstacle to White settlement and the coming up civilization” because they “remained at the stage of society before the evolution of White American civilization”—that developed out of a “frontier settlement” toward an “agricultural development” to achieve a “fullfledged urban civilization” (Berkhofer 109).

Thus, out of “the confrontation between dream and reality, the sacred and the profane” (Sachs 11) emerged the “myth of America—the puritan New Canaan, and the frontier pagan dream of a Paradise on Earth” (Sachs 11)—that explores the “unexamined territories of life in the New World” (Chase 5). In “the morality play of westward expansion” the “transformation of a wilderness into [a] civilization was the reward” for the hero’s “sacrifices, . . . achievement, and the source of his pride” (Nash 24-25). In this

way, the frontier “wilderness was the villain, and the pioneer [was the] hero” destined to rid the former of its “darkness . . . chaos, and . . . evil” (Nash 24). Thereby, born out of the imperative to transform the wilderness into a new civilization, eradicate the Indian chaos, bridge the gap between myth and reality, and re-create a New Canaan, was the frontier figure.

Conversely, the frontier setting required three types of characters: one representing the agents of civilization, the other symbolizing the outlaw or Indian, and another (a frontier figure) frequently representing some blend of both sides (Berkhofer 97). This was because the frontier environment inevitably “stress[ed] strong individuals locked in combat with the enemy without social institutions or civilized law and order” (Berkhofer 97). In fact, one of the fundamental conditions of the frontier is the “disparity between ideals and practice” and the “lack of connection between thought and experience” (Chase 8). Thus, according to Slotkin, as the “law of nature and of progress requires that those unsuited for civilization either give way to those who bear the germs of progress or be destroyed” (*Gunfighter Nation* 48), the end product of the frontier is “the production of a new kind of ruling class” (*Gunfighter Nation* 50), called the frontiersmen. Despite the clash between an “urge to believe in the rural myth” and an “awareness of industrialization as counterforce to the myth” (Marx 229), these two opposing forces inform the setting in which a frontier figure is created. As the frontier, often, is depicted as a place where “violent” meeting between savagery and civilization takes place, a frontier figure is created out of this violent confrontation. He is a new type—neither fully a European nor a native Indian—a new Adam, born out of this contest between savagery and civilization. Along these lines, for Crèvecoeur, Americans are a

people who

leav[es] behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. [. . .] Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry which began long since in the east; they will finish the great circle. (5)

In this line of thought, Americanness, in particular, becomes directly related to one's ability to hold one's own ground during the war against wild man and nature. As the term "the winning of the West" suggests, Americanness necessitates masculinity and violence—America's ability to subjugate wild men and nature. This is why many scholars would agree to Matthew Carter's reading of Theodore Roosevelt's take on the history of the American West that promoted "racialist theories of Anglo-Saxon superiority and the necessity of wars of extermination against the native Americans" (Carter 15). For Roosevelt, there was no room for "the coward and the weaklings in the ranks of the adventurous frontiersmen" (1860) since the weaklings are destined to die as "the penalty of inability to hold [their] own in the rough warfare against [their] surroundings" (1861). David Lusted also affirms this notion by saying that the "myth of the Garden of America authorized the imperial colonization of a land already inhabited and adapted by peoples of a different race" (20). From this perspective, Carter is right in claiming that the "frontier was not so much 'gone' as it was transposed onto foreign military ventures" (14). In fact, these new foreign wilderness "provide[d] the necessary conditions for producing all that was good in American manhood" (Carter 14). While the

features of Americanness seem positive, beneficial, or even virtuous for establishing “Anglo-American self-definition” and fulfilling the American Dream, this belief nevertheless “justifie[s] a violent response to difference” and privileges the “notions of masculinity, heroism and Anglo-male bias” (Carter 4). Following Carter’s reading, Kolodny also suggested that “the myth of the woodland hero necessary involves a man” who transforms the feminine wilderness “to gratify his desires” (*The Land Before Her* 5).

Since the frontier myth perceived the New World as the New Canaan in mythological terms, it follows that it simultaneously required the New World to be just that in actuality. In other words, implicit in the frontier myth is the imperative of transfiguring a chaotic, mysterious, and savage wilderness into an ordered civilization. The myth, through constant negotiation between myth and reality, presupposes a “pastoral impulse” (Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land* 6) that attempts to bridge the gap between myth and reality and undertakes to transform dreams into daily realities. Leo Marx, in the same manner as Kolodny, suggests that since “the imagination of Americans was [so] dominated by the idea of transforming the wild heartland into such a new ‘Garden of the World’” (141) this “mode of belief” expressed “a believable definition of reality” (143). Likewise, if we acknowledge how this “mode of belief” is able to “shape and structure experience” (Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land* 6), we can also surmise the unforeseen relationships between the myth, reality, and pastoral impulse which are at the heart of the myth of the frontier. As it happens, pastoral impulse becomes the driving force that makes the myth into reality—it transfigures wilderness and chaos into civilized and ordered universe as it attempts to impose the Judeo-Christian view of the world. Just as Slotkin has pointed out, this view—an “errand into the wilderness”—gave occasions

for the whites to justify their “imperialistic adventure[s]” (*Regeneration Through Violence* 562) to regenerate their fortunes, their spirits, and the power of their church and nation by means of violence (*Regeneration Through Violence* 5). Mary Louise Pratt explicates how this project really works: the Euro-Americans employed a “totalizing and classification project” (28) to compose an ordered universe that brought forth the “reality of order into being[s]” (33) as they were looking for “commercially exploitable resources, markets, and lands to colonize” (30).

If the New World is considered as a place of mysterious “excitement and great deeds . . . taking place in a sacred time” (Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique* 11), then what logically follows is America’s desire to understand, uncover, and conquer this New World both literally and metaphysically. The mantra of the myth is always going to be: multiply and conquer, transform the Old World into the New Canaan as it has always been just that in the past. Since the New World was perceived by the discoverers as “vast, unknown, exotic, uncultivated, and peopled by diverse nations of savages” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 29), Euro-Americans’ task in this new land, nicely put, was to create “a sanctified civilization, a society ordered on rigid principles of divine authority” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 51).

More particularly, the predominating theme in the frontier myth is the frontier hero’s mission and role in reforming and purifying the New World of its darkness, chaos, and sins. Indeed, the frontier hero “represents the values” of America’s “last frontier” and his “fate is ultimately an emblem of the last pure experience of the American Dream” (Mogren 16). As a “hero *en-masse*” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 34), the frontier figure is supposed to transform the wilderness into a civilization, find innovative ways to solve

problems, and establish order in the midst of chaos. Since the “Puritan way aimed at the creation of a sanctified civilization ordered on rigid principles of divine authority” as they “prized cultivation: the bringing of wild man, wild passions, and wild nature under the check of order” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 51), it is not surprising to find that the frontier figure was thought to abolish all the chaos of the wild landscape and to cultivate an ordered and civilized garden in this New World.

In order to regain this prelapsarian paradise (before the Fall), the frontier figure ought to be the new Adam. As a manifest reality expressed by their pastoral impulses, not only did the first settlers of New England think of the American frontier as the New Canaan but they also believed themselves to be the new Adam. The frontier figure is a “new man” who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions” (Crevecoeur 6). According to the Judeo-Christian myth, Adam is the archetypal man whose authority and sovereignty are granted from God to re-create nature. The very first thing that Adam did after his creation was to give things their names. Whatever he called each creature, it became the very thing he named. In the same way, Americans believed that it was their “manifest destiny” to “fill the earth and subdue” (Genesis 1:28) the New World. Just like Adam gave names “to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beasts of the field” (Genesis 2:20), the frontier figure reconfigured the New World in his own terms. For Crevecoeur, the frontiersmen are the new Adams: they are “a people of cultivators” (3-4) with the “spirit of industry which is unfettered and unrestrained” (4) developing “fair cities, substantial villages, extensive fields, an immense country filled with decent houses, good roads, orchards, meadows, and bridges where an hundred years ago all was wild, woody, and

uncultivated!” (2). Identically, the frontiersmen, for Turner, are emigrants who are capable of transforming the wilderness into an American civilization by building “cabin[s],” “roads,” “bridges,” “mills,” “school-houses,” and “court-houses” (Turner 15). In short, the frontier figure, by naming, categorizing, cultivating, and civilizing the New World, transfigures a naturalized landscape into an artificial one—a product which he proudly calls “civilization” (Turner 2). This is perhaps why the frontiersmen illustrated and espoused by Turner and Crevecoeur are pioneers, farmers, inventors, and explorers—because one way or another they embody the characteristics attributed to Adam. Americans believed that a frontier figure, as a new Adam, can “transcend the restraints of society and the limitations of human nature to achieve total earthly fulfillment . . . by achieving organic unity with nature” (Nobel 4) and through “tap[ping] the vast power of mother earth” that contains a “limitless national reservoir of spiritual strength” (Nobel 5).

The frontier figure needs to embody this Adamic personification because this allows him the justification for terraforming the New World. In order to become the new Adam, the frontier figure actively engages with his surrounding landscape, nature, and the world. He reconfigures the wilderness (chaos) into a civilization (order) on a planetary scale. That being so, even before the conquest of the Americas there existed the idea of the New World necessitating its terraformation into something manageable and orderly. If so, it is not difficult to conceive the rationale for this associative move—from the mythical imagery of Adam to the practical imagery of a frontiersman. The frontiersman, in short, is who re-creates a wild and chaotic wilderness into an ordered, civilized society. In this way, the frontier space—the meeting place between savagery and civilization—justifies “the establishment of the American colonies” (Slotkin,

Gunfighter Nation 10) and imposes the “progressive idea of history” (Marx 146) that reconfigures the world into a new system of reality by transforming an undesignated chaos (wilderness) into a designated order (civilization). This impulse, thus, expresses a “wistful yearning for a social order” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 146) defending a particular kind of society—a society based upon Euro-American notions of civilization. As Leo Marx pointed out, what we witness in this impulse is its preference for the “willed, empirical, practical mode of consciousness” over the “spontaneous, imaginative, mythopoetic, intuitional perception” (233). In this line of thought, a frontiersman, defined through the lens of Crèvecoeur, Turner, and many others, seems to embody Adamic characteristics of the Judeo-Christian myth and tradition. Although Crèvecoeur and Turner may indicate the necessity or inevitability of the “terraformation” of the New World through technology and innovation, they nevertheless hint the function of such an impulse that constitutes a significant element within the fabric of the frontier myth. Just as the Puritan “aimed at the creation of a sanctified civilization, a society ordered on rigid principles of divine authority” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 51), it was necessary for the frontier figure, regardless of the physical and material realities of the frontier, to fulfill his errand into the wilderness as this project was “akin to the right to absolute possession of [his] own soul and conscience” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 43).

Encoded in the myth is the idea of America as a place of “opportunity to regenerate their fortunes, their spirits, and the power of their church and nation” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 5). Accordingly, the most compelling attraction of the frontier was “the hope of economic betterment, the feeling that [one] ought to do better”

(Billington 27). It is true that the “fluid society of Western America bred an unquenchable hope and faith in the rags-to-riches formula” (Billington 38) because this belief rested on the historical foundation that the Western frontier “created an opportunity for upward social mobility unparalleled in other nations” (Billington 37). However, by untested adoption of the Turnerian frontier paradigm, many scholars pithily regard the above formula to be true. While it is hard to refute the undeniable role that the Western frontier played in developing the “rags-to-riches formula,” it is also true that this template presupposes the role of the frontier individual who possesses “coarseness, strength, restlessness and exuberance” (Turner 9) that allow him to realize this formula. Thinking in this line, it is not surprising to regard that the frontier experience was one of the crucial factors that fostered the formation of a “composite nationality for the American people” (Turner 5) as these frontiersmen “[adjusted] their lives to” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 26) the frontier environment with its “unmitigated harshness and tremendous potential fertility” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 18). According to Ray Billington “the English pioneers came from a culture where he had been trained emotionally to exploit the resources of the frontier” (56) that resulted in creating a unique American character that stands apart from Europeans with their “drive toward success,” “self-directedness” (63), “rugged American individualism” (65), and “faith in the future” (66). Billington’s suggestion is correct because in order to effectively transform a rugged landscape into an earthly Garden of Eden, a frontier figure, as a new Adam, requires particular traits that would realize the above dream-myth.

While the traits of a frontier figure is commonly associated with masculinity and violence during and upon terraformation, as such suggested by Slotkin, Kolodny, and

others, these features, nevertheless, inform certain characteristics oftentimes known as self-made personality and rugged individualism. Defined through Turner's lens, a frontier figure is a "self-made-man" (176) who "opens all the realms of rational human enjoyment and achievement" (181) through "coarseness, restless, nervous energy, and dominant individualism" (25-26). According to Crèvecoeur's definition, he is a "new race of [man]" (5) who possess a "great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry" created on the "broad lap of our great Alma Mater" (5). For R. W. B. Lewis, he is "the hero of the new adventure: . . . an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources" (5). In short, "all this and more were contained in the image of the American as Adam" (Lewis 5).

While the frontier figure can be different things to different people, as mentioned above, his image essentially is derived from Adam: a self-made man. A self-made man, according to John Cawelti, is an individual who puts "emphasis on the individual's getting ahead," endorsed with "secular qualities such as initiative, aggressiveness, competitiveness, and forcefulness" (*Apostles of the Self-Made Man* 5). Although its definition is broad and at other times vague, it repeatedly suggests the necessity for expressing masculine energy or force within human nature to transform a (harsh) frontier environment into a tamed civilization. Perhaps, this is the reason why we frequently encounter frontier figures in the myth as farmers, hunters, cowboys, backwoodsmen, pioneers, explorers, and captains of industry. It seems that the frontier figure is always the proponent of an agrarian-industrial society as if the "myth-hero embodies or defends

the values” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 269) of his agrarian-industrial culture. Since the frontier figure was “taught in the school of [frontier] experience,” he was required “to make old tools serve new uses; to shape former habits, institutions and ideas to changed conditions; and to find new means when the old proved inapplicable” (Turner 171). If so, the self-made frontier figure is a rugged individual who possesses the ability to adapt to new circumstances and use old things for new purposes. In other words, rugged individualism is considered one of the primary characteristics of the self-made man. This idea became naturalized as American society believed that the “conditions of development in the [frontier] have steadily tended to accentuate the peculiarly American characteristics” (Roosevelt 1860) described by Theodore Roosevelt as the “iron qualities” (1860) of the men of the West. Americans, foremost,

must choose so far as the conditions allow him the path to which he is bidden by his own peculiar powers and inclinations. [. . .] It is not given to us all to succeed, but it is given to us all to strive manfully to deserve success. We need then the iron qualities that must go with true manhood. We need the positive virtues of resolution, of courage, of indomitable will, of power to do without shrinking the rough work that must always be done, and to persevere through the long days of slow progress or of seeming failure which always come before any final triumph. (Roosevelt 1861)

What is emphasized is the frontier figure’s rugged individualism—his self-reliance and self-propelling qualities—that can transform an inert land into a civilization/new garden promoting evolution in every stage of human development. To sum up, a frontier figure is

none other than a self-made man, a rugged-individualist transforming the wilderness into civilization with “coarseness and strength” (Turner 25). Ultimately, the “success of the settlement in the American frontier depended on the frontier figure’s ability to master the land, transforming the virgin territories into something else—a farm, a village, a road, a canal, a railway, a mine, a factory, a city, and finally, an urban nation” (Kolodny, *The Land Before Her* 4). As Marx has noted, armed with the “power of machines as the conclusive sanction for faith in the unceasing progress of mankind” (191), Americans are able to “realize the dream of abundance” (192) and to bring “America into its own as a pastoral utopia” (225) by “transforming the wild heartland into such Garden of the World” (141). Thus, according to the myth, rugged-individualism is key in realizing the American Dream. As a matter of fact, contrary to Turner’s exposition, a frontiersman cannot “accept the conditions which [the frontier] furnishes” and would not fit “himself into the Indian clearings [or follow] the Indian trails” (2) but instead exercise a rugged-individualist impulse to “transform the wilderness . . . [into] a new product” (3).

The relationship between the frontier myth and the Dream, according to many scholars, is substantial; all the while both of these terms are never clearly defined. In the frontier myth, and so too in the American consciousness, the New World symbolized hope. The West, according to Harold Simonson, “figured into the process of civilization, so that the process itself came to mean progress” (4). From this logic, the frontier was “synonymous with the American Dream” (Simonson 4). In fact, the frontier myth was conceptualized side by side with the American Dream as these terms, more often than not, became conflated to fascinate and capture the psyche and sentimentality of Americans. The persuasiveness of the myth results from its ability to sustain the idea of

the American Dream. Mogen notes that Americans “define [themselves] most fundamentally by reference to [their] frontier heritage, which symbolically represents the ambiguous implications of [their] belief in limitless possibilities” (26). Here’s how the romantic myth of the frontier became synonymous with the Dream: in the American frontier, Simonson explains, “individuals could move west” (3) and consequently social “mobility nurtured optimism” (4). In the Judeo-Christian mythology, “a new Heaven and a new Earth” will be created and in the frontier myth “a better, richer and happier life” will be established. In America, the “[p]rogress toward the better life, and freedom for the pursuit of it, became the modified, secularized ideals of the American dream” (Carpenter 6). Always vaguely present, undeniably the American Dream has been the “motivating forces of American civilization” (Carpenter 5). In this way, Mogen correctly recognized that the myth embodies the Dream (Mogen 29). Historian James Truslow Adams popularized the phrase “American Dream” in his 1931 book *The Epic of America*:

But there has been also the *American dream*, that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. (415)

As Adams noted in *The Epic of America*, the American Dream “has been realized more

fully in actual life here than anywhere else” as the Dream stipulated that every American is “able to grow to fullest development . . . unhampered by the barriers . . . unrepressed by social orders” (416). In this way, the Dream, analogously with the frontier myth, “saw life and history as just beginning. It described the world as starting up again under fresh initiative, in a divinely granted second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrously fumbled in the darkening Old World” (Lewis 5). Deriving its “creative energy” from Judeo-Christian mythology, the Dream asserts that in America “men could, with the prospects of a new continent, actually believe in their power at last to create an environment congenial to an ideal self” (Poirier 17). Additionally, according to Hochschild, the Dream stipulates that “all Americans have a reasonable chance to achieve success as they define it—material or otherwise—through their own efforts, and to attain virtue and fulfillment through success” (xi).

However, fulfilling the Dream (of a new Garden) within the frontier myth is rather difficult not only because the Dream is ambiguous and elusive but also because it is unrealistic and mythical. If we follow the logic of the myth, it is inevitable for the frontier/wilderness—a space that furnishes boundless resources and opportunities to the frontiersmen—to diminish and eventually disappear. This was why Turner, at the end of his essay, acknowledged that the “ever retreating” American frontier has “gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history” (26). Agreeing with Turner, Wright Morris argues that the belief in “a wilderness as yet untamed” (33) no longer “supplie[d] the artisan” (9) with a “raw-material reservoir” (12) to the “American sentiment and sensibility” (27) because of the “passing of the last natural frontier” (9). Building off of Turner’s statement above, Simonson was able to argue that America’s

tragic sense of the closing of its own frontier destroyed “illusions fostered on the open frontier” (5) that led America to “[p]ainfully admit that possibilities can only be finite and progress only limited” (6) and finally caused America to “discard illusions about national invincibility or the divine right to exercise power” (6). Simonson believed that this state—the closing of the frontier—substantiated the closed wall metaphor that “account[ed] for the American’s tragic limitations” (7). Indeed, Simonson rightfully indicated the inevitable destination of the frontier myth—that the frontier dream inevitably leads to a wall (an end to the frontier). However, he was too quick in expanding this idea toward a sentimental prospect of America. If the tragic sense of the closing frontier anticipated in Turner’s essay “destroyed illusions fostered on the open frontier and impelled the nation to come to age” (Simonson 5), and if the cultural dialogue between the settlers and native Indians caused the maturation of the American Dream, as argued by Simonson, then how can we explain the perpetuation of the belief in the American Dream and its ideology of Pax Americana? If one accepts such romantic terms suggested by Simonson, then one is likely ignoring the myth’s negative role in justifying violence and slavery brought on by an unfettered expansion of the frontier.

In fact, contrary to Simonson’s and Morris’s arguments, the closing of the frontier, and hence, the American Dream, are not only caused by the exhaustion of America’s natural resources, but also by the intrinsic limitation within the conception of the American Dream itself. Certainly, the American Dream has been a “defining characteristic of American culture, aspirations, and institutions” (Hochschild xi). Outlining the American Dream as America’s central ideology, Hochschild’s investigation on the flaws of the American Dream’s core tenants is worth mentioning here because this

allows us to reflect on the myth's flaws as well. According to Hochschild, the Dream's idea of a self-made man—"that everyone can participate equally and can always start over" (26)—is flawed because "people cannot shed their existing selves as snakes do their skin" (26); the Dream's idea of a "reasonable anticipation of success" (27) is problematic because there aren't enough resources and opportunities for everyone "that everyone has a reasonable chance of having some expectations met" (27), and the Dream's belief in "success result[ing] from self-motivated actions and traits under one's control" (30) is illogical because failure is not caused by one's "lack of talent or will" (30). She suggests that these tenets (of the American Dream) are deceptive for the reasons mentioned above. Her case is reasonable because the Dream, contrary to its own assertions, cannot guarantee complete self-making, anticipated success, and limitless upward mobility. Upon careful investigations on the tenants of the Dream, we begin to understand that they correlate with the underlying implicated flaws anticipated in the frontier myth.

Turner, in his essay, argued that the frontier "promoted individualism, economical equality, freedom to rise [and] democracy" (164) because "the conditions of free competition" (165) produced "free opportunity" (164) for men unbound by the "chains of social class" (164). Turner, in contradiction, also argued that the frontier promoted the "concentration of economic and social power in the hands of a comparatively few men" (165). What is rather contradicting about Turner's arguments here is that he not only considers the frontier to provide "chance[s] for indefinite ascent in the scale of social advance" (165) but also to produce masters of industry who have "risen to power by the conquest of Western resources" (167). While Turner mentions terms like "equality,"

“freedom to rise,” and “free opportunity” to define the American frontier, he seems to forget that the frontier simultaneously includes the “concentration” (165) of natural resources by a “comparatively few men” (165) who became the “masters of industry and capital” (167) of these natural resources. Contrary to Turner’s above arguments, free land and free competition are misnomers because, as we intuitively register, natural resources are not free (unlimited); and free competition results in monopoly and class distinctions but not socio-economic equality. Uncritically following Turner’s assumptions, David M. Potter puts forth that “American industrial growth, relying upon the use of other forms of abundance” (98) offered the development of American life. While Potter attempts to distinguish himself from Turner by arguing that “other forms of abundance” (97) such as “technological advance,” “urban growth,” and “higher standard of living” (97) contributed to the advancement of America, his argument nonetheless replicates Turner’s central assumption: free resources equals prosperity.

Turner’s definition of social evolution is by every means pro-capitalistic. He explains this process in terms of capitalism; progress, as Turner thinks, is to be brought forth by three types of men—pioneers, emigrants, and most importantly, capitalists. To elucidate, for Turner, national progress is nothing more than an establishment of a capitalistic state developed through capitalist vanguards “who depend for the subsistence of [their] famil[ies] chiefly upon the natural growth of vegetation . . . and become founder[s] of a new county, or perhaps a state,” and then “purchase the lands . . . and buil[d] [themselves] a plain, frugal, civilized life,” and finally become men of capital, and through enterprise, transform a “small village . . . to a spacious town or city” (5).

During this industrialization process develops a capitalistic caste system that

privileges capitalists as opposed to non-capitalists (uncivilized savages). Obviously, in this system, capitalists are positioned at the very top of the social pyramid whereas non-capitalists are placed at the very bottom. In this sense, this system parallels the binary world system in the frontier myth: both restructure the world into a binary hierarchy privileging capitalists (or frontiersmen) over non-capitalists (or savages). Thereby, unsurprisingly, both the frontier myth and capitalistic system implicate a social Darwinian theory of evolution. It holds that “the struggle for existence tended to pass power on to higher biological forms, races, and social classes” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 42-43). From this point of view, Turner was able to proclaim that the “prizes” won on the frontier “were for the keenest and the strongest” and “all the varied chances for advancement [were] afforded to him who knew how to seize the opportunity” (172). The result of this contest for survival, according to Turner, was the interpenetration and disintegration of savages and savage ways “by lines of civilization” (9), in short, by pro-capitalistic ways. This is evident as Turner situated the expansion of the frontier and social development in terms of industrial-capitalistic enterprise. He asserts that this involves “crossing a continent,” “winning a wilderness,” and finally developing a “complexity city life . . . of manufacturing civilization” out of the “primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier” (Turner 2).

As Kathryn Hume notes, while “[p]rosperity for anyone willing to work hard is a crucial component” of the myth, that “the reality of America falls short of the ideal America is nothing new” (4). This noticeable gap between the reality and the dream or the contradiction in the myth’s assertion, perhaps, illustrates crucial flaws in the frontier paradigm. Ray Billington argues that “of the many myths associated with the frontier,

none has been more persistent than the belief that class divisions vanished there” (97). If we acknowledge Billington’s study, we should consider, contrary to common belief, that class divisions did occur in “the frontier primitive communities, and even deepened as the social order matured” (97). While class stratification in America was less severe than European societies, class division, no doubt is “inevitable in any social group, no matter how primitive” (Billington 101). In this line of thought, Billington notes that the frontier—the basic fabric of the American Dream—“played an essential role in shaping a distinct class system by allowing individuals to move upward in the social scale” (106), but, at the same time, “persuad[ed] the lower classes to sustain the political order” (114) of this system.

Obviously, the frontier myth reads the “westward expansion as a [s]ocial Darwinian parable, explaining the emergence of a new managerial ruling class and justifying its right to subordinate lesser classes to its purpose” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 22). On a closer look, the frontier model is revealed to be less of a truism but more of a logical fallacy based on this sort of romantic, mythic, and capitalistic notions of economy. If we follow the logic of the frontier myth we will arrive at the conclusion that without perpetual free land and labor, its system will eventually fail. This is because national resources will eventually exhaust themselves as western expansion takes place. Turner’s claim—“[m]en would not accept inferior wages and a permanent position of social subordination when this promised land of freedom and equality was theirs for the taking” (164)—is theoretically and realistically flawed not only because freedom and equality are not guaranteed in this system but also because natural resources are not unlimited. Since there’s a certain limit to these resources, this system will not be able to

guarantee freedom and equality for all men. This, in turn, obviously results in class stratification. More particularly, opportunities promoted by a new (frontier) not only results in class stratification between captains of industry and underprivileged groups of men but also causes unequal distribution of capital among them. The only way to salvage the myth's paradigm is the perpetual existence of unlimited natural resources (land) and human resources (labor). Indeed, the myth's interior logic—free land calling for new opportunities for individual mobility, social development, and national progress in terms of economic advancement and industrialization—can be accomplished only if the conditions of free land and free labor are met. If the dominant factor that sustains and propels the frontier myth rested upon the procurement of seemingly unlimited resources, then it follows that “America's hope thus lay in westward expansion—in the extended opportunities for the growing population” (Limerick 58). Since opportunities for upward mobility rely upon the continual sustenance of land or property via western expansion, then it is understandable that Americans “saw the acquisition of property as a cultural imperative” (Limerick 55). According to the myth's logic, frontier opportunity is supposed to permit boundless freedom and equality. However, in reality, settling the frontier required “a lot of work” (97) mostly done by “individuals laboring on their own” and “a great deal was done for wages” (Limerick 98).

Theoretically, this can be achieved by expanding to other territories that are replete with natural resources or by developing a system that decreases the deprivation of natural resources. In other words, in order to maintain the myth's paradigm, it invariably requires a caste system that maintains upper mobility to the captains of industry while depriving lesser classes of their property and capital as the former seeks “to demonstrate

their superiority over” (Billington 100) the latter. In Western thought, individuality depended upon one’s relation to property, or conversely, property is associated with individuality. Indeed, Westerners “envision[ed] the absolute individual possession of the land” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 42-43) as a God-given right. So, they believed that “there is no individuality without property” and demanded that other “cultures accept the terms of property/individualism/representation or die fighting for another set of terms” (Cheyfitz 112). In this line of thought, it is not surprising that the myth dictates that subordinate classes become “excluded from the terms of property so that the conquest of America, which will force Indians into a position where they must sell their lands, can be justified” (Cheyfitz 116) according to the terms of capitalist economy.

This class stratification and concentration of capital ultimately ensures economic and political power to the captains of industry. The frontier myth, like a capitalistic economic system, allows the upper class (capitalists) to justifiably take and exploit the frontier resources while precluding other classes from participating in this capitalistic venture. This type of myth’s venture resulted in “campaign[s] to integrate native resources into the American economy” (200) because the capitalists considered the latter as potential “property holder[s]” (Limerick 196). Limerick is correct to acknowledge that “American society came equipped with an institutional framework” (Limerick 63)—a pro-capitalistic economy system—that demarcates classes and fosters unequal distribution of land, property, and resources. The process of ideological-political legitimization of the ownership of these new resources is implicit in the frontier paradigm.

The frontier myth commonly presents the formation and development of a national myth in a romanticized-mythified way. According to the myth, the frontier has always been and still is an area of vacant/free land, a virgin landscape, and a new Garden. The frontier landscape or frontier resources, at this precise instance, transforms from a use-value into an exchange value as this transfiguration becomes an analogy for understanding how a natural landscape came to be a commodity. If the frontier land was vacant of “any human occupancy, then a nation could claim both land title and political jurisdiction on the grounds of *vacuum domicilium*” (Berkhofer 120). This sort of theoretical rationale for “taking up the free or virgin land of the wilderness” in the frontier myth is finally justified by “defeating the savage natives in a war of races” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 33). Contrary to the myth’s premises, as common sense dictates, the frontier landscape was never vacant nor free. However, what was more important was the fact that it “ought” to be free and vacant. Perhaps this is why Kolodny was able to claim that this “free land” was not only conceived “as an object of domination and exploitation” but also as a “maternal garden receiving and nurturing” (7) its children (Americans). Patricia Limerick’s historical inquiry into America’s Western history demonstrates that the conquest of the frontier involved “drawing of lines on a map,” “defin[ing] and allocat[ing] of ownership,” and the subsequent “distribution of property” (27). In this sense, Limerick is correct in stating that the frontier history “has been an ongoing competition for legitimacy—for the right to claim for oneself . . . the status of legitimate beneficiary of Western resources” (27).

It is needless to say that “[i]mages and symbols of a ‘chosen people’ in a New Zion and a new Promised Land have helped” (Girgus 106) to formulate the myth of

America. In a similar fashion, Bercovitch notes that America “used the biblical myth of exodus and conquest to justify imperialism” (8) in which the frontier “belonged to their errand before the errand belonged to them” (9). In explaining the reasons for the popularity of the frontier myth, John R. Milton notes that since “the American experience was based so fully on the frontier for two centuries . . . America needed a heritage of its own, fully divorced from England, and the somewhat mythical” (34). While it is true that the accumulation of the frontier myth stemmed from a “physical reality” of the “American West” (Milton 42), such notions can be misleading if we ignore one crucial element that structure the frontier story-myth: the synchronization between reality and myth. To elucidate, this component, explicated by Kolodny, not only “holds at its very core the promise of fantasy as daily reality” but also impels America to “pursu[e] the fantasy in daily life” (Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land* 7).

According to Limerick, Americans believed “in the social fiction that lines on a map and signatures on a deed legitimately divide the earth” (Limerick 56). This fiction—“turning the open expanses of North America into transferable parcels of real estate” (Limerick 55-56)—involves a process that equates physical matters with symbols and map-legends. In fact, this procedure—i.e., myth-making process—serves as a metaphor in which the frontier myth correlates physical realities with symbolic myths that blur the boundaries between them. This is, according to Slotkin, because myth-making processes “lie in our capacity to make and use metaphors, by which we attempt to interpret a new and surprising experience or phenomenon by noting its resemblance to some remembered thing or happening” (*Gunfighter Nation* 6). Slotkin further explains, “[i]f the metaphor proves apt, we will be inclined to treat the new phenomenon as a recurrence of the old”

(*Gunfighter Nation* 6). If we take into account Slotkin's analyses above, a myth is engendered through an applicable metaphor that effectively explains a present reality in association with a past myth. The myth-making process is complete when a metaphor effectively explains the association among the mythic past, historic present, and anticipated future.

Regarding our investigation, we can consider that the myth of the frontier is an apt metaphor that associates the myth (most forcibly influenced by Judeo-Christian cosmology) with the present frontier reality. According to Slotkin, America has

developed an elaborate concept of their mission in the New World . . . in which their emigration was analogue of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt—a temporary exile for fugitives from an idolatrous land, a period of trial which would make them worthy of entering into a new Promised Land and a New Jerusalem. (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 38)

The gravitational pull, or linkage, among the past, present, and future is at the heart of the myth-making process. What made their association so effective, as a matter of fact, was the affinity between the myth and reality. As immigrants from European societies, Americans subconsciously and/or consciously allowed the transplantation myth to be a part of their frontier experience and reality that after a certain point of time the distinction between myth and reality no longer became necessary. America's drive to eradicate their difference, and its attempt to transform myth into reality, or to realize the American Dream, was so powerful that it began to efface the elements of its frontier reality—the unmitigated harshness of the frontier landscape and presence of the native Indians, to name of few. As a result, the frontier myth was not thought of as an incredible story cut

off from the reality of the present but rather as an attainable dream that had real affinity with the actuality of the present and the prophetic future. The metaphor proved to be apt: the mythic past, the reality of the present, and the prophetic future became one and the same as the metaphor furnished a cosmic narrative of the genesis and revelation of America's past, present and future. David Nobel, acknowledging this phenomenon—the merging of the mythical past with the historical present toward a prophetic future—also notes that the metaphor is “linked to the past and is always leading into the future” (x). On that account, Slotkin is right in suggesting that if “the metaphor proves apt, we will be inclined to treat the new phenomenon as a recurrence of the old” (*Gunfighter Nation* 6).

Commonly in the frontier myths and narratives, we witness this phenomenon—Adam or Abraham (of the Judeo-Christian myth) of the past becomes the Puritans of the present and frontiersman of the future; the promised land of Canaan of the past becomes the American frontier of the present and the space frontier of the future. William Bradford, for example, makes a parallel between the New Englanders' experience in the New World with that of the Jews' journey to the promised land of Canaan. As “the first New Englanders associated their migration with the Exodus” (Nash 34), Bradford's account of the New Englanders' journey to and experience in America parallels Judeo-Christian biblical accounts on the Jews' pilgrimage to and experience in Canaan. When Bradford reached Massachusetts Bay, he firmly believed that the mountain he saw was a new “Pisgah, the mountain from which Moses had allegedly seen the promise land” (Nash 34). Bradford writes that they needed to “go up to the top of Pisgah, to view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes” (61) just as Moses did in the book of Genesis. In another instance, during one of their attempts to scavenge food on

this foreign land, we again see Bradford associating the New Englanders with the scouts sent by Moses in search for food near a brook called “Eschol”—a mythical stream from which the scouts of Moses drank water. Bradford writes that they “took with them part of the corn and buried up the rest, and so like the men from Eschol carried with them of the fruits of the land” (62). Hence, the Puritans’ arrival at the Plymouth plantation and looting food from the Indian territory became synonymous with Moses’s arrival at the top of Pisgah mountain and taking fruits from Canaanite land.

In a similar fashion, less in religious tones, but nonetheless with definite mythological terms, Turner’s frontier narrative practices this kind of parallelism. To explicate the American ethos, Turner parallels the spirit of Ulysses with the feature of a frontiersman. In essence, according to Turner’s argument, Ulysses’ desire to “follow knowledge” and “sail beyond the sunset” (194) is equal to a frontiersman’s inclination for discovery and conquest in the New World frontier. Directly citing from Tennyson’s poem, “Ulysses,” Turner argues that just as Ulysses possessed a spirit to “follow knowledge like a shining star [b]eyond the utmost bound of human thought” and owned a desire to “seek a newer world,” to “sail beyond the sunset,” and to “strive, to seek, to find and not to yield” (Turner 194), a frontiersman “train[ed] in aggressive courage, in domination, in directness of action, in destructiveness” is endowed with a manifest destiny to initiate a “quest after the unknown . . . beyond the sky line, where the strange roads go down” (170). Although it is superfluous to describe all the commonalities between Ulysses and a frontiersman, described by Turner, it is not without merit to note that both are men of discovery and conquest.

