

# Politics of Landscape and National Identity in Hawthorne's Travel Sketches and Notes-Book

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**Abstract** As one of the representative writers of the early romantic period in the United States, Hawthorne's travel writing has obvious romantic characteristics. On the aesthetic level, he knows how to grasp the light and shadow effect projected on the characters and change the picturesque favor of ruins, irregularity and nature, creating the rules of the American picturesque landscape. At the political level, his vision not only looks abroad, but also gazes at the homeland, stripping out the political ecology and conception of ethnic integration of the United States through the comparison of the landscape. Finally, with the strategy of landscape writing followed by historical writing, he highly unifies politics and aesthetics, and carves the metaphor of national identity into the picturesque landscape, so as to achieve the purpose of easing national contradictions.

**Keywords** Nathaniel Hawthorne; travel sketches and notes-book; politics of landscape; national identity

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## Introduction

“By the middle of the eighteenth century in England, ‘romantic’ had become an adjective meaning wild or strange or picturesque, and was applied more to painting and to scenery than to poetry” (Bloom xvi). Hawthorne's romantic approach is

imprinted not only in Hester Prynne's immortal love affair with Dimmesdale, but also in the shadow that casts over them, exerting its influence on all of it. As in *The Scarlet Letter*, "the wooden jail was already marked with weather-stains and other indications of age, which gave a yet darker aspect to its beetle-browed and gloomy front. The rust on the ponderous iron-work of its oaken door looked more antique than anything else in the New World. Like all that pertains to crime, it seemed never to have known a youthful era" (Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* 39). The dark and depressing tone of the whole novel begin to prevail throughout. Leo Marx said in the prologue of *The Scarlet Letter* that published in 1959, "landscapes ... is inseparable from policy and action and meaning.... [Hawthorne] turns the whole landscape into a metaphor" (qtd.in Levy 377). Edward H. Davidson viewed landscape as "a symbolic abbreviation which is capable of an infinite extension beyond the mere spatio-temporal limitations of characters in a scene; they are in it, but it is never permissively subservient to them" (Davidson 493). "Throwing his eyes anxiously in the direction of the voice, he indistinctly beheld a form under the trees, clad in garments so sombre, and so little relieved from the gray twilight into which the clouded sky and the heavy foliage had darkened the noontide, that he knew not whether it were a woman or a shadow" (*The Scarlet Letter* 148), in *The Scarlet Letter*, Leo B. Levy subtly captured and analyzed the environmental description of Hester's encounter with Dimmesdale in the woods: The Hudson River painter's practice of depicting shrunken or unrecognizable figures in the surrounding wilderness is similar to Hawthorne's description here, but Hawthorne's motivation is partly psychological, he wants to show a ghostly state, which makes Hester's image like "a specter that had stolen out from among his thoughts"(148), "flickering light and shadow emanating from a vast forest and reflecting every nuance of thought and mood of the characters" (Levy 378).

### **Travel Writing: The Shaping and Correction of National View**

The flourishing development of travelogue themes during the Romanticism period was mainly influenced by two factors. First, rationality was questioned by writers as the standard for thinking about everything, and imagination and sensibility became the synonyms and weapons of Romanticism. The second is industry and war. The development of industry has brought about the innovation of transportation for the people, while war is the stimulant injected into the body to make people's eyes open. In the international environment, after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, the European continent faced rebirth and light from the dust, becoming the first choice for tourists from all over the world. As Thomas Nugent put it, the Grand

Tour tended “to enrich the mind with knowledge, to rectify the judgment, to remove the prejudices of education, to compose the outward manners, and in a word form the complete gentleman” (Humble and Youngs 41).

