

# AMERICA SEEN

## British and American Nineteenth Century Travels in the United States

Submitted by Adam Neil Hallett to the University of Exeter

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## Abstract

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The thesis discusses the development of nineteenth century responses to the United States. It hinges upon the premise that travel writing is narrative and that the travelling itself must therefore be constructed (or reconstructed) as narrative in order to make it available for writing. By applying narratology to the work of literary travel writers from Frances Trollope to Henry James I show the influence of travelling point of view and writing point of view on the narrative. Where these two points of view are in conflict I suggest reasons for this and identify signs in the narrative which display the disparity.

There are several influences on point of view which are discussed in the thesis. The first is mode of travel: the development of steamboats and later locomotives increasingly divested travellers from the landscape through which they were travelling. I concentrate on Frances Trollope, Charles Dickens and Mark Twain travelling by boat, and Robert Louis Stevenson and Henry James travelling by rail to examine how mode of travel alters travelling point of view and influences the form of travel writing. The second is the frontier: writing from a liminal space creates a certain point of view and makes travel not only a passage but a rite of passage. I examine travel texts which discuss the Western frontier as well as the transatlantic frontier. As the opportunity for these frontier experiences diminished through the spread of American culture and developments in travel technology, so the point of view of the traveller changes. A third point of view is provided by European ideas of nature and beauty in nature. The failure of these when put against American landscapes such as the Mississippi, prairies, and Niagara forms a significant part of the thesis, the fourth chapter of which examines writing on Niagara Falls in guidebooks and the travel texts of Frances Trollope, Dickens, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Anthony Trollope, Twain and James. Other points of view include seeing the United States through earlier travel texts and adopting a more autobiographical interest in travelogues.

In the final chapter the thesis contains a discussion of the nature of truth in travel writing and the tendency towards fictionalisation. The thesis concludes by considering the implications for truth of having various travelling and writing points of view impact upon constructing narrative out of travel.

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# Acknowledgements

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Over the last four years this thesis has taken shape and has become a narrative. With “What’s the story?” reverberating around my head early ideas have been refined into arguments and early bad ideas have been consigned to the recycle bin. This process has been fun, hard, painful and all-consuming.

Many people have been helpful during this time, none more so than my supervisor, Bob Lawson-Peebles who has been patient, wise, helpful, and reassuring at all the right moments. The support of my parents has been invaluable and valuable; neither of which I will ever be able to repay in full.

I owe thanks to the University of Exeter and its library and support staff. The British Library has been invaluable and the Lilly Library of the Indiana University deserves special mention for allowing me access to their Frances Trollope collection.

Alexandra Wood’s transatlantic support and affection has kept me focused, both looking forward and enjoying the now; long may it continue. The supporting cast is endless for the thesis, I hope it is worthy of everyone: Mark Whalan as my mentor; Jo Gill, Maeve Pearson, and Paul Williams for support and advice with teaching; Max Stites, Sean Willis, Rob Davidson, Mike Collins, Iain Barton, and others who are studying for or successfully gained PhD’s; New York University, the Fulbright scholars group in New York and the new friends I made both English and American; everyone who has ever put me up on a sofa. I owe each and every one of these people (and many more) a debt of gratitude.

# Introduction

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America is a story. The United States is one particular story; a narrative constructed through texts which support a notion of progress and expansion. It is a narrative that is selective, jettisoning or rewriting what does not fit in the story. This study focuses on travel during the nineteenth century in the United States. It hinges upon the premise that travel writing is narrative and that the travelling itself must therefore be constructed (or reconstructed) as narrative in order to make it available for writing. It argues that travellers are trying to make their own American narrative, their own America. Peter Conrad writes that “the reality of America is selective, optional, fantastic: there is an America for each of us” (4). His book is fittingly entitled *Imagining America*, which suggests that perhaps all that can ever be found in travel texts is imagined America. Or to be more precise, there is not one America but many imagined Americas, one “for each of us”. The idea that America is imagined before, during, and after travel is central to this discussion. With this in mind, I will discuss point of view in the travel and travel writing in the United States of a number of British and American authors from 1832 until 1907. These dates mark respectively the publication of Frances Trollope’s *Domestic Manners of the Americans* and Henry James’s *The American Scene*.

This thesis is also a narrative and aims to tell a story: the development of the United States and perceptions of that nation in the period prescribed. I argue that from the beginning of the nineteenth century to James’s work, several factors have influenced travellers’ writing. These are technology, the landscape, and other texts (or intertextuality). Point of view is the central focus of my argument as it is this, I believe, which has affected alteration and been altered during the nineteenth century. Point of view, as discussed in the first chapter of this work, is both a visual and a narrative consideration. It affects how one sees the world and how one writes about it. Technological and artistic developments in the nineteenth century have in turn affected point of view in both senses. It is these developments which form the basis for this study. Finally, I examine the impact of changing point of view on the ‘truth’ of travel texts; whether the developments undermine a truthful representation of America or encourage fiction. Truth and fiction, as discussed in the final chapter of the thesis, do not necessarily sit in binary opposition. Indeed, this story contains no binaries and no absolutes but is instead concerned with edges and frontiers; the point of view of the traveller. Henry James’s thoughts on point of view and his theory of narrative provide much of the basis for investigation. To use a travel metaphor, he is my constant companion and it is fitting that his

American travel book (from which this thesis takes its name) marks the close of the period considered in this study.

Point of view is a fundamental interest throughout these pages and is explained in more detail in the next chapter. I explore three major landscape subjects for travel writers in the United States in the main body of this thesis: the Mississippi River, plains and prairies, and Niagara Falls. These are significant in terms of narrative and point of view: I argue that the experience of these three spaces was problematic for the traveller and that in turn revisiting these spaces was problematic for the writer. This difficulty is exposed in the narrative and by examining disparity between travel and writing. Travel in these spaces can be described in terms of a rite of passage and described as a liminal experience; on the “margin (or *limen*, signifying ‘threshold’ in Latin)” (V. Turner 5) as taken from the theory of anthropologists Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, introduced later. ‘Rite of passage’ is particularly useful as it implies a link between movement and a change of state or status; the transatlantic passage is an excellent example of the two ideas of change and movement. It also represents one of the definitions of narrative given by Schmid in the next section. The implication of both of these on point of view is discussed in these pages. For the purpose of this work these spaces are also in a state of movement themselves; “the liminal condition celebrates the element of passage itself” (Fender, *Sea Changes* 121). Frontiers, including the American frontier, are liminal spaces, to use van Gennep’s term; he calls the “rites of separation from a previous world, *preliminal rites*, those executed during the transitional stage *liminal (or threshold) rites*, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world *postliminal rites*” (21; emphasis in text). It is the liminal period with which much of this work is concerned, particularly the second and third chapters. In both van Gennep and Turner, the liminal is linked to many transitions: pregnancy, childbirth, birth, childhood, betrothal, marriage, initiation, funerals, and – most significantly for this study and suggested by Turner’s use of the word “passenger” – travel.

Through narrative it is possible to chart different responses to the United States and explore if the authors are inclined to insert fiction into problematic spaces. The point was made earlier that travel must be constructed as narrative: it is the need to order the travel and make it into a story which creates the gap between experience and writing which I explore. Nassim Nicholas Taleb discusses the power and limitations of stories as well as our need to concoct them to order the world: “metaphors and stories are far more potent (alas) than ideas; they are also easier to remember and more fun to read” (xxvii). The absence of stories and metaphor is something with which the earlier travellers to America had to deal and the

overreliance on them is something which I identify in later travellers. This study does not purport to offer a replacement for metaphor; there is a literal blank when metaphor is removed, as I show in several notable instances in writing on the United States.

Literary travellers are the chief subject of this work. The rationale for which travellers form the basis for this work is given below. By ‘literary’ I mean travellers known for their writing in other genres – most notably fiction – either before or after their travels; writers who did not make travel writing their trade. These are writers who are well versed in the production of narrative and have greater inclination and skill to make a story of their travels. This is not to say that not all travel and travel texts are narratives, on the contrary I believe they are. However, coming from a literature background I am inclined to examine literary travelogues. Fictionalisation does not just occur in the travel writing of novelists, but it is more pronounced and less apologetic because they are novelists.

### **Narratology**

The theory of narratology can be used as a tool to see the development in travel writing techniques over the nineteenth century. Narratological conceptions of point of view – in combination with literary analysis and cultural-historical readings – allow a comparison and explanation of the processes of travelling and writing. These conceptions have been chosen to explore the role of the author and the narrator in the construction of travel narratives. This section introduces the theory of narratology as briefly as possible. Gerald Prince, in his *Dictionary of Narratology* (2003) defines narratology as “the (structuralist-inspired) theory of narrative [which] studies the nature, form, and functioning of narrative (regardless of medium of representation) and tries to characterize narrative competence” (66). Narratology as a theory of narrative was synthesised by the structuralists of the fifties and sixties, including Roland Barthes and Tzvetan Todorov, who first used the term “narratologie” in his 1969 work entitled *Grammaire du Décameron*. Indeed, Todorov also talks of the question of perception and “point of view” affecting reader, narrator and character relationship; creating a bridge between this term, interest in the ‘truth’ of texts, and narratology. The structuralists developed these theories from the Russian formalists including Vladimir Propp who worked on the narrative theory of fairytales exclusively. Propp’s work was then applied and developed on a far wider range of texts, eventually becoming narratology; a theory of all narrative, and indeed a means to measure what is narrative. Exploring the implications and meaning of narrative has antecedents from Plato and Aristotle to Henry James. Later important narratologists include Gérard Genette and Seymour Chatman who attempt (as do



many others) to define and synthesise what has increasingly become a behemoth with myriad contrasting and overlapping terms in French, German, Russian and English.

[Genette] subtilized in various ways the analysis of third-person point of view. For example, he distinguishes between focus of narration (the teller of the story) and focus of character (who perceives what is told us in any part of the story). Both the focus of narration and the focus of character (that is, of perception) in a single story may shift rapidly from the narrator to a character in the story, and from one character to another. (Abrams 166-7)

Prince's *Dictionary*, Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (1972) and Seymour Chatman's *Story and Discourse* (1978) provide the basis for definitions and the theory of narratology within this work.

As with the frontier theory of the third chapter of this work, there has been a recent resurgence of interest in the theory and its application which has led to claims that there are now various branches of narratology and the question of "narratology or Narratologies?" (Nünning 239). Nünning suggest that there is an excuse for not telling the story of narratology (ibid. 241) because (as also quoted by Nünning (ibid.)) "lately the tables have turned, and instead of narrative being the object of narratological theory, it is theory that has become the object of narrative: ... we now begin to have stories about theory" (McHale 4). Narratology is not the story of this work so there will be no further attempts to engage in the current critical debate on the virtues of different branches of narratology. Instead I will attempt to provide my own narratology which best serves the discussion here, drawing on some previous theories, as noted above.

### **Travel Texts as Narratives**

In order to use narratology as a tool to interpret travel writing, travel writing must first be proven to be narrative. In Prince's definition of narratology which opens the previous section, the most significant statement for my purposes is the parenthetical "regardless of medium of interpretation". This suggests that ostensibly non-fictional narratives, such as travel texts, can be examined using theories of narrative. I argue in the final chapter of this work that fictionalisation is inherent in travel writing, and it is fiction that is the usual subject of

narratological study: “it is evident... that the two branches of narratology<sup>1</sup> have until now devoted their attention almost exclusively to the behaviour and objects of fictional narrative alone... which has been hypostatized as narrative par excellence” (Genette 1990, 755).

However, the travel writing discussed in these pages is an example of narrative and therefore legitimate subject for narratological analysis. Travel texts are required, in fact, to perform more functions than fiction.

So what is a narrative? Wolf Schmid presents two definitions. The first is from the earlier German school of narrative theorists:

A text qualified as a narrative if it contained specific communicative characteristics. Narration was bound to the presence of a mediating authority, the narrator, and contrasted with the direct presentation of events in the drama. (Schmid 17)

The mediation which Schmid talks of here is narrative point of view, while the “direct presentation of events in the drama” is closer to the visual point of view. The second definition is taken from the structuralists:

The defining characteristic of narration is not a feature of discourse or communication but rather a feature of what is narrated. Texts which we describe as narrative in the structuralist sense of the word contrast with descriptive texts in that they contain a temporal structure and represent changes of state. (ibid. 18)

This second definition again shows the presence of the author in crafting a narrative from the travel. Though it could be argued that travel suggests a temporal structure, the author must still choose to adopt that structure and almost exclusively does in order to create narrative. In the third chapter of this work “change of state” is shown to be synonymous with a rite of passage as defined by van Gennep and Victor Turner: during the rite of passage the traveller enters a “‘liminal period’, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the “passenger”) are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. In the third phase (reaggregation or reincorporation), the passage is consummated” (V. Turner 94-5). Using either of these definitions travel texts are narratives

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<sup>1</sup> The two branches Genette mentions are earlier defined as the formal study of narrative discourse and the thematic study of the ‘story’.

and are therefore suitable subjects for narratological analysis. My consideration of point of view posits it as the fundamental factor in experience and the writing of that experience; it is therefore also fundamental to issues of truth. M.H. Abrams discusses the link between narratology and point of view (124; 165) and “the way that narrative discourse fashions a ‘story’ – the mere sequence of events in time – into the organized structure of a literary *plot*” (124; emphasis given). My argument is that the travel constitutes the “story” as Abrams has it and the travelogue the “literary *plot*”, or narrative. As shown above, I use ‘travel’ to discuss the events and experience which is then turned into a ‘story’ or ‘narrative’; two terms which I use interchangeably.

The table which precedes chapter one uses narratological terms to describe the role of the narrators as both characters and authors within the travel books. It is for reference throughout this thesis when narratological terms are used. The table differentiates between the story world, the writing world, and the real world. These ‘worlds’ are known in narratology as diegeses. Having made this distinction between different narrative worlds, or diegesis, it must be noted that

In terms of the narrative, and barring any textual indication to the contrary, the world described by the narrator constitutes the world as it is, whatever its correspondence to our own world (or the way we imagine it) may happen to be... Note that [the truth of the narrator's declarations] does not necessarily depend on the (homo- or hetero-) diegetic status of the narrator. (Prince 1991, 548)

‘Diegetic’ constitutes telling rather than the showing of mimetic narratives. This therefore implies someone to tell the story: the narrator. The narrator describes events occurring in a certain world, or ‘diegesis’ meaning “the universe in which the story takes place” (Genette 1988, 17). ‘Diegetic’ (or ‘intradiegetic’, to avoid confusion), then, means within this narrative universe. Diegesis is the ‘story’ of the travelling narrator-character; the narrative itself is ‘discourse’. Discourse is ‘extradiegetic’, meaning outside of the traveller’s world and is the technique used to present the story as plot and narrative, as discussed earlier. In normal fiction, then, the author is extradiegetic and the narrator – if there is one and he is part of the same fictional world – intradiegetic. The narrator can either be homodiegetic (part of that fictional story) or heterodiegetic (not a character in the story). An ‘autodiegetic’ narrator is a homodiegetic narrator who is not only a character in the diegesis but the central protagonist (Genette 1980, 245). These travelogues are presented as truth, however, so are

ostensibly all intradiegetic (the story and real worlds are intended to be the same). The ‘truth’ of the travelogues is explored at greater length at the end of this study along with the implications for truth of narrating and the construction of narrative. My purpose here is to simply flag up the presence of a narrator-author who is writing at a distance (temporally and spatially) from the events which took place. Even Fanny Trollope writing her notebooks is writing at a distance from events, albeit a very small distance. The author is therefore always removed from the diegesis of the travel: “the act of writing is always distanced from the correspondent’s life, be it ever so minimally” (Chatman 1978, 171). The author’s representations of themselves in the story are also, therefore differentiated from the real author. As Chatman says, “on the sending end [of the narrative communication] are the real author, the implied author, and the narrator (if any); on the receiving end, the real audience (listener, reader, viewer), the implied audience and the narratee” (ibid. 28). These terms relate to the table following this introduction where I show the terms which I prefer and make use of throughout this work.

In order to use narratology to analyse nineteenth century travel texts I must first address the issue of using a twentieth century theory to describe developments in the nineteenth century, including issues of anachronism. As already discussed, narratology is used as a tool to identify the changes in travel narrative techniques during the nineteenth century, just as looking at the history of technology in travel is used analytically in the next chapter. With the exception of James, I make no claims for writers I am examining being overly concerned with the theory of putting their travels into writing. Nor do I claim that narrative techniques are consciously being employed as part of a collective movement towards more artful, sophisticated narratives. Instead narratology is used to note the increase in sophistication (and interference) of point of view within travel writing as a result of external factors, such as technological advances and the impact of the publication of a greater volume of writing on the United States. The story of this thesis is narrative development, but the story should not suggest that the authors were working under a common impulse. Merely, it identifies the trend of the development and suggests some reasons for it. To quote Taleb once again: “if I have to go after what I call the narrative disciplines, my best tool is a narrative” (xxvii).

### Travel writers

Ten writers make their mark throughout this work; most are not primarily thought of as travel writers, but writers of fiction. These authors and their works have been chosen in

part because of their canonical status: their works were widely read and therefore informed other travel writing in the nineteenth century and beyond. In this sense, these works created and were part of ‘textual networks’ which informed further points of view<sup>2</sup>. Some works have a greater role in these networks than others. The texts in this study are those which are more prominent in the creation of a textual America in the nineteenth century. But, despite this assistance in selecting my texts, some decisions had to be made for brevity. The chosen authors function as case studies for my argument. They exemplify trends which could also be illustrated by reference to a number of other contemporary writers<sup>3</sup>.

The major phase of nineteenth century British interest in the United States ran from the period following the war of 1812 until the Civil War of 1861-5. Within this period come my first three British writers: Frances Trollope, Charles Dickens and Anthony Trollope (Anthony Trollope was travelling during the Civil War). With Jefferson’s Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the arrival of the journals and accounts of Lewis and Clark’s 1804-6 expedition came a stronger American interest in the interior of the country; the United States’ territory had doubled in extent overnight. The proliferation of waterway and rail travel within the country in the same interwar period saw American citizens more able and willing to explore their own country. On the American side this period saw the travels of Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry David Thoreau. Following the Civil War the remainder of my writers made their travels in the United States: these are Mark Twain and Robert Louis Stevenson – writing on the frontier – and W.T. Stead and Henry James who considered the United States’ growing prominence in the international community. These ten authors form the core of this study, although Fanny Trollope, Dickens, Twain and James are the most important to my thesis. Herman Melville’s South Sea travels support the argument in the last chapter but his work is not writing on travel in the United States so is not covered in the thesis until that point. The remainder of this introduction explains the reasons for excluding various travel texts before giving a brief synopsis of each chapter.

### Omissions

This work has some lacunae which need to be addressed. Firstly, as already hinted above, non-literary travelogues do not receive much attention in these pages. Of the nineteenth

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<sup>2</sup> Benedict Anderson talks about print capitalism giving “fixity to language” (46) in his *Imagined Communities* (1983) which I see as analogous to the creation of textual networks and textual Americas.

<sup>3</sup> Prominent travel accounts of the United States not central to this work include Captain Basil Hall’s *Travels in North America* (1829), Captain Frederick Marryat’s *Diary in America* (1839), and Francis Parkman’s *The Oregon Trail* (1847). Others are mentioned throughout this introduction.

century travel narratives, the most popular at the time and most widely read today are from the pens of the literary community, specifically novelists. Whether it was their penchant for and proficiency in rich description and incisive social observation, or merely the greater notoriety of these authors which elevated their work above the collection of similar travelogues cannot be certain. There was desire both on the part of the writers and the readers for these works to be undertaken. The nineteenth century, “in particular the age of Queen Victoria, was a period of intensification of travel which can be seen to emerge at the end of the previous century in the increased popularity of travel on the Continent and the fashion of scenic tourism” (Korte 84). This “intensification of travel” is reflected in the proliferation of travelogues during the period and reflects the technological advances (discussed in chapter two of this work) which enabled the greater circulation of travellers and travelogues. Several of the authors covered here talk about the proliferation of tourists in such sites as Niagara Falls in their travel accounts, as is discussed in chapter four. The opinions and views of literary figures are no less valid pieces of information than those instructions and prescribed points of interest to be found in other sub-genres found under the umbrella of travel literature, and are arguably much more interesting. I have consulted guidebooks, travel companions, and works by non-literary travellers and they are discussed in some detail when discussing Niagara in the fourth chapter<sup>4</sup>. However, they are not central to this work as they disavow point of view as noted in the first chapter. Likewise, recent tourism theory does not feature in any significant way in this work<sup>5</sup>. This is a work interested in literary production and the creation of narrative; extensive consideration of tourism would change the focus of this work. The authors discussed in this study rarely consider themselves tourists: to them, their role is writing for readers back home.

Secondly is the question of transatlantic exchanges. Several books already deal with the interaction between American and British travellers on either side of the Atlantic Ocean, which was one reason for not extensively making this a study of transatlantic issues<sup>6</sup>. I am less concerned with comparisons between Britain and the United States. In addition, with ten

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<sup>4</sup> The discussion of Niagara is also one of only a few instances when theories of tourism – as opposed to travel writing – are considered, with reference to John Sears’s *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (1998).

<sup>5</sup> Among the writers consulted here are Barbara Korte and John Sears (noted above), Donald Macleod and James Carrier’s *Tourism, Power and Culture: Anthropological Insights* (2010), and Nicola J. Watson’s *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth-Century Culture* (2009).

<sup>6</sup> I am thinking in particular of Christopher Mulvey’s *Anglo-American Landscapes: a Study of Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Travel Literature* (1983) and *Transatlantic Manners: Social Patterns in Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Travel Literature* (1990), and Paul Giles’s *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary* (2002).

authors of prolific travel and travel writing forming the basis of this discussion it would be easy to become swiftly overwhelmed with material and lose focus of the main subject for this work which is writing (on) America. As such while I do concentrate on British and American travellers, this work could not be said to be truly transatlantic in nature, with the focus overwhelmingly on the United States.

Thirdly, little is made of the social commentary in these works. Undoubtedly this was the central reason for my authors – particularly those from Britain – travelling in the United States: Dickens and Anthony Trollope were interested in American institutions and Frances Trollope was preoccupied with domestic manners. Other authors who took this for their theme but are not central to this work include Alexis de Tocqueville and Matthew Arnold. Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835 and 1840) had a significant role in European perceptions of American society and culture and does impact upon some writers discussed here, though it has little to say about landscape or travelling. Arnold's *Civilisation in the United States* (1885) is dismissed for similar reasons. European social commentary on the United States has been examined at length elsewhere and would detract from my discussion of the construction of narrative<sup>7</sup>. Another omission which deserves an explanation is the lack of input from African American, Native American, Mexican, Spanish or other European writers; indeed, there is only one female among the primary authors<sup>8</sup>. These omissions are due to significantly fewer writers from the first three categories being published or widely available at the time and their not being literary even if they were. The focus is on Anglophone writers because the possibility for alienation within (essentially) the same language system is of interest and writing from a language other than English would add another, complicating point of view on top of those which concern this study. Frances Trollope's account is the only travel account chosen by a female author largely because of its (adverse) reception in the United States and the influence it had on subsequent British travellers, including her son Anthony; Trollope's work is another example of a book which interacts with a far-reaching textual network. I was also able to look at Trollope's original notebooks and manuscript for *Domestic Manners* during a research trip to the Lilly Library at Indiana University, Bloomington. I make no apologies for the white British (and American)

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<sup>7</sup> Peter Conrad's *Imagining America* deals with several of the authors covered here, adding Oscar Wilde, Rupert Brooke, Kipling, H. G. Wells, Stevenson, Lawrence, Auden, Huxley, and Isherwood.

<sup>8</sup> Frances Wright's *Views of Society and Manners in America* (1821), Harriet Martineau's *Theory and Practice of Society in America* (1837) and *Retrospect of Western Travel* (1838), and Fanny Kemble's *Journal of Residence on a Georgian Plantation 1838-1839* (1863) do not have the same cultural significance as Frances Trollope's work.

male dominance of my primary texts: it is a symptom of the era and the hegemony of male authors and their prominence in the *literary* world rather than any reflection of bias on my part. Generally, ‘United States’ has been preferred to ‘America’ despite the common conflation of these two terms. ‘United States’ is more often used in these pages when discussing the geopolitical country, while ‘America’ is used when trying to identify an ideological entity. ‘America’ exists in myth while the ‘United States’ exists on the map.

This work also does not contend with writing from post-1912. It would simply be too great a task for a doctoral thesis to adequately cover the entirety of British and American literary writing on the United States; even being as selective as I have been. Also, the advent of the automobile and then the aeroplane changed means of travel and therefore travel narratives, narration, and point of view drastically. River and rail travel decreased significantly in prominence, stage travel ceased to exist, and the ordinary traveller became increasingly isolated from the landscape. Several prominent twentieth century travellers attempted to negate the disconnection from the landscape which had been increasing since the nineteenth century by utilising personal motor vehicles: John Steinbeck travelled in a mobile home named ‘Rocinante’ – after Don Quixote’s horse – in *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962); William Least Heat-Moon has a van in *Blue Highways: A Journey into America* (1982); Jack Kerouac uses a variety of automobiles as Sal Paradise in *On the Road* (1957); Robert M. Pirsig chose the modern mode of transport which arguably allowed the closest connection with the landscape, travelling by motorcycle in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974). Jonathan Raban discussed travel in the United States and nineteenth century travel writers (many of whom are central to this thesis) in several works<sup>9</sup>. His choices demonstrate a desire to retrace the journeys of earlier travellers and interact with these textual networks, as well as an interest in the retrospective point of view.

In the books mentioned above the travellers made an effort to avoid interstates and highways, instead choosing to take back roads and the ‘blue highways’ on the map in order to reconnect with the landscape. I would be interested to explore post-1912 travel narratives and the effect that twentieth century technology has upon point of view in future work. Before bringing this introduction to a close I will delineate the content of each chapter.

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<sup>9</sup> *Old Glory: An American Voyage* (1981), *Hunting Mister Heartbreak: A Discovery of America* (1991), *Bad Land: An American Romance* (1996), and *Passage to Juneau: A Sea and its Meanings* (1999).



## Structure

Chapter one introduces Henry James and his writing on point of view, both in terms of perception and narrative. Also introduced in this chapter are the primary authors and texts of the study. With a brief analysis of their narratives I show the merits of applying narratology to the travel texts by identifying some narrative techniques which attempt to order the United States in narrative and betray the adoption of different points of view both visually and narratologically.

The second chapter begins with the Atlantic Ocean, and with one of the greatest failures of the desire to order nature, RMS Titanic. Travellers are trying to get to grips with the American continent as well as the Atlantic Ocean; at least in part they are assisted by technology. Travel technology and its implications for travellers is therefore the main subject of this second chapter. On the one hand more can be seen (or at least more ground can be covered) using technology, on the other there are repercussions for how that ground is seen. There is a brief history of travel to and within the United States before focusing on rail and river travel. I examine the different points of view when travelling by each method and the implications on narrative engendered by the two modes of travel. The development of steam affected the perspective and narrative of each; the development of rail technology drastically altered the point of view a traveller adopted of the natural world. The Mississippi River is the main landscape explored in this chapter which leads to the next chapter by discussing the transatlantic voyage and suggesting that it is a liminal, frontier location.

In chapter three I explore the idea of frontiers in travel further. Identifying the common link between the transatlantic and the prairies, chapter three explores the idea of frontiers in time and space and the liminal condition 'enjoyed' by travellers. It discusses the implications of the frontier on both travel and narrative. I suggest that persona is vital to the traveller and the writer and that it is in frontiers that these narrators are developed as a means of making travel into narrative. The third chapter ends by considering James's inability to discuss the West, suggesting an interest in covering that which had been written on before.

Chapter four discusses various points of view on the American landscape from the ordered cities and picturesque landscape of the Northeast, to the sublime of Niagara. Writing within the conventions of the European sublime was often problematic for travel writers who found Niagara had no precedent in the Old World. Once again I explore issues of rewriting the landscape to construct a story and consider various points of view of the cataract,

including silence – as with James in the West –, guidebook empiricism, guidebook romanticism, and Twain's fiction.

In the final chapter I posit fictionalisation as a necessity when composing a narrative of travel. However, I argue that this does not necessarily compromise 'truth'. After a brief exploration of fictional Americas I discuss Herman Melville's South Sea narratives in similar terms. Finally, I investigate the compositional techniques of Frances Trollope, Dickens, and Twain to see where and how fictionalisation takes place and argue that point of view renders any America truthful if it intended to be.

A brief conclusion draws the two definitions of point of view together once again and presents a case for the impact of technology, landscape, and text on visual point of view, and visual point of view's impact on narrative. I discuss the development of travel writing on the United States through travel and argue that the nineteenth century saw a dramatic shift in attitudes and points of view for seeing and writing America.

# Table

Chatman's terms	Real Author	Implied Author	Narrator
My terms	Real Author	Narrator-author	Narrator-character
	An existing person	The author's self-projection	The traveller
Secondary Diegesis (of the implied author writing on return 'home')	Extradiegetic	Intradiegetic	Metadiegetic
Role in Diegesis	---	Auto- and/or Homodiegetic narrator	Character
Primary Diegesis (of the actual travel)	Extradiegetic	Extradiegetic	Intradiegetic
Role in Diegesis	---	Heterodiegetic or non- narrating	Auto- and/or Homodiegetic narrator
<i>Domestic Manners</i>	Frances Trollope	Mrs. Trollope, a respectable, haughty lady from England who visited the U.S.	Fanny Trollope a failed emigrant
<i>Tour on the Prairies</i>	Washington Irving	Irving with 'Crayonisms'	Geoffrey Crayon.
<i>American Notes</i>	Charles Dickens	Charles Dickens, writing on International Copyright and institutions	Boz, the celebrated author
<i>North America</i>	Anthony Trollope	A. Trollope, living with the legacy of <i>Domestic Manners</i> .	Anthony Trollope, representative of the post office
<i>Life on the Mississippi and Roughing it</i>	Samuel Clemens	Mark Twain, author and liar	Mark Twain, cub pilot and young adventurer
<i>Amateur Emigrant and Silverado Squatters</i>	Robert Louis Stevenson	Robert Stevenson the author who made his way to the U.S.	Stevenson the lover and nervous emigrant
<i>The American Scene</i>	Henry James	James the Europhile	James the American

## One: Travel Narratives

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This study begins with a discussion of travel and narrative. The fundamental position taken by this thesis is that travel writers order their experiences using narrative, attempting to represent both the travel and the land through which they travel. Some travellers write down this narrative creating travel texts; a small number of such travellers are famous for their writing and it is a small number of those whom I will discuss. This first chapter introduces point of view as a primary ordering device for both travel and narrative. It also discusses travel as narrative and introduces the theory of narratology, supporting the use of this theory to examine the process of making travel into narrative. Finally, I identify some narrative set-pieces which point to the crafting and ordering of experience by travellers into narrative.

The writing of Henry James serves to introduce point of view as a concept. Born in the United States in 1843, he spent most of his life in Europe (acquiring British citizenship in 1915, shortly before his death). James's 1907 travel book *The American Scene* is therefore an opportunity for revisiting many of the haunts of his much earlier life, rewriting his imagined America in the process. James comes to the United States, and indeed any landscape, with strong theories on point of view. As he is travelling (returning) to the United States at the end of the period I consider, James's theories offer a way of looking back on the travel writing of the nineteenth century to reflect on a story which has now been 'completed'. This idea will also be briefly explored and problematised in the third chapter of this work when raising issues with Frederick Jackson Turner's 'story' of the West using the frontier which had been declared 'closed' shortly before his famous 'Significance of the Frontier in American History' (1893). Telling a story from a subsequent point of view is key to the formation of travel narratives. There is a reliance not only on the personal history of the traveller's travels but also on other works on the United States. James's famous criticism of Hawthorne reflects this reliance:

History, as yet, has left in the United States but so thin and impalpable a deposit that we very soon touch the hard substratum of nature; and nature herself, in the Western world, has the peculiarity of seeming rather crude and immature. The very air looks new and young; the light of the sun seems fresh and innocent, as if it knew as yet but few of the secrets of the world and none of the weariness of shining; the vegetation has the appearance of not having reached its majority.