What is fascinating about these parallels, and perhaps this is true of all parallels, is

that they not only distort historicity but also re-create mythology. In *Mythologies*, according to Barthes, myth is “constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things” (142) and the function of myth “is to empty reality” as “it gives [things] a natural and eternal justification” which “gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact” (143). For Barthes, mythical system is based on the liquidation of linguistic system: a process of “ceaseless flowing out, a hemorrhage, or a perceptible absence” (143) of reality that leaves only the myth. By deliberately draining the components of reality, the distinction between reality and myth becomes unnoticeable. This is where, paradoxically, myth is considered as reality (as myth gains its historicity from reality) and reality as myth (as reality loses its authenticity by myth). Even though specifics and context may vary between myth and reality, in these parallels, their differences are readily ignored and filled with fillers to create something new: a myth-reality. For example, Bradford’s hill suddenly transfigures from a foreign hill into Abraham’s Pisgah mountain, and Turner’s frontier figure, in an instant, acquires mythical properties of a mythic hero, Ulysses. So successful is this kind of synchronization that it is difficult to separate between them once the connection is aptly made. What used to be held in the realm of myth now is existent within the realm of reality. When reality is translated into myth, according to Slotkin, “the complexities of social and historical experiences are simplified and compressed” (*Gunfighter Nation* 13).

In consequence, a new form of reality —simplified and compressed—opens: a frontier wilderness transforms into the New World garden, and the settlers morph into new Adams or Abrahams. This new kind of reality—a (mythic) reality that is engendered out of a “synthetic process of reconciling the romantic-conventional myths of Europe to

American experience” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 17)—ultimately becomes a manifest destination of the frontier myth which is the American Dream. As a metaphor of the subjunctive, the American Dream has been and will always be about the subjunctive despite its complexity and elusiveness. Investigating the multifarious and at times elusive meanings of the American Dream, Jim Cullen notes that the Dream essentially displays the “charm of anticipated success of a better, richer, and happier life” (7). According to Cullen, the American Dream implicates the idea of an “upward mobility, a dream typically understood in terms of economic and/or social advancement” (8) and a “sense of *agency*, the idea that individuals have control over the course of their lives” (10). Indeed, as Cullen points out, although the Pilgrims may not actually know about the term—American Dream—they, nonetheless, would “intuitively express rhythms of the Dreams with their hands and hearts” (5). Although the ideas of upward mobility and sense of agency are central in defining the American Dream, Cullen recognizes that the Dream is “neither a reassuring verity nor an empty bromide” but rather a “complex idea with manifold implication[s]” because sometimes “better and richer and fuller” (7) cannot be defined only in terms of economic betterment. Notably, “the Dream itself remains, almost by definition, elusive” (Mogen 28). Frederic I.

Carpenter, too, recognizes the elusive aspect of the Dream by noting that it

has never been defined exactly, and probably never can be. It is both too various and too vague. [. . .] American literature has differed from English because of the constant and omnipresent influence of the American Dream upon it. This influence has usually been indirect and unconscious, because the dream has remained vague and undefined. [. . .] Almost by

inadvertence our literature has accomplished a symbolic and experimental projection of it. (3)

Admittedly, the Dream “has always been a fact of American history, and even if a delusion, it remains a motivating force” (Carpenter 6). Perhaps the myth’s “ambiguity is the very source of [its] mythic power” (Cullen 7).

This dissertation explores the extent to which postmodern novels that purportedly celebrate indeterminacy, universality, and relativism and refuse logocentrism and grand narratives, yet continue to invest their attention to the (seemingly obsolete) frontier tradition that articulates terms such as logocentrism, rugged individualism, capitalism, the American Dream, and mythology. In order to identify how each novel engages with the frontier myth, I have carefully selected the four novels (*City of Glass*, *No Country for Old Men*, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, and *Mason & Dixon*) that belong to distinctive genres—postmodern detective fiction, contemporary Western, science fiction, and historical/alternative fiction. My thesis is that these novels, while each staged in a distinctive frontier landscape, relatively in different ways, invoke various aspects of the frontier myth.

The aim of Chapter 1 is to understand how the core elements of the frontier myth manifest in *City of Glass*. To understand this, I will explore the relationship among Turner’s frontier thesis, the logocentric project, and Adamic transfiguration/rebirth in *City of Glass*. While the novel is regarded by many scholars as a “postmodernist version of the detective genre” (Rowen 224), it is to be considered as a variant of the frontier myth because it not only evokes the central elements of the myth but also endorses its logocentrism and Adamic transfiguration. The novel’s preoccupation with a search for

order, truth, and reality suggests that it aligns itself with the frontier project that attempts to create an ordered civilization from a chaotic wilderness. Paul Auster's characters, in this novel, attempt to restore logocentricity, prelapsarian language, and Adamic rebirth that correspond with a frontier figure's civilization project and his metamorphic impulse in the frontier myth. That Quinn's and Stillman's logocentric project closely parallels the frontiersman's civilizing mission strongly suggests the affinity between their logocentric project and Turner's frontier thesis. More particularly, Quinn's position as a detective who would decode the mystery of the (chaotic) world is suggestive of his logocentric proclivity that is in line with the frontier enterprise. Furthermore, similar to a frontier figure, Quinn strives to reincarnate himself as the new Adam. Through Adamic metamorphosis, Quinn attempts to restore prelapsarian innocence just like a frontier figure ventures to revitalize himself through an errand into the frontier wilderness of the New World.

The goal of Chapter 2 is to understand how *No Country for Old Men* engages with the frontier myth, especially focusing on investigating the ways in which a frontier figure is created, as well as unraveling the characteristics of a frontier figure that makes him a true American in association with the American Dream. In order to accomplish this goal, I will explore the relationships between the frontier tradition, determinism vs. free will, rugged individualism, and the American Dream in *No Country for Old Men*. Despite the novel's post-industrial setting and postmodernist philosophy, the novel strongly conjures up imagery of the traditional West that tells a story of the rugged frontier landscape in a postmodern era. The novel engages with the frontier myth in several critical ways: it dramatizes not only the violent confrontation between the Old World and New World but

also stresses frontier values such as free will and rugged individualism (as opposed to determinism or nihilism) and, more importantly, the pursuit of the American Dream that makes Moss a bona fide American. I argue that the novel's three main characters reflect different aspects of a frontier figure. It is through Moss, I argue, who is able to combine Bell's traditionalism and Chigurh's innovation, and his relationship with the American Dream that we find true expression of an American that correlates with Turner's account of a frontiersman. More particularly, I argue that Bell is associated with traditionalism—representing civic order and law—whereas Chigurh is identified with individualism and determinism representing savagery, violence, and chaos. In contrast, Moss not only combines the traits that both Bell and Chigurh signify but also links them with the idea of the American Dream—the “belief in limitless possibilities” (Mogen 26) and “the sense of [agency], the idea that individuals have control over the course of their lives (Cullen 10). As it turns out, Moss is like a frontier figure who is born out of the combination of the European and the Indian and engendered from the metaphorical meeting place between “savagery and civilization” (Turner 2) participating in the dream-making process of the American Dream.

The aim of Chapter 3 is to further explore the frontier myth in terms of a capitalistic model of economy. While *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*—as a representative of the cyberpunk genre that “maps the landscape of the near future” providing a “totalizing chart of new stages of social and industrial development” (Tandt 95)—undeniably explores the issues and concerns on the “moral implications of enslaving a human-like biological machine[s]” (Sims 67), many critics miss the fact that the novel belongs to a frontier paradigm—a paradigm that is based on a capitalistic model

of economy. In order to understand the novel's correlation with the frontier myth, I will analyze the relationship between the frontier model of economy and socio-economic-political crisis in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* In this chapter, I will read the novel in terms of the frontier myth because it dramatizes central factors of the frontier model of economy. The novel not only enacts the systemic categorization of the self-other (humans vs. androids) binary latent in the frontier paradigm but also charts the position of the androids as a way of defining humans for socio-economic-political purposes. Just as the defining factor that demarcates savagery and civilization has been the capacity for reasoning, civilized behavior, and compassion in the frontier paradigm, the novel informs that the determining element that distinguish androids from humans is the ability for logical thinking and empathic responses proven via the Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test and Mercerism. These devices not only re-enforce the demarcation between humans and androids but also provide justifications for discriminating against androids for socio-economic-political privileges of humans. Androids, as sub-human beings, are considered as commodities, exotic/erotic trophies that represent their human owners' socio-economic-political status. Just as the frontier thesis implicitly supports class division and suppression of the native Indians as a way to promote nationalism and national superiority, in a similar way, I argue that the novel not only reveals the necessity of class differentiation and inequalities between humans and androids to stabilize the status quo of Terra's socio-economic-political structure but also depicts the necessity of the androids to strengthen the class/racial hierarchy. Since androids that pass as humans destabilize the ontological definitions between humans and androids, and in effect, invalidate the socio-economic-political privilege of humans, Rick and humans on Terra

require this differentiation in order to establish and maintain the class/racial hierarchy between humans and androids.

Finally, the goal of Chapter 4 is to understand how the frontier myth acquires historical values extending its mythical properties towards reality. In order to do so, I will investigate the relationships between myth, mythopoetic vision, and reality; especially I will look into the interconnectivity between mythology and historicity in *Mason & Dixon*. Although the novel's "pervasive use of anachronism" (Hinds 197) has allowed Hinds to argue that this matches "postmodern sensibility of disconnection and disorientation" (Hinds 203) and the novel's critique on the "scientific rationalistic impulse to impose order" of the "Enlightenment project" (Hume 315) has allowed Hume to claim this to be an indication of a satirist reading, these scholars ignore how the novel encapsulates the frontier myth in association with its myth-making process. To this line, I will read *Mason & Dixon* less as a historical narrative that delineates Mason's and Dixon's frontier experience but more as a mythical narrative that recapitulates the symbolic essence of America and that transfigures the American history into the American romance, allegory, and myth. Just as "the American myth was a synthetic process of reconciling the romantic-conventional myths of Europe to American experience" (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 17), Cherrycoke's version of the myth of America is created by the linkage between myth and reality. It is my contention that while Cherrycoke's stories that depict Mason's and Dixon's journeys seem to be historical, they are, rather, mythological—sharing commonalities with the frontier myth. In this chapter, I argue that Cherrycoke's narrative displays a mythopoetic vision of the frontier myth. As in the frontier myth, Cherrycoke's narrative becomes mythicized and

interprets America's historical present in terms of its mythic past. In particular, I argue that as his tales continuously cross the boundary between history and mythology, they not only create a true measure of myth as a construct of reality but also establish a new American frontier myth by imposing its subjunctive dreams, fantasies, and desires onto history.

City of Glass and the Frontier Myth: Turner's Frontier Thesis and
the Detective "Eye" as Logocentric Projects

Norma Rowen in her essay "The Detective in Search of the Lost Tongue of Adam: Paul Auster's *City of Glass*" classifies Auster's stories as "postmodernist versions of the detective genre [in which] the "straightforward business of identifying a guilty person, bringing him or her into justice and restoring social order is ineluctably subverted into a larger and more ambiguous affair" (224). Particularly, Steven E. Alford who examines the postmodern self in Auster's trilogy, in "Mirrors of Madness: Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy*" remarks on Quinn's true self-knowledge as fundamentally impossible inasmuch as the self is a text and as the text's knowability is endlessly deferred (21-22). From this observation, Alford was able to conclude that readers find themselves "in a vertiginous intellectual space in which the distinction between narrative and its traditional certifying element (truth) . . . collapses" ("Mirrors" 22). Relying on Alford's position, Jeffery T. Nealon's essay "Work of the Detective, Work of the Writer: Paul Auster's *City of Glass*" is based on the same deconstructive premise—that linguistically constructed self is a differing/deferring process (22) of irresolution and variability. Unlike Rowen, Alford, and Nealon stressing the postmodernity of, or anti-logocentric tendencies in, Auster's texts, Roberta Rubenstein, in her essay "Doubling, Intertextuality and Postmodern Uncanny: Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy*," acknowledges the tension between reading as about the psyche (in the Freudian sense) and about words themselves. Regarding Auster's dramatizations of an elusive subjectivity as representations of a psychological configuration, Rubenstein, more

particularly, explains that Auster's trilogy pivots "on psychodynamic processes and images central to Freud's construction of the psyche" (246) that include "variations on the Oedipal conflict—what Auster terms elsewhere as the 'curse of the absent father'" (Rubenstein 246).

If we read Auster's texts within deconstructive formula, then *City of Glass* is a postmodern novel that justifiably demonstrates the postmodern idea that "clues no longer point to anything certain; signifiers have drifted away from what they signify" (Rowen 225). However, if we read *City of Glass* within Freudian/Lacanian system, then the novel is a faithful representation of Freudian psychoanalytic process that involves the operations of the uncanny in the midst of the Oedipal conflict between the father (Stillman) and son (Peter). While it is tempting to read Auster's texts in ways suggested by Rowen and Rubenstein, most of Auster's critics heavily rely on either post-structural or (post-)Freudian theory to read Auster's texts. These readings, in fact, not only reaffirms deconstructive or Freudian/Lacanian interpretations but also compels Auster's texts to become nothing other than a theoretical formula.

Despite the fact that Pascale-Anne Brault clearly belongs to the first camp when she argues for the deconstruction of language in Auster's texts, in her "Translating the Impossible Debt: Paul Auster's *City of Glass*," she rightfully acknowledges the limitation of the above readings by pointing out that Auster's writing risks repeating the "notion and rhetoric of America as a promised land" (229). Taking on Brault's hint, it seems that both camps—deconstructive and psychoanalytical readings—fail to consider the novel's preoccupation and investment with the myth of America and the frontier thesis which can position the novel in a much broader American literary tradition. More specifically, both

deconstructive and psychoanalytical readings, however, neglect the ways in which *City of Glass* engages with and evokes familiar images encoded in the myth of America and the frontier thesis, and at the same time these readings dismiss the logocentric tendencies that are in line with the frontier project in this text. If we read this novel with the frontier myth in mind, perhaps we will better understand how the core elements of the frontier myth manifest in *City of Glass*. Particularly, we will be able to understand the relationships among Turner's frontier thesis, the logocentric project, and Adamic gravitation in the novel.

While scholars such as Rowen, Alford, and Nealon treat Auster's *City of Glass* as a postmodern detective fiction that deploys postmodern "dissemination, decay and opaque chaos" (Tysh 47), instead, I suggest that the novel can be read as another variant of the myth of America that sees the frontier experience as a frontier figure's mythical journey in the New World "in the hope of rejuvenation and the gaining of innocence, trying to return to a time before the Fall" (Mogen 27). This is because the novel faithfully reenacts and dramatizes David Mogen's model of the frontier myth. According to Mogen, its basic elements are a setting—the opposition between an Old World ("civilization") and a New World (associated with "nature" and/or "wilderness,"—a frontier figure "who moves between these worlds" and a narrative as progress "triumphs, the hero's destiny resolves or dramatizes conflicts between the Old World and the New World (24). In fact, structural comparison between Mogen's frontier model (above) and *City of Glass* will allow us to understand how the novel endorses logocentric ideas rather than depicting them in order to critique them. Not surprisingly, both the frontier paradigm and *City of Glass* commonly share these structural elements—the (1) setting, (2) frontier hero, and

(3) narrative. These commonalities, as they conjure and replicate the structural foundations of the frontier myth, enable us to argue that the novel itself endorses logocentrism, perhaps to mythicize itself. So, while a deconstructive or Freudian/Lacanian reading of *City of Glass* seems tempting since the novel involves aspects of the postmodern and particularly since the novel, on a certain level, may respond to the impossible relationship between the signified and signifiers.

In short, illustrating “Derridean dissemination” (Russell 71), the novel’s preoccupation with the search for meaning, truth, and order suggests that this novel does not disseminate logocentrism but rather dramatizes, and even supports, the frontier myth that hinges upon logocentric ideas. Richard Slotkin has commented that the “predominating theme” of the frontier myth is that of “European renewal through discovery and conquest of the New World” (*Regeneration Through Violence* 30). In other words, just as detective work attempts to solve mysteries (or establish order from chaos), the frontier thesis aims to create order (civilization) from chaos (wilderness). If this is true, then detective work and the frontier myth are logocentric in nature because both assumes that truth, essence, meaning, purpose, and reality are to be expressed through words or language and that mysteries and chaos of the universe are to be solved and placed in order.

Thus, while *City of Glass* may seem to criticize logocentric ideas, I suggest that the novel endorses these ideas by evoking crucial elements of the frontier myth: the binary opposition between the Old World and the New World, the frontier figure’s journey from the Old World to the New World, the frontier figure’s self-regenerative drives, and finally, the frontier figure’s civilizing project (via detective processes and

logocentric consciousness).

While Alford's and Nealon's explanations may give insights to locate *City of Glass* within postmodern terms —set in a “universe of chaos and non-solution” (Rowen 224)—they fail to account the ways in which the novel, with its invocation of the myth of America, engages with, and even supports, the frontier thesis via its protagonists' logocentrism (i.e., Quinn's detective search and Stillman's prelapsarian project). It is important to note the striking resemblance between Stillman's and Quinn's views of the world with the obvious binary codings in the frontier myth, which according to Mogen, Busby and Bryant the New World/frontier is not only a “limitless national reservoir of spiritual strength” (4) but also a “gateway through which one might escape from time into space, from bounds to boundlessness, and from the works of corrupt and corrupting humanity to works of God in uncorrupted nature” (6). In the binary system of the frontier myth, the New World is considered as a landscape of wilderness, innocence, myth, and chaos which are all comparable to a prelapsarian state, whereas the Old World is regarded as a space of civilization, corruption, order, and truth (postlapsarian state). This binary consciousness is exposed, for instance, as Quinn regards New York in terms of the Old World, within the model of the frontier myth, as “an inexhaustible space, a labyrinth of endless steps [which leaves] him with the feeling of being lost. Lost, not only in the city, but within himself as well. . . . It was the nowhere he had built around himself” (8-9). Similarly, the elder Stillman relates to Quinn that this (Old) world “is in fragments, sir. Not only have we lost our sense of purpose, we have lost the language whereby we can speak of it. . . . things have broken apart, shattered, collapsed into chaos” (120-21).

As new frontiersmen journey from the Old World to the New World, Quinn and

Stillman respectively reenact the paradigm of the Western movement in the frontier thesis. Just as the Turnerian paradise was equated with America's western colonization their (Quinn's and Stillman's) earthly paradise was associated with metaphorical conquest of language. Nevertheless, interesting parallels can be drawn between Turner's and the protagonists' treatment of the frontier/New World: they regarded it as a free, empty and innocent space to be "interpenetrated by the lines of civilization" (Turner 11). This transitional space, "the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (Turner 2) which Sylvia Söderlind calls the "translation zone, a space for defamiliarization" (6) is mapped out through the protagonists' walks and investigations. While, for the protagonists, the Old World resonates images and feelings of destruction and despair, in contrast the New World echoes new possibilities and innocence. This transitional space—the space between the devastating reality of a broken past and the salutary emptiness of the present—is illustrated through Quinn's wanderings in the city:

by giving himself up to the moment of the streets, by reducing himself to a seeing eye, he was able to escape the obligation to think, and this, more than anything else, brought him a measure of peace, a salutary emptiness within. The world was outside of him, around him, before him, and the speed with which it kept changing made it impossible for him to dwell on any one thing for very long. Motion was of the essence, the act of putting one foot in front of the other and allowing himself to follow the drift of his own body. By wandering aimlessly, all places became equal, and it no longer mattered where he was. On his best walks, he was able to feel that he was nowhere. And this finally, was all he ever asked of things: to be

nowhere. (8-9)

Here Quinn is enacting the role of Turner's frontier figure who would, in theory, constantly move Westward in order to escape from the bondage of the past and get a hold of a new field of opportunity (Turner 26). Thereby, if we read *City of Glass* within the frontier paradigm, then Quinn's "awak[ing] to the things around him . . . as if, because of the attentiveness he now brings to them, they might begin to carry a meaning other than the simple fact of existence" (15) becomes analogous to the transitional moment in which, according to the frontier myth, the frontiersman restores innocence and rejuvenation by journeying from the Old World to the New World. For Quinn, wandering aimlessly or walking without thoughts not only serves as a way to separate himself from the Old World but to forget himself from the past and gain access to the New World. This transition, a fundamental condition that allows Quinn's metamorphic transformation, is represented from the very beginning of the novel when he receives Peter's desperate phone call: It was a wrong number—a desperate voice at the end of the line shouting: "There is great danger, death and murder. You must come here" (20). If being Quinn, as the writer of detective stories, means being in the past, or being in the old/dead part of his life, then taking the call suggests the beginning of his new life as Paul Auster of the Auster Detective Agency. His feelings of "isolation and silence" (58) in New York before he took Stillman's case, as well as his aimless wanderings in the streets that make all places to be equal and at the same time nowhere (9), are obviously indicative of his desire for a new life of revitalization, purpose, and a sense of order. For this reason Quinn gives in to Peter's command (17), the "first word that came from [his] mouth" (7) not only because the old "part of him had died" (9) but because taking the case would allow him

to become a new person (Auster), and in effect he may find a “coherence, an order, a source of motivation” (105) just as the frontier figure would move West for regeneration.

With this same motive in mind, Stillman regarded prelapsarian words and names to correspond to the essence of things: prelapsarian “words had not been merely appended to the things he saw, they had revealed their essences, had literally brought them to life. A thing and its name were interchangeable” (70). Driven by this motive—in other words, to restore the prelapsarian innocence (New World), Stillman wanders the streets of New York (Old World). He tells Quinn: “I have come to New York because it is the most forlorn of places, the most abject. The brokenness is everywhere, the disarray is universal. . . . Each day I go out with my bag and collect objects” (122-23) in order to invent “new words that would correspond to the things” (123). For Stillman, a word that does not correspond to the thing functions much as a bondage of the past that “hides the thing it is supposed to reveal” (122). It is this bondage (the bondage of language) that Stillman attempts to free himself and mankind from. For example, he tells Quinn that the word “umbrella” indicates a “kind of stick, with collapsible metal spokes on top that form an armature for a waterproof material which, when opened, will protect you from the rain” (121); however, when you rip the cloth off the umbrella it ceases to be an umbrella because it can no longer perform its function (122). For this reason, Stillman assumes that language, and the world at large, remain in a transitional space that lies between disarray and order (or in Turnerian terms, between savagery and civilization), as having “pure potential, an example of the not-yet-arrived” (128). On a different level, Stillman explicitly make attempts to free himself and mankind from the bondage of the past (in this case, language) and get ahold of a new field of opportunity “to inhabit the second,

everlasting paradise” (79). Stillman’s prelapsarian directives that reveal the novel’s invocation of the frontier paradigm become known through Quinn’s initial investigation into Stillman’s book, *The Garden and the Tower: Early Visions of the New World*. That Stillman uses Christian myth as a palimpsest for the frontier myth suggests how religious (Christian) myths have close association with the frontier myth. Borrowing directly from the Bible, Stillman argues in his book that it is “[m]an’s duty to scatter himself across the whole earth—in response to God’s command to ‘be fertile . . . and fill the earth’—would inevitably [mean] move along a western course” (77) to America because “it was the Puritans, God’s newly chosen people, who held the destiny of mankind in their hands” (78) to build themselves a new Tower of Babel and from this effort should “emerge a new man, speaking God’s language, prepared to inhabit the second, everlasting paradise” (79).

These instances might be interpreted as an indication of the Freudian psychodynamic, which according to Rubenstein involves the “feelings of acute self-estrangement as well as [the] ‘desire to be re-united with a lost centre of personality’” (Jackson qtd. in Rubenstein 248). They may even be considered as a symptom of the postmodern self, according to a deconstructive reading, derived from “a profound sense of loss of a rationally ordered universe” (Rowen 225) as this self is “self-divided and dis-integrated, always exiled from the ground of self-identical Being” (Little 138). While these readings rightly point out Auster’s characters’ absolute sense of loss of self-being and ordered universe, these readings fail to consider Quinn’s Stillman’s unmitigated drives in order to put their (shattered) selves together and re-create an ordered universe. Therefore, these instances, rather, illustrates how their journeys duplicate frontier figures’

journey to the New World in order to recover the state of innocence, order and essence. Implicating that the nature of their quest is inextricably linked to the frontier myth, particularly with the frontier figure's journey, Söderlind rightfully reads their "impossible search for the transparency of signification [as] the hallmark of the Adam vernacular" (3), a reading supported by Russell, elsewhere in his essay, who views these instances as quests "for origin and identity" (72).

Thus taken together, Quinn's wanderings that allow him to transit from the bondage of the past to the liberating present and Stillman's "case for the building of paradise in America" (75) by re-creating the "language that was spoken in Eden . . . thereby recover[ing] a state of innocence" (76) not only recall the frontier myth that "America[']s frontier] has been another name for opportunity . . . [which] indeed furnish a new field of opportunity, a gate of escape from the bondage of the past" (Mogen 9) but also suggest that they are, in essence, evoking the frontier myth: that "people from the Old World journey to the New World in the hope of rejuvenation and the regaining of innocence, trying to return to a time before the Fall" (Mogen 27). These instances, contrary to Russell's claim for the novel's dissemination of the meaning of the detective story (73), rather illustrate the novel's investment with the frontier myth. Thus Rowen's claim that Quinn's endless search for the origin of logos, in *City of Glass*, as representative of "one form of a general late twentieth-century malaise" (226) and Russell's diagnosis of Stillman's obsessive search for the prelapsarian language to disseminate our "Western culture's obsession with closure" (73) are provisionally accurate as long as they are rather chronic symptoms that tenaciously evoke and support fundamental ideas of the frontier myth.

According to Turner's model, the frontier figure not only transforms the frontier wilderness into an American civilization but also transfigures himself into a native:

The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick, he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings, and follows the Indian trails. (3)

While Turner's reasoning here seem logical, a closer look, in fact, reveals the frontier figure's paradoxical situation—he needs to become the very person that he has initially intended to change or oppose. It is as if the stigma of the native (who, according to the myth, obviously personifies wild and chaotic elements) becomes embedded into the frontier/American figure (who symbolizes civilization and order). Turner later argues that this transformative feature is a precondition for transforming the wilderness into an American civilization (2-3).

Interestingly, that this kind of image frequently overlaps with Quinn's own Adamic moments further validates reading the novel in terms of the frontier myth in which the frontier figure passes himself off as one of the natives (who according to the

myth, apparently symbolize wilderness, chaos, and innocence). As it was “Adam’s one task in the Garden had been to invent language, to give each creature and thing its name” (70), Quinn’s representation of himself as the new Adam is best illustrated in the following scene:

Then he drew the shades in the room, took off all his clothes, and sat down at the desk. He had never done this before, but it somehow seemed appropriate to be naked at this moment. He sat down there for twenty or thirty seconds, trying not to move, trying not to do anything but breath. Then he opened the red notebook. He picked up his pen and wrote his initials, D. Q. [for Daniel Quinn], on the first page. (63-64)

Quinn, here, being naked and writing his initials, is performing a regeneration ceremony—“as if [the notebook’s] unique destiny in the world was to hold the words that came from his pen” (63)—that gestures toward writing his own history declaring the emergence of his new existence onto the notebook, as he “had been one thing before, and now he was another” (183), in effect, creating his own identity and destiny from nothing, just like Adam in the Book of Genesis. Additionally, Quinn’s gesture above reminds us of Nobel’s frontier “hero who might transcend the restraints of society and the limitations of human nature to achieve total earthly fulfillment . . . by achieving organic unity with nature” (5).

While Rubenstein is correct in suggesting the above scene as Quinn’s self-transformation into another (25) or Quinn’s impersonation of Paul Auster, the detective, who actually is his “other” self (254), these self-regenerative and self-actualizing qualities that Quinn embodies further help to explain the correlation between Quinn and

the frontier figure in Turner's frontier thesis. As Quinn "adapted to his new life" (174) as Paul Auster, the detective, his turning "into a bum" recalls images associated with the raw nature of infantility and in extension can be regarded as a regression into the Adamic womb and innocence. This regressive process as a prerequisite for regeneration is understandable because such "innocence requires rebirth, and to be reborn one first must die" (Rowen 230). On a similar note, Dimovitz's careful hint that Quinn's disappearance at the end of the novel, particularly to others, not only "give[s] the illusion of non-existence" but also reveals that the "knowledge of the other . . . forms one ontological aspect of others" (621), and Nealon's suggestion that Quinn's disappearance into oblivion and out of narrative/history provides a space for "hesitation and response to alterity" (10) do suggest the possibility to interpret the above scene as Quinn's drive for Adamic rebirth.

However, unlike the myth of a self-made man who establishes himself in terms of the rags-to-riches narrative, Quinn works himself to become the new Adam in a reverse direction. Thus Quinn's final moments in Stillman's vacant apartment as he "took off all his clothes, opened the window, and one by one dropped each thing down the airshaft" (194) illustrates his drive for Adamic innocence that preconditions his rebirth. Quinn disappears into nothingness or into the realm of mysteries and mythology "as though he had melted into the walls of the city" (178). That Quinn's natal vision—when he "remembered the moment of his birth and how he had been pulled gently from this mother's womb" (200)—is being associated with his final moments of his life (history)—when "the darkness had begun to win out over the light" (198)—is suggestive of his prelapsarian drive to the nothingness of Adamic innocence.

Little defines this nothing as “wholly Other—a radical heterogeneity, an irreducible difference” (136) and argues Quinn’s fasting and his disappearance into nothingness as gestures that resist “totalizing schemes of Author-ity” (134) and allow “dissemination and displacement” (160) of language. Although he is correct in claiming that Quinn’s self-starvation is related to a “longing to return to a prelapsarian state” (145) and a precondition for “rebirth” (160) and “resurrection” (155), these instances are not operations to refuse the “silencing of different values and the values of difference” (160) but rather are associated with Quinn’s underlying intentions to embrace that very Adamic condition which Little misinterpreted. This is why this nothingness to which Quinn crawls into—as “It was dark in the room when he woke up. Quinn could not be sure how much time had passed—whether it was the night of the day or the night of the next” (194) and he “ate what he could of the food” (194)—reminds us of Peter’s own prelapsarian experience. On their first encounter, Peter relates to Quinn that it was “Dark. As dark as very dark. . . . Numb and naked. . . . There was food in the dark, yes mush food in the hush dark room” (28). In extension, Peter’s rebirth—“[s]ince in this nothingness, Peter knew nothing of time, he is new every day. He is born when he wakes up in the morning, he grows old during the day, and he dies at night when he goes to sleep” (30)—is analogous to Quinn’s experience of “the moment of his birth and how he had been pulled gently from this mother’s womb” (200).

By simulating the regression into the Adamic womb, Quinn is not only attempting to restore prelapsarian innocence but also striving to retain the Adamic position. This mirroring suggests the affinity between Turner’s frontier thesis and Quinn’s Adamic restoration. Since Little regarded *City of Glass* as an errant version of postmodern

detective fiction, the images of Quinn's self-starvation are viewed as a way "to critique logocentrism's ascetic insistence" (141), or an instance of the "totalizing scheme whose operations . . . exposes the repressive nature of logocentrism's powerfully seductive projects" (134). However, viewed from this deconstructive lens, these self-starving images or transformative processes are only indications of logocentric dissemination. Here, Little, by dismissing the novel's (and protagonists') adherence to and evocation of the nature of the frontier figure in the frontier myth, rather fails to notice the novel's emphasis and inclination for their logocentric tendencies. Yet considering that the New World is represented in terms of wilderness, mystery, chaos, and innocence and considering that the new Adam is characterized within Turnerian terms, these images are important in understanding the underlying nature and aim of Quinn's self-regenerative project. In fact, Quinn's experience of the primordial darkness allows him to obtain Adamic regeneration—his sense of self and universe are being renewed. At this point in the narrative, Quinn realizes that his former selves (Max Work, William Wilson and Paul Auster) and former realities had "died somewhere on the way" (196). Giving confirmation of his Adamic regeneration, he has now gained new perceptions about his new self and universe. For Quinn, the case "had been a bridge to another place in his life, and now that he had crossed it, its [former] meaning had been lost" (200). Just like Adam who assigned meanings to the things and made these things become a part of reality, Quinn "wrote about the stars, the earth, his hopes for mankind. He felt that his words had been severed from him, that now they were a part of the world at large, as real and specific as a stone, or a lake, or a flower" (200).

If self-transformation is considered the hallmark of a frontier figure, and if this

transformative quality is considered a prerequisite for the Adamic position, then perhaps it is not illogical to assume such a figure to be in a space, paradoxical as it is, which Söderlind calls the “translation zone” (6) mentioned earlier. Essentially, the novel illustrates through the juxtaposition of Peter and Quinn that Adamic regeneration and prelapsarian innocence are both required in a frontier figure residing in this transitional zone. In fact, the novel, unlike Quinn, situates Peter in terms of the above Turnerian savage in the most poignant fashion. Rubenstein, who examines *City of Glass* in terms of a variation of Oedipal conflict, considers Peter’s lack of corporality as characteristic of an automaton’s “unconsciously driven behavior that precedes selfhood and the emergence of language” (249). Although he is correct in linking Peter with an automaton which posits Peter’s unintelligibility as primarily prelapsarian, Rubenstein fails to acknowledge that Peter’s qualities are in many ways comparable to Turner’s savage who symbolizes wilderness and chaos and that Peter’s similar condition signifies the frontier figure’s project to reinstate, in Lacanian terms, the pre-mirror stage or, as Söderlind calls it, the “irreversible process” (10) in which “the transparency of signification” (3) is possible. This misunderstanding has allowed Rubenstein to claim that Peter’s condition of self-estrangement was a response to his father’s betrayal and abandonment (204). In other words, what Rubenstein recognizes as Peter’s prelapsarian condition, is, in fact, not Oedipal but more closely associated with the Lacanian pre-mirror stage. Söderlind, who reads the novel in Lacanian terms, suggests that “the process of individuation is linked with the process of language acquisition” (6) and the “fall into language is also the fall into history and genealogy, the necessary prerequisite for self” (11)—ideas that seem to be applicable to Peter, in particular.

That Auster's protagonists' search for absolute knowledge and a final solution is "a form of madness" (Rowen 232) because they destroy everything human and life itself (Rowen 232) is also a precise description of Peter, who embodies the paradoxical characteristics of destructive chaos and madding creativity. This is why the novel associate Peter, even with his prelapsarian innocence, with madness, disorder and destruction—all the traits associated with the frontier wilderness and chaos. Peter, essentially, contradicts the idea of a frontier figure. This is because a frontier figure is characterized as someone bent on creating civilization and order from wilderness and chaos. If this so, then prelapsarian innocence is significant to the frontier figure provided that it simultaneously configure his (Adamic) transfiguration. Supposing that Peter lived so close to God (34)—locked up in a room without human contact—and supposing that his words are prelapsarian, much like God's language that no one else can speak them (34), his "Wimble click crumblechaw below" (29) becomes only gibberish noises just like the barks of a dog that when "you put [the word God] backwards, it spells dog. . . . Woof woof. Bow wow" (33). Peter's speech, here, is suggestive of the moment of maddening creativity and destructive chaos. In other words, while "Wimble click" is a prelapsarian language—a language spoken by God himself—nevertheless, it simultaneously is gibberish like a dog's barking noise. Therefore Alford's statement that Auster's *City of Glass* "holds a mirror to our own madness—the assumption of our hermetic individuality" ("Mirrors" 20) is understandable insofar as this mirror of madness simultaneously reveals the dual condition—innocent but insane/chaotic—of a frontier savage.

In fact, Peter's unintelligible—particularly in his prelapsarian and postlapsarian

moments—condition seems to be analogous to the frontier savage’s transmutable position. Being on the threshold between the two worlds—prelapsarian and postlapsarian—Peter is something of a paradox: simultaneously real but unreal, dog but God, existent but vacant, seen but not-seen, making poetry but speaking gibberish, acting out of free-will but screaming without control. While Dimovitz is correct in suggesting that Stillman’s identity comes into being for itself through Quinn who watches and objectifies the self and forces consciousness itself into an object of consciousness (625) and while Alford rightfully acknowledges that “the other is implicated in the self-constitution of the investigator” (“Mirrors” 19), both of these observations do not take into account the ways in which Peter’s sense of self is not established through the other but rather is in a flux, constantly oscillating between prelapsarian non-individuality and postlapsarian subjectivity much like the transmutable position in Turner’s savagery.