Throughout the American writers of the Romantic period, almost all the well-known novelists are masters of travel writing, such as Washington Irving, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Some American romantic writers also perfectly followed the continental travel lines and mainly visited three countries, England, France and Italy. In line with the purpose of the continental travel proposed by Nugent, they visited the literary giants such as Wordsworth, Burns, Scott and Shakespeare or visited their former homes, which can be regarded as a typical pilgrimage. Unlike Melville’s adventures from maritime island, Irving and Emerson focused on Britain, the absolute hegemon of the nineteenth century world. Although Britain has been the political reference of development for the United States, there is another reason that gazes at Britain, namely the culture and blood ties. In *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon*, Irving faces the fallacies of the British people about the United States. His identification and defense of national identity is the opposite of his Rip Van Winkle. Despite the pressure of publication, Irving still criticized hypocritical and discredited Britain. Emerson’s *English Traits*, on the other hand, is more like a guide book, dissecting Britain in every detail. “Great traveler is a kind of introspective: as she covers the ground outwardly, so she advances inwardly” (Morris 9). The subject and perspective of Emerson’s evaluation are grand and careful, showing as much of a nation as possible. His praise of Britain shows a certain fairness, because behind the praise he gives the warnings for the people of his country, such as “the English delight to indulge, as if to signalize their commanding freedom...The thing done avails, and not what is said about it. An original sentence, a step forward, is worth more than all the censures” (Emerson 15). As a symbol of the American cultural spirit, Emerson was keenly aware of the influence of residual British ideology on the construction of American culture, he stressed “...which English forms are sure to awaken in independent minds” (43). Instead of rejecting it, it is better to “...aid himself, by comparing with it the civilizations of the farthest east and west, the old Greek, the Oriental, and, much more, the ideal standard (42)”. The impact of Emerson’s travelogue on the United States and its people is both profound and realistic.

In mainland of American, a journey was presented by the Knickerbocker group of writers, such as Washington Irving and James Cooper. The Hudson River School, led by Thomas Cole, and landscape designer, horticulturist, and author

Andrew Downing marked the northern part of the map as the “Northern Tour” or “Fashion Tour” also known to some as the Grand Tour of America, including the Hudson Valley and Catskills, the White Mountains, the Erie Canal, Lake George, the Connecticut Valley, and Niagara Falls. By the 1830s, travelers who wanted to go to the North could benefit from infrastructure including stagecoach and steamboat. It helped bourgeois travelers from Northeastern cities enjoy picturesque landscapes. Then tour routes expanded westward to include trips to the Great Lakes, eventually opening up the border areas of Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio to tourists. From Thoreau’s *A Walk to Wachusett* and *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* to Irving’s *The Sketch Book*, they both applied the aesthetics of the picturesque to the landscapes they passed through, from myths to folk tales, reflecting on the relationship between national history and time. As Irving said, Americans “never need an American look beyond his own country for the sublime and beautiful of natural scenery” (Irving 17).

In 1832, Hawthorne published a large number of travel notes written during his travels to the North in the *New England Journal*, as will be mentioned below: *The Canal-Boat, A Night Scene, An Ontario Steam-boat, Old Ticonderoga: A Picture of the Past*. In 1853, Hawthorne accepted one of the most well-paid appointments, as the American consul in Liverpool, England, wandering through the towns and countryside, enjoying local customs and practices. *Our Old Home* was first published. On The eve of the outbreak of the Civil War, he published his last Italian romance, *The Marble Faun*. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Hawthorne traveled to Washington, D.C., with his close editorial friend William Dickner, where he met Abraham Lincoln and other prominent figures, and in 1862 *The Atlantic Monthly* published his article *Chiefly About War Matters*. In 1870 and 1871, His friend, who was an editor, compiled and published *Passages from the English Notebooks* and *Passages from the French and Italian Notebooks*. In 1879, *Passages from the American Note-Books* was published.

### **Politics of Landscape: Competition and Integration of National Identity**

The nineteenth century was an era of global competition. The decay Napoleon brought about had not yet dissipated on the European continent, the Crimean War had risen again and the American continent was not peaceful too. Britain was still unwilling to loosen its chains on the American continent and fought with the United States again. President James Monroe first proposed the Monroe Doctrine in his seventh annual State of the Union address to Congress on December 2, 1823. Monroe asserted that the New World and the Old World would remain dominant in

the distinctly separate spheres, and further efforts by European powers to control or influence sovereign states in the region would be seen as a threat to American security. In return, the United States would recognize and not interfere in existing European colonies or in the internal affairs of European countries. “Monroe Doctrine’s geographic construction of a Western Hemisphere and its relative locations of Europe and North and South America were crucial to the formation of an ideology of American exceptionalism that both claimed a radical separation from European colonialism and enabled cultural, military, and economic dominance” (Murphy 6). The “separation” between the United States and Britain is particularly evident in Hawthorne’s short story *Legends of The Province House*. Esther Dudley as the last Englishman in the province house, she “firm in the belief that had fasten its roots about her heart, beheld only the principal personage, and never doubted that this was the long-looked-for Governor, to whom she was to surrender up her charge. As he approached, she involuntary sank down on her knees and tremblingly held forth the heavy key” (*The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne* 988). The representative of subverting “a symbol of the past” is “chosen Governor of Massachusetts” Hancock. He made grand statements: “we represent a new race of men—living no longer in the past, scarcely in the present—but projecting our lives forward into future” (989).