... One might enumerate the items of high civilization, as it exists in other countries, which are absent from the texture of American life, until it should become a wonder to know what was left. No State, in the European sense of the word, and indeed barely a specific national name. No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities nor public schools – no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class – no Epsom nor Ascot! Some such list as that might be drawn up of the absent things in American life – especially in the American life of forty years ago, the effect of which, upon an English or a French imagination, would probably as a general thing be appalling. (351)

This passage has been much discussed, both contemporarily and by critics (including Lawson-Peebles in his *American Literature Before 1880*) and taken both in earnest and as a joke. James describes the work as his “ill-fated little *Hawthorne*” in his *Notebooks* (29) and in a letter to Charles Eliot Norton (dated 31 March 1880) talks of his

Poor little *Hawthorne*, which appears to have had the fate of creating a very big tempest in a very small tea-pot. If it were not so childish and so farcical, it would be melancholy and mortifying; but the verdant innocence of it all saves it, to a certain extent, and it seems to me like the clucking of a brood of prairie-hens. (*Letters II* 280)

James seems to be allying his work with Hawthorne himself, noting that “the verdant innocence” saves it. In an earlier letter to William Dean Howells (31 January 1880) James admits that he overdoes the dusky and provincial in the work. Earlier in his life, before heading to Italy, James (in another letter to Norton dated 4 February 1872) also discusses his bias for Europe, admitting that he – as an American – is prone to

Exaggerate the merits of Europe. It’s the same world there after all and Italy isn’t the absolute any more than Massachusetts. It’s a complex fate, being an American, and one of the responsibilities it entails is fighting against a superstitious valuation of Europe. – It will be rather a sell, getting over there and finding the

problems of the universe rather multiplied than diminished. Still, I incline to risk the discomfiture. (*Letters I* 274)

James is aware, therefore, of his own point of view concerning Europe and his native land. An almost identical passage to that in *Hawthorne* in James's notebook suggests that this diatribe was originally to be attributed to one of his characters rather than himself, suggesting it is not his view:

In a story, someone says – “Oh yes, the United States – a country without a sovereign, without a court, without a nobility, without an army, without a church or a clergy, without a diplomatic service, without a picturesque peasantry, without palaces or castles, or country seats, or ruins, without a literature, without novels, without an Oxford or a Cambridge, without cathedrals or ivied churches, without latticed cottages or village ale-houses, without political society, without sport, without fox-hunting or country gentlemen, without an Epson or an Ascot, and Eton or a Rugby” (*Notebooks* 14)

I believe it to fall somewhere between comment and joke, suggested by James's original intention to attribute the point to a character. In *Hawthorne* James is discussing American novels and literature, finding it generally underdeveloped, but by no means wholly absent. Noting that the United States is “without a literature, without novels” is therefore not wholly sincere. James is employing hyperbole to make his criticism, perhaps attempting to soften the blow with a joke that few critics understand, leaving James upset. It is a mock-damning indictment of America as a literary topic which does, however go some way to explain James's preoccupation with his personal history of the United States and indeed his reliance on Hawthorne. The importance of literary precedent is made clear as I chart various responses to the United States; it shows the development of the story of travel. James, coming at the end of a period of expansion and exploration has the wealth of nineteenth century writing on the United States with which to comment and interact. James's discussion of Hawthorne ironically shows that “no literature, no novels” is clearly untrue. I will go on to argue that as the nineteenth century wore on, technological advancements combine with a greater body of literature *trying* to interact with the American landscape. This allows later writers such as James to become more occupied with the story ( the crafting of their own story and those written by others) so that they no longer view the country itself. A

development in narrative and technology led to a development in travel writing, from trying to write about the country to writing about self and the construction of the story.

### Point of View

Issues of point of view are omnipresent in this study. Point of view is both a visual and a narrative term and therefore can apply to the experience of travelling as well as the creation of narrative. Point of view is used here as a means of explaining differences of perception whilst travelling. It is also used as a narrative tool and its effect on narratives is examined. When Henry James talks of what advice he would give to the writer who is starting out in his 'Letter to the Deerfield Summer School' he alludes to the dual nature of point of view:

Oh, do something from your point of view; an ounce of example is worth a ton of generalisations; do something with the great art and the great form; do something with life. Any point of view is interesting that is a direct impression of life. You each have an impression colored by your individual conditions; make that into a picture, a picture framed by your own personal wisdom, your glimpse of the American world. The field is vast for freedom, for study, for observation, for satire, for truth. (93)

This idea of "a picture framed by... personal wisdom" incorporates the visual, personal or perceptual and metaphorical concern of this chapter and the work as a whole. The final line of the above passage brings truth to the fore, with James claiming that the "field is vast ... for truth"; it is this idea which is discussed and questioned most explicitly in the final chapter. Making the "direct impression of life... into a picture" suggests adopting a narrative point of view in order to frame the original impression. The craft and signs of this effort display the development of travel writing on the United States in the nineteenth century. The last sentence of the above quotation is complex and interesting. In it, James begins a list with freedom, that most American of ideals, and one which would inspire his young audience. Is James suggesting that freedom and truth are linked and that in effect truth can be found by utilising freedom and that American freedom is indivisible? In other words, if one must be free in the United States, then one is free to find truth in whichever way one sees fit. The vast field certainly suggests many different truths and that American freedom allows pursuing a personal truth. The list also includes study, observation and satire; study and satire imply

working point of view upon observation, marking the importance of the visual point of view (observation) and the writing point of view (study and satire) providing the freedom for truth.

It is important to note, as suggested earlier, that fact and truth are not necessarily synonymous, nor truth and fiction antonymous. While talking about fiction, Henry James talks about finding

The superior truth, [which] was all more or less present to me; only the question was, too dreadfully, how make it present to the reader? How boil down so many facts in the alembic, so that the distilled result, the produced appearance, should have intensity, lucidity, brevity, beauty, all the merits required for my effect? (*Art of the Novel* 13)

James suggests that truth is more important than facts, which must be boiled down “in the alembic” by the author. In other words, in order to create the desired “superior truth” facts cannot be presented objectively, they must first be transformed into narrative. The metaphor has James as the alchemist who works upon the facts to create the concentrated truth, using tools and time to produce it. An author, then, can apply his own point of view to the facts while writing, just as the traveller applies point of view while observing, to create something which boils down the facts into something which is true, but also has the “beauty” of a story. James is here expressing the manifesto for all travel writers, and indeed all writers.

Henry David Thoreau’s *Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849) also discusses the need for an ordering point of view. *A Week* is about a trip of *two weeks* in 1839 with his brother, John. The ordering of the travel into narrative begins, then, with the title. The book began on the “muddy but much abused Concord River” (12) but quickly becomes more allegory than travel book, suggested by this passage: “Gradually the village murmur subsided, and we seemed to be embarked on the placid current of our dreams, floating from past to future as silently as one awakes to fresh morning or evening thoughts” (18). Thoreau goes on to discuss fluency in writing, using the river as an extended (and sometimes mixed) metaphor:

Enough has been said in these days of the charm of fluent writing. We hear it complained of some works of genius, that they have fine thoughts, but are irregular and have no flow. But even the mountain peaks in the horizon are, to the eye of science, parts of one range. We should consider that the flow of thought is more like a



tidal wave than a prone river, and is the result of a celestial influence, not of any declivity in its channel. The river flows because it runs down hill, and flows the faster the faster it descends. The reader who expects to float down stream for the whole voyage, may well complain of nauseating swells and choppings of the sea when his frail shore-craft gets amidst the billows of the ocean stream, which flows as much to sun and moon as lesser streams to it. (84)

Thoreau's narrative, written ten years after the travel took place, aptly demonstrates the preference for fluency of writing over exact reproduction of the journey. By using celestial imagery it suggests a subsequent ordering of the narrative – on top of the framework provided by the flow of the river – from above, by the author himself. *A Week* uses the real journey as a framework for the overlaid narrative. Using mode of travel as an ordering point of view is something which is discussed in greater length in the next chapter.

Point of view is an ordering device both for seeing and writing. In chapter two I explore the implications of technological advances on point of view. I suggest that the development in travel technologies and narrative approaches create more crafted points of view, which placed greater emphasis upon the observer and the framing of the object, rather than the object itself.

The remainder of this chapter introduces most of the travellers and their texts, subjecting those texts to some early narratological analysis to show the craft of point of view upon travel narratives. I will begin this analysis with the first author chronologically, Frances Trollope, and examine the different signs of narrative point of view through to Henry James. The aim in examining the texts of the primary authors is to recognize different compositional techniques and note the implications of these on narrative. By looking specifically at the narratives and how they are formed it is possible to identify instances where the craft and point of view of the narrator-author overwrites or is in opposition to that of the narrator-character. The following sections in this chapter make use of narratology as a tool in analysing the narratives; several narratological terms are defined in the course of the chapter in addition to those given in the introduction.

### Frances Trollope

Fanny Trollope's original reason for coming to the United States in 1827 was to aid the falling fortunes of her family. At the age of 48 she made the journey to the United States with three of her children (though not the young Anthony), two servants and a young French

artist in the sailing vessel *Edward*. She twice failed with economic ventures: a commune for former slaves at Nashoba with Frances Wright was abandoned swiftly by Trollope, while her later Cincinnati Bazaar became known locally as “Trollope’s Folly” (Heinemann 11). Following these failures Trollope turned her attention to her ever-present notebooks and decided to write a travel book. That book, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, was published in 1832 after her return to England. The bulk of the material for *Domestic Manners* comes from Trollope’s three notebooks, all of which seem to have been requisitioned by Frances from family members for the purpose of note-taking, with the first having the signature of Henry Trollope and containing fifteen pages of his poems and notes before being given to or taken by his mother (Smalley 648). A second volume previously belonged to “T.A. Trollope” (either Thomas Adolphus her eldest son, or Thomas Anthony her husband) and is dated 1827. The final notebook originally belonged to Thomas Adolphus but contains no writings by him (Smalley 648). Trollope describes these notebooks near the conclusion of her travel book, describing them as “six hundred pages of griffonage” (314). “Griffonage” is Trollope’s word for her rough scribbling and the taking down of conversations in her notebooks, which form the main source material of *Domestic Manners*. These

Go well beyond her arrival at Baltimore ... and most, though by no means all, of the paragraphs of the printed text of *Domestic Manners* that deal with her visits to Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Washington and her residence at Stonington, Maryland have their rougher counterparts in the notebooks (Smalley 649).

The 64,000 words of the notebooks are then distilled into a manuscript of 52,000 words, 148 pages composed “during her first months at Stonington in the spring of 1830” (Smalley 650). It is after these chapters, near the end of *Domestic Manners* when Trollope talks about her composition and makes several general observations of the United States and its inhabitants. Trollope was keen to uncover the compositional technique of another prominent travel writer: Captain Basil Hall’s *Travels in North America* was published in 1829, while Trollope was still in the United States. Mrs. Trollope talks about the “moral earthquake” occasioned by the appearance of Hall’s book, but maintains that though she was in America when the book came out, “it was not till July, 1830” that she finally got hold of a copy. Trollope seems to be asserting that she and her book were not influenced by Hall’s, and that therefore her

travelogue was original (*Domestic Manners* 276). Fanny's notebooks<sup>10</sup> show Trollope was occupied with "the veritable Capt. Basil Hall" from 1830 onwards as he is discussed several times, including when she writes, again in 1830, that "the Philadelphia publisher told me that Capt. Hall told him the method he pursued in the composition of his work on America was as follows ... he made [...] copious [notes] of all he saw – he brought home 15 volumes of notes" (*Notebook 3* n.p.). On several occasions Trollope maintains that she meticulously made notes immediately after notable events: "I will transcribe the notes I took of a conversation at which I was present, at Cincinnati; I wrote them immediately after the conversation took place" (*Domestic Manners* 94); "I beg to assure the reader, that whenever I give conversations they were not made *à loisir*, but were written down immediately after they occurred, with all the verbal fidelity my memory permitted" (53). While the two first-person-singulars in the first quotation demonstrate the presence of the narrator (and therefore validate narratological analysis), it should be pointed out that they refer to two different narrators. The first "I" is the narrator-author who is writing *Domestic Manners*, the second "I" is the narrator-character who is writing notes as she is travelling. The two narrators are separated by time and space. These quotations draw attention to the fact that Mrs. Trollope is crafting the travelogue after the event.

Throughout the first part of the book which comes from the notebooks, Trollope prefers tagged or free direct speech: " 'if anything could make me agree to it, it would be the hope of living long enough to kill you and my dog of a son: however, I won't agree: you shall have the hanging of me' " (131); as opposed to indirect: "he told me that he too had made the voyage with the same description of company, but remarking that there was not a single captain among them, he made the observation to a fellow-passenger, and asked how he accounted for it" (ibid. 27). The narrator-author is therefore less prominent: "indirect tagged forms go further toward illuminating a narrator's presence" (Chatman 1978, 208). Indirect forms are the norm in the other travelogues of this study. Although Trollope's assertions about the authenticity and proximity of her narrative to the events paradoxically highlight the role of an editing narrator-author her travelogue is largely presented as "*à loisir*", lending the speech a more authoritative or quasi-truthful tone. In the first draft of *Domestic Manners* Trollope writes: "my book has been altogether compiled from notes made at the moment and can therefore pretend to little regularity of arrangement" (n.p.), introducing the narrator-author as editor, but suggesting that the editing is minimal. The narrator is less obtrusive in

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<sup>10</sup> The notebooks are held at the Lilly Library, University of Indiana. The designated numbers for the notebooks are taken from Smalley's reckoning.

events suggesting – though not reaching – ‘mimesis’. Mimesis, or mimetic narratives are where the action is simply presented or shown. Having said this, all travel writing has a diegesis which – though intended to be verisimilar to the ‘real world’ – is actually removed from the real world by time and space. The narrative is rewritten by the narrator-author who is removed from the diegesis of the story (and the narrator-character) in both time and space, albeit in Frances Trollope’s case not by much.

Another sign that the narrator-character’s narrative is being re-written from the subsequent point of view of the author in Trollope’s book is the use of footnotes. These suggest that the narrator-author is making comments on the observations of the narrator-character with the knowledge accrued since the original travel. The narrator-character, even though she ‘is’ the author, is being revealed as unreliable. The (effectively) simultaneous – though more properly described as interpolated or intercalated – narrating of the narrator-character is being undermined by the retrospective narrator-author. To use Genette’s terminology, these travel accounts can be seen as almost entirely consisting of one grand complete analepsis: a revisiting to past events with a complete return to the present (i.e. time of writing).

However short, the first paragraph of *Domestic Manners* seems to me to be of the extradiegetic level: an ellipsis from departure from England to arrival at the mouth of the Mississippi and a summary of the “tedious voyage”, together constituting four lines: ‘ellipsis’ skips some of the diegesis without any discourse time – there is no mention of events which have occurred in the story; and summary has the narrative shorter than the diegesis (Genette 1980, 95; Chatman 1978, 68). In the first draft of the book this introductory preface by the narrator-author is longer:

Two new volumes of travels is enough to produce an exclamation from writer and reader, similar to that of the sentimentalist in the neglected addresses, “Indeed it makes me very very sick”.

For myself, I ~~certainly~~ found an antidote to the nausea attending my part of the business in the constant excitement of having to describe scenes that amused, and objects that delighted me, and I can only hope, like all dutiful authors, that my readers may be amused and delighted too.

My book has been altogether compiled from notes made at the moment and can therefore pretend to little regularity of arrangement.

The West Indian Islands and lastly Cuba, were passed in succession, and on Christmas Day we witnessed with great delight the singular phenomenon of the mighty Mississippi, mingling its muddy mass of waters with the deep blue of the Mexican Gulf. (n.p.)

After this, the narrative continues similarly to the final draft. Trollope strikes-out “certainly” in the second paragraph, perhaps because on reflection the creation of narrative (“the business... of having to describe scenes that amused”) was not necessarily always an antidote to the nausea of travel. The reduction of this whole page into a few lines could be another technique to conceal the narrator-author. The suggestion that the writing of the travelogue makes the writer (as well as the reader) “very very sick” contrasts with the “antidote to nausea” that the original composition provided the traveller; the narrator-author is sick where the narrator-character is well. The ellipsis of the Atlantic Ocean and the transatlantic voyage is also notable and discussed at greater length in the following chapter; for now I will say that it was omitted because of sea-sickness.

The return to the extradiegetic level (or secondary diegesis) after almost 300 pages of largely intradiegetic (in the primary diegesis of the time travelling in the United States) narrative occurs in the conclusion, with the lines:

There is enough of [this book], yet I must add a few more lines.

I suspect that what I have written will make it evident that I do not like America... I entered the country at New Orleans, remained for more than two years west of the Alleghanies, and passed another year among the Atlantic cities, and the country around them. I conversed during this time with citizens of all orders and degrees (*Domestic Manners* 314)

This passage also contains a further partial analepsis: “I remember hearing it said, many years ago” and summary. This differs from the intradiegetic passages which are closer to isochrony and presented as scene. When diegesis time and discourse time are running at the same speed, they are said to be ‘isochronous’; if they are ‘anachronous’ they can be either in ‘analepsis’, a displacement in narrative time to the past, or ‘prolepsis’ to the future (Genette 1980, 40), though “intermediate events must themselves be recounted at some later point, for otherwise the leap would simply constitute ellipsis” (Chatman 1978, 64).

The story, then is narrated not diegetically as earlier put forward, but extradiegetically, with the ‘narrator-author’ performing the literary act of recounting the story of the ‘narrator-character’ at the first level, who is talking intradiegetically, and indeed homodiegetically at a second narrative level as Genette describes it (1980, 228). Of course, the ‘narrator-author’ is still a narrator, just as the ‘narrator-character’ is supposedly the author: the extradiegetic narrator tries to conflate the two narrative personae and hide the internal narrative level, but by doing so draws attention to the unreliability of both of the narrators; the intradiegetic by not knowing how the narrative will take its course, and the extradiegetic by lying in order to suppress this ignorance and disparity between the narrators. It should also be pointed out that the different levels of narrative are separated not only by temporal space, but by geographical space (in this case the Atlantic Ocean). To put it another way, Trollope’s *Domestic Manners* is a frame narrative, with the bookending first sentence and concluding chapter serving as an omniscient narrator’s introduction to that which is to come, followed by a summary and retrospective.

There are several signs of the narrator-author’s presence in the largely intradiegetic section, as discussed earlier. These are when the usually covert heterodiegetic narrator-author inserts an excerpt from the (supposedly unedited) narrator-character’s notebook. There are several other of these insertions (251; 278), but they are mostly taken from contemporary letters, notices, or other books and are generally presented in the diegesis as being discovered by the intradiegetic narrator-character.

To end the introduction of Mrs. Trollope I wish to return to when Trollope talks “of a conversation at which I was present, at Cincinnati; I wrote [the notes] immediately after the conversation took place” (94). In this section the action is presented as close to isochronically as is practical and is literally and diegetically a scene as in a play, apparently without a ‘main character’. The narrator-author dispels the myth that the other sections of the book are set likewise from transcribed notes merely presented author. She becomes conspicuous before then representing the scene – as seen and written from the point of view of the homodiegetic narrator-character (Trollope says that she was present) – as mimesis. The extra- and heterodiegetic narrator’s only role is to set the scene and tag the direct speech. This scene serves to accentuate the importance of the narrator-author in retelling the story of the narrator-character and reveals the notebooks as shadow texts which are unedited by the narrator-author.

While I have identified several instances when the point of view of the extradiegetic narrator-author is mediating the point of view of the intradiegetic narrator-character in

Trollope's *Domestic Manners*, her text has the least 'interference' and subsequent overlay of the extradiegetic point of view of these travelogues. As the earliest text of this study, Trollope had significantly fewer works on the United States with which to interact. She made a point of not reading Hall's work before writing the bulk of her (homodiegetic) narrative and it could therefore be argued that Trollope is deliberately attempting to represent her travel from the (almost) simultaneously written notebooks. It is only after deciding to write a travel book from these notebooks that she becomes interested in the narrating of the story, as shown by her interest in Hall's technique. As such, there are several instances of the two narrative points of view being revealed as from different diegeses; the two points of view have not been combined to make a narrative told as though it was from one point of view. Later authors are more interested in the telling of their narrative and more sophisticated narrative techniques are used as introspection and narration come to the fore. However, later authors also incorporate these techniques in the narrative without the obvious signposts of extradiegetic intervention; whereas Trollope's different points of view are more apparent, they are also less frequent and represent less hegemonic control of the narrator-author. I will now continue to explore the narratives of some of the other authors of this study in chronological order, beginning with Washington Irving.

### Washington Irving

After a self-imposed European exile of seventeen years, Washington Irving returned home to his native United States in 1832 amid criticism of his writings becoming increasingly European in style and subject. On returning to the United States Irving first reacquainted himself with the Northeast and then visited the political centre of Washington D.C. (Antelyes 49) before realising that the current trend in American literature was towards narratives of Western adventure, typified by the popularity of James Fenimore Cooper: "*The Pioneers* had sold 3,500 copies the day following publication" (Dekker and Williams 1). Cooper's first three popular Leatherstocking novels – *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), and *The Prairie* (1827) – were written about the frontier at a time when Irving was largely writing of European subjects, and historical ones at that.

Irving responded to the criticism levelled against him at the beginning of his 1835 book *A Tour on the Prairies*: "some... supposed that I was dazzled by the factitious splendours around me... Others, who knew me not, or chose to judge harshly, accused me of a want of affection for my native land" (*Prairies* 6). *Prairies* was to be the first of three Western books designed to reaffirm Irving's connection to his homeland. It was followed by

*Astoria* (1836) and the 1837 *The Rocky Mountains; or, Scenes, Incidents, and Adventures in the Far West* (known subsequently, as it is in this work, as *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville*). I discuss the dramatised histories of *Astoria* and *Captain Bonneville* briefly in this work; however, it is *Prairies* – a travelogue – which is of most interest.

*A Tour on the Prairies* is written from the point of view of Geoffrey Crayon, Irving's persona who also penned *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1820). Crayon presents himself as a slightly bumbling, conservative figure, but one who is a practiced observer interested in point of view. As well as some fairly standard elements of a transatlantic travel book – namely a description of the crossing and many discussions on the country and its customs – *The Sketch Book* contained two of Irving's most famous 'tales': 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' and 'Rip Van Winkle'. Both of these tales reintroduce the fictional Diedrich Knickerbocker; Irving's pseudonym for the satirical *A History of New-York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty, by Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1809). The use of persona and that persona's having previously been attributed to something fictional suggests a greater interest in narrative and crafting the travel in *Prairies*. Fictionalisation in Irving's work is explored later in this thesis. The very name of Irving's persona – Crayon – also betrays an interest in drawing and crafting an image from a certain point of view. Just three years after the publication of Trollope's *Domestic Manners* an American travelogue is published which demonstrates much greater design of the narrator-author over the travels of the narrator-character; the use of persona will occur again in Dickens and most pertinently in Twain.

*A Tour on the Prairies* is a book in which essentially nothing happens; instead, a circular journey is represented, permeated by scenes of frontier life. Irving himself describes it as "a simple narrative of everyday occurrences; such as happen to everyone who travels the prairies. I have no wonders to describe, nor any moving accidents... to those who look for a marvellous or adventurous story... 'I have none to tell, sir' "(9). Irving begins his thirty-one day journey (xxi) at Fort Gibson, just east of the Arkansas River in the Indian Territory, home of the Osage: "stately fellows; stern and simple in garb and aspect... the finest looking Indians I have ever seen in the West" and the Creek (Muskogee): "there is something... oriental in the appearance of this tribe" (15). The narrative and story are generally in isochronal agreement and presented in scene, with no obvious examples of ellipsis or stretch. Chapter four marks the October 10<sup>th</sup> departure, with each subsequent chapter corresponding either to one day or occasionally an (non-) event at night. The last nine days of the journey, however, are presented in summary. This period of the journey is the return home after the



climactic Buffalo chase; the narrative climax does not correspond with the intradiegetic end of events and the narrator-author intervenes to shorten the final days of the journey to accentuate the importance of the Buffalo episode. *Prairies* ends with the anticlimactic: “and thus ended my foray into the Pawnee Hunting Grounds” (122).

As with Trollope’s *Domestic Manners* the intradiegetic narrator-character is left to tell most of the story. Any tales within the narrative are presented as intradiegetic, told to, or by the homodiegetic narrator-character; “these are simple and artless tales, but they had a wild and romantic interest heard from the lips of half savage narrators, round a hunter’s fire, in a stormy night with a forest on one side and a howling waste on the other” (59). In the above quotation, the narrator-author’s voice comes forth with “these are simple and artless tales”, and the fear of the narrator-character of the “wild and artless tales” is dispelled to some extent. The extradiegetic narrator intervenes only to provide context, for example when discussing the introduction of the horse in the prairies (67).

Washington Irving’s *Prairies* is another book where the point of view of the traveller is largely protected, with only minor infractions from the subsequent narrator-author’s point of view. However, these infractions are more seamless as Irving utilises the Crayon persona to be both the narrator-character and narrator-author, effectively tying the two diegeses together to remove himself (as the real author).

### Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens is another author who employs persona in his writings: Boz. Boz is both a creation of Dickens, and Dickens himself; the creation of the author and the author (i.e. *Sketches by Boz* (1836)). Dickens seems to be aware of the complex relationship he has with his narrative selves as he reports to overhearing the following:

'Boz is on board still, my dear.' After a considerable pause, he added, complainingly, 'Boz keeps himself very close;' which was true enough, for I was not very well, and was lying down, with a book. I thought he had done with me after this, but I was deceived; for a long interval having elapsed, during which I imagine him to have been turning restlessly from side to side, and trying to go to sleep; he broke out again, with 'I suppose *that* Boz will be writing a book by-and-by, and putting all our names in it!' at which imaginary consequence of being on board a boat with Boz, he groaned, and became silent. (219)

This is, as Genette has it in ‘Fictional Narrative, Factual Narrative’ (1990, 769), the contradictory equation  $A = N = C$ , with the Author ‘legally’ equal to the Narrator, and the Narrator ‘linguistically’ equal to the Character; however  $A \neq C$ . Dickens gives us, as with many first-person narratives, an insight into his thinking at the time, an example of which is the reported inner speech of “ ‘Well!’ thought I, ‘it would be well if we could shut up a few false prophets of these later times...’ ” (86). This is presented as the thoughts of the narrator-character as they occurred in the American diegesis and is an example of tagged direct thought. As with all such narratives however, the narrator-author is present (or implied) and it is unclear (especially because of the use of the past tense) whether these are the narrator-character’s simultaneous thoughts recorded faithfully or whether these are those of the narrator-author:

Narratives establish a sense of a present moment, narrative NOW, so to speak. If the narrative is overt, there are perforce two NOWs, that of the discourse, the moment occupied by the narration in the present tense..., and that of the story, the moment that the action began to transpire, usually in the preterite. (Chatman 1978, 63)

There is of course a third, murky possibility: that the narrator-author is attempting to present the narrator-character’s thoughts as they were, but either consciously or subconsciously cannot recall them, presenting this as the substitute; his point of view is impacting upon the narrator-character’s.

Much of the material for *American Notes* comes from Dickens’s letters written from the United States, particularly those sent to (and kept by) his biographer John Foster. Dickens arrived in the United States on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1842 and was writing letters detailing his first impressions almost immediately. *American Notes* was published later the same year. *Martin Chuzzlewit* appeared serially between 1843 and 1844 and contains several American chapters where the eponymous ‘hero’ and Mark Tapley struggle in the United States. The transformation of Dickens’s American adventures, then, was undergone in the space of less than two years. During this time Dickens had become disillusioned by the United States, been viciously attacked by the American press – at first because of his campaigning for an International Copyright Law and later because of the perceived negative depiction of the

United States in *American Notes* – and returned to the relative calm of England<sup>11</sup>. There are as I see it three basic forms of fictionalisation evident in travelogues. I will identify them by giving examples relating to *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, assuming the material in Dickens's letters – written almost simultaneously – is as close to an accurate representation of his travels as can be obtained (though I note that they are still evidence of narrative in chapter five). The first I will call exaggeration or its more extreme cousin hyperbole (often present in retellings of the same story as it becomes distanced by the original by time and space; indeed, the second telling can act as the original for the third and the third for the fourth et cetera): for example portraying something which happened once, or a few times, as occurring many times over. It matters little whether exaggeration is deliberate or not; it is a minor fictionalisation. The second is deliberate fictionalisation: inventing or altering something completely to suit the needs of the narrative, Dickens the narrator-character, or Dickens the narrator-author (i.e. fictionalised either to make the narrative more entertaining there and then, or to convey Dickens's general feelings on returning to England which may not necessarily correspond with his original views). The third fictionalisation is subconscious or a result of the failure of memory: where Dickens's subsequent experiences lead the material in the letters to be rewritten, or displaced entirely to correspond with Dickens's subsequent opinions or emotions of the United States. I explore the fictionalisation process from Dickens's letters to his novel via *American Notes* in the final chapter of this work.

The sixth chapter of *American Notes* is a notable example of Dickens the narrator-author taking complete charge of the narrative. The end of chapter five sees Dickens the narrator-character describing his excitement at seeing “Hell Gate, the Hog's Back, the Frying Pan, and other notorious localities, attractive to all readers of famous Diedrich Knickerbocker's History” (89). This mention of *A History of New-York* is notable because, as Dickens would have known, this book is a satire by Washington Irving who created the persona Diedrich Knickerbocker to write his history. The “notorious localities” listed by Dickens do indeed occur in the *History* but are not necessarily presented with the ‘truth’ of a historian, rather the art of an already proven liar. Dickens is here, therefore, entering into the diegesis of Irving's work and treating himself as part of the same story-world as Knickerbocker; the narrator-author is placing the narrator-character in an – at least partially – fictionalised world. This is a world removed several times over from Dickens's own: Knickerbocker's name is Dutch and recalls New Amsterdam before that city was handed over

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<sup>11</sup> Namely Park Benjamin of the *New World*, James Gordon Bennett of the *New York Herald*, and Colonel Watson Webb of the *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer* (Moss 21-22).

to the British and became New York in 1664. Irving's Knickerbocker is therefore something authentically Old World, removed from the United States by the Dutch administration and the subsequent British colonial period. Knickerbocker 'writes' about the three periods (Dutch, British and American) in 'Sleepy Hollow' and 'Rip Van Winkle' in the *Sketch Book*. Robert Lawson-Peebles notes that the plan of Manhattan which is known as "The Duke's Plan" (presented to the Duke of York – later James II – after whom New York was named) was probably a copy of an earlier Dutch plan; "the map became part of the royal map collection, and then, with the books of George III, formed the basis of the British Library" ('British Outpost to American Metropolis' 12). In 'Rip Van Winkle' George III's face on the pub sign is changed to George Washington (37) after the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the war which saw King George and Britain lose its colonies, marking another level of overwriting earlier diegeses, just as Dickens subsequently overwrites Knickerbocker's New York. There are many levels of diegesis, point of view, and fictionality in this complex relationship.

After this, Dickens goes on to describe the "jail; and other buildings; and so emerged into a nobled bay, whose waters sparkled in the now cloudless sunshine like Nature's eyes turned up to Heaven" (ibid.). He continues with a panoramic description of the harbour in pause: everything is described as would be a picture without the story continuing. Dickens has moved from the narrow focalisation of the buildings seen by the narrator-character to the whole scene, perhaps from above, as hinted at with the preliminary "waters sparkled in the now cloudless sunshine like Nature's eyes turned up to Heaven". Dickens also provides the picturesque point of view. Taken by itself this does not necessarily entail the transfer of narration from narrator-character to narrator-author, but placed in the context of the coming section, it seems clear that we now have a omnipresent narrator who can move his visual point of view at will.

Dickens's description of New York has similarities with those of London in his novels. He slips into lavish description and morphs into an omniscient, omnipresent narrator, briefly forgetting, or omitting his own position in the narrative of *American Notes*<sup>12</sup>. Dickens's urban descriptions are among his most flowing; taking the reader through the underbelly of the city. Dickens does not have the same familiarity with New York as he does London, however, and it is sensible to assume that there is at least an element of dramatic

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<sup>12</sup> The two do not necessarily go together, but I believe the narrator's postulation on the biography of the pigs does suggest omniscience; although much as with Dickens's novels, we cannot know the entirety of the narrator's knowledge.

licence in his account. Chapter six undoubtedly takes the travel of the narrator-character in New York City as its source material, but is given added artistry in the discourse by Dickens and expressed by the narrator-author, who incorporates the reader into the diegesis. This narrative technique draws attention to the disparity between the intra- and extra-diegetic narration.

Allan Nevins remarks that Dickens appreciated the “value of America as a source of literary material” (111), whilst Dickens himself in a letter to John Forster, feels the strain of writing a travel book when he feels he could put his observations to better use; for example in a novel: “I do perceive a perplexingly divided and subdivided duty, in the matter of the book of travels. Oh! the sublimated essence of comicality that I *could* distil, from the materials I have!”<sup>13</sup> (*Letters* 211). Distilling the “sublimated essence” is anticipatory of James (even using the same metaphor): “how boil down so many facts in the alembic, so that the distilled result ... should have intensity, lucidity, brevity, beauty, all the merits required for my effect?” (*Art of the Novel* 13). What Dickens either does not realise, comes to terms with later, or does not make explicit, is that the two genres – travel literature and fiction – are not necessarily mutually exclusive; Dickens makes many a comic (fictional) observation in between his more sober observations in *American Notes*.

The Dickens of *American Notes* is similar in many ways to the narrator in his novels. Dickens the narrator-author seems to slip between imagined omniscience and first person narrative, yet is always something of a knowing protagonist when he presents himself as one, with the kind of sagaciousness typified by Mr. Bucket in *Bleak House*. The only time that Dickens seems to lose control of this reserved, knowledgeable persona is when he is struck by natural wonders; Mr. Bucket is an assured man of cities just as Dickens. Boston, the first American city Dickens encounters after his journey across the Atlantic, is described in a standard informative style, attempting to create in the reader’s mind the young metropolis. Contrast this to the description of New York City, which begins in a similar manner, but at the end of the second paragraph there is a hint towards the ensuing adventurous description. The narrator addresses the reader, saying “shall we sit down in an upper floor of the Carlton House Hotel... and when we are tired of looking down upon the life below, sally forth arm-in arm, and mingle with the stream?” (90). Not only does the narrator-character here seem absent, but the implied author (the narrator-author) is addressing the implied reader directly. The mention of mingling with the stream also suggests that we are entering a stream of

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<sup>13</sup> 26 April 1842.

consciousness, or at least of narrative. That “mingle” begins with “warm weather! ... Was there ever such a sunny street as Broadway!” (ibid.), demonstrates the possibility of interior monologue: we are in the narrator-author’s mind presented in direct free style here. It might be said that the narrator-author is here imagining himself as being part of the diegesis, but the reference to the reader and the freedom of movement and knowledge suggests that it is not the intradiegetic narrator-character but an extradiegetic narrator operating in discourse. The narrator is no longer homodiegetic (part of the story). The narrative point of view switches, as does the visual. The point of view is almost aerial; see the fourth chapter’s discussion of Jefferson’s penchant for the grid and aerial point of view as an ordering device. This passage has much in common with Edgar Allen Poe’s *The Man of the Crowd* – published two years before *American Notes*, in 1840 – which begins with the narrator at first viewing the crowd from a distance, and then getting drawn into the life of the streets; moving from the genteel coffee house in which he had been sitting into the underbelly of the city:

This change of weather had an odd effect upon the crowd, the whole of which was at once put into new commotion, and overshadowed by a world of umbrellas. The waver, the jostle, and the hum increased in a tenfold degree. (2417)

The city in Poe’s work is London. Dickens is discussing New York; in London Poe remarks on the shadowy world of umbrellas, in Dickens’s New York it is colourful parasols. Dickens and Poe are in each other’s domain and both are strangers in their respective foreign city. It is reasonable to suggest that Dickens and Poe were aware of each other’s writings<sup>14</sup>, therefore the *American Notes* passage may be a deliberate allusion to Poe’s short story and must be seen as a narrative technique of fiction. Already Dickens has drawn on both Poe and Irving, suggesting a preference for literary – rather than real-world perceptual – influence on the travel narrative; the point of view of the traveller becomes less important as the narrative point of view overwrites it.