This is why Peter collapses his own name with others. Upon their first meeting, he introduces himself to Quinn thusly: “My name is Peter Stillman. That is not my real name. My real name is Mr. Sad. What is your name Mr. Auster? Perhaps you are the real Mr. Sad, and I am no one” (28). Additionally, that Peter speaks for himself both in first-person and in third-person perspective further suggests his fluctuation between prelapsarian and postlapsarian state. Evidently Peter uses the third-person perspective when telling his past (his prelapsarian state): “Peter kept the words inside him. All those days and months and years” (34), then changes to the first person when speaking about the present: “I forget how to make words come out of my mouth” (35).

According to Söderlind, since language acquisition suggests the formation of individuality/individualism via first-person perspective, and thus moving from

prelapsarian to postlapsarian state, these instances, the wavering between first person and third person, suggest not only that Peter's sense of self derives from both the prelapsarian and the postlapsarian state, but also that this double condition corresponds to the transmutable conditions of the frontier figure. This double-binding nature of Peter's prelapsarian and postlapsarian state is further suggested during the conversation between Quinn and Virginia Stillman when she says to Quinn that "[y]ou mustn't assume that Peter always tells the truth. On the other hand, it would be wrong to think he lies" (42). These instances complicate Söderlind's idea of individualism because Peter, in fact, vacillates between the two poles. Thus, in a way, trapped between these two conditions, in contrast to Quinn who manages to transfigure himself, Peter exhibits signs of debilitation and languidness. On his first encounter, Quinn is taken by surprise to see Peter because Quinn "could see [Peter] sitting in the chair across from him, but at the same time it felt as though he was not there" (26). Here, Quinn's description of Peter—as "a marionette trying to walk without strings . . . as if the operations were out of control, not quite corresponding to the will that lay behind it" (25)—radically contrasts with Stillman's constant mobility—who is "constantly on the move, forever on [his] feet, going from one place to the next" (119) or Quinn's perpetual exertion—as he needs to glance "now up at the one, now down at the other, seeing the thing and writing about it in the same fluid gesture" (101). While the novel engages with the frontier myth in terms of the Old-New paradigm mostly through Quinn's detective quest and Stillman's prelapsarian project, the novel's negative positioning of Peter who is trapped between the two worlds allows us to understand the ways in which the frontier paradigm most forcibly relies on Turnerian characteristics—the idea of a self-made man transforming both

himself and the chaos of the wilderness/frontier into an ordered universe.

Strange as it sounds, on a similar note but on a different level, unlike Peter who personifies enervative innocence, Quinn enacts invigorating self-transfiguration much like Turner's model of a frontier figure by passing as multiple identities such as Max Work and Paul Auster. If we take Peter's case into account along with Turner's frontier figure with his hunting shirt and the moccasin, the revitalizing and transfiguring qualities seem to be important in Turner's model. For Turner, the frontier figure "strips off the garments of civilizations and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails" (3).

Contrary to Nealon's suggestion that Quinn's impossibility to pass as Work is the result of words "refusing her mastery" (6), Quinn's continual creation of (multiple) selves (Max Work, William Wilson and Paul Auster) rather reveals to be the result of Quinn's Adamic drive to adapt himself in the New World of chaos with unlimited possibilities. Because of Quinn's ability for perpetual impersonation, i.e., to transform himself from one thing to another, Little misinterprets Quinn's metamorphic qualities as merely postmodern—that they "are never single, straightforward, or self-evident but rather are always duplicitous, always (at least) double and deceptive" (137). However, unlike Little's rationale, in fact, Quinn's creation of a triad of selves illustrates his metamorphosing characteristic which is prerequisite for a frontier figure. Quinn's transfiguration from Work to Auster, and then to a nobody/nothingness is demonstrated through the creation of renewable selves:

In the triad of selves that Quinn had become, Wilson served as a kind of ventriloquist, Quinn himself was the dummy, and Work was the animated

voice that gave purpose to the enterprise. If Wilson was an illusion, he nevertheless justified the lives of the other two. If Wilson did not exist, he nevertheless was the bridge that allowed Quinn to pass from himself into Work. (Auster 11-12)

For Quinn, this triad of selves, by leaving behind the old self and becoming the new self, i.e., inventing doubles, is a way of reincarnation, and in effect, an effective way to gain energy and vitality. These traits that Quinn establishes here by creating doubles seem to echo Turner's "buoyancy and exuberance" which Turner calls "American energy" (26). By allowing himself to become Wilson (Quinn's pen name), then Max Work (a fictional character in one of his detective novels), Quinn is able to continue to live on as a writer and then a detective, and ultimately "someone else" (187)—as a new Adam. The result of these creations, for Quinn, the novel relates, is not only sensational—it is as if "he had managed to outlive himself, as if he were somehow living a posthumous life" (11)—but also invigorating because this allows Quinn to transform his old self into the new self—much like Turner's frontier figure.

According to Russell, Auster's trilogy employs and deconstructs the conventional elements of the detective fiction (71), and similarly according to Rowen, Auster's texts are examples of the metaphysical detective story since in these texts, the relatively straightforward business of identifying a guilty person, bringing him or her to justice, and restoring social order is ineluctably subverted into a larger and more ambiguous affair (224). While both Russell and Rowen do not explicitly explicate how Auster's texts divert from traditional detective fiction, they, and many scholars in this school of thought, nevertheless, commonly point out that all three works of the trilogy hinge upon the

conventions of detective fiction, even as they become a “postmodernist version of the detective genre” (Rowen 224). Interestingly, diverging from Russell’s and Rowen’s reading but yet maintaining a postmodernist view, Betty Nigianni comments that *The New York Trilogy* revolves “around the metropolitan environment of New York . . . [and] Auster uses metropolitan life . . . as its main theme: that is man’s absorption by urban space” (139). And Nigianni is quite right in suggesting that Auster’s heroes “stand on the edge of the urban void, balancing with great difficulty between creation and destruction, sanity and madness, life and death” (140).

Although the setting of *City of Glass* is metropolitan New York, it is nonetheless a space that recalls the unfamiliar space of the frontier, just as Nigianni realizes that its urban space represents something “uncanny” (140). What Nigianni also hints here is that the novel’s setting and theme that swerves between fullness and emptiness, rationally and madness, and creation and destruction, as a matter of fact, parallels the central motif of the frontier myth—in which the frontier hero similarly attempts to mediate between civilization and savagery, rationality and irrationality, and order and chaos, in other words, between the familiar Old World and the unfamiliar New World. Likewise, Markku Salmela seconds the above suggestion by proposing these text’s spaces as sites of “freedom for independent psychological regeneration” (133). Additionally, Steven E. Alford concisely calls these utopian spaces “nowheres” (“Spaced-Out” 614), just as frontier spaces are conceptualized for their regenerative and utopian potentiality. If the frontier hero, in the myth, mediates these two oppositional worlds through making the New World like the Old World, in other words, by taming, civilizing, and conquering the New World, in the same fashion, the two main characters in *City of Glass* attempt to

reconcile their inner worlds with the outer world through conquering the world of mysteries to establish a coherent, ordered universe.

So, if we acknowledge the above suggestions and view *City of Glass* through them, it becomes possible to read the novel that links its detective elements within the conventions of the frontier myth. While there are obvious differences between the detective genre and the frontier myth (for one, the detective deals with solving mysteries and cases whereas the myth deals with creating order and civilization), if we acknowledge the fact that the New World/frontier denotes the state of chaos and savagery in the myth, just like mystery indicates the situation of obscurity and enigma in detective fiction, making the association between them should not come as a surprise. In short, both situations require a solution comparable to a detective process. Debra Shostak characterizes Auster's novels to "follow a narrative pattern of quest or detection in which the questing figure . . . seeks the missing person, either literally or in the figurative terrain of knowledge and understanding" (66). While this is true with Auster's texts, it is also true that the pattern of detection, or logos-searching, in general, is also the pattern of quest of a frontier hero who travels to the New World in search for order, meaning, and rationality (embodied in his civilization project). If this project is figurative in *City of Glass*, it is literal for Turner. Indeed, for Turner, the goal of the frontiersman's quest is none other than transforming the wilderness (chaos) into an American civilization (order), as he concludes that "the wilderness has been interpenetrated by lines of civilization" (11). Thus, contrary to Russell's and Rowen's postmodern reading, Auster's *City of Glass* undeniably deploys crucial conventions of the detective story commonly recognized in the frontier myth.

Just like the frontier hero in the frontier myth travels to the New World to establish order, stability, and civility in a chaotic, mysterious, and savage world, Stillman and Quinn are invested in the detective genre's logocentric idea of establishing order, logic, and meaning in a chaotic and meaningless world. In short, just as Turner's frontier figure's eyes examine the frontier landscape for exploitation (to transform nature into resources), Quinn's detective eyes investigate the cityscape for utilization (to transfigure chaotic and worthless things into order and value). In this way, both gazes are violent—they require a forceful transfiguration from one to the other. Both, the elder Stillman and Quinn, indisputably not only employ detective methods such as objective observations and deductive reasoning in order to solve their problems but also resort to a logocentric frame of mind—a propensity for order, meaning, and solution—for seeing the world around them. If both Quinn and Stillman regarded the Judeo-Christian myth as essentially the myth of the frontier, then Quinn's notion of a "private eye" is suggestive of a frontier figure's characteristics. This association is marked out as Quinn ruminates about the meaning of a detective: he is

one who looks, who listens, who moves through this morass of objects and events in search of the thought, the idea that will pull all these things together and make sense of them. In effect, the writer and the detective are interchangeable. The reader sees the world through the detective's eyes, experiencing the proliferation of its details as if for the first time. He has become awake to the things around him, as if they might speak to him, as if, because of the attentiveness he now brings to them, they might begin to carry a meaning other than the simple fact of their existence. (15)

Not surprisingly, Quinn's idea of the detective/writer remarkably becomes synonymous with Turner's description of a frontier figure who possesses traits of "acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy" (25). Thus, Quinn's watching/decoding the other (Stillman) is not a "process of self (re)cognition" (Penteado 46) but rather an operation of Quinn's detective "eye" comparable to the acuteness and inquisitiveness of the frontier figure.

Quinn's detective work—taking notes of Stillman's gestures, describing each object he selected or rejected for his bag, and keeping an accurate timetable for all events, but setting down with meticulous care an exact itinerary of Stillman's divagations (99)—further suggests the parallelism between Turner's frontier figure's acuteness and inquisitiveness and Quinn's detective processes. Very much like Turner's pioneer, Quinn feels the need to observe, record, define, and control "every detail about Stillman," because being a detective, for Quinn, is not only to discover a "meaning other than the simple fact of their existence" (15) but also to piece together "a coherence, an order, a source of motivation" (105) for Stillman's movements. In order to do so, Quinn deploys certain detective methods—observing, gathering clues, and decoding mysteries, usually utilized by Max Work (a fictional character in one of Quinn's detective novels), in order to "walk through the mayhem of his adventures with an ease and indifference" (16) by impersonating Paul Auster, the detective. Thus, Quinn's following Stillman as "the hare in pursuit of the tortoise" (93) and recording "every detail about Stillman he possibly could" (99) not only recalls Turner's "restless energy," but also reminds us of the frontier figure's "acuteness and inquisitiveness" as Turner defined them to be the hallmark of

Americanness.

Within this context, Clara Sarmiento is able to provide an insightful framework in understanding Quinn's propensity for detective methodology. Sarmiento delineates classic literary genres' "need for mergers, imposing the image of the author-creator and the opus-universe" (84); as she maps that tendency onto Quinn, she claims that the "author, who is the custodian of these frontiers of chaos, becomes a conductor of forces" (84) in creating an ideal order. For Sarmiento, Quinn re-plays this "creation paradigm" (84) in which the detective-author "restrain[s] his own fragmentation and construct, through thought and prose, a legible universe from the chaos of his imagination" (82). This inclination for an opus-universe or legible universe created out of chaos is precisely what constitutes the logocentric project that involves "procedures for structuring the existing chaos," just as both Quinn and Stillman express a "classical need for order" (Sarmiento 84). This need for ordering is a fundamental characteristic of the role of language that Ferdinand de Saussure explicated in his essay. According to Saussure, the linguistic sign is comprised with, or rather is bounded by a concept (signified) and a sound-image (signifier). For Saussure, the "bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary" (964) since the signified can be represented equally by other signifiers. Thus, for Saussure, the characteristic role of language is to provide a link between signified and signifier because thought (signified), chaotic by nature, has to become ordered (967).

Regarding Saussurean assumptions as logocentric and maintaining a poststructuralist position, William Lavender, for instance, considers *City of Glass* as "deconstructive" because, in it, he sees that a "mystery is presented, investigated, drawn out to what we feel is its midpoint, that place where it is most profligate of potential

solutions, and then abandoned never to be solved” (22). The rationale that Lavender mentions here seems to make sense. He takes the novel’s structure—a form that lacks any definite solution or resolution—as symptomatic of deconstruction. However, when we take the novel’s theme—a topic that closely interrogates its underlying agendas—into account, contrary to deconstructive reading, the novel endorses logocentrism. This is because logocentrism not only drives the plot of the novel but also it is the novel’s main thematic concern. So, while elements of indeterminacy are commonly acknowledged as signifiers of a deconstructive novel, unsolved mysteries and irresolute endings do not make this novel automatically deconstructive nor postmodern.

Although many of Auster’s characters fail to accomplish this task—a task that has been central to many literary genres including classical detective fictions and even Auster’s unconventional detective narratives—Quinn’s and Stillman’s continual engagement with their detective processes of finding order, truth, and resolution gives evidence to consider their detective processes as essentially logocentric. This is why Sarmiento, by comparing Auster’s *Trilogy* with Thoreau’s *Walden*, is able to conclude that in both of these works there exist characters who achieve perfect isolation that endows them with a transcending ability to observe and reflect in order to discover their identity and place in the world (82-83) and “create [their] personal and imaginary meaning for everything, in other words, re-write the universe” (84). Thus while poststructuralist reading would suggest that their bond (between signifier and signified) is arbitrary and that a signifier can be endlessly replaced by other signifiers, this reading opposes Saussure’s assumptions that the signified, or the concept, without language, is “a vague, uncharted nebula” (967) and that through language—chaotic in nature—it can be

ordered. As a poststructuralist reading would call Saussure's argument logocentric, as a matter of fact, this logocentric position most forcefully reverberates through the two main characters in *City of Glass*.

Quinn's position as a detective who would decode the mystery of the world (in particular, the mystery of Stillman) is suggestive of his logocentric proclivity that is in line with the binary conception of the world in the frontier paradigm. In this sense, Quinn's detective work in search for the idea that will pull a morass of objects and events together and make sense of them (15) obviously reminds us of the exclusive privilege bestowed onto the first man (Adam) in the Garden by God: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion . . . over every living thing that moveth upon the earth," (Genesis 1:28) and "whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof" (Genesis 2:19). Just as Adam re-created God's creations by giving creatures their names), Auster's protagonists attempted to re-define the world/universe by establishing order from chaos (i.e., giving new names to things that are undefined). This association allows us to read Quinn's logocentric project in terms of the frontier myth, especially the idea of an ordered logocentric universe re-created from chaos and nothingness. For instance, Quinn's obsession with detective books highlights his investment in order, meaning, and purpose—characteristics that are central to both logocentrism and frontier paradigm. As for Quinn, he is obsessed with detective books because:

In the good mystery nothing is wasted, no word that is not significant. [. . .] Since everything seen or said, even the slightest, most trivial thing, can bear a connection to the outcome of the story, nothing must be overlooked.

Everything becomes essence. [. . .] The center, then, is everywhere. (14-15)

While this may be a generic description of the detective genre, what Quinn suggests here is the ways in which the detective genre really works. As a matter of fact, the structural analysis of the frontier paradigm not only allows us to understand the affinity between the paradigm and detective genre but also permits us to comprehend their logocentric tendencies. Interestingly, the detective genre (logocentric in nature) relies on a binary paradigm: old-new, center/inside-margin/outside, order-chaos, truth-mystery, etc., much like the binary encodings in the frontier myth.

Furthermore, although this instance—where clues lead nowhere and solutions seem nonexistent—may indicate the novel’s gravitation toward “dispersal over accumulation, indeterminacy over conclusion” (Dimovitz 615), rather indicts the novel’s paradoxical signature which highlights the frontier figure’s desire for order, signification, and identity in a chaotic and nihilistic world of the very logocentrism that deconstructive reading attempts to subvert. If so, then Quinn’s preference for the detective genre where “everything becomes essence” (14) and adherence to the idea that close observation yields logical solutions (105) indicate how close the binary system in the frontier myth and logocentrism really are. It is important to understand that Quinn projects this logocentric mentality onto Stillman’s case, and the world at large, assuming that a “close observation of details. The more accurate the scrutiny, the more successful the results” (105) would follow. This is why Quinn, notwithstanding the fact that Stillman’s movements clearly lack coherence, order, and logic, would make an logocentric interpretation that Stillman’s wanderings form letters that can be read as “THE TOWER

OF BABEL” (111) instead of regarding that the letters were not letters at all . . . [but] w[ere] only a fluke” (113) caused from his desire to find “some glimmer of cogency” (109).

The novel, more obviously, portrays Stillman as a logocentric driven—Quinn first hears from Virginia Stillman that the elder Stillman locked up his son (Peter), with no human contact for nine years for some religious experiment—driven to reinstate the prelapsarian state of innocence. While investigating Stillman’s work in the library, Quinn stumbles upon Stillman’s book. In it, Stillman writes:

[i]f the fall of man also entailed a fall of language, was it not logical to assume that it would be possible to undo the fall, to reverse its effects by undoing the fall of language, by striving to recreate the language that was spoken in Eden? If man could learn to speak the original language of innocence, did it not follow that he would thereby recover a state of innocence within himself? . . . And did not Christ speak this prelapsarian language?” (76)

While Stillman’s argument affirms his drive for prelapsarian language and innocence, the Edenic myth that he mentions here, in fact, not only foregrounds the binary position that the prelapsarian state relates to essence, truth, and innocence whereas the postlapsarian refers to nonsense, chaos, and corruption, but also recalls that this position is of the same binary paradigm in the frontier myth—the New World as innocent and chaotic whereas the Old World as corrupted and ordered—that was discussed earlier.

Furthermore, that Quinn’s detective work and Stillman’s prelapsarian project remind us of a frontiersman’s civilizing aim suggests the affinity between logocentrism

and the frontier thesis. Whereas Russell understands Quinn's and Stillman's position as questers in search of the origin of logos, as their "quest for an ultimate referent leads [them] into an investigation of the origin of logos; [their] quest becomes a pursuit of paternal authority associated with creation and also a quest for [their] own identity" (73), he miscalculates the way in which their logocentric project is a way, ultimately, to transform the natural or chaotic world (of language) into an ordered one which is comparable to the civilizing mission of Turner's frontier thesis. In fact, Turner views the frontier as a primitive space—located "between the savagery and civilization" that requires "Americanization" (Turner 3) or "dominion over inanimate nature" (Turner 6). For Turner, "Americanization" or "dominion" registers the transformation of wilderness into civilization—the "progress from primitive industrial society . . . to manufacturing civilization" (2). In fact, Turner's "Americanization" (3) parallels Quinn's and Stillman's (logocentric) project that aims to create order (civilization) from chaos (wilderness).

Within the much-acknowledged trend of deconstructive reading of Auster's texts, John Zilcosky's position is quite unique. Bearing in mind—the poststructural point of view—both Barthesian politics of the effacement of the (post)modern author and Foucauldian schema of the author's dispersal into historical functions (197), Zilcosky rather points toward a reading that does not place Auster's texts into either of these two models. Zilcosky suggests that Auster "literally rejects theory's imperative to die or disperse" as Auster "experiments, in fictional practice, with the possibilities of the life after authorial death" (197). In other words, he suggests that "[b]y transferring authority from himself to the Narrator, he 'kills' himself and reinvents himself as an implied author" (199). Zilcosky's suggestion is interesting not because his formulation provides

an alternative to a poststructural reading but more so because it imparts a possibility to reinstate the author's authority that was previously deposed by deconstructive theorists. On a certain level, Zilcosky's above assertion makes sense because, just as he suggested, Auster "appears, conspicuously, throughout his novels" authorizing "his own (and several other criminal writers') disappearances to explore writing beyond authorship" (197). And for Zilcosky, this seems to be Auster's way of speaking "about another person, himself, without wielding the authority he so distrusts" (199). If Zilcosky is correct, in other words, if Auster explores the "possibilities of the life after authorial death" and if the author "reinvents himself as an implied author" by transferring authority to the narrator, it can also be true that these explorations afford, to a certain extent, authorial authority—logocentric in nature—to the author. In other words, Zilcosky's above formulation provides an implicit link between Auster's recognition of the postmodern condition of the authorial death, his resistance to poststructural reading, and his argument for the re-installment of the author's logocentric authority (via the voice of the narrator). If this is the case, then this, however, suggests that Auster endorses logocentric authority of the author/narrator rather than critiques it.

Not surprisingly, on a different level, Quinn attempts to decode and dominate Stillman's movement and the world at large in the same way a frontiersman would civilize nature/wilderness/frontier. Here's what Turner writes about the three classes of the frontiersmen: the first wave of men "strikes into the woods with his family, and becomes the founder of a new county, or perhaps a state. He builds his cabins" (15). The second wave of men "purchase the lands, add field to field, clear out the roads, throw rough bridges over the streams, put up hewn log houses with glass windows and brick or

stone chimneys, occasionally plant orchards, build mills, school-houses, court-houses, etc., and exhibit the picture and forms of plain, frugal, civilized life.” And the final wave of men of capital and enterprise allows “small villages rises to a spacious town or city” (15). While this may be a simplified description of a (historical) civilization process—what these frontiersmen do here in the new land is not simply building log houses that extends to establishing towns and cities—but rather this is a description of the logocentric tendency of a civilizing procedure that demarcates nonsense, savagery, and chaos from essence, civilization, and order and that justifies the re-creation of the latter into the former.

As it was Stillman’s project to create new meanings for (shattered) things in the world and the universe, as a “part of the disease [that he was] trying to cure” (121), Quinn later adopts Stillman’s project by re-creating the world via his red notebook. If we consider Quinn’s earlier purpose in Stillman’s case was to find a “coherence, an order, a source of motivation” (105) in Stillman’s movements, it becomes clear that Quinn’s writing can be understood as attempts to conquer language. This is why Quinn endeavors to decode haphazard objects into coherent meanings through writing the sacred book of myth (the red notebook)—i.e., making “the stars, the earth . . . a part of the world at large, as real and specific as a stone” (200). Towards the end of Quinn’s narrative, Quinn’s notebook—that started out as a detective’s log—turns into coded sign in which the world is re-created. Though as a part of Quinn’s (delusional) imagination, according to his narrative, Quinn’s writing literally is shown to re-create the world from chaos in the same way he re-created Stillman’s random movements into letters that spells “THE TOWER OF BABEL” (111).

That this re-creation of the world is illustrated by Quinn's drawing a map of Stillman's movement suggests his efforts to civilize mysteries, objects, and the unknown. In other words, Quinn's drawing a map—from the eyes of the man who looks out from himself into the world and demands the world to reveal itself (16)—suggests his attempts to reduce Stillman, and in extension, the world, and turn them into a system of coded system. Analogous to the frontiersmen's desire to transform savagery into some form of civilized life, this (logocentric) map, for Quinn, serves as a way to define, understand, and control the meaning of things. If Stillman's movement is rendered by drawing the movement of his steps, similar to “drawing a picture in the air with your finger” (111) that spells “THE TOWER OF BABEL” (111), here, Quinn actually is re-creating an ordered system of language from Stillman's haphazard movements—that vanishes as he makes it. There is no result, no trace to mark what he has done (111). By following Stillman for several days and then tracing his movements in lines (mapping), from the images that resemble “OWEROFBAB”—and then by “cop[ying] out the letters in order . . . switching them around, pulling them apart, rearranging the sequence that spells “THE TOWER OF BABEL,” (111) a sense of order and logic is thus created. While Dimovitz views these (dead-end) clues as Auster's way of exploiting “the already exhausted anti-detective genre to explore dimensions of ontology . . . reaffirming a metaphysical system in which chance overrides all questions of postmodern indeterminacy” (614), here, Dimovitz rather ignores the ways in which these meaningless and haphazard clues, or what he generally calls “chance,” are used in the overall claim of logocentrism to create a “sense to [words], no matter how obscure” (109) that is affiliated with the frontier project of self-validation and dominance for creating order and meaning. In this case, by

concluding that Stillman's movements are relevant to the implications of the story of "THE TOWER OF BABEL" (111) and thus, are a kind of a "symbol of the resurrection of the human spirit" (78), his interpretation takes on a dominant position. This kind of encoding requires a willful conscious effort by "switching [the letters] around, pulling them apart, rearranging the sequence" (111) in order to create coherence, order, and logic from chaos, randomness, and irrationality. With this imperative in mind, Quinn is reenacting the role of the frontier figure in the frontier myth that justifies the figure's dominion over language and things in the new world. Thus, these attempts reveal that Auster's protagonists are not "freed from the tyranny of their logos-motivated quests" (Russell 82) but rather are actively engaged in their logocentric projects which ultimately dramatize the myth of the frontier.

No Country for Old Men and the Frontier Tradition: Determinism vs. Free Will,
the American Dream, and Rugged Individualism

Addressing the function of Bell's narration in *No Country for Old Men* (2005), in "He's a Psychopathic Killer, but So What?: Folklore and Morality in Cormac McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men*," Lydia R. Cooper points out that despite the nihilism in the novel, McCarthy's "first-person narrative frames" (37) along with other devices explore "the relationship between story-telling and morality . . . [which are] typically associated with the folktale" (38). More particularly, Cooper argues that Bell's voice offers a "metaphysical counterpoint to the nihilistically-inclined narrative events" and that the "interplay of the two literary forms, [Moss's and Chigurh's] story and [Bell's] thinly-veiled philosophy" (40) assures the novel of its "right autonomy"—as a "folktale-type parable" (42). While Bell's first-person narration, and his philosophy it suggests, do function as a counterpart to Chigurh's nihilistic principles, and while the "coexistence" of their narrative voices may blend together and counterbalance each other like an example of "novelistic heteroglossia" as Cooper contends, they do not "decentralize [the] narrative authority" (41) of each other. Through the interplay of countering voices, they, instead, centralize a particular narrative position—Moss's version of the American.

While Cooper considers the main narrative (Moss's-Chigurh's story) as a "Pandora's box-type cautionary tale" (44), the main narrative's nihilistic foregrounding and prophetic imagery, mainly articulated through Chigurh's and Moss's story, serves as an antithesis to Bell's narrative. Sheriff Ed Tom Bell, obviously "charged with preservin'" the law and "govern[ing] good people" (64) is very much invested in preserving and

justifying his own moral-philosophical position: as his testimonial or confession-esque narrative it is saturated with words reminding us of the values of the traditional Southwest—"good policy" (62), "medals" (90), "community," "respect" (124), "history," "good sense" (285), "gettin older" (216), "truth" (249), "old age" (281), "put things right" (286)—with which he aligns himself. If Bell represents himself as an emblem of these traditional values that are quickly fading away, or as he says every "day is against you. Time is not on your side" (216), then, however, Chigurh's words are charged with nihilistic tendencies—"[a]ny thing can be an instrument [of death]" (57) and a person's path is drawn (175) that leads to his/her own end/death. Cooper, by arguing that characters in *No Country for Old Men* are "types, not individuals," (43) misinterprets them as characters of "parables" (42) rather than reading the novel, in particular, within the tradition of the frontier myth. Such typing is problematic because it not only fixates complex characters into simplified types but also simplifies the characters' underlying motives and intentions which are weaved into the novel's convoluted narratives. McCarthy's characters are not "types" to illustrate moral lessons nor his stories intended as "parables." One typical misinterpretation can be found in Scott D. Yarbrough's reading of McCarthy's characters within "Jungian archetypes" (46) that tells, on one hand, the story of some type of a trickster figure, who carries the fire that evokes Prometheus, the Titan who defied Zeus by giving fire to mankind (47), and on the other, tells the story of an agent of chaos, who is self-indulgent and self-satisfying (48). While Yarbrough's interpretation above does provide a framework in which to understand the archetypal features (whether folkloric or mythologic) of these characters, this may become a simplified way of seeing McCarthy's characters with complex moral-

philosophical foci—Chigurh, for one, becomes the subject to his own claim for determinism when Wells’s admonishment becomes somewhat realized as a car hit Chigurh, leaving him with a “[b]one sticking up under the skin” (269), or when Moss eventually is killed just as he believed “that whatever you do in your life it will get back to you. If you live long enough it will” (281).

In order to evade these limitations, I suggest an alternate reading that takes into account both the complexity of the novel’s characters and its orientation that represents certain (American) values and ideas by evoking the frontier myth. While Chapter 1 explored the overall structure of the frontier myth, this chapter is focused on investigating the ways in which a frontier figure is created, as well as unraveling the characteristics of a frontier figure that makes him a true American in association with the American Dream. Investigating the Western novel as literature of the last frontier, Delbert E. Wylder notes that Western novels present “the loss not only of the virgin land but of a primitive way of life that is extremely masculine in requiring physical strength, adaptability to nature, resourcefulness, courage, and an almost stoic self-control” (121). Wylder’s above notion, in fact, supports reading *No Country For Old Men* as a variant of a frontier narrative. This is because *No Country For Old Men* deals with the same themes—for example, the loss of the frontier and traditional way of life—with Western novels. The novel, especially, follows the narrative pattern and heroic quest of the frontier archetype delineated by David Mogen. According to Mogen, the frontier archetype consists of a setting that presents the opposition and clash between an Old World (civilization) and a New World (associated with nature and/or wilderness), (2) a frontier figure who moves between these worlds, (3) a narrative (of progress) as the

hero's destiny dramatizes conflicts between the Old World and the New World— triumphantly, ironically, tragically, or comically (24). Thus, unlike Cooper who reads the novel with a folkloric lens or Yarbrough who argues for a Greek mythologist reading, I argue that these antagonistic characters or the oppositional philosophies that each character represents rather serve to validate reading the novel in terms of the (American) frontier paradigm. This is because, while Cooper's and Yarbrough's readings potentially efface the true significance of these characters' philosophy (or world view) by highlighting their actions, my reading of the novel—as a narrative of a frontier myth— can effectively explain the dialectic roles that these characters play within the novel. The novel engages with the frontier myth in several critical ways: it draws attention to the antagonistic relationship between the Old World (civilization, traditionalism, and order) and the New World (savagery, innovation, and chaos) through their violent encounter, it focuses on some key traits of a frontier figure, and finally generates images pertaining to the American Dream. In other words, the novel engages with crucial elements of the frontier paradigm. Structurally, the novel dramatizes the violent conflict between the Old World and New World which culminates in maintaining the Old World order. Contextually, the novel not only evokes images fundamentally associated with the American Dream—the “faith in man . . . belief in America's destiny, unbounded confidence in his ability to make his dream come true” (Turner 138)—but also stresses frontier values such as free will and rugged individualism—the ability to “make old tools serve new uses” (Turner 171). Despite the novel's description of a post-industrial/capital milieu, nevertheless, it never fails to mention or conjure imagery of the traditional West/frontier that tells stories about the “ceaseless strife waged against wild man and

wild nature” and about the men with “stout heart, cool head and ready hand” (Roosevelt 1861) building their own success.

More particularly, I argue that while the main three characters in the novel reflect different aspects of a frontier figure, mainly articulated by Turner, it is through Moss, who is able to combine Bell’s traditionalism and Chigurh’s innovation, and Moss’s relationship with the American Dream that we find an American figure that parallels Turner’s account of the frontiersman as someone who is born out of the combination of the European and the Indian. According to Turner, the American intellect owes its striking characteristics to the frontier condition. For Turner, that coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil; and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom—these are traits of the frontier (25-26). Although Turner’s frontiersmen may be defined in many different ways—a farmer, pioneer, backwoodsman, etc.—his central traits can be boiled down to “traditionalism,” “(constructive) rugged-individualism,” and “potentiality.” Within the Turnerian frontier model, the frontiersman is a man of traditionalism—creating order/civilization out of chaos/savagery—clearing out the wilderness and building cabins, houses, villages, and cities. In other words, he becomes a tool for “effective Americanization” where he “accepts the conditions which [the frontier] furnishes him” as he “transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe . . . [but] a new product that is American” (Turner 3). Secondly, he is a “self-made man” taught “in the school of experience” as he was “forced to make old tools

serve new uses; to shape former habits, institutions and ideas to changed conditions; and to find new means when the old proved inapplicable” (Turner 171). Finally, he possesses the idea of the American Dream: “a vision of hope, and assurance that the world held a place where were to be found high faith in man and the will and power to furnish him the opportunity to grow to the full measure of his own capacity” (Turner 169).

Just as Turner defines such characteristics as “strikingly American” against the American frontier landscape, the novel constantly navigates the traits of the three main characters—Bell, Chigurh, and Moss—that reconfigure and redefine the American in a postmodern frontier setting. Although all of these three characters demonstrate particular aspects of the American, it is their relationship with the American Dream that defines the American. As I will explore in the following pages, if we compare Turner’s model of the American with Bell, Chigurh, and Moss we begin to realize that Bell is associated with traditionalism—representing civic order and law—whereas Chigurh is identified with (destructive) individualism representing violence and chaos. In contrast, Moss is not only associated with traits that both Bell and Chigurh signify but also is linked with the idea of the American Dream: a vision of hope and assurance to grow to the full measure of his own capacity. Furthermore, while the plot of the novel focuses on the cat-and-mouse chase between Moss and Chigurh, however, that the tension of the novel pays more attention to the philosophical dialects among Bell’s traditionalism, Chigurh’s deterministic savagery, and Moss’s philosophical navigation and invocation of the American Dream seems to suggest that the defining characteristic of the American is born out of the metaphorical meeting place between “savagery and civilization” (Turner 2). Just as the American in Turner’s frontiersman is engaged with the American Dream,

in order to be considered a bona fide American, so too should this figure participate in the dream-making process. Vague as it seems, the Dream can be described as the “belief in limitless possibilities” (Mogen 26) and “the sense of agency, the idea that individuals have control over the course of their lives (Cullen 10). Schematically, both Bell and Chigurh fail to embody the above designation because the former resorts to traditionalism and the latter employs a fixated principle of fatalism and violence. Moss, in comparison, who is born out of Bell’s and Chigurh’s metaphorical antagonism becomes the true heir of the American precisely because, as a self-made person, he fully expresses the spirit of the Dream. More particularly, while Bell pursues law and order in a lawless and seemingly chaotic landscape, he is unable to believe in unlimited possibilities for America. In a similar way, while Chigurh seems to show signs of innovation, not only is he destructive and violent but he also firmly denies the role of agency or free will that plays an important role in realizing the Dream. Contrary to Bell and Chigurh, along with Moss’s own conservatism and rugged-individualism, Moss’s philosophic stance stems from his relentless faith in human agency and potentiality. Just as Nick, in *The Great Gatsby*, knew that Gatsby “believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us” and knew that people “beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past” (Fitzgerald 180), readers of *No Country For Old Men* can realize that while this “dream had not found fulfillment,” (Nobel 160) it nevertheless promises a vision of a “fresh, green breast of the new world” (Fitzgerald 180). Despite Gatsby’s death, as Kirk Curnutt have pointed out, *The Great Gatsby* is “both a critique of and a tribute to the power of the America as an ideal to inspire” (640) dreams. In a similar fashion, despite Moss’s death, *No Country For Old Men* depicts him as a failed

(but nonetheless) frontier hero, like Gatsby, who not only “believed in the green light” but also had dreams “commensurate to his capacity for wonder” (Fitzgerald 180). In the end, readers are led to realize that Moss is, in fact, the true heir of the American Dream and legitimate frontier hero of a frontier myth.

