

**A CONTEMPORARY REVIEW ON SENSE OF PLACE  
AND BORDER IN NINETEENTH CENTURY  
NARRATIVES OF AMERICAN EXPANSIONISM**

**On Dokuzuncu Yüzyıl Amerikan Yayılmacılık Anlatılarında  
Mekân ve Sınır Algısı Üzerine Çağdaş Bir Bakış**

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**Abstract**

Since its discovery, the New World has had a lasting impact on Western mind. While the geographical explorations of fifteenth century were progressing as an outcome of economic and political competition in Western Europe, transatlantic voyages transformed the feudal darkness of the Middle Ages and the concept of borderline. Beginning with the thirteen colonies in the Eastern sea board of North America, the Anglo Saxon dominance started its course of expansionism with the foundation of the United States of America. In this era, frontiersmen's diaries, pamphlets, works of literature, political articles and various other cultural products of folk and high art were highlighting American patriotism, which gained momentum within Westward expansion. This study aims to review the sense of *place* and *border* in nineteenth century narratives of American expansionism and trace back the historical imprints of today's American notion of frontier with reference to John O'Sullivan's essay "The Great Nation of Futurity" (1839), Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis "Significance of the Frontier" (1893), Washington Irving's travel writing, *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835), Walt Whitman's poem "A Passage to India" (1871); autobiography of William Apes, *A Son of the Forest* (1829), the paintings of Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze's *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1861) and Albert Bierstadt's *Valley of Yosemite* (1865).

**Key Words:** American Expansionism, Manifest Destiny, *place*, *border*.

**Özet**

Keşfinden bu yana Yeni Dünya Batı düşünce yapısını derinden etkilemiştir. On beşinci yüzyıldaki coğrafi keşifler, Batı dünyasının ticari ve politik iktidar rekabetiyle başlarken, bu yüzyıla birlikte kıtasal sınırların ötesine, okyanus aşırı gidilen seyahatler, Orta Çağ Avrupa'sının yüksek duvarlı, kapalı feodal kentleri ve hanedanlıklarının yaşantısını, dolayısıyla, *sınır* anlayışını da dönüşüme uğratmıştır. Bilinmeyen coğrafyaların egzotizmi, Batı'nın hayal gücünde Yeni bir Dünya, kendilerine bahşedilmiş bir cennet izlenimi uyandırmıştır. On yedinci ve on sekizinci yüzyıllarda, Kuzey Amerika'nın Doğu kıyısında on üç İngiliz kolonisi olarak başlamış olan Anglo Sakson hâkimiyeti, Amerika Birleşik Devlet'lerinin kuruluşu ile kıtasal yayılma sürecini başlatmıştır. Bu çalışma, on dokuzuncu yüzyıl Amerikan yayılmacılığını meşrulaştırmada önemli rol oynamış olan farklı türlerden anlatılardaki özel *mekân* ve *sınır* algısını incelemeyi ve bu bağlamda günümüz Amerikan kültüründe de *farklılık* kavramı üzerinden devam ettirilmekte olan *sınır* kavramının tarihsel izlerini sürmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Böylece, Amerikan milliyetçiliği ve kıtasal yayılmacılığının ulusun Aşikâr Alın Yazısı olduğu söylemini yaymada önemli rol oynamış olan bu kültürel ürünler arasından, John O'Sullivan'ın makalesi "The Great Nation of Futurity" (1839), Frederick Jackson Turner'ın "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893) adlı tezi, Washington Irving'in *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835) adlı seyahatnamesi, Walt Whitman'ın "A Passage to India" (1871) adlı şiiri, William Apes'in *A Son of the Forest* (1829) adlı otobiyografisi ve on dokuzuncu yüzyıl Amerikan peyzaj resimlerinden örnek olarak seçilmiş olan, Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze'un *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1861) ve Albert Bierstadt'ın *Valley of Yosemite* (1865) adlı resimleri incelenecektir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Amerikan yayılmacılığı, Aşikâr Alın Yazısı, *mekân*, *sınır*.

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## 1. Introduction

At its first sight, the lure of the New World was conceived as an idyllic gateway as Christopher Columbus pointed out in his diary that neither reason nor mathematics nor maps were guiding him but the words of Isaiah: “[...] it is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out a tent to dwell in: [...]” (Isa., 40:22) Seventeenth century New Englander Puritan writer Cotton Mather also depicted North American shores in his *The Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) in a similar point of view: “I write the wonders of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, flying from the Depravations of Europe, to the American Strand [...]” (Mather, 1994: 258). In both of these accounts, we see that the world called “America,” both North and South would become a world invaded by meanings as much as facts. From its discovery onward, its nature, geography, climate and indigenous cultures have been the sites where fantasy and fear would determine the contours of reality. So, from the accounts of both Columbus and Mather, we also understand -as the Mexican historian Edmundo O’Gorman has pointed out - that Vespucci’s “*Mundus Novus*” / “New World” was not only explored but also invented, - through which one can trace down the imprints of religious, political and historical influence of European culture. On the other hand, as we see in nineteenth century American frontier narratives, historical and cultural heritages of both North and South Americas - antedating the commencement of European settlement- were also nourishing the European imagination. Thus, while violently displacing the indigenous life styles, the European / English explorers, conquistadors, colonists, and settlers were also being nourished by the mythological frame work and the cultural mindset of native cultures of the Americas. This means that the parameters of early American literature and art can go back as far as the beginning of the early modern period in Europe and include everything from narratives of discovery to utopian fantasies about the creation of Paradise as well as providing mutual cultural interactions between European and native peoples of America. Accordingly, while the geographical explorations of fifteenth century were progressing as an outcome of economic and political competition in Western Europe, transatlantic voyages transformed the feudal darkness of the Middle Ages and the concept of borderline. British Empire commenced and sustained its dominance in North America in late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Portugal, France and Spain had already been imperial powers of both North and South Americas. Beginning with the thirteen colonies in the Eastern sea board of North America, the Anglo Saxon dominance started its course of expansionism with the foundation of the United States of America. Louisiana Purchase in 1803; invasion of West Florida in 1810 and the annexation of Texas in 1845 gave way to continental expansion. Thus, national frontiers of the United States were not only gathering the Eastern lands with the uncivilized Mid-West and Far West, but it was also bringing the *white law* in confrontation with the Native American tribal life. In this era, frontiersmen’s diaries, pamphlets, works of literature, political articles and various other cultural products of folk and high art were highlighting American patriotism, which gained momentum within Westward expansion. Accordingly, through these cultural productions, a national narrative of an exceptional American democracy of equal opportunities and freedom was being disseminated in order to promote migrations and settlements in the expanding frontier. So, American democracy was identified with the *frontier* metaphor in nineteenth century. This *frontier* concept was a popular theme in nineteenth century works of mainstream literature and art in legitimizing American expansionism as they exposed certain binary oppositions such as civilization and nature; Christianity and paganism; law and outlaw and consequently “us” and “them”. As a resolution to these binary opposites, domestic and foreign politics of the United States offered a mono-ethnic national identity, which was White- Anglo Saxon and Protestant