Dickens the narrator-author then takes the reader with him on a journey through the city, describing the scenes the two travellers (Dickens the narrator-character intradiegetically and the reader) would, or might encounter as they zigzag across the main thoroughfare of Broadway. Dickens’s descriptions are not as verbose in this passage as elsewhere, with the occasional detail sprinkled amongst the frantic scenes passing before the reader’s eye of

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<sup>14</sup> Gerald G. Grubb published a three-part essay on their relations in 1950, although it is heavily biased in the direction of Poe’s perspective.

imagination. The reader gets absorbed in the biography of two Irish brothers: “one crossed the sea alone, and working very hard for one half year, and living harder, saved funds enough to bring the other out” (92). This is another example of Dickens’s omniscient narrator-author. He either takes the two brothers from the primary diegesis, giving them stories which are not their own or takes two imaginary, ‘every-emigrants’ and places them in the primary diegesis. Dickens is moving the narrative quickly to express being part of the “stream” of the city, with darting glances around, taking in the people, animals and streets; there is also something impulsive about this passage, though this is feeling is constructed by the craft of the narrator-author:

Let us go forth again into the cheerful streets.

Once more in Broadway! Here are the same ladies in bright colours, walking to and fro, in pairs and singly; yonder the very same light blue parasol which passed and repassed the hotel-window twenty times while we were sitting there. (96)

Dickens also presents a jail scene, with dialogue in the same narrative style: he is showing the underworld of the city – or the unknown darker institutions, which the citizens were more than willing to show this prestigious, curious commentator – while contrasting it with the bright and cheerful Broadway with its “great blocks of clean ice” (92) and colourful streets. It is here that the narrative seems to return to Dickens the narrator-character, with free direct speech between (presumably) Dickens and the jailer. It might equally be said, however, that this passage is in the same style as the surrounding work, exemplified by the lack of tagged speech as we are never told that it is Dickens speaking. In fact the dialogue is presented as a hypothetical one between the reader and the jailer. Interspersed in this dialogue is free indirect speech presumably presented in the voice of the narrator-author, before returning to what might superficially be viewed as the actual conversation between the narrator-character and jailer:

For what offence can that lonely child, of ten or twelve years old, be shut up here? Oh! that boy? He is the son of the prisoner we saw just now; is a witness against his father; and is detained here for safe-keeping, until the trial; that’s all.

But it is a dreadful place for the child to pass the long days and nights in. This is rather hard treatment for a young witness, is it not? – What says our conductor?  
(95)

Who is the conductor? Is he the narrator-character, narrator-author, or even the reader? This mixture of free direct and free indirect speech draws further attention to the presence of the narrator-author, the composition of this section, and indeed the entire work. In this specific case it seems as though the narrator-author is taking over to accentuate the injustice of the jail, allowing the response to be considered and orchestrated in such a way as to get the most sympathy from the reader. The possibility for increased sympathy is also increased by placing the reader in the scene. This entire section – and the freedom (omnipresence) of the narrator-author – serves as a poignant contrast to those confined in the jail, the watch house and in the poor, narrow streets of New York.

Dickens pays almost as much attention to the myriad swine that crowd the streets as anything else in this passage; they are ever-present in the streets and are personified by the author as “gentlemen hogs”; one such hog is imaginatively described as leading

A roving, gentlemanly, vagabond kind of life, somewhat answering to that of our club-men at home. He leaves his lodgings every morning at a certain hour, throws himself upon the town, gets through his day in some manner quite satisfactory to himself, and regularly appears at the door of his own house again at night, like the mysterious master of *Gil Blas*<sup>15</sup>. (96-97)

Whereas in his letter to Forster Dickens suggested he could not adequately convey his experiences in a travel book, he succeeds to some degree by placing this narrative passage in the heart of his book. After the excursion to the darker reaches of New York *American Notes* returns to the more familiar style of first person narrative; the narrator-character is given control once more. This chapter shows Dickens utilising narrative techniques to present a point of view subsequent to his original travel and the desire for literary travellers to interlace their travels with narratives outside the primary diegesis of the central travel. He is interacting with fictional texts and tries to place the reader in the primary diegesis, despite the temporary disappearance of the narrator-character. The possibility of Dickens having presented a fictional America becomes apparent.

There are several other narrative set-pieces which demonstrate Dickens the narrator-author imposing his point of view upon the narrative, including the dialogue between

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<sup>15</sup> Alain-René Lesage’s *Gil Blas* (1715) is an early picaresque novel of which Huckleberry Finn is another example. It is “episodic in structure (as opposed to the sustained development of a single *plot*)” (Abrams 130).



BROWN HAT and STRAW HAT (210-11). I consider some of these later in the thesis, particularly in chapter five which deals with fictionalisation and truth in travel texts.

### Anthony Trollope

Anthony Trollope travelled to the United States on post office business thirty years after his mother had left. This trip would become *North America*, published in two volumes in 1862.

Anthony Trollope's *North America* is perhaps the narrative of this study which displays fewest techniques to hide its construction, with the homodiegetic narrator writing (obviously) in the first-person and subsequently to the travel. In this respect it is closest to the hand- and guidebooks. This is not to say that there is not an extradiegetic narrator, or different narrative levels; indeed I argue that all subsequent narrators are extradiegetic. It can therefore be said that *North America* is narrated by an extradiegetic homodiegetic narrator; the narrator-author. However these different levels of diegesis and points of view are masked by greater consistency between narrators than with the previous texts. The last sentence of the introduction implies an interesting disparity between the overarching narrative of the narrator-author and the intradiegetic narrative proper: "and now, having said so much in the way of introduction, I will begin my journey" (I, 20); or in other words "I will now leave the story to the intradiegetic narrator". The first paragraph of the next chapter continues in the same voice, distanced from the diegetic narrative, effectively summarising the itinerary of the trip, and confirming that the intended itinerary was followed "with sufficient exactness". Trollope claims "I am not going to write a guide-book" (I, 44) before proposing which route and sites his hypothetical traveller would observe to make the most of his journey; effectively writing in the style of a guidebook. This extradiegetic passage of narrative shows a bias towards the fictional and suggests the important role in the text for the narrator-author. Trollope could very easily have suggested an itinerary, but instead he narrates a possible excursion, effectively composing a narrative and creating a fictional character to inhabit it.

The instances where the role of narrator-author is most evident are when Trollope veers from the topic of the United States per se, and turns to more general rumination. An example is: "I am frequently addressing my own muse, who I am well aware is not Clio, and asking her whither she is wending" (II, 312). Another case can be found at the end of the text: "it is right that all this should be acknowledged by us. When we speak of America and her institutions we should remember that she has given to our increasing population rights and privileges which we could not give – which as an old country we probably can never give" (II, 334). Henry James talks about Trollope's skill at representing the American character:

His American portraits... are always friendly; they hit it off more happily than the attempt to depict American character from the European point of view is accustomed to do: though, indeed, as we ourselves have not yet learned to represent our types very finely – are not apparently even very sure what our types are – it is perhaps not to be wondered at that transatlantic talent should miss the mark.

(‘Anthony Trollope’ 1345)

However, James disliked Trollope’s technique in his fiction of addressing the reader or discussing the composition of his fiction, believing it to show disrespect to the reader:

Certain accomplished novelists have a habit of giving themselves away which must often bring tears to the eyes of people who take their fiction seriously. I was lately struck, in reading over many pages of Anthony Trollope, with his want of discretion in this particular. In a digression, a parenthesis or an aside, he concedes to the reader that he and this trusting friend are only "making believe." He admits that the events he narrates have not really happened, and that he can give his narrative any turn the reader may like best. Such a betrayal of a sacred office seems to me, I confess, a terrible crime. (‘Art of Fiction’ 46)

This charge could also be made against Trollope’s travel writing. Where James’s narrator-author is substituted for the narrator-character as covertly as possible, Trollope’s unabashedly wrestles the narrative from the traveller, confessing to his ‘crime’ by discussing composition. These are the thoughts occurring to a narrating author as he reflects on what it is that he has been narrating; he has stepped outside the diegesis of his original narration as character and concerns himself with more general questions which are raised with the reader in mind, a reader who is placed in the same temporal place as the extradiegetic narrator. It is when Trollope metatextually discusses the composition of his book that he leaves the simultaneous thoughts, and therefore the narrator-character behind him and assumes the voice of the narrator-author, reflecting on the intradiegetic narrative as a whole. Trollope shares the technique of conclusion with his mother but goes further by interlacing the entire narrative with these essays on subjects from slavery to hotels, the civil war to the post office. It is unlikely that these passages were written or even conceived during the journey. Instead, they are evidence of Trollope’s political views and reveal some of the reasons for his writings on

the United States. They are a point of view subsequent to the travel. It could be argued that these passages are closer to the real author, coming as they do as almost unrelated to the primary travel diegesis, or the secondary writing diegesis. As the narrative is interlaced with such thoughts *North America* maintains a closer link to the point of view of the narrator-author; the narrator-character is overtly narrating only when discussing the landscape, as at Niagara Falls.

Trollope associates himself with a fictional character – Mark Tapley from Dickens’s *Martin Chuzzlewit* – whilst discussing the town of Cairo, largely believed to be the subject of the fictional “Eden” in Dickens’s novel:

An idea is prevalent in the States, and I think I have heard the same broached in England, that a popular British author had Cairo, State of Illinois, in his eye when under the name of Eden he depicted a chosen happy spot on the Mississippi river... But I doubt whether that author ever visited Cairo in mid-winter, and I am sure that he never visited Cairo when Cairo was the seat of the American army. Had he done so, his love of truth would have forbidden him to presume that even Mark Tapley could have enjoyed himself in such an Eden. (II, 110)

Trollope is here adopting an ironic voice, whilst also admitting a prior (fictional) knowledge of the town: the constant references to Tapley place the entire passage somewhere between the homodiegetic world of Trollope’s narrator-character, and both the heterodiegetic homodiegetic world of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Trollope cannot escape from Dickens’s fiction and talks of himself in the same diegesis, effectively questioning the nonfictionality of his perceptions, descriptions and emotions. Trollope might be said to be combining both the ‘real’ Cairo and the fictional Eden in his account which demonstrates one of the most obvious passages of quasi-fiction in his text. The narrator-author is almost absent for the duration of about a page, and the narrative inhabits the diegesis of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. This interaction with a fictional text suggests Trollope’s narrative is not adopting the point of view of looking at the United States directly, but rather looking at it from a point of view through other texts.

Another suggestion of this intertextual point of view comes when Anthony Trollope discusses Frances Trollope’s *Domestic Manners* at the beginning of his own writing:

Thirty years ago my mother wrote a book about the Americans, to which I believe I may allude as a well-known and successful work without being guilty of any

undue family conceit... All that she told was worth the telling, and the telling, if done successfully, was sure to produce a good result. I am satisfied that it did so. But she did not regard it as a part of her work to dilate on the nature and operation of those political arrangements which had produced the social absurdities which she saw, or to explain that though such absurdities were the natural result of those arrangements in their newness, the defects would certainly pass away, while the political arrangements, if good, would remain. Such a work is fitter for a man than for a woman, I am very far from thinking that it is a task which I can perform with satisfaction either to myself or to others. It is a work which some man will do who has earned a right by education, study, and success to rank himself among the political sages of his age. But I may perhaps be able to add something to the familiarity of Englishmen with Americans. (I, 5-6)

Anthony Trollope is looking at the United States from the point of view of redress; he wishes to add a ‘masculine’ work on the United States to that of his mother’s ‘feminine’ work. He goes on to mention another famous writer on the United States: “it is very hard to write about any country a book that does not represent the country described in a more or less ridiculous point of view. It is hard at least to do so in such a book as I must write. A de Tocqueville may do it” (6). Trollope is expressing awareness of other texts on the United States and placing his work in that canon. Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* considers the politics and society of the United States without much discussion of the landscape; it is written with one eye on the French system of government and sees the United States as a model. Anthony Trollope is interested in politics in the United States but does not have the same motivations as de Tocqueville. Trollope is a novelist who is concerned with the writer “who professes to use a light pen, and to manufacture his article for the use of general readers” (ibid.); describing the responsibility of a novelist to narrate his travels and the United States. This quotation also suggests the “manufacture” or craft of such a narration, though the use of a “light pen” suggests that his literary point of view will not overwhelm the travel itself.

By interacting with these other texts (both fictional and travel) and discussing his craft Trollope is admitting the importance of the narrator-author. His point of view is filtered through other texts and relies on the literary muse. Increasingly, then, the narrator-author’s role in travel texts has increased, with *North America* being the first text discussed in this study which unashamedly promotes the point of view of the writer over the traveller.

### Mark Twain

Samuel Clemens describes the birth of the Mark Twain persona in *Life on the Mississippi* (1883). Along with *Roughing It* (1872), *Life on the Mississippi* describes Twain's travels in his own country. In *Life*, Twain talks about becoming

A new being, and the subject of my own admiration. I was a traveler! A word never had tasted so good in my mouth before. I had an exultant sense of being bound for mysterious lands and distant climes which I never have felt in so uplifting a degree since. (32)

This could also describe the birth of the persona. 'Mark Twain' uses the nomenclature of travel. The name of Clemens's persona is notoriously drawn from steamer vocabulary: 'by the mark twain' means a depth of two fathoms when plumbing the river depth. As with Irving's Crayon and Dickens's Boz, the creation of a persona suggests the inhabitation of a diegesis which is not the same as the real author's and one which has the protagonist as constantly travelling to "mysterious lands and distant climes".

Twain employs more narrative techniques than earlier writers and also allows more space for fiction in his work. His narratives are populated with tall tales and addresses to the reader. This is explained by the distance in time between travel and writing; it is also explained by a more flexible approach to the original travel of the narrator-character; more so than with Anthony Trollope, the narrator-author's role is accentuated and the real author imposes his point of view to a greater extent on the narrative.

A look at the overarching plot of *Life on the Mississippi* shows several different diegeses. The first section of the book has Twain talk about the history of the Mississippi from his heterodiegetic, extradiegetic viewpoint, including an excerpt of his concurrent writings, in the case of what becomes *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (15-28), published in 1884. This frames the subsequent section which passes the narration on to the young Twain, the narrator-character in the historical primary diegesis. There are, however, strong signs of the extradiegetic narrator-author's heavy hand in proceedings, interspersing tall tales and biographical information, which reveals a knowledge of the characters' subsequent fates that the young Twain as narrator-character could not know; they are revealed outside the diegetic chronology; examples of analepsis.

After this introduction there is a journey downstream by the narrator-character, before a shorter (in terms of discourse) journey upstream and a summary of events over the ensuing years of cub-piloting. The reader is alienated from the narrator-author by his input in the narration, and adopts the viewpoint, ignorance and lack of language of the primary diegesis's narrator-character, in this case a cub pilot. Twain the cub pilot is ignorant of the language of the river, as is the reader who is as impressed and bemused by the colloquialisms and vernacular of the homodiegetic characters:

“Going to heave it clear astern? WHERE're you going with that barrel!

*For'ard* with it 'fore I make you swallow it, you dash-dash-dash-*dashed* split between a tired mud-turtle and a crippled hearse-horse!”

I wished I could talk like that. (34)

Twain the narrator-author can of course “talk like that” and uses this knowledge to add authority to the account. In chapter five I discuss language and truth in greater detail; colloquialisms and vernacular are often used to give fictionalised speech authority in the primary diegesis. For a short time, then, the reader shares this first narrator-character's point of view. The heterodiegetic narrator also presents these in their original (or elaborated) form to position Twain – the persona and narrator-author – as an omniscient narrator. An example taken from *Huckleberry Finn* is in the opening ‘Explanatory’ where Twain states that

In this book a number of dialects are used... The shadings have not been done in a hap-hazard fashion, or by guess-work; but painstakingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech. (48)

As with many cases in *Life on the Mississippi* we are left to trust in the knowledge of the narrator-author and placed, with the young cub pilot, in the alienation and ignorance of the primary diegesis.

There then follows a more extreme summary of the ensuing twenty-one years in the chapter entitled ‘A Section of my Biography’ (128). The reader is placed in the diegesis of the narrator-author, before being introduced to a much older (in age) and more recent narrator-character as this chapter closes with “let us resume, now”. Twain finally describes his more recent journey as an adult as he returns to the river and his old haunts, mirroring the original journey of his cub pilot life. These later, less coherent sections see Twain return to a

river which no longer holds its importance in the nation's hierarchy, with railroads now the preeminent means of transportation and trade; the steamboats are greatly reduced in number and importance. The cub pilot section, then, offers a retrospective and a primary diegesis where the river is still key; the narrative follows this river down and up, presenting various events, largely in the order in which they occurred. Any interruptions from the extradiegesis, while obviously anachronous, are thematically in line with following the Mississippi River as plot; meanders and stop-offs included. There is less narrative cohesion when Twain inserts his tall tales and old pilot tales as they do not fit into either the diegesis or the discourse. These fictional tales come as later additions by the narrator-author, which fit neither the story of the cub pilot narrator-character nor that of Twain revisiting the river. It is the final revisiting of the narrator-author which disrupts the narrative flow of the work, with the various memories of the river perhaps combining, leaving unreliable, anachronistic anecdotes and interruptions to mar the central structure of the two voyages.

The latter stages of the book also show Twain as unable to recapture the full knowledge of his youth, and it is as if he is returning to the river anew. The river of the primary diegesis is now fictional, historical and the only satisfactory one to Twain, likewise his boyhood home has changed beyond recognition, he is a Rip van Winkle. The changes on the Mississippi and in the United States in general are presented under the ludicrous auspices of 'science', when Twain declares that

Any calm person, who is not blind or idiotic, can see that in the Old Oölitic Silurian Period, just a million years ago next November, the Lower Mississippi River was upward of one million three hundred thousand miles long ... And by the same token any person can see that seven hundred and forty-two years from now the Lower Mississippi will be only a mile and three-quarters long. (109)

Another example of Twain's failure to come to terms with the 'present' Mississippi of the diegesis of the second half of the book comes with the population figures of towns which are already outdated and the terminus of the journey, Chicago which "is always a novelty, for she is never the Chicago you saw when you passed through the last time" (338). Twain suffers from the same issues he discovered as a cub on the river, namely that it is constantly changing.

Similarly to *Life on the Mississippi*, *Roughing It* has a lengthier interval between travel and writing than travelogues by other authors in this study. This heightens the

importance of the subsequent narrator-author's point of view upon the travel and narrative. Twain expands upon his biography as given in the later *Life on the Mississippi*, describing his journey to Nevada and exploits in California and the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). Just as with *Life on the Mississippi*, *Roughing It* has the narrator-character as naive and alienated from the world through which he travels; he is therefore, as described in chapter three, undergoing a frontier experience. Again, the reader shares in the ignorance and naivety of the narrator-character, and must place trust in the narrator-author to break down the vernacular of the West and decode the many lies and tall tales which are woven indelibly into the narrative.

The young Twain comically includes for his proposed three-month stay in Nevada (52) "six pounds of Unabridged Dictionary; for [he and his brother] did not know – poor innocents – that such things could be bought in San Francisco" (53). This presents a double alienation: firstly, Twain was not aware that Nevada had such provisions and contact with the rest of the United States; secondly Twain displays either an ignorance of language by needing a dictionary, or the unsuitability of dictionary language, which would be useless in the West. The dictionary later becomes an encumbrance: on a rough section of the journey Twain describes how every time he was "avalanched from one end of the stage to the other, the Unabridged Dictionary would come too; and every time it came it damaged somebody" (66). The Dictionary, like the language within it, was unsuited to the rigours of Western life; or vice versa the landscape does not fit the vocabulary. Twain is encountering a similar problem to Meriwether Lewis at the beginning of the century and many other travellers who had made the journey in between, including several covered in this study. For Lewis there were no words as the landscape was unwritten, for Twain that language is inadequate. The ignorance of the language of the West is revealed almost immediately when the coach driver announces that "by George, the thoroughbrace is broke!" (57), leading Twain to wonder if the thoroughbrace is the horse's leg. The narrator-character's thoughts are expressed here in tagged direct speech, allowing the narrator-author to play on and exploit the ignorance of his younger self, and presumably that of the reader. This ignorance is exemplified by the extradiegetic insertions about subsequent experience in Syria, Jordan and Constantinople (63) which contradict markedly with the narrator-character's "I had never been away from home, and that word 'travel' had a seductive charm for me" (49). Twain's alienation from the country is further exemplified by his being named as an emigrant,

And consequently a low and inferior sort of creatures [sic]. Perhaps the reader has visited Utah, Nevada, or California, even in these latter days, and while



communing with himself upon the sorrowful banishment of those countries from what he considers “the world,” has had his wings clipped by finding that *he* is the one to be pitied, and that there are entire populations around him ready and willing to do it for him – yea, who are complacently doing it for him already, wherever he steps his foot ... And all the time that he is thinking what a sad fate it is to be exiled to that far country, that lonely land, the citizens around him are looking down on him with a blighting compassion because he is an “emigrant” instead of that proudest and blessedest creature that exists on all the earth, a “FORTY-NINER”. (160)

A sign of the young, innocent Clemens slowly metamorphosing into the wily Twain who is able to tell tales, rather than being taken in by them, occurs when Twain sells his horse, a “Genuine Mexican Plug to a passing Arkansas emigrant whom fortune delivered into [his] hand. If this ever meets his eye, he will doubtless remember the donation” (202). Importantly, Twain is here passing on the scam committed against him onto another, who he names “emigrant”, presumably considering himself to have become something of a local. By revealing the anecdote in print Twain is confessing to his new role: the narrator-author who is the scammer, as opposed to the narrator-character who was scammed. The two figures are becoming less differentiated as the narrative progresses: the narrator-character is morphing into the narrator-author as we read.

The achievement of Samuel Clemens was to transform the humourists’ tendency to aphorism into continuous narrative, the baroque anacoluthia of their transliterated humour into a simple vernacular style, and their pseudonymity into a persona of such elemental force that the author almost disappeared... More than with the other humourists, a complex dynamic existed between Samuel Clemens and his pseudonym. Mark Twain was a mixed blessing. Like a double that is just out of control, Twain prompted Clemens to make his most outrageous flights of fancy. (Lawson-Peebles, *American Literature* 246)

Indeed, the author becomes insignificant in Twain’s writing, leaving only pseudonym to fill that role as a larger-than-life version of the author; thus there is intentional fallacy which is (perhaps paradoxically) intentional.

The various tales, untruths and elaboration of Twain’s two American travelogues-come-autobiographies are addressed in greater detail later. Their appearance here serves to

show the importance of the narrator-author and his positioning as a more knowledgeable, yet less impeccable, figure than his younger narrator-character self. Twain makes use of both direct and indirect speech, tagged and free when presenting the various characters and speech of his narrative. The notion remains that direct speech – and free direct speech in particular – is more likely to be from the point of view of the narrator-character, rather than the half-remembered or invented impression of what was said provided by indirect forms. However, as Twain revels in his role as an unreliable narrator, the distinction is less powerful here. Direct forms are often used when the idiom of the characters involved is being put to comic effect; when Twain wishes to present the events in the vernacular it is likely that comedy is intended. When indirect forms are used, there is either no humour intended or we are presented with the intradiegetic thoughts of the narrator-character which serve as comedic oppositions to the reality by use of understatement or exaggeration. An example comes with the bathos of Twain resigning himself to freezing to death in the dark wilderness; we get (supposedly) the thoughts as they were of the narrator-character intradiegetically:

It came stealing over us presently, and then we bade each other a last farewell. A delicious dreaminess wrought its web about my yielding senses, while the snow-flakes wove a winding sheet about my conquered body. Oblivion came. The battle of life was done. (248)

The above passage ends the chapter, before the tension and inflated grandeur of the earlier thoughts in indirect form are dispelled with the direct: “a voice said, with bitterness: ‘Will some gentleman be so good as to kick me behind?’ ” (249). It then transpires that “not fifteen steps” away was the station. For good measure, as he often does, Twain the narrator-author intervenes to assert the veracity of the events saying “I have scarcely exaggerated a detail of this curious and absurd adventure” (250). These constant assertions, such as “that anecdote is *true*” (416), serve to reinforce the idea that those which have gone before are not, undermining both the narrator-author, and by extension the possibility of the narrator-character’s narrative being untouched by editorial hand.

As with *Life on the Mississippi*, the heterodiegetic narrator often makes remarks such as “I was about to say, when diverted from my subject” (64), which serves two purposes. The first is that the implied author is prominent in the discourse, and frequently breaks off his account of the narrator-character to edit and interject with subsequent knowledge, facts, or tall tales. The second purpose is that the discourse is given the air of serendipity, just as is the

story. In both the primary, and the secondary diegesis, then, the reader is included: in the primary diegesis by sharing with the ignorance and linguistic alienation of the narrator-character; in the secondary diegesis by the familiarity with which the narrator-author discusses the discourse and its recurrent blowing off course by recollections which are made to seem spontaneous. Twain is going to some lengths to ally the two diegeses through this narrative technique which paradoxically draws attention to the narrator-author. By narrating in this way the reader is encouraged to believe he is experiencing the point of view of the original travels, however, this is being achieved by the point of view of the author writing retrospectively and altering the narrative to achieve the effect.

Twain discusses the overland trip from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Carson City – now state capital of Nevada – in much the same way as he later discussed his time as a cub pilot on the Mississippi. The driver of the coach is described as “the only being [hostlers and station-keepers] bowed down to and worshipped. How admirably they would gaze up at him” (68) and “the driver was to the conductor as an admiral is to the captain of the flagship” (81). Compare this to the pilot on a steamboat, who “was the grandest position of all” (*Life on the Mississippi* 31). As in many other travelogues discussed in chapter three of this work, the plains are described as “a sea upon dry ground” (*Roughing It* 54), and further river and sea-going metaphors abound on travels throughout the book.

*Roughing It* incorporates many of Twain’s trademark tall tales, which are either presented as being related to the narrator-character or inserted subsequently by the narrator-author. These tall tales are almost without question the work of the subsequent narrator-author, however, placing them with the episodes of *Huckleberry Finn* over the framework of the episodic journey related by the homodiegetic narrator. In general, these tall tales are given some degree of authenticity by being told to the naive narrator-character by another character in the primary diegesis: “there was no doubt of the truth of it – I had it from their own lips” (*Roughing It* 97). The other means of authenticity of tales is achieved by being inserted and therefore *authorised* by the omniscient narrator-author in the secondary diegesis, compiling stories to supplement and complement the narrative. Such intradiegetic tales are exemplified by Bemis’s story of being chased (and followed) forty foot up a tree by a bull. This is immediately followed (as if not wanting to be outdone!) by the narrator-author’s own extradiegetic tale concerning the ousting of a celebrated liar, Eckert “a person famous for the number, ingenuity and imposing magnitude of his lies” (91). These intra- and extradiegetic tales occur frequently throughout the narrative and serve to remind the reader of the

unreliability of Twain as implied author, as well as his prominence, therefore undermining the story of the narrator-character additionally.

As with *Life on the Mississippi* the most successful and narratively coherent sections of *Roughing It* follow the course of the journey, or travel of some sort. When the narrative reaches Carson City and Virginia (now called Virginia City), Nevada, the extradiegetic narrator assumes more prominence and inserts more tales and explanations. One chapter is even labelled as such with the lines: “since I desire, in this chapter, to say an instructive word or two about the silver mines, the reader may take this fair warning and skip, if he chooses” (378). This address to the reader is one of the frequent signposts in this section that demonstrates something of a stretch in the narratological sense; nothing of much note is happening in the primary diegesis, which is perfect opportunity for some further tall tales or essays on the Chinese in the West (Chapter 54). However, there are occasional returns to the primary diegesis in these chapters, which normally recount one short incident taking place, narratologically in scene, before another stretch. A few chapters after offering the reader the chance to skip (with a metatextual, reader-induced ellipsis), and the narrative seemingly losing direction, Twain asserts that he “began to get tired of staying in one place so long” (398), which is as much a reflection of the extradiegetic narrator’s feelings on the narrative as the intradiegetic’s on the travel. This is also found in Irving’s *A Tour on the Prairie* in which the last section of narrative is rushed and seems to reflect the fatigue not only of the traveller but the author.

The possibility of this loss of isochrony between narrative and travel could be explained once again by the distance (spatially and temporally) of Twain the writer to his travels. Both the space for fiction and fictionalising in Twain’s work and the anachrony are suggested in the following letter to his brother Orion<sup>16</sup>:

Per contract I must have another 600-page book ready for my publisher Jan. 1, & I only began it to-day. The subject of it is a secret, because I may possibly change it. But as it stands, I propose to do up Nevada & Cal., beginning with the trip across the country in the stage. Have you a memorandum of the route we took—or the names of any of the Stations we stopped at? Do you remember any of the scenes, names, incidents or adventures of the coach trip?—for I remember next to nothing about the

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<sup>16</sup> 15 July 1870.

matter. Jot down a foolscap page of items for me. I wish I could have two days' talk with you. (*Letters* 70)

Following the reply, he writes<sup>17</sup>:

Dear Bro.

I find that your little memorandum book is going to be ever so much use to me, & will enable me to make quite a coherent narrative of the Plains journey instead of slurring it over & jumping 2,000 miles at a stride. (*ibid.*)

It could even be argued, therefore, that the journey represents the point of view of Orion more than Twain the narrator-character, with Twain the narrator-author inventing a narrative and overwriting on the original travel.

Twain's part travelogue-part biographies loosely follow the formula of his most famous novel. They follow the course of the landscape or river and are episodic, serendipitous account interlaced with tall tales and subsequent, extradiegetic interruptions. Where the narratives falter, they dally too long at one point, allowing the extradiegetic narrator-author to become too overt and lose direction, becoming instead a journalistic collection of essays and tales upon loosely connected subjects.

### Henry James

This chapter comes to a close as it began, with Henry James. *The American Scene*, published in 1907, details James's return to his native United States in 1904-5 during a successful lecture tour. *The American Scene* demonstrates perhaps the most obvious heterodiegetic narrator, with the narrator-character of the primary diegesis almost always absent except by implication. The text displays a narrative which is more concerned with the description of America than with the travel or the traveller, despite each chapter being named for its geographical subject. The perceptions are made retrospectively and dip only occasionally into the intradiegetic. James's extradiegetic thoughts, rather than the intradiegetic journey itself which mould the narrative. His account opens with a disclaimer which admits to the role of the extradiegetic narrator-author and the interaction of the narrative with James's personal history and memories of the United States:

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<sup>17</sup> 2 Sept. 1870.

Conscious that the impressions of the very first hours have always the value of their intensity, I shrink from wasting those that attended my arrival, my return after long years, even though they be out of order with the others that were promptly to follow and that I here gather in, as best I may, under a single head. They referred partly, these instant vibrations, to a past recalled from very far back; fell into a train of association that receded, for its beginning, to the dimness of extreme youth. (1)

James revisited many places familiar to him from his childhood, to find them much changed. James bemoans the pandemic of commercialism and the “business man” (64). He is particularly scathing of New York City, the “terrible town” (72) with “that note of vehemence in the local life of which [he has] spoken, for it is the appeal of a particular type of dauntless power” (74). James levels the same charge against New York that he discusses in *Hawthorne* and relates to the entire United States:

Crowned not only with no history, but with no credible possibility of time for history, and consecrated by no uses save the commercial at any cost, they are simply the most piercing notes in that concert of the expensively provisional into which your supreme sense of New York resolves itself. (77)

His polemic continues, using more of the same language as in the passage from *Hawthorne* quoted at the beginning of this chapter:

But the newness of New York – unlike even that of Boston, I seemed to discern – had this mark of its very own, that it affects one, in every case, as having treated itself as still more provisional, if possible, than any poor dear little interest of antiquity it may have annihilated. The very sign of its energy is that it doesn't believe in itself. (110)

James suggests New York – and by extension the United States – does not “believe in itself”; it is out of time and space, fictional. Peter Conrad notes that in Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit* “the American section is thin and shrill in comparison with the surrounding English chapters. But this lapse, however drastic, is deliberate, for it is intended to denote an imaginative difference between England and America” (53). Compare this to James's discussion of

England and the “vivid reflection of this magic in some of the early pages of Dickens’ *Copperfield* and of George Eliot’s *Mill in the Floss*, the writers having had the happiness of growing up among old, old things” (*English Hours* 39). London is described in similar terms: it “must ever have a great illustrative and suggestive value, and indeed a kind of sanctity. It is the single place in which most readers, most possible lovers, are gathered together; it is the most inclusive public and the largest social incarnation of the language, of the tradition” (ibid. 10). Tradition is important to James because it gives him a point of view with which to arrange the city. Language, tradition and readers significantly go together to make the city illustrative: it can be seen, painted, and written because it exists in the textual and linguistic framework of James’s consciousness. Later in *English Hours* James evokes *Bleak House* when he talks about the

Friendly fog [which] seems to protect and enrich [adventures in London] to add both to the mystery and security, so that it is most in the winter months that the imagination weaves such delights. They reach their climax perhaps during the strictly social desolation of Christmas week, when the country-houses are crowded at the expense of the capital. Then it is that I am most haunted with the London of Dickens, feel most as if it were still recoverable, still exhaling its queerness in patches perceptible to the appreciative. (22)

James is literally seeing London through the fog here, but also through the writing of Dickens and the fictional fog of *Bleak House*’s famous opening. Thus, James is comfortable with England and comfortable writing about it. There is a literary precedent in that country and the author can absorb himself in the well-established tropes and discourses for describing that country using standard vocabulary without necessarily disrupting the image in his mind’s eye. It might be argued that James is not seeing England and her cities as they really are, but because of the literary and linguistic precedent, he can describe the scenes in terms which do not challenge his imagination’s image. His point of view is that of an author seeing England through her great literary texts. In the United States conversely there is often no literary precedent, particularly in frontier locations so the fictionalising impulse arises to create a mythology; something to fill the perceived ‘void’. This leads James to write: “my choice is the old world – my choice, my need, my life” (*Notebooks* 23).