David Willbern, tracing the historical and psychological frontiers in McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian* (1985) within Turnerian and Freudian terms defines the frontier as fundamentally confrontational, arguing that the “process of exploration, struggle, compromise, then settlement or fortress, describes both psychological and social expansion” (81). While his analysis pertains to *Blood Meridian* in particular, if we consider the parallelism between the nihilism-driven plot of *No Country for Old Men* with that of *Blood Meridian*, his suggestion that McCarthy “merge[s] geographical and psychological versions of frontier” (82) perhaps can also be applicable to *No Country for Old Men*. If so, then this novel’s representation of the conflict within the frontier space seems to validate reading this novel in terms of the frontier myth—a myth so familiar to the American psyche and history. This reading is plausible not only because two adversary worlds collide in the novel, but also because the novel situates Bell’s narrative and Chigurh’s story, to a great degree, to correspond to the oppositional terms—the former as the story of the Old World, the latter as the New World—of the frontier archetype. While Chigurh’s elusive features and suprahuman abilities, such as evading massive bullets and killing the deputy with an artistic ease, seem to validate Cooper’s argument that he is “not much of an individual” but rather a “typed character” or a “caricature of evil” (43), she misses the complexity of Chigurh’s nihilistic point of view that serves to antagonize Bell’s traditionalism. In fact, as we will discuss later, Chigurh’s

complicated philosophy that “transcend money or drugs” (153) can hardly be considered as two-dimensional. Also, it is quite difficult to typify Bell as a folktale-typed character (as Cooper claims) because his matter-of-fact narrative rather veils Bell’s traditionalism and his predilection for civic order and morality.

The novel not only presents Bell as someone who personifies civilization, order, morality, and common-sense but also locates Chigurh as someone who epitomizes deterministic force, chaos, immorality, and irrationality. This contrast in turn locates each into antagonistic terms within the frontier paradigm. What seems to be at stake in *No Country for Old Men* is less what each of these characters represent per se as some “folkloric” type but more how their relative philosophies are contrasted. Mogen insightfully defines the frontier archetype in terms of the opposition between civilization and frontier/nature/wilderness (25)—a characterization that is applicable to novel within this paradigm. In the frontier tradition the New World is considered “unknown, exotic, uncultivated, and peopled by . . . savages” (Slotkin 29)—a description akin to what Chigurh represents in the novel—whereas the Old World is considered as a “civiliz[ed] society ordered on rigid principles” (Slotkin 51)—an illustration corresponding to what Bell signifies in the novel. Diverging from Mogen’s structuralist view, John Cawelti notes that within the frontier tradition a frontier figure is an individual who puts “emphasis on the individual’s getting ahead,” endorsed with “secular qualities such as initiative, aggressiveness, competitiveness, and forcefulness” (*Apostles of the Self-Made Man* 5).

In this context, Butler is quite right in suggesting that McCarthy’s vision of the “Western emphasizes that the story of the West is a myth designed to impose order on

anarchy” (47), as McCarthy’s vision underlines the mythical trope of the West. Throughout the novel, Chigurh continually evades Bell’s grasp; physically and philosophically, just as Bell’s traditional values are inexhaustibly refuted, challenged, and subverted by Chigurh. Not surprisingly, Slotkin’s analysis on the frontier tradition captures their (Bell’s and Chigurh’s) antagonistic relationship and antithetical representations. According to Slotkin, for the settlers, the Indian is the human expression of the natural powers that rule the wilderness, the embodiment of both creative and destructive potentialities (553) and the “representative of a culture and a social order that offer a radical alternative to the established order of Euro-American society” (558). Conversely, they (the colonists) saw themselves as frontiersmen who strive to create a “sanctified civilization, a society ordered on rigid principles of divine authority” (51) through a “quest for salvation in the wilderness of the human mind and soul” (39). Reiterating this kind of frontier formula, the illusive relationship between Bell and Chigurh indicate the foregrounding of the two antagonistic forces—deterministic, anarchistic, and chaotic, on one hand, and submissive and orderly on the other—at work in the landscape of the novel. Aside from the one instance where Bell directly mentions Chigurh—in his first-person narrative, right after he tells Carla Jean of Moss’s death—all other narrations, interestingly, do not address in any way Chigurh’s and Moss’s case directly. This point calls into attention the understanding that Bell’s philosophical internal monologues functions not only as a response to the world’s senseless violence and its nihilistic gravitation but also as a rationale to maintain and champion Bell’s own moral-philosophical position that draws attention to “the virtues required for the establishment and maintenance of law-abiding communities” where “law enforcement is weak and

nonexistent” (Nichols 207).

In essence, Bell is a figure of conservatism and traditionalism representing these aspects within the frontier figure. Despite Chigurh’s determinism pervading the main narrative, the fact that it is framed around Bell’s first-person narrative—alternately critiquing senseless violence and the determinism of the landscape—suggests an underlying function of Bell’s narrative that opposes Chigurh’s principles. It is understandable that Bell’s continued exposure to unremitting violence seems to result in his sense of “defeat” (306), and his first-person narrative seems to function as a “therapeutic process of releasing his own anxieties . . . in an attempt to work through his post traumatic symptoms” (Collado 56).

However, I argue that Bell’s narrative serves to inculcate his ancestors’ version of the “old myth of American expansionism” (Cooper 53) by contrasting his with Chigurh’s version of determinism by exploiting the latter’s absurd, meaningless, and destructive nature that may “bring the human race to its knees” (218). Interestingly, Turner’s frontier formula (especially, his idea of social progress) encapsulates Bell’s gesture to maintain his traditionalism. While Turner defines the frontier/West as “the meeting point between savagery and civilization” (2), he also describes it as the

region whose social conditions result from the application of older institutions and ideas to the transforming influences of free land . . . [where] wilderness disappears, the “West” proper passes on to a new frontier, and in the former area, a new society has emerged from its contact with the backwoods. Gradually this society loses its primitive conditions, and assimilates itself to the type of the older social conditions

of the East. (133)

What is ironic about Turner's description here is the fact that the frontier, when it develops its condition, becomes much like the Old World. For Turner, it is fundamental that the frontier lose its primitive condition to become a new civilized society much like the Old World (European society). Just like Turner, Bell makes it clear that his ideas and values are more sensible than that of this world (and Chigurh) by calling into question the absurdity of the world's, and also Chigurh's, violence in his frontier west where the savage landscape ought to be civilized or policed.

That Bell's conservative ideas and values serve as counter-forces to Chigurh's nihilistic principles and destructive violence further highlights their antagonistic philosophical orientations that parallel the binary structure—the Old World vs. the New World—in the frontier myth. Although there are moments in the narrative when Bell's confession resembles a sacrament of penance that seem to validate Collado's argument for Bell's need to relieve his traumatic stress, one cannot help but to wonder at Bell's persistent attempts to set “things right” (281) where things don't make “good sense” (285) as indications of his civilizing project. Benjamin S. Child, who explores the “fluid postmodern geographies” (1) in *No Country for Old Men*, is correct in suggesting that Bell is a “figure in the novel to make a connection between the tropes of the West and personal authenticity” (11). Child contends that the novel's West Texas is a site that confounds the binary conceptualization of places that encodes spaces as either exclusively urban or rural (2). He argues that the novel's West is a postmodern space that bears the influence of late capitalism and that merges distinct cultural forms: urban and rural, “American” and “Mexican,” postwar and drug-war (2). While Child's formulation

complicates (modern) binary conceptions and allows a postmodernist reading of the novel, partly because of Chigurh's deterministic principles to which he holds his victims, we are, nevertheless, led to see that the novel (particularly Bell) assigns a narrative space to assert ideas—focused on establishing the moral-social order—of the Old World. Through his narrations, Bell acknowledges the need for this order in his apocalyptic landscape that heralds “the second coming of Christ” (159), where the “ones that really ought to be on death roll will never make it” (62). Paradoxically, Child's conclusion that the novel is a “product of late modernism” (13) is only correct insofar as it remains an (ideological) product of postmodernism that belies its (unconscious) proclivity for endorsing traditional notions of the wild west.

Thus, Child's claim that Bell's adherence to the codes of a delicately stylized West in order to elaborate a difference and to construct his version of masculinity (11) fails to recognize that Bell's “rustic” codes and his version of masculinity (Child 14) are in fact attempts to resist his landscape's deterministic and violent gravitation. In other words, Child views the novel's landscape as postmodern (the blurring or disseminating the ideas encoded, respectably, in the urban vs. rural). Bell's narrative, I argue, highlights and endorses the codes of the Old World and is more concerned with maintaining his moral-philosophical-political position: celebrating ideas and values such as moral codes, common sense, social order, and civic law. The following instance serves as representative examples of the underlying motive of Bell's narrative that pervades the novel. Bell's first-person framed narrative makes drastic contrast between the new world's nihilistic tendencies and the Old World's traditional values. In one instance, Bell explicitly contrasts his/his father's view of the world that makes perfect sense because

“the truth is always simple” (249) against the unbelievable truth of Moss’s and the girl’s death which “make[s] no sense” (248). In fact, Bell is more interested in asserting his conservatism against the backdrop of a nihilism-driven landscape. The underlying motive of his narrative becomes clearer if we consider Bell’s conversation with a lady who wants her granddaughter to have an abortion. Here’s what Bell has to say about it: the “way I see it goin I dont have much doubt but what she’ll be able to have an abortion. I’m goin to say that not only will she be able to have an abortion, she’ll be able to have you put to sleep” (197). While this may be considered as illustrating Bell’s conservatism, this instance actually is one of many typical examples we see throughout the novel concerning Bell’s moral-philosophical-political position and penchant for establishing the status quo of the ideas concerning the Old World—“some things” that ought not to be “changed,” things like “Common sense” (62).

As evidenced from one of Bell’s first-person soliloquys, for Bell, common sense seems to be defined in terms of responsibility and respect for community—values and ideas which he tries to reconstruct and uphold:

I always tried to be available for your social events and I would always go to things like cemetery cleanins of course. That was all right. The women would fix dinner on the ground and of course it was a way of campaignin but you were doin somethin for folks that couldnt do it for theirselves. Well, you could be cynical about it I reckon and say that you just didnt want em comin around at night. But I think it goes deeper than that. It is community and it is respect, of course, but the dead have more claims on you than what you might want to admit or even what you might know

about and their claims can be very strong indeed. (123-124)

While going to a social event including a funeral seems to be about certain things such as Bell's humanitarianism at work, him having to eat a free meal, or his fear of being chased by the spirit of the dead, however, this instance, in fact, illustrates that it's more about maintaining responsibility for the community and upholding respect (for both the dead and alive).

Not only does Bell clearly lack the ability to stop the train of moral and social devastation of his frontier west but also he relies on (institutional) force to maintain both moral and social order in the deterministic landscape of his frontier. A likely parallel can be found between Bell's and Turner's treatments of the frontier landscape. Much like Turner's frontiersman whose first approach to the landscape is in the terms of conquest—"to fight with nature for the chance to exist. . . . Vast forests blocked the way; mountainous ramparts interposed; desolate, grass-clad prairies, barren oceans of rolling plains, arid deserts, and a fierce race of savages, all had to be met and defeated" (170)—the novel does not fail to indicate that the frontier space (occupied between the savagery of Chigurh and the law-and-order of Bell) has been, and still is, a landscape of violent confrontation between the two world orders. While Turner here focuses on the harshness of natural elements as things to be dominated, Turner, in turn, cleverly undermines the obvious inherent violence in clearing out the natives from this "unmastered continent" (170), just as Bell (either unconsciously or unwillingly) misses the reality that his frontier is and has always been not only prone to violence and criminality but also can only be tamed with matching force and violence. Thus, while Bell unwittingly believes, and in effect belies readers to believe, that the extent of misdemeanor and violence in the world

has increased—from “talkin in class and runnin in the hallways. Chewin gum. Copyin homework” to “[r]ape, arson, murder. Drugs. Suicide” (196) and from fistfights to shootouts that made Bell’s car look like “the Bonnie and Clyde car” (40)—his memory about Uncle Mac, rather, hints toward the understanding of its reoccurrence. Unlike Bell, Ellis recognizes that this country’s violence and criminality are repetitive and reoccurring rather than something new. In a conversation between Bell and Ellis, Ellis mentions the violent death of Uncle Mac, who was a sheriff in 1879. He tells Bell that some “seven or eight of em c[a]me to the house. Wantin this and wantin that. . . . and they shot him down in his own doorway” (269-270). Not surprisingly, this conversation leads them to remember other violent deaths in the family and, in extension, the country. Ellis tells Bell that Harold Ellis died “in a ditch somewheres” (268) in the war, and Bell tells Ellis that his war comrades also had “died” (195) in the war. Right after this exchange, Ellis sums up the conversation by mentioning that while “[t]his country was hard on people . . . they never seemed to hold it to account” and that “[t]his country will kill you in a heartbeat and still people love it” (271). Finally, after this conversation, Bell is able to admit that this country is not unfamiliar to such violence, beginning with early settlers who had their “wife and children killed and scalped and gutted like fish” (195) and that “this country has got a strange kind of history and a damned bloody one” (284). This realization rather reveals that the violence of the past—scalping and gutting people—is not different from the violence of the present—a couple out in California who would rent out rooms to old people and kill them to cash their social security checks (124).

If the landscape of Bell is indeed violent and deterministic, and in turn analogous to Turner’s rugged and violent frontier, Bell seems to be deploying two not unrelated

strategies to counter this kind of devastation. Together with the frontier landscape's proneness to violence and criminality, just like Turner's frontiersman's conquest, Bell likewise recognizes the necessity of force to check that violence. His first-person narration that contrasts the traditional imagery of the West and the new (deterministic) West serves to retain moral-social order via force and socially sanctioned violence. In short, Bell wants to "figure out what might be headed this way" (40) that doesn't make "good sense" (285) in order to "preserv[ve] nonexistent laws" (64). We see multiple instances within Bell's first-person-narrative, as well as the main narrative, where Bell asserts moral-social order. While reminiscing about the dangers of being a law enforcement agent, Bell explains that "you'd have a fistfight somewheres and [he'd] go to break it up and they'd offer to fight you. And sometimes you had to accommodate em" and at another time he "had a man pull a gun on [him] . . . and it happened that [he] grabbed it just as he went to fire" (38). Here Bell hints that his work most of the time relies on force and involves some kind of violence. Similar to Moss, who is a "strong believer in the shotgun" (19), Bell not only carries the old "Colts" and "Winchester model 97" (62) but more importantly feels that guns, law enforcement, and/or even divine power/God are necessary to "preserve nonexistent laws" and regulate "bad people" (64). This becomes more evident when we consider Bell's rumination about why "he wanted to be a lawman" (295) right after his talk with Moss's father. Bell says, "[t]here was always some part of me that wanted to be in charge. Pretty much insisted on it. Wanted people to listen to what I had to say. But there was a part of me too that just wanted to pull everybody back in the boat. If I've tried to cultivate anything it's been that" (295).

While Bell's attempts to bring order, justice, and peace in this rugged landscape are, in themselves, noble, he is, nevertheless, doubtful whether this landscape can ever be kept in order. Additionally, while Bell is not inattentive of his mission—to put people back in the boat—that he finally realizes that this will only happen in fairytales suggests Bell's overwhelming submission to nihilism and repudiation of the American Dream. Here, Bell's impulse to pursue the American Dream (to put people back in the boat) quickly fades into meaninglessness, or at best dims to some fairytale prospect. Here's a part of their conversation:

How do you think this is goin to end? he said.

I dont know. I dont know how nothin is goin to end. Do you know?

I know how it aint.

Like livin happily every after?

Something like that (129).

Thus, the above scene, together with Bell's aiming to "quit" (296) his office, should be considered as a validation of his failure to deal with the new world precipitated by the "true and living prophet of destruction" (4). However, this should not be thought of as Bell's "domestication of male identity within the sheltered and nurturing precincts of the family home" (Jarraway 55) because the paucity of sheltered nurturing homes in the novel—for example, Chigurh has no problems in infiltrating Bell's trailer truck nor Jean's hideaway place—not only suggests the extent to which insecurity disrupts the domestic/outside binary in the novel, but also suggests the inexistence of any definite domestic safety. Since there is no true place to "be safe again" (109) in the landscape of *No Country for Old Men*, Bell's retirement cannot be considered as safe domestic bliss.

The only thing that may secure that safety, although temporarily, is a higher force—sometimes represented in the form of weapons, and at other times, in the form of self-reliant and independent characteristics—that may match Chigurh’s destructive violence and deterministic force. Thus, Bell’s rationale not to “put his soul at hazard” in confronting the “true and living prophet of destruction” who “has no soul” (4) is not an emasculating nor a domesticating decision, unlike claims made by Jarraway, considering the fact—a fact that Bell already acknowledges—that this world is governed by the logic of determinism/naturalism, but rather it is an acquiescent submission to this destructive force based on a rational conclusion that when you “encounter certain things in the world, the evidence for certain things, you realize that you have come upon somethin that you may very well not be equal to” (299), you need something that would slow the train of the “second coming of Christ” (159). Consequently, Bell’s failure to disbelieve in the hope of mankind (the American Dream) disqualifies him of the title of the American gauged against the figure of the frontier myth.

Throughout the novel, Bell’s philosophical reflections and commentaries and Chigurh’s world view are constantly contrasted and compared to each other, as if to dominate each other’s logic. If we consider Bell’s first-person narrative to form one end of a pole in *No Country for Old Men*, then, Chigurh’s forms another end in which each strives for dominance and control, meanwhile eluding the logic of each narrative. Clearly, Chigurh is a figure of violence, chaos, and savagery corresponding with the images of the savages within the frontier model. Although he possesses frontier traits such as innovation and rugged individualism, he is, in a way, anti-American. This is because, unlike Jean, Moss, and most Americans, and contrary to the spirit of America that

embraces the idea of progressivism and free will, Chigurh denies any role of agency that may play a part in people's life choices. Chigurh flips coins to determine the fate of his victims in order to inculcate his philosophy of determinism and violence. This kind of struggle for dominance is mostly visible, for instance, when Jean's idea of free will is questioned and challenged by Chigurh's determinism. Jean's idea of individual agency, as one of the key conceptions in the American ethos, is undercut by Chigurh's determinism (via coin toss). When he replies to her that "the accounting is scrupulous" (259), he is affirming the overwhelming power of determinism that wins over free will. If Benjamin Mangrum's analysis that McCarthy "criticizes the crisis underpinning Bell's society and its predominant understanding of justice by revealing that the logos actually governing human relations is a chaotic order of violence and power" (122) is correct, then we can acknowledge the contrast between Bell's invocation of traditions and Chigurh's deterministic violence as a struggle for dominance in which Bell's sense of "democratic state and its sense of civic justice" (Mangrum 112) is antagonized by Chigurh's principle of "chance, the forces exterior to an individual will" (Mangrum 119). J. A. Bernstein likewise sums up this opposition by arguing that McCarthy, through his characters, "engages [with] modern philosophical debates over free will and determinism, specifically the question of whether the two notions are compatible" (388).

For one thing, Chigurh's coin is symbolic of this determinism that debunks the proprietor's and Jean's conception of free will, making his victims not only dumbfounded but also philosophically devastated. Considering the importance of this debate, in *No Country for Old Men*, the conflict between free will and determinism is critically illustrated in the following scenes. The novel relates two specific instances where this is

happening. In a filling station, Chigurh “took a twenty-five cent piece from his pocket and flipped it spinning into the bluish glare of the fluorescent lights overhead. He caught it and slapped it onto the back of his forearm just above the bloody wrappings. Call it, he said” (55) to the proprietor.

Well I need to know what it is we’re callin here.

How would that change anything? . . .

I didnt put nothin up.

Yes you did. You’ve been putting it up your whole life. You just didnt know it. . . .

I dont know what it is I stand to win. . . .

You stand to win everything, Chigurh said. Everything (56).

In another instance, in Jean’s apartment Chigurh “straightened out his leg and reached into his pocket and drew out a few coins and took one and held it up. He turned it. For her to see the justice of it. He held it between his thumb and forefinger and weighed it and then flipped it spinning in the air and caught it and slapped it down on his wrist. Call it, he said” (258). Interestingly, aside from the dire consequence of Chigurh’s coin toss that we later discover, this moment illustrates how determinism works in the novel, as if one could lose most (55) or win everything (56) in a world of chance. In both of these instances, Chigurh parodies and further deposes the concept of free will by executing his speech-act—as he tells the proprietor that the coin and himself have “been traveling twenty-two years to get here. And how it’s here. And [he’s] here” (56) and as he tells Jean that he “got here the same way the coin did” (258), thus, when he “came into [her] life [her] life was over” (260). The disparity between Chigurh and the proprietor becomes

more obvious when considering the fact that, as a response to Chigurh's determinism, Jean argues for will free instead of fate—"[y]ou make it like it was the coin. But you're the one" (258)—whereas Chigurh shushes this idea by saying that he

had no say in the matter. Every moment in your life is a turning and every one a choosing. Somewhere you made a choice. All followed to this. The accounting is scrupulous. The shape is drawn. No line can be erased. . . . A person's path through the world seldom changes and even more seldom will it change abruptly. And the shape of your path was visible from the beginning. (259)

To this end, the proprietor and the rest of Chigurh's victims, at some point in their conversation, commonly say to Chigurh: "[y]ou aint makin any sense" (56). This is because, for Chigurh, people "separate the act from the thing. As if the parts of some moment in history might be interchangeable with the parts of some other moment" (57) whereas, for Jean, one "can change" (256) the connection between the past and present. Here Chigurh is criticizing Jean's belief. For Chigurh, free-will is a false belief because free-will (the act) cannot change the course of one's future (the thing). Jean, on the other hand, through free-will, believes that one can change the outcome of one's future. In short, Jean, like Moss and most Americans, is a progressivist whereas Chigurh is a determinist. He believes in the doctrine that all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by causes external to the will.

Obviously, Chigurh's promises are destructive, based on his deterministic principles: "[t]he shape of [one's] path was visible from the beginning" (259) and one's life "had a beginning, a middle, and an end. This is the end" (260). To this end, Chigurh

is obsessive in keeping his word to “establish [his] bonafides” (251) as he returns the stolen money to his client, emphasizing his reliability and honesty (252).

Jarraway reads the precariousness of Chigurh’s “axiomatic mindset concerning masculinity that views it as inevitably fixed, entirely self-contained, and totally impervious to alteration vis-a-vis the outside world” (42) and the vulnerability of Bell’s “complex appreciation of the accelerating criminal culture” (54) that ended in a “domiciled retirement” (55), as well as Moss’s settling into a “narrative space somewhere between the aggressive activity of Chigurh and the proactive passivity of Bell” (59), as indicators of emasculation (or masculine emergency). However, what is problematic in Jarraway’s reading is that the “emergency” that he (mis)understands as problematizing the characters’ masculinity, in fact, is the very principle that Chigurh, Moss, and even Bell adhere to. If his reading is correct, then these characters should not be subjected to the dangers of masculinity because they represent and very much rely on that very masculinity manifested in the form of rugged individualism, self-reliance, and violence/force. In other words, contrary to Jarraway’s argument above, all three characters represent different aspects of the frontier figure—features such as “coarseness and strength” which are directly related with masculinity.

Thus, Chigurh’s “axiomatic mindset” (Jarraway 42) should not be read as a causal for his emasculation but rather a primary source of his masculinity, or rather rugged individualism, if we regard violence, force, and rugged individualism as a form of masculinity. In point of fact, Chigurh’s masculinity is not emasculated but rather is enforced—which becomes the real emergency. In one instance, Chigurh tells his employer that he is “in control of events” (253). In order to demonstrate this, after

retrieving the money from Moss, Chigurh makes a visit to his client “to establish [his] bonafides” (251) by recovering the client’s “property” (251). For one thing, as we can see from this scene, for Chigurh, not only keeping his (deterministic) principle that “transcend[s] money or drugs or anything like that” (153), demonstrated through his coin toss, is important but also establishing the trust that he is someone who the client might do business with (252) becomes equally important. A couple of sentences later, Chigurh emphasizes to his client that he is the only one fit for the job because “[n]ot everyone is suited to this line of work. The prospect of outsized profits leads people to exaggerate their own capabilities. In their minds. They pretend to themselves that they are in control of events where perhaps they are not. . . . I have no enemies. I dont permit such a thing” (253)—suggesting how someone “who is an expert in a difficult field” (251-252), in short, a truly self-reliant person, can achieve the mission. Thus the masculine emergency that Jarraway addresses above, in fact, is a matter of masculine individualism. Perhaps there is much benefit in viewing this as a re-affirmation of that very masculinity that these characters deploy. This is why, not coincidentally, Chigurh’s (destructive) individualism becomes hardly distinguishable from and most of the time it is conflated with that of Moss. And, in effect, both Chigurh and Moss serve as a visible link between the idea of masculinity and rugged individualism. Interestingly, that Chigurh’s deterministic principle is associated with traits that we witnessed in Moss indicates the novel’s ambivalence towards individualism. Although Chigurh shares with Moss certain traits of masculinity and rugged individualism, Chigurh’s moment of such traits clearly distinguishes from Moss’s because Chigurh’s determinism directly counters the idea of free will inherent in the American Dream.

In “‘Anything Can Be an Instrument’: Misuse Value and Rugged Consumerism in Cormac McCarthy’s *No Country for Old Men*,” Raymond Malewitz, by pointing out that recently critics have begun “to explore the tensions between McCarthy’s fictional world of material self-creation and the realities of American economic development” (722), provides an insight into the aesthetic project—that displays the creative relationship between men and man-made objects (721)—of Cormac McCarthy’s Western novels. Malewitz characterizes, for instance, Chigurh’s (mis)usage of a coin—not used a function of exchange but used as a tool for his deterministic principle—as an emblem of achieving a “sublime victory over the symbolic exchange-value systems of Western culture” (724). While Malewitz is correct in suggesting how characters in *No Country for Old Men* use man-made objects—the end commodity of a late capitalist society—and while this kind of misuse of man-made objects actually pops up erratically in the novel, this does not indicate “McCarthy’s search for ‘rugged consumerism’” (727) as an alternative “to late capitalism” (726). This is rather a retrospective conjuration of the frontier thesis that emphasizes traits such as self-reliance and rugged individualism.

Both Chigurh and Moss actively embrace the logic of rugged individualism that is associated with the ideas such as self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Obviously, directly contradicting the American Dream that privileges progressivism and free will, Chigurh’s promises are not only destructive but also based upon determinism: “[t]he shape of [one’s] path was visible from the beginning” (259) and one’s life “had a beginning, a middle, and an end. This is the end” (260). While Chigurh is faithful to his principles, they are rather dangerous and destructive. In other words, Chigurh’s version is one in which the American Dream is not permitted to thrive. Thus, Chigurh replicates Moss’s

moments of individualism but in a reverse (destructive) direction. Chigurh's (mis)use of "the cobalt steel plunger of the cattlegun" to shoot "out the lock cylinder" (80) to open Moss's trailer door, his alternate use of a coat hanger and his shirtsleeve (162-163) to explode the door of a drugstore, and his self-treatment of existing wounds caused by the previous shootout, as well as other various instances in the novel, strongly emphasize his self-sustaining and self-reliant characteristics bent on causing destruction and chaos. So, for example, Chigurh's "packet of swabs and forceps" (164) and "syringe containing tetracycline" (165) used to treat his gunshot wounds are not misused objects that subvert the deadening effects of late capitalism (as Malewitz claimed), but rather are objects that display the user's self-reliant characteristics that prefigure social destruction.

Particularly, Chigurh's re-created objects serve only to be used as tools for maximizing violence and annihilation. Consider, for instance, when Chigurh explodes a pharmacy by using an improvised explosive device:

[h]e unscrewed the gascap [of a car] at his elbow and hooked the shirtsleeve over the coathanger and ran it down into the tank and drew it out again. He taped the cardboard over the open gastank and balled the sleeve wet with gasoline over the top of it and taped it down and lit it and turned and limped into the drugstore. He was little more than half way down the aisle toward the pharmacy when the car outside exploded into flame taking out most of the glass in front of the store. (163)

Here Chigurh turns domestic objects (such as the coat hanger, card board, tape, his shirt sleeves, and a parked car) into weapons of destruction. Moss uses hangers and tape for constructive purposes that allow possibilities and promise whereas Chigurh exploits these

objects solely for destructive purposes—to let himself inside the pharmacy for medicine. While Chigurh is not a self-made-man in a conventional (rags-to-riches) sense, these re-created objects further highlight the user’s destructiveness. Replete with descriptions illustrating Chigurh’s chaotic nature, readers begin to see the differences between Chigurh and Moss.

In this context, Moss’s rugged individualism helps us to link this concept with Turnerian masculinity which David R. Jarraway identifies in his essay: “‘Becoming-Woman’: Masculine ‘Emergency’ After 9/11 in Cormac McCarthy.” Jarraway’s reading of McCarthy’s novels, including *No Country for Old Men*, rightly indicates the ways in which the novel engages with the issues surrounding masculine identity in the “ever-expanding textual space that opens up between” (49) Chigurh and Bell, and the extent to which readers of McCarthy’s fiction “experience a palpable shift away from the model of American masculine instinct with both self-protective aggression [Chigurh] and self-absorbed isolation [Bell]” (42). Moss is described as a self-sufficient man very much invested in the idea of rugged individualism. Throughout the novel we see him relentlessly on the move and constantly adapting to the (limited) surroundings. Without diverging from Jean’s above characterization of Moss, the novel invests much in describing Moss’s individualistic traits through his use of objects (such as tent poles) in creating more useful tools (a hauling device, for example) and his effective exploitation of various resources for his advantage. In other words, these man-made objects do not signify the user’s resistance to “the commodification of human-object relations” (727) as Malewitz claimed, but instead represent the operator’s rugged individualism. Just like Turner’s frontier figure who “accepts the conditions which the frontier furnishes” and so

“fits himself into the Indian clearings” (Turner 3), so does Moss, as a form of rugged individualism, adapt himself to the determinism-driven and rugged landscape of the West by creating useful tools out of objects for his advantage and survival. Being “taught in the school of experience,” for Turner, the pioneer was “forced to make old tools serve new uses; to shape former habits, institutions and ideas to changed conditions; and to find new means when the old proved inapplicable. He was building a new society as well as breaking new soil; he had the ideal of nonconformity and of change” (171).

If we read Chigurh’s world view as both entropic and fatalistic, denying any function of agency and progressivism, then Moss’s can be seen as progressive much like the frontier figure. While Chigurh’s actions are propelled by fatalistic principles that “transcend money or drugs” (153) that undo any kind of rags-to-riches story, much of Moss’s activities are driven towards simulating the (failed) rag-to-riches story—“fixin to do somethin dumbern hell but . . . goin any ways” (24). If we consider the scene where Bell visits Jean to warn about Moss’s trouble with “[s]ome pretty bad people” (127), Jean’s characterization of Moss rightfully puts Moss in a tradition of the American icon: a self-sufficient man who “can take care of hisself” (127) and a reliable man. Mary P. Nichols seconds this idea by subscribing the novel (in her case, the film adaptation) within the Western tradition in which the “frontier tests resources, not only against the harshness of nature, but also against the ruthlessness of others that emerges when law enforcement is weak or nonexistent. The Western appeals to American individualism. The triumph of good over evil justifies liberal politics, which rely on human self-reliance and independence” (207). And Nichlos’s idea does provide a hint in clarifying what that liberalism actually is: rugged individualism. Ultimately, Chigurh’s version of rugged

individualism is undercut because of its determinism and destructiveness. This, in turn, privileges Moss's version of constructive rugged individualism that is based on progressivism.

In fact, multiple passages are invested to describe Moss to echo the signature of a frontier figure—who possess the ability to “make old tools serve new uses” (171)—advocated by Turner in his thesis. As mentioned earlier, Moss is something of a hunter (although immediately turned to prey when he stole the drug money), who “glassed the desert below him with a pair of twelve power German binoculars” and “a rifle strapped over his shoulder” that has a “harness leather sling was a heavybarreled .270 on a '98 Mauser action with a laminated stock of maple and walnut” (8). Just as “hunters” (11) would, Moss is “a strong believer in the shotgun” (19) as he handles it meticulously: at times he “unslung and cradled at his waist with the safety off” (11), and another time he “unslung the rifle from off his shoulder and laid it in the grass and took the H&K and pushed back the follower with heel of his hands” (14). Much like prehistoric hunters, he cleans off his tracks—gets “out his handkerchief and walk[s] back and wip[es] clean everything he [touches]” (13) —plans his next move—takes out the “survey map from the glovebox and unfold[s] it across the seat and s[its] there studying it” (25) —manages to use the tent poles for hiding and retrieving the satchel in the ductwork (101), and buys a “twelve gauge Winchester pump gun and a box of double ought buckshot shells” (87) in order to prepare for the ultimate kill.

Moss's moment of rugged individualism is effectively illustrated when he creates a hauling tool, to haul the bag that was kept hidden in the vent duct, from tent poles, wire hangers, and duct tape:

[h]e untied the little nylon bag and slid the poles out. They were lightweight aluminum tubes three feet long and he assembled three of them and taped the joints with duct tape so that they wouldnt pull apart. He went to the closet and came back with three wire hangers and sat on the bed and cut the hooks off with the side cutters and wrapped them into one hook with the tape. Then he taped them to the end of the pole and stood up and slid the pole down the ductwork. (101)

As he re-creates a foot cushion from his shirt, Moss's moment of rugged individualism is further emphasized as this image becomes embedded with the rugged images of the landscape. Pursued by drug lords, just after he has taken the drug-deal money in a satchel, in order to alleviate the blister from his feet, he "unsnapped the small leather holster at his belt and got out his knife and then stood up and took off his shirt again. He cut off the sleeves at the elbow and sat and wrapped his feet in them and pulled on the boots" (35).

A couple of sentences later, McCarthy takes us to the bottom of a canyon where Moss sat up and wrapped his feet and pulled the boots on and stood and started up the last stretch of canyon to the rim. Where he crested out the country lay dead flat, stretching away to the south and to the east. Red dirt and creosote. Mountains in the far and middle distance. Nothing out there. Heatshimmer. He stuck the pistol in his belt and looked down at the river one more time and then set out east. (36-37)

Here McCarthy depicts Moss much like the Western hero who rides off into the sunset.

Although, Moss's own philosophical-moral stance is not explicitly articulated like Bell's, it nevertheless points toward the Turnerian view of individualism and free will—

“strong in selfishness” and “intolerant of administrative experience and education” (Turner 22). According to Turner the self-made man, out of his “wilderness experience” and “out of the freedom of his opportunities,” is one that possesses the freedom to fashion his own individual “regeneration” (137) and who knows “how to seize the opportunity” (172) for advancement. Also, he is a free self-directing individual seeking his own place and finding play for his own powers and his own original initiative based on free choice (192). If so, if the self-made man, for Turner, is no other than a free-willing man of opportunity for personal advancement, then perhaps Moss is also something of a self-made man characterized as such by Turner—that implicates this novel with the familiar images of the self-made man in the frontier myth.

The following scene exemplifies how Moss’s free will is accentuated through a paradoxical gesture. Consider that the scene where Moss tells a runaway girl who wants to go to California to “start over” (226) is very much suggestive and a repetition of Chigurh’s determinism when Moss says: [t]he point is there aint no point. . . . You dont start over. Your notions about startin over. Or anybody’s. You dont start over. That’s what it’s about. Ever step you take is forever. You cant make it go away. . . Your life is made out of the days it’s made out of. Nothin else” (227). Here Moss is clearly making the point that the past isn’t something that is severed from the present and future but rather a fixated link that causes “fatalistic” future/consequences from the choices made from the past. This is why Moss warns her that to avoid “a lot of bad luck” (234) “the best way is to be from Mars” (233). But if he already knows that to run away with the drug money would foretell with “dead certainty that someone was going to come looking for the money” (18-19), why doesn’t he resort to nihilism much like Chigurh? Under this

predicament, it is quite strange that Moss would actually choose to defy his own philosophy. Contrary to his own philosophy, Moss's maxims—"there's still 'a lot of good salesmen [or good luck] around'" (235) in the world and "[e]ven a blind sow finds an acorn ever once in a while" (223)—in fact, suggest his precise unwillingness to conform to the forces of determinism. This seemingly contradictory gesture signals Moss's active resistance to determinism—an instance serving as an analogy when we remember Bell's similar conversation with Jean mentioned earlier. The above suggestion becomes even clearer when we remember Moss's rumination just after he obtained the drug money: "[if] you knew there was somebody out here afoot that had two million dollars of your money, at what point would you quit looking for em? That's right. There aint no such a point" (29). This understanding and willingness allowed Moss to "listen" (12, 101) to things and to wipe "clean everything he'd touched" (13) without leaving anything or any tracks behind (19, 35). In this sense, Moss is a self-made man because his (voluntarily) actions are the results of his free will.