and claimed that Westward expansion – both continental and overseas – was the Manifest Destiny of the nation. It has been clear that today's foreign and domestic politics of the United States follows a similar route with nineteenth century American sense of frontier / borderline. Thus, today's notion of *difference* has appeared as a substitute for nineteenth century notion of American frontier. Nevertheless, contemporary critics of culture have offered new understandings on the sense of *place* and *border* as a response to political sentiments of American culture. So far as it has been highlighted, this study aims to review the sense of *place* and *border* in nineteenth century narratives of American expansionism and trace back the historical imprints of today's notion of American frontier with reference to John O'Sullivan's essay "The Great Nation of Futurity" (1839), Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis "Significance of the Frontier" (1893), Washington Irving's travel writing, *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835), Walt Whitman's poem "A Passage to India" (1871); autobiography of William Apes, *A Son of the Forest* (1829), the paintings of Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1861) and Albert Bierstadt, *Valley of Yosemite* (1865). The reason for juxtaposing such different cultural materials within the scope of this study is the belief that intertextuality would bring about new understandings in reviewing these nineteenth century frontier narratives as well as abridging the content –the notion of borderline – to that of the boundary between genres, which, in our day, has lost its legitimacy over the distinction between fact and fiction. Thus, these cultural products, which were a means in disseminating the political discourse of nineteenth century American patriotism and expansionism, will be examined with reference to contemporary perspectives on the sense of *place* and *border*.

## 2. Contemporary Perspectives on Sense of Place and Border

The notion of borderline has been a characteristic of today's cultural spaces as well as it had been a prominent aspect of nineteenth century American culture. Contemporary global culture and the political sentiments of multicultural societies have revealed the symptoms of certain cultural contradictions. For instance, one of the prevalent conflicts is derived from the fear that global interactions among remote cultures would cause annihilation or assimilation of local identities, therefore delegitimizing cultural authenticities. The reason for this fear is felt not only through transnational sites of global culture but also within the boundaries of nation states because of the newly emerging political sentiments of multiculturalism. Thus, the concept of *borderline* has become a determinant sentiment in receiving such cultural conflicts of our day. Hence, prominent number of political writings, which underlined the notion of borderline and difference, has shaped the United States' foreign policy in our century, which has been highlighting *difference* and *borderlines* between cultures and civilizations. Accordingly, contemporary cultural critics have been developing new perspectives on the notions of *place* and *border* in order to challenge this political zeitgeist. Thus, considering that today's discourse of liberal democracy appears in many ways similar to nineteenth century American expansionist and patriotic discourse, a contemporary review on these frontier narratives would broaden the conventional notions on *borderline* and reveal the cultural mindset at the backdrop of today's discourse of Americanization. In this respect, though of different scope and generic forms, Casey Blanton's, Martin Heidegger's, Gloria Anzaldua's, Homi Bhabha's and Benedict Anderson's arguments and challenging views on the notions of *place*, *liminality* and *border* will be illuminating the ways to revisit nineteenth century frontier narratives of American expansionism.

To begin with, the New World received its definition as a location from Vespucci's *Mundus Novus* in 1503. Based on Vespucci's experiences of voyages between 1499 and 1501,

*Mundus Novus* is composed of his letters to his patron Lorenzo Pietro di Medici. Thus, as Vespucci introduced the American continent as a densely populated, habitable place in abundance of natural sources, he located the New Found Land in the Western mindset. In his *Travel Writing: The Self and the World*, Casey Blanton questions the truthfulness of travel narratives as firsthand accounts of certain places. Besides limited perspectives of the autobiographical accounts of places, Blanton emphasizes the legacy of certain routes and localities in making certain definitions of other places. He refers to Melville's narrator Ismael and his questionings on the notion of place in *Moby Dick*. When Ishmael is telling about his friend Queequeg's home, he says that it was not on any map and goes on to contemplate that no true places could be on any map. Blanton's remarks concerning the validity of maps among other sites of historical narratives are noteworthy:

*Ismael's attempts to represent the exotic island homeland of his friend are frustrated by the inherent difficulty of faithfully rendering the foreign into familiar terms. As every travel writer knows, maps and books can tell only part of the truth. By what process, using what models does the traveler presume to describe, to interpret, to represent people and places who are other to him?* (Blanton, 1995: 1)

Following Blanton's remarks on the legacy of certain places, his examples from *Moby Dick* can be furthered. In the chapter entitled as "Nantucket," Ismael points to inferiority of Queequeg's homeland Kokovoko as an unknown place is compared to the island of Nantucket, which is known to be a center of whaling business in North America: "Nothing more happened on the passage worthy the mentioning; so, after a fine run, we safely arrived in Nantucket. Nantucket! Take out a map and look at it. See what a real corner of the world it occupies; how it stands there, away off shore, more lonely than the Eddystone lighthouse" (Melville, 1983: 860). As "a real corner of the world," Nantucket Island is an offshore outpost of the ancient whaling business. Deriving its history from the native tribes' mythologies of New England, nineteenth century Nantucket has a historical significance, which makes it a real corner of the world that can be easily marked on any map.