James admits to seeing England from the point of view of previous texts when he writes: “I have recently had a literary adventure which, though not followed by the

prostration that sometimes ensues on adventures, has nevertheless induced meditation". By discussing "*Denis Duvel... Reading over Thackeray to help me further to Winchelsea*" (178), he is admitting to seeing Winchelsea from a fictional point of view. Likewise, Suffolk is visited because it is "a province enshrining the birthplace of Copperfield" (195). *English Hours* is littered with such allusions to Dickens, Shakespeare and other famous English writers. Perhaps most interesting is the village of Dunwich which "is not even the ghost of its dead self; almost all you can say of it is that it consists of the mere letters of its name" (197). James finds it interesting because of the letters, the textual history of the place. Despite the physical Dunwich being almost disappeared into the sea, James is transfixed with the imaginary Dunwich. W.G. Sebald was to visit Dunwich nearly a century later in *Rings of Saturn* (1995; 1998 in English) and also interweaves his narrative with textual history and fiction. Using the point of view of fiction and the fictionalisation process are important themes discussed in the final chapter of this work.

Having said that James enjoys writing on Europe because of precedence and history, he does find some pleasure in his return to the United States, most notably when there is history or precedence for him to interact with:

It was the queer old complexion of the long straight street, however, that most came home to me: Hudson, in the afternoon quiet, seemed to stretch back, with fumbling friendly hand, to the earliest outlook of my consciousness. Many matters had come and gone, innumerable impressions had supervened; yet here, in the stir of the senses, a whole range of small forgotten things revived, things intensely Hudsonian, more than Hudsonian; small echoes and tones and sleeping lights, small sights and sounds and smells that made one, for an hour, *as small* – carried one up the rest of the river, the very river of life indeed, as a thrilled, roundabouted pilgrim, by primitive steamboat, to a mellow, medieval Albany. (51-2)

James's mention of the pilgrim suggests he is here interacting with the history of the Hudson as well as his own memories; this is the Hudson River of Rip van Winkle and Diedrich Knickerbocker. Another significance of this passage is the preference of the "primitive steamboat" for being able to view the landscape from a pleasing point of view. Contrast this to the frequent mention of the railway cars throughout the narrative. The railway is allied to the newness of New York in James's mind and detracts from American nature. These themes are discussed in the following chapter in greater detail.



In *The American Scene* James is concerned more with interacting with his own memories of places rather than the travel he is currently undertaking. As such the extradiegetic narrator-author moulds the narrative and provides the point of view. Max Beerbohm – caricaturist and writer – wrote ‘The Mote in the Middle Distance’ as a parody of Henry James’s style and preoccupation with perspective. Published in his 1912 *Christmas Garland*, ‘The Mote in the Middle Distance’ mocks James’s interest in point of view and its significance with the mote described as “a cathedral, it’s a herd of elephants, it’s the whole habitable globe. Oh, it’s, believe me, of an obsessiveness!” (8). As the tale continues the reader learns very little about the central characters – Keith and Eva, two children awaiting their Christmas stockings – and instead is subjected to the narrator’s consideration of perspective and impression with the extradiegetic narrator-author’s importance growing to the final paragraph. In this parody, as in James’s *American Scene*, an interest in point of view and perspective seems to block (like the mote in the middle distance) a look at the intradiegetic world.

Another example of the diegesis of travel holding secondary importance to the diegesis of writing and recollection is when James gives a summary of his trip to the West that it is virtually an ellipsis:

It is still vivid to me that, returning in the spring-time from a few weeks in the Far West, I re-entered New York State with the absurdest sense of meeting again a ripe old civilization and travelling through a country that showed the mark of established manners. It will seem, I fear, one's perpetual refrain, but the moral was yet once more that values of a certain order are, in such conditions, all relative, and that, as some wants of the spirit *must* somehow be met, one knocks together any substitute that will fairly stay the appetite. We had passed great smoky Buffalo in the raw vernal dawn – with a vision, for me, of curiosity, character, charm, whatever it might be, too needfully sacrificed, opportunity perhaps forever missed, yet at the same time a vision in which the lost object failed to mock at me with the last concentration of shape; and history, as we moved Eastward, appeared to meet us, in the look of the land, in its more overwrought surface and thicker detail, quite as if she had ever consciously declined to cross the border and were aware, precisely, of the queer feast we should find in her. (*American Scene* 147-8)

James's omission of the Western section of his journey represents not only the narrative's importance over travel, but also James's own distaste for the West and perhaps the frontier too (he ignores the other major frontier identified in this work also: the transatlantic passage). This extract also exemplifies James's preference for the old. In this case, however, it is the eastern United States, not Europe, which is a "ripe old civilization". The East has "history" and a "more overwrought surface and thicker detail" which acts as the starting point for James's chapters. In *The American Scene* the United States is the subject, but the specific travel is not; rather it is James's every memory and association of New York, Boston, Washington etc. The West lacks the history, both personal and national to interest James the heterodiegetic narrator-author, regardless of how much it may have interested the homodiegetic narrator-character at the time of travel. James reveals in his notebook that while in the West (Coronado Beach, California), he is musing over and digesting his impressions of the East which have changed so much; perhaps it is dealing with the more familiar East and its transformation which makes contending with the West too difficult (*Notebooks* 315-19). The second chapter of the book signifies the intent of the remainder, titled, as it is, 'New York Revisited'. It is this subsequent, extradiegetic revisiting which concerns James. In some ways the primary diegesis of this work is James's first, unrecorded experience of the sites he returns to.

In New York, James confesses to the possibility that he may in fact be viewing events through the narration of "the most liberal of hosts and most luminous of guides". James sees no problem in his impression being seen entirely through the point of view of another's narration when he writes:

I can scarce help it if this brilliant personality, on that occasion the very medium itself through which the whole spectacle showed, so colours my impressions that if I speak, by intention, of the facts that played into them I may really but reflect the rich talk and the general privilege of the hour. That accident moreover must take its place simply as the highest value and the strongest note in the total show – so much did it testify to the quality of appealing, surrounding life.

(*American Scene* 130-1)

This undermines the intradiegetic narrator-character but suggests that the quality of the impression is not sacrificed. James again suggests the insignificance of the intradiegetic narrator-character by describing him as "the observer whose impressions I note" (107); the

observer and writer are very different in James's eyes. This "observer" expresses one point of view while the narrator-author reveals another; neither is preferred. James also makes use of both economic and musical metaphors in the above passage, finding both financial value and artistic merit in the point of view of another, even if it alters the truth of the account.

Although he is discussing fiction in the following quotation, I believe it to aptly describe James's thoughts on perception and narrative: "the house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million ... every one of which has been pierced, or is still pierce-able, in its vast front, by the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of the individual will" (*Art of the Novel* 46). In this very well-known quotation, the individual vision seems to express the perception and the individual will represents the craft of the author. James's will does not just extend to representing the travels, however, he uses them as inspiration for his narrator-author. James discusses this as the "double analogy" of the philosopher and painter whilst discussing the role of the novelist; these writers are novelists who create these travelogues which aim to express truth:

To represent and illustrate the past, the actions of men, is the task of either writer [historian or novelist], and the only difference that I can see is, in proportion as he succeeds, to the honour of the novelist, consisting as it does in his having more difficulty in collecting his evidence, which is so far from being purely literary. It seems to me to give him a great character, the fact that he has at once so much in common with the philosopher and the painter; this double analogy is a magnificent heritage. ('The Art of Fiction' 47)

The philosopher and the painter could both be seen as the extradiegetic here, representing "the actions of men" which in this case means the travels of Henry James. Representing and interpreting these travels after the fact is like "the painter making use again and again of the tentative wet sponge" to uncover the "buried secrets" of the canvas (*Art of the Novel* 11).

James – the most recent author in this study – is the most concerned with the effects of travel on himself and the creation of narrative. Although he understands the importance of different points of view for both the traveller and the writer, he does not describe himself as an observer; he does, in fact, differentiate his extradiegetic writerly self from that role. Instead James is the philosopher and painter interacting with and representing the travel. James seems more interested in other texts and the history of writing on America than writing on it without that lens, or point of view. Henry James's brother William wrestles with the role

of the painter too. Where Henry found writing to represent his ‘painter’, William turned to philosophy, though “William James was frustrated in his early attempts to become a painter. In a sense it undoubtedly made more difficult his task in finding a form in which to attempt a multiple response to the world” (Bush 132).

Henry James also shares many of his ideas of point of view and truth with his pragmatist brother. William James describes pragmatist as a pluralistic theory of truth (*Pragmatism in Focus* 43;85). His “distinctive version of the pragmatic theory of truth ... has drawn the largest share of critical attention [for his work], and is generally regarded as James’s most original and substantive contribution to philosophy” (Olin 5). The pluralistic element of pragmatism informs Henry James’s million windows of fiction, quoted earlier; William suggests that “our account of truth is an account of truths in the plural ... Truth is *made*, just as health, wealth, and strength are made, in the course of experience” (*Pragmatism* 107). Like Henry, William James finds truth to be experiential and individual: “true ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those we cannot” (ibid. 100). Henry James’s point of view and impressions overlap with William James’s conception of the truth “of our mental operations [which] must always be an intra-experiential affair. A conception is reckoned true by common sense when it can be made to lead to a sensation” (*Essays* 202-3).

The narratological analysis in this chapter has shown the disparity between the point of view of primary and secondary diegeses in my primary texts. I argue that as the period discussed wore on, there was an increasing opportunity to interact with other (travel and fictional) texts on the United States which many authors took. The reasons for this are discussed later in this work.

There was also a concern with making travel into narrative. Where earlier authors aimed to show that their role as author was minimal in crafting the travel for readerly consumption, later authors played an increasing part in the extradiegesis of their work. My analysis has shown that there will always be disparity between the two diegeses in travel texts, but that became more overt during the nineteenth century. Henry James’s *American Scene*, coming just after the turn of the twentieth century, displays the greatest interest in the point of view of the extradiegetic narrator-author at the expense of the intradiegetic narrator-character.

I have argued that narratology works as a critical tool in analysing these travel writings and applied it to primary texts. Narratology is introduced in future pages of this work when it has a decisive effect in my argument. ‘Narrator-author’ is henceforth generally

preferred to 'extradiegetic narrator', and 'narrator-character' to 'intradiegetic narrator'. This chapter has raised many issues about travel and narrative which are discussed at greater length in this study. The next chapter talks about technological advances in mode of travel influencing the point of view of traveller and the narrative of author, with particular focus on the Mississippi River.

## Two: Mode of Travel

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The sinking of RMS Titanic on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1912 was a transatlantic trauma. Tim Bergfelder and Sarah Street talk of the significance of the event as a “historical caesura in the 20<sup>th</sup> century” (1) rivalled only by the two World Wars and the fall of the Soviet Union. It represented the failure of technology when confronted with the Atlantic Ocean. This transatlantic disaster was predicted by British journalist and writer W.T. Stead in his 1886 story ‘How the Mail Steamer Went Down in Mid Atlantic’, also known as ‘The Sinking of a Modern Liner’. Stead’s fiction describes an insufficient number of lifeboats and the panic of the passengers once they realised their vessel was sinking, though in his story the narrator survives “after a nasty time” (n.p.) in a lifeboat. W.T. Stead was among those who perished in the Titanic disaster which was such a catastrophe because of insufficient lifeboat numbers for the complement of passengers. Stead was interested in the United States and commented on it in his 1902 *The Americanisation of the World*. Although largely sincere, Stead is speaking tongue-in-cheek when he discusses the possibility for English-speaking nations uniting under the Stars and Stripes, noting “we could, of course, keep the Union Jack as a local flag” as it “possesses a historical interest, and is instinct with too many heroic memories for it to be allowed to pass for ever from sea or shore” (152-3). Stead saw the United States as leading the way in commerce, culture and technology, but also in vice and corruption, as detailed in *If Christ Came to Chicago!* (1894) based on his visit to that city in 1893. Stead was able to foresee both the dominance of the United States and the sinking of a vessel which was considered unsinkable.

The Titanic marks a significant point in the role of technology on travel. In this chapter I consider technology’s role in the changing perceptions of the United States. I argue that mode of travel shapes narrative as well as travel. Where Stead is concerned with the United States as a nation, I look at the country itself; the landscape. River and rail were the predominant methods for travelling the United States in the nineteenth century; I discuss the impact of these modes of travel on point of view and narrative. As with those who made the voyage to the United States I first contend with the Atlantic Ocean and the transatlantic passage.

The Titanic disaster concurrently marked a failure and demonstration of the technologies which had issued from the nineteenth century and had revolutionised travel and communication:

The wireless enabled the Titanic disaster to be experienced almost simultaneously across diverse realms from the news-reading public, and the terrible, helpless waiting of relatives and friends of those on the liner on two continents, to the victims of the disaster and their potential rescuers on the Carpathia. (Hammond 26)

Although the travel link between the United States and Great Britain failed catastrophically, the two countries became even more closely connected in the realm of media and text. Along with Stead, on board were several railroad magnates and John Jacob Astor IV, great grandson of John Jacob Astor; all of whom have a small part to play in the telling of this work. The financier of the ship, another mighty figure in American business, J.P. Morgan was notable by his absence, as was another name with strong connections to American travel, George Vanderbilt (Foster 39). Financed from the United States and built in Great Britain, Titanic was truly transatlantic.

The Titanic represented the desire to eliminate the gap between Britain and the United States; it was luxurious and outfitted with all of the trappings of culture which could be expected on either side of the Atlantic. The ship was a small community in itself (Hammond 29). Because of its size the effect of the motion of the waves of the Atlantic was also reduced. By replicating the culture of the two nations onboard, passengers were able to ignore the Atlantic Ocean and the distance between their departure and arrival in both time and space. Technology was thought to allow for travel without any of the impact of nature which had affected earlier travellers and their narratives. The passage was also much shorter than that which faced nineteenth century travellers: the Titanic was supposed to have arrived in New York within a week of its departure. Compare that to the almost three weeks which Charles Dickens spent on an admittedly rough crossing in January 1842. Therefore steam came to compress the Atlantic in time *and* space. The transatlantic passage was a liminal, frontier space (frontier spaces are considered at greater length in the next chapter); this liminality is being reduced by the advent of steam and the impress of Anglo-American culture on the voyage meaning the traveller never leaves their own culture, at least until they arrive. The development of technology has therefore changed the point of view of travellers who no longer look to the cultures behind and ahead of them from outside (or on the margin) of those cultures.

Dickens was in some ways ahead of his time in electing to travel by steamship to the United States in 1842; however his account was not flattering to the new service. Indeed,

Dickens was terrified by the trip and resolved to return by sail: “we sail from New York, per George Washington Packet *Ship* (none of your steamers) on Tuesday the Seventh of June. Hoo – ray – ay – ay – ay – ay – ay – ay – ay!!!!” (*Letters* 226). The return journey was slightly longer (twenty-two days to the outward passage’s nineteen), but both methods of transatlantic travel were utilised in the 1840s.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel’s steamship *Great Western* – so named as Brunel thought of it as a way to “extend the Great Western Railway clear across the sea to New York” (Halacy 59) – lost in a transatlantic race to the sailing vessel *Sirius* in 1838. Since the Atlantic Ocean had first been crossed by Europeans, sailing technology had developed significantly, however, by the middle of the nineteenth century steam power – the young pretender – was finally beginning to regularly outpace the fastest sailing vessels. The steamship *Canada* beat the sailing vessel *Sovereign* across the Atlantic in 1853 by two days (Halacy 32-3) and the worth of steam-powered transatlantic vessels was confirmed. Dickens’s fear of the vessels in *American Notes* was not unfounded, however, with incidents even more common within the United States itself: wrecks peppered the Mississippi river, adding a further obstacle for pilots on that river, as described by Twain in *Life on the Mississippi*. It was as late as 1852 that an act was passed to improve the safety and inspections of the vessels in the United States. (Meinig 1993, 337).

### The Transatlantic Passage

Dickens was not alone in devoting some attention in his travelogue to crossing the Atlantic. The voyage to the United States from Britain was a considerable undertaking and often provided a lens through which to see the United States. Subsequent point of view is in some respects influenced by the transatlantic passage. Dickens’s uneasy passage over was rendered even more perilous by a fierce storm: “the wind howling, the sea roaring, the rain beating: all in furious array against [the ship]. Picture the sky both dark and wild, and the clouds, in fearful sympathy with the waves, making another ocean in the air” (*Notes* 21). Later, Dickens speaks of his inability to describe the storm scene’s darkness and violence which overwhelmed his senses, lacking even the horizon to break the flow: “to say that all is grand, and all appalling and horrible in the last degree, is nothing. Words cannot express it. Thoughts cannot convey it. Only a dream can call it up again, in all its fury, rage, and passion” (24). The “dream” – or nightmare – does come back to haunt the author later in his account, as we will see in chapters three and four. These first experiences of violent oceans and “ocean[s] in the air” foreshadow Dickens’s opinions of the American landscape.



Robert Louis Stevenson travelled to the United States in 1879 to marry a recently divorced Californian whom he had met in France several years earlier. Stevenson also made the transatlantic voyage in steamer, an “iron world” (*Amateur Emigrant* 114) as he called it. Stevenson has been selected for this study as he speaks extensively about both the transatlantic and the transcontinental voyage; the effects of rail travel on his perceptions of the plains are particularly pertinent. He travelled in the second cabin, one class up from steerage.

Stevenson’s travels were described in *The Amateur Emigrant* (1895) which contained *From the Clyde to Sandy Hook* and *Across the Plains* (parts of which were published in 1892). A further volume, *The Silverado Squatters* (1883) covers his honeymoon with his new wife Fanny in an abandoned mining camp in California. *The Amateur Emigrant*, published in its entirety after Stevenson’s death, is the most interesting for my purposes. It was written during a period of convalescence in 1879 (MacLachan xxxii).

Stevenson’s journey in both the first and second half of the book is unpleasant and cramped. The sea journey is not clearly laid out chronologically with various vignettes and occurrences surfacing in the narrative ad hoc, as if the lack of change of scenery and means of measuring progress intradiegetically has been passed onto the extradiegetic narrative; it takes an extradiegetic conclusion to mark an end to the short essays on life at sea. The second half of the book, *Across the Plains* is in marked contrast, giving times and days. The suggestion from the subtitle of this part, “Leaves from the Notebook of an Emigrant between New York and San Francisco” is that the reader is being shown, mimetically, the writing of the narrator-character as he travelled. This is immediately undermined with the opening line, however: “*Monday*. – It was, if I remember rightly, five o’clock when we were all signalled to be present at the Ferry Depot of the railroad” (187). By implying that the writer has to “remember” the details of travel it is revealed that this is a retrospective account from the narrator-author.

There is not a strong narratorial presence in the book and the intradiegetic narrator-character is given no biography. Stevenson is alienated from his fellow passengers and the other emigrants he comes across during his journey; few are given names. The voice of the extradiegetic narrator-author does surface with a section of ‘Personal Experience and Review’, however, with the realisation of travelling not only out of his “country in latitude and longitude” but also “in diet, associates, and consideration” (161). This is a subsequent, extradiegetic appraisal of the experience of being “taken for a steerage passenger” (ibid.). Stevenson’s actual situation was not as lofty as it seems and earlier. In a passage which

shows the intradiegetic doubt and real position of Stevenson *with* his fellow passengers he says that “we were a shipful of failures, the broken men of England” (109). The distinction between second cabin and steerage is minimal. Stevenson the narrator-author cites his reason for travelling in the second cabin as a deliberate ploy to see the poor emigrants of steerage, yet the reality was not so anthropological. Having said this, Stevenson is always adopting the point of view of the outsider.

While Stevenson’s Atlantic voyage did not include storms of the severity of Dickens’s, he still spoke of the “moving desert of seas, now cloud-canopied and lit with but a low nocturnal glimmer along the line of the horizon” (114) which surrounded the ship, a “swift-travelling oasis” (114). Stevenson compares the sea to the desert, but later inverts the comparison while viewing the plains of Nebraska (207). This is far more optimistic imagery, with Stevenson discussing the scene immediately *after* a storm with the “low nocturnal glimmer” as a point of hope. This optimistic point of view can in some ways be explained by a less arduous crossing, but also by the purpose of Stevenson’s journey: rekindling the love with his eventual wife. Stevenson largely discussed the ship’s society in *The Amateur Emigrant*, suggesting that the advent of steam has allowed for less heed to be taken of the natural world; Stevenson is interested in the “iron world” rather than the seascape. Having said that, Stevenson does also speak of the feeling of renewal or rebirth after a second storm:

The next morning when I came on deck I found a new world indeed. The wind was fair; the sun mounted into a cloudless heaven; through great dark blue seas the ship cut a swath of curded foam. The horizon was dotted all day with companionable sails, and the sun shone pleasantly on the long, heaving deck. (121-2)

In the case of the Titanic, the rite of passage was extreme and violent, bridging life and death in the frontier of the transatlantic passage. Less severe was the storm which articulated the severance from the Old World and inclusion in the New for Dickens and Stevenson. Jonathan Raban, considering Dickens and Stevenson, writes about his own metaphorical rebirth:

We’d reached the stage where not only was it impossible properly to imagine the land we were heading for, it was impossible properly to remember the land we’d left. There was simply too much sea around to think of anything else but sea. It sopped up every other thought in one’s head. It must have been at this stage that the emigrants began to shed their *emi* prefix, and turned into pure migrants, as oblivious

as birds to anything except the engrossing mechanics of their passage. (*Hunting Mister Heartbreak* 31-2)

The vastness of the sea and the separation from either world creates the migrant, between emigrant and immigrant. It is sufficient for now to note the importance of this first travel in both setting the tone and point of view for the narrative and implanting images in the traveller's brain. These images resurface when metaphors and similes are needed, or a similar sense of being between places – cut off from the where from and where to – occurs.

The transatlantic experience – and the point of view which that engenders – is a major difference between indigenous writers and the visitor from Europe. The European traveller has already experienced a rite of passage and a colouring of his perception before landing in the United States. Advances in technology meant that travellers no longer relied on the wind to speed them to the United States and therefore the passage across the Atlantic Ocean affected their journey and narrative to a lesser degree; even more so in the case of passengers on the Titanic. The violence of storms (and collision with an iceberg in the case of the Titanic) served as a reminder of nature and the liminal space occupied by transatlantic travellers. Rites of passage and frontiers take on even greater significance when in the United States. The next chapter discusses the Western frontier and I note several occasions when the initial rite of passage of the transatlantic voyage is recalled when travelling in the West.

I now consider travel within the United States itself and the impact of technology on the point of view of the country. These technologies – specifically steam – allow for modes of travel where the traveller is not as affected by the physical landscape as with earlier forms of travel.

### Stagecoach

Before steam had revolutionised travel by land and water, stagecoach travel was the norm for domestic travel. While river and rail travel are the main focus of this chapter, I wish to talk briefly about stage travel and how it links travel to the landscape, before moving on to those modes of transport made possible by steam power. For earlier writers on the United States the experience of steamboat and rail travel was compared to the stagecoach, and several, most notably Nathaniel Hawthorne, were against the newer developments.

In 'The Celestial Railroad' (1854) from *Mosses from an Old Manse* Nathaniel Hawthorne is negative towards both the steamboat and the train, he was an "inveterate stagecoach traveler, yet he produced nothing comparable to Washington Irving's nostalgic

‘The Stagecoach’ ” (Fairbanks 156). ‘The Stagecoach’ appears in Irving’s *Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon* which describes a “stage-coach” as a vehicle which “carries animation always with it, and puts the world in motion as it whirls along” (155). This implies that travel by stage keeps the scenery always fresh and changing, something which is lacking in descriptions of later travel by train in America; stagecoach travel is suited to the Old World. The stage travellers “were under the particular guardianship of the coachman, to whom, whenever an opportunity presented, they addressed a host of questions, and pronounced him one of the best fellows in the whole world” (154). The driver of the stagecoach, as also noted by Twain, was revered by travellers and those locals he travelled past alike:

He enjoys great consequence and consideration along the road; has frequent conferences with the village housewives, who look upon him as a man of great trust and dependence; and he seems to have a good understanding with every bright-eyed country lass. (ibid.)

The driver seems to have a girl in every village, just as with the sailor having a girl in every port. The driver also acts as narrator for the journey, combining travel and narration for the passengers and performing an almost extradiegetic role as he knows the route and the ‘story’ of travel before the travellers do: “all look up to him as to an oracle, treasure up his cant phrases, echo his opinions about horses and other topics of jockey lore, and, above all, endeavor to imitate his air and carriage” (155).

George Eliot’s *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866) has a similarly nostalgic portrait of travel by stagecoach in its introduction. Set in 1832, the year in which *Domestic Manners* was published by Frances Trollope (who had not travelled by rail in the United States), *Felix Holt* is another text which looks back at a golden era of stagecoach travel, just as Twain’s *Life on the Mississippi* paints a favourable picture of antebellum river travel. The novel begins with an introduction effusing praise on travelling by stage. Although it is set in England the description of travel and the coach driver is significant to this study. The book begins:

Five-and-thirty years ago the glory had not yet departed from the old coach-roads; the great roadside inns were still brilliant with well-polished tankards, the smiling glances of pretty barmaids, and the repartees of jocose ostlers; the mail still announced itself by the merry notes of the horn. (75)

The narrative then contrasts this mode of travel to the later rail and tube journey:

The slow old-fashioned way of getting from one end of our country to the other is the better thing to have in the memory. The tube-journey can never lend much to picture and narrative; it is as barren as an exclamatory O! Whereas the happy outside passenger seated on the box from the dawn to the gloaming gathered enough stories of English life, enough of English labours in town and country, enough aspects of earth and sky, to make episodes for a modern *Odyssey*. (75-6)

In this passage travel by stagecoach is better “in the memory”, suggesting not only a more pleasant travel but a better retrospective reimagining of that travel by an extradiegetic narrator-author. The next sentence supports this by claiming stagecoach travel is preferable to the “tube-journey” (which is even more extreme in its removal from the landscape, going under the ground rather than across it) for “picture and narrative”; travel and story. The “barren... exclamatory O!” is a response which seems to echo the response of the traveller to the American sublime as described in the following few chapters of this work. The traveller is outside of the coach and more in touch with the landscape through which he travels, seeing from dawn to dusk (and these times are favoured for point of view by James) and picking up vignettes and “stories of English life... to make episodes for a modern *Odyssey*”. This mode of travel is far more fitting than rail travel to the episodic story of travel typified by the *Odyssey* as the traveller is involved in the landscape and travels slowly through the “busy scenes” (80) of a constantly changing landscape:

In these midland districts the traveller passed rapidly from one phase of English life to another: after looking down on a village dingy with coal-dust, noisy with the shaking of looms, he might skirt a parish all of fields, high hedges, and deep-rutted lanes; after the coach had rattled over the pavement of a manufacturing town, the scene of riots and trades-union meetings, it would take him in another ten minutes into a rural region, where the neighbourhood of the town was only felt in the advantages of a near market for corn, cheese, and hay (79)

Not only is the landscape varied, but the traveller feels the undulations of the road; the “deep-rutted lanes” and rattling pavement reflecting not only the change between country and city but also the physical implications of travel over (rather than through) the landscape.

The traveller is seen as progressing through a world as if paused under an unchanging sky, though this is not a narratological pause because the traveller progresses; the landscape changes only as the traveller moves linking travel to narrative even more closely. The traveller is moving through and involved in the landscape: “under the low grey sky which overhung them with an unchanging stillness as if Time itself were pausing, it was easy for the traveller to conceive that town and country had no pulse in common” (80). This represents the reality of travel: the landscape does not move, the traveller moves through it. In later accounts of travel, however, it is almost as if the landscape is moving and the traveller sitting still watching a moving panorama which passes the stationary traveller, as though watching a film. Travel by stage, therefore, reflects the motion of the traveller rather than encouraging a point of view of the landscape as a changing picture framed by the window. Significantly, it is the only homogenous aspect of the scene – the sky – which is explicitly described as unchanging. This has similarities with descriptions of travel on the Atlantic, across the prairies and down the Mississippi River. In England, however, only the sky remains the same and the rest of the landscape moves past with pleasant variety.

As with Irving and Twain’s account of stagecoach travel, the driver is a narrator and a guide:

The coachman was an excellent travelling companion and commentator on the landscape; he could tell the names of sites and persons, and explained the meaning of groups, as well as the shade of Virgil in a more memorable journey; he had as many stories about parishes, and the men and women in them, as the Wanderer in the 'Excursion', only his style was different. (81)

Wordsworth’s *Excursion* (1814) is a picturesque passage through the countryside and again suggests variety in travel. Travel by stage allows for episodic ‘pictures’ of the landscape and the stories told by the coachman again reinforces that this is a varied landscape and the stage passage aptly suited to describing the countryside. Travel by stagecoach allows for the landscape to be turned into a story more effectively than travel by train. The driver again adopts the extradiegetic narrator-author role, moving from the (almost uncomfortable) “high prophetic strain to the familiar one of narrative” (81). The narrator of *Felix Holt* expects for

the narrative of the coachman to be tied to the landscape rather than a detached “high prophetic strain” which we see evident when travellers are not closely tied to their landscape. The coachman is best when narrating homodiegetically.

Although writing after the spread of the railway, Henry James also found pleasure in the unusual experience of riding by stagecoach in North Devon on the way to Exeter (notably this is an Old World experience). The route, he notes, “has the primary merit of being, as yet, virgin soil as to railways”. James goes on to write: “I went accordingly from Barnstaple to Ilfracombe on the top of a coach, in the fashion of elder days; and, thanks to my position, I managed to enjoy the landscape” (*English Hours* 59). By the time James was writing travel by stage was a welcome novelty, which broke down the barriers between the traveller and the landscape through which he travels.

The coach journey in *Roughing It* is in many ways similar to a steamboat passage on the Mississippi. For both modes of travel there is a pilot or driver who is lord of the vessel, and determines when and where it goes. For the stagecoach traveller the driver acts in some ways as an extradiegetic narrator, or the narrator-author assumes the position of this figure on narrating the story. The landscape is also an important factor in these travels, where the river dictates speed and ease of passage, so the landscape can slow a journey down or create turbulence and unpleasantness by coach (an example of which is above). Twain makes little mention of the railway in either *Roughing It* or *Life on the Mississippi*, but when it is discussed, it is set against the older means of travel and signals an irreversible change of life. The coach journey and river trip fit Twain’s narrative style of serendipitous meetings, delays and servitude to nature much better than the rigidity of the rails, which speed the passenger along with limited conception of the distance travelled or the physical effects of the terrain. In another extradiegetic insertion, Twain is amazed by the speed of the railway voyage from Omaha to the North Platte, which is described as a “long jaunt”; Twain “can scarcely comprehend the new state of things” (73), but makes no proclamation on whether travel by rail is an improvement on the older forms. The next section provides a history of travel on American rivers, the development of travel technology for internal waterways, and the implications of this for point of view.

## Rivers

America’s extensive internal waterways system provided early settlers with opportunities for exploration. Into the nineteenth century the myth persisted that there was a navigable river route from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts, known as the Northwest Passage (Adams,

*Travelers and Travel Liars* 45; 133-4). It was this myth which in part inspired the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-6; Jefferson arranged the expedition in response to the Louisiana Purchase from France of 1803. While this expedition did furnish the president with knowledge of the interior of the country it could not provide proof of the Northwest Passage and as subsequent exploration proved, there was no continuous route to the Pacific Ocean by water. Despite this, rivers provided an important network for the United States, particularly in its infancy.

The rivers and waterways east of the Mississippi were the subject of improvement plans: Albert Gallatin constructed a plan which incorporated both roads and waterways to make the country as far as the Mississippi River easily accessible. Where the existing network of streams was insufficient, canals were proposed to carry freight and passengers between the burgeoning metropolises of the nation. Albert Gallatin, a Swiss immigrant, U.S. Senator, and Secretary of the Treasury under Jefferson's presidency delivered a 'Report on Internal Improvements' in 1808 (Banning 466) which suggested a number of roads and canals to strengthen the transport links and the economic capabilities of the fledgling nation. It is described by Joseph Harrison as a "documentary monument of Jeffersonian nationalism" (343). Gallatin's suggestions were all eventually realised through a combination of river, canal and rail, but were heavily delayed because of the war of 1812 with Britain and several were completed after his lifetime (Goodrich 439). Perhaps the most significant of Gallatin's suggestions in the nineteenth century, the Erie Canal, was completed in 1825, though it was constructed by the state rather than federal government. Such state and federal 'improvements' were matched by the realisation that the power of the eastern rivers could be harnessed for the needs of the growing economy in the Northeast and the arrival of the industrial revolution to American shores. Although it is with travel upon rivers that this section is primarily concerned, the developments affected the New England landscape and travel within it, as Thoreau in particular was to discover, much to his chagrin.

The linking and extension of the river network enabled vast highways for trade and travel alike: whole industries and communities relied on the river completely, entrusting their survival with these sometimes volatile waters. Many of the early cities of the United States were without good links by water; D.W. Meinig mentions Savannah, Philadelphia, Charleston, Baltimore, New Haven, and Boston (1993, 316). Canals were therefore essential for these less fortunate cities which owe their location to an easily accessible harbour and route to the Old World as opposed to links to the interior and the New, which was becoming



increasingly important for exploiting the wealth of the country in the early nineteenth century.