Thus while Moss, here, seems to share, in part, a sense of determinism similar to Chigurh's, Moss, rather, is implicating an alacrity for free will and individual agency. This is evidenced from a variety of other instances. Moss not only rejects Wells's offer for protection by saying "I dont need no favors" (155) but also rejects Chigurh's "best deal" (184) by telling him that "I'm goin to bring you somethin all right" (184) on the phone. In this line of thought, Bernstein's argument that the "only free-willing characters in McCarthy's fiction—those not subject to the hazards of fortune—are those espousing evil" (392) seems to overgeneralize the case since Moss continually chooses to do things based on his free will, notwithstanding his foreknowledge that these choices will

ultimately cause him his own life. Yet, Bernstein is not wrong in noting that Moss's struggle to overcome his own fate (394) as a paradox because in the world of *No Country for Old Men* "human agency exists alongside divine powers" (394). His latter claim allows us to see that, while Moss's struggle for agency is paradoxical, it is one that is still grounded in his willingness to enact that free will. Thus despite Moss's determinism at work—his foreknowledge of "how this is going to turn out" (184)—he is relentless in his role as a challenger to Chigurh's prophetic determinism. Moss's paradoxical struggle to resist fatalism is demonstrated in the following scene. As it dawns on him that "at some point he was going to have to quit running on luck" to face "what was coming" (108), he checks into a motel and says to the clerk:

I need another room.

You want to change rooms or you want another one besides the one you've got?

I want to keep the one I got and get another one.

All right. Have you got a map of the motel?

She looked under the counter. There used to be a sort of a one. Wait a minute. I think this is it.

She laid an old brochure on the counter. It showed a car from the fifties parked in front. He unfolded it and flattened it out and studied it. (99-100)

The meticulous and methodical effort that Moss invests here—renting another room as a deception and studying the map of the motel's layout—and throughout his entire journey to keep himself and the drug money hidden actually display his willingness to exercise his right for agency. Although Daniel Weiss may not be accurate in suggesting that

Moss's finding another space (another room in a motel) symbolizes his failure to recognize his fate, Weiss's suggestion that the information of the old brochure that Moss borrows from the motel clerk implicates a return to the innocent American nostalgia (71) is logical, insofar as these nostalgic objects such as the pictographs and old map of the motel radiate the promise of the future. In other words, while Daniel Weiss reads the above scene (Moss's occupying another space) as a metaphor that illustrates his failure to understand the violence that has already been mapped (71) out for him, however, Moss's pre-awareness that with "dead certainty that someone was going to come looking for the money. Maybe several someones" (19) rather suggests his persistence to resist his fate—in other words his expression of free will—so central to the spirit of the American Dream.

Daniel Butler, who explores the historical-political impacts on McCarthy's novels, suggests that the confidence—the insistence of the sovereignty of his will—that Chigurh exudes is the hallmark of his anarchistic impulses (47) and that the "new kind" (McCarthy 3) of violence brought by figures like Chigurh in *No Country for Old Men* does raise concerns on the tainting of the American Spirit (43). Indeed, as seen from the coin toss scenes, he is a character that embodies the deterministic force that antagonizes the American Dream (a dream that presupposes progressivism and free will). Butler is right, to a certain extent, in arguing that *No Country for Old Men* is a novel "dominated by the outlaw figure Anton Chigurh, who seems to fully realize the apocalyptic American anarchy" (38). However, the novel's depiction of the "anarchical violence" (43) of Chigurh should not be considered as McCarthy's "expression of an entire [American] culture's anxiety about anarchy" (43) nor his articulation of the "American proclivity for

destruction” (44).

In other words, the pervasion of determinism and nihilism in the novel does not register endorsing anarchy nor defeatism, as many would think, but rather serves as a space of negative capability that justifies the re-evocation of the American Dream as an essential component of the frontier paradigm. If this paradoxical condition is considered an alternate reading to one of McCarthy’s visions in *No Country for Old Men*, then perhaps Chigurh’s monolithic violence, destructiveness, and anarchy which result in a deterministic fashion can be read as the American disposition towards progressivism. Let’s consider Chigurh’s final moments and the remainders of him in the end of the novel, after he has just shot Jean: “[t]he car that hit Chigurh in the intersection three blocks from the house was a ten year old Buick that had run a stop-sign. There were no skidmarks at the site and the vehicle had made no attempt to brake. Chigurh never wore a seatbelt driving in the city because of just such hazards” (260). Contrary to Bell’s affirmation that he is a god-of-war-like figure, as he calls him—a “prophet of destruction” (4), “invincible man” (141), “Satan” (218), or “ghost” (299)—the above moment puts Chigurh in a “vulnerable” (259) position, also susceptible to a higher law (although deterministic), similar with his countless victims. Ironically for Chigurh, that this moment confirms Wells’s final words—“[y]ou’re not outside of death” (177)—further suggests the novel’s careful reluctance in resorting to defeatism and nihilism.

Instead of encroaching into existential nihilism, the novel reveals the essence of the American Dream via Bell’s dream-figure, and ultimately through its association with Moss. The striking similarity between the promise that Jean sees in Moss and that Bell visions in the dream-figure points toward a reading that associates the novel within the

frontier paradigm, particularly in association with the spirit of the American Dream. A closer look at the dream-figure will reveal a likely parallel between Moss and this figure which will ultimately relate them back to Turner's frontier figure. This becomes more obvious when we consider the final scene—concerning Bell's dream—of the novel. In this scene, we see a stone water trough—chiseled out of a rock (307)—that had been there for a hundred years in his old house. Bell narrates, this dream-figure:

had set down with a hammer and chisel and carved out a stone water trough to last thousand years. Why was that? What was it that he had faith in? It wasnt that nothin would change. Which is what you might think, I suppose. He had to know bettern that. I've thought about it a good deal. I thought about it after I left there with that house blown to pieces. I'm goin to say that water trough is there yet (307).

Here Bell cannot help being fascinated by a stone water trough that has been carved out to last hundreds of years. And when compared to his childhood home which was blown to pieces by age and time, that this water trough is not only a valuable source for man's survival and development but is also a man-made product that requires considerable labor and time, obviously symbolizes "some kind of promise" (308) for mankind. Just as the stone water trough was chiseled "out of the rock" (307) not "in a time peace" (307), Bell, likewise, dreams of a future (although bleak) carved out from a man's solid determination and faith despite the reality that the prophet of destruction might still be "out there" (299). This promise is later revealed in the form of a dream where Bell meets his father: "I have to say that the only thing I can think is that there was some sort of promise in his heart. And I dont have no intensions of carvin a stone water trough. But I would like to be

able to make that kind of promise” (308). Despite the nihilistic overtones of Bell’s narration, as he retires from the law enforcement agency, he nevertheless hopes for the kind of promise (manifested in the form of a fire) that his father gave in the dream. Bell finally relates that in the dream his father “was fixin to make a fire somewhere out there in all that dark and all that cold” and that “whenever I got there he would be there” (309). It is a dream that ultimately simulates the frontier tradition’s triumph of progress that attempts to subvert, if not survive, Chigurh’s and the frontier landscape’s determinism. What Bell hasn’t realized during his service as a county sheriff and even in his dream is that this transcendental figure is already incarnated in the figure of Moss.

The identity of this something that potentially transcends Chigurh’s all-encompassing determinism is manifested through Moss as he embodies traits of rugged individualism, free will, and the American Dream. In fact, Bell’s dream-figure—the American hero only thought to exist in the form of dreams—happens to correspond with Moss. The novel’s use of “repetitious imagery of loss and destruction” and “the imagery of renewal and re-creation” (Cooper 53) serves to strengthen the association between the two figures and the frontier hero. Through the existence and persistence of such a character (Chigurh) that challenges the American Dream, paradoxically, opens up a space for nurturing the true American ethos evidenced by Moss and Bell’s dream-figure. Paradoxical as it seems, the struggle between free will and determinism, dramatized in Moss’s narrative, opens up a space for promise and hope much like the frontier landscape that renders similar motives. Just as Americans thought themselves as “manifestly destined not just to achieve prosperity and power but to represent the best hope for mankind” (Mogen 22), this type of belief in “limitless possibilities” (26), what Mogen

calls the “images of the American Dream” (22), is analogously represented in Moss and projected onto Bell’s dream-figure. Describing this (frontiersman’s prophetic) idealism, Turner writes: he “dreamed dreams and beheld visions. He had faith in man, hope for democracy, belief in America’s destiny, unbounded confidence in his ability to make his dream come true. . . . restless and wayward in action . . . wherein to create something so magnificent as the world has scarcely begun to dream of” (138).

Partly embodying this kind of ideal, Moss’s role as a failed but potential version of this frontier figure can be best understood if we position Moss and the boy—from another of McCarthy’s works, *The Road* (2006)—side by side. While Kunsu’s main analysis in her essay pertains specifically to the boy in *The Road*, if Kunsu is correct in defining the boy’s role as an Adamic figure “who must struggle on, so that he can be present at, or somehow contribute to, the eventual rebirth of the world” (65), and if we find the same kind of potential in and manifest destiny of Moss and Bell’s dream-figure, then perhaps it is not a stretch to suggest that the promise and hope expressed through these two characters may, in fact, point towards understanding this novel in terms of the frontier space that preconditions a “New Eden.” In regards to this space, Bernstein argues that the novel retains the “religio-philosophical concept of a transcendent logos” (108) that exists beyond the anthropocentric orders brought to the world” (124) which can only be glimpsed through “dreams and metaphorical stories” (122). Bernstein’s argument here seems applicable because his idea enables the linkage between the novel’s representations of the “possibility of transcendent meaning” (109) with the frontier space mentioned earlier.

Although Bernstein defines this “transcendent logos” (108) to mean “the good,

the just and the real” (128), if we acknowledge his idea to be plausible, then it becomes possible to read this logos as a kind of promise or hope that may be akin to the notion of the American Dream, also encoded in the frontier paradigm. The transcendent logos that occupies this space most forcibly presents itself via Moss and Bell’s dream-figure. Moss, as the narrative unfolds, is portrayed as a hunter who would hunt down his prey because, for one, the rifle that Moss carries in the hunt is a “heavybarreled .270 on a ’98 Mauser action” that “would shoot half minute of angle groups” (8) with “a Canjar trigger set to nine ounces,” and for another, he knows “the exact drop of the bullet in hundred yard increments” (9). While, in this instance, he actually misses the antelopes as he watches “them out of sight beyond the rocky headlands to the south” (10), however, the fact that he carries superior weaponry that would maximize his shots and another fact that he possess the expertise for a successful hunt, does, in fact, constantly remind readers of the potentiality that Moss constantly exhibits here and elsewhere in the novel. This is why, despite Moss’s failure to hunt down the antelopes, the novel takes readers along the ridge where Moss witnesses some rocks “etched with pictographs perhaps a thousand years old. The men who drew them hunters like himself” (11). Here the images of a prehistoric hunt overlapping with Moss’s antelope hunt further implicate Moss within the tradition of a frontier figure who also happens to be a backwoods pioneer, with his rifle and axe, “trained in aggressive courage, in domination, in directness of action” (Turner 170).

Together with these images of a frontier figure, the rocks that Moss sees, here, function as a nostalgic object that responds to his potentiality. Thus, what we see in these objects is actually endless possibilities and potentialities, just as Moss sees his “whole life sitting there in front of him” (18) as if “there wont be another day like this one” (20)

when he first gets a glimpse of the drug money. In fact, readers are constantly exposed to the idea of Moss to embody this kind of potentiality of the not-yet-realized. This is why Jean is entranced by Moss because he represents the very thing that came to her in her dream. In other words, she doesn't have to "know who [this dream-figure] was or what he looked like" since Moss fulfills the promise—"that if [she] went down there that he would find her" (135). Jean further tells Bell how Moss, for her, embodies that potentiality. She tells Bell:

When I got out of high school I was still sixteen and I got a job at Wal-Mart. I didn't know what else to do. We needed the money. What little it was. Anyway, the night before I went down there I had this dream. Or it was like a dream. I think I was still about half awake. But it come to me in this dream or whatever it was that if I went down there that he would find me. At the Wal-Mart. I didn't know who he was or what he looked like. I just knew that I'd know him when I seen him. [. . .] And on the ninety-ninth day he walked in and he asked me where sportin goods was at and it was him. And I told him where it was at and he looked at me and went on. And directly he come back and he read my name tag and he said my name and he looked at me and he said: What time do you get off? And that was all she wrote (131-32).

While their first encounter sounds like a typical "nice [romantic] story" (132), it is hard to deny the presence of potentiality that Moss radiates here and elsewhere in the narrative.

Moss's promise seems to foreground the possibility of mankind's hope and the American Dream. Through the similar portrayal of Moss, readers are led to acknowledge

that the narratives of Moss and Bell are essentially a part in the stories of the West. Exploring the issues of trauma, loss, and mourning in McCarthy's works, particularly *Blood Meridian* (1985) and *The Road*, Bill Hardwig argues that McCarthy "looks to the past, or the soon-to-be-paved-over present, and sees the trappings of culture and materialism" that "become filled with a radiant power, as McCarthy imagines the disappearance of the world and considers the world that will never be" (39). For Hardwig these trappings become "resonant with an at times nostalgic meaning for what is gone and at other times a poignant meaning of the expectation of a future that such things evoke" (39). If we place the main plot, the crime-thriller part of Moss's and Chigurh's narrative, as a microcosm of the world of *Blood Meridian*, and the final part of *No Country for Old Men*, describing Bell's concluding remarks and his dream, as a primary theme that drives the plot of *The Road*, then perhaps Hardwig's suggestion above can provide an insight to understand the significance of these narratives in *No Country for Old Men*. If Hardwig is correct in reading trappings in McCarthy's fictions as vessels for nostalgia, then it follows that the water trough or fire—and all the rest of objects such as Bell's old "Colts. .44-40" (62), and values such community and respect (124) that involve some sort of a past tradition in *No Country for Old Men*—denotes the conjuration of some form of hope that unveils a "type of permanence" (Hardwig 46). In other words, this potentiality that Moss embodies is evidenced by the overt similarities that exist between Moss and Turner's frontier figure. Strangely enough, that Moss with his "rifle strapped over his shoulder" (8) who "wont quit" (127) not only recalls a figure who had "some sort of promise in his heart" (308) but also calls to mind the American who possesses: "a vision of hope, and assurance that the world held a place where were to be

found high faith in man and the will and power to furnish him the opportunity to grow to the full measure of his own capacity” (Turner 169).

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, the Frontier Model of Economy and
Socio-Economic-Political Crisis

A meager colonization program had been underway before the war, but now that the sun had ceased to shine on Earth, the colonization entered an entirely new phase. In connection with this a weapon of war, the Synthetic Freedom Fighter, had been modified; able to function on an alien world, the humanoid robot—strictly speaking, the organic android—had become the mobile donkey engine of the colonization program. (Dick 16)

Christophe Den Tandt, who explores the cyberpunk genre in terms of naturalistic science fiction, indicates that as “cyberpunk maps the landscape of the near future” its function is to perpetuate “the tradition impelling realist/naturalist artist to provide a totalizing chart of new stages of social and industrial development” (95). Leaving aside whether *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* qualifies for a variant of naturalistic fiction, if Den Tandt is correct in his definition of cyberpunk, then we can consider this novel to be conforming to his definition of the genre because the novel does, in fact, map the landscape of the near future that generally “focuses not only on the construction of the social fabric of information societies but also on the latter’s unraveling” (98).

Furthermore, if humanity, self, and identity are to be achieved through their endless demarcation with the others—humanoid androids—then perhaps, the novel’s post-human future charting “new stages of social and industrial development” (Tandt 96) is nothing

more than outlining a (space) frontier tale that serves to perpetuate the status quo of this post-human society's dominant structure—an element so familiar and fundamental in the frontier myth.

However, oblivious to the frontier paradigm of the novel, Tandt translated the novel's post-human future to be naturalistic because he thought it constructed a "social fabric of information societ[y]" (98). Just like Tandt, Jill Galvan, from an idealistic point of view, mistranslated the novel to be a "bildungsroman" that "envision[ed] a community of the posthuman" (414). To elucidate, regarding the theme of Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Galvan in her essay "Entering the Posthuman Collective in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*" especially addresses the "changing parameters" that the androids posit in the novel with regards to the protagonist's questioning the "boundaries between human and androids" (414). Galvan considers the novel as a "bildungsroman for the cybernetic age" (414). According to Galvan, these cybernetic machines challenge "the very categories of life and selfhood . . . and the ontological prerogative of its creators" (413) as Dick repudiates the idea of confined human community by "envision[ing] a community of the post human, in which human and machine commiserate and comaterialize, vitally shaping one another's existence" (414).

Indeed, failing to notice the illusionary nature of human-android cohabitation, and thus ignoring the discriminatory posthuman society's affinity with a frontier paradigm, Christopher A. Sims in his essay "The Dangers of Individualism and the Human Relationship to Technology in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*," claims that the novel "explores the moral implications of enslaving a human-like

biological machine . . . and uses the invention of a humanoid replica to critique and define the essence of humanity” (67). Sims argues that the functional aspect between the user (subject) and technological artifact (object) challenges and creates an opportunity for the user to reveal the “essence of nature and themselves” (71). He further claims that this realization “return humans and nature to a mode of being prior to the understanding of” (71) technology and technical artifacts. However, as long as technological artifacts, machines, and androids are ontologically and epistemologically differentiated, categorized, and hierarchized, Sims’s vision of human-android equal cohabitation and equilibrium becomes inevitably an illusion. Similarly, Galvan indicates that Rick’s rethinking of the dominant ideology—the “ontological categories of his culture” (414)—of his society’s juridical system is evidence that reveals the novel’s vision of the post-human culture.

While the novel undeniably explores (if not critiques) the issues and concerns—for example, what it is to be human if humans and androids (the other) can hardly be distinguished?—it certainly leaves the question open whether this envisioned “posthuman” (Galvan 414) community, where humans and androids cohabit, can even be envisioned at all, even if “humans reclaim the essence of humanity” (Sims 67) and both parties realize their essential likeliness. On the contrary, it is precisely these ideological and ontological categories that are essential for a future society that relies on a socio-economic-political division. Thus, contrary to Sims’s argument that “technology can be used as a means to reclaim the essence of humanity” (67) by “eroding the boundaries between the real and the artificial, between humanity and technology” (69), technology and other means, which I will further discuss later, are fundamental for

claiming humans' own social, economic, and political status and identity. This is a paradoxical condition required in any claim for self-identity that these critics ignore. What these scholars saw in the novel, as it explored a new space frontier, in fact, was its socio-economical and technological idealism that are common in a frontier narrative. Notably, these critics rather missed the complexity of the boundaries between these two species, and in effect, missed more serious issues related to this division, which in fact belongs to a tradition of frontier narratives.

Drawing on the fact that the metaphors that pertained to the frontier and the New World are only replaced by the signifiers for post-apocalyptic space and cybernetic aliens, I suggest reading the novel as another variant of a frontier narrative. Diverging from these readings, Eric S. Rabkin, who views the mechanizing of people as a consequence of industrialism, suggests that Dick dramatizes the “intellectual desolation” by focusing on beings—androids—“who were themselves artificially produced” and have been “forbidden the usual habitations of humanity” in order to “labor on humanity’s behalf” (163). Seconding Rabkin’s idea above and providing a connection between American industrialization and frontier expansionism, Gary K. Wolfe indicates that with the closing of the western frontier, “science fiction gained popularity as a kind of literature that not only offered new frontiers but did so without sacrificing the technological idealism that had equally come to characterize industrial America” (248). Wolfe, relying on David Mogen’s categorization of science fiction, notes that science fiction not only “views the movement into space as a kind of extension of the manifest destiny myth of American expansion, focusing largely on the problem-solving aspects of life in a hostile wilderness” but also sees “the frontier as an arena for capitalist

exploration” (258). If we accept this formula, then *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* seems fitting as a frontier narrative.

Agreeing with Wolfe’s view and taking on Rabkin’s idea, I would like to read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* in terms of a frontier myth because the novel dramatizes central factors of the frontier model of economy: the novel not only enacts the systemic categorization and inequality of self-other (humans vs. androids) binary latent in the frontier paradigm but also charts the position of the other (androids) as a way of defining the self (humans) for socio-economic-political purposes, closely recalling the frontier paradigm. To this line, based upon a capitalistic model of economy, both the frontier paradigm and novel treat the other as an object of dominion, subjugation, and violence. Obviously, the logic of the frontier model—the existence of unlimited free land and resources will call for new opportunities for individual mobility, social development and national progress in terms of economic advancement and industrialization—is flawed because it is founded on an idealistic notion of economy. This is because natural resources are not unlimited—it will eventually exhaust itself—and in effect, this system of economy will not be able to guarantee freedom and equality for all men. Thus, contrary to the frontier thesis, the logic of the frontier inevitably results in class stratification between captains of industry and underprivileged groups of men.

The frontier myth’s paradigm invariably requires a caste system that would maintain upper mobility to the captains of industry while depriving lesser classes of their property and capitals. If so, it is not surprising that the myth demands subordinate classes such as Indians be “liberated from savagery and advanced to civilization . . . [c]ausing them to give up hunting and gathering and to adopt farming” because this not only

“would reduce the amount of land they needed” but also would have “the happy side effect of liberating their land and resources as well” (Limerick 191). The frontier paradigm allows the upper class to justifiably take and exploit the frontier resources while precluding lesser classes to participate in this capitalistic venture. The frontier model, in short, is founded upon a pro-capitalistic economy system that supports class divisions and fosters unequal distribution of land, property and resources.

Commensurate with Frederick Jackson Turner’s model of economy, the novel not only informs the assumptions underlying the frontier model—that assume socio-economic advances through unlimited supply of free resources and socio-economic-political equality from lack of competition for natural resources—but also unravels the rationale latent in the frontier thesis that presumes a binary stratification of classes. More particularly, just as the frontier thesis implicitly supports class distinction and conquest of the native Indians as a way to promote nationalism (or national identity) and national superiority, in a similar way, I argue that the novel not only reveals the necessity of class differentiation and inequalities between humans and androids to stabilize the status quo of Terra’s (post-World War Terminus Earth) socio-economic-political structure but also depicts the necessity of others (androids) to strengthen the class/racial hierarchy.

Not surprisingly we begin to see how Terra’s socio-economic-political system—that positions the androids as the (savage) other—corresponds with Turner’s (defective) model of capitalist economy. Turner notes that “the West was so free and so vast, the barriers of individual achievement were so remote, that the pioneer was hardly conscious that any danger to equality could come from his competition for natural resources” (273). For Turner, “free land meant free opportunity” (259) because inexhaustible land offered

“an exit into a free life and greater well-being among the bounties of nature, into the midst of resources that demanded manly exertion, and that gave in return the chance for indefinite ascent in the scale of social advance” (261). If, according to Turner, free land guarantees free natural resources, and in turn, allows “freedom of the individual to rise under conditions of social mobility” (266) by exploiting those free natural resources, then he is correct in saying that this prevents the formation of a dominant class, whether based on property or on custom, since “economic equality fosters political equality” (274). However—contrary to Turner’s claim for “economic equality,” “American democracy,” and “social mobility,” which are all based on the “abundance of unoccupied land” (274)—equality rather produces “[c]lass distinctions” (278) because, just as he mentioned, “the conditions of free competition furnished by the West . . . produce the rise of those captains of industry” (260).

On closer observation it is not difficult to realize Turner’s thesis above is paradoxical: as a matter of fact, abundance of land results in economic inequality (that gives rise to captains of industry) but not economic equality. In this way, Turner’s capitalist economic system implicitly premises competition for these resources and privileges class hierarchy based on individual determination and strength. Evidently “the keenest and the strongest” (Turner 271) are those who are fit for survival. To this line, Slotkin explains, “the end product of the Frontier is the production of new kind of ruling class . . . whose authority is ratified by both natural law (their success in the Darwinian strife with the Indians) and the consent of those they govern” (*Gunfighter Nation* 50-51). This has become the stigmata of “those captains of industry” that demarcate the civilized pioneers with savage Indians. Comparably, in Terra, humans are considered superior to

androids—or conversely, androids inferior—not only because the lifespan of humanoid robots is merely two years—as Rosen Industries could never solve the problem of “cell replacement” (197)—but also because they lack the capacity to empathize with other beings, and thus have not acquired the survival skills necessary for a “higher survival factor” (31). On the other hand, humans have evolved, according to Terra’s ideology, “with two billion years of pressure” (200) to overcome difficulties through strength, empathy, and cooperation. In point of fact, the novel dramatizes the paradoxical ideology of capitalist economy—free land leading to economic equality followed by social (upward) mobility—through the position of androids in the post-WWT Terra in which the novel is set.

While the setting of the novel maintains that immigration to Mars (free land) and possession of androids (free labor) assures “economic equality” and “social mobility,” like Turner’s thesis above, the position and treatment of androids instead reveals that free labor brought by these humanoid robots, in reality, exacerbates social and economic inequalities between humans and androids. Much like Turner’s view of the other—non-Europeans: native Indians—the androids, as the human-other, are treated as second-class citizens (or rather beings) that assist and uphold the upper-class humans. When Turner separates “savagery and civilization,” he clearly makes the point in demarcating the Indians from the Europeans not only in terms of racial and national categories but also with regards to cultural differences. The Indians, according to Turner’s world-view, are sub-humans—i.e., savages and barbarians—because they have not achieved the level of sophistication to sustain a civilized life-style. According to Slotkin’s analysis of the settlers’ view of the Indians, the New World “perceived by the discoverers was vast,

unknown, exotic, uncultivated, and peopled by diverse nations of savages” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 29). Furthermore, the Indians “without a sufficient sense of civic responsibility and of the need for law” were perceived not only to lack the “sentiment which binds Euro-Americans societies together” but also were thought to be “unnecessarily cruel and revengeful in war, prone to mindless rages . . . lacking in a proper sentimental feeling” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 275).

In short, it is believed that the Indians lack the capacity for sophistication and empathy, and thus are an uncivilized culture. As a matter of fact, Robert Berkhofer effectively explains the cause of this Euro-American bias: by classifying “the variety of cultures and societies as a single entity”—Indians—“for the purpose of description and analysis,” Euro-Americans neglected the “social and cultural diversity of Native Americans” (Berkhofer 3). So, the “term *Indian* and the images and conceptual categories that go with that collective designation for Native Americans are White inventions” (Berkhofer 3-4). As a product of “White conception,” (3) images behind this terminology was ineluctably associated with savagery—“hairy, naked, club-wielding child of nature who existed between humanity and animality [l]acking civilized knowledge or will . . . [and] liv[ing] a life of bestial self-fulfillment, directed by instinct, and ignorant of God and morality” (Berkhofer 13). On a similar vein, according to Patricia Nelson Limerick’s studies on the conquest of Western America, “the very idea of culture—as a whole system of ideas and behavior—was a creature” of “Euro-American ways of thinking [that] was dominated by the ideas of civilization and savagery” (190). To Euro-Americans, savagery “meant hunting and gathering, not agriculture; common ownership, not individual property owning” who “neglected the land’s true potential and kept out

those who could put it to proper use” (Limerick 190). Thus, for the Euro-Americans, they “represent[ed] a fallen race, a people who have failed to realize the arcadian possibilities of the land and their own human capacity for civilized behavior” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 286). This Euro-American myth mandates that “those unsuited for civilization either gave way to those who bear the germs of progress or be destroyed” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 48).

According to Turner, just as a frontiersman is supposed to acquire social mobility and economic equality by exploiting free land and labor, humans in Terra are invested in this idea that rather reveals itself to be unfounded on closer inspection. The position of androids actually uncovers class (species) inequity between androids and humans. While marginalized status of androids in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* most forcefully parallels the disenfranchised position of native Indians in American history, this does not preclude the possibility of making the association between androids with other marginalized groups of people such as Hispanics, African slaves and colonial subaltern. In fact, the novel’s main thematic concern revolves around this binary demarcation between human and android species. It is quite evident from the beginning of the narrative that the world in which *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is set is based upon a caste system—its very top is occupied by humans who are given incentives to live on Mars, one ladder down is taken up by humans living in Terra, another ladder down is arranged for specials who are genetically defective, and finally the very bottom is reserved for androids. As the “mobile donkey engine of the colonization program” (16), the androids particularly serve as manual laborers and (unequal) companions to humans. While the androids and electric animals alike are classed and treated as simply electric

machines that have “no ability to appreciate the existence of another” (42)—a view that so repels Rick in the beginning of the novel, nonetheless humans regard them as lower working class that uphold human’s socio-economic-political standing. In fact, androids are advertised as manual laborers in a way that “duplicates the halcyon days of the pre-Civil War Southern states! Either as body servants or tireless field hands, the custom-tailored humanoid robot—designed specifically for YOUR UNIQUE NEEDS, FOR YOU AND YOU ALONE—given to you absolutely free, equipped fully, as specified by you before your departure from Earth; this loyal, trouble-free companion in the greatest, boldest adventure contrived by man in modern history” (17-18).

As it happens, Mercerism, as a political propaganda that defines the hierarchy between humans and androids, is the primary ideology that conditions the population (including humans and androids) to comply with the status quo of this society’s socio-economic-political structure. Mercerism (or the ability to merge and sympathize with a cybernetic-collective figure called Mercer) is a religion-ideology of Terra. Richard Viskovic, who examines Mercerism as a “rhythmic link” (163) that connects the “twinned themes of empathy and humanity” (167), suggests that the fusion with Mercer relates to “the theme of defining humanness, because the androids are unable to attain fusion for the same reason their claim to humanity is refuted: they [purportedly] lack empathy” (167). While Viskovic’s idea (that fusion with Mercer demonstrates empathy, and thus is to be linked with humanity) rings true in this novel, and while he is right in suggesting that Mercer is a “historical figure” (an old man climbing a hill to his death), and a “figure of myth and uncertainty” (167), he misses the underlying function of Mercerism for humans and androids alike. In fact, Mercerism (the use of a cybernetic

device for communal empathy experience) serves as political propaganda that furnishes a rationale for discriminating against those (androids) who cannot merge with Mercer.

Thus the “physical merging—accompanied by mental and spiritual identification—with Mercer” (22) is not only what distinguishes humans and androids but also what disadvantages androids for their inability to merge with Mercer. From the evolutionary point of view, according to Mercerism, humans are positioned higher (superior) than androids in the evolutionary ladder because the empathic faculty requires an unimpaired group instinct which functions as a “biological insurance” (31) to a highly evolved species like humans.

It is within the above conception in which Terra writes specials (degenerate humans) and androids as inferior races or beings. John Isidore, for example, is “classed as biologically unacceptable, a menace to the pristine heredity of race” (16). He is, according to Terra’s standards, a “special [who] dropped out of history” and “ceased, in effect, to be part of mankind” (16). Evidently, situated further down this ladder of evolution are the humanoid robots or solitary organisms that don’t have the “empathic faculty . . . required [for] a higher survival factor” (31). In Terra, it is believed that an “android, no matter how gifted as to pure intellectual capacity, could make no sense out of the fusion which took place . . . among the followers of Mercerism—an experience which he, and virtually everyone else, including subnormal chicken heads, managed with no difficulty” (30). As a result, Isidore was conditioned to think himself a “chickenhead” with “distorted genes” (19). Right after Isidore has ruminated on his failure to distinguish an “organically ill” (71) cat from a malfunctioning mechanical cat, he can’t help but to think that this has to do with him going down the ladder of evolution (72) just as

chickenheads and androids in Terra are treated as disposables called “kipple” (73).

Apparently, without risking the elimination of the entire work force (androids) that sustains Terra, the novel reveals the Voigt-Kampff device and Mercerism as mechanisms that justify the demarcation between the ruling class and lower class and, in turn, give reasons for privileging the former and disenfranchising the latter. As seen from the above examples, from Terra’s standpoint, both “specials” and androids are by no means acceptable human beings because they lack intelligence and empathy.

Specifically, androids as non-human other corresponds to the frontier myth’s binary conception of the world—self vs. other and civilized Euro-Americans vs. savage Indians—that is founded upon a premise in which the progress of mankind rests upon the disintegration of savagery, wilderness, and chaos, and the refurbishment of European civilization in America by dominion, subjugation, and violation. According to Turner, the frontier is a space between savagery and civilization, and he makes clear that this othered space, which he calls “the frontier” should be subjected to the “dominion” (6) of the “disintegrating forces of civilization” (10). Turner’s idea of conquest seemingly is restrained within the bounds of nature when he says that it is the pioneer’s “task to fight with nature for the chance to exist . . . [and] to wage a hand-to-hand war upon it . . . fired with the ideal of subduing the wilderness” (170).

However, what he doesn’t explicitly announce is the fact that this dominion of nature is also that of the indigenous natives (the Indians) who inhabit the wilderness. To elucidate, by emphasizing the development of the frontier within socio-economic terms, and by assuming that “[l]ong before the pioneer . . . appeared on the scene, primitive Indian life had passed away” (10), Turner’s idea of conquest is without qualms for

claiming that this dominion of nature also involves the “disintegration of savagery by the entrance of the trader, the pathfinder of civilization” (9). Indeed, Slotkin is right in pointing out the violent nature implicit in Turner’s frontier myth. According to Slotkin, the frontier myth “emphasizes the necessary linkage between [the theme of the hunter and farmer] as the basis for spiritual and secular regeneration, taking up the free or virgin land of the wilderness, and defeating the savage *natives* in a war of races” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 33). Donald Palumbo’s analysis provides an impetus for reading the novel within the context of American history and in particular within the frontier tradition. In his essay, he suggests that not only Terra’s definition of humans (who are believed to possess both empathy and intelligence) but also this society’s “willful self-deception [that] allow[ed] its members to claim [empathy and intelligence] as exclusively theirs” demonstrates humanity’s “make[ing] both specials and androids its scapegoats, much as the dominant members of many real societies employ racism to make scapegoats of designated minorities” (1280).

In a way, just like the “virgin land theme [in the frontier myth] symbolically address[es] the economic aspects of ideological concern” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 33), adhering “to the underlying fantasy [that] necessarily involves a man . . . and a quintessentially feminine terrain apparently designed to gratify his desires” (Kolodny 4), the theme of the other in the novel inscribes the socio-economic-political characteristics of Social Darwinian ideology that “explain[s] the emergence of a new managerial ruling class and justifi[es] its right to subordinate lesser classes to its purposes” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 22). In this line of thought, Sims is correct in suggesting that “the only way to ensure the conformity of the androids to traditional power systems and

technological paradigms is to insist on maintaining a difference” (70) between humans and androids—an accurate description upon which the androids are subjected in the cybernetic world of this novel.