Though of different scope, Blanton's questionings of the sense of place reminds Martin Heidegger's remarks on the etymological aspect to the notion of place in his "Building Dwelling Thinking" are thought provoking:

*Only things that are locations in this manner allow for spaces. What the word for space, raum, rum, designates is said by its ancient meaning. Raum means a place cleared or freed for settlement and lodging. A space is something that has been made room for, something that – namely within a boundary, Greek peras. A Boundary is not that at which it stops, but as Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing.* (Heidegger, 1971: 5)

As an existentialist philosopher in the first half of twentieth century, Heidegger underlines phenomenological questionings over the notion of being. Relative to his philosophy, he is in search of a meaningful essence for the notion of place in his "Building Dwelling Thinking." In contrast to contemporary critics of culture, Heidegger is exploring an absolute sense of being in a place as a connection between mortals of earthly living and the immortality. As a European philosopher, who witnessed two world wars, his perspective is relevant to a shattered image of Western civilization, displacements, genocides, and mass migrations. Thus, his definition of the sense of place unravels a dichotomous aspect of the notion. In the given quotation, a space is perceived within its boundaries, through which its presence begins. He suggests therefore, that

only locations could be associated to the sense of place. When detached from its presence as a location within certain boundaries, a place loses its meaningful definition. In this respect, the Nantucket Island in *Moby Dick* could be easily marked on a map, where Queequeg's homeland Kokovoko was absent. Kokovoko Island was displaced as well as Queequeg was. As Blanton has stated, mapping, like other forms of travel writing, legitimizes certain places and delegitimizes certain other places. Writing about a place is, thus, another form of *presencing* in Heidegger's terms.

As a contemporary alternative perspective to Heidegger's sense of boundary, which he projected as the source of a place's *presencing*, Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldua suggests a challenging view of the concept of border: "A borderline is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" (Anzaldua, 1999: 25). Here, she challenges arbitrary and universalized definitions of a borderline as a physical boundary between nations. Excavating the meaning of a border line, Anzaldua reminds us that a border line is in a constant state of transition and incarnated by its inhabitants' experiences. In her poem from her preface to the first chapter of her *Borderlands / La Frontera* her redefinitions of borderline highlight the relative aspect of such culturally specific definitions. Within these lines from her poem she appears as an agency of her Chicana identity in defining her own cultural experiences of a borderline: "1.950 mile-long open wound / dividing a pueblo, a culture, / running down the length of my body, / staking fence rods in my flesh, / splits me splits me [...] This is my home / this thin edge of / barbwire" (Anzaldua, 1999: 24-25). Here is seen a conflicting sense of a borderline. The U.S.-Mexican border divides "a pueblo" / "a culture" and runs down on her "flesh" and "splits" her being, which was used to be her home or her "dwelling" as Martin Heidegger suggested in his "Building Dwelling Thinking." However, no more a legitimate *location*, mapping the Mexican heritage, the borderline between the United States and Mexico is conceived as destructive of a world, which was once her home. Nevertheless, Anzaldua suggests a new perception on this physical borderline. Nature as the sole source and substance of her ancient Mexican heritage appears as a challenge to this physical borderline: "But the skin of the earth is seamless. / The sea cannot be fenced. / el mar does not stop at borders / To show the white man what she thought of his / arrogance, / Yemaya blew that wire fence down. / This land was Mexican once, / was Indian always / and is. / And will be again" (Anzaldua, 1999: 24-25). The poem may sound as a latent political sentiment for we all know there is no such a world without borderlines and especially the one between the U.S. and Mexico. There is no turning back to Native Americans' age of pantheistic realm, which had once produced a symbolic universe of its own in harmony with nature. However, through her poem she makes us revisit and question history. Beyond a nationalistic attitude, she calls for a new perspective of all kinds of borders, physically and emotionally. She denounces narratives of history and calls for the authentic connotations of a borderland. Attached to her selfhood, *Borderlands* becomes a means to articulate her new sense of identity, through which she not only questions the oppressive First World but also the patriarchal hierarchies of her own Chicano culture.

In addition to these redefinitions and questionings on the notions of *place* and *borderline*, another contemporary cultural critic Homi Bhabha's views have been influential. Unlike Blanton, Heidegger and Anzaldua, Bhabha's remarks are much about political and social theory. On the other hand, his suggestions for reexamining the modern definition of nation states have been inspiring post-colonial literary criticism, which has had much to say on the narratives of *borderline*. He has correctly stated that nations and their narrations emerged not only from certain traditions of political thought and literary language of modernity but also from an immemorial past – their religious, political and

cultural traditions-, which is projected towards the future horizons of national narratives of identity. Bhabha asserts that the modern definition of nation states has been reduced to bordering claims of national narratives on the basis of race, language, religion and dynastic roots in our day. Lastly, in Benedict Anderson's terms, this aspect of national narratives reveals the dark side modernization process which was brought by the Enlightenment and the rationalization of institutional narratives of newly emerging nation states. Questioning the machines of modernity that affirmed a total rejection of past for building new national narratives and its institutions, Anderson challenges the notion of nationalism. According to Anderson, we should consider nationalism not as a mere outcome of "self-consciously held political ideologies, but large culture systems that preceded it, out of which – as well as against which – it came into being" (Anderson, 1991: 12). Adding to Anderson's criticism, Bhabha brings a further suggestion on the notion of nation with reference to the process of *liminality*:

*What I want to emphasize in that large and liminal image of the nation with which I began is a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write of it and the lives of those who live it. It is an ambivalence that emerges from a growing awareness that, despite the certainty with which the historians speak of the origins of the nation as a sign of the modernity of society, the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality. (Bhabha, 1990 :1)*

Here, Bhabha puts forward the concept of *liminality*, which, he believes, refers to *ambivalence* between the national narratives of the historians and the narratives of the people. This certain ambivalence makes us understand the relative, and most significantly, a temporal nature of the national definitions. So, he proposes that, rather than an absolute notion of a nation, a transitional realm of social experiences should be the concern of the cultural critics. In this sense, Bhabha's argument is similar to that of Gloria Anzaldúa's perspective in exposing alternative definitions of Chicana identity out of contemporary experiences of the borderline between the United States and Mexico. To recall her point of view, her narrative of *La Frontera* is not just a mere criticism of Western imperialism but also a challenge against her own patriarchal dead-ends of her Chicano culture.

All in all, Blanton's remarks on the sense of place as a marked quarter of the earth; Heidegger's definition of place as *presencing* within certain borderlines; Anzaldúa's challenge against arbitrary notions of borderline and bringing about a new definition of border as "a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" (Anzaldúa, 1999: 25) and lastly Anderson's and Bhabha's questionings on the authenticity of national narratives make us reconsider the concept of frontier and the narratives of frontier as culturally and historically produced discursive practices. Thus, reviewing nineteenth century frontier narratives of the United States' continental expansion will exhibit relevant examples for such a mindset.