It was not the infrastructure, however, which was the most revolutionary factor in the use of waterways for economic and travel reasons, but steam power. “By 1825 it was clear that the steamboat would transform the nation’s transportation” (Meinig 1993, 318), with more than 500 vessels on the Ohio and Mississippi by 1840 (323). This was coincidentally when the railroads were rising to prominence in national transportation: “by 1845 the superiority of this radical overland instrument in directness, speed, frequency, flexibility, regularity, and reliability was becoming obvious” (337). While large rivers such as the Mississippi are still major highways today, by the mid-nineteenth century the emergence of the railroad was a significant factor in the partial decline of the waterways both in economic and travel terms and also in the consciousness of the nation in the second half of that industrial century. Railways were themselves superseded by the automobile – and later the aeroplane – in the twentieth century. Railroads finally provided a direct link between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, albeit a notably different proposition than that suggested almost three centuries previously. When considering the role of waterways, canals and rivers in the formation and growth of the United States and their subsequent relegation by the railroads, it is unsurprising that in two of his main Mississippi books, *Life on the Mississippi* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain writes about the antebellum United States, looking back to the heyday of the Mississippi.

After that brief history of river travel in the United States I discuss the affect of travelling by river on point of view and narrative. Henry James discusses the Hudson River by the West Point military academy in comparison to European streams, finding positives in its similarity to them:

I want you to have something unforgettable, and therefore you shall have type – yes, absolutely have type, and even tone, without accent; an impossibility, you may hitherto have supposed, but which you have only to look about you now really to see expressed. And type and tone of the very finest and rarest; type and tone good enough for Claude or Turner, if they could have walked by these rivers instead of by their thin rivers of France and Italy; type and tone, in short, that gather in shy detail under wings as wide as those with which a motherly hen covers her endangered brood. (*The American Scene* 150-1)

The only difference between the rivers of the Old World and the Hudson, it seems, is the American river's larger size; they are of a similar "type". Frank Kermode talks about the use of "types", originally as "events or persons which are themselves, but may presage others. Their purpose, to put it simply, is to accommodate the events and persons of a superseded order of time to a new one" (90). In later American usage, however, type came to be extended to "natural phenomenon". For Emerson, who influenced Hawthorne, who in turn we know influenced James, "the agency through which the types were recognized was not theological; it was the imagination – 'a second sight' looking through the facts, and using them as types or words for thoughts which they signify" (ibid.). This "second sight" could represent the imaginative working of point of view upon facts; thus type can be seen as describing the superseding of the old by the new, as well as the imaginative connection between the rivers of Europe and the United States, imbuing the latter with the history and artistic heritage of the European streams. James is seeing the Hudson River through the work of Claude and (English painter J.M.W.) Turner from a European point of view. He interacts with painters as he interacted with his own memories in an earlier passage written on the Hudson. James was to make a similar, though more positive point by seeing American (over European) rivers as "the greater antiquity of the two, the antiquity of the infinite previous, of the time, before Pharaohs and Pyramids, when everything was still to come" (*American Scene* 461). Again, James lauds antiquity. Similarly, H.D. Thoreau's discussion of fluid writing, using river for metaphor, is discussed in the first chapter of this work; he adds:

That unlike the mariner, ... [river travellers] have the constantly varying panorama of the shore to relieve the monotony of their labor, and it seemed to us that as they thus glided noiselessly from town to town, with all their furniture about them, for their very homestead is a movable, they could comment on the character of the inhabitants with greater advantage and security to themselves than the traveller in a coach, who would be unable to indulge in such broadsides of wit and humor in so small a vessel for fear of the recoil. (*A Week* 170)

Thoreau places the river traveller on the margins of society, safe from the "recoil" of his observations. The point of view is that of a privileged outsider; the "constantly varying panorama" suggests the very scenery provides the traveller with a subject for his observations and the narrative – as with the travel – moves from "town to town". James is talking about the Hudson River; Thoreau is talking about the Concord and Merrimack rivers here: rivers of

the Northeast in a landscape often described in European terms. I wish to discuss a river farther to the west – father of waters – the Mississippi.

### The Mississippi

The Mississippi River was the major transport artery for the United States from the early nineteenth century until the Civil War, after which it was superseded by the rail network. Some 1,100 miles southwest of Thoreau's Concord lies St. Louis on the Mississippi River; the Mississippi bears few similarities with the rivers of the Northeast and does not necessarily provide the river point of view Thoreau sees on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.

Frances Trollope entered the United States at the mouth of the Mississippi River and wound her way up to the heart of the then frontier, Cincinnati. Trollope was thrust straight from the Oceanic frontier to the fluvial frontier and apart from a brief mention of the Mississippi at the beginning of her travelogue she is silent on both. One ellipsis is followed by another as two (apparently) homogenous scenes leave her with nothing to say, overawed by their immensity. It is little wonder Trollope was overawed and distressed by the United States, not having had the altogether more gentle transition in cultures from Europe to the Eastern Seaboard shared by many of her contemporaries. Not only this, but Trollope is going against the flow of the great river and therefore by my analogy going against the proper narrative flow; her point of view is upside-down and back to front. What Trollope does say about the Mississippi suggests this in its nightmarish description.

Mrs. Trollope describes the Mississippi as “this mighty river pouring forth its muddy mass of waters, and mingling with the deep blue of the Mexican Gulf... the murky stream which now received us” (16); the Mississippi is portrayed as the point from which the refuse of America – its sewage – pours forth into the pure blue of the ocean. Here it is described in terms of Dante's *Divine Comedy* as hell on earth:

I never beheld a scene so utterly desolate as this entrance of the Mississippi. Had Dante seen it, he might have drawn images of another Borgia from its horrors. One only object rears itself above the eddying water: this mast of a vessel long since wrecked in attempting to cross the bar; and it still stands, a dismal witness of the destruction that has been, and a boding prophet of that which is to come. (ibid.)

The “boding prophet of that which is to come” is for Trollope her experience in the United States. Like the *Divine Comedy*, Trollope's account begins with Inferno, before being

tempered by her later experiences in the United States as the *Divine Comedy* moves on to Purgatory and Paradise (though Trollope never found Paradise in the United States, she did describe Niagara Falls in biblical terms, discussed in chapter four of this work). It is likely that the extradiegetic narrator-author is drawing attention to this foreboding scenery with the retrospective knowledge of the unpleasant time spent further up the river at Cincinnati. The river is a reversal of the proper order of things:

Sometimes several of these [trees, uprooted during a hurricane], entangled together, collect among their boughs a quantity of floating rubbish, that gives the mass the appearance of a moving island, bearing a forest, with its roots mocking the heavens; while the dishonoured branches lash the tide in idle vengeance: this, as it approaches the vessel, and glides swiftly past, looks like the fragment of a world in ruins. (17)

American nature – or at least Western nature – is *against* nature from Trollope’s European point of view. The “fragment of a world in ruins” describes the stuttering start to her narrative: it is marked by ellipses and fragments with the journey upstream not in isochrony. Stephen Fender discusses Mrs. Trollope views on the Mississippi, and points out that

Above all the country is a fragment, uprooted, topsy-turvy, literally “The World Turned Upside Down.” ([Cornwallis’s]<sup>18</sup> regimental bands played that old radical anthem, slowly and ironically, when the British surrendered at Yorktown)” (*Sea Changes* 238)

Again, this could be put down to Trollope effectively paddling against the flow of the Mississippi, the antithesis to the ‘relaxed’ float downstream which so captivated the young Twain the first time and allowed Huck and Jim their adventures; Trollope is the flustered foreigner who needs to learn to go with the flow. The technological advance of steam power enables this reversed point of view which differs so greatly from Thoreau’s appreciation of river travel. In part Trollope’s European point of view is overwhelmed by the size and perceived homogeneity of the Mississippi; in part it is undermined by entering the United States from the back door and countering the flow. Both of these factors of travelling point of

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<sup>18</sup> *Cassell's Biographical Dictionary of the American War of Independence* confirms that it was in fact Burgoyne’s regimental bands.

view affect the narrative point of view as the narrative begins in a disjointed manner, ignoring that which cannot be discussed.

Dickens, too, seems to be haunted by the Mississippi:

And still there is the same, eternal foreground. The River has washed away its banks, and stately trees have fallen down into the stream. Some have been there so long, that they are mere dry, grizzly skeletons. Some are almost sliding down, as you look at them. And some were drowned so long ago, that their bleached arms start out from the middle of the current, and seem to try to grasp the boat, and drag it under water. (*Notes* 178)

The above passage was actually written about the Ohio River in *American Notes* but given Dickens's views of that river expressed in letters I argue below that he has in mind the Mississippi. As Christopher Mulvey points out, the Mississippi is so large that it "had to be seen in time as well as in space" ('*Ecriture and Landscape*' 108). Both Frances Trollope and Dickens wrote as little about the river as possible, despite the fact that it was a significant part of their trip. It rendered the authors lost for words: unable, or unwilling to write about it. Dickens spends most of his time on the Mississippi writing about his fellow passengers; retreating to his more comfortable mode of personal portraits. Mark Twain writes about the first explorers of the river and says that "the river was an awful solitude, then. And it is now, over most of its stretch" (*Life on the Mississippi* 10). The lack of culture and civilisation which greet the traveller on the river exemplify the homogeneity and size of the landscape; there is nothing of interest on the banks, which are marshy, "low and flat" (*Notes* 190) and lack the curiosity or roughness of picturesque or Romantic sublime scenery. On the Mississippi there are, according to Frances Trollope "no objects more interesting than mud banks, monstrous bulrushes, and now and then a huge crocodile luxuriating in the slime" (17) – are crocodiles not interesting? One would think that Trollope had never seen anything like a crocodile before. This is another sign of the extradiegetic narrator-author overwriting the intradiegetic observations of the traveller; surely the first crocodile on the Mississippi elicited more excitement than the mud banks and bulrushes. Note that the bulrushes, not the crocodiles are described as monstrous. Trollope's senses have been so overcome by the barren monotony that nothing on the river can excite or illicit a reaction; the landscape is described as monstrous as a result.

Mrs. Trollope cannot view American scenery from outside her European viewpoint: “the Ohio is bright and clear; its banks continually varied as it flows through what is called a rolling country”. The variation is beautiful to her, however it still lacks all of the beauty of a European scene, missing the signs of civilisation and culture which show it to be tamed: “were there occasionally a ruined abbey, or feudal castle, to mix the romance of real life with that of nature, the Ohio would be perfect” (38). The Mississippi River has no romance of real life or nature and is not pleasing from Trollope’s point of view. The Erie Canal suffered a similar fate to the Mississippi in Trollope’s view, offering little in the way of scenery: “from the canal nothing is seen to advantage, and very little is seen at all” (293). Trollope ended her time on the Erie “fully determined never to enter a canal boat again, at least, not in America” (ibid). The canal boat offered nothing by way of point of view for Trollope and may also have been influenced intradiegetically by the previous monotony of the Mississippi.

Dickens, too, discusses the Ohio River. In a letter to his friend Forster, he writes “while I have been writing this account, we have shot out of that hideous river [Mississippi], thanks be to God; never to see it again, I hope, but in a nightmare. We are now on the smooth Ohio, and the change is like the transition from pain to perfect ease” (*Letters* 195). Later, in *American Notes* his response to that same river has been imbued with the horror of the Mississippi, in the passage quoted above in full: “and still there is the same, eternal foreground” (178). The subsequent narrator-author has rewritten the Ohio River, seeing it from his retrospective point of view *through* the experience of the Mississippi River. Trollope and Dickens are both guilty of seeing their subsequent rivers and travels through the nightmarish lens of the Mississippi.

Stephen Fender suggests that the traveller to America underwent three stages of response: the first being fear and revulsion at the unscalable wilderness; the second involves inventing a fantasy culture to fill that wilderness; and the final constitutes realisation, (self) mocking, inward thinking, and boredom (*Sea Changes* 52). Fender’s three stages of response to the American landscape can accurately be applied to the travel writers here. Dickens, for example is initially revolted by the Mississippi: “it is well for society that this Mississippi, the renowned father of waters, had no children who take after him. It is the beastliest river in the world” (*Letters* 194). He then anthropomorphises the landscape in *American Notes*: the trees are “grizzly skeletons” which “seem to try to grasp the boat”. Finally, Dickens ignores the river and employs ellipsis. The anthropomorphising is an example of Dickens’s penchant for breathing life into the lifeless and removing it from the alive: a feature common in his fiction and here transposed in the genre of travel writing. Another example found in *American Notes*

is:

These stumps of trees are a curious feature in American travelling. The varying illusions they present to the unaccustomed eye as it grows dark, are quite astonishing in their number and reality. Now, there is a Grecian urn erected in the centre of a lonely field; now there is a woman weeping at a tomb;... They were often as entertaining to me as so many glasses in a magic lantern. (*Notes* 215)

As Peter Conrad says: “these vacant, haunted places, from which people have fled in fear and loathing, are repopulated with phantoms by Dickens’s teeming imagination” (51); Dickens’s skill is in describing the density of life, and when he finds no life he invents it. Fender’s three stages are also apparent in Frances Trollope’s writing. She is appalled by the hellish river, has a fantasy of the riverbanks dotted with romantic castles, and then swiftly turns her attention to meals onboard the steamer, thus turning inward away from the landscape (*Domestic Manners* 38).

### Twain’s Mississippi

Mark Twain did not turn away from the landscape of the Mississippi but instead embraced it. Twain’s *Life on the Mississippi* begins with a brief history of the river, then anecdotes and his own history on the Mississippi as a ‘cub’ (trainee) pilot, before relating a trip from St. Louis to New Orleans taken not long before the publication of the book. Twain sets the scene of his travels by describing the immensity of the river, its length, huge valley and drainage basin; even the amount of mud which it deposits into the Gulf of Mexico. In his eagerness to impress upon the reader the full extent of the Mississippi, Twain does err in proclaiming it the longest river in the world. The Mississippi is actually the fourth longest river. Yet in this bombardment of facts and figures it is not important exactly what is being said, but the rhetoric and manner in which it is said: a grandiose list of enormity which also strongly shows Twain’s awe and respect of the river, despite knowing it intimately from an early age. This list also compares the Mississippi with several European rivers such as the Rhine and Thames, showing how ‘inferior’ these rivers are compared with the American waterway. After failing at first to find employment on a steamer, the young Twain instead decided to make his way to New Orleans and get a ship to “go and complete the exploration of the Amazon” (32); this is another of Twain’s grandiose jokes and the Amazon is second choice to the Mississippi for the Twain.

I have already discussed the creation of Mark Twain as persona in the previous chapter after becoming that “new being... a traveler” (32). Twain adopts the point of view of naive traveller at first, before he has completed his training as a pilot. The narrator-character’s naivety is demonstrated here when discussing the opportunity to become a cub pilot after persistently pestering a pilot; Twain believes the river to be the slow lumbering beast it sometimes appears to be on the surface:

He agreed to teach me the Mississippi River from New Orleans to St. Louis for five hundred dollars, payable out of the first wages I should receive after graduating. I entered upon the small enterprise of 'learning' twelve or thirteen hundred miles of the great Mississippi River with the easy confidence of my time of life. If I had really known what I was about to require of my faculties, I should not have had the courage to begin. I supposed that all a pilot had to do was to keep his boat in the river, and I did not consider that that could be much of a trick, since it was so wide. (36)

The pilot represents the author constructing the narrative; however, even he is ultimately following the river with almost religious devotion. Yet another important facet of the Mississippi’s character is the difference between travel up- and downstream:

When I returned to the pilot-house St. Louis was gone and I was lost. Here was a piece of river which was all down in my book, but I could make neither head nor tail of it: you understand, it was turned around. I had seen it when coming up-stream, but I had never faced about to see how it looked when it was behind me. My heart broke again, for it was plain that I had got to learn this troublesome river *both ways*. (42)

The pilot’s power and privileged point of view comes from his elevated position on the boat in the pilot house, able to look down on the river and see its current and eddies more clearly. It also comes from knowledge; however, this is not the same as imposing European knowledge and point of view upon the river as Dickens and Trollope attempted. Rather it is by gaining local, specific knowledge and understanding the uniqueness (and malleability) of every bend in the Mississippi. This knowledge is manifest in vernacular and tall tales, and taking on the role of the narrator-author.



All of these factors combine to ensure that Huck in *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain as protagonist in *Life on the Mississippi*, and Twain as narrator-author each have a certain streak of deception, and refashioning of the truth which can sometimes place the reader in the same position as any characters who come in contact with the protagonist: confused over fact, fiction, embellishment and ellipses. This comes in part from the malleability of the river and the creation of persona.

Two characters from *Huckleberry Finn* who have spent their lives on and around the river, the King and the Duke, are particularly culpable of this imaginative existence. That Twain also includes an extract of his greatest fiction, *Huckleberry Finn* in *Life on the Mississippi* is significant and almost seems to justify the writing of what was reportedly an arduous task of creation (Ganzel 40). The two works go somewhat hand in hand as the novel required a re-acquaintance with the river to provide a stronger grounding for the fictional journey, and *Life on the Mississippi* required more than a little fictional assistance to stretch what was originally a shorter work into something of book length (ibid.). The second half of the book also includes some of his tall tales: “repeatedly, Twain blurs the line between truth and fiction in the text's autobiographical sections, redistributing value from actual to textual experience” (Howe 421). The extradiegetic experience is as important as the intradiegetic travel. Thus, the writing of a travel book is akin to travelling itself; the author must follow the route of his traveller-self, revisiting the experiences of travel from the retrospective point of view. This new travel is represented in writing and becomes to all intents and purposes the actual travel, as Howe suggests. In Twain's case the Mississippi provided the focus for the original travel and the subsequent narrative, structuring both actual and textual experience. In *Huckleberry Finn*, the narrative loses coherence when the characters abandon the river and the inevitability of a return upstream reasserts itself. A similar charge can be made against *Life on the Mississippi*. When Twain departs from the Mississippi in writing the binding narrative structure which ordered the travel collapses. I now discuss the river as an ordering point of view in greater detail.

On several occasions Twain, like Thoreau uses the river as a simile for plot: “I had often seen pilots gazing at the water and pretending to read it as if it were a book; but it was a book that told me nothing” (54). It is not until later that the narrator-author can make a book or extract a plot from the Mississippi. Another occurrence is while describing the pilot's memory, which is

About the most wonderful thing in the world. To know the Old and New Testaments by heart, and be able to recite them glibly, forward or backward, or begin at random anywhere in the book and recite both ways and never trip or make a mistake, is no extravagant mass of knowledge, and no marvellous facility compared to a pilot's massed knowledge of the Mississippi and his marvellous facility in the handling of it. (77)

The above passage might suggest that the order of these events is not important, with the pilot able to "recite them glibly, forward or backward, or begin at random anywhere in the book and recite both ways and never trip or make a mistake". However, it is this ability which is important, not the practice of it. *Life on the Mississippi* generally treats the river as an episodic linear, with the narrative flow being important, as set out by Twain's description of an encyclopaedic memory:

Such a memory as that is a great misfortune. To it, all occurrences are of the same size. Its possessor cannot distinguish an interesting circumstance from an uninteresting one. As a talker, he is bound to clog his narrative with tiresome details and make himself an insufferable bore. Moreover he cannot stick to his subject. (80)

The irony is of course that Twain's (semi-)autobiographical writings do just that; the chapter from which this is taken begins with: "but I am wandering from what I was intending to do" (76). It is as if the reader is present in the secondary diegesis of the narrator-author, listening to a story told, complete with interruptions, anecdotes and tangents, by a man with such a memory as that described by Twain.

As suggested above, the river is not only an important formative element for the characters and author of the two books, but is also essentially a narrative technique in itself as well as the plot. The tongue in cheek "Notice" beginning *Huck Finn* – another example of fiction masquerading as a very definite fact – warns that "PERSONS attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot" (48). This is at least in part because the river is a substitute for all of these novelistic staples. The motive is obsolete on the river: all there is to do is to drift down (or paddle up) the river stopping at locations which the river prescribes. Having said this, there clearly is a motive for Twain, but it is by using the river as a plot device and a narrative force, propelling the characters onwards, that Twain

can effectively let the events unfold without many other author's intrusions. There is always the river to return to. To lessen the control for Jim and Huck even more, they cannot even go upstream because they are on a raft. There are several theories as to why they could not have landed at Cairo and travelled up the river: firstly, the book would have been considerably shorter; secondly it could have been because Twain had only limited knowledge of the Ohio. However, I believe the spectre of the river hangs over this decision, which is not so much a decision for Twain but a fact: the river flows downstream and the characters will do likewise regardless of their motive. The moral is similarly prescribed by the river. The Mississippi itself is amoral and therefore both bad and good things will happen: there is no higher power or human power orchestrating events. There is a notable exception to the rule of the amoral Mississippi: Kern and Hammerstein's 'Ol' Man River' from the stage (1927) and film (1936) version of *Show Boat* has the Mississippi as omniscient, but not making his thoughts known. He is a Mother Nature figure, making masculine something usually feminine.

The Mississippi is more akin to the sublime than the picturesque, an idea explored in greater depth in chapter four. In my reading of the river Twain assumes the role of 'Ol Man River'; a role which fits him perfectly and merges well with the creation of Mark Twain as persona. Serendipity is rife in the book, but this has the effect of prolonging and maintaining the journey downstream. Finally the plot: the river once again prescribes where the characters can stop and cements the episodic nature of the book. These episodes are in the same vein as the tall tales and anecdotes present in *Life on the Mississippi*, short respite from the river but always propelling the action back to the stream. In essence, it is the inexorable nature of the Mississippi which describes Twain's plot and his, and his characters' fate. A comparison between the narratives of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Life on the Mississippi* shows Twain as knowingly guiding the narrative like a pilot from the pilot house, but it is the Mississippi River itself which provides the point of view and structure for both the travel and the narrative.

Twain's acceptance of the Mississippi as a valid ordering point of view is demonstrated by the structure of his travel and his travel narrative, use of vernacular, and interest in local knowledge. He succeeds in representing the Mississippi where Dickens and Trollope fail by using the river as his point of view rather than attempting to impose European ideas of rivers onto the American waterway. Because of its immense size and necessity to be travelled in time and space it becomes an integral part of Twain's narrative, where it is an ellipsis for Dickens and Mrs. Trollope. What Twain did so successfully was realise that the Mississippi could not be viewed from a European point of view, unlike the

rivers of the Northeast. Instead, Twain uses his knowledge of the river to focus on the specific, changing his point of view regularly to avoid the monotony which other commentators felt while on the river. This acceptance and use of the narrative flow of the river can also be seen in panoramas, which in some respects mirror the experience of travelling by boat, with some significant differences as discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter. Where Twain inserts fiction in his narrative, it fits within the diegesis he has created using his knowledge of the river to present a semi-fictional world inhabited by his fictionalised narrator-character persona, Mark Twain.

Steam technology allowed Twain to travel up and well as down the Mississippi River and revolutionised travel on rivers in general in the United States; however, steam's greatest travel revolution would not take place on the water. The next section considers the role of the railroad on travel in the United States and its effect on point of view in travel and travel writing.

## Rail

As with the improved technology on waterways, rail travel in the United States came about for commercial and infrastructural reasons. I begin with the briefest possible history of railways in the United States.

Albert Gallatin was not the only American statesman interested in internal improvements; both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were keen surveyors and took an active interest in the routes and expansion possible on both their own lands and that over which they were president. Washington was particularly interested in the commercial potential of the Potomac River (Dilts 15). Likewise in his early years – long before he sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on their expansionist river trip – Jefferson had his mind on smaller scale infrastructural improvements:

For Jefferson internal improvement, like charity, began at home. The Rivanna River, or North Branch of the James as it was sometimes called, watered his own lands. At the age of twenty he explored its obstructions by canoe, set about raising a subscription of £200 for their clearance, and got Dr. Thomas Walker (his guardian and predecessor in the House of Burgesses) to obtain statutory authority for the project. (Harrison 337)

Dilts says that “Washington had foreseen the routes that were to become New York’s Erie Canal, Pennsylvania’s Main Line of Internal Improvements, Maryland’s National Road, and Washington, D.C.’s Chesapeake and Ohio Canal”. But it was the railroad, using technology which had not yet been invented at the time of Washington’s surveys, which “proved to be the ultimate beneficiary of his mountain surveys” (16), in particular the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The Baltimore and Ohio can be seen as the most significant railroad in terms of learning the lessons which enabled the expansion of the network and therefore the nation (Dilts 4). These early presidential interests in the specifics of internal improvement – routes and means of travel specifically – paved the way for later federal and army assistance; this aid was in the form of both finance and engineering<sup>19</sup> (Meinig 1993, 325). It was called, says Meinig, “the university of railroad engineering” (324) and was essential for the education of many of the prominent figures in U.S. railroad history<sup>20</sup>. In addition, it was the site of the experimentation and improvement of building practices and techniques needed to eventually tackle the entirety of the vast country with its mountain ridges, vast valleys and wide rivers. Meinig points out that several other important railroads were completed before the B&O (325) due to greater organisational and financial prowess and power, but that railroad’s place and legacy in the United States was firmly planted.

The “steam fiend” (*Mosses from an Old Manse* 445) as Nathaniel Hawthorne once described it, made a swift and decisive impact in the United States of America in the 1830s and grew to overtake canals and rivers as the major means of transportation for goods and people. Leo Marx writes that:

The locomotive, associated with fire, smoke, speed, iron, and noise, is the leading symbol of the new industrial power. It appears in the woods, suddenly shattering the harmony of the green hollow, like a presentiment of history bearing down on the American asylum. (*Machine in the Garden* 27)

Over 30,000 miles of track had been laid by 1860 (Meinig 1993, 328) with a line extending as far west as St. Joseph on the border between Missouri and Kansas. However, the birth of the railroad in the United States was somewhat inauspicious. A group of prominent

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<sup>19</sup> Dilts’s *The Great Road* is an invaluable resource for an investigation of the B&O railroad from its inception to 1853 when it met the Ohio River in Wheeling, West Virginia (then Virginia). The exact deals made with the various state legislatures and congress can be found throughout this book.

<sup>20</sup> For some of these colourful characters, see Moody’s *The Railroad Builders: A Chronicle of the Welding of the States* (1919).

Baltimore businessmen met in 1827, worried about the orientation of Western trade with the Northeast largely as a result of the Erie Canal. New York – and more importantly Baltimore’s neighbour Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – were in danger of rendering the port of Baltimore irrelevant by becoming the Eastern hubs of trade to and from the West, as well as the more traditional trade eastwards with Europe. While Philadelphia was embarking on the Main Line of Public Works including the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad and several canal systems, Washington to the south was beginning the Chesapeake & Ohio canal system largely following the Potomac River (Dilts 14).

After much discussion and many surveys and reports, the decision between a Baltimore canal and a Baltimore railroad was finally settled in favour of the railroad, with the Potomac River ironically often providing the best route for the surveyors of the route. One of the major technical decisions made by the B&O board and engineers was that the railroad should, in order to keep costs down, follow the contours of the land as much as possible. Thus it was not until late in the original period of construction that any tunnels were built on the B&O line, and bridges were understandably kept to a minimum, though those which were built demonstrated particular technical aptitude and ingenuity for spanning some of the more challenging valleys and rivers along the route. As a result of this, the earliest American railroad was not as detached from the landscape as later endeavours. British railroad builders tended to level, tunnel and bridge where the Baltimore and Ohio’s engineers, at least at first, had to go around and over. The main reasons for this difference in approach are that the British railroads were better funded and had to contend with shorter distances. Wolfgang Schivelbusch describes the straight road “as if drawn by a ruler” which increases the railroad’s separation from nature, started by the switch from horse power to steam and mechanics and culminating in severance from the landscape (23). In the earliest days of American railroads, however, this detachment from landscape was not as pronounced.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the railroad was the most important mode of travel in the United States, so much so that James could write that “the authority of railways, in the United States, sits enthroned as none other, and has always, of course, in any vision of aspects, to be taken into account” (*American Scene* 142). However, it was not until the major railroads of the East had reached the great natural boundary of East and West – the Mississippi River – in the 1850s (Meinig 1993, 328) that the railroad was truly to come into its own. It was also around this time that the canals and interior waterways were being put out of business by the railroads (ibid. 331). A further sign of the railroad’s prominence in the 1850s was that a transcontinental railroad was high in the thoughts of the public:

By 1852 relatively few questioned either the necessity or the practicality of such a national project, a railroad to the Pacific was the main theme of commercial conventions, orations, pamphlets, newspapers, and national periodicals, and Pacific railroad bills became a staple of every session of Congress. From this time on the basic questions were not *could* and *should* we build a transcontinental band of iron but *how* and *where* to do so. (Meinig 1998, 5; emphasis given)

There was much debate over the proposed route of the railroad, which had as much to do with politics in the tumultuous period leading up to the civil war as a desire to find the most practicable and economical route. There were five routes proposed, four of which eventually had trunk-lines anyway (Meinig 1998, 9), but it was the 41st parallel through Cheyenne which was eventually chosen. The Baltimore and Ohio railroad's experiences with the grades and curves which American locomotive engines could handle informed many of the practicalities of the new railroad (ibid. 19), which would have to cross three mountain ranges (from east to west: the Sierra Nevada, Wasatch Mountains and Rocky Mountains) where the B&O had just the Appalachians. The transcontinental railroad was a misnomer in that there was not originally a single line leading from sea to sea, but rather two railroads: the Central Pacific spanned Sacramento, California (more than fifty miles from the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco) and Omaha, Nebraska (over three hundred miles from St. Louis on the Mississippi). Nevertheless, this allowed, with several transfers, travel across the vast continent and finally completed Columbus's dream, though it was over land rather than by water (though this, too, was to come to pass with the Panama Canal). The completion of the so-called transcontinental railroad effectively shrank the Union by bringing home the reality that the vast space of America was not only traversable, but it was possible to travel the breadth of the continent in relative safety and, essentially, with no physical effort. Lewis and Clark's original exploits of 1804-1806 and the rigors of terrain became mere memories, with the machinery taking the strain and propelling the passenger on a pre-determined path.

The advent of this technology meant that, for the first time, speed and motion were divested of their relation to the natural world. Terrain and obstacles ceased to affect the running of the locomotive travelling on an artificial road which went over and through the contours of the land. The relation between distance travelled and human effort almost disappeared and the impact of terrain on both speed and delay was greatly reduced – or even disregarded. Schivelbusch points out that “road and vehicle became technically conjoined on

the railroad” (16), though curiously not in name. This combination creates two opposing attitudes to nature: on the one hand machine and road are working in harmony towards the common end; on the other, neither road nor machine is responding to the landscape or terrain and the road is particularly detached from the contours and terrain of the earth. The effort of crossing these natural boundaries and difficult terrains was immense in the first place, and created extreme stresses on man. However, these memories are overwritten – just as is the land – by the functioning railroad itself. The railroad, then, is in some respects working against nature and is, as was said earlier, a sign of man’s mastery over nature; diminishing her effect. Henry James laments the railroads superimposition on the natural streams:

The great vista of the stream alone speaks of it – save in so far at least as the voice is shared, and to so different, to so dreadful a tune, by the grossly-defacing railway that clings to the bank. (*American Scene* 142)

The American railroads, more akin to the ‘old roads’ of which Schivelbusch talks, were nevertheless something of a menace to nature and the landscape. They not only placed great networks of iron over the countryside but also brought large populations to hitherto uninhabited areas of seclusion. Henry James was negative about the travel technology of the railroad:

We may have been great fools to develop the post office, to invent the newspaper and the railway; but the harm is done – it will be our children who will see it; we have created a Frankenstein monster at whom our simplicity can only gape. (*‘American Letters’* 664)

There was also the feeling that nature’s most impressive and awesome sights such as valleys, gorges, rivers and mountain-tops, were being not only written on with iron, but being surpassed or subdued by man’s artistry:

I recognized as disconcerting, toward the close of the autumn day, to have to owe this perception, in part, to the great straddling, bellowing railway, the high, heavy, dominant American train that so reverses the relation of the parties concerned, suggesting somehow that the country exists for the “cars,” which overhang it like a conquering army, and not the cars for the country. This presence had learned to



penetrate the high valleys and had altered, unmistakably, the old felicity of proportion. (*American Scene* 27)

In this passage (in which he again uses the twilight point of view) James suggests that the country exists for the cars and that nature is being made subordinate to technology, just as with the Titanic and the Atlantic Ocean. As he bemoans the loss of “felicity of proportion” brought about by the railroad he links this technological advancement to the pictorial quality of the landscape and perception. I also argue that not only does the railroad affect the landscape but it affects how it is being seen; point of view. *Across the Continent: Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1868) [Figure I] by Fanny Palmer from the Currier and Ives printing company is another example of seeing the landscape from the point of view of the train. The picture has the train in the foreground with industrious workers around a small settlement which seems to be remote in the wilderness. The train track dissects the picture heading to the horizon while Native Americans are engulfed in the smoke of the train in the bottom-right. The railway is here the feature of the picture, providing the point of view for the landscape. Aside from implications for point of view, the lithograph takes its subtitle from Bishop Berkeley’s famous poem and expresses the mood of manifest destiny (discussed in next chapter of this work).



Figure I. *Across the Continent: Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1868), Fanny Palmer.



Figure II. *Westward the Course of Empire* (1861), Emanuel Leutze.

Indeed, *Westward the Course of Empire* [Figure II] is also the title for an 1861 mural in the United States Capitol by Emanuel Leutze in which again ‘civilization’ and the settlers of the Far West are in the foreground with the American landscape extending to the horizon with what appears to be train smoke in the distance. This again implies the railroad is the vanguard of civilization. Seeing the landscape from the point of view of the railroad is therefore seeing the landscape as inevitably to be civilized in part by that very mode of transport.