Sims’ idea is insightful because we can find the underlying parallelism between the frontier myth and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*: in essence, both treat the other as an object of dominion, subjugation, and violation. Reid is clever in identifying Rachael as a metaphor of “racial mixing” (358) who blurs the boundaries between human and machine. Moreover, Reid explicates how this blurring is one of the main reasons for humans’ subsequent fear of androids for their “collective identity as undifferentiated other” that may refuse to remain “under the colonial rule . . . [that] never fully sanctioned [them] as civilized” (357) beings. Reid’s suggestion, here, seems particularly applicable when we consider how humans in Terra view and treat their counterpart androids as subaltern (in the Spivakian sense) subjects “whose identity [lies in their] difference” (Spivak 272). Notably, Spivak explains this as a Western “effort [for] inserting non-Europe . . . into an Eurocentric normative narrative—[Western] economic system . . . and social and cultural resistance to its influence” (72). In a similar vein, John Huntington makes an observation relating to these differentiated entities (androids) that seem to be “anti-social, pathological creatures preying on society, but at the same time to be pathetic victims exploited by society” (154). Just as Isidore defines kipples as yesterday’s junk, humans in Terra consider androids as disposable objects/others. Isidore’s description of “kipple” epitomizes humans’ quandary related to the existence of androids. While androids are considered as tools and commodities providing free labor and even human companionship, they are nevertheless regarded as subaltern others that/who are required

to remain subjects for differentiation, exploitation, and control by humans. Isidore's account of kipple gives evidence for the disadvantaged position of androids as human-others in Terra. According to Isidore, kipple is a useless object,

like junk mail or match folders after you use the last match or gum wrappers or yesterday's homeopape. When nobody's around, kipple reproduces itself. For instance, if you go to bed leaving any kipple around your apartment, when you wake up the next morning there's twice as much of it. It always gets more and more. [. . .] There's the First Law of Kipple. [. . .] Kipple drives out nonkipple. [. . .] It's a universal principle operating throughout the universe; the entire universe is moving toward a final state of total, absolute kippleization. (65-66)

While this may be a general description of what we know as entropy, or just junk, it is concurrently interesting to find the underlying parallelism between an android and a colonized subaltern. Thus, just as (subaltern) others are differentiated and exploited as inferior and disposable beings within the frontier paradigm, androids are controlled and mistreated as kipple (junk) in Terra.

Rachael Rosen—one of the most advanced type of androids built by the Rosen Industries that can successfully pass for humans—is a commodified product representing the disadvantaged position of the subaltern other. Michelle Reid rightfully points out that the “language Rachael uses to describe herself is very similar to terms used by colonial authorities when creating racial distinctions: representative of a type and subtype” (357) and that her similar position could very well be equivalent to Turner's description of the other (native Indians) who does not disappear into a historical nothingness or non-identity

but also is caught in a violent confrontation between “traditional conceptions of identity, and the modernization of those conceptions forced by first-world technology” (361).

Much like the European colonial eye that produces “sentimental, experimental subjects [who] inhabit that self-defined ‘other’ sector of the bourgeois world, the private sphere—home of desire, sex, spirituality, and the Individual” (Pratt 78), the human eye (in Terra) constructs differentiated subjects (androids) that belong to the domiciled realm as desiderata of human desire and violation. If we take Reid’s and Pratt’s observations into account, it is not difficult to view how androids, as subaltern subjects in Terra, are regarded as exotic beings susceptible to subjugation by their owners or humans in general. In fact, Isidore’s and Rick’s apparent gaze toward female androids are symptomatic of colonizers’ imperial gaze on native Indians who, for the Euro-Americans, embody the exotic-erotic. Made from the same Nexus-6 production line with Rachael Rosen, Pris Stratton is very much described in terms of the exotic. According to Isidore’s first description, Pris “cringed and skunked away and yet held onto the door, as if for physical support. Fear made her seem ill; it distorted her body lines, made her appear as if somebody had broken her and then, with malice, patched her together badly. Her eyes, enormous, glazed over fixedly as she attempted to smile” (62). A couple of moments later, Isidore continues to relate his impression of Pris: “[n]ow that her initial fear had diminished, something else had begun to emerge from her. Something more strange. And he thought, deplorable. A coldness. Like, he thought, a breath from the vacuum between inhabited worlds, in fact from nowhere: it was not what she did or said but what she did not do and say” (67). Pris, in the eyes of Isidore, is a perfect paragon of the exotic virgin. While seemingly requiring support, she does hold on to the door; while her body seems

broken or ill, yet it is patched together; and while she attempted a benign smile, it is rather a glimmer of a smirk. It is interesting that Isidore, here, sees Pris in an outlandish and at times exotic way.

Comparably, Rick's gaze toward, and his relationship with, Rachael conjure images associated with colonial dominion and gratification. Towards the end of the novel, as Rick is accompanied by Rachael who comes to aid Rick to retire three remaining Nexus-6 models, he relates Rachael's appearance in an exotic fashion: "Rachael's proportions, he noticed once again, were odd, with her heavy mass of dark hair, her head seemed large, and because of her diminutive breasts, her body assumed a lank, almost childlike stance. But her great eyes, with their elaborate lashes, could only be those of a grown woman; there the resemblance to adolescence ended. [. . .] Although definitely that of a girl, not a woman. Except for the restless shrewd eyes" (187). As Rick sees the disproportion between her head with hair, body with breast, and eyes with lashes displaying the stages between adolescence and womanhood, her bodily features conjure up images of innocence and virginity.

Yet, while this may be an accurate/objective description of her, that her bodily characteristics parallel that of Isidore's description of Pris suggests the ways in which androids, female in particular, are objectified. The next scene that follows Rick's impressions of Rachael's body raises erotic and even illicit overtones involving situations where "human men, and android women" (182) engage in sexual relationships. Just as her un-humanlike bodily appeals to Rick, he cannot help but to deflower her as he "kissed her dry lips. No reaction followed; Rachael remained impassive. As if unaffected. And yet he sensed otherwise" (189). Even if Rick considers Rachael as merely a machine, his

having to sleep with an android that so much resembles a woman rather suggests that this is not a simple case of commodity (mis)use but rather a case of eroticizing the other. Rick eventually approaches (violates) her while she remains impassive as a colonized subject.

By envisioning a “unified vision of humankind” (Huhndorf 29) and “human progress” (Huhndorf 30) to the Euro-Americans Indian culture were deemed primitive, irrational and cruel. According to Huhndorf’s study, not to mention their primitiveness, it was the Indians’ “inadequate cooking, and certain items of diet repulsive to White taste” (28) that solidified a loathsome view of Indian way of life. If we consider Huhndorf’s above idea, then the association between the Indians with the androids in the novel is not surprising. Just as the defining factor that demarcates savagery and civilization has been the capacity for reasoning, civilized behavior, and compassion within Euro-American terms, the novel also informs the determining element that distinguishes androids from human is, of course, the ability for logical thinking and empathic responses proven via a mechanical tool called the “Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test.” In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* inter-species stratification occurs through the Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test that verifies the subject’s empathic capabilities. It is thought by Rick and rest of the human population on Terra that empathy “existed only within human community” (30). And for Rick especially, killing an android passing as a human being is nothing other than getting rid of a competing “solitary predator” (31)—a motto according to Mercer: “You shall kill only the killers” (31). Interestingly, that the questions that Rick administers to Rachael—a Nexus-6 model that resembles humans in many ways—in order to verify whether she is an android by calculating the elapsed time between her

reactions to Rick's questions, are commonly related to killed animals (calf-skin wallet, butterfly collection, bear-skin rug, deer's head, boiled dog, etc.) recalls the irrational barbaric culture that the settlers saw in the native Indians. As Rick administers the Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test to Rachael, he says to her: "[y]ou are watching an old movie on TV, a movie from before the war. It shows a banquet in progress; the guests are enjoying raw oysters. [. . .] The entree . . . consists of boiled dog, stuffed with rice" (51). While the boiled dog in this hypothetical situation may arouse disgust to those attending the banquet, the main issue here is not the lack of empathy toward this dog nor the disgust in seeing one in the entree but rather the subject's impassive responses to this and all the other hypothetical situations that Rick mentions to Rachael. The series of questions that Rick administers to Rachael and many of his (android) prey not only serves as a barometer that distinguishes androids from humans but also as a gauge that reveals humans' insecurities toward android culture, which seems so apathetic to the humans for its savageness.

Slotkin's analysis on the frontier mentality below is telling in explaining humans' discomfort towards these androids. The Puritan way, according to Slotkin, "prized cultivation: the bringing of wild man, wild passions, and wild nature under the check of order" (*Regeneration through Violence* 51). Since the Indian was the American "expression of the natural powers that rule the wilderness, and his character in the myth embodies the traits of the libido: sexual and conceptual energy, filled at once with creative and destructive potentialities" (553) it is within this world-view that the Puritan "reaction to the sexual freedom of the Indian culture . . . caused them to view the prospect of marrying an Indian . . . with horror and revulsion" (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through*

Violence 123). In White man's eyes, the (bad) Indians possessed contradictory traits of "[n]akedness and lechery, passion and vanity" leading the "lives of polygamy and sexual promiscuity" (Berkhofer 28).

Comparably, in the novel, that Rachael's promiscuousness exemplifies androids' inability to suppress their physical and sensual passions parallels the Puritans' deep-rooted view on the dangers of (Indian) unchecked wild passions and sexuality. Not only does Rachael confess to Rick that she has had sexual relations with other bounty hunters before she met Rick but she also tells him that this allowed her type (Nexus-6 models) to avoid being retired. Right before sleeping with Rick, she further tells him that "[w]e androids can't control our physical, sensual passions" (196) and that he should not worry about moral implications of their affair because she's technically "not alive. [He's] not going to bed with a woman" (194) per se but with a machine. While Rachael, in this scene, emphasizes the asexuality of the androids, Rick, nevertheless, is captivated by the thought of making "love to an android" (194). For Rick, androids are mechanisms of sexuality and licentiousness—a comparable view that the Puritans had on the native Indians.

Together with these negative images, they were thought to be irrational and indifferent: these wild men "existed halfway between humanity and animality" who lacked "civilized knowledge or will" and "lived a life of bestial self-fulfillment, directed by instinct, and ignorant of God and morality" (Berkhofer 13). In a similar way, Rick expresses the above sentiment throughout his hunting-work. Rick is, in fact, quite surprised to find Luba Luft—another fugitive Nexus-6 model—so resigned precisely at the moment of her arrest. Here Rick sees Luba's eyes "faded and the color dimmed from

her face, leaving it cadaverous, as if already starting to decay. As if life had in an instant retreated to some point far inside her, leaving her body to its automatic ruin” (131-32). Upon her arrest, that Rick cannot help but to wonder whether the “artificial life force” animating androids, in crucial situations, “would fail if pressed too far” (132) suggests Rick’s, and in extension humans’, repulsion toward androids’ indifferent passivity and irrationality. In another scene, as Rick tells Rachael of his arrest of Luba, he complains to Rachael that he can’t stand the way androids give up: “The classic resignation. Mechanical, intellectual acceptance of that which a genuine organism—with two billion years of the pressure to live and evolve hagridding it—could never have reconciled itself to” (200). He not only derides androids’ apathetic passiveness but also celebrates human superiority by mentioning how, unlike androids, humans by nature and evolution would not resign so easily.

Although androids (more specifically, the Nexus-6 types) are considered in terms of the exotic/erotic, they are, in fact, threatening to humans living in Terra because they may jeopardize the stability of the socio-economic-political structure of Terra. Just as the Puritan’s terror on “marrying an Indian or bearing Indian children . . . derive[s] from their fear of allowing themselves to adjust to and merge with the environment of the New World, their fear of acceding to the new demands for freedom that the New World stimulated” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 123-25), humans’ fear, in the novel, derives from the prospect of the disintegration of their humanness, and in effect, their privileged socio-economic-political position. Discussing the first American mythology that emphasizes the colonists’ Englishness (superiority) “by setting their civilization against Indian barbarism” (*Regeneration Through Violence* 21), Richard

Slotkin excellently captures the colonists' cultural anxieties which are associated with the "most articulate phenomena of the wilderness, the Indians" (*Regeneration Through Violence* 118). Admittedly, the real danger for humans in Terra is not the mere fact of inter-species intercourse/marriage but rather the implications that it carries—the Nexus-6 models that resemble humans in almost every way challenge humans' socio-economic-political position by blurring the boundaries between the two species/classes. Discussing the issues related to the social anxieties that are experienced by humans in Terra, Charles Thorpe suggests that the novel "expresses the transformation of the middle-class self under pressure from the development of corporate capitalism" (414). Although Thorpe here is indicating Dick's depiction of "existential dread" (413) as a part of social anxiety pertaining to the middle class, especially to the lower middle-class white male, it is not difficult to extend this class-specific anxiety toward species-specific terrors that we witness in this novel. Priscilla Wald has similarly commented that as the novel makes clear that these androids' "ability to pass [as human beings] attests to the irrelevance of the distinctions between androids and humans," the absence of their dissimilarity "underlies the most profound anxiety these beings generate" (841).

Furthermore, the novel addresses this "android problem"—interspecies intercourse/marriage—in the same manner as Turner's account of the Indian problem. At least according to Turner's account, the settlers feared Indian contact precisely because of the "transforming influence of the Indian frontier upon the Puritan type of English colonist" (31). According to Turner's account, the settlers considered the Indians as a real influence upon the mind and morals as well as upon the institutions of frontier New England because of the instances where "Puritans returning from captivity to visit the

frontier towns, Catholic in religion, painted and garbed as Indians and speaking the Indian tongue, and the half-breed children of captive mothers” (31) would encroach upon the settlers’ way of life. To this line, Christopher Palmer calls attention to the androids’ “other-ed” position not because humanoid robots warn of the “spreading danger of the mechanical in our civilization” but because this has to do with the “autonomy which they gain when they (appear to) gain life” (330). Anthony Enns develops this idea further by noting Scott Bukatman’s take on Dick’s views on technology. Enns suggests that while “Dick may evidence a profound suspicion of technology . . . it is less technology per se than the mythifying uses to which it is directed by the forces of an instrumental reason . . . for the affirmation of political power” (70).

As interspecies intercourse/marriage becomes a crucial political issue, Rick’s and Rachael’s sexual intercourse becomes the moment of danger indicated by Turner as the Indian problem. Since making “love to an android” (194) involves these risks, ones that involve “philosophical dreary” (194), Rick takes Rachael’s advice not to think about what he is about to do to her but rather to go on with it. As a response to Rachael’s advances, Rick blatantly confesses to her that he would legally marry her if she weren’t an android. Here, Rick does not realize the ramifications of the inter-species marriage that he briefly mentions to her. Overlooked by Rick, inter-species marriage, in reality, would threaten the whole socio-economic-political system—a system that promotes the class division and inequality—of Terra that is founded upon this kind of demarcation. It is evident that Rick is emotionally involved with Rachael. Remembering a conversation he had with Resch, Rick realizes not only that he cannot go to bed with her first, then kill her, but also that she is not made out of “transistorized circuits like a false animal” but

rather is an “organic entity” (198). Realizing Rick’s vulnerability—his emotional involvement with her—she points out that he “won’t be able to retire any more androids” (198). As a bounty hunter (barrier) that keeps the demarcation between two social classes/species, Rick, in this exact moment, not only fails to do just that but also risks the disintegration of the entire ideology that supports Terra. In this moment, the humanoid robot can no longer be served as the “mobile donkey engine of the colonization program . . . in the manner of American automobiles of the 1960s” (16). This is because, as it becomes more difficult to detect machines passing as humans, these “organic androids” (16) would no longer guarantee the sustenance of the colonizing effort on Mars and maintain the socio-economic-political system of Terra. Thus, for these reasons Rick’s emotional involvement with Rachael (android) is dangerous: it potentially subverts both the ideological and the structural functions of his society.

In this line of thought, it makes sense that Rick and humans on Terra require this differentiation through the Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test and Mercerism in order to establish and maintain the class/racial hierarchy between humans and androids. As it turns out, this hierarchy is related to the issues of ownership and, thus, class/species privilege as this hierarchy provides justifications for sustaining the (fragile) socio-economic-political structure of Terra’s society. The following scene visibly illustrates the tension arising from the issues related to personal property, ownership, and power structure. While notions on property, ownership, and authority are exclusively pertinent to humans in Terra, they are unstable concepts. The power structure associated with ownership between an owner and property, rather, breaks down when the former becomes emotionally attached and dependent upon the latter. In fact, we witness a scene

where this fragile socio-economic-political system reaches its breaking point as Mr. Pilsen become too emotionally involved with his cat Horace. Soon after the death of Horace—the cat that Isidore picked up for repair—Mrs. Pilsen, the cat’s owner’s wife, tells Isidore not to tell her husband that it died because “he’ll go mad. He loved Horace more than any cat he ever had, and he’s had a cat since he was a child” (81). She then asks Isidore to duplicate Horace because she thinks that her husband could not live through knowing that Horace had died. This is the precisely the moment of danger as “owners who get to love their animals . . . go to pieces” (82). That’s why, she explains, he never got too close to Horace: he was afraid to get emotionally involved. The maddening effect, or debilitating result—Terra’s essential terror—of this unstable authority or power structure is further illustrated by Isidore’s response in seeing Pris’ death: “[t]he special floundered, not knowing what to do; a variety of mute expressions crossed his face and then, turning, he shuffled out of the apartment” (225). Isidore’s pathetic stammer—“I’m leaving this b-b-building. [. . .] I’m going to l-l-live deeper in town where there’s m-m-more people” (225)—ironically exemplifies humans’ desperate dependence on androids for (non)human-connection. Interestingly, that Isidore stutters words that are associated with human relations such as “building,” “live,” and “more people” further suggests the trauma of losing such a connection, albeit with an artificial being.

Slotkin insightfully indicates how the colonists’ abhorrence of Indian marriage “derived from their fear of allowing themselves to adjust to and merge with the environment of the New World” (*Regeneration Through Violence* 125). As a result, he argues that they were bent on destroying the wilderness and the people who inhabit the land. Despite Slotkin’s insightful analysis that allows us to understand the settlers’ fear of

assimilation with the Indians/wilderness and their propensity for destroying the Indians/wilderness, he, nevertheless, misses a more subtle consequence in spite of their fears: the colonists require the marginal status of Indians in order to establish their own identity and superiority against the savage Indians, just like humans and Rick require the subordinate status of androids in order to retain their humanness and ontological status. Recalling captivity narratives of the frontier that account the colonists' terror in which an Euro-American captive is "tempted by devilish seductions to degenerate" into a "base, lecherous, materialist, and demonic" Indian (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 117), the novel relates episodes that display Terra's terror in which a human (Rick) is captured and seduced by androids to de-evolve into an apathetic, irrational, immoral, and licentious being. As Rick becomes emotionally engaged, and partly integrated, with the androids, especially after sleeping with Rachael, it becomes clear that he begins to lose his sense of identity and superiority. While Josh Toth does not realize the novel's (Rick's) unconscious drive to overcome this (assimilation) terror by attempting to reestablish his identity and superiority based on the notions on humanness, he, nevertheless, correctly points out that the android problem "in Dick's novel is inextricably linked to [a] much larger problem of ontology" (66) and "the ever increasing similarities between androids and human beings is a factor that undermines socio-symbolic and ontological definitions" (67).

Just as the perpetuation of the frontier myth depends on the absolute division between "savagery and civilization," the sustainability of Terra's socio-economic-political system relies upon the uncompromising separation and distinction between androids and humans. Since "Whites primarily understood the Indian as an antithesis to

themselves,” they not only believed that only “civilization had history and dynamics,” but also that Indianness to be “ahistorical and static” (Berkhofer 29). So, for instance, if “the Indian changed through the adoption of civilization as defined by Whites”—in other words, if he became similar to a White man—then “he was no longer truly Indian according to the image, because the Indian was judged by what Whites were not” (Berkhofer 29). As a result, the Indians, as a “negative reference group,” could not be used to “prove White superiority over the fears of their own depravity” (Berkhofer 27). In this way, humans in Terra, especially through the arrival of Nexus-6 models, lose the basis for gaining superiority over the androids. In other words, humans can no longer claim their superiority, and thus control over the androids because the latter can no longer be differentiated with the former. This is why, for humans, these Nexus-6 androids are threatening and dangerous.

In the novel, the Nexus-6 androids seem to establish themselves just that: “[t]he servant had in some cases become more adroit than its masters” (30), as Rick examines the information on his hit list, learns that Roy Baty, the supposed leader of the group, “proposed the group escape attempt, underwriting it ideologically with a pretentious fiction as to the sacredness of so called android life” (185). Just as Rick feared, Baty is no ordinary fugitive android. By developing drugs that would simulate human empathetic experience, he is attempting not only to erase the distinction between humans and androids—a distinction that allows socio-economic-political hierarchy—but also is striving to become the master of humans. Especially, these “escaped humanoid robots, which had killed its own masters, which had been equipped with an intelligence greater than that of many human beings . . . which possessed no ability to feel empathic joy for

another life form's success or grief at its defeat" (32)—in short, these "solitary predators" (31) are dangerous.

The novel presents this situation (servants turning into masters and terrorists) as threatening to Terra's socio-economic structure, as we can see from Rick's frightening experience with these terrorist androids. In another scene during the arrest of Luft, Rick is taken to an unidentified police station run by subversive androids passing for humans where he is questioned for being one of the escaped androids. In the police station, Inspector Garland, Resch, and Rick discuss the issue relating to escaped androids passing as humans and the possible dangers of their subversive and destructive nature. This scene, in fact, reverses Rick's advantaged human position: now he is considered by Garland as a fugitive android from a "phantom, hallucinatory, nonexistent police agency allegedly operating out of the old department headquarters" (118). Without the bone marrow test (that detects human genes) result, Rick is mistaken for an "andy to retire" (123). Without the test result there's no way to really distinguish him from an android (Nexus-6 model) "posing as out-of-state bounty hunter" (114). Rick's experience in the police station displays how easy it is for humans to be mistaken for Nexus-6 models and how hard it is for humans to detect them—and thus also the precariousness of human life. Ironically, in the police station, Rick, for a moment, is regarded as a fugitive android, and androids passing as police officers and even bounty hunters become masters themselves.

The problem here is the fact that Terra's technology that makes androids indistinguishable with humans rather blurs the ontological definitions between humans and androids and, in turn, undercuts the rationale for retiring these non-human beings. In another scene, we see Rick struggling with the same problem: right after Luba's

retirement (death), Rick is having qualms about retiring more Nexus-6 models. Rick tells Phil: "I'm getting out of this business. [. . .] They can use androids. Much better if [an android retire other androids]. I can't anymore: I've had enough. [Luba] was a wonderful singer. The planet could have used her. This is insane. [. . .] I don't get it; how can a talent like that be a liability to our society? But it wasn't the talent . . . it was she herself" (136-37). However, while Rick cannot understand the need to retire these useful, talented androids, he quickly realizes here that she and other escaped Nexus-6 androids imitating humans are a "menace in exactly the same way, for the same reasons" (137) to Terra's socio-economic-political system. Rick finally recognizes that being too emotionally involved with androids would undermine his rationale for eliminating them. As Carl Freedman correctly views Dick's androids as objects of a paranoid hermeneutic by the historical subjects of bourgeois society (18), Freedman's suggestion that Dick's "protagonists tend to be harassed men who strive to interpret and deal with alienating forces beyond their control" (18) seems fitting when we notice such anxieties in human characters, such as Rick, throughout the novel. Even if bounty hunters like Rick successfully retire all remaining Nexus-6 models, Rachael tells Rick, the Rosen Association will make "modifications of its zygote-bath DNS factors. And then we have the Nexus-7. And when that gets caught, we modify again and eventually the association has a type that can't be distinguished" (190). As it become clear, during the arrest of Luba and his experience with Rachael, Rick comes to the realization that androids, just like himself, do "dream . . . [and] that's why they occasionally kill their employers and flee here" to live a "better life, without servitude. Like Luba Luft; singing Don Giovanni and Le Nozze instead of toiling across the face of a barren rock-strewn field. On a

fundamentally uninhabitable colony world” (184)—an obvious conclusion and message that Dick seems to be making in this novel. Thus, as long as technical advances (if androids become even more like humans) are made, the above prospect, for Rick and humans, becomes a frightening possibility. This is because these humanoid androids, as objects of a “paranoid hermeneutic” (Freedman 18) not only threaten the ontological identity of human beings but also undermine the socio-economic-political structure of Terra.

In order to evade these conundrums, humans on Terra, including Rick, are greatly invested in maintaining Terra’s socio-economic hierarchy by embracing the philosophy of Mercerism and the logic behind the Voigt-Kampff device—“*You shall kill only the killers*” (31) which “had killed its master . . . [and] which had no regard for animals, which possessed no ability to feel empathic joy for another life form’s success or grief” (32). By no surprise, this mantra duplicates the early European settlers’ perception of the native Indians—as savage beasts—in the frontier setting. According to Turner’s description of the life of the settlers, “threatened from the Indian” (2) enemy, Indian hunters were “offered bounties for scalps, varying in amount according to whether the scalp was of men, or women and youth . . . to hunt Indians as they do Bears . . . [because] the Indians act like wolves and are to be dealt with as wolves” (31-32). In other words, the Puritans “thought of exorcizing the Indians through physical extermination” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 118)” as the “exorcism of the Indian is likened to the hunting down and slaying of rabid beasts embodying all qualities of evil” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 154). Palumbo’s diagnosis becomes poignantly resonating if we consider how androids, in particular, are differentiated as the monstrous

other, and ultimately required to be “retired” by bounty hunters like Rick and Resch. While androids are threatening to humans, Rick and the human population in general cannot allow them to pass for humans not only because they would kill humans for their independent status but also because not doing so would obliterate the crucial distinction between humans and androids which would ultimately challenge humans’ superior socio-economic-political standing. This is why Rick realizes that his job is part of the “form-destroying process of entropy” (99).

Thinking in this line, Rick is a kind of Indian (in this case, android) hunter. In fact, under the White “conceptions of progress and evolution” (Berkhofer 30), Indians (or comparably androids) who “remained alive” (Berkhofer 29) was destined to “disappear either through death or through assimilation” (Berkhofer 30). Analogous to the settlers’ conception and handling of the Indians as wild bears and wolves to hunt, Rick considers these Nexus-6 androids as predators to retire. The idea of hunting down these lone predators is not surprising if we consider the conversation between Resch and Rick. Upon Rick feeling remorse for retiring Luba, Resch comforts Rick by emphatically telling him that “[t]hese Nexus-6 types . . . they’d roll all over us and mash us flat. You and I, all the bounty hunters—we stand between the Nexus-6 and mankind, a barrier which keeps the two distinct” (141). If androids are (human) predators to humans on Terra just like Indians are wild beasts to the European settlers, Resch may be right in saying that bounty hunters are the only barriers who keep the androids and humans apart. Being justified in their actions (bounty hunting androids) via Mercerism and Voigt-Kampff propagandas, both Rick and Resch play a key role not only in keeping humans and androids (that pass as humans) apart but also in sustaining the socio-economic-political structure of Terra.

While the novel (mis)leads readers to confirm that Mercerism is none other than a political propaganda of Terra, this fact implicitly hints toward a possibility that instances of enlightenment and revelation by Mercerism re-enforce the necessity of these political propagandas in order to maintain Terra's reality—its socio-economic-political structure.

Not surprisingly, just as Whites regarded the Indian with nostalgia upon his demise—or when that threat was safely past” (Berkhofer 29), Rick considered Nexus-6 models as things to be memorized and celebrated even as they were being killed. As a matter of fact, the Indians’ “worth as human beings was determined by their usefulness as counterpoint to the unfolding progress of the ages” (Huhndorf 28). The Indians “served to glorify the accomplishments of a technologically invented European society” (Huhndorf 30) as Indian artifacts indicated “the dominance of (white) civilization over (Native) savagery” (Huhndorf 31). Likewise, Rick embraces the logic of Terra's propaganda (for example, the precepts of Mercerism), and its underlying assumptions, to its very core because androids, via the ideology of demarcation, provide him with a sense of humanity and effect his authoritative position. Rick acknowledges the need for almost perfect human replicas not only to retain his job as a bounty hunter, but also to feel a humanly sensation—that reminds him of a fraction of human essence—from Luba Luft's singing voice. Here, Rick's need for Nexus-6 androids serves as a representative of humans' need for these cybernetic beings. As Rick takes a visit to the opera house in order to retire Luba, passing as an opera singer, he finds “himself surprised at the quality of her voice; it rated with that of the best, even that of notables in his collection of historic tapes” (99). Although, at this moment, he knows it is his job to retire this android, he nevertheless enjoys—as he “leans back satisfied” (98)—hearing her performance of Mozart's *The*

Magic Flute. Her voice serves as a reminder that someday the existence of these androids, as Rick thinks, “will end” (98) accordingly with the process of evolution. More interestingly, Rick indicates the paradoxical fact of bounty hunters’ need for androids, as he thinks:

The Rosen Association built her well, he had to admit. And again he perceived himself *sub specie aeternitatis*, the form-destroyer called forth by what he heard and saw here. Perhaps the better she functions, the better a singer she is, the more I am needed. If the androids had remained substandard, like the ancient q-40s made by Derain Associates—there would be no problem and no need of my skill. (99)

This is why, although he needs the bounty money, he is somewhat hesitant about retiring all of Nexus-6 models: just as he confesses, as long as there’s “more andys to retire; my career isn’t over; I haven’t retired the last andy in existence. Maybe that’s what it is, he thought. I’m afraid there aren’t any more” (232).

Supporting the apparent parallelism between native Indians and androids, androids are associated with the lower class whereas humans belong to the upper class. The politics behind the inequality between humans and androids revolve around the issue related to property, ownership and even humanity. Just as European colonists, humans on Terra are endowed with the rights of property (owning an android or some type of electric or organic pet) whereas the androids and lesser entries (specials) are divested of this right. On this future earth called Terra, owing an animal (electric or real) is irreducibly related not only to humanism but also to classism because only humans have the rights of property and the capacity for empathy. In one instance, the issue related to

the rights of property is mentioned in a punning way. As Rick and Resch (also a bounty hunter), are underway to retire one of the Nexus-6 models that has escaped from Mars, Rick cannot help suspect if Resch may, in fact, be a Nexus-6 android working undercover as a bounty hunter in order to evade detection. When Rick, at point blank, asks Resch whether he is an android, Resch firmly denies Rick's allegation by saying that he actually owns a living squirrel (which means he has empathy and conversely cannot be an android). He confesses to Rick, "I own an animal: not a false one but the real thing. A squirrel. I love the squirrel, Deckard; every goddamn morning I feed it and change its paper—you know, clean up its cage—and then in the evening when I get off work I let it loose in my apt and it runs all over the place" (128). Due to Rick's skepticism about Resch's human identity, Resch later makes a claim that he can prove himself human by letting Rick administer the Voigt-Kampff test, and if he fails Rick can even have his squirrel. Their conversation ends rather comically (but with serious implications) as Rick tells Resch that if Resch turn out to be an android then he "can't will anything" because an android "can't possess anything to will" (136). This punning episode highlights how ownership relates to humanness since, unlike androids, only humans are capable of empathy (taking care of an animal) and eligible for possession. Thus, purchasing and owning a robotic-pet is important, for Rick, because this directly reflects his socio-economic-political status.

Another instance illustrates how ownership is irreducibly related to classism in Terra. "*Sidney's Animal & Fowl Catalogue*" (10), which Rick carries in his coat pocket, distinctively becomes an icon of the commodification of other-ed beings. The catalogue constantly reveals the demarcated, and thus discriminated, social position between the

humans (who are invested with the right of property) and non-human beings (that are catalogued for sale). *Sidney's Catalogue* is first introduced to us in a conversation between Rick and his neighbor Barbour. In order to see if Rick himself can purchase an organic animal, he checks the catalogue for “colts (vide horses, offsp[ring])” that “presently had the prevailing national price” (10). Unfortunately, Rick’s wish to purchase a “Percheron colt from Sidney’s for five thousand dollars” is negated by learning from Barbour that he can’t because the listing is in italics—which means they don’t have any in stock—and that “Percheron colts just don’t change hands at catalogue values, even. They’re too scarce” (10). This scene reveals the relationship between ownership and class as Rick’s limited socio-economic situation prevents him from purchasing an expensive commodity like a Percheron colt.

Equivalently, the androids’ worth was decided on their exchange-value that reflects their owners’ socio-economic-political position. These sub-human beings (humanoid androids and electric/real animals) are considered as trophies illustrating humans’ socio-economic-political status. That the ownership of real and/or electric animals is associated directly with socio-economic-political status is clearly demonstrated in the following scene. As Rick ventures out to the top of his apartment to check on his electric sheep, he ruminates upon the topic of owning an electric animal as opposed to an organic one, which in turn reminds him of his own socio-economic-political status. In a conversation with Barbour, Rick cannot help to feel “offended” (14)—a condition similar to Rabkin’s idea of “intellectual desolation” (163)—by Barbour’s comment on owning an electric animal. For Rick, “[o]wning and maintaining a fraud [animal] had a way of gradually demoralizing” him. Nevertheless, he confesses that “from a social standpoint it

had to be done, given the absence of the real article. He had therefore no choice” (9) but to buy an “ersatz animal” (12). That Rick cannot own a real animal on his salary, “on what a city employee makes” (13), further frustrates the gap between Barbour and his socio-economic-political standing. In the next scene, as Rick meets Rachael Rosen for the first time, upon seeing a real raccoon inside the building of the Rosen Association, Rick again is frustrated that “Sidney’s doesn’t have any [of these animals] in stock” (10) because he cannot afford, and thus, is divested of attaining socio-economic-political prestige:

In an automatic response, he brought out his much-thumbed *Sidney’s* and looked up raccoon with all the sub listings. The list prices, naturally, appeared in italics; like Percheron horses, none existed on the market for sale at any figure. *Sidney’s* catalogue simply listed the price at which the last transaction involving a raccoon had taken place. It was astronomical.
(40-41)

Right after Rick has signed the “time-payment contract” and “paid over his three thousand dollars—his entire bounty money—as down payment” (169), we see him thinking that he “couldn’t go on with the electric sheep” because it not only “sapped [his] morale” but also his job requires “Prestige” (170). For Rick, inability to own a real animal is demoralizing because Rick knows that people will consider it “immoral and anti-empathic” (13). In short, Rick needs to buy a “Black Nubian goat” (169) because this allows him to reaffirm his social status. This enables him “to get [his] confidence, [his] faith in [him]self and [his] abilities, back” (170). This idea is further emphasized as Rick shows Iran (his wife) and Barbour his newly bought goat. Both Iran and Barbour consider

purchasing this goat as something to celebrate because it undeniably reflects Rick's upper socio-economic standing. This is why, upon seeing the goat that Rick brought home, Iran proclaims that "[n]ow [she] can admit to everybody that the sheep's false" and now they "have nothing to hide; what [they]'ve always wanted has come true. It's a dream!" (172); and in a similar fashion, Barbour tells Rick that "that's a nice-looking goat" and "[c]ongratulations" (172).

It becomes clear that for Rick, Iran, and Barbour owning a real animal symbolizes something of the "American Dream"—a dream founded upon industrialism that translates a commodity into socio-economic status. Just as industrialism "forces those working that system to fragment and rationalize their labor into replicable and identical units" (Rabkin 163), so it forces their products into social fragmentations and categories. If we generally apply Rabkin's borrowings of Marx's lens to view the above scene, an organic horse becomes more valuable than an electric horse because this demonstrates a social condition that one's possession of a commodity becomes inextricably linked with socio-economic status. Thus, just as Turner's frontier model of economy promoted class division and inequality, Terra's capitalistic economy advocated class hierarchy and "economic [in] equality" (Turner 164). While the following scene that describes the conversation between Rick and the animal salesman seems nothing new, when viewed within a Marxist lens the scene, rather, reveals how commodity purchases have direct bearing on socio-economic status. With three thousand dollars in cash—from the bounty money he received from retiring three Nexus-6 androids, Rick initially thinks about buying a family of rabbits. However, the salesman instead suggests to Rick to buy a goat. The salesman tells Rick: the "thing about rabbits, sir, is that everybody has one. I'd like

to see you step up to the goat-class where I feel you belong. Frankly you look more like a goat man to me” (168) and “[a]s a long term investment we feel that the goat—especially the female—offers unbeatable advantages to the serious animal-owner” (169). The salesman addresses Rick as a class-specific type of person. Here, that Rick is classified as a “goat man” (168) and “serious animal-owner” (169) by the salesman illustrate the relationship between purchasability (of robotic-pets) and socio-economic-political status. While this may just be a salesman’s typical business tactic—persuading a customer to purchase a more expensive item—that would allow him to increase his sales, the fact that a family of rabbits costs the same as this particular Nubian goat rather reveals how a commodity is inscribed with a particular exchange-value and socio-economic status. Goats are valued more than rabbits, and thus, goat (serious) owners are thought to possess higher socio-economic status than rabbit owners. Although Rick initially hadn’t thought about buying a goat because of its “economic burden” (175)—in fact, the goat requires three thousand down payment with thirty-six months contract (175)—nevertheless, he ends up buying one because Rick feels (or he was required to think) that he needs to “step up to the goat-class.”