*Our Old Home* was written during Hawthorne’s tenure as U.S. Consul General in Liverpool from 1853 to 1857. In *Our Old Home*, the acute problem of Hawthorne’s narrative of self and other is the reappearance of Mrs. Dudley and Hancock. He claims that he “Sitting, as it were, in the gateway between the Old World and the New” (*Our Old Home* 10). It separated the United States from Britain, as Monroe claimed. Before comparing the two countries, Hawthorne made clear his firm national position: “my patriotism forbade me to take down either the bust or the pictures, both because it seemed no more than right that an American Consulate (being a little patch of our nationality imbedded into the soil and institutions of England) should fairly represent the American taste in the fine arts” (5). This was the political influence of the American exceptionalism behind the foreign consuls and gave him a great sense of superiority, but he found that there existed a striking contrast between his strong sense of superiority and the colonial nostalgia of his own people, such as the American grocery store owner who imagined himself as some kind of English nobleman and the two women who claimed to have ties of kinship with Queen Elizabeth. Hawthorne blames it all on that “English character would have been too ponderous a dead-weight upon our progress” (23). “Since the Revolutionary War, the other side of the Atlantic has always been a lingering

cultural shadow and an ‘otherness’ at the core of American culture and national character” (Fang Cheng 83).

From the time that groups of explorers such as Columbus set sail and opened Pandora’s Box, the imperial path of colonization provided ample conditions for adventurers and travelers to “Putting the world on paper” (Hulme and Youngs 17), Making it “a symbolic carrier for shaping and expanding one’s own spatial imagination and gazing at the world of others with ‘imperialist eyes’ to satisfy his impulse for adventure, his desire to make a fortune, his enthusiasm for preaching and his fantasy of utopia” (Zhang Chaoming 109). In *The Canal Boat*, Hawthorne observes on board:

Perceiving that the Englishman was taking notes in a memorandum-book, with occasional glances round the cabin, I presumed that we were all to figure in a future volume of travels, and amused my ill-humor by falling into the probable vein of his remarks. He would hold up an imaginary mirror, wherein our reflected faces would appear ugly and ridiculous, yet still retain an undeniable likeness to the originals. Then, with more sweeping malice, he would make these caricatures the representatives of great classes of my countrymen. (*Hawthorne’s American Travel Sketches* 39)

Homi Bhabha compared every nation to two pairs of eyes, which always “gaze” inward or outward at the same time as they define themselves. On the one hand, they seek the “pleasures of the hearth”; on the other hand, they confront or deny the “unheimlich terror of the space or race of the Other” (Bhabha 2). By comparing the knowledge of other peoples and cultures they met, those “backward”, “underdeveloped” and “uncivilized” nations and countries, as a mirror allow Europeans redefined their natural and cultural position in the world and imagined European civilization as the most advanced civilization in world history.<sup>1</sup> Hawthorne used “imaginary” to describe the mirror. The hidden discourse behind it constituted the mutual gaze of the two, that was, the act of “fancy of national image” to maintain the colonial position. The English traveler portrayed “a Virginia schoolmaster as a scholar of America, but compared his erudition to a schoolboy’s Latin theme, with scraps, ill-selected and worse put together” (*Travel Sketches* 39). Farmers’ tirades against dogma were also recorded by him boasting about

<sup>1</sup> See Chen Xiaolan and Zhou Lingyi. “Travel, Masculinity and Femininity: The Gender Perspective on ‘Studies of Travel Writing’ in Britain and America.” *Journal of East China Normal University*, vol. 54, no. 5, 2022, pp. 80-89+190.

congressional debates, newspaper stories, and caucuses. For British travelers in the former colonies, the American landscape evoked mixed feelings. “The American landscape that was different from Britain’s also inspired their imperialist ‘sublimity’.” When they described this sense of ‘dislocation’ as ‘sublime’, they actually included the United States in the categories of ‘disorder’ and ‘chaos’ and sought to reinterpret ‘Englishness’” (He Chang 162), transforming and controlling former colonies.