In *The American Scene* James confesses to the double role of the railway in a passage where he ironically is travelling by train following the path of the “perpetually interesting river” Hudson:

As I recall the impression, I repent a little of having just now reflected with acrimony, on the cost of the obtrusion of track and stations to the Riverside view. One must of course choose between dispensing with the ugly presence and enjoying the scenery by the aid of the same – which but means, really, that to use the train at all had been to put one's self, for any proper justice to the scenery, in a false position. That, however, takes us too far back, and one can only save one's dignity by laying all such blames on our detestable age. A decent respect for the Hudson would confine us to the use of the boat – all the more that American river-steamers have had, from the earliest time, for the true *raffine*, their peculiar note of romance. (148)

The “false position” again refers to point of view as James shares Twain’s preference for boats over trains. In England, James looks over North Devon “impatiently from the carriage window for the veritable landscape in water colours” (*English Hours* 57). Another example of James seeing the train journey as suiting the English countryside and allowing a pictorial point of view is when he writes “you wait in your corner of the compartment for the starting of the train, the window makes a frame for the glowing picture” (25). James finds that the train window makes a picture of the landscape – framing the landscape as I argue – but also making it less natural and more composed as if by presented by an artist.

James shares his mixed opinion on the railroad with many writers in the United States, including Twain, Hawthorne and Henry David Thoreau. Although, interestingly, Thoreau’s transcendentalist mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson had mixed views. Emerson travelled his own country more extensively than Thoreau, whose thoughts and actions were

generally rooted in New England. Emerson made use of the railroad to facilitate his lecture tours and provide him with a greater view of the country:

Beginning about 1850, coincident with the development of railroad travel in the West, he made almost yearly lecture tours which, in the course of the next twenty-one years, took him to every one of the states-then twelve in number-west of the Alleghanies, north of the Ohio, and east of the Rockies, and to most of them many times. Nor did our philosopher shrink from the discomforts and dangers of travel. (Marchand 149)

Emerson visited Yosemite in 1871 (Sears 149). He was rather more open to the possibilities which railroad travel afforded than Thoreau. For Emerson, technology opened up the possibility of him exploiting and exporting his New England fame further afield. Emerson's views on the railroad are summarised thus:

The central focus of most of Emerson's remarks about the railroad shifted, after 1836, from an explanation or description of the railroad itself (principally in images of smoke and speed) to an appraisal of its effects on the country. During the boom years of the 1840's, his attention was preponderantly on the economic development and unification of the nation. Then, late in the 1840's and through the years of the New England railroad slump and the panic of 1857, he paid relatively more attention to the shortcomings of the railroad (especially as an investment) and to the dangers of materialism. Finally, his later observations settled into an approving, long-range view of the railroad's rôle. (Cronkhite 307-8)

Although he eventually lost money on the railroad, Emerson seemed compensated by the thought that the railroad was inevitably good for the nation (ibid. 310). Thoreau, whilst he admired his fellow-man's ingenuity, could not accept the railroad as Emerson had, finding it more often than not to be for the national good but to the detriment of nature. The railroad threatened the seclusion to be enjoyed by those supposedly in tune with nature, and those wishing to be inspired by it. The mixed views of Thoreau are expressed in the following passage, where the railroad can be heard "arousing a country". The train awakens America to its potential, yet overwhelms nature which is ceasing to be heard, and cannot blow away the industrial smoke:

But [the river's] real vessels are railroad cars, and its true and main stream, flowing by an iron channel farther south, may be traced by a long line of vapor amid the hills, which no morning wind ever disperses, to where it empties into the sea at Boston. This side is the louder murmur now. Instead of the scream of a fish-hawk scaring the fishes, is heard the whistle of the steam-engine, arousing a country to its progress. (*A Week* 71)

Thoreau notes that the railroad follows the course of the river, just as with James travelling *next to* the Hudson River by train. Thoreau, the earlier writer, still adopts the point of view from the river, while James is gazing on the river from an aerial, ordering point of view provided by the technology which Thoreau distrusts. A final point of contrast between Emerson and Thoreau is that Thoreau can grudgingly accept the canal being embraced by nature, as it is the same water from nature's stream: "all works pass directly out of the hands of the architect into the hands of Nature, to be perfected" (*ibid.* 51), where Emerson says that Railroads and factory towns "fall within the great Order not less than the beehive or the spider's geometrical web. Nature adopts them very fast into her vital circles, and the gliding train of cars she loves like her own" (*Essays* 24).

Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) finds him in less derisory – if not exactly – positive mood:

'Is not this railroad which we have built a good thing?' Yes, I answer, comparatively good, that is, you might have done worse; but I wish, as you are brothers of mine, that you could have spent your time better than digging in this dirt. (49-50)

Later in *Walden* he seems to pre-empt James's assertion that the country exists for the cars. In this passage the citizens represent the country and are being overridden in a similar way to the landscape:

We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a

new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. (85)

The railroad is here represented as being undemocratic (Thoreau picks the Irishman as the Irish represented the labouring class in the United States at the time) and a negative aspect of the drive for expansion. However, the specific railroad in *Walden* fares more positively, providing a link to society and suggesting Thoreau adopts a privileged point of view between nature and society: “the Fitchburg Railroad touches the pond about a hundred rods south of where I dwell. I usually go to the village along its causeway, and am, as it were, related to society by this link” (105). This link with society is an important one for Thoreau; after all, he shares a more European point of view on New England scenery which is often described in European terms using European ideals of beauty. In the next chapter I examine Frances Trollope’s descriptions of the Northeast which support this claim. Thoreau needs society to order his point of view of nature:

Those American writers we associate with the New England Renaissance (and many subsequently) most typically felt themselves to be swimming in space; not, certainly, tied fast into any society, nor really attached very firmly to the vast natural environment...

The emergent strategy, variously developed by different writers, was to spin out a web which could hold them in place, which would occupy the space around them, and from which they could look out into the world. But even when they scrutinized their environment with extreme care, and took over many of its details to weave into their webs of art, they were seldom in genuine communion with nature. (T. Tanner, *Scenes of Nature* 31)

This “web” of art represents learning and the philosophy used to order nature: the point of view. The Fitchburg Railroad is described as something almost natural; it is the dual comfort of having the regular reminders of the representatives of both nature and society in sight (though not too close):

I watch the passage of the morning cars with the same feeling that I do the rising of the sun, which is hardly more regular. Their train of clouds stretching far behind and rising higher and higher, going to heaven while the cars are going to

Boston, conceals the sun for a minute and casts my distant field into the shade, a celestial train beside which the petty train of cars which hugs the earth is but the barb of the spear. (*Walden* 183)

Thoreau has found his preferred point of view, and it is one which works in the New England of which James was so dismissive; whether it would work on the Mississippi River is questionable. Thoreau's "celestial train" was hinted at in Nathaniel Hawthorne's earlier 'Celestial Railroad'.

Nathaniel Hawthorne has already been discussed in this work in relation to Henry James and his criticism. James considers Hawthorne to be one of the few great American writers despite – rather than because of – having America as his subject. Hawthorne and Thoreau were both primarily based in the Northeast of the United States and seldom strayed too far. Hawthorne's travels discussed in this work only go as far afield as Niagara Falls in upstate New York. Hawthorne's 'The Celestial Railroad' (1854) is an update and reinterpretation of John Bunyan's allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come* (1678) extolling the virtues of taking Bunyan's Pilgrim's long route to heaven (the Celestial City):

Instead of a lonely and ragged man, with a huge burthen on his back, plodding along sorrowfully on foot, while the whole city hooted after him, here were parties of the first gentry and most respectable people in the neighborhood, setting forth towards the Celestial City, as cheerfully as if the pilgrimage were merely a summer tour. (*Mosses of an Old Manse* 188)

The railroad provides the swift route to heaven from "this populous and flourishing town" (186), the city of Destruction, this route turns out to be a deal with the Devil, Mr Smooth-it-away, who consistently sweetens the appeal of the railroad over the long route. The railroad – whilst obviously used for dramatic and artistic effect – is portrayed as Satan's vehicle to hell, with the steam, smoke and fire references to the hell to come for those who shrink away from the true pilgrim's path.

Hawthorne uses the 'unnatural' speed of the railroad to show the dangers of machinery not only to nature, but also to man. Likewise the vast hills and valleys of the route which would normally be overcome with deference to nature and human effort by the pilgrim, are now tunnelled and filled in:

Through the very heart of this rocky mountain a tunnel has been constructed, of most admirable architecture, with a lofty arch and a spacious double-track; so that, unless the earth and rocks should chance to crumble down, it will remain an eternal monument of the builder's skill and enterprise. It is a great though incidental advantage, that the materials from the heart of the Hill Difficulty have been employed in filling up the Valley of Humiliation; thus obviating the necessity of descending into that disagreeable and unwholesome hollow. (192)

The stockholding and land prospecting so woven into the fabric of the railroad is also commented on, with Vanity now a thriving market town where riches are made by bartering with land from the Celestial City, yet to be reached. At the end of the journey, Smooth-it-away is revealed as the devil when “a smoke-wreath issued from his mouth and nostrils, while a twinkle of lurid flame darted out of either eye, proving indubitably that his heart was all of red blaze” (206); the marrying of the imagery of the railroad and steam power and that of hell is unmistakable. Hawthorne avoids the consequences of the story by making it a dream tale at the last minute.

The critical debate surrounding the tale discusses it as an allegory and warning against the new technology as well as the new religious approach of transcendentalism. American composer Charles Ives wrote an unpublished musical interpretation of the tale also entitled *The Celestial Railroad*. The tale has seen attention as a dream tale concerned with complex ambiguities about sin (Pattison, “‘The Celestial Railroad’ as Dream-Tale’) and symptomatic of transcendentalism’s conflicting views of technology (Fairbanks, ‘Hawthorne and the Machine Age’ and Cronkhite ‘The Transcendental Railroad’); in this study, however, it is briefly examined in terms of the disconnection between effort and distance travelled engendered by the railroad. Hawthorne makes an allegory of this breakdown and finds that the traveller is not only disconnected from landscape but from the virtuous path to heaven.

The short story is saying much about sloth in the machine age in general: if there is no effort in the difficult journey there is no reward. Hawthorne seems to be concerned that by losing touch with the trials and tribulations of the road in favour of the railroad Americans will also lose touch with nature and any appreciation of effort and hard work. Steam technology on rivers is not exempt from criticism:



A steam ferry boat, the last improvement on this important route, lay at the river side, puffing, snorting, and emitting all those other disagreeable utterances which betoken the departure to be immediate (205).

In *Fragments from the Journal of a Solitary Man*, Hawthorne has his narrator find a “ferry-house, a rude structure of boards ... devoid of poetry” and “lost some of [his] own poetry by contact with them” (*Travel Sketches* 62); the new river technology is against the landscape and against poetry in Hawthorne’s view.

However, I believe it is specifically the railroad which worried Hawthorne, being as it is an industrial force which strikes out from the city in an aim to conquer the landscape. The frontier spirit is also undermined by the railroad. Significantly, because trains required rails the frontiering aspect is reduced – at least a little – because the road must already have been laid out by the frontiering worker. Remember Thoreau’s: “some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon”. This leads Hawthorne’s character to the natural terminus of the apocalypse, when there is no further landscape to conquer. Ideas of frontier and the apocalypse occur again the next chapter of this thesis.

The railroad was occasionally a valuable source of material for Hawthorne, who used it as a device to mark a transition in the life of Clifford in *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) where the train is a microcosm of society. The train in the novel is an exciting melting pot of cultures in direct contrast to the constrictive, gothic house. Jonathan Arac compares Dickens’s *Dombey and Son* (1846-8) with Hawthorne’s work and has both as portraying the railroad in one sense as allied with death, but also with renewal and progress, though in Dickens’s case, perhaps progress which could “be terribly and dangerously inhumane” (18).

I have spoken at some length about the history of rail travel in the United States and some general impressions of travel writers on railroads. I turn now to think about the influence of travelling by rail on point of view and narrative.

Railroads created disparity between distance travelled and time taken: “as the space between the points – the traditional travelling space – was destroyed, those points moved into each other’s immediate vicinity: one might say that they collided” (Schivelbusch 38). Gone are the long and arduous (in the view of such authors as Dickens in *American Notes* and Frances Trollope in *Domestic Manners of the Americans*) journeys along rivers with homogeneous landscapes which were unchanging, the rivers which have “to be seen in time as well as in space” (Mulvey, ‘Ecriture and Landscape’ 108). Rail travel – and therefore

travel narratives by train – are generally structured around stations and stops; everything in between becomes ellipsis.

Robert Louis Stevenson travelled westwards across the United States in 1879 by train and talks of the railroad in an ‘empty’ landscape when he says that

To one hurrying through by steam there was a certain exhilaration in this spacious vacancy, this greatness of the air, this discovery of the whole arch of heaven, this straight, unbroken prison-line of the horizon. Yet one could not but reflect upon the weariness of those who passed by there in the old days, at the foot’s pace of oxen... and with no landmark but that unattainable evening sun for which they steered.  
(*Amateur Emigrant* 208)

However, the train journey yet again divests the narrator-character – and therefore the narrative – from the landscape, with Stevenson awaking having lost time and space on the railroad: “when I awoke, it was already day; the train was standing idle ... We were near no station, nor even, as far as I could see, within reach of any signal” (191). Later the train once again robs Stevenson, and the narrative of time and space in further ellipsis with four states passing by without having made significant impact intradiegetically, or with the narrative: “All through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, or for as much as I saw of them from the train and in my waking moments” (194). Stevenson finds poetry in the language of the towns and states, but they pass by in a blur (192-3), just as Frances Trollope does while travelling by canal with no pleasurable view (*Domestic Manners* 293); even the weather changes from extremes on the emigrant train (*Amateur Emigrant* 207). Schivelbusch likens the experience to a filmic *montage* (42) with disparate images succeeding one another in a series of panoramic views. Because of the speed, the train passenger, he asserts, does not see detail but watercolouresque swathes of landscape: “unlike the driver, the travellers had a very limited chance to look ahead: thus all they saw was an evanescent landscape. All early descriptions of railroad travel testify to the difficulty of recognizing any but the broadest outlines of the traversed landscape” (ibid. 55). The traveller and the reader are presented not with a continuous journey but with fleeting pictures of the landscape framed by the train window, from that point of view. Stevenson is alienated from America through this point of view. Further alienation comes from differences in language, and by his being an immigrant:

I asked a conductor one day at what time the train would stop for dinner; as he made no answer I repeated the question, with a like result; a third time I returned to the charge, and then Jack-in-office looked me cooling in the face for several seconds and turned ostentatiously away. (*Amateur Emigrant* 205)

Compare the following once more with Twain's description of a journey across the plains given previously in this chapter:

To one hurrying through by steam there was a certain exhilaration in this spacious vacancy, this greatness of the air, this discovery of the whole arch of heaven, this straight, unbroken prison-line of the horizon. Yet one could not but reflect upon the weariness of those who passed by there in old days. (208)

“Spacious vacancy” is an interesting term which suggests again a disparity between time and space. The plains take up a vast amount of the distance travelled but do not impact upon the traveller as much as “in old days”, while they barely impact upon the narrative time at all. Stevenson is pleased to fly through what he perceives as homogenous landscape, but would feel every bump if travelling by another means, which he accedes to:

But the eye, as I have been told, found differences even here; and at the worst the emigrant came, by perseverance, to the end of his toil ... he is cut off from books, from news, from company, from all that can relieve existence but the prosecution of his affairs. A sky full of stars is the most varied spectacle he can hope. He may walk five miles and see nothing; ten, and it is as though he had not moved; twenty, and still he is in the midst of the same great level” (ibid.).

Stevenson's historical emigrant cannot use knowledge or learning to describe the plains which, like the Mississippi River and Niagara Falls, defy description. He is cut off from “books” which might at least provide a point of view, albeit an inadequate one. The historical emigrant is in (painful) commune with nature but not moving; the modern emigrant has no relationship with the landscape and skips it entirely, seeming to move directly from one stop to the next with “spacious vacancy” in between.

Later Stevenson talks of the railway as

The one typical achievement of the age in which we live, as if it brought together into one plot all the ends of the world and all the degrees of social rank, and offered to some great writer the busiest, the most extended, and the most varied subject for an enduring literary work. If it be romance, if it be contrast, if it be heroism that we require, what was Troy town to this? (212-3)

Stevenson seems to be saying that despite his concerns with the railway, and indeed the fact that because, intradiegetically, he was turned more often inward than looking upon the landscape which made little impression, a great narrative could be made of it. However, as if sensing the impossibility, he ends with “but alas! It is not these things that are necessary – it is only Homer” (213). The death of such writings has been brought by the advent of rail. Again, the railroad is linked to not only the end of the world but the end of plot.

The railway holds an important part in the second half of Stevenson’s travelogue and becomes the main subject for the narrator-author, precisely because it was the railway, rather than the landscape and America itself, which preoccupied the narrator-character. There are some descriptions of the landscape, but they are invariably given when not onboard the train. While the progression to the Pacific coast continues and maintains the direction of the narrative, it is offset by ellipses and missed experiences caused by the relentless progress of the train and the consumption of time and space, leaving the narrator-character with gaps in his experience, and the narrator-author with gaps in the narrative. Journey-time continues, but narrative-time stops, or becomes disjointed from the journey-time by looking inward, typified by the “storytelling in some quarters” (217) and entertainments such as “books (such books!), papers, fruit, lollipops, and cigars” (203). This suggests that culture and art are also being brought from the city to the ‘wilderness’, allowing that cultural point of view of the landscape. If this is so then the opportunity to gain knowledge of the landscape and the vernacular – as Twain does on the Mississippi – is not there.

The train is “the one piece of life in all the deadly land, it was the one actor, the one spectacle fit to be observed in this paralysis of man and nature” (212). Landscape is subordinate to the society of the carriage; point of view turns inward. Stevenson talks of an American train carriage as “long, narrow wooden box, like a flat-roofed Noah’s ark” (206) with the image suggesting another example of the melting pot and the moving culture discussed in reference to the Titanic. James also notes that Americans treat

The crowded contemplative cars, quite as familiar, domestic, intimate ground, set apart, it might be, for the discussion and regulation of their little interests and affairs, and for that so oddly, so innocently immodest ventilation of their puerile privacies at which the moralizing visitor so frequently gasps. (*American Scene* 429)

The carriages are “set apart” from the landscape around them and provide the continuation of American culture and society between cities and over the plains. Technology has provided for an enclosed carriage separated from the landscape through which they travel. The similarity between travel by train and the situation on the Titanic is clear: in both cases nature and the landscape are to be overwritten and ignored, engendering an inward-looking, “contemplative” point of view. In fact, Stevenson, just as with the transatlantic crossing, was generally more interested in the society in which he travelled than the landscape outside. *The Amateur Emigrant* has only a few paragraphs devoted to the landscape, and they are predominantly discussing the absence of life in the plains, as described earlier in this chapter. With rail travel the view does not impose itself on the passenger; he could spend the entire journey looking inwards and observing society, or even reading (Stevenson’s “books (such books!)”) or writing:

The emergence of the habit of reading while travelling was not only a result of the dissolution and panoramization of the landscape due to velocity, but also a result of the situation inside the train compartment. The railroad disrupted the traveller’s relationships to each other as it disrupted their relationship to the traversed landscape” (Schivelbusch 67).

Not only does the train journey provide opportunity for looking inward at carriage society and continuing interaction with art and culture from books and papers, thereby creating an ideological barrier for the local point of view, but there is a physical barrier between the traveller and the landscape. Train windows were glazed and therefore provided a framed lens for viewing landscape (when one was not distracted by activities within the carriage). Therefore the traveller is slightly anchored to nature by light, but even this and time can change drastically when travelling at such speeds (this is in effect a much less severe case which is experienced in the twentieth century with flying across time zones). These time shifts are exasperated “as there was no cooperation whatsoever between the private railroad

companies. Each company had its own time, in most cases the local time of the company's headquarters" (ibid. 44). It wasn't until "1883 that the major railroad companies imposed on North America new, "standard" times to replace the hundreds of "local" times" (Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis* 79). Although "by 1848 a number of the lines banded together to form the New England Association of Railway Superintendents" who adopted a single time which was predominant for New England railroads (C. Stevens 7), so there was a precedent in the United States. Before "standard" time, the traditional method of time-keeping had been "astronomy: noon was the moment when the sun stood highest in the midday sky", which meant that

Every locale had a different noon, depending on the line of longitude it occupied. When clocks read noon in Chicago, it was 11:50A.M. in St. Louis, 11:38 am in St. Paul, 11:27am in Omaha and 12:18pm in Detroit, with every possible variation in between.... Railroads around the country set their clocks by no fewer than fifty-three different standards. (Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis* 79)

While Britain had adopted standard time in 1847 (Landes 285), it was the "first American regional time standard, adopted in 1849" which "anticipated the establishment of Greenwich as prime meridian" (C. Stevens 11) worldwide (except for France) in 1884 (Landes 286). The invention of railway standard time was enabled by the telegraph, in use by 1848 in the United States which was symbiotic with the development on the railroad: "railroad and telegraph systems would expand in tandem, often following the same routes, and together they shrank the whole perceptual universe of North America" (Cronon *Nature's Metropolis* 76). The traveller thus was able to travel great distances *without* changing time zones, or short distances gaining or losing an hour. Just as with train journeys making travel into a series of jumps of distance, so the railway inspires jumps of time; the traveller is once again removed from the action of travel.

While standard time was not to be acknowledged by the government until 1918 (ibid. 79), it was quickly adopted by communities, as the railroad increasingly became part of a town's daily and weekly life:

Once a week, for decades at noon on Thursday, the Western Union time signal flashed across telegraph wires everywhere... In many towns gradually evolved the

weekly custom of businessmen and boys drifting over to the depot around noon on Thursday to assess the accuracy of their watches. (Stilgoe 203-5)

Henry James, however, notes a darker aspect of the railroad becoming a fixture of American urban life:

The level railway-crossing, gaining expression from its localization of possible death and destruction, where the great stilted, strident, yet so almost comically impersonal train, which, with its so often undesignated and so always unservanted stations, and its general air of "bossing" the neighbourhoods it warns, for climax of its characteristic curtness, to "look out" for its rush, is everywhere a large contribution to one's impression of a kind of monotony of acquiescence. (*American Scene* 43)

He talks of the natural scene by train being "the sense of landscape in mere quantity [becoming], once more, the vehicle of effect" (*American Scene* 397), with nature there to be seen from the window and nothing else. Later he expresses dissatisfaction at the ease of the railroad's dominion over nature:

Where was the charm of boundless immensity as overlooked from a car-window? – with the general pretension to charm, the general conquest of nature and space, affirmed, immediately round about you, by the general pretension of the Pullman, the great monotonous rumble of which seems forever to say to you: "See what I'm making of all this – see what I'm making, what I'm making!" I was to become later on still more intimately aware of the spirit of one's possible reply to that, but even then my consciousness served, and the eloquence of my exasperation seems, in its rude accents, to come back to me. (463)

James, like Hawthorne, sees the railroad as a negative influence not only on city and landscape. The technological advancement has forever changed the relationship of people to their environment, altering their point of view in the process. In the above two quotations the railroad is demanding point of view, calling "look out" and "see what I'm making"; in both cases the railroad and the means of viewing the environment becomes the focus just as when on the train the focus becomes internalised. The railroad reminds James, as well as the everytown he is describing, of the rush of life, leading eventually to death; the new railroad time

and the speed of the service hurries and bosses the populace, stealing time. Thus time had been forever changed, and the railroads had brought this about, enacting not only the annihilation of space, but also time (C. Stevens 21). As suggested earlier, travel point of view is dependent on time and space. When the relationship of the traveller to these is severed so the narrative loses its continuity, as we see in particular with Stevenson's *Amateur Emigrant*. Rail travel thus encourages us to view landscape as a series of linear pictures, but they rush past so fast that ellipses are created. James speaks of the "eloquence of [his] exasperation" – a fascinating turn of phrase which suggests ellipsis as James does not write about his exasperation any further in *The American Scene*; instead, he recalls the eloquence but merely states that it had "rude accents". This also draws attention to the initial exasperation felt by the intradiegetic traveller being rediscovered by the extradiegetic narrator-author, calling up again the feelings and experience of travel.

Despite the differences between travel by river and rail which I have noted, and the suggestion that rail travel – as the later technological advancement – has a greater effect on later narratives like Stevenson's and James's, there are some similarities. River and rail travel share some traits in the narratives they create; in both cases technology has helped travellers to make continuous journeys in both directions with less subjugation to nature. This is manifest in the narratives which come from these travels; they have less relation to the natural world, just as the travel has less relation to the natural world. Not only do these technologies relegate the role of nature in travel, they also relegate the role of the traveller to mere observer. There is the feeling of being carried by forces out of the traveller's control which is even greater in the case of rail travel: "the fear of derailment was in fact a feeling of impotence due to one's being confined in a fast-moving piece of machinery without being able to influence it in the least" (Schivelbusch 78). Ruskin even described rail passengers as parcels delivered to their destination (qtd. in Schivelbusch 38-9). Because of the prescribed stops, the train also lacks some of the opportunity for serendipity that the river can offer (as seen in *Huckleberry Finn*) and there is finality about the destination. In terms of narrative, then, the railroad potentially offers less scope for randomness and the will of Nature; delays do not provide the same narrative tension as a storm or a foggy night upon the river. There are also problems of internal and external time if a narrative is progressing both in a carriage and outside it. An example of this time differential is exemplified in Alfred Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* (1951), which sees Guy Haines accused of the murder of his wife<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Largely because the witness was drunk.



despite being on the train at the time the murder was committed. Hitchcock creates the impression that society within and without the train are separated, as are the respective timelines.

Technology's relegation of traveller to observer – and the links between rail and river – is also revealed by another nineteenth century phenomenon, the panorama. In the next section I discuss panoramas and how they make landscape and travel into narrative in similar ways to travel using the new travel technologies; engendering a specific visual and narrative point of view.

### **Panorama**

Panoramas are a phenomenon which is usefully examined as yet another attempt at ordering the landscape; this time by imposing strict narrative structure and uniform speed. Panoramas – invented in the late eighteenth century – went through cycles of popularity in the nineteenth century and allowed for the Mississippi River and railroad points of view to come together later in that century.

A panorama consists of rolls of giant painted canvases turned on cylinders which give the viewer an appreciation of a scene which cannot be presented in a single picture; Panorama as a term “was intended for giant, stationary 360° paintings” but “was almost immediately applied to virtually any large picture displaying a broad scene” (Hyde 131). Panoramas allowed the point of view of travel much like looking through a framed window. It was literally making art from landscape and art from travel and provided the observer with a view of that travel and landscape which they could not get without the use of technology. When I discussed rail travel I noted that the traveller – because of technology – has become just an observer of the scene, not in interaction with it. Panoramas mirror this experience and can proffer the same point of view for river travel:

Moving panoramas, which in Britain and America became even more ubiquitous and popular than the 360° variety, [which] consisted of canvases of often enormous length wound round a concealed spool... Moving panoramas lent themselves perfectly to river trips. (ibid.)

River travel and panoramas first came together when Robert Fulton, famous for his steamboat, first introduced them to France (Wilcox 25). Fulton was not, as Henry Tuckerman has him, the “mechanician who first successfully applied steam to navigation” (121), that

honour goes to Monsieur J. C. P erier, who steamed in France (Halacy 41), yet it was Fulton who made the greatest success of steamboats. After failing to convince the French government of the merits of his submarine Nautilus (ibid. 46), Fulton turned to steamships. The River Seine saw Fulton’s first steamboat in 1803 (ibid. 48). Exactly four years later Fulton’s famous North River Steamboat of Clermont – or Clermont as it became known after Fulton’s death – steamed up the Hudson River: “in thirty-two hours of steaming the Clermont covered 150 miles against the wind and current, a speed of nearly five knots instead of the required four” (51). The Clermont travelled between New York City (where Fulton Street is named after the inventor) and Albany in upstate New York. Robert Fulton began his working life as a painter (Tuckerman 122) before turning inventor. Panorama technology did to painting in the nineteenth century what in many ways steam power did to river travel by making vast landscapes observable from a different, somewhat detached point of view. Where panoramas and steamers come together most interestingly is on the Mississippi River.

The first panorama opened in London in March 1789 entitled ‘Mr Barker’s Interesting and Novel View of the City and Castle of Edinburgh, and the whole adjacent and surrounding country’ (Wilcox 13) after premiering in Edinburgh, and was an instant success. Robert Barker, the artist, later coined the term ‘panorama’ (ibid.). Panoramas went in and out of fashion over the next century, with specific panorama houses and new innovations helping to maintain or revive interest. After the popularity of moving panoramas had declined in the 1840s the interest of the public was piqued by two Mississippi panoramas arriving in London (Hyde 132). As Jonathan Raban says in his account of a journey down the Mississippi, *Old Glory* (1981), almost exactly a century after Twain’s:

It was like enjoying an accelerated steamboat ride all the way from New Orleans up to St. Paul... For the American artist, the Mississippi was his inevitable subject... The panorama which came nearest to being a serious painting was Henry Lewis’s “Mammoth Panorama of the Mississippi River” (130)

This was twelve feet high and 1325 yards long; and even then it only covered the upper reaches (130-1). Raban points out that there was also a “three-mile-long picture which showed the Mississippi from St Louis to the Gulf of Mexico” (131) by John Banvard which was presented to Queen Victoria in 1848 (Hyde 132). But, as Hyde again points out, it was not just the painting itself which stands out, but

The lecture he gave... too. Though descriptive and statistical it was laced with jokes and poetry, all delivered with an attractive Yankee twang. From Banvard onwards no panorama show was complete without a lecturer – later called the Cicerone – and a painting's success or failure would depend at least as much on this man's wit and luxurious vocabulary as on the panorama's qualities as a work of art. (133)

The Cicerone was styled as a skilful narrator of the journey, an orator and guide. In this respect, the Cicerone becomes the narrator-author outside the diegesis of the original travel. The link between visual point of view and narrative point of view surfaces again here. The artist is representing his perception of the river both visually and textually, doubly asserting its legitimacy as a viewpoint and prescribing the same viewpoint for the audience/viewer. Banvard's panorama was succeeded by that of

‘Professor’ Risley and John R. Smith. Banvard promptly denounced it as a spurious copy. Risley and Smith responded by publishing the opinion of the photographer of Red Indians, George Catkin, that Banvard's panorama was ‘The work of some one's imagination’. In any case their panorama was *four miles long* (ibid).

The similarities between panoramists and Twain are clear to see: one can imagine Twain, himself a prolific and prodigious lecturer on tour in the United States, describing the river. In fact, *Life on the Mississippi* fits almost exactly the description of the Cicerone's mandate: history, description, statistics, jokes and poetry. Raban also points out that Banvard's Mississippi, which, was estimated to have been viewed by an over a million visitors (Hyde 133) would have taken more than eleven hours at twenty miles an hour (Raban 131). Even a miniature image of the Mississippi has, as Christopher Mulvey points out, “to be seen in time as well as in space” (‘Ecriture and Landscape’ 108). *Huckleberry Finn* and to a lesser extent *Life on the Mississippi* can be seen as panoramas, drawing the reader ever onward down the river, a metaphor for the plot with Twain the narrator-author interpreting and overwriting the original travel (or panorama) with subsequent, extradiegetic commentary.

Despite the interest in making the Mississippi into panorama, panoramas actually represented the point of view of rail travel more closely: the ‘voyage’ was continuous and

presented like a fast-moving landscape painting; there was no physical effect from the landscape (obviously) and course changes were impossible. Instead the observer, like the traveller, sits back and watches from predestined start to finish. One example of pleorama (where the viewer sat in a replica vehicle whilst watching the panorama) suggests a link between rail travel and panorama: it was “shown at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900. [It was] a trip from Moscow to Peking on the Trans-Siberian Railway, in which spectators sat in railway carriages whilst painted canvas sped past their windows” (Hyde 135). In this case not only is the point of view of a continuous journey looking at a landscape presented, but the carriage itself is replicated.

The travelogues discussed here were written in the cultural context of panoramas, particularly considering rivers and even more specifically the Mississippi River. The authors are writing from the point of view of presenting a panorama for the reader; however, the Mississippi resists such treatment. It is not surprising that the Mississippi was such a popular subject with American panoramists, nor perhaps that most of these perished in fires: as Raban says, “the Mississippi would not be cut down to size” (*Old Glory* 131).

### Conclusion

The mode of travel can be described as a ‘between’ place in travel writing, certainly with the advent of the steamboat and railroad; technology has separated the traveller from the landscape in which he travels. Travel technology through the nineteenth century increased the separation of the traveller from the landscape and allowed culture to take a more dominant role in travel; the ‘between’ place became more like ‘home’ (complete with curtains in railway carriages). Leo Marx, in *The Machine in the Garden*, suggests that there is a middle state between primitive nature and oppressive culture; this is perhaps the role that the machine of travel takes on. However, with improvements in technology the traveller moved closer to the culture from (or between) which he was travelling. In some cases he saw landscape from the point of view of this culture, in more extreme cases point of view was turned inwards, either to the vessel or to the self. Where Dickens was traumatised by his transatlantic voyage, truly in a frontier and feeling every wave, on the technologically more advanced Titanic there was barely a discernible difference between being on land and on the Atlantic (until that technology failed).

It cannot be ignored that in most of the long journeys in nineteenth century travel writing taken by river or rail, society and culture is necessarily taken onboard to some extent. The finality of the transcontinental railroad could spell death for history and the space

between cultures, with the overriding Eurocentric culture encroaching ever further on the territory which did not belong to it and creating the uncertainty implicit in idea of the ‘end of the road’. Would it lead to a new appreciation of what was left, or would it, as Hawthorne tentatively suggests, lead to a world of fire and the apocalypse? Hawthorne’s views on technology are exaggerated for his fiction and are satirical rather than literal. Of course, the United States was still travelled and still provided travellers with tales, with the road narrative a natural successor to rail travel, albeit with the greater freedom inherent in a personal vehicle. In fact, it could be argued that automobiles provided the traveller with an experience somewhat closer to that of the carriage and stagecoach (though not as close as that of the motorcycle); albeit with several technological advancements which create distance from the landscape (climate control, for example). The highway provides a closer analogy to rail travel, where the quieter byroads which follow the contours of the land more closely are similar to stagecoach – and to a lesser extent – river travel. In the twentieth century John Steinbeck in *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962) and William Least Heat-Moon in *Blue Highways: a Journey into America* (1982) are two proponents of byroads over highways as a way to interact with the landscape and the United States. Comparisons can be made between stagecoach travel in the nineteenth century and Robert M. Pirsig’s description of travel by motorcycle in the twentieth century in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974):

You see things vacationing on a motorcycle in a way that is completely different from any other. In a car you’re always in a compartment, and because you’re used to it you don’t realize that through that car window everything you see is just more TV. You’re a passive observer and it is all moving by you boringly in a frame.