### **3. Sense of Place and Border in Nineteenth Century Narratives of American Expansionism**

To begin with, John L. O'Sullivan's essay "The Great Nation of Futurity" (1839) and Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893) are two historical texts legitimizing a new American identity, which had become an emblem for national expansion in nineteenth century. These narratives produced the concept of frontier as a metaphor for the principles of American democracy and Christian

morality. Thus, in his essay John L. O'Sullivan introduced the phrase Manifest Destiny in 1839:

[...] *It is so destined, because the principle upon which a nation is organized fixes its destiny, and that of equality is perfect, is universal.* [...]

[... ] *The far reaching, the boundless future, will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High – the Sacred and the True. Its floor shall be a hemisphere – its roof the firmament of the star-studded heavens, and its congregation a Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling, owning no man master, but governed by God's natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood – of peace and good will amongst men.* (O'Sullivan, 1987:7-8)

O'Sullivan's description of American frontier takes the form of the words of Isaiah: "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out a tent to dwell on" (Isa., 40:22). Making its cause a legitimate one through Christianity, the author disguises imperialistic mission and empowers his rhetoric of Westward expansion with the principles of democracy and equality. O'Sullivan's tone is similar to that of Cotton Mather in his *The Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702): "I write the wonders of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, flying from the Depravations of Europe, to the American Strand [...]" (Mather, 1994: 258). Seeing their cause as a great enterprise, the Puritan leaders of the seventeenth century North American colonies were received as prophetic leaders as well as political figures. Mather's *The Magnalia Christi Americana* includes the biographical accounts of the New England leaders as John Winthrop and William Bradford. Mather aims at transferring the history of New England to the next generations of the colony. So, the earlier hardships on their way from Europe to the New World, their ambition and will to lead their communities to build *A City Upon A Hill*, as they believed they were assigned to achieve, were to present an exemplar image for the founding principles of the New England Colony. Accordingly, from seventeenth century Puritan notion of an ideal community, nineteenth century American national identity had been transformed into an imperial power in the Western hemisphere with its ideal democracy and representative mission in delivering Christianity. This process of political and religious transformation can be observed in an eighteenth century Quaker artist Edward Hicks's painting *The Peaceable Kingdom*. Hicks's painting is a depiction of American wilderness as a symbol of a civilized frontier, exemplifying this ideological perspective (See Fig. 1). Originally a self-taught folk artist, Hicks was a Quaker colonist. His Quakerism attributed a religious aspect to his painting as he usually exhibited his versions of *The Peaceable Kingdom* with the Words of Isaiah from the Old Testament: "The wolf shall also dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and the little child shall lead them" (Isa., 11:6). As an exemplar of the words of Isaiah, Hicks startles the viewer with his hybridized images of wild and domestic animals clustered together with children. A closer look on animals' and children's faces reveals a similarity of their facial figures, especially the eye shapes. A cupid like figure hovering above the lion and the leopard connotes the antiquity of the pantheistic realm of nature. When the viewer's focus moves behind these hybridized images of nature, smaller human figures of Native Americans and Quaker colonists are seen. Among these figures the most noticeable is William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania colony, who is making a treaty with the Indians. In another version of *The Peaceable Kingdom*, there appears an

anchored ship as well. Consequently, Hicks's painting appears as an exact depiction of his colonist point of view of the continental sources and the commencement of *white law* in American wilderness. Signed with Isaiah's words, Hicks proposes a *peaceable kingdom* within the confines of Christianity and *white law*. William Penn's trustworthy ethos legitimizes this kingdom, while to-be-domesticated American wilderness manifests the *destiny* of the land. The artists and writers – just like Edward Hicks – of next generation nineteenth century America produced such works of art which were being widely disseminated as harbingers of upcoming white dominance over the continent. Thus, as O'Sullivan claimed in his essay that future of American nation was projected as "far-reaching" and "boundless," signifying "American greatness." "As a nation of many nations," the author suggested that the United States was destined to manifest itself thorough the principles of democracy and "the Most High." In his discourse, O'Sullivan gathered the founding principles of American democracy: "[...] and its congregation a Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling, owning no man master, but governed by God's natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood – of peace and good will amongst men." (O'Sullivan, 1987:7-8) Apparently, a superior mono-ethnic national identity is implied through these statements such as "Union of many Republics," "hundreds of happy millions" who were to be "governed by God's natural and moral law of equality."

In parallel with O'Sullivan's essay, Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893) is another famous text, depicting the frontier experience. In Turner's point of view, frontier experience was the dynamo behind American democracy:

*Behind institutions, behind constitutional forms and modifications, lie the vital forces that call these organs into life and shape them to meet the changing conditions. The peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people – to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life. (Turner, 1987: 81)*

Turner claimed that, with the territorial expansion, was developed American democracy as a peculiar model compared to other European nations. Encountering new territories and new dilemmas of a pioneer life, frontier experience of America was unique in comparison to the imperial wars of Europe. In continental North America, there were no powerful nations to fight against but native tribes, whose irregular, nomadic communal population would easily surrender to U.S. army. Hence, Homestead Act of 1862 enabled the new comers and helped to parcel out the free land. Thus, Westward expansion established equal opportunity of landownership for every U.S. citizen, who promised to cultivate and settle down in the wilderness. Lastly, Turner defined American frontier as "the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (Turner, 1987: 81). Between savagery and civilization, there appeared a romance out of the frontier land, out of Americans' relationships to it. The opening of Erie Canal in 1825 enabled travelling from the Great Lakes to the seaport of New York City. This was a significant triumph over nature. As they expanded further West and completed the transcontinental railroad, trails, canals, the frontier experience took on a different phase. Overcoming the wilderness of an expanding frontier line, spreading the principles of democracy and Christian morality, a victorious American national character was drawn through frontier experience. Turner's belief in the truthfulness and historical validity of frontier experience was so persistent that, releasing his article in 1893, he defined the whole sum of frontier



experience as a successfully completed historical process. According to him, this was a unique phase in the United States history as with the close of the continental frontier a unique American identity was shaped.