Furthermore, Rick constantly needs to affirm his ontological identity, and this is achieved in the form of commodity purchase. In other words, buying a real animal allows Rick to retain his ontological identity against the androids. This becomes especially important considering the fact that towards the end of the novel he has begun to empathize with androids (for instance, with Rachael) and feels that they (at least with the Nexus-6 models) are in many ways human-like and are to be treated like human beings. It is during this time that Rick makes an unlikely confession to Iran: “I’ve begun to

empathize with androids, and look what that means. . . . That's why I bought the goat. I never felt like that before" (174). After retiring all six Nexus-6 models, as Rick parks his hovercar on a desolate part of a desert, he gains an epiphany that he has "permanently fused with Mercer" (233). With the eyes of Mercer, he begins to see that the toad that he found after all contains "[l]ife which [he] can no longer distinguish; life carefully buried up to its forehead in the carcass of a dead world. In every cinder of the universe Mercer probably perceives inconspicuous life" (238). While Rick's realization or epiphany here seems to be a validation of Rick's support for android rights—an idea that Howard Canaan termed the "triumph of subjective vision over objective reality" (335)—however, this realization rather belies Rick's underlying motive to reaffirm the necessity of the minorities (androids) in order to enforce the status quo of the privileged position of the majorities (humans). Thus, Rick's ultimate realization—that androids "have their lives, too Paltry as those lives are" (241)—at the end of the novel, is not a "drama of discovery, of gnosis, and of enlightenment" (336) as Canaan argued, but rather a drama of anti-climax and anti-enlightenment which serves to illustrate humans' need for their ontological authority.

In order to retain his sense of human self and to reaffirm the difference between him and an android, it is imperative for him to participate in the defining moment of humanness—exercising the right to own a commodity (an android or at least an electric animal). Thus, despite the above enlightenment, Rick nevertheless requires the stamp of ontological affirmation. This stamp is epitomized in a form of possessing an android as a commodity. After finding out that his recently bought goat has been killed by Rachael Rick then gets ahold of an electric toad found in Terra's frontier region. Actually, what

we see here in the following scene is a reenactment of the myth of the frontier in which the “conflict between an oppressed visionary and a world seeking to stifle the vision” (Canaan 335) is rather established in an antithetical fashion: Rick obsessively seeks the vision (ideology) of his world without conflict. So, Rick’s penultimate conclusion—“electric things have their (paltry) lives too” (241)—is once again subverted as these (electric) things provide Rick and humans with ontological authority. The novel’s anti-climax is thus illustrated when Iran calls the electric animal accessories shop through the phone:

“I’d like to order one pound of artificial flies that really fly around and buzz, please.”

“Is it for an electric turtle, ma’am?”

“A toad,” she said.

“Then I suggest our mixed assortment of artificial crawling and flying bugs of all types including—”

...

The clerk said, “For a toad I’d suggest also a perpetually renewing puddle unless it’s a horned toad, in which case there’s a kit containing sand, multicolored pebbles, and bits of organic debris. And if you’re going to be putting it through its feed cycle regularly, I suggest you let our service department make a periodic tongue adjustment. In a toad that’s vital.”

“Fine,” Iran said. “I want it to work perfectly. My husband is devoted to it.” She gave her address and hung up. And, feeling better, fixed herself

at last a cup of black, hot coffee. (243-44)

While this may seem like a benign transaction that recalls Rick's goat purchase earlier, it is hard to erase the irony, or even grotesqueness, this scene implicates. Worse than purchasing an electric ersatz sheep that grazes simulated pasture, the pretense of raising an electric toad is rife with a bitter taste of irony. The electric toad not only requires (artificial) bugs but also a perpetually renewing puddle, sand, pebbles, organic debris, and even periodic tongue adjustment. What is interesting about this scene is not only the fact that the toad is high maintenance but also the fact that the extent to which Iran's and Rick's pretense seems to reach is almost to the point of grotesqueness. This final scene rightfully puts Rick's position as a "devoted" practitioner of the colonial effort--the need for humans' ontological authority—of this society. While both Rick and Iran know that the toad is artificial/electric, they both require the toad to function "perfectly" because of the precise reason that they bought these animals, real or electric, in the first place. Here Iran requires the toad to function perfectly (that does not give away its artificialness) because this allows both Rick and her to maintain their ontological difference by affirming their right to purchase. After this transaction, finally, both Iran and Rick are contended—they are entitled to a "[l]ong deserved peace" (243)—by knowing that although they cannot afford to purchase another goat they can at least purchase a toad and keep up with a pretense that they are ontologically different from, and superior than, specials and androids who are unable to make such a purchase.

Mason & Dixon and the Re-charting the Frontier Myth: History, Myth and the
Mythopoetic Vision

Mason & Dixon not only depicts two British astronomers'—Charles Mason's and Jeremiah Dixon's—"on the road" adventures, but also carnivalizes Rev. Wicks Cherrycoke's picaresque "tall tales" with a mixture of Mason's and Dixon's biographic accounts, historical facts, legends, conjectures, and even fabrications. Set in the Colonial US, Rev. Wicks Cherrycoke tells satiric tales to his relatives and friends of his travels with Mason's and Dixon's mission to navigate the transits of Venus in South Africa and later chart the East-West boundary lines in America. Addressing the satire in Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*, Kathryn Hume locates the novel within the satiric tradition. Hume calls *Mason & Dixon* as a type of "diffused satire" that has a "lower emotional intensity, so low at times that the target may be difficult to determine" (302). For Hume, this form of satire makes sense in the postmodern era because "this version of satire . . . undermines our ontological certainties" (303). Particularly, *Mason & Dixon*'s lack of "emotional engagement" or its "low-key nature of its attack" (316) allowed, for Hume, to classify *Mason & Dixon* on the "satire threshold" (316). Indeed, Hume is not wrong in pointing out that many experts agree on Pynchon's disapproval towards the "scientific rationalistic impulse to impose order" and/or questioning the "Enlightenment project" (315); however, *Mason & Dixon*'s "lack of any important, central target" (315) of satire ironically serves to illustrate the major flaw in her argument. While Pynchon may present *Mason & Dixon* as a way to critique the enlightenment impulse—its drive for "empire, property, capitalism, and the subjection of conquered peoples" (315)—the novel's mild

attack on these issues as well as its absence of any central target of attack, rather illustrates how *Mason & Dixon* escapes Hume's satirist reading.

As a matter of fact, the novel's allusiveness has allowed Elizabeth Hinds to build her essay upon a Deleuzian reading of the novel. Hinds argues that *Mason & Dixon*'s combination of "materials of eighteenth century and twentieth-century culture" (198) "underpins an enactment of history as rhizome . . . by way of connections and misconnections whose point of contact remain as unseen and untraceable" (203). Hinds further argues that the novel's "pervasive use of anachronism" (197) matches the "postmodern sensibility of disconnection and disorientation" (203). While it is true that in *Mason & Dixon*, eighteenth-century materials and twentieth-century culture converge to formulate an alternate history, what Hinds calls "historiographic anachronism" (189) that may undermine the "scientizing, squaring up and marking down [of the] Enlightenment impulse" (202), her primary analysis on the novel, rather, misses an important aspect of the novel—the myth-making function of Cherrycoke's tales about Mason's and Dixon's journeys. Thus, in order to unfasten *Mason & Dixon* from the grips of a postmodernist reading as well as to provide logical explanations on Pynchon's pervasive use of anachronisms throughout the novel, and Cherrycoke's meta-narrative that employs historical fabrications, mysteries and the paranormal, we need to take a closer look at how a myth is formulated and perpetuated, more particularly, how Cherrycoke's (mythic) narrative is devised and maintained. In other words, this chapter aims to understand how the frontier myth acquires historical values extending its mythical properties towards reality.

Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* allows us to understand the myth-formation

processes in Cherrycoke's narrative. According to Barthes, myth is "constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things" (142) and the function of myth "is to empty reality . . . ; it gives [things] a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact," (143) "it hides nothing and flaunts nothing, it distorts" (129). In short, the very principle Barthes assigns to myth is that it transforms history into nature. For Barthes, mythical system is based on the liquidation of linguistic system: a process of "ceaseless flowing out, a hemorrhage, or a perceptible absence" (143) of reality and history that leave only the sign. Charles Clerc has noted that the "entire milieu" of *Mason & Dixon*'s frame narrative "reinforces a grand, and now sadly dying tradition of oral storytelling" (90) that upholds traditional values such as "magic, adventure and exploration" as it "wings its way from history into myth" (136).

Taking on Barthes' lens and relying on Clerc's view, I argue that these mythological principles can be found in Cherrycoke's meta-narrative. This is because "myth can be seen as an intellectual or artistic construct that bridges the gap between the world of the mind and the world of the affairs, between dream and reality" (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 7). In particular, investigating the myth of America, Howard Kushner suggest that the frontier myth "reflects both the actual experience and ideological underpinnings of American expansion; its persistence flows from the symbolic meaning contained in recapitulation of its narrative as history and as romance" (3). This kind of narrative "transform[s] into a national myth whose metaphors transcended issues of historical veracity" (Kushner 3). Kushner's suggestion here provides an important clue in reading *Mason & Dixon* not merely as a historical narrative

delineating Mason's and Dixon's frontier experience but also as a mythical narrative that seems to be recapitulating the symbolic essence—"the belief in limitless possibilities" (Mogen 26)—of America and that seems to be transfiguring American history into American romance, allegory and myth. If complete settlement of the American West meant the completion of the age of reason and history and, in turn, the end of the age of romance and fantasy then pre-colonial West meant the coexistence and confluence of the age of history and myth. It seems that Pynchon set this novel at a time just before the settlement of the American West because this era of American history, for him, represents a time when history and myth intersect—it immediately foregrounds the sense of romance, fantasy and myth in the American frontier.

If we read *Mason & Dixon* along with Barthes' lens, it should not come as a surprise that Cherrycoke's tales have correlations with key properties of mythic tales. In *Mason & Dixon*, Cherrycoke becomes a "myth-artist" as his narrative "retain[s] [its] mythic powers . . . as [it] continue[s] to evoke in the minds of succeeding generations a vision analogous in its compelling power to that of the original mythopoetic perception" (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 8). Thus, as Slotkin has noted, the "role of the artist, the intelligent manipulator of media and artifacts" uses tales as "means of controlling and directing the development of [a] myth . . . to induce the mythopoetic affirmation in its audience" (15). It is within the above premise that I will interrogate Cherrycoke's narrative that is framed around Mason's and Dixon's adventures because both Cherrycoke's narrative and Turner's frontier story (or myth) dramatizes the interconnectivity between historicity and mythology. While there have been a significant number of critical works that probe *Mason & Dixon*'s inner narrative frame, there seems

to be a general lack of research that attempts to interrogate the intersections between the novel's inner and meta-narrative frame. In short, many readings of *Mason & Dixon* fail to consider the significance of Cherrycoke's meta-narrative. It is my contention that while stories that depict Mason's and Dixon's journeys seem to be historical, these "tall tales" narrated by Cherrycoke are rather mythological, especially sharing commonalities with the formation processes of a frontier myth. There are several indicators that suggest this notion. According to Richard Slotkin, myth-making processes "lie in our capacity to make and use metaphors, by which we attempt to interpret a new and surprising experience or phenomenon by noting its resemblance to some remembered thing or happening" (*Gunfighter Nation* 6). He further explains, "[i]f the metaphor proves apt, we will be inclined to treat the new phenomenon as a recurrence of the old" (*Gunfighter Nation* 6). In fact, the aptitude of the metaphor is driven by myth-artists who not only work to cultivate their "culture's repertoire of genres" but also "control the production and distribution of their artifacts" (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 7). In other words, "the actual work of making and transmitting myth is done" (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 8) through these artists who serves as "medium[s] with which to interpret our heritage and to give it new forms" (Mogen, Mark Busby and Paul Bryant 4). Perhaps, this is why Pynchon presents Cherrycoke as a narrator who is engaged in mythmaking. Treating the new phenomenon as a recurrence of the old, in short, making the metaphor apt, Cherrycoke is the medium from which the myth of America is created, transmitted and perpetuated.

Indeed, this framework allows us to acknowledge how Cherrycoke's narratives are mythologized, and ultimately become a frontier myth. Clearly, a frontier narrative

deals with the concept of the frontier. As David Mogen, Mark Busby and Paul Bryant have noted, it “begins with a sense of wonder at the infinite possibilities in the expanding world of the Renaissance explorers, for the frontier as the margin of the known opened the possibility of wonders in the unknown” (5-6). In effect, the frontier “was the gateway through which one might escape from time into space, from bounds to boundlessness” (Mogen, Mark Busby and Paul Bryant 6). Accordingly, a frontier narrative concerns itself with “wonders [of] the unknown,” “infinite possibilities,” and “escape from time into space” (Mogen, Mark Busby and Paul Bryant 6) in the New World. As a frontier narrator, Cherrycoke, in order to counter the inevitable closing of the American frontier, attempts to recreate the subjunctive possibilities of America. His “Tale[s] about America” (Pynchon 7) bears an apparent association to frontier narratives. Like Cherrycoke’s tales, frontier narratives, as a matter of fact, are created not only to counteract the sense of declining subjunctive possibilities of the New World (America) but also to perpetuate the sense of infinite possibilities of America. In order to achieve this kind of mythopoetic vision of America frontier narratives are mythicized in the same way that Turner’s frontier narratives are mythicized by merging history and myth, and by translating history into myth.

In general, Cherrycoke’s narrative manifests a mythopoetic vision of frontier America. Comparable to the frontier myth, in order to counterbalance America’s loss of the frontier (as a place of magic, dream, and salvation), first of all, Cherrycoke’s paranormal, mythic, and subjunctive tales of America can be considered as a myth-making process that attempts to conquer history by imposing its subjunctive dreams and desires onto history. Secondly, his narratology becomes mythicized as his tales

continuously cross the boundary between history and mythology. Thirdly, Cherrycoke's narratology interprets America's historical present in terms of its mythic past. Finally, by parallelizing history (reality) with myth (supernatural), his narratology not only re-aligns the notions of reality but also creates a true measure of myth as a construct of reality. In this chapter, I argue that Cherrycoke's narrative displays America's mythopoetic vision—the belief in limitless possibilities and new frontiers. As his tales continuously cross the boundary between history and mythology, they not only create a true measure of myth as a construct of reality but also establish a new American frontier myth by imposing its subjunctive dreams, fantasies, and desires onto history.

According to Slotkin, a “myth-artist, priest, or fabulist” uses mythical artifacts in “an effort to make propaganda for his cause, or unconsciously, under the compelling association of perceived event and inherited mythology” (*Regeneration Through Violence* 8). Particularly, as Slotkin pointed out that “the American myth was a synthetic process of reconciling the romantic-conventional myths of Europe to American experience” (*Regeneration Through Violence* 17), the association between perceived event and inherited mythology seems fundamental to the myth-making process. As a matter of fact, in Turner's essay, we are able to glimpse into Turner's (un)conscious gesture toward this merging of history with myth that produces the frontier myth. For example, Turner merges the imagery of the mythical Ulysses, as a symbol of the Western spirit, with the historical frontiersman. Here the images of Ulysses who sought “a newer world” and sailed “beyond the sunset” (194) overlapped with Turner's own version of a backwoodsman who crossed from the Atlantic coast to the “Western World” (190) and set “new goals . . . with varied and higher ideals” (194). What is fascinating about

Turner's association between Ulysses and a backwoodsman is that he cleverly merges the mythological (past) ideals and circumstances with the historical (present) imperatives and events. As a result, we see a perfect product of myth-history that flawlessly bridged the gap between myth and history. Thomas Claviez, studying the rhetoric within Turner's frontier thesis and analyzing the interaction between different historical contexts, insightfully proposed that the longevity and success of Turner's thesis lies in its "synthesizing dimension, the historical imagination and poetic power" (566). In other words, Claviez suggests that "[w]ith the inscription of mythical components into [Turner's] 'empirical' text, as an 'attempt of create order' Turner transforms and arranges the incoherent historical data into 'his' story, his account and interpretation of history" (571). Claviez's above suggestion is not only plausible but logical because we can undoubtedly find much evidence in Turner's essay in which mythopoetic properties merge onto America's "historical, geographical and social situation" (Claviez 568). If such a reading is possible, by the same token, we can expect the same when we read *Mason & Dixon* because Cherrycoke likewise employs a project of merging the poetic, mythical, and historical ingredients together in his narrative.

In *Mason & Dixon*, like the frontier myth, I suggest, Cherrycoke's narrative serves as mythopoetic affirmation. More particularly, I argue that just as Turner's frontier thesis is founded upon the mythopoetic vision of the frontier, Cherrycoke's narratology is based on the mythopoetic vision of the frontier America as it has become mythicized. Thomas Claviez, discussing the ideology and rhetoric of Turner's frontier thesis, insightfully points out that the "coexistence of mystical materialism and organicist historical idealism, of actual frontier experience and archetypal significanc[e] in Turner's

essay effects the transgression of historical time on the temporal level, without finally excluding it” (573). Just as in Turner’s essay “descriptive and . . . normative discourse mingle” as he projects mythopoetic properties onto a “historical, geographical and social situation” (Claviez 568) that causes America to become “another name of opportunity” (Turner 26), in Cherrycoke’s narratology, historical and mythological tales intermingle as Cherrycoke deliberately inserts his mythopoetic visions into history.

In this way, in *Mason & Dixon*, Cherrycoke perfectly serves the role of Slotkin’s description of a myth-artist because his narrative continuously makes associations between perceived history and mythic account of the Mason-Dixon Line. Thus, where history should shed its own skin as we no longer can verify its veracity, we are again furnished by the myth-narrator (Cherrycoke) with an alternative (anti)history that has more commonality with myths, legends, or fantasies. It is here (where history begins to fade into the unknown) that a “myth-maker . . . draw[s] upon the vocabulary of myth-images and [myth]-structures that is his cultural heritage” as he is aware of articulating “the need for myth as *myth* . . . derived from real and imagery experience and ordered by the imagination” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 13). According to Slotkin what we find in the myth-making process is the re-creation of its own myth-images and myth-structures that came into being by the imaginative power to create myth as/by myth. Thus, in this instant, depending on the myth-maker’s need to merge “an original experience of mythopoetic insight in the nature of reality” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 12)—in other words, from the myth-artist’s need—the mythic imagery of the frontier is merged with the historical, real, and existential frontier figure. A myth is the product of a myth-maker’s “attempt to recover the world of primary myth” and “his cultural heritage”

(Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 13). This is why a myth-maker's myth always indicts the consummatory articulation of "recaptur[ing] the lost innocence of the mythopoeic attitude by transcending the narrative, logical and linguistic forms" (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 13). Despite occasional objections raised by relatives on Rev. Cherrycoke's narrative, his tale holds much authority over the listeners. With his "Authorial Authority" (354), depending on the nature of the audience, Cherrycoke intentionally changes the genre of this tales: navigating between mock-heroic adventure to exotic, mysterious, violent, and erotic sorts of tales.

By commenting on Mason's and Dixon's journey and by making himself part of their adventure, he is able to refashion himself as a myth-maker—an adventure, didactic sage, preacher of morality, and storyteller/entertainer. If so, then Cherrycoke's narrative not only operates to re-create the history of America but also serves to re-imagine the myth of America. It was Cherrycoke "that had been haunting Mason [and] . . . he expected Dixon, but newly arriv'd at Death, to help him"(8) to re-create the mythical America. Just like the line of civilization, enlightenment, and progress is believed to be built by transforming the wilderness (myth) into an American civilization (history), within the frontier myth the line that Mason and Dixon "carve through the pristine wilderness symbolizes the human imposition of order on the natural world" (Staiger 641).

It is this quality of (Cherrycoke's) superimposition of history against mythology that marks the Mason-Dixon Line. In this line of thought, Cherrycoke's Mason-Dixon Line "represents an imperial intrusion, an insertion of artificial writing that implies a narrative of Conquest to be etched upon the West" (Lifshey 4). Patricia Nelson Limerick argues that in America "conquest basically involved the drawing of lines of a map, the

definition and allocation of ownership (personal, tribal, corporate, state, federal, and international), and the evolution of land from matter to property. The process had two stages: the initial drawing of lines (which we have usually called the frontier stage) and the subsequent giving of meaning and power to those lines, which is still underway” (27).

If we follow this definition, obviously the Mason-Dixon Line concerns the frontier process of drawing of lines and subsequent giving of meaning and power to those lines. However, on a higher (narrative) level, we see this conquering process once again as Cherrycoke marks his own lines and claims ownership of his version of history through the parallaxic method. In fact, Turner’s notion of American history allegorized in the form of the frontier myth provides a key hint in explaining Cherrycoke’s underlying motive for delivering tales full of anachronisms and paranormals akin to folktales, legends, and myths. Turner describes America as “the land of European dreams, its Fortunate Islands were made real, where, in the imagination of old Europe, peace and happiness, as well as riches and eternal youth, were to be found” (189). Slotkin’s analysis rightfully captures how in the myth of America, the “New World was seen . . . in terms of a psychological and spiritual quest, a quest for salvation in the wilderness of the human mind and soul” (*Regeneration Through Violence* 39).

Undeviating from Slotkin’s analysis on the myth, Turner’s frontier thesis relies on the “manifest destiny of his country” (Turner 137) that out of the “quest after the unknown” (Turner 171) and of the frontier experience, the frontiersman is able to fashion a “formula for social regeneration—the freedom of the individual to seek his own” (Turner 137). According to Turner’s logic, individual, social, and national progress depends upon two conditions: America’s capacity to expand West and its ability to

exploit unlimited supply of natural resources. Turner argues that exploiting these free natural resources will open up new and infinite opportunities. “So long as free land exists,” Turner argues, “the opportunity for a competency exists, and economic power secures political power” (22). However, it should not take a genius to figure out that it is only a matter of time that natural resources will be exhausted and that there no longer will be a frontier to expand, thus no longer serving as momentum for individual, social, and national development. This predicament is terrifying because having no place to acquire free land means the cessation of Turner’s frontier thesis—the end of American “progress” (Turner 2). Thus, without the possibility or promise for replenishment, the idea of America as “another name of opportunity” that used to guarantee social evolution is inevitably doomed. Cohen rightfully notes this conundrum: “[t]he unlimited possibility of America, of the New Eden, the land not just of the free but the equal, will not survive” (276). Just as Turner deplored the fact that with the closing of the frontier “America [which] has been another name of opportunity . . . has gone” (26), Cherrycoke likewise regrets the disappearing of the subjunctive possibilities of the American history by the superimposition of the enlightenment project. In response to Mason-Dixon’s Visto—their “destructive project of reducing the potential to the actual by turning space into territory” (Pohlmann 29), Zhang who practices Eastern “Feng Shui” indicates that

[e]v’rywhere else on earth, Boundaries follow Nature,—coast-lines, ridge-tops, river-banks,—so honoring the Dragon or Shan within, from which Land-Scape ever takes its form. To mark a right Line upon the Earth is to inflict upon the Dragon’s very flesh, a sword-slash, a long, perfect scar, impossible for any who live out here the year ‘round to see as other than

hateful Assault. (542)

Zhang, here, argues that drawing boundaries on nature is less of a geometrical division but more of a symbolic violence to nature which with its sword of reason and logic slashes the “hope in the realm of the Subjunctive” (543)—a crucial conceptual component that makes America as another name of opportunity. Corresponding to the Learned English Dog’s sentiment described earlier, Zhang deplores the enlightenment project (or Western logic) as it attempts to demarcate the two realms (history and myth) and destroy the latter. In this respect, Zhang’s complaint about the line’s slaying of the “Shan” is not unrelated to the concerns related to the closing of the frontier since both implicate the end of the subjunctive and the termination of an unlimited possibility of the American frontier.

In this way, in *Mason & Dixon*, it is not surprising to find the tension between the continual expansion of the Western territories, as a part of the enlightenment project via the Mason-Dixon Line, and the anxieties associated with the ongoing retreatment of the frontier, and in turn the disappearance of subjunctive possibilities and mythical properties. Since the enlightenment “attitude privileges reason over emotion and the irrational, allowing scientists and colonists to explore, conquer, condemn, and disable” the ancient magic, it is not surprising that Pynchon often presents “the tenets of the Age of Reason . . . as having killed off the possible, the mysterious, the magic, the primitive, and the natural” (Sears 113). If so, as Andrew Taylor rightfully notes, then it is not hard to consider the line’s “clarifying impulse, born out of [the] enlightenment imperatives to measure, standardize and colonize, exists in a dialectical tension with . . . subterranean spatialities and temporalities” which belong to “occult, enchanted realms” (38). In fact, as

a direct response to the closing of the frontier-subjunctive, Cherrycoke manages to disclose these tensions and anxieties. So, understanding that America has become a reservoir of imperial Britain's sickening dream, he asks,

[d]oes Britannia, when she sleeps, dream? Is America her dream?—in which all that cannot pass in the metropolitan Wakefulness is allow'd Expression away in the restless Slumber of these Provinces, and on Westward, wherever 'tis not yet mapped, nor written down, nor ever, by the majority of Mankind, seen,—serving as a very Rubbish-Tip for subjunctive Hopes, for all that *may yet be true*,—Earthly Paradise, Fountain of Youth, Realms of Prester John, Christ's Kingdom, ever behind the sunset, safe till the next Territory to the West be seen and recorded, measur'd and tied in, back into the Net-Work of Points already known, that slowly triangulates its Way into the Continent, changing all from subjunctive to declarative, reducing Possibilities to Simplicities that serve the ends of Governments,—winning away from the realm of the Sacred, its Borderlands one by one, and assuming them unto the bare mortal World that is our home, and our Despair. (345)

As to the above passage, Kyle Smith explains,

[t]he junction in history at which the novel is set shows America in the midst of constructing itself as a nation state. This is a point where America may have chosen new routes to freedom, but is also both a supplement of the British Empire and a community striving towards its own delusions of universality and imperialism. The nation state, and the manifestation of its

success, empire, is formed by its “subjunctive hopes” (*Mason & Dixon* 345) and its ability to make them assimilate what it does not know and can only imagine. Nation [or history] is thus inescapably created of what it destroys and rejects and rationalizes away. (193)

Cherrycoke mentions, in the above speech, the terrifying result of Britain’s enlightenment project that triangulates America’s subjunctive dreams/myths into declarative realities, analogously to the slaying of the Dragon, America’s Shan or its potentialities reduced to affirmatives. Once known as a realm of mythic-immortal-sacred hopes and dreams, America being surveyed, calculated and mapped, for Cherrycoke, now belongs to a realm of historic-mortal-profane realities and nothing more. Thus, while Mason-Dixon’s Visto merely seems to mean that “people shall set their homes to one side or another. That it be a Boundary, nothing more” (542), however, within the grand scheme of the enlightenment project, it actually implies the deposition of the ideals of America simultaneously present in both Turner’s frontier myth and Cherrycoke’s tales. If so, Cherrycoke requires his audience to see “the line” of history not only as an “anatomy of loss” but also as a “celebration of continued possibility” (Cohen 282) of America when he narrates the “fantastic possibilit[ies] of America” (Cohen 280) so mysterious and mythical. When we consider the fact that what “we hear in *Mason and Dixon* is the sound of . . . Wicks Cherrycoke outlining . . . the Eastern solution” (Dewey 129), it becomes obvious that Cherrycoke’s outline (narrative) is comparable to the “mysticism of the East” (113) that informs “crises in intellection” since it prefigures “perplexing . . . contradictory and (ir)resolvable” (128) realities as ontological fundamentals. Therefore, it makes sense that “the trope of America assumes symbolic weight far heavier than merely

a lost opportunity” because it “becomes representative . . . of [America’s] loss of magic, and salvation” (Baker 178). For this exact reason, what we witness in Turner’s version of the frontier myth ultimately turns out to be the recapitulation of the lost innocence of the subjunctive possibilities of the New World that in its purest form transcends the earthly into the heavenly future. Turner writes, “the West gave . . . a vision of hope, and assurance that the world held a place where were to be found high faith in man and the will and power to furnish him the opportunity to grow to the full measure of his own capacity” (169).

Just as Turner continued to argue for the discovery of cultural, mental, and scientific frontiers upon realizing the inevitable closing of the American frontier, so does Cherrycoke to counter America’s loss of magic and salvation attempt to recreate, at least for a while, within his narrative, the subjunctive possibilities of America. Brian McHale also supports this notion by suggesting that these episodes foreground a salient feature of “the American West as subjunctive space, the space of wish and desire, of the hypothetical and counterfactual, of speculation and possibility” (44). If the American West “symbolizes the subjunctive world of possibilities” (Savvas 60), Theophilus Savvas is right in suggesting that Cherrycoke’s “lament for the loss of the West” leads Cherrycoke to produce a “space, both temporal and geographical, for many whose stories have previously been left out” (Savvas 52). In this way, we can understand how Cherrycoke’s mythic production, derived from his sense of the “erosion of the subjunctive realm” (Savvas 6), allows him to create and re-create a mythic space that formerly had been in a state of vacuum. Thus, preserving the imagery of America’s eternal possibilities is one essential function of Cherrycoke’s tales. He needs to tell these

stories to be rid of the crime of “Anonymity” (9). His crime of oblivion can only be vindicated by remembering, conjuring up, and re-creating the American subjunctive where there’s always “a Path, not yet discover’d” (380). To be silent, or worse, to forget these stories is a crime that deprives us of the American subjunctive. Cherrycoke, an “untrustworthy Remembrancer . . . within a broken memory must provide the only comfort now remaining to him” (8) to chronicle America’s (mythic) history. This is why Cherrycoke tells his audience, “I was back in America once more, finding, despite all, that I could not stay away from it, this object of hope that Miracles might yet occur, that God might yet return to Human affairs, that all the wistful Fictions necessary to the childhood of a species might yet come true, . . . a third Testament” (365). If this is Cherrycoke’s rationale, then Stacey Michele Olster is right in noting that “[e]stablishing what is . . . America . . . becomes an act of representation . . . [or] a question of aesthetics” (284) in the novel because Cherrycoke’s “aesthetic of cognitive mapping” (284) not only illustrates the impossibility of establishing with any certainty the actuality of America but also exemplifies the tendency of re-constructing the subjunctive America only through the parallaxic method. When Cherrycoke paints his narrative with paranormalities and subjunctives via parallaxic method, he is, in fact, exploring “the very fork in the road America never took” (Baker 168) for “provisions of Survival in a World less fantastick” (22).

Just as Turner romanticized the New World as a place of “opportunity, a gate of escape from the bondage of the past” (26) and an exit into a free life and greater well-being among the bounties of nature (165), Cherrycoke mythicizes America as a “new Arcadia, a land rich in the promise of spiritual and erotic fulfillment and renewal”

(Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 59). Cherrycoke not only narrates “tales of fertile lands, savage Women, giant Vegetables, forests without end, Marshlands seething with shell-fish, Buffalo-Herds the size of Paris” (380), but also tales of “gold cities, marble cities, men that fly, women that fight, fantastikal creatures never dream’d in Europe,—something always to take and draw you that way” (671). In fact, Cherrycoke is less interested in merely describing the factual accounts of his or Mason’s and Dixon’s journey, but more so in relating stories like “an Herodotic Web of Adventures and Curiosities” (7).

Contrary to the poststructuralist reading, Cherrycoke’s somewhat incredible stories do not disseminate nor retrench the validity of Cherrycoke’s narrative but rather strengthen its authority by the mixture of history and myth: his narrative satisfies his audience’s mythopoetic vision that is opened up between what is and what could have been. As it happens, Cherrycoke’s narrative throughout the novel seems to revolve around this intersection—between historicity and historical myth. Cherrycoke’s use of a form that traverses between legend-myth and historical-factual account sets the stage of the entire novel. The authenticity of Cherrycoke’s narrative is dubious because he not only abridges his recordings (in his *Spiritual-Day-Book*) of Mason’s and Dixon’s remembrances but also changes the tone, mood, and contents of his stories depending on the listeners. This (unreliable) quality can easily be perceived in the novel because Cherrycoke’s tales are characteristic of mythological conventions. As Cherrycoke tells his tales of the “Escape from Hottentot-Land, the Accursed Ruby of Mogok, the Shipwrecks in Indies East and West,—an Herodotic Web of Adventures and Curiosities selected,” (7) his audience is instantly taken into stories, known to Uncle Wade as

“Adventures [that] have converged into a Saga that is difficult to reconcile with the living” (31), that ranges from historical facts and anecdotes to folktales, legends, and myths. Just as the myth of America starts by the pilgrims’ hazardous Westward journey to the New World, Cherrycoke’s “Saga” begins with the account of his perilous journey to the West. As it turns out, Cherrycoke’s stories, supposedly factual accounts of his and Mason’s and Dixon’s journey, are imbued with conjectures and exaggerations rather fit for folktales, legends, and myths. As the genre of these stories continues to shift (at one point, delivered in a mock-epic style, then, at another point, in a supernatural or phantasmagoric mood) depending on Cherrycoke’s audience, Cherrycoke’s journey to South Africa on the vessel called the *Seahorse* and the subsequent battle between the *Seahorse* and the *L’Grand* rather becomes a blend of historic account-mythic tale which is told in a hyperbolic fashion with a spice of dramatic effect. Describing the battle between the two vessels, Cherrycoke tells the boys that:

[w]atching helplessly as we closed with the *L’Grand*, I felt that with each fraction of a second, Death was making itself sensible in new ways. [. . .] The Astronomers and I meanwhile endur’d intestinal agonies so as not to be the first of foul his breeches in front of the others, as the Spars came crashing from above, and the cannon sent sharp Thuds thro’ the Ship like cruel boxing our ears, knocking cockroaches out of the overhead, —Blows whose personal Malevolence was more frightening ever than their Scale,—the Ship’s horse Shrieking, a great Sea-animal in pain, the textures of its Cries nearly those of the human Voice when under great Stress. (38)

As if to duplicate the mock-epic literary tradition, according to Cherrycoke's (oral) description or his narrative's dramatic effect, the severity of the situation is soon later deflated to the point of witticism by the dramatic gap between the severe and trifling. In this scene, the violent blasts from the spars and cannon balls not only wittingly knock out cockroaches to fly in the air but also cause the ship to shriek like a human voice in distress. While the battle between the *Seahorse* and *L'Grand* culminates into an epic by loud blasts and violent actions, the battle soon implodes into a farce by the flying cockroaches and shrieking ship. Furthermore, their near-death experience that Cherrycoke narrates does seem out-of-place and inconsequential considering how, at this frightful moment, they (Cherrycoke, Mason, and Dixon) had to withstand spoiling their breeches by excreting in front of other people. This dramatic contrast recapitulates Cherrycoke's mythopoetic vision as he conjures the mock-epic literary tradition.

In another episode, affirming the myth-artist's (Cherrycoke's) power to induce mythopoetic visions, Cherrycoke's narrative text gravitates between history and myth. Mason says to Dixon, upon finding a cave used for a Catholic mass, "it is [a] Text,—and we are its readers, and its Pages are the Days turning. Unscrolling, as a Pilgrim's Itinerary map in ancient Days. And this is the Chapter call'd 'The Subterranean Cathedral, or The Lesson Grasp'd'" (497-98). For the surveyors this cave is not just a conclave that has an "arch about 6 yards in length and four feet in height" that opens up to a room 45 yards in length" but one that "makes the whole an awful, solemn appearance: Striking its Visitants with a strong and melancholy reflection: that such is the abodes of the Dead" (497). In this instance, the cave that they read is one that not only possesses physical qualities (thus subscribed for scientific analysis) but also one that is endowed with gothic and

metaphysical properties (thus transcending scientific probing). If a text of “The Subterranean Cathedral” is thus read to these surveyors in the above way, Cherrycoke is the one who pays respect to this holy ground by embellishing it (history, truth, and fact about the cave) with a tinge of mystery, fantasy, and myth. The material, physical, and corporal cave suddenly transforms into the spiritual, metaphysical, and ethereal cathedral haunted by the ghosts of the dead, enclaves that smite any visitors with a forceful, gothic, and ghostly effect. As truths, facts, and history merge with the supernatural, they also become a pilgrim’s itinerary map, a map that guides the pilgrim or reader from material origin to some unknown metaphysical destination. This becomes a function of Cherrycoke’s narrative that emerges from the subterranean world.