On a cycle the frame is gone. You’re completely in contact with it all. You’re *in* the scene, not just watching it anymore, and the sense of presence is overwhelming... the whole thing, the whole experience, is never removed from immediate consciousness. (4)

While the motorcycle is motorized, Pirsig and his companions take the smaller, quieter roads which follow the contours of the land, just like travel by stage. As well as this tie to the landscape, they are not being separated from the scene by the glass and frame of the window, “you’re *in* the scene”. They are within the diegesis of travel. Earlier in this chapter I discussed the window of the train journey linking the landscape to a picture and panorama,

arguably a nineteenth century equivalent of the TV. While point of view is still in effect for Pirsig, the interaction with the landscape is closer to “immediate consciousness” because of fewer layers of point of view. As for nineteenth century commentators on the West, language fails on a motorcycle, albeit for different reasons: “unless you’re fond of hollering you don’t make great conversation on a running cycle. Instead you spend your time being aware of things and meditating on them” (7).

Motorcycle travel shares many of the points of view of the stagecoach in the nineteenth century; however, the motorcycle rider controls the vessel and acts as narrator (as in Pirsig’s book). Using these routes rather than the highways allows for the rediscovery of a frontier and a point of view that owes less to the culture from which the traveller comes and more to the landscape, as difficult as that may be to express.

The railroad mentality was of travelling *between places* rather than “lighting out for the territory” and freedom being replaced with the ‘where from’ and ‘where to’. Having said this, it could be argued that from the outset European culture was looking westwards and would always eventually reach the end of the road. Dickens accepts that progress is inevitable in *Dombey and Son*, but worries what that progress entails: the picturesque wanderings so beloved by the Romantics and later by such writers as Jack Kerouac were in danger. Dickens, like Hawthorne, had a complicated view of technology which cannot be reduced to wholly anti-industrial; it was often the systems accompanying technological advancements which caused concern for both writers. It took a new imagining of travel and the travelling to counterbalance progress and keep it as a personal and emotional space of movement. I explore the importance of the “between” space – or frontier – in the next chapter; liminality is inherent in travel and allows for the point of view of the outsider. It also creates “the new being... the traveler” of Twain’s work. Without liminality the traveller is merely an observer and sees the landscape from the point of view of those watching a panorama. As I have argued, this pictorial, detached point of view is significantly more pronounced when travelling by rail.

The railroad in America was on the one hand a testament to the skill and ingenuity of man and an example of laying iron on the landscape, or shaping the landscape with the iron rod. It unlocked vast areas of hitherto unsettled land and natural resources which were to strengthen and improve the nation. On the other hand, the railroad overwrote nature and struck straight lines across much of the most impressive natural landscape which the United States had to offer. It created a void between space and travel time and disassociated passengers from the terrain through which they passed. The link between manpower or

physical effort and distance and time was lost, and machines came to the fore in a way which was to change attitudes to travel for the coming centuries. Although they were not necessarily anti-technology, writers with Romantic tendencies like Hawthorne or those that worried about nature's role in the industrial age like Dickens had an uneasy relationship with the railway, wondering what laziness and progress meant for mankind and for literature, as well as the disparity between time and space:

It is easy to see what significance the experience of space and time had for bourgeois education when one considers the Grand Tour, which was an essential part of that education before the industrialization of travel. The world was experienced in its original spatio-temporality. The travelling subject experienced localities in their spatial individuality. His education consisted of his assimilation of the spatial individuality of the places visited, by means of an effort that was physical and intellectual. The eighteenth-century travel novel became the *Bildungsroman*... of the early nineteenth century. The motion of travel, that physical and intellectual effort in space and time, dominated both.

The railroad, the destroyer of experiential space and time, thus also destroyed the educational experience of the Grand Tour. Henceforth, the localities were no longer spatially individual or autonomous: they were points in the circulation of traffic that made them accessible. (Schivelbusch 197)

Yet it is unfair to say that rail travel meant the death of the narrative of travel, as it is unfair to say that the nineteenth century writers universally lamented its acceptance. Perhaps the onus shifted more onto the “intellectual effort in space and time” which Schivelbusch talks about, with the search for more alien or extreme landscapes driving on those wishing to reach to form an identity. Schivelbusch is, after all, generally talking about Europe, and the intellectual, natural ‘frontier’ was still open to travellers and travel writers late in the nineteenth century. Emerson for one was not against the railroad, and even extolled its virtue, particularly during its early development. But what cannot be escaped is that steam power had altered travel in the United States, and therefore how to write about travel in the United States, and the point of view of that travel. The machine now became as much part of the journey as the landscape, yet was still the space between; between cultures or between a supposed primitive world and the cultured world. Mark Twain was one of the first to be able to write about the vastness of America by using the language of those who inhabit those vast

spaces; it is no coincidence that the author also writes of the West and California in other works. By incorporating the manners and landscape of the Mississippi he achieves the effects of a panorama brought to life, but still under the restrictions which the river imposes. He is also an exponent of travel for travel's sake and the importance of the journey as opposed to the destination; the journey is more likely to be the subject when travelling by river as opposed to rail, which revolves around departure and destination.

It is, then, the means of travel which not only dictates the path travelled, the stops to be made and the direction – what is seen – but also how the traveller views and writes. The railroad traveller sees the landscape at a greater speed than the steamboat traveller and is coursing through the landscape as opposed to being dictated by it. He sees the landscape through a pane of glass, separating him further from the scene. He also has the added 'attraction' of the society with which he is travelling – a self-contained microcosm of the United States – which can often be more interesting to the traveller than what is outside. The river traveller predominantly does not have the same exclusion from the landscape, though is separated by being on a man-made object, firstly, and physically by the water either side. His course is rarely straight and often slower, with the moving panorama turning at a lesser pace. He is also perhaps supposed to, as with Huck and Jim, float with the current rather than steam against it. He may be closer to nature, but is still dictated to by what he sees and often has society of his own aboard his vessel, even if that vessel only accommodates two. River scenery carries with it the connotations of previous river vistas, be they of New England or the Old World.

It is true that how one travels decides what one writes, but also how one writes. Dickens chose (or subconsciously had) to cut and paste his narrative and leaves uncomfortable ellipses, effectively performing the same severing of time and space as that of the railroad. As I have shown, Twain lets the river dictate his narrative – perhaps to the extent that he lost control of it – only to wrestle control back to create a wholly unsatisfactory ending to *Huckleberry Finn*.

The river and the railroad could, in essence, create completely different travel narratives, different points of view on the natural landscape, and have different impacts on the country through (or over) which they coursed. Travellers could find themselves like Thoreau, looking inward in self reflection on the river, or like Stevenson looking inwards to society on the train. Rivers can elicit intense local knowledge, while rail is a sign of the (possibly malevolent) progress of mankind and absence of that local knowledge. Either way, Huck should think very carefully just how he plans to “light out for the territory”.





## Three: The Undiscovered Country

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Huck's territories are one example of the frontier, a "between" space which represents neither the culture of the incorporated United States nor the perceived savagery of the Indian nations; the transatlantic passage is another. This chapter moves on from the issue of the 'how' of American travel to the 'where'. I have already discussed the importance of the liminal in travel in reference to mode of travel and point of view; in this chapter I discuss the West (generally at first, and then specifically the Western United States) and various liminal frontiers in travel. Both 'West' and 'Frontier' are difficult, contentious terms, the definitions of which have shifted over time. However, they are vital to a discussion of travel in the United States and are therefore contended with. A certain amount of ground clearing is necessary for my discussion, so I will interact with well known theorists and present my own working definitions in order to contend with the ideas necessary for a discussion of the influence of the West and frontier on point of view.

After defining these terms for my purposes I return to the transatlantic frontier (which is echoed throughout writers' travels once they ventured further west) to begin my discussion. I also discuss the impact of the frontier process and point of view on both travel and narrative, with particular reference in this chapter to plains and prairies.

As Patricia Nelson Limerick points out, "[Frederick Jackson] Turner's frontier was a process, not a place" (26). This thesis also considers the frontier as a process which occurs to the traveller when in or looking for the West. This experience will be shown to be evident in the transatlantic passage – as discussed in the previous chapter – and various personal frontiers in the United States itself; D.W. Meinig notes several different frontiers, including the United States' borders with Canada and Mexico. The frontier is, for the purposes of this work, movement and the meeting of two cultures; it can occur either in the West or in another space where cultures meet. As such, my definition of the frontier takes the work of Turner and other Western historians as a starting point. The definition identifies similarities between the Western frontier and other frontiers. This is justified in part by the frequent comparisons made between the two liminal spaces in primary texts. Sometimes where these two cultures meet it will appear to the traveller that he is in a void, a space lacking culture altogether. Meinig identifies one of the problems with the nineteenth century definition of frontier is that "to refer to this basic difference in human ecologies as a "boundary" or an "edge," however, risks a wrong impression. There was no such line to be seen on the ground... In the common

view of the Americans, the whole vast region was essentially *empty*” (Meinig 1993, 77). This presents interesting implications for those who enter the space. This is then the point of view from which the traveller sees both his current situation and the two cultures; a privileged but ungrounded, and therefore unsettling, point of view. The psychological effect of this is considered here, while the textual manifestations of the process are considered throughout this work. The main symptom of adopting the frontier process and point of view covered in this work is the creation and treatment of an authorial persona. This feature is present in the work of Mark Twain, Charles Dickens and Washington Irving explicitly, and others less prominently. These three writers offer an intriguing example of some effects of the frontier experience. This experience places the travel in a liminal condition, undergoing a rite of passage, while literally in passage.

Frederick Jackson Turner’s famous ‘Significance of the Frontier in American History’ appeared in 1893 declaring the frontier closed. However, it argued for the importance of the frontier in American history up to that point on the foundation and development of the United States. These ideas have also been considered in relation to Western and American history since Turner’s thesis. Despite Turner’s date excluding almost all of my authors from the supposed closed frontier, uncertainties about what comes next are evident much earlier.

In my view any discussion of the Western frontier cannot ignore Turner. His work provides a starting point for many theorists, whether in accord or disagreement<sup>22</sup>. Turner also provided a theory of the so-called safety-valve system: in times of economic hardship the West attracts disillusioned workers – who are out of work or underpaid – to the supposed abundant West<sup>23</sup>. This is another contentious theory which is often criticised and widely dismissed<sup>24</sup>. However, this idea can also apply to literary travellers looking for a new subject, as I argue in the case of Washington Irving.

Turner’s frontier thesis is looking retrospectively, applying a point of view to events that have already happened: the frontier is supposedly already closed in 1893. This retrospective point of view is also a tendency of the authors discussed within these pages. As such, Turner joins the ranks of these travels in writing a version of America using a subsequent point of view.

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<sup>22</sup> Some of these writers are discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

<sup>23</sup> This is an implicit theory in Turner’s writing, an example of which can be found in pages 32-3 of *The Frontier in American History* from his most famous essay.

<sup>24</sup> George Woolfolk discusses this particular theory’s merits and reception in his article ‘Turner’s Safety-Valve and Free Negro Western Migration’. Laurence M. Hauptman does not credit Turner as the first to think of the West as a safety-valve, however, saying “the frontier as a ‘safety-valve,’ was widespread in American thought well before Turner’s birth in 1861” (271).

For these reasons I believe reference to Turner in this chapter is a necessity, although my use of the term ‘frontier’ extends far beyond Turner’s original usage to include the Atlantic Ocean during the transatlantic passage. I also equate frontiers with other margins and between-spaces. I argue that experiencing these frontiers and returning to a familiar culture constitutes rites of passage. During this rite of passage there is a liminal point of view. After the rite of passage point of view remains affected by the experience, the process, the place. The frontier is identified in retrospective point of view. Thus my argument extends beyond Turner’s physical Western frontier, but sees his frontier have an effect on the travellers discussed in this work.

The writers discussed in detail in this chapter include Frances Trollope, Dickens, Robert Louis Stevenson, W.T. Stead, Irving, Twain, and Henry James. These authors confront the American West and the frontier process in their travels in the United States.

### **The Frontier and the West**

These two terms, ‘frontier’ and ‘West’ are indelibly linked in American history. The West, in particular, has undergone many changes in definition and is still something of a loose, ideological label with no fixed borders. Part of the reason for this is that the frontier happened in, and to the West.

‘Frontier’, that “unsubtle concept in a subtle world” (Limerick 25) is preferred to the term ‘borderland’ which is a term appropriated by Spanish-American ‘frontier’ historians such as Herbert Eugene Bolton and Louise Phelps Kellogg,

Two of Turner's early students... Bolton was best known for his voluminous studies of Spanish colonialism in the Americas, and in works like ‘The Mission as a Frontier Institution’ (1917), *The Spanish Borderlands* (1921), and ‘Epic of Greater America’ (1933), readers could find frontiers somewhat less constrictive than those featured in other texts. They could also find ‘borders’ and ‘borderlands’ employed as close discursive cousins of frontier, if not synonyms for that word. (Klein 188)

My preference for the term ‘frontier’ is largely a result of the title of Turner’s thesis, the enduring legacy of which has influenced Western and American historians, and because “if the American West was discussed to an American – or; perhaps even more, to a European – frontier wars and pioneering came immediately to mind” (Limerick 19). This term was current and on the minds of several of my authors in the nineteenth century, just as it well-

known is now. The ‘borderland’ is more often the meeting space of two traditional Western (on a European model) cultures like Spanish America and the United States, for example<sup>25</sup>.

‘Frontier’ originally meant a population of two or more people per square mile (‘Significance of the Frontier’ 3). But Turner’s use of the word ‘frontier’ can be a process, a geographical place, or a border; yet another oft-faulted imprecision in Turner’s work:

Lost in space but stuck in time, the frontier is at once too broad and too narrow a concept. It has always seemed more mythic than real, not a place but a process so sweeping in effect and occurring in so many places that it defies substantive or specific description. (Neel 493)

“Stuck in time” here is a confusing statement as Neel goes on to call the frontier a process. It is perhaps a reference to the supposed closing of the frontier. Despite the difficulty of the concept, I will show the frontier can be influential in very specific, personal ways.

Henry James writes about the role of the railroad in accelerating the progress of ‘civilisation’ to the West. The implication that there is supposedly no opportunity for the frontier point of view by the time of James’s *American Scene* does not disturb the author, rather, he laments the role of the railroad (and the following American ‘civilisation’) in destroying the frontier and replacing it with more of the same brash, empty newness he so despises in New York. In the continuation of the earlier quotation where James’s railroad asks “See what I’m making of all this”, the author responds with:

I see what you are not making, oh, what you are ever so vividly not; and how can I help it if I am subject to that lucidity? – which appears never so welcome to you, for its measure of truth, as it ought to be! How can I not be so subject, from the moment I don't just irreflectively gape? If I were one of the painted savages you have dispossessed, or even some tough reactionary trying to emulate him, what you are making would doubtless impress me more than what you are leaving unmade; for in that case it wouldn't be to you I should be looking in any degree for beauty or for charm. Beauty and charm would be for me in the solitude you have ravaged, and I should owe you my grudge for every disfigurement and every violence, for every

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<sup>25</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa uses the term in the title of her 1987 book *Borderland/La Frontera* which discusses the United States and Mexico; D.W. Meinig uses ‘borderland’ when discussing the meeting spaces of the United States with modern Mexico and Canada.

wound with which you have caused the face of the land to bleed. No, since I accept your ravage, what strikes me is the long list of the arrears of your undone; and so constantly, right and left, that your pretended message of civilization is but a colossal recipe for the *creation* of arrears, and of such as can but remain forever out of hand. You touch the great lonely land – as one feels it still to be – only to plant upon it some ugliness about which, never dreaming of the grace of apology or contrition, you then proceed to brag with a cynicism all your own. (463)

In this passage, James considers the major issues of the frontier either explicitly or implicitly. Firstly, he talks about the dispossession of Native Americans – “painted savages” – by European Americans. This has been aided by technology. Secondly, he discusses the idea that the West was empty, a “solitude”, reminiscent of Twain’s description of the Mississippi as an “awful solitude” (*Life on the Mississippi* 10). Finally, James talks about the march of ‘civilisation’ which itself is like an unstoppable train; he accepts the “ravage” of the railroad and its accompanying ‘civilisation’. However, the closing of the frontier could also mark the end of history. Using the above passage as a reference point I will now address each of these themes – which represent and affect the frontier point of view – in more general terms.

### The Vanishing Frontier

The dispossession of the Native Americans and movement of the frontier and ‘civilisation’ westwards goes hand in hand. James subscribes to the view that:

The whole point of the frontier had been to vanish. Like Timothy Flint's Daniel Boone or James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking, its "purpose" in Turner's scheme was to prepare the way for the civilization that would ultimately replace it. Civilization had always been the teleological goal which had lent its force to Turner's historical sequence, and so there was no escaping the doom it must finally spell for the frontier thesis. If each new generation of historians must discover a past that spoke to the needs of the present, then Western history, as Turner had framed it, would become more and more irrelevant. Turner himself saw this almost from the start, and it caused him increasing anxiety as he grew older. (Cronon, ‘Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier’ 167)

James accepts the damage of the railroad as he found nothing in the “solitude” and nature destroyed by the press of American civilisation. By the end of the nineteenth century the unknown lands and myths of the Northwest Passage, strange creatures and wild natives<sup>26</sup> are replaced with technology and texts: “mapping was generally cumulative, a business of progressive extensions and refinements (with occasional lapses and aberrations) impressing an ever-greater mental control upon the territory” (ibid. 73). Fear of the natives and landscapes of the American West persisted long into the nineteenth century and is discussed at greater length later in this study. This engendered a view of the West through the rhetoric of the unknown; emptiness is replaced by myth, conjecture and fiction in travel accounts and maps. The landscape was not only different to that in the eastern United States, but unlike anything else encountered in Europe. Even the weather was more extreme in this environment, adding to the sense of unease felt by travellers:

It was commonly remarked that nature seemed to be designed on a grander scale beyond the mountains: the mighty rivers, the vast floodplains of the Mississippi, the seemingly endless forests – and then the broadening plains and eastern embayments of the great prairies... It was soon powerfully apparent to any newcomer that Western weather was also on a grander scale. There were greater seasonal extremes of heat and cold, and far more violent changes, sometimes in a matter of hours, accompanied by spectacular thunderstorms, cloudbursts, hail, blizzards, or, most awesome of all, tornadoes. (Meinig 1993, 238)

Yet James does not seem to bemoan the loss of this version of the West, nor does he find “beauty and charm... in the solitude” which he assumes the Native Americans perceive. The frontier process brings ‘civilisation’ with it as it progresses and is part of the creation myth of the United States. James is not alone in accepting this version of history, though writing after the supposed close of the frontier, his view of the civilisation which has inhabited the West is fairly negative.

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<sup>26</sup> For the Northwest Passage specifically, see John Seelye’s early analysis of the role of rivers and waterways in the discovery and development of America, *Prophetic Waters* (1977), Percy G. Adams *Travelers and Travel Liars* (1962) pp. 133-4 and Bernard DeVoto’s *Westward the Course of Empire* (1951), which also contains misconceptions of the geography and people of North America from the early Spanish and English explorers.

### Westward the Course of Empire

The theme of civilisation moving westward is represented with more positivity in earlier texts such as Bishop George Berkeley's 'Verse on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America' (1726) which contains the line "Westward the course of empire takes its way", later to become the title for the two famous lithographs discussed in the previous chapter. Joel Barlow's 'The Prospect of Peace' (1778) contains a mixture of propaganda and the conceit of America embodying the next act, a "golden age" (Barlow 2), while Jedidah Morse's *The American Geography* (1792) includes similar themes. The West – and the American West in particular – connotes progress (Limerick 322-3). De Voto quotes the sixteenth century Spanish explorer Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca who said "we ever held it certain that going toward the sunset we would find what we desired" (*Westward the Course of Empire* 19), showing an early European attitude toward the West in the New World. Also from the European viewpoint – though much later – comes Hegel, an early nineteenth century commentator on America as "the Land of the Future" and an opportunity (though as yet unrealised) for the New World to throw off the petty squabbles of the Old:

America is therefore the land of the future, where, in the ages that lie before us, the burden of the World's History shall reveal itself, - perhaps in a contest between North and South America. It is a land of desire for all those who are weary of the historical lumber-room of old Europe. Napoleon is reported to have said, "Cette vieille Europe m'ennuie." It is for America to abandon the ground on which hitherto the History of the World has developed itself. What has taken place in the New World up to the present time is only an echo of the Old World, - the expression of a foreign Life; and as a Land of the Future, it has no interest for us here, for, as regards History, our concern must be with that which has been and that which is. (86-7)

Mid-century, both Emerson and Thoreau were expressing similar leanings to, and longings for the West (Baritz, *City on a Hill* 261; 'Idea of the West' 639). W.T. Stead at the close of the century also expressed the mood of many concerning the role of the United States as the world entered what would become known as the American Century (*Americanization of the World* 7). It is interesting here to note the rhetoric used: there are both imperial and religious movements suggested; the central two myths concerning the westward movement.

These statements, from Europeans and Americans alike, speak of America as becoming a new empire. The imperial drive of Europe had been transplanted to the New



World and taken up by the United States. The problem was, of course, that despite the rhetoric of the time, the land was not exclusively an outlet for the expanding peoples of the United States and by proxy Europe, but a land populated with natives. These statements of intent for America and subsequently the United States, then, demonstrate the “concept of ‘Manifest Destiny’, the phrase coined in 1845 to express the inevitable expansion of the United States to the Pacific” (Lawson-Peebles, *American Literature* 31). The argument that it was an ‘inalienable right’ for the American people to possess the entirety of the continent was behind much of the expansionist rhetoric of the nineteenth century, the prototype of which can be seen in Berkeley, Barlow, and Morse before it was given its more famous title of Manifest Destiny. However, Limerick notes that:

It is common to associate the American West with the future, one of independence and self-reliance. The future that was actually projected in the Western past is quite a different matter. It was in the phenomenon of dependence – on the federal government, on the changeability of nature, on outside investment – that the West pulled ahead. (88-9)

Again, the West is being written on and mythologized retrospectively. Berkeley, Barlow, and Morse express optimism for the American future, however they also contain references to the end of the future and the end of everything. In similar ways to Mrs. Trollope’s discussion of the Mississippi River and thunderstorms (wilder on the American continent), these writers seem to be imbuing their writing with biblical foreshadowing of the apocalypse. Melville is another who bemoans the loss of the frontier: "To Terminus builds fanes!/Columbus ended earth's romance:/No New World to mankind remains!" (*Clarel* 461).

As Stephen Fender states: “deep in the impulse to migrate westwards lies the end of the world. The Promised Land is the end of history, and death is buried in the trope” (*Sea Changes* 357). Henry James’s description of the railroad’s presence in the American West speaks of the vanishing frontier, the vanishing Indian, the role of technology in the spread of civilisation, and implies a nihilistic view of progress; in this respect James is seeing all possible Wests at once. The West was constructed as a frontier in both time and space, but it is a frontier which changes not only in time and space, but also in the imagination. Despite its links to the future, however, “the West had no magic power for dissolving the past, a fact that Americans confronted at all levels, from the personal to the national” (Limerick 90).

Travel narratives of the United States now seem to evoke the great migrant tradition, but do so with new forms, and always with an eye on the past; it is never truly possible to ride off into the sunset (the West) ad infinitum, there are boundaries, one is going somewhere definite, a fixed point on the horizon. Trains aided the closing of the frontier and automobiles ensured that travel would become increasingly easier, yet to ensure the continuation of the American migratory spirit, road narratives, both in novels and film arose, though always with a retrospective eye on the motifs of travel to the unknown; the liminal; the frontier.

Stevenson also notes the implied evening of history:

It was in the sky, and not upon the earth, that I was surprised to find a change. Explain it how you may, and for my part I cannot explain it at all, the sun rises with a different splendour in America and Europe. There is more clear gold and scarlet in our old country mornings; more purple, brown, and smoky orange in those of the new... to me the coming of the day is less fresh and inspiring in the latter; it has a duskier glory, and more resembles sunset; it seems to fit some subsequential, evening epoch of the world, as though America were in fact, not merely in fancy, farther from the orient of Aurora and the springs of day. (*Amateur Emigrant* 191)

Whether or not this is true, the end is certainly implied in the myths of the West (including the vanishing Indian). Stevenson looks from the point of view of the East watching what he perceives as the end of the day and the end of time. Light provides this point of view for Stevenson and the sun once again provides inspiration for the image of America as the setting sun. This myth inspired travellers in America from both sides of the Atlantic. On the closing of the frontiers, a great literary resource was lost, only to be rekindled in miniature whilst travelling between the new cities of the United States, in micro-frontiers traversed largely by car in the next – the American – century.

Henry James finds the American civilisation spread by the frontier process as empty as the “solitude” which came before it. For him, American civilisation in the West represents “the arrears of [the railroad’s] undone”. On the East Coast there was at least a personal history for James to interact with and from which to criticise the new culture of the United States typified by New York City, Newport, and the new culture of Salem which left barely a trace of Hawthorne. To the West was a “lonely land” filled with “ugliness” bragged about with the brashness of New York but with even less substance. James found nothing to interest him as a novelist; therefore nothing is presented of the West in his literary travels:

James's case against America was not based on any notion that it was somehow intellectually backward or morally inferior to Europe (quite the contrary indeed); it was rather that, as a novelist, he found it comparatively empty... Where America was a void, Europe was a plentitude. (T. Tanner, *Scenes of Nature* 68)

This undermines his own status as an American and the idea of "Americans travelling to be Americans. For over thirty years, James had lived and travelled in Europe on the assumption that America was a nullity" (Rawlings 186). For James, then, the nullity of the West was the nullity of all America; this is a common point of view for Europeans. James notes the theme of civilisation moving westward and the role of technology in this shift, but criticises both the frontier and the civilisation which replaces it. In this way, James senses a similar "end of history" (Fender, *Sea Changes* 357) in the closing of the frontier in America and the West propagated by technology and the railroad; what has replaced the frontier cannot be written about, demonstrated by James omitting the West from *The American Scene*.

These two sections have shown that myths of the West and ideas of progress from a European or European American point of view were applied to the actual American West. As the geographical West altered and the frontier process passed over the country so the point of view of and from the frontier was altered. The next section attempts to identify the American West in time and space, but argues that what is of more use for this study is the frontier and the West as process.

### **The American West**

In the previous section I demonstrated how myths of the West in general became transplanted to the American West and how Turner's frontier thesis became a central text in discussing the (re-)birth and significance of this region and its mythology. I will give a brief historiography of the American West, a brief history, and then define what I consider to be the American West for the purposes of this work.

An analysis of this sort will need to contend with the many contrasting terms inherent in the field of frontier history, with 'frontier', 'region', 'section' and 'borderland' just a few of the terms and replacement terms used by various scholars of the West, from Turnerian to anti-Turner; those who (re)claim 'frontier' to the New Western regionalists. By discussing the West I am necessarily interacting with Frederick Jackson Turner's work, and equally creating my own frontiers, or regions. It is important here to state that Turner's work is

almost always unfairly reduced to his famous 1893 'Significance of the Frontier in American History', but, as Michael Steiner points out in his analysis of Western historians (almost) up to the present, Turner evolved his frontier thesis into ideas sectionalism ('The Problem of the West' (1896)). Even this, when addressed by Western historians, is faulted for imprecise language, something which mars much of Turner's work (as well as the work of almost every scholar to some degree). Steiner points to the fact that Turner

Was hindered by misleading terminology. "Sectionalism" had the divisive connotations of civil war, populist agitation, and segregation; the more integrative term, "regionalism" which would have been closer to Turner's intent, was not widely used in the United States until the last decade of his life. (496)

The recent history of the West is not a concern of this work. What should not be ignored, however, is the Eurocentric concentration of Turner's theory, his "westward surge of fading frontiers and rising regions is Eurocentric and one dimensional, slighting the movement of people from Asia, Africa, and Latin America" (Steiner 497). In addition, "in no other field of Western history did the concept of the end of the frontier in 1890 carry so little meaning [as in] Hispanic borderlands history; Turner himself showed little awareness of Hispanic people's existence (Limerick 253). Having said this, by my choice of authors, I am necessarily ignoring the same peoples as Turner. As noted 'frontier' in Turner's terminology originally meant a population of two or more people per square mile ('Significance of the Frontier' 3), since then it has become more of a mythic term. 'West' has likewise taken on significance in myth. The pre-eminence of the frontier in the history of the West remains, however and has caused something of a crisis of confidence in Western historians: "to many American historians, the Turner thesis *was* Western history. If something had gone wrong with the thesis, something had gone wrong with Western history" (Limerick 20).

The same charges brought against the use of 'frontier' can apply to the American 'West': "the West is just about anything that anyone has ever wanted it to be.... it has been located anywhere and everywhere" (Worster 142). This is a West which "has floated through four centuries" (Caughey 7). The West could not cease to exist, however and entered a new period of geographical uncertainty. To illustrate this, it should be noted that some scholars have the West as including Alaska and Hawaii, others do not include California. Two of the most prominent classifications of the West are Worster's ecological modes of the pastoral

West (cowboys) and the hydraulic West (farmers relying on irrigation) (150)<sup>27</sup>, which itself grew out of Walter Prescott Webb's *The Great Plains* (1931) and his ideas of the West as defined by aridity in terms of European standards for crop production. Both of these have their flaws, and necessarily have their exceptions; areas of urbanization, areas flanked to the east by the West, but not arid themselves. Worster does, however, present a generalisation – in part taken from Webb – that the modern West “begins with the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. So defined, the West would become, along with the North and the South, one of the three great geographical regions of the coterminous United States” (Worster 145). Any discussion of the West and the frontier must contend with the complexity and mythology of the West:

The Western historian runs into... trouble with the creation myth centered on the frontier. This tale has unquestionable power and influence but bears little resemblance to the events of the Western past. The myth has the undeniable charm of simplicity. Simplicity, alas, is the one quality that cannot be found in the actual story of the American West. (Limerick 323)

In the period discussed in this thesis, D.W. Meinig identifies four main phases of westward expansion useful (for my purposes) as a basic history of what can be called the West in order to have a working definition. Meinig states that the first phase was in the 1790s marked by “Western New York, Pennsylvania, and the Ohio Valley”. The second came after the 1812 war with Britain and was marked by the “shattering of Indian confederations in both the Northwest and Southwest”, with the spread of whites to Alabama and the gulf states in the Southwest (again, this term is problematic, as he means these directions in respect to the United States as it existed at this time) and Indiana and Illinois in the Northwest. Meinig's third phase occurred in the 1830s with the impetus of Jackson's expansionism marked by complete removal of Native Americans and the impact of canal and railroad networks improving, as mentioned in the previous chapter. The fourth and final stage mentioned by Meinig in his book *Continental America* is the gold rush to California with the movement to Oregon as a prelude: the migration to the Far West of the country (1993, 222-3). This

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<sup>27</sup> David M. Emmons takes these and further adds to them, creating eight socio-ecological and economic subregions of the West in his 'Constructed Province: History and the Making of the Last American West' (1994).

provides yet another classification for the West throughout the nineteenth century. Meinig mentions several terms used to describe the various Wests in the nineteenth century: including the ‘Transappalachian West’, ‘Mississippi Valley’, ‘Western Waters’, and ‘Northwest’ and ‘Southwest’ of the Ohio River. All of these terms have benefits and problems and “as for simply *the West*, we can hardly avoid making extensive use of the term, but we must always remember that it is heavily charged with many mythic as well as locational meanings” (223). Meinig also identifies some terms which were more closely linked to the land and which occur in the work of authors covered here: the ‘great plains’ (which surfaced in the 1770s) and ‘prairies’ (1800s) which applied to the open stretched of land to the east and north of the greater ‘West’; and the ‘Great Desert’ which applied to further West, though these terms are far from scientific and were used interchangeably without consensus (*ibid.*). I include them here as they occur in many of the primary texts, sometimes synonymously with ‘West’; but also to illustrate the difficulties and irregularities in defining or describing the West in the nineteenth century, marking the beginning of a complex relationship in defining this amorphous region.

The West for Washington Irving may not be the West for Mark Twain, for example. This is a definition of ‘West’ which changed during the period in consideration for this work as demonstrated above. According to Meinig’s classification above, for the British authors Frances Trollope and Charles Dickens, the Mississippi River was the West and as far as they had travelled in that region; Dickens’s *Looking Glass Prairie* was close to St. Louis. After moving up the Mississippi River and the failed Nashoba colony near Memphis, Mrs. Trollope settled for a time in Cincinnati on the Ohio River, which was still very much a frontier city at the time. As pointed out above, the Mississippi was still the West of the frontier and the main focus of westward expansion until the move to the Far West in the 1850s. Anthony Trollope discusses the West and includes the states of

Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas; to which [he] would add Missouri, and probably the Western half of Virginia. We have then too account for the two already admitted States on the Pacific, California and Oregon, and also for the unadmitted Territories Dacotah [sic], Nebraska, Washington, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado, and Nevada (I, 116)

He also posits California and Oregon as consisting of “a division which may be called the farther West” (I, 117); he himself visited Detroit, Michigan (I, 126), Milwaukee, Wisconsin (133) and St. Paul, Minnesota (I, 155). Robert Louis Stevenson crossed the continent from New York to California and spent his ‘honeymoon’ in Nevada and is the only British author covered here to have achieved the feat of crossing the continent. Of the Americans, Washington Irving’s trip to the prairies is discussed later in this chapter and was considered by him as a journey to the West; his other two Western works of the 1830s concern the region farther West, though Irving was not to travel there himself. Hawthorne didn’t venture too far west, with Niagara being the main ‘frontier’ location of which he spoke. Mark Twain’s Mississippi is the West, particularly when he looks retrospectively, but he also crossed the continent to the West Coast in *Roughing It*. Henry James states that he went west (to California according to his notebooks) in *The American Scene* but, as mentioned earlier, did not discuss it in detail.