Regarding the mutual gaze behind the mirror, British traveler was to reclaim their “Englishness” by depicting the “chaos” and “backwardness” of the United States. The traveler explored himself while exploring the other, and wrote his self-image while describing the image of the other. Explorers, colonists, and other visitors often set out in their own country’s travel literature, carrying their own national ideology with them. At the same time, identity independence and the national competition reached a climax when Hawthorne described the modern flat glass used in the shop in *Our Old Home*. Under Hawthorne’s brush, the United States was associated with “modern” and “new enough”. Britain was associated with “old fashioned” and “Gothic”, “The street is an emblem of England itself. What seems new in it is chiefly a skillful and fortunate adaptation of what such a people as ourselves would destroy” (*Our Old Home* 111). Through understanding the customs of Britain, Hawthorne has completely become “the other”, expressing the statement of “shoe is on the other foot” and becoming the “representative” of the United States.

With the consent of the Fugitive Slave Act by the United States Congress on September 18, 1850, growing tensions between the North and the South made Hawthorne to begin to generate national anxiety and envision the possibility of African American integration with white Americans. As Henry James put it: “I have alluded to the absence in Hawthorne of that quality of realism which is now so much in fashion, an absence in regard to which there will of course be more to say” (James 4). But Hawthorne, as a white American in New England who had written his autobiography for his friend Franklin Pierce’s presidential campaign, was unable to stay out of the country’s sharp conflicts. *The Marble Faun* was written by Hawthorne while he was living in Italy on the eve of the American Civil War. This travelogue combines allegorical, pastoral, gothic and travel elements. In the preface, compared with America where “no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong” (*The Marble Faun* 4), Hawthorne said Italy could “affording a sort of poetic or fairy precinct” (4), but the origin of the story clearly points to the United States, “It will be very long, I trust, before romance-writers may find congenial and easily handled themes, either in the annals of our stalwart republic, or

in any characteristic..." (4), so Italy is the perfect place to accommodate stories and avoid contradictions. When he saw the statue in the center of the square, Kenyon said, "possibly they would give me a commission to carve the one-and-thirty (is that the number?) sister States, each pouring a silver stream from a separate can into one vast basin, which should represent the grand reservoir of national prosperity" (184).

Kenyon's self-doubt about the nation is the common national awareness under the self-government of the states, that is, the loose federation. Then the irony of the British artist directly leads to the fact that the prosperity of the country cannot be separated from the original sin committed, he said "you could set those same one-and-thirty States to cleansing the national flag of any stains that it may have incurred" (124). Then he immediately mentioned that Corine and Lord Neville's "temporary estrangement" could hardly be separated from the rivalry between the North and the South, and that the source of the discord was slavery, that is, "the stain on the flag". Here, Hawthorne portrays two types of people: the white Americans represented by Kenyon and Hilda, and the racially marginalized groups represented by Donatello and Miriam. Miriam's "African blood" was clearly marks in this novel, while Donatello, Hawthorne, repeatedly emphasized his similarity to Faun, his "inhuman" nature and "inexact character", which makes him unrestrained. In *Chiefly About War Matters*, Hawthorne's description of the runaway black soldiers was almost identical to Donatello's: "so picturesquely natural in manners, and wearing such a crust of primeval simplicity, (which is quite polished away from the Northern black man,) that they seemed a kind of creature by themselves, not altogether human, but perhaps quite as good, and akin to the fauns and rustic deities of olden times" (*Chiefly About War Matters* 50). It depicted a pair of sharp antagonism of race.

In the face of Donatello's crimes, Hawthorne gives two solutions, one is Kenyon's utterance: "Has there been an unutterable evil in your young life? Then crowd it out with good, or it will lie corrupting there forever, and cause your capacity for better things to partake its noisome corruption!" (59). Hawthorne was trying to explore the means of national integration, and guiding Donatello to rebirth. The other one is Hilda's psychological commitment. The result is that Donatello, like Dimmesdale, found wrongs in tragedy. Miriam is morally responsible for the crime, and she is doomed to be haunted by it forever. Kenyon and Hilda returned to the United States and responded only to Donatello and Miriam: "But when the kneeling figure, beneath the open eye of the Pantheon arose, she looked towards the pair, and extended her hands with a gesture of benediction. Then they knew that it was Miriam. They suffered her to glide out of the portal, however, without a



greeting; for those extended hands, even while they blessed, seemed to repel, as if Miriam stood on the other side of a fathomless abyss, and warned them from its verge” (*The Marble Faun* 282). It also meant that Hawthorne has not yet found a way to reconcile and integrate blacks and whites.