The persuasiveness and perpetual quality of Cherrycoke’s narrative, I suggest, results from its mythopoetic quality that mythifies historicity: filling the gaps of history with myth. Incredible as they are, Cherrycoke’s narrative authority is retained through his mythic explanations regarding Mason’s and Dixon’s travels and experiences. More particularly, I argue that the overlap and convergence between these two realms is one method used in the representation and development of the American myth. Just as the myth of America successfully interprets its mythic past in terms of America’s historical present, Cherrycoke’s tales effectively explain American’s historical reality with regards to its unsubstantiated mythic past. Like most (compelling) story-tellers, Cherrycoke is very deliberate and clever in blending factual anecdotes with myths and fabrications. In one scene, he narrates Mason’s fantastic experience regarding the vortex that evaporated eleven days in ’52. According to Cherrycoke’s narrative, it was Mason who told Dixon that he (Mason),

[a]t the Stroke of the Hour, whilst [he] continued into the Third, there came an instant Transhalation of Souls, leaving a great human Vacuum, as ev'ryone else mov'd on to the Fourteenth of September . . . there now lay but the mute Effects of their Lives,—Ash-whiten'd Embers that yet gave heat, food left over from the last Meals of September Second, publick Clocks frozen for good at midnight between the Second and the day after,—tho' somewhere else, in the World which had jump'd ahead to the Fourteenth. (556)

While in reality the evaporated eleven days were caused by the calendar reform that regarded September 3rd as September 14th, adding eleven days in the calendar; however, for Mason this skipped eleven days were thought to be caused by the vortex of time causing the eleven days to disappear at the stroke of the hour. Cherrycoke explains, in this vortex of time—at the precise moment when the second of September becomes the third—Mason experienced linear time coming to a halt as things that represent the immutable passage of time literally froze. The embers in the fire stopped burning, food left for meals stopped being cold and public clocks stopped ticking. More interestingly, at this moment, Cherrycoke narrates, Mason experienced time “[i]n a slowly rotating Loop, or if you like, Vortex, of eleven days, tangent to the Linear Path of what we imagine as Ordinary Time, but excluded from it, and repeating itself,—without end” (555), leaving Mason to be in a time vacuum where it is the third of September meanwhile allowing everyone else to live contently in the fourteenth of September. Noting *Mason & Dixon's* temporal-spatial voids such as the vortex above, Santiago argues that “we must conclude that, whatever that might happen in the duration of those eleven days, it depends on the

subject's filling of the void" ("The Physics of Postmodern Laughter" 529). In other words, "the emptiness left by the deletion of those eleven days from the calendar . . . produces in time some sort of temporal re-accommodation . . . that pull down the smooth surface of apparently synchronic reality" and creates "some sort of promised land they have to be constantly filling in with their own fantasies, their own subconscious surpluses of repressed impulses and desires" ("The Physics of Postmodern Laughter" 529-30).

Just before Cherrycoke's account of Mason's encounter with the supernatural turns preposterously incredible, Cherrycoke provides a copy of his field journal that substantiates his story. In substantiating Mason's experience regarding the missing (skipped) eleven days from the Calendar Reform of '52, Cherrycoke produces to his listeners "his Facsimile of Pennsylvania's Fair Copy of the Field-Journals of Mason and Dixon . . . copied without the touch of human hands, by an ingenious Jesuit device, and printed by Mr. Whimbrel, next to The Seneca Maiden, Philadelphia, 1776" (554).

Cherrycoke, then turning the pages of his field journal, tells the audience that "eleven days after setting out southward from Brandywine . . . Mason paus'd at Williamsburg, the southernmost point of his journey,—next day he [left] for Annapolis, and eleven days later depart[ed] that City, to return work upon the Line,—a very Pendulum" (554).

Cherrycoke's incredible stories become somewhat less unbelievable because events, incredible as they are, become documented as a form of evidence: first of all, he is able to provide his own field journal (as physical evidence) to his audience, second, Cherrycoke can claim the authenticity of his facsimile of Mason's and Dixon's field-journals because it was not copied by human hands but printed by a printing device, and last, he is able to report the precise and detailed accounts on Mason's travels through his field journal.

Cherrycoke's "Pennsylvania's Fair Copy of the Field-Journals," "printed by Mr. Whimbrel" in "1776" that accounts Mason "setting out southward from Brandywine . . . for Annapolis" becomes a marker of authenticity. While Cherrycoke's stories may seem incredible even with physical evidence, they nevertheless function perfectly well within Cherrycoke's own narratological world.

In regards to Pynchon's way of dealing with history as myth or myth as history, Gary Thompson notes that "[w]hat we have, rather than truth as something to be established as in a court of law, is truth as something elusive, to be elicited not only by those in positions of power so much as 'fabulists and counterfeiters' and others who create and transmit fictions such as that containing this passage" (164). This tendency is not unusual in *Mason & Dixon*, and, in fact, it happens all the time. While on the surface, this seems to dissipate or undercut the authority and authenticity of the stories contained in *Mason and Dixon*, however, this enriches Cherrycoke's narrative by providing multiple layers and depths to his tales of Mason's and Dixon's journey, which otherwise could have been factual and thus unattractive. Clearly crisscrossing between Hamlet's apparition and Poe's resurrected maidens of the dead, the integration of the phantasmagoric and historical elements in the following scene suggests the above notion. To readers' surprise, all the characters in the novel actually do take supernatural and myth for granted because they coexist with reality and history. Upon hearing Mason's story on Rebekah's visitation, Dixon casually remarks, "the two of ye need some time together. [. . .] I've no wish to offend your Companion" (173-74). These supernatural occurrences and fantastical beings in Cherrycoke's narration are as real as any other realistic events and human beings: they possess the same weight as any reality. During a

conversation between Captain Zhang, Dixon, and Cherrycoke, Cherrycoke relates a tale—a mythical tale-turned-history heard from Mason—to his audience. According to Dixon’s tale, heard when he was a boy, there lived a creature called “Lambton Worm” (in fact, a dragon) near Lambton Castle.

This tale told by Dixon to Captain Zhang and Cherrycoke, then narrated by Cherrycoke to his youthful audience, is portrayed in a mythopoetic fashion that treacherously traverses along the realms of mythical and historical. The epic battle between a knight and dragon begins to unfold as “Young Lambton chooses to wait out upon the Worm’s own Batt . . . he kneels a moment, appearing to repeat his sacred Oath, before rising to put on, very carefully, piece by razor-keen piece, his bloodletting suit,—till all at last is ready” (592-93). This scene shows John Lambton’s—who just has returned from the last Crusades to kill “The Evil One” (590)—encounter with the dragon as he hears “the unimagin’d tons of wet and purposeful Flesh, moving a-clatter through the reeds, ever closer, till out of the riparian mist emerges, towering, the Savage Head, the deathlike Face, of the great Worm” (593). However, Lambton’s terrifying moment with the dragon quickly turns into a humorous scene, according to Cherrycoke’s description, because the dragon’s face “has lost the youthful malevolence” and Lambton finds its former “blood-lust” gaze that used to paralyze its prey to be “strangely attractive” (591). The following scene becomes rather interesting because this mythical story—with its mock-epic form—is later frictionlessly blended with a historical anecdote that Dixon relates to Captain Zhang and Cherrycoke. According to Dixon’s tale, John Lambton, unable to fulfill his oath—killing the first person he sees when he succeeded in defeating the dragon—died because of a Gypsy curse. The contents of the curse that

bounded John which was “to remain in force for nine generations,—one for each pair of holes in the Creature,—was that no Lord of Lambton die in his bed. Under this Gypsy curse, one by one, they down’d they were kill’d in battle,—Wakefield, Marston Moor,—sure ’twas, none died in bed. The last, the ninth Lord, was Henry Lambton . . . whilst at the Cape, [Dixon received] news that he’d died, three weeks after the Transit of Venus, riding ‘cross the new Lambton Bridge in his carriage” (594). So, while this tale introduces mock-epic traditions—such as the origin of evil (dragon), the devastation of social order, the hero’s crusade and oath, an epic battle between good and evil, and the restoration of order by vanquishing evil—elements that would draw a young audience’s attention, it rather blurs the separating line between mythical and historical. This is because historical Lambtons die by mythical circumstances caused by (mythical) John Lambton’s disrespect for the oath he made to the Gypsy prior to the slaying of the dragon. In fact, the news that the last remaining Lambton has died while crossing the new Lambton bridge three weeks after Mason’s and Dixon’s tracing of the Transit of Venus seems to confirm that mythical circumstances have equal weight with their counterpart historical events.

In fact, Cherrycoke is quite good at providing his mythopoetic visions—conjectural at times and purely imaginative at other times about Mason’s and Dixon’s trips—that transcend the normative and historic. Despite the unreliability of Cherrycoke’s narratives, if we consider Cherrycoke’s role as a maker of folklore and myths, these narratives do not undermine their own validity, but paradoxically reinforce Cherrycoke’s own authoritative position. As in all folktales, legends, and myths, a myth-maker’s or storyteller’s role is crucial. Chapter 73, for example, is wholly invested in describing

Cherrycoke's fabricated version of Mason's and Dixon's journey beyond the Warrior Path. That Cherrycoke initiates this chapter with an auxiliary verb "might" and a supposition "suppose" suggests Cherrycoke's active role as a myth-maker. Cherrycoke starts his narrative by telling his audience that "[a]s all History must converge to Opera in the Italian Style, however, their Tales as Commemorated might have to proceed to a bit more hopefully" (706). As Cherrycoke relates the surveyor's alternate journey beyond the "Warrior Path" (706), his tale again takes us on another journey into the mythic. Totally fabricated by Cherrycoke, Mason and Dixon not only meet an "[a]dventurer from Mexico, and [hear about] the ancient City he has discover'd beneath the Earth, where thousands of Mummies occupy the Streets in attitudes of living Business, embalm'd with Gold" (707-08), but also they "encounter a strange tribal sect, bas'd upon the worship of some celestial Appearance none but the Congregation can see" (708). Cherrycoke's fantastic tale culminates in Dixon's journey to the "North Magnetic Pole" (739). Upon H.M.S. *Emerald*, Dixon finds himself going down the "great circum-polar Emptiness" and into the "inner Surface of the Earth" as they arrive "upside-down as bats in a belfry" (739). Governed by different laws of physics, here in this "*Terra Concava*" Dixon not only witnesses "chains of mountains, then strokes of towers, the eternally spilling lives of thousands dwelling in the long Estuarial Towns wrapping from Outside to Inside . . . hang[ing] over an Abyss thousand miles deep" but also gets to meet "Gnomes, Elves, smaller folk, who live underground and posses . . . magickal powers" (740).

Daniel Punday locates Pynchon's novels directly in line with the postmodern tradition. Although interrogating the novel's compatibility with postmodernism has its own benefits, we should not take this for granted. This is because the significance of

Cherrycoke's narrative may not solely reside in its association with a postmodern indeterminacy or dissemination but perhaps more in its relation to Cherrycoke's mythopoetic vision. Discussing the role of ghostly figures in *Mason & Dixon* and exploring Pynchon's treatment of ghostliness in the novel, Punday brings Derrida's notions of temporality, history, and ethics to the front. According to Punday, both Derrida and Pynchon "finds in the specter not a simple embodiment of some wrong or some debt that we must satisfy, but a figure of reversed temporality" (256) or itself a "projected relationship with the past" (257). In other words, Punday argues that these specters are "not emblems of the past, but things always imagined out of the present and projected into the future as part of an ethical task" (259). As expected, while it may be true that "the ghosts emerges in Derrida's work as an embodiment of our debt to the past" (256), however, Punday seems to be overemphasizing the extent to which Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* conjures these ghosts as a reminder of some past debts (of sin) toward history and ethical responsibility in order to clear the debts of conscience. Punday's logic seems to imply that as long as postmodernism summons specters of the past, then the debts of the past are forgiven, or at least forgotten. What Punday fails to see in Pynchon's summation of ghosts is, in fact, its unconscious gesture to erase or alleviate the brutal, yet embarrassing truth about (American) history by paradoxically pacifying the begrudged ghosts of the past. In fact, the actual nature of history's debt, justice, and ethical responsibility in *Mason & Dixon* is not hard to imagine considering how an alternate, yet of the same kind, (American) history is being played out throughout Mason's and Dixon's journeys and adventures in both South Africa and America. For Punday, however, Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* "make[s] the conventional demand for equity

before history's bar, at the same time representing and calling for heterological practices as means of achieving that end" (253). This gesture—regarding postmodern traits like dispersal and heteroglossia as potentially redemptive—precisely exemplifies the blind side of a postmodern reading of the novel. On a similar note, Richard Hardwick characterizes Cherrycoke's narration as a kind of "reflexive entropy" (94) that "decenters [the] notions of self-contained subjectivity and linear time" (94) because "narration itself is destabilized, and we can no longer differentiate the sources of representation" (95). Indeed, on a certain level, Cherrycoke's narration seems to be destabilized—his narrative frequently trespasses into mythic and fantastical from historicity and logicity.

However, as Cherrycoke's tale makes a successful grafting into the myth (of Mason's and Dixon's quest) he is able to claim the history of America as the myth of America. Cherrycoke writes, "went we off the most prodigious such Line yet attempted, in America" we "pursue[ed] a ride through the air" as we were "link'd to the stars" (440). Through his retelling/re-creation of American history, it becomes a part of American myth shared and acknowledged by his audience. This is because if history cannot be distinguished from fabrications, fables, and myths, then, conversely, it is also possible that myths can pass as history. As Thompson notes, this reading the world as text is "offered as a model to Pynchon's readers—not as something to be emulated, but as something we cannot help emulating" (173). Thompson further adds that as "we examine the various clues and suggesting in [Pynchon's] texts, part of which in *Mason & Dixon* derive from their resemblance to stylizations of the past, we necessarily participate in the re-creation (and recreation) of history" (173-74).

Thus, contrary to Hardwick's and Punday's views, *Mason & Dixon* is informed

by Cherrycoke's mythopoetic vision that (although alternatively) re-simulates the myth of America as his (in)credible tales become the history of America through the mergence and coexistence of mythology/supernatural with history. This is because, as Thompson explains, Cherrycoke's use of "pastiche, while initially seeming to mark a sharp distancing between text and our ordinary verbal representations, eventually serves to bring these . . . by directing our attention to the represented nature of our quotidian world" (174).

Cherrycoke's narrative, by parallelizing supernatural and rational/scientific, re-aligns the notions of reality or history. Mason tells Dixon about the historical Rebekah. It was "at the annual cheese-rolling at the parish church in Randwick" (167) that Mason first met her. Here's a brief description of historical Rebekah. Mason, after being rescued "by way of stout shove" from Rebekah as the giant cheese rolled down towards him, found himself staring at "the shape of her mouth, her Lips slight apart, in an Inquiry that just fail'd to be a Smile,—like a Gate-Keeper about to have a Word with him" (171). Then he hears her voice saying: "Were it Night-time, Sir, I'd say you were out Star-Gazing" (170-71). Against Mason's own rationalization—"Isn't this suppose'd to be the Age of Reason?"—on Rebekah's haunting, he cannot help but to ask that "if Reason be also Permission at last to believe in the evidence of our Earthly Senses, then how can he not concede to her some Resurrection?" (164). And just like that it is believed that Mason is visited by the resurrected ghost of Rebekah as she appears to Mason with "black Fumes welling from the Surface of her Apparition, heard her Voice thickening to the timbres of the Beasts . . . [and] the serpents of Hell, real and swift, lying just the other side of her Shadow" (171). Clearly, Rebekah (whether historical or supernatural) is a

given reality, for Mason, because, according to reason, both forms of Rebekah can be acknowledged through his bodily senses (in both of these cases, by sight and hearing).

The folding of these two different versions of Rebekah—one encountered as a ghost, the other as a real person—commonly takes place in Cherrycoke’s narrative. Here, supernatural and historical Rebekah are both acknowledged as givens. That both Mason and Dixon, including Cherrycoke, are silent in denying the supernatural elements in Mason’s encounter with Rebekah’s ghost suggests the novel’s way of establishing a myth-maker’s (Cherrycoke’s) power of mythopoetic vision. What seems to be at stake is not the contradiction between reason and supernatural but rather the paradoxical condition of this reality that permits the existence of both the paranormal and natural. In *Mason & Dixon*’s world since both realms are equally confirmed by the bodily senses as empirical evidence, both realms are treated as realities. So, as Cherrycoke narrates it, in *Mason & Dixon*, these two dimensions are not mutually exclusive nor considered paradoxical: they merely exist side by side as *de facto*.

To this point, Cherrycoke, throughout the novel, develops “the theme of history contrapuntally” and views that “reality is such that it can never be disentangled” (Bove 659) between fact and fiction and between history and myth/supernatural. In another account, punningly critiquing the enlightenment sensibility, Cherrycoke tells a story about the “Learned English Dog” that thinks and talks like a philosophy professor. According to Cherrycoke’s account, as a response to Dixon’s denial about the existence of such a dog, the Learned English Dog replies, “‘Tis the Age of Reason, rrrf? There is ever an Explanation at hand, and no such thing as a Talking Dog,—Talking Dogs belong with Dragons and Unicorns. What there are, however, are Provisions for Survival in a

World less fantastick” (22). The Learned English Dog is logically correct: if a talking dog exists, then it follows that dragons and unicorns also exist. This sort of story not only serves to critique the (enlightenment) notions that demarcate reality and fiction but also plays a role to re-establish the notions of myth as history. To this effect, Cherrycoke, in one of his field journals, thus writes,

[h]istory is not Chronology, for that is left to lawyers,—nor is it Remembrance, for Remembrance belongs to the People. History can as little pretend to the Veracity of the one, as claim the Power of the other,—her Practitioners, to survive, must soon learn the arts of the quidnunc, spy, and Taproom Wit,—that there may ever continue more than one life-line back into a Past, we risk, each day, losing our forebears in forever,—not a Chain of single Links, for one broken Link could lose us All,—rather, a great disorderly Tangle of Lines, long and short, weak and strong, vanishing into the Mnemonick Deep, with only their Destination in common. (349)

This passage, as a matter of fact, is crucial in understanding Cherrycoke’s (or the myth-maker’s) understanding of history and its relationship to myth. As seen from the above passage, for Cherrycoke, history is neither chronology nor history (remembrance) because, contrary to the enlightenment sensibility, history is not comprised of a single chain of factual events but rather is consisted of multiple and tangled lines of unverifiable stories (such as folktales, legends, and myths) that ultimately vanish into oblivion. For this reason, he reasons that its practitioners must learn the narrative arts—“quidnunc, spy, and Taproom Wit”—of gossip and entertainment lest it should vanish into nothingness.

Reading Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* in a poststructuralist point of view, Lee Rozelle argues that "paranormal . . . creatures, geodetic oddities and totemic landscapes . . . perturb the linearity of colonial history" which "produce a continual impression of instability and uncertainty in the reader that tries to apply western logic to the act of reading" (156). Rozelle further argues that such cases of "liminality" in *Mason & Dixon* become "unexpected source[s] of transcendent signification" (162). Indeed, while liminality—paranormal creatures and supernatural events—proliferates in the novel, it still remains uncertain whether these transgressive properties do, in fact, destabilize ontological foundations, Western logic, and colonial linearity. What is interesting about Rozelle's reading is that he mainly focuses his attention to the inner narrative frame of the novel that deals with the Mason-Dixon Line but rarely investigates the ways in which this inner narrative is part of a larger narrative structure that is told by Cherrycoke. In other words, we should not forget that the novel's "parallactic method" is refracted through Cherrycoke's narrative lens. Commenting on Pynchon's use of parallactic method, Christy L. Burns suggests that this method is suggestive of a "configuration, wherein historical agency, compelled by the desire to narrate history and formulate identity, must mediate its willful and subjective vantage point with that of some other, radically distant-point-of-view in order to produce a true 'measure' of the past" (12). Burns, here, is correct in indicating how a "true measure of the past" is configured by a historical agency or myth-maker's intervention that compels him to mediate a subjective point of view (mythology) alongside with an objective point of view (history).

If this true measure of the past is produced from the interweaving of "a critical representation of imperialism's oppressive practices [with] a history of science and

exploration” (Burns 1), then perhaps Cherrycoke’s measure of the past (not historical past but mythical past) is to be produced from the intertwining of a representation of the enlightenment project’s oppressive impulses against an equally subversive and resistant force of the paranormal. This convergence of history and fiction precisely encapsulates the function of Cherrycoke’s narrative that creates a single picture of (mythical) history. Borrowing from Dixon’s lips, Cherrycoke, this time, narrates how a true measure of history really works,

[a]s if . . . there were no single Destiny . . . but rather a choice among a great many possible ones, their number steadily diminishing each time a Choice be made, till at last “reduc’d,” to the events that do happen to us, as we pass among ‘em, thro’ Time undeniable,—much as a Lens, indeed, may receive all the Light from some vast celestial Field of View, and reduce it to a single Point. (45)

Recalling the Deleuzian “rhizome” but in a reverse direction, according to Cherrycoke, history is a choice among multiple possibilities that ultimately converges into a single destination (point of event) that is neither a straight line of facts (the enlightenment idea) nor an endless web of uncertainties (the postmodernist conception). Thus, Cherrycoke’s view of history is neither pro-enlightenment nor postmodernist. These references help us to understand Cherrycoke’s, and in turn Pynchon’s, conception of history. However, we should not consider Cherrycoke’s notion of history as the same with our notion of history or reality because for Cherrycoke it involves a process of agency—a choice and/or choices—that reduces its scope of possibilities.

In point of fact, Cherrycoke’s history is much in line with the properties of

legends, myths, and fantasies for obvious reason: Cherrycoke is the authorial authority just like the reader is the “magnetic centre of authority” (Santiago, “The Text’s Bauble or Pynchon’s Metafiction in *Mason & Dixon*” 95), when it comes to analyzing a text and deciding what to tell or what not to tell. In short, what we find in Cherrycoke’s narrative is precisely the moment of the “death of the author” (history) and “resurrection of the reader-interpreter” (myth). As history continues to be interpreted and shaped by the narrator, it becomes what Sascha Pohlmann calls “parageographical” history in which history and geography are “re-imagined” to “superimpose alternate maps of the world onto more familiar ones” (23).

If the enlightenment sensibility assumes a “belief in the human ability to domesticate [both] the natural” (Cohen 267) and supernatural by dividing the line between the “Native Americans and the settlers . . . [the] Old World and New [World] . . . tradition-bound Europe and the New Eden of America . . . [and] fact and fiction, history and romance” (Cohen 270), then what Cherrycoke is aiming at, here, in fact, is the disintegration of both the enlightenment project and postmodernist approach as his tales not only blur the fundamental categories between history and myth or truth and fantasy but also re-establish myth through history. History and myth are not mutually exclusive. While originated from a different point, they converge, intersect, and end up in a common destination—toward creating a new form of the myth of America. If history “falls short of a full, objective account of events” (Harris 201) because it is inevitably “hir’d, or coerc’d, only in Interests that must ever prove base” (Pynchon 350) as Cherrycoke argues, then perhaps it is to “disrupt the official account of events . . . [that] would be part of a set of new multivalent truths” creating a “multiplicity of histories”

(Harris 201).

However this does not cause narrative entropy nor de-center the ideas of linear time and history. Instead, by allowing a parallaxic paradigm to prism through Cherrycoke's narrative lens, this results in creating a mythic reality (or historic myth). It is within this "mythic space" that "new acts of mythogenesis" (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 61-62) occurs destabilizing both the rationalizing or historicizing of myth (the enlightenment project) and mythicizing of history (the postmodernist approach). In fact, this "new acts of mythogenesis" (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 61-62) through "frequent retellings and deployments" become "conventionalized and abstracted until it is reduced to a deeply encoded and resonant set of symbols" (*Gunfighter Nation* 5). Thus, just as the frontier myth is neither a historicized myth nor mythicized history but mythicized myth, Cherrycoke's parallaxic stories occurring in these mythic spaces are neither verified legends nor romanticized historical events but mythicized myths in which "new acts of mythogenesis" (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 61-62) takes place. This new act of mythogenesis is America's way of defining itself in "reference to [its own] frontier heritage" symbolically representing its "belief in limitless possibilities" (Mogen 26) and continually generating "visions of new possibilities, new frontiers" (Mogen 27). If so, diverging from the enlightenment sentiment and postmodernist project, then Cherrycoke's narrative is no other than his mythogenesis in action creating a sense of subjunctive possibilities and mythopoetic vision of America.

It is evident, just as many scholars agree, that the Mason-Dixon Line is a critical part of the colonial process that involves the "mapping" (Schell 72) of America. In fact, as colonists make claims to the American frontier, Schell argues that stories of conquest

legitimize their own “cultural mythologies stretching back into immemorial” (Schell 75). If so, stories of conquest do seem to harbor greater implications than what are expected of them. Unexpectedly, if we follow Schell’s logic, Cherrycoke’s paranormal, mythic, and subjunctive tales of America can be considered as a gesture of colonial myth-making. Just as the enlightenment project attempts to “mathematize nature” (Ireton 142) derived from its “anthropocentric determination” (Ireton 149), Cherrycoke’s mythification project likewise endeavors to conquer history by imposing its subjunctive dreams and desires onto history. On this level, mythical tales help to re-create Cherrycoke’s version of the myth of America by his use of the parallactic method that effectively accomplishes a seamless blending of history-myth. In this line of thought, Wood is right in suggesting that Cherrycoke’s narrative “has created a narrated . . . past [that] is being fitted to the needs of the present, scripted by hindsight, like the report of a prophetic after its fulfillment” (Wood 123). In other words, as a false prophetic and myth-maker, Cherrycoke, by weaving his own (fabricated) version of America into the fabric of the history of America, is able to create what Jeffery Staiger calls “reverse historicism” (641). On a similar note, Alessia Ricciardi indicates that *Mason & Dixon* “rewrites a crucial historical moment, denaturalizing history and [thus] blurring the boundaries that distinguish it from fiction” (1064). While Ricciardi would pithily interpret this feature as a “topography of the postmodern” (1064), I would rather identify this characteristic as a mythification of American history—Cherrycoke’s version/vision of the myth of America. Evans L. Smith argues that *Mason & Dixon* “make[s] use of the mythologies of the maze and the underworld” as Pynchon typically makes use of nekylas—ceremonies involving summoning of ghosts in order to predict the future—that “activate a dynamic interplay

between poesis and hermeneusis” (171). As a matter of fact, poesis (formation) and hermeneusis (interpretation) permeate *Mason & Dixon* as Cherrycoke’s narratology is structured like a nekyia—a narrative structure that operates a complex interaction between the formation and interpretation of the myth of America. In fact, analogous to Turner’s brilliant gesturing in converting anxieties directly associated with the closing of the frontier into other possibilities of expansion, we quickly see Cherrycoke making myth formation and interpretation. Just as Turner interprets the history of America in terms of myth, Cherrycoke likewise interprets the history of America in association with a subjunctive myth. While Cherrycoke regards the Mason-Dixon Line as pointless due to the fact that the Visto were later nullified, Cherrycoke nonetheless remarks how “Tales about America” (7) are required to be told because not only they are the stories of conquest but also they are stories that re-construct the vanishing mythical past. He firmly tells Franklin in his death bed that his tales were and still are a part of a “Construction, . . . a great single Engine, the size of a Continent. I have all the proofs you may require. Not all the Connexions are made yet, that’s why some of it is still invisible. Day by day the Pioneers and Surveyors go on, more points are being tied in, and soon become visible, as above, new Starts are recorded and named and plac’d in Almanacks” (772). By depicting Mason’s two children acting as faithful adherents to the subjunctive myth of America, Cherrycoke ends his tales:

“We can get jobs,” said William, “save enough to go out where you were,—”

“Marry and go out where you were,” said Doc.

“The Stars are so close you won’t need a Telescope.”

“The fish jump into your Arms. The Indians know Magick.”

“We’ll go there. We’ll live there.”

“We’ll fish there. And you too.” (773)

Analogous to the dreams and hopes of American pioneers and British imperialists, the children “are looking forward to, and dreaming of, life in America. They do this in ways that contain many seeds of hope and many of the seeds of destruction that have molded America into the ‘state’ it is today” (Smith 194) without any realistic notions about the life in America. They merely duplicate Cherrycoke’s mythopoetic vision—get jobs, save money, marry, go out where Mason and Dixon were, see the stars without a telescope, fish and learn magic from the Indians—of the American frontier.

Conclusion

Since *City of Glass* deals with characters who attempt to restore logocentricity, prelapsarian language, and Adamic rebirth, the novel dramatizes one of the central tenets—the frontier figure’s civilization project and his metamorphic impulse—of the frontier myth. More specifically, the novel’s preoccupation with a search for order, truth, and reality suggests that it aligns itself with the frontier project that attempts to create an ordered civilization from a chaotic wilderness. As *City of Glass* demonstrates, for this reason, rather than to read it as a postmodern detective fiction its logocentric proclivity allows us to decode it in relation to a frontier narrative. As a variant of a frontier narrative, *City of Glass* foregrounds the frontier paradigm that reads the world within an Old World and New World binary in which a frontier figure travels from the Old to the New in an attempt to restore prelapsarian innocence and regain vitalization. Just like Turner believed in re-creating the New World garden through transfiguring chaos (wilderness) into order (civilization), Auster’s characters (blindly) believe that they would be able to build a paradise in America and become a new man if they learned to speak God’s (prelapsarian) language and achieve Adamic rebirth and innocence. This was why Stillman becomes obsessed with creating a new language that would correspond to the world and Quinn is consumed by becoming a no-one—a cipher—who would ultimately accomplish Adamic rebirth. As I’ve shown, Quinn’s Adamic metamorphosis and Stillman’s logocentric project turn out to be civilizing missions in an attempt to decode the mystery of the (chaotic) world. Obviously, both Stillman and Quinn were, in fact, the replicating frontier paradigm’s manifest destiny—an errand into the frontier

wilderness—that is based on violence, conquest, and dominion. In other words, according to *City of Glass*, the frontier myth, despite its claim for progress—Quinn’s and Stillman’s attempt to transform disorder, chaos, and savagery into order and civilization—implicates its attempt to re-assign the world in a new world order.

Just as we’ve seen, since America’s manifest destiny was ineluctably associated with the American Dream, the frontier myth necessitates a certain type of figure to accomplish America’s manifest destiny—to make America a New World garden. Just as a frontier figure is an essential component of the frontier myth required to fulfill this mission, likewise, in *No Country For Old Men*, Moss is represented as a vital component necessary to accomplish the American Dream. In other words, just as Turner’s frontier figure is born out of the confrontation between savagery and civilizing possessing “coarseness and strength” (Turner 25), McCarthy’s hero, Moss, is depicted as a figure created out from the fatal clash between Chigurh and Bell. In order to paint Moss as an American frontier hero, it was necessary for Moss to possess the frontiersman’s traits such as traditionalism, rugged individualism, and violence as well as to participate in the dream making process. Just as the frontier myth required a romantic vision of America’s manifest destiny—commonly known as the frontier thesis—in a similar way, *No Country For Old Men* demanded a vision of America’s (or Moss’s) spirit. As it turns out, the novel portrays that vision through Moss, a (frontier) figure who not only combines traditionalism and civic order rugged individualism, violence, and savagery but also who associates them with the idea of the American Dream that completes America’s manifest destiny. However, as *No Country For Old Men* illustrates, it is violence—the violent confrontation between the New (Indian savagery of Chigurh) and the Old (European

civility of Bell)—that allows the emergence of a bona fide American figure (in this case, Moss) and preconditions the realization of the American Dream. In short, while the frontier myth privileges progress—free will, rugged individualism—and demands the participation of the dream-making process (i.e., the American Dream)—in reality, it preconditions the violent confrontation between the Old and the New just as a frontier figure emerges from this confrontation and combination of the European and the Indian. As we've seen from *No Country For Old Men*, as a true American, Moss not only combines Bell's traditionalism and civic order with Chigurh's rugged individualism, violence, and savagery but also links them with the idea of the American Dream—the belief in limitless possibilities and the sense of free will. In this way, while the novel summons replicated imagery of the traditional West that tells a story of the rugged frontier landscape in a postmodern era, *No Country For Old Men* testifies that the frontier myth necessitates violence inherent in the meeting between savagery and civilization.

While the frontier myth explains the progress of American civilization and possibility of attaining the American Dream through the encounter between savagery and civilization, it does so by implicating the necessity of a new and superior (American) society based on a capitalistic economic model. As investigated in the discussion of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, however, this economic system not only enforces the systemic categorization of the self-other (humans vs. androids) binary latent in the frontier paradigm but also imposes the position of the androids as a way of defining humans for socio-economic-political purposes. This is because, as we have seen, the capitalistic model of economy—a (flawed) system inherent in a frontier paradigm—can only be sustained through class differentiation and inequalities between humans and

androids. Contrary to Turner's frontier thesis, the frontier paradigm did not promote equality between classes but rather resulted in class divisions and inequities. In other words, to sustain and strengthen the status quo of Terra's socio-economic-political structure, class/racial hierarchy were required—just as the frontier thesis implicitly supported class division and suppression of the native Indians as a way to promote nationalism and national superiority. However, in order to implicate and enforce this paradigm, humans needed to develop an ideology or device that would justify class division and class hierarchy. As we have seen, in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* the Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test and Mercerism not only re-enforced the demarcation between humans and androids but also provided justifications for discriminating against androids for socio-economic-political privileges of humans. Thus, as it turns out, just as the defining factor that demarcates savagery and civilization has been the capacity for reasoning, civilized behavior, and compassion in the frontier paradigm, the novel informs that the determining element that distinguishes androids from humans is the ability for logical thinking and empathic responses. With these tools humans were able to acquire the justification needed to suppress or eliminate androids (passing as humans) that destabilize the ontological definitions between humans and androids and, in effect, invalidate the socio-economic-political privilege of humans. In the end, just as Indian hunters were needed in the frontier narratives, in Terra, as an android hunter, Rick is required to retire these androids in order to maintain class/racial hierarchy between humans and androids to establish human owners' socio-economic-political status.

In the end, the frontier myth was able to gain the momentum for its perpetuation because it acquired historical values extending its mythical properties toward reality. As I

have investigated the relationships between myth, mythopoetic vision, and reality in *Mason & Dixon*, its pervasive linkage between mythology and historicity encapsulated the ways in which its myth-making process is achieved. Just as “the American myth was a synthetic process of reconciling the romantic-conventional myths of Europe to American experience” (Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* 17), Cherrycoke’s version of the myth of America is created by the linkage between myth and reality. Just as the myth-maker uses narratives as a “means of controlling and directing the development of [a] myth . . . to induce the mythopoetic affirmation in its audience” (Slotkin *Regeneration Through Violence* 15), Cherrycoke, as a myth-artist, manipulates Mason’s and Dixon’s narratives through conflating myth with reality in order to promote his mythopoetic vision of America—as a (frontier) space of magic, dream and infinite possibility. However, as seen in the novel, it becomes quite clear that this vision as it re-simulates the myth of the frontier is no longer viable because this vision preconditions America’s loss of magic and dream through the encroachment of seemingly unlimited frontier resources and opportunities. Just as Turner not only predicted the closing of the frontier as a direct result of continued expansion of the Western territories but also devised ways to perpetuate his version of the frontier myth, Cherrycoke, in a likewise manner, not only realizes the disappearance of subjunctive possibilities and mythical properties inherent in America’s frontier but also formulates methods to sustain his mythopoetic vision of America. Thus, in order to counterbalance America’s loss of the frontier, Cherrycoke’s paranormal, mythic, and subjunctive tales of America can be considered as a colonial myth-making process that attempts to conquest history by imposing its subjunctive dreams and desires onto history. In fact, Cherrycoke’s

picaresque tall tales of Mason's and Dixon's biographic accounts, historical facts, legends, conjectures, and even fabrications serves this purpose—to inculcate a cyclic and perpetual vision of America's subjunctive possibilities and dreams. For this reason, *Mason & Dixon* can be read less as a historical narrative that delineates Mason's and Dixon's frontier experience but more as a mythical narrative that recapitulates the symbolic essence of America and that transfigures American history into American romance, allegory, and myth. As in the frontier myth, Cherrycoke's narrative becomes mythicized and interprets America's historical present in terms of its mythic past. As a result, Cherrycoke's narratives not only create a true measure of myth as a construct of reality but also establish a new American frontier myth by imposing its subjunctive dreams, fantasies, and desires onto history.

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VITA

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