As if a final reminder about the complex possibilities for the definition of West was needed, the above list should provide it. What is important for the purpose of this work, however, is that every author went west and experienced the frontier, whatever that meant for them. During the nineteenth century in particular, the West – like the frontier – is a process not a place static in time and space: “in choosing to stress place more than process, we cannot fix exact boundaries for the region, any more that we can draw precise lines around ‘the South,’ ‘the Midwest,’ or that most elusive of regions ‘the East’” (Limerick 26). Instead, the mythic, textual West overwrites the landscape as the railroad is written upon the landscape.

### Frontiers

Travellers are separated from the familiar and their own culture on the liminal frontier. In terms of American travel this can mean being between European or Eurocentric culture and American or so-called ‘uncivilised culture’, depending on the personal definitions of culture present in each individual: “liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (V. Turner 95). This liminal situation is often “regarded as dangerous, inauspicious, or polluting to persons, objects, events, and relationships that have not been ritually incorporated into the liminal context” (108). So it is with the transatlantic frontier and the Western frontier.

Before discussing first the transatlantic frontier and then the frontier in the American West, I’d like to turn to the Pillars of Hercules and suggest the Statue of Liberty as a symbolic point of departure and arrival as suggested by van Gennep when discussing tribal

conditions of liminality and rites of passage: “more often the boundary is marked by an object – a stake, portal, or upright rock (milestone or landmark – whose installation at that particular spot has been accompanied by rites of consecration)” (15). Alan Trachtenberg’s *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (1965) explores the famous bridge as a boundary marker for the United States and point of view for seeing the United States through the arches and wire supports. Another significant mythic boundary is Plymouth Rock, the poetic landing point of the Pilgrims in 1620. However, the actual point of landfall is some 75 miles away at the tip of Cape Cod in modern day Provincetown. It is useful here to repeat Jonathan Raban’s description of the liminal state on the transatlantic frontier:

We’d reached the stage where not only was it impossible properly to imagine the land we were heading for, it was impossible properly to remember the land we’d left. There was simply too much sea around to think of anything else but sea. It sopped up every other thought in one’s head. It must have been at this stage that the emigrants began to shed their *emi* prefix, and turned into pure migrants, as oblivious as birds to anything except the engrossing mechanics of their passage. (*Hunting Mister Heartbreak* 31-2)

It is from this liminal point of view that travellers chose (or were forced) to view the landscape, themselves, and the cultures either side of them, engendering some interesting descriptions and fractured self-identities which come across in the travel writing. Significantly, it is the intradiegetic narrator-character who undergoes this liminal experience and the extradiegetic narrator-author who returned from the margins of society.

The Western and transatlantic frontiers are two examples of the liminal condition. These liminal points of view can be personal and subjective. Henry James experienced this condition in the season when most of the residents of either London or New York were out of town. In London he talks about the

English faculty for ‘going out of town for a little change’ [coming] into illimitable play, and families transport their nurseries and their bath-tubs to those rural scenes which form the real substratum of the national life. Such moments as these are the paradise of the genuine London-lover, for he then finds himself face to face with the object of his passion: he can give himself up to an intercourse which at other times is obstructed by his rivals. (*English Hours* 22)



James suggests that at these moments the observer is somehow closer to his subject than at other times, when he must look through the point of view of London society. He later writes that “the pages of this volume exhibit from August to November an attractive blankness; they represent the season during which you may taste of that highest kind of inspiration, the inspiration of the moment” (25), again implying a greater artistic merit to these times. In New York the summer months provide James with a slightly more favourable impression of the city which he laments and writes about so frequently in *The American Scene*:

One could talk of “quietness” now, for the shrinkage of life so marked, in the higher latitudes of the town, after Easter, the visible early flight of that “society” which, by the old custom, used never to budge before June or July, had almost the effect of clearing some of the streets, and indeed of suggesting that a truly clear New York might have an unsuspected charm or two to put forth. (88-9)

Another example of a personal liminality in James’s writing, and one which suggests a certain pictorial point of view, is the author’s preference for viewing in twilight: literally the space between day and night. In England James talks about using the English twilight as his point of view (*English Hours* 51) and the artificial twilight of the English winter:

Those to whom it is forbidden to sit up to work in the small hours may, between November and March, enjoy a semblance of this luxury in the morning. The weather makes a kind of sedentary midnight and muffles the possible interruptions. It is bad for the eyesight, but excellent for the image. (22-3)

In his *Notebooks* James talks about a scene which “in the late Scotch twilight, and the keen air, it was romantic” (44) and the “*Passages* in London which make vistas, and just at this hour I catch a little specimen of it and of the way that they make a little charm and a little picture” (326). James presumably was unaware of the Scottish word “gloaming” which is noted as the unique type of Scottish twilight by a character in Lewis Grassie Gibbon’s trilogy *A Scots Quair* (1932-4). He remarks “if you said gloaming was sunset you’d fair be a liar” (*Sunset Song* 161). In *The American Scene* James finds the “essence” of his impressions arrive during the twilight and his being in the liminal space, removed temporarily from the society of New York:

After that arrived daylight recognitions, but they were really for the most part offered me, as in a full cup, by the accident of a couple of hours that were to leave me the pure essence, the finer sense of them. (58)

James's personal between-spaces all provide the writer with a certain point of view; they provide an almost pictorial point of view but also imply being on the edge of culture and daylight.

To return to the physical frontiers, they can be said to have two things in common. Firstly, they exist temporally as well as geographically. Secondly, these frontiers are seen in motion; they are moving places in which to travel, not in which to remain stationary. In these rites of passage the physical passage is essential. As discussed above, the frontiers are not static themselves and change throughout the nineteenth century as does the definition of the West. To experience these frontiers it is necessary to travel, therefore it could be argued that to travel is to exist in a margin, to have a frontier mentality. A frontier mentality is the forgetting or suspension of 'normal' conventions from the home state and structure, or "communitas" as Victor Turner has it: "in *rites of passage*, men are released from structure into communitas only to return to structure revitalized by their experience of communitas" (129). Thus the liminal, frontier state can be experienced or thought of as a rite of passage; something to be undertaken in order to become a new being. Home becomes a benchmark and any sign of it is something to be praised and compared to the frontier. There is a heightened sense of awareness and nervousness which comes from a sense of not belonging to a culture. Yet more examples, in addition to Dickens's sea travels are his river experience with the spectral trees, discussed earlier, Frances Trollope's thunderstorms in Virginia (*Domestic Manners* 225-6), or Washington Irving's Indians. There is something unsettling about these frontiers which is expressed not only in the content of these descriptions, but also in the general tone and style. There is also – however – an implied return to 'culture' implicit in travel writing. Stephen Fender writes of the journey west which is finished with a return voyage as a rite of passage. Actual emigration – something which none of the nineteenth century authors covered here achieved – is described as a simple passage (*Sea Changes* 15). In some cases the liminal experience of the narrator-character is presented in the narrative by the narrator-author: the creation of persona is one example of this, suggesting the travelling narrator-character is undergoing a different experience to the narrator-author. However, it is also true that in many cases the narrator-author dismisses the liminal experience and adopts

the extradiegetic voice of the writer who has returned from the margins of society, not the liminal traveller. Even in retrospect, perhaps more so, the frontier creates (sometimes false) remembrances of danger or unease:

The West as a literary territory will often be regarded with uneasiness, if not fear and loathing, by those eastern writers who subsequently chose it as a fictional territory – a disjunctive tradition first established by Crèvecoeur – but as a realized landscape the region beyond the Alleghenies would have to wait for a writer who had benefited from the Romantic movement. (Seelye, *Beautiful Machine* 152)

Such an unsettling area, which appears to be less cultured, necessarily creates and alters characters to inhabit it; it can be no coincidence that the characters best known in the frontier are generally outlaws, who become cult anti-heroes both in their own time and subsequently. These Western heroes are often conmen, thieves, and murderers, yet are given hero status because they can survive in this frontier environment for long periods of time. The travellers in this study suffer fractured selves (sometimes symptomized as persona), a longing for home exhibited in inarticulate adoption of familiar European modes, and the failure of language to represent experience which becomes ellipsis in travel writing. This is the point of view which I wish to discuss and analyse. The Western characters are of interest in frontier writings, whether they were expelled from the East because of their behaviour, found the West to be their niche of lawlessness, a dark version of the ‘safety valve’, or are turned to this behaviour by the harsh surroundings is uncertain. Huck Finn can be said to express some of the more questionable moral attributes associated with the frontier, but his views on law and lawlessness are often linked to the Mississippi River itself, with that body of water being the ultimate leveller and fairest judge in Huck’s eyes. There is certainly, however, foreshadowing of what Huck may in time become if he continues to live in a frontier landscape. Huck has admiration for the King and the Duke, at first at least; “we all said the Duke was pretty smart” (*Huckleberry Finn* 196), although he does find some of their actions “enough to make a body ashamed of the human race” (226) as their schemes start to have greater human costs. Twain also points out similarly lacking morals and laws further west in *Roughing It*, an example being the inquest of Buck Fanshaw who was said to have

Taken arsenic, shot himself through the body, cut his throat, and jumped out of a four-story[sic] window and broken his neck – and after due deliberation, the jury,

sad and tearful, but with intelligence unblended by its sorrow, brought in a verdict of death “by the visitation of God.” (60)

Whether fact, fiction or embellishment is impossible to tell, as usual with Twain. But the entire episode and its inclusion is a sign of the violence and danger of the West, or at least the perception of such things which allows Twain, the Western, hard-living version of Clemens, to concoct the story without seeming implausible. This fictionalised point of view occurs throughout Twain’s writings on the frontiers, Northern (Niagara), old Western (Mississippi) and Far Western (in *Roughing It*). Likewise, questions are asked of Washington Irving during his sojourn to the West; he seems to take on some of the attributes of his fellow travellers, frontiersmen themselves, and almost seems to be losing himself, or at least his prim Geoffrey Crayon persona.

In travel writing the frontier experience can be expressed by the narrator-author using persona, fiction, or ellipsis. The Mississippi discussed in the previous chapter demonstrates all of these features in various travel writing by the authors of this study and therefore qualifies as a frontier. The West and the Mississippi are linked in their vastness and homogeneity in the following passage in which James talks about the boredom he feels in response to the “criminal continuity”:

The expanse of the floor, the material opportunity itself, has elsewhere failed; so that what is the positive effect of their inordinate presence but to make the lone observer, here and there, but measure with dismay the trap laid by the scale, if he be not tempted even to say by the superstition, of continuity? Is the germ of anything finely human, of anything agreeably or successfully social, supposably[sic] planted in conditions of such endless stretching and such boundless spreading as shall appear finally to minister but to the triumph of the superficial and the apotheosis of the raw? Oh for a split or a chasm, one groans beside your plate-glass, oh for an unbridgeable abyss or an insuperable mountain!" – and I could so indulge myself though still ignorant of how one was to groan later on, in particular, after taking yet further home the portentous truth that this same criminal continuity, scorning its grandest chance to break down, makes but a mouthful of the mighty Mississippi. That was to be in fact my very next “big” impression. (*American Scene* 465)

As noted, James did not write of the West, nor did he write of his big impression of the Mississippi; these were experienced intradiegetically but James did not work his extradiegetic point of view over them, leaving them as raw unwritten impressions. Thus these two frontiers in James's work are represented (or not represented) in terms of ellipsis. There are ways other than ellipsis in which frontiers are linked, however.

### American Frontiers

All experiences of the frontiers in the United States are linked in language and metaphor. Being linked in language and metaphor suggests a link in point of view, at least a link in point of view of the extradiegetic narrator-author where the accounts are retrospective; this is *looking at* the frontier. I argue that the experience of the intradiegetic narrator-character is also related through point of view *from* the frontier, while undergoing the frontier process and existing in a liminal space. Washington Irving forms the basis for this study, though other authors are included.

In the previous chapter descriptions of the Atlantic Ocean seemed to anticipate the prairies and plains; once in the United States and confronted with the perceived homogeneity and vastness of the West the comparisons are reversed. Much of the American West is typified by abundance; abundance of space and land being the most significant: "though the nature and causes of American abundance may have been misunderstood, the importance of it has never been doubted, and a long procession of travellers, other observers, and social analysts have pointed to it as a basic and conspicuous feature of American life" (Potter 90). Potter goes on to explore abundance as a major factor in the how Americans view themselves and how others view them, including "the forming and strengthening of the American ideal and practice of equality" (91). Points of view of American abundance, like those of the American landscape were "first discovered as an environmental condition [then] converted by technological change into a cultural as well as a physical force" (141) which has affected the United States' treatment of its environment and interactions with the wider world. Potter has the idea of abundance as linked to and as important as Turner's frontier thesis; the frontier being just one example of American abundance. Indeed, Potter suggests that abundance is one leftover of the American frontier (if it has indeed closed), allowing some of the forces which Turner identifies to exist after the 'closing' of the frontier (156). However, many of the authors describing the plains found that abundance overwhelming and could experience a lack (most specifically of culture): "despite an abundance of space, people have found themselves being driven to a few isolated oases where they live packed closely

together, while all around them the land stretches away like a great, wild void” (Worster 154). In Irving’s *A Tour on the Prairies* he writes that “the landscape was vast and beautiful. There is an expansion of feeling in looking upon these boundless and fertile wastes”(97); here it seems that Irving is feeling the sublime, but is unable to express it fully, he instead tamely calls it a “waste” then compares it to the “close dungeon of innumerable boughs” of the woodland. Later he writes that

There is something inexpressibly lonely in the solitude of a prairie. The loneliness of a forest seems nothing to it... There the imagination is left free to picture some livelier scene beyond. But here we have an immense extent of landscape without a sign of human existence. We have the consciousness of being far, far beyond the bounds of human habitation; we feel as if moving in the midst of a desert world... The silence of the waste was now and then broken by the cry of a distant flock of pelicans stalking like spectres about a shallow pool. Sometimes by the sinister croaking of a raven in the air, while occasionally a scoundrel wolf would scour off from before me and having attained a safe distance, would sit down and howl and whine with tones that gave a dreariness to the surrounding solitude. (100)

Irving’s alliteration here creates an uneasy scene: the “pelicans stalking like spectres”, sinister ravens, “scoundrel wolf scouring” off and the “surrounding solitude” combine to make the prairie seem almost supernatural in this passage. Compare this to Twain describing the Mississippi as an “awful solitude”: frontiers are here linked by a paradoxical abundance of void. The imagery is nightmarish like the Mississippi of Mrs. Trollope and Dickens. Irving talks of “silence of the waste” where Trollope’s Mississippi contains “a quantity of floating rubbish” and instead of the sinister raven and scoundrel wolf the Mississippi is home to “monstrous bulrushes, and now and then a huge crocodile luxuriating in the slime” (17). Where the Mississippi for Dickens is populated with “grizzly skeletons” (*Notes* 190) the prairie has “pelicans stalking like spectres”. Nature is not welcoming in these frontier landscapes but rather sinister, ghostly and foreboding. Having said this, these regions do contain life and therefore cannot be truly empty (to say nothing of the native cultures) and it is the imagination of the authors which imbues nature with these negative connotations in response. As with Dickens in the Mississippi the frontier of the American West encourages use of the imagination and fictionalisation:

Irving had used history to write a form of fiction – fiction because it certainly was not history. He applied a nineteenth-century romantic gloss to his Western subjects – he had to, both because of his own penchant and because of the tastes of his readers – a gloss which did not enhance but which obscured and befogged the historical reality... Irving's *Tour*, therefore, represents a sort of first and last chance to do poetic justice to reality in the West. As history or as fiction, it failed to have a lasting significance. Irving, the only skilled eyewitness, had found no way to transform that perishable reality into a lasting truth. (R. E. Lee 69)

I disagree with Lee when he claims Irving did not create a “lasting truth”. While it is true that *A Tour on the Prairies* has not had as lasting a significance as other fictions of the West – for example James Fenimore Cooper's work – it is a valid representation of the narrator-author's subsequent opinion of the West. Lee dismisses Cooper's *The Prairie* (1828) as “written out of whole cloth by a man who had never been west of the Finger Lakes” (59). James Wallace suggests a different reading of Cooper's intention, which was not to create fact or history but to create a “moral fiction that engages the reader's imagination through an essentially realistic portrayal of the details of the fictional world” (120). Significantly, it is not the realistic portrayal of the details of the *real world* which Cooper wishes to create. Rather the fictional world must be believable so that it *could* exist in our world. Lee claims that “Irving's West is – unfortunately – more East than West” (59) because it was written from a retrospective point of view from the East. However, Bryan Wolf argues that “Irving converts the otherness of history into a fabric of fictions indistinguishable from more ‘objective truths’” (*Romantic Re-Vision* 113) and that

Like Charles Brockden Brown before him, [Irving] defines in his fiction the limits of the observable and commonsensical world, displaying the vulnerability of empirical thought before the pressures of the imagination and the individual's desire to know. (ibid. 114)

I argue that Irving continues this theme in his travel works (and indeed in his other Western works). This suggests that travel in Irving's book is somewhat fictionalised, because it cannot fail to be otherwise. The extent of the void at the prairies encourages further fictionalisation.

This is typified in many instances in *A Tour on the Prairies*, a book, as already mentioned, in which essentially nothing happens. When Crayon spies a cliff he not only uses

a maritime metaphor, but also once more populates this wild expanse with something familiar to him; not the American republic this time, but the quasi-fairytale world he earlier wrote of in *Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada* (1829) and one of his best known works, *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832):

To the south west on the summit of a hill was a singular crest of broken rocks resembling a ruined fortress. It reminded [him] of the ruin of some Moorish castle crowning a height in the midst of a lonely Spanish landscape. To this hill [they] gave the name of Cliff Castle. (61)

Not only is he populating this blank page in his prose, but he is also actively writing on the landscape, naming this cliff as a castle to suit his needs. Likewise a few paragraphs later Crayon talks of the prairies which border rivers, and are therefore more picturesque, they are “always varied, in this way, with woodland, so beautifully interspersed as to appear to have been laid out by the hand of taste; and they only want here and there a village spire, the battlements of a castle, or the turrets of an old family mansion rising from among the trees, to rival the most ornamented scenery of Europe” (62). Crayon once again laments the lack of civilisation in the wilderness. His idea of civilisation is picturesque civilisation, or ruins showing the decay of it. Irving, through Crayon, is viewing the prairies from a European, picturesque point of view.

However, there are several signs that the intradiegetic Crayon does experience something of the liminal condition of the frontier. Crayon, this “middle-aged gentleman of ruffled sleeves and exquisite temperament” (Antelyes 45) does join the hunters in disrupting the tranquillity of the picturesque scene: “there was something in this picture of the last moment of a wounded deer to touch the sympathies of one not hardened to the gentle disports of the chase; such sympathies, however, are but transient” (Irving, *A Tour* 51). This can be viewed as regression to the wild in the wilderness and the waning influence of civilisation as man travels further west, something which the other literary travellers I cover have observed in others, but not before experienced themselves. Here, though he claims that “man is naturally an animal of prey, and, however changed by civilization, will readily relapse into his instinct for destruction” (ibid.). Trying to rationalise his behaviour, Crayon is being changed by the landscape. When he set out, Irving was trying to mould the wilderness to his own means economically and creatively, much as the pioneers and frontiersman do; civilising the wilderness. However, there is something about the American West which renders this at



least temporarily impossible. In fact, in a comic inversion, the landscape moulds and alters Crayon; as William Bedford Clark states, *A Tour* is

A kind of mock-heroic quest that quietly subverts the perennial American myth of westering, a myth that presupposes that civilization must inevitably conquer the wilderness. In *A Tour on the Prairies*, it is the West itself that wins in the end and sends the would-be torchbearers of law and order – peace, progress, and prosperity – scurrying back to Fort Gibson. (336)

Crayon is a liminal character in the West, removed from the “torchbearers of law and order”. Irving’s characters (including Crayon)

Are almost always marginal figures... isolated from the recognized channels of productive activity within their societies; they rely on wit and imagination to maintain themselves within their worlds, and ... draw attention, through their tales, to the process of fiction-making itself” (*Romantic Re-Vision* 109).

We can see that this is true not only in the case of Knickerbocker and Crayon in *The Sketch Book*, but in *A Tour* which supposedly contains no fiction at all.

Crayon, through the course of the narrative, becomes increasingly disenchanted with the “half-breeds” of the group which I believe to be a testament to his acceptance of the savage, almost in tandem with the civilised; it is when the two are evident in one person and amalgamated that Crayon finds it distasteful. The Creole Tonish in particular is lambasted for the wild urges which he feels; he is unable to obtain balance. Tonish always returns with “no game but his customary budget of wonderful tales” (63). Do we here see an ugly mirror image of Crayon himself, who cannot find the “game” of a story but returns with “wonderful”, or not so, tales. Crayon is just as guilty as Tonish of falling back on storytelling when the landscape disappoints. It is interesting to note here that Crayon talks of the hunter who raises the alarm of Indian attack as “the author” of “wanton fabrication” (77) which mimics Crayon’s own problems tackling writing about the prairies: namely, that if there is nothing to describe, all that remains to be done is fabricate. The narrative is peppered with Indian stories, designed within the diegesis to distract and entertain hunters with tales about the land in which they are travelling, but also detached, being interesting and full of adventure. The adventure for the rangers is of their own making: endless hunts or chases

giving bursts of adrenaline to alleviate the boredom. It is notable that Crayon even begins to partake in these mounted hunts when in the prairies proper, after having earlier chastised the impetuous youngsters of the group for chasing after anything which moved. This is portrayed in perhaps the most exciting passage of the work as a whole: the Buffalo chase which ends with Crayon removing the tongue of one of the beasts as a trophy. This is the climax of the story intradiegetically and represents Crayon's most complete frontier self, but extradiegetically – and in order for the work to represent a rite of passage – the narrative continues until another sea metaphor brings it to a close: “Beatte climbed a high tree commanding a wide prospect, and took a look out like a mariner at sea. He came down with cheering tidings” (119); and thus ended Irving's “foray into the Pawnee Hunting Grounds” (122) with Irving adhering to the idea of danger and adventure to the last.

The stories and tales are designed by Irving the narrator-author to add interest and flavour to the narrative. It is a narrative in which much of the excitement is promised and hinted at by the omnipresent Pawnee threat and suspense, as well as the intriguing and exciting chapter subtitles. However, the excitement ultimately comes to nothing. This increasingly leaves the reader with a wry smile at Irving's artfulness in consistently building up, then gradually letting down suspense, normally through a comic event. The stories serve the double function of distracting the characters in the story from their fears and entertaining the reader who does not share them. They are further examples of fiction in the frontier and function in similar ways to Twain's tall tales in *Roughing It* where the fiction serves not to undermine the story but to add flavour and a sense of local knowledge as a more legitimate point of view than that of an Easterner seeing the West as if from afar. That frontiers seem to require fictionalisation supports the claim that the West – and other frontiers – increasingly become myth written upon myth as the wealth of written material increases. Twain, writing near the end of the frontier can draw on those tall tales to create his impression of the West, albeit one which is heavily fictionalised. This is however the West which he can represent as a retrospective extradiegetic narrator-author. Irving was one of the first to weave fiction into his (ostensible) non-fiction writing, supported by Wolf's claim that

All individuals are fiction-makers in Irving's world, for all individuals are travelers, reading somewhat, hearing and seeing more, and dreaming more than all. Their truths, like their histories, are the products of man's mythy mind in active commerce with the world. (*Romantic Re-Vision* 113-4)

Nowhere is “man’s mythic mind” more active than in the West, already replete with myth. At the opening of Irving’s book the Native Americans are described in similar terms as great gossips “telling whimsical stories” (26); they too are fiction-makers. Another example of Irving populating the landscape with his imagination is when he talks of “the beautiful forest [which] abounded in bee trees; that is to say trees in the decayed trunks of which wild bees had established their hives” which are described as associated “with the farm house and the flower garden... the heralds of civilization” (29).

The bees are one example of Irving writing civilisation upon the wild in *A Tour*; the prairie dogs are painted in a similar light. Irving concentrates on the ‘human’ attributes of these creatures. These animals are given greater attention, however, as they populate the great expanse of the prairies, the great void. The prairie dogs are described as members of a “republic” (108) and are humanised by Irving who is not alone in creating imagined society for these mammals:

The prairie dog is, in fact, one of the curiosities of the Far West, about which travellers delight to tell marvellous tales, endowing him at times, with something of the politic and social habits of a rational being, and giving him systems of civil government and domestic economy almost equal to what they used to bestow upon the beaver (108).

Irving ends the section by having Crayon dream of the dogs’ personified actions: “I could not help picturing to myself the inhabitants gathered together in noisy assemblage, and windy debate, to devise plans for the public safety, and to vindicate the invaded rights and insulted dignity of the republic” (110). Hence Crayon has entered into the discourse of prairie dog humanising and has populated the prairies with characters, as do most of the travel writers under consideration when presented with homogeneity in landscape<sup>28</sup>. Likewise when struggling to comprehend the scene before him, the writer takes something known and translates it to the unknown: the wild prairies become a microcosm of the United States, the republic Irving knows from the East. While this could simply be seen as a metaphor for expansionism, or even more obviously, the author seeing something familiar in something alien, Peter Antelyes argues that Irving’s trilogy of Western books are examples of Irving consuming the West and using its resources economically to further his career: “when Irving

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<sup>28</sup> John Steinbeck uses a similar technique with the eponymous dog in *Travels with Charley* (1962) more than a century later.

returned to America... he found not only a new America but a new calling as well. He would enter that marketplace himself in search of the American tale of adventurous enterprise” (43). Irving, then, is another of the authors who aimed to profit from the West in a less obvious way than the prospectors and railroad magnates, but saw the region as an equally untapped resource. Christine Bold discussed the growing trend of the both commodifying and fictionalising the West in her book *Selling the West* (1987), though its period of interest stretches later than mine, to 1960. This suggests that long after the frontier was supposedly closed, the textual, mythic West was at work and being constructed retrospectively. In her book Bold discusses the rise of the dime and crime novel and the difficulty of writing on the West after the close of the frontier. Authors were forced to look back on the West and apply their point of view on a West which had in reality ceased to exist. The West of these novels can therefore be said to represent the West of intertextuality and rewriting; it is the West of the writing point of view rather than the travelling point of view.

It is significant that “Mark Twain and Melville both looked back for the material of their greatest works” (T. Tanner, *Scenes of Nature* 43-4); the frontier had already moved from Twain’s best-known location, the Mississippi River. Likewise *Roughing It* has Twain looking back. For Irving the frontier was largely unchanged from when he travelled but he was still looking back, just as with his 1820 *Sketch Book*.

In *The Sketch Book* Knickerbocker – as persona within persona – is given two of the four chapters specifically concerning America. These are the fictional sketches which paint the familiar New England scenery of Irving’s home as picturesque, adopting much of the Romantic sensibility, though also incorporating the uncanny which typifies the tales of Edgar Allan Poe and the American Gothic which itself is derived from the earlier European form. Irving’s book on the East is interesting because it writes of when New York was the frontier region and demonstrates both an American author’s and an American audience’s desire to read of the frontier, be it past or present. The same can be said of ‘Rip Van Winkle’ in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, where both the first Dutch settlers and the early pre-revolution village are central to the story. However, on Irving’s return to America he needed to go further west.

While Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky asserts that “*The Sketch Book* is not a travelogue, or a travel book, although Irving does adopt the travel motif as the premise for Crayon’s journey” (394), I am inclined to disagree. There is no need for a travel book to have accounts of travelling or even to have a truly reliable narrator (the disparity between narrator-character and narrator-author is identified throughout this work). In fact it is almost a trait of nineteenth

century travel writing that it does not. Likewise, the scenes or sketches are perfectly conducive to a travel book and the inclusion of tales and stories unconnected to the travel itself is again not uncommon (Twain is another proponent of this technique). Having said this, the main interest in *The Sketch Book* is not as a travel book but for transatlantic comparisons and for its narrator. Crayon waxes lyrical about travel, saying:

I have wandered through different countries and witnessed many of the shifting scenes of life. I cannot say that I have studied them with the eye of a philosopher, but rather with the sauntering gaze with which humble lovers of the picturesque stroll from the window of one print-shop to another; caught sometimes by the delineations of beauty, sometimes by the distortions of caricature, and sometimes by the loveliness of landscape. As it is the fashion for modern tourists to travel pencil in hand, and bring home their portfolios filled with sketches, I am disposed to get up a few for the entertainment of my friends. When, however, I look over the hints and memorandums I have taken down for the purpose, my heart almost fails me, at finding how my idle humor has led me astray from the great object studied by every regular traveller who would make a book. I fear I shall give equal disappointment with an unlucky landscape-painter, who had travelled on the Continent, but following the bent of his vagrant inclination, had sketched in nooks, and corners, and by-places. His sketch-book was accordingly crowded with cottages, and landscapes, and obscure ruins; but he had neglected to paint St. Peter's, or the Coliseum, the cascade of Terni, or the bay of Naples, and had not a single glacier or volcano in his whole collection. (9-10)

Irving's fear that the narrator-character has not adequately recorded what the narrator-author wishes to describe is telling here; the "sauntering gaze" – perhaps a contradiction – is an important idea in Irving's work, particularly his travel writing. It implies a point of view which often misses what is of importance; the intradiegetic is not providing the extradiegetic narrator-author with the material he requires so he must either make do with what is provided or turn the sauntering gaze into something with more focus. James makes a similar statement:

It is too late to recover all those lost impressions – those of the last six years – that I spoke of in beginning; besides, they are not lost altogether, they are buried deep in my head, they have become part of my life, of my nature. (*Notebooks* 24)

These impressions create the point of view of the extradiegetic narrator-author, but they cannot necessarily be repeated by him. The lengthy passage from *The Sketch Book* shows Crayon's picturesque sensibilities and humble demeanour, capable of "the distortions of caricature", and conscious only of the "nooks, and corners, and by-places". Significantly for this study, Crayon talks not about viewing the landscapes directly, but from the point of view of other artists and through yet another point of view as mentioned in the previous chapter, the window. The window is a significant point of view. The importance of

Looking through a window, as opposed to being out on the street, is that the window-world, like the faculty of Judgement, is a space of dalliance. It allows one to pause over middle terms. The window mediates what one sees; it gives the viewer not only the world outside... but an awareness of that world as seen through a frame.  
(Wolf, *Vermeer* 103)

Thus the window functions as the narrator-author's point of view in some respects. The window is an important framing device for rail travel and it is looking as though through a window which suggests a greater disparity between travel and writing. Looking through a window (or several windows) betrays the development of various points of view and ways of viewing which become more prevalent as the nineteenth century wears on; partly this is due to technological advancements, partly it is a response to other writerly attitudes towards the United States. More windows – or points of view – become available to the traveller during the nineteenth century. The passage above finishes with an appraisal of the picturesque versus the sublime. Approaching the American sublime from the point of view of the picturesque is discussed as a significant failure in the next chapter. Crayon, the sketcher of *The Sketch Book* finds that he is more interested in the small and detailed than the vast and homogenous. This is a problem magnified in the American West.

As with many of the travel writers of this study, the ocean is all too much for Crayon, "the temporary absence of worldly scenes and employments produces a state of mind peculiarly fitted to receive new and vivid impressions. The vast space of waters that separate the hemispheres is like a blank page in existence" (11). This "blank page" has more in common with the grandiose prairies and Niagara, a sight too grand to be consumed, a curse on perspective. As an author, Irving's compulsion is to fill this blank page with sketches;

I said that at sea all is vacancy; I should correct the expression. To one given to day-dreaming, and fond of losing himself in reveries, a sea voyage is full of subjects for meditation; but then they are the wonders of the deep and of the air, and rather tend to abstract the mind from worldly themes. (12)

The drive for fictionalisation is another point of view shared between the transatlantic and Western frontiers. This is perhaps a hint to the origin of ‘Rip Van Winkle’ and ‘The Legend of Sleepy Hollow’. The inclusion of ‘Sleepy Hollow’ in *The Sketch Book* is particularly interesting in how the narrative itself is introduced. This tale is the penultimate chapter of the book and is perhaps an example of Crayon’s failure to truly come to terms with England, and Europe as a whole. Where he openly admits a penchant for the picturesque and detail over grandeur and the sublime, he also fails to see these in their context. As such, Crayon is “an outsider... [his] main objective is somehow to get inside the timelessness of England via an imaginative projection into the very fiber of its cultural and spiritual heritage” (Rubin-Dorsky 397). Expecting to find relics of Falstaff and Shakespeare – almost to find them alive and inhabiting their famous scenes – Crayon suffers the almost inevitable disappointment of the traveller which is a theme of this work. The picturesque is there in abundance for Crayon, but it still seems empty. Finding the disappointment in the picturesque England more traumatic than that of the actual absence of the sea, Crayon is “destined to play the role of observer... the best he can do in this regard is fabricate an emotion, devise an illusion, or create his own fiction” (Ibid. 397-8). This he does in the shape of his two American tales, which themselves are based on a pre-United States, Colonial America; after failing to find the picturesque in Britain, he looks to a European past in his own country, but one which is necessarily fictionalised and romanticised. Just as with James in *English Hours* (1905) and the fictional Des Esseintes in *À Rebours* (1884), the present represents a loss of the history which is so longed for, people ruin the scene, and the fiction or the impression garnered from texts is still more impressive. Irving’