### **Picturesque Landscape: National Identity and Community Shaping**

The travelogue genre has been largely neglected in the study of literary criticism. Even in its heyday in the mid-19th century, America’s picturesque travel sketches have languished, with many Europeans, Britons, and even some domestic critics claim that the American landscape lacks historical connections and ruins, which makes it uninteresting and essentially unsuited to picturesque travel. But like Theodore Dwight, Gideon Miner Davidson, and Nathaniel Parker Willis put the American landscape on stage, bringing the benefits of travel into homes. The new American middle class turned to the picturesque “...to win traditional sanctions for [their] new experience, finding new ways to imagine and construct the American landscape from within the inherited aesthetic of the picturesque” (qtd. in Evelev 4).

Hawthorne’s broad concept of “picturesque” was first proposed by Henry James, James noted that “Hawthorne is perpetually looking for images which shall place themselves in picturesque correspondence with the spiritual facts with which he is concerned” (James 119). Within the aesthetic framework established by numerous artists, Hawthorne’s travel sketches used picturesque visual frameworks and spatio-temporal variations to comment on social issues in American history.

Hawthorne wrote to Horatio Bridge in 1857, “in the sense in which an Englishman has a country. I never conceived, in reality, what a true and warm love of country is, till I witnessed it in the breasts of Englishmen. The States are too various and too extended to form really one country. New England is quite as large a lump of earth as my heart can really take in” (*The Letters 1857-1864* 8). Literary nationalism, like the early formation of American nationalism, remains a site of perpetual struggle. As David Waldstreicher underscores, “local, regional, and national identities existed simultaneously, complementing or contesting one another” (qtd. In Levine 4). John D. Kerkerling also believes that from Hawthorne’s early local writing, he “treating local traditions as productive of shared identity, but for Hawthorne the identity they construct is local – specific to a town – rather than regional or national” (Kerkerling 77).

Despite the regional character of the landscape, the religious and political roots are solid. The influx of Irish immigrants had always been a great threat to America’s Puritanic-based religious culture, threatening to dilute American unique political

and racial identity. From Hawthorne's description of the Irish group, it is difficult to define the national identity of the group from the perspective of him. In *A Night Scene*, the dark hues seem to pull people back to the wilderness they once were, and the rough Irish were "imperfect creatures" and "shadow-like" who wandered around the edge of darkness. In the end of the narrative, Hawthorne created supernatural images and deflected contradictions to the least imaginative spectators, likening them to "devils" (*Travel Sketches* 49), further refusing to humanize them.

In *An Ontario Steam-Boat*, they were mob, exiles of another climate and the scum which every wind blows off the Irish shores. The atmosphere was a kind of fear for the future of America. When he saw an Irish family sitting around a fire, the light of the fire made them feel pleasant, like a comfortable family. Hawthorne began to think about the possibility of including the Irish community into the picturesque painting, and he began "meditating on the varied congregation of human life that was beneath me," pitied "what was to become of them all, when not a single one had the certainty of food or shelter?" (54). Because immigrants posed a threat to the future landscape, Hawthorne reconstructed the landscape through "strong light and deep shade" (48). The previous descriptions often focused on the supernatural environment. But at that time the focus of image was projected into the "home" to achieve the effect of shining light into the darkness, a picture of the future. The Irish here have changed their decaying image to a picturesque one.

Hawthorne was careful enough to know that the picturesque effect was not an Irish invention, he emphasized that "with all these homely items, the repose and sanctity of the old wood do not seem to be destroyed or profaned. It overshadows these poor people, and assimilates them somehow or other to the character of its natural inhabitants. Their presence did not shock me any more than if I had merely discovered a squirrel's nest in a tree" (*American Note-Books* 140), "a sure prophecy of better days to come" (*Travel Sketches* 53), the land of miracles in the United States brought them benefits. Hawthorne fundamentally denied its legitimate identity and compromised that they acquire citizenship rather than become members of the nation. Twenty-eight years later, when *The Marble Faun* was published, the natural divide between Catholics and Puritans reconciled in Hilda, an American painter. When she witnessed the model's murder, she repeatedly sought solace in the Catholic faith:

If she knelt, if she prayed, if her oppressed heart besought the sympathy of divine womanhood afar in bliss, but not remote, because forever humanized by the memory of mortal griefs, was Hilda to be blamed? It was not a Catholic

kneeling at an idolatrous shrine, but a child lifting its tear-stained face to seek comfort from a mother. (*The Marble Faun* 128)

Even as she was being blessed by the priest, she reaffirmed her identity as the “daughter of the Puritans”. Although Hilda and Kenyon continued to debate the merits of the Catholic faith and then Hilda was kidnapped by a priest and imprisoned in a nunnery, the threat of Catholicism was more or less neutralized in the final resistance. The moment represented a cautious reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants.