As a literary depiction of these political sentiments of the era, there had appeared a peculiar sense of *place* and *border* in literary writings on nineteenth century American expansionism as well. Thus, the best examples for mainstream nineteenth century American frontier narratives were produced by the Romantic authors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper. These authors promoted a new American identity in frontiersman's spirit. Through an inevitable contradiction with the natives of the land, they suggested a hybridized identity which was romanticized with the image of *noble savage*. Dominantly white in physical traits, the *noble savage* had the wisdom and authenticity of a Native American in his relationship with nature. Though the meeting of *white* and *native law* sounds peaceful, in such works of fiction, destruction of the native side is delineated as an inevitable historical consequence in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Leatherstocking Tales*. The protagonist of Cooper's series, Natty Bumppo is a mixture of white and native blood. He dwells in wilderness and cannot cope with the artificial rules and politics of a civilized frontier society. In each series, Natty Bumppo leaves a settled area behind, fights for the protection of the forest or resolves a dilemma between Whites and Indians, yet at the end, he goes further west, which is untouched by the civilization. Even this plot line does not suggest a peaceful future for the Native Americans. It foreshadows an end for the *native law* in American land. Thus, in the subtext of Cooper's novels, *white law's* victory is prevalent, while the suggested new American identity of *noble savage* becomes a means to evoke sentimentality through the lure of the exotic unknown. In one of his travel books, *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835), Washington Irving's depiction of the frontier landscape is attached to the images of the Creek villages and their inhabitants. In his opening lines of the chapter "Frontier Scenes," he draws a panoramic scene within the following passage:

*On the following, (Oct. 11, 1832) we were on the march by half past seven o'clock, and rode through deep rich bottoms of alluvial soil, overgrown with redundant vegetation, and trees of an enormous size. Our route lay parallel to the west bank of the Arkansas, on the borders of which river, near the confluence of the Red Fork, we expected to overtake the main body of rangers. For some miles the country was sprinkled with Creek villages and farm houses; the inhabitants of which appeared to have adopted, with considerable facility, the rudiments of civilization, and to have thriven in consequence. Their farms were well stocked, and their houses had a look of comfort and abundance. (Irving, 1987: 49)*

The continental ancient beauty of the landscape, described in this passage, is enchanting. Author's perspective of the rich soil and fertile vegetation – inhabited by the Creeks - is parallel to the immensity of the opportunities of the frontier. Possessed by the scenery, Irving also lays claims to the place. In his delight he captures the unknown, untouched wilderness of the frontier, which lures and offers him its rich sources. Thus, frontier narratives provided a rich imagery and symbolism unique to American soil. Producing a literature of their own, American writers followed a nationalistic fervor which depicted an idealized landscape through their frontier narratives. Irving's depiction of the inhabitants of the Creek villages is questionable as a truthful account of their living conditions. He admits that they "appeared to have adopted, with considerable facility, the rudiments of civilization, and to have thriven in consequence." Through these lines, Irving seems to appreciate their ways of living, yet a sensitive eye can easily discern how they were depicted inferior to *white law* which was to dominate them in future. For

example, Irving's report on their way of adopting "the rudiments of civilization" is conceived as primitive, though sufficient enough to provide their living. Nevertheless, in this respect, Irving's interest in primitive ways corresponds to the political ideology of Romanticism represented by Jean Jacques Rousseau. Barbara Novak reviews this romantic sentiment over the depiction of the primitive in painting. Novak states that nineteenth century emphasis on nature and landscape as central imagery was in parallel with Rousseau's concept of primitivism, Wordsworth's and Emerson's perspectives of sublime beyond nature. Furthermore, after the American Revolution, American landscape painting appeared as an emblem of an idyllic gateway to an idealized democracy. Distinct from regular and cultivated landscapes of Europe, American landscape was depicted through a national history of westward expansion and a constant contradiction between the civilized and uncivilized sites of frontier life. So, Irving's depiction of native life in American wilderness as a primeval paradise serves to set up a unique national identity, which was established under the principles of Enlightenment.

Looking back at Irving's narration in *A Tour on the Prairies*, he reports on Creek Indians that "Their farms were well stocked, and their houses had a look of comfort and abundance" (Irving, 1987: 49). In comparison to Melville's sense of place that is already exemplified from Casey Blanton's remarks on *Moby Dick*, Irving's narrative is affirmative of the popular nationalist sentiment of Americanization. This contrast can be clearly seen when Irving's report on the frontier life is compared to another nineteenth century author William Apes. Compared to Irving's delusional idealized discourse of mapping and reporting on frontier lands, William Apes's autobiography presents a first person account of how did it feel to be an Indian / a Native American in nineteenth century. His book is entitled as *A Son of the Forest: The Experience of William Apes, A Native of the Forest. Comprising a Notice of the Pequod Tribe of Indians*. Published in 1829, six years earlier than Washington Irving's *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835), *A Son of the Forest's* report on the conditions of the native people is quite the opposite. Isolated from tribal living and addicted to bad habits of Whites, his parents could not provide a decent standard of living. Thus, Apes's narrative of his Indian childhood tells a different story:

*My father and mother made baskets which they would sell to the whites, or exchange for those articles only, which were absolutely necessary to keep soul and body in a state of unity. Our fare was, of the poorest kind, and even of this we had not enough, and our clothing also was of the poorest description, literally speaking we were clothed in rags, so far as rags would suffice to cover our nakedness. We were always happy to get a cold potato for our dinner, and many a night have we gone supperless to rest, if stretching our wearied limbs on a bundle of straw without any covering against the weather, may be called rest. (Apes, 1829:10)*

Apes's narrative of the frontier life, which he had experienced in his childhood, distorts the idealized perspective of Irving. Having nor an abundance of living conditions or a decent way of tribal life, Apes's agitating language reveals a firsthand account of frontier history. Nevertheless, thinking that this narrative was a published autobiography in 1829, we should take into consideration the generic conventions of nineteenth century American literature. It is important to ask, how far the author transcends the literary conventions of the era or whether he was affirmative of these conventions. Indian autobiography was a rare genre in Apes's era. And such Indian autobiographies as *A Son of the Forest* were affirmative of White dominance in their lands. Even the fact he had written and published an autobiography tells much about how far he had been detached from the oral tradition of his native heritage. Thus, as a literate and converted Indian, William Apes is in search of political legitimacy. In this sense, the author serves to deliver

the patriotic message of the American expansionism and confirms to romantic view of Irving in his projections of a progressive American identity. Accordingly, despite the fact that this frontier story marks the end of *native law* in nineteenth century American frontier, Bhabha's idea of borderline as liminal spaces for temporal, transitional social realities refers to this transformed image of William Apes's Native American identity. To elaborate more on the contrast between Irving's and Apes's narrations of frontier life, Irving's portrayal of an Indian in his *A Tour on the Prairies* is as picturesque as a visual impression of a painting:

*We met with numbers of them returning from one of their grand games of ball, for which their nation is celebrated. Some were on foot, some on horseback; the latter, occasionally, with gaily dressed females behind them. They are a well-made race, muscular and closely knit, with well-turned thighs and legs. They have a Gypsy fondness for brilliant colors and decorations, and are bright and fanciful objects when seen at a distance on the prairies.* (Irving, 1987: 49)

Within this scenery of wilderness, Osage people are described as "bright and fanciful objects." And again as in the previous description on fertility of the land, the crowd of healthy Osage men and women strolling along the prairie is a similar image to promote the richness of sources in frontier. On the other hand, in the same chapter, Irving presents a white settler through a degrading perspective: "[...] a white settler or squatter; a tall, rawboned, old fellow, with red hair, a lank lantern visage, and an inveterate habit of winking with one eye, as if everything he said was of knowing import [...]"(Irving, 1987:49). Hearing this white settler, reporting that one of his horses was stolen by a party of Osages in neighboring camp, Irving comments that "[...] he had the frontier propensity to charge everything to Indians [...]"(Irving, 1987:49). On the other hand, the young Osage, who was accused as a thief, is depicted as a superior soul:

*As the Osage drew near, I was struck with his appearance. He was about nineteen or twenty years of age, but well grown, with the fine Roman countenance common to his tribe; and as he rode, with his blanket wrapped round his loins, his naked bust would have furnished a model for a statuary.* (Irving, 1987:50)

*[...] Such is the glorious independence of man in a savage state. This youth, with his rifle, his blanket, and his horse, was ready at a moment's warning to remove the world; he carried all his worldly effects with him, and in the absence of artificial want possessed the great secret of personal freedom. We of society are slaves, not so much to others as to ourselves; our superfluties are the chains that bind us, impeding every moment of our bodies, and thwarting every impulse of our souls.* (Irving, 1987: 51)

In this description of the young Osage, a delusional Indian image is drawn. Attached to an idealistic point of view, Irving rewrites what he encounters in the frontier. Fiction overwhelms fact. Rather than a historical depiction, Irving is captured by the Romantic and nationalistic fervor. Like other Romantics of the era, he is in search for a new definition of an individual, whose sovereignty, progressive mind, and unified selfhood could have been representative of an ideal citizenship in a newly born nation as he says "[...]such is the glorious independence of a man in a savage state" (Irving, 1987: 51). Besides this transcendental, unified character of the Osage, his racial traits are exaggerated: "[...] but well grown, with the fine Roman countenance common to his tribe; and as he rode, with his blanket wrapped round his loins, his naked bust would have furnished a model for a statuary" (Irving, 1987: 51). Reading this description, heroic

figures from Greek and Roman mythologies are immediately recalled. Thus, a substitute for Old World iconography, the young Osage's image nourishes collective imagination of the people on the American strand. And lastly, Irving suggests a criticism of the established enslaving systems of thought: "We of society are slaves, not so much to others as to ourselves; our superfluities are the chains that bind us, impeding every moment of our bodies, and thwarting every impulse of our souls" (Irving, 1987: 51). As it is seen, much is said about a whole sum of philosophical questionings through the simple, pure image of an Indian youth. Farfetched from the historical facts of the Indians, who were deprived of their land rights, depopulated and scattered into reservation camps in isolation from their tribal traditions, the representation of the Osage youth appears as an element of narrative style just as they have been assumed to be a part of the American land having been invaded and cultivated.

Compared to Irving's definition of an Indian as a *noble savage*, William Apes's sense of an Indian identity is totally different:

*I thought it disgraceful to be called an Indian. It was considered as a slur upon an oppressed and scattered nation, and I have often been led to inquire where the whites received this word, which they so often threw as an opprobrious epithet at the sons of the forest. I could not find it in the Bible, and therefore come to the conclusion that it was a word imported for the special purpose of degrading us.* (Apes, 1829:20)

*[...] to be sold to, and treated unkindly by those who had got our fathers' lands for nothing, was too much to bear.* (Apes, 1829:35)

As a child, William Apes had come of age with an Indian identity, which he thought, was a "disgraceful" thing. Furthermore, he resents that being called as an Indian was "considered as a slur upon an oppressed and scattered nation." However, as he takes the Bible as his source to denounce whites' misconceptions of Indian identity, Apes attacks *white law* in its own discourse. So, aside from underlining the fact that Native Americans were being misrepresented, the author somehow uses a rebellious tone and challenges white dominance as he says: "[...] to be sold to, and treated unkindly by those who had got our fathers' lands for nothing, was too much to bear." Nevertheless, being educated and converted to Christianity, William Apes confesses that he could upgrade his life and progressed. In this sense his narrative affirms to other frontier narratives, which will be analyzed in the following parts.

Walt Whitman's poem "A Passage to India" (1871) is another example praising this romanticized image of the American frontier. Whitman's patriotic voice and imperial discourse is already entitled within the name of the poem, "A Passage to India." In the title, Whitman suggests that American continental expansion would consequently lead the nation towards rich sources and unknown exotic places of the Far East, which were already being exploited by other European imperial powers, as he calls out in this line: "Passage to more than India!" (Whitman, 1987:19, 234). Thus, as the United States's dominance in continental North America is already achieved in the second half of the nineteenth century, the poet embraces American frontier in a possessive tone: "O secret of the earth and sky! / Of you O waters of the sea! O winding creeks / And rivers! / Of you O woods and fields! of you strong / mountains of my land! / O you praires! of you gray rocks! / O morning red! O clouds! O rain and snows! [...]" (Whitman, 1987:19, 235-241) Recalling William Apes's feelings of being deprived of the land rights and political legitimacy, hence being "[...] treated unkindly by those who had got" his fathers' lands,

Whitman's claim on American frontier sounds as a clear discourse of nineteenth century American expansionism:

*Passage, immediate passage! The blood burns in  
My veins!  
A way O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!  
Cut the hawsers – haul out – shake out every sail!  
Have we not grovel'ed here long enough, eating and  
drinking like mere brutes?  
Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with  
books long enough? [...]* (Whitman, 1987:19, 242-249)

In these lines, Whitman's depiction of the American frontier reveals the romantic political sentiments of the era as well. The date of the poem is after the Civil War and 1871 is the year, when transcontinental rail roads were almost completed and the far reaches of the unknown Western frontier was already settled down. With an obvious representation of transcendentalism and Emersonian perspective over nature, Whitman is calling for progressive and clear mind, getting rid of old-fashioned ideas and conventions as he says: "Have we not grovel'ed here long enough, eating and /drinking like mere brutes?/Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with / books long enough?" (Whitman, 1987: 234-250) Just as what Ralph Waldo Emerson suggests in his "The American Scholar" (1837), Whitman voices this romantic sentiment of an ideal individual and specifically an American, who should be freed from European and Old World traditions and be inspired with the unbounded freedom, fertility and knowledge of the unknown American frontier:

*Sail forth- steer for the deep waters only,  
Reckless O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou  
with me,  
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared  
to go,  
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.  
O my brave soul!  
O farther farther sail!  
O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas  
Of God?  
O farther, farther, farther sail! [...]* (Whitman, 1987:19-20, 249-255)

Whitman's line, saying "For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared / to go [...]" is an exact depiction of John L. O'Sullivan's notion of the Manifest Destiny. And as he says, "Are they not all the seas / Of God?," the poet legitimizes their cause to move farther and farther and rich farthest frontiers of the world beyond the continental dominance. Thus, with this poem, Walt Whitman foreshadows the future notion of American frontier as he utters his national dominance hailing: "Passage to more than India!"

Similar to Washington Irving's, William Apes's and Walt Whitman's perspectives on nineteenth century American frontier experience, reflections of this ideological backdrop can be traced back also in nineteenth century American romanticism in painting. American geography has always attracted the imagination of the nineteenth century American artists: "From the time of discovery onward nature and nation have been mutually dependent in defining one another. The consciousness of a virgin wilderness of great and variable wonders helped create a national identity distinct from that of the Old World of Europe, by definition newer and by conviction better" (Wilmerding, 1991: 3).

Established firstly by John Singleton Copley's nature paintings, nineteenth century American landscape painters were mostly under the influence of European Courtly Tradition and Grand Style, which emphasized historical significance of the subject matter through borrowing from Greek, Roman mythologies, and Christian iconography in an eclectic style. Yet, the use of such painting styles could not receive popularity in America of nineteenth century. Thus, such schools of painting as conceptual realism in Europe, which emphasized a need to construct an idea behind reality in aesthetics, was transformed into American landscape painting which romanticized the frontier experience. To grasp an absolute in the wilderness of the New World, American landscape painters were to avoid figures which connoted Old World ideals as subtext. As a reflection of Emersonian transcendentalist mind, nature and idea was unified as all matter was an extension of an absolute truth: "Respect for nature as evidence of God's handiwork was to become one of the major aesthetic tenets of the nineteenth century" (Novak, 1969: 22). Thus, most of the nineteenth century American painters discovered and valued their landscapes as a unique source of inspiration. The painter Washington Allston's description of American landscapes is significant for it exemplifies the similar attitude of the Romantic writers of frontier narratives: "How vast a theatre is here laid open...where the physical eye is permitted to travel for millions and millions of miles, while that of the mind may, swifter than thought, follow out the journey from star to star, till it falls back upon itself with the humbling conviction that the measureless journey is there but begun!" (Novak, 1969: 48) Allston's concern in American nature depicts the sensibility for constructing a national identity through landscape paintings. American nature is the sole absolute prior to the birth of a new nation. Breaking bounds with the Old World, the New World is to embrace new democracy which is in a constant process of transition through frontier experience. Thomas Cole, the founder of Hudson River School, is another significant painter, who confirms to this nationalistic and romantic fervor: To him, "all nature here is new to art, no Tivolis, Ternis, Mont Blancs, Plinlimmons, hackneyed and worn by the daily pencils of hundreds; but primeval forests, virgin lakes and waterfalls" (Novak, 1969: 61).

Thus, Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze's *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1861) and Albert Bierstadt's *Valley of Yosemite* (1865) are visual examples representing this mindset of American territorial expansionism. Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze's *Westward the Course of Empire Takes It Way* (See Fig. II) appears as an emblem of this expansionist national spirit. The title of the painting is announcing the imperial expansion as a justified cause of Manifest Destiny. In the foreground of the painting, central image is a family resting on a hill top. Father is pointing Westward, where the sun goes down. The family has two children. Mother is breast-feeding one of the children. This family figure appears as a promising aspect of Westward expansion, where the pioneers would multiply for healthy and peaceful next generations, who would live in the fertile lands with equal opportunities of land ownership and political freedom. This family on the hill top is encircled with a flow of arriving frontiersmen. Among these frontiersmen, there are other families, single figures and path finders with Native American companions. In the background there is another hill top, where two of the frontiersmen have just climbed and one of them is saluting the farther West. In this painting, as well as in the following example by Bierstadt, the viewer is attracted to a peculiar sense of distance, which is usually depicted with sunset rays spread over the land. Thus, the idea of a boundless territorial expansion and sense of freedom is promoted within these landscape paintings.

German-American painter Albert Bierstadt's landscapes of the American West are as compelling as Irving's first person accounts of the frontier, as Bierstadt himself also had joined several journeys of the Westward expansion. His paintings of nineteenth century