The federal system in the United States have made the concept of nation very weak to the public. The concept of region is more stable than that of country. As Wordsworth has even said, “what seemed a paradox, that they needed a civil war in America, to teach the necessity of knitting the social ties stronger” (Emerson 25). Unlike the local identity in Salem emphasized in Hawthorne’s earlier works, the history of Franklin Pierce’s home state of New Hampshire forced him to distance himself from the region toward Washington D.C, several aging survivors of the revolution “at the first tap of the shrouded drum, to move and join their beloved Washington” (*Life of Franklin Pierce* 19). This scene gave “Pierce’s a stronger sense, than most of us can attain, of the value of that Union which these old heroes had risked so much to consolidate — of that common country which they had sacrificed everything to create” (20). It can also be seen from Hawthorne’s later writing style that history writing became writing strategies he usually used. Angela Miller asserted “landscape as a form of symbolic action”. Nineteenth-century landscape painters struggled to find “visual or narrative resolution to unresolved problems of cultural identity or to test alternative futures. Conflicts between freedom and order, change and continuity, growth and stability could be rehearsed through spatial scenarios” (Miller 14).

In *Chiefly About War Matters*, Hawthorne met American painters Leutze in Washington, D.C. Two paintings *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* and *Washington Crossing the Delaware* made the artist famous. Hawthorne saw *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* that displayed inside the White House and depicted a group of settlers and explorers crossing the Golden Gate Strait. This work represented an affirmation of history and a commitment to American exceptionalism, “link between aesthetics and politics is the ‘central, explicit subject’ of Hawthorne’s essay, he invokes aesthetics, in fact, to stress the social immobility that has characterized their lives in the South and will continue to do so should they succeed in getting to the North” (Baker 435). The picturesque became Hawthorne’s

new way of understanding history. Although the cracks in the dome suggested that the country was on the verge of division, he praised when he saw such a magnificent fresco “so rich in thought and suggestiveness, shall glow with a fire of their own, — a fire which, I truly believe, will consume every other pictorial decoration of the Capitol, or, at least, will compel us to banish those stiff and respectable productions to some less conspicuous gallery” (*Chiefly About War Matters* 46).

The politics of land and land ownership work through picturesque aesthetics. “...producing new forms of artistic beauty from the natural features of the Rocky-Mountain region, which Leutze seems to have studied broadly and minutely” (46). Like the early depictions of the Western landscape, the emphasis on landscapes with American characteristics was exhilarating at a time when the country was Mired in conflict. The idea of shaping national identity based on national history is particularly important in this painting, as Cole mentioned in a polemic, American scenes are not destitute of historical and legendary associations, the great struggle for freedom has made many places sacred, and many mountains, streams, and rocks have their legends.<sup>1</sup> Cole identified the Revolution and American nature and colonial “legends” as viable sources that could rival European “antiquity” to identify American picturesque landscapes.

Although Fort Ticonderoga reflected the residual violence of America’s past on the landscape, it exemplified the picturesque American past as a resource for travelers and writers. Hawthorne imagined “a process of Americanization in which the historical time and spaces of European colonial conflict lapse into ‘natural’ ruins” (Evelev 39). By engrave America’s past in the landscape, the landscape metaphor became a powerful force in building unity. According to Anderson’s theory of nationalism, one of the preconditions for the establishment of national identity is the existence of nation “glide into a limitless future” (Anderson 11-12).

In the key stage of the Civil War, the historical background of the painting is the two major historical events: the independence revolution and the westward movement. It represented the common cultural memory of the American people. The hunters in wilderness with western characteristics and vagrants are embedded in the painting with picturesque costumes, so that such a common cultural identity brings the United States into the painting, which was original and had obvious American characteristics. Under this circumstance, the United States can be perfectly represented and interpreted, which can awaken national emotions and

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1 See Cole, Thomas. “Essay on American Scenery.” *American Monthly Magazine*, 1 January 1836, pp. 1-12. Available at: <<https://thomascole.org/wp-content/uploads/Essay-on-American-Scenery.pdf>> (accessed July 26, 2023)

alleviate conflicts, and is of great significance to shaping a federal country with political and cultural unity.

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