American West were representative of pioneer spirit. Belonging to Hudson River School painters, Bierstadt depicted his Western landscapes with lighting peculiar to romantic's conceptual realism. In this respect, his style is representative of Luminism, in which lightening, stillness and tranquility were essential elements evoking an idealized sense of a frontier landscape. Bierstadt's technique of lightening and reflection can be observed in his *Valley of Yosemite* (See Fig. III). As it is seen through this painting, nature is detached from its reality and is differed into an idyllic place. This idyllic wilderness offered a natural sanctuary. Furthermore, Westward expansion and the progressive mindset of Manifest Destiny are best represented with the sense of distance in these paintings of Leutze and Bierstadt. Referring both to geographical and mental distance, these paintings evoked a teleological aspect. Distances were to be explored, conquered, whereas huge mountains, perilous trails, and rivers were being gradually transformed into railways, canals and barrages. Thus, besides having provided a natural sanctuary, American landscape paintings depicted a dilemma between idealized, spiritual meaning of the frontier life and that of a civilized one.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, Washington Irving's *A Tour on the Prairies* opens with his mapping of the frontier land as he reports that their route laid parallel to the west bank of the Arkansas. Considering Casey Blanton's and Martin Heideger's questionings on the sense of place as location, which can have its *presencing*, predominantly from a borderline, Irving's narration is affirmative of the conventions of the nineteenth century frontier narratives. Furthermore, however the fact that Irving's narration is detached from the historical realities of frontier experience, his depiction of the young Osage as a *nobel savage* and his admiration of the primitive tribal life is representative of both the patriotic and romantic sentiments of the period. Through his narrative, Irving promotes the revolutionary principles of the new nation and national identity. On the other hand, William Apes's *A Son of the Forest* appears as a controversial account of Native American frontier experience. Apes's search for legitimacy as a native of the land and his angry tone in describing how he grew up as an Indian boy distorts Irving's representation of the young Osage in *A Tour on the Prairies*. Thus, Gloria Anzaldua's challenging notion of a borderline as "a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" overlaps with the writing processes of these two different accounts of Irving and Apes. Anzaldua's emphasis on writing process as another site of discursive practices illuminates the perspective that should be developed in reviewing these nineteenth century American frontier narratives. Published in the same era, Irving's and Apes's textual claims in their own definitions of American frontier confront each other. Recalling Homi Bhabha's criticism of national narratives, such contradictory frontier narratives enable a clear observation on the validity of textual authenticity. Therefore, Bhabha emphasizes *a liminal image of the nation*, which he equates with a particular *ambivalence* that leads for further questionings on the idea of the nation. Despite the legitimized textual history of the nations, the language of the people, whose accounts tell a different story, is his main concern. Hence, he suggests that out of this controversial interaction of the language of the people and the historians, comes the *liminal* image of a nation. Nations are not absolutes of history; and they should be concerned as narrative constructions, representative of a much more temporal, transitional social reality. Accordingly, John O'Sullivan's essay "The Great Nation of Futurity" and Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" announce the ideological sentiment of nineteenth century American expansionism. In both of these texts, the authors are trying to introduce a new national identity and in order to do that they denounce the Old World's political and even religious

stands in viewing the American frontier experience. In this respect, Benedict Anderson's argument on the historical validity of the notion of nation as an invention of Enlightenment refers to both of O'Sullivan and Turner's narratives. Anderson rightly remarks that, a total rejection of the past for creating new national narratives should make us question the authenticity of nationalism. In parallel with this critical point of view, ideological claims of O'Sullivan and Turner on the frontier experience prove to be mere narrative constructions. Announcing their national cause as a Manifest Destiny does not go beyond the Grand Narratives of the Old World dynasties. Thus, the European background precedes the founding principles of the new American nation. In this sense, Walt Whitman's "A Passage to India" is critical of the Old World ideals and schools of thought which prevailed throughout nineteenth century American experiences. Despite such a romantic tone, Whitman's lines conform to the popular zeitgeist of the era. His language is an ultimate representation of American patriotism and imperialism in late nineteenth century. To him American nature seems as a commodity for further national progress and achievement of civilized life just as what Ralph Waldo Emerson suggests in his essay "Nature." His calling for "waters of the sea," "winding creeks and rivers," "mountains" of *his* land expresses this exploitive perspective over nature. As visual depictions of this ideological point of view, Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze's and Albert Bierstadt's paintings are as impressive as the narratives of Irving, O'Sullivan, Turner and Whitman. Symbolic elements in these paintings appear as harbingers of future dominance of the *white law* in continental North America. Albert Bierstadt's artistic techniques imply the same romantic point of view on American frontier experience. His *Valley of Yosemite* is also representative of similar frontier spectacles. In order to depict his idealized American wilderness, Bierstadt uses luminists' techniques of lightening and reflection. Valley of Yosemite is illuminated with the sun set that is spread over the rocky mountains, trails and the water. Though the wilderness of the sight is challenging, the artist's perspective rewrites the spectacle into a tranquil beauty that evokes the emotions of the viewer. In all these accounts of nineteenth century American frontier, the physical realm, untouched wilderness of the continent was received as a symbolic gateway towards an idyllic destination for the white settler-invaders, who assumed themselves as being commissioned to deliver Christianity and democratic principles. The unique relationship of native tribes to American nature, their virtues and morals over the consumption of the natural sources inspired the nation's reproduction of a romantic realm. Yet, with the close of the frontier, was closed an era of idyllic American nature including the tribal population and life style. While an increasing number of Native Americans were converted into Christianity and moved to reservation camps, the frontier lands were parceled out, and transformed into civilized habitats. Thus, as it was mentioned in the beginning of this study, nineteenth century American frontier narratives were the products of a romantic and patriotic spirit as well as the representations of a military and political success of the United States. Consequently, this metaphor of *borderline* in nineteenth century of American frontier narratives has survived through today's cultural experiences and ended up with a Western concern in a clash between civilizations. In this respect, today's sense of place and borderline should be reevaluated in order to open up new spaces for a transnational culture, which would provide *liminal* sites for multicultural interactions, guaranteeing cultural authenticities as well.

Figure I





Figure I. *The Peaceable Kingdom*. Reprinted from *Wikipedia*. E. Hicks, 1826, Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Edward\\_Hicks\\_-\\_Peaceable\\_Kingdom.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Edward_Hicks_-_Peaceable_Kingdom.jpg). This work is in the public domain in the United States, and those countries with a copyright term of life of the author plus 100 years or less.

Figure II



Figure II. *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*. Reprinted from Wikipedia. E. G. Leutze, 1861, Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westward\\_the\\_Course\\_of\\_Empire\\_Takes\\_Its\\_Way](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westward_the_Course_of_Empire_Takes_Its_Way). This work is in the public domain in the United States, and those countries with a copyright term of life of the author plus 100 years or less.

Figure III



Figure III. *Valley of Yosemite*. Reprinted from Wikipedia, A. Bierstadt, 1865, Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Looking\\_Down\\_Yosemite-Valley.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Looking_Down_Yosemite-Valley.jpg). This work is in the public domain in the United States, and those countries with a copyright term of life of the author plus 100 years or less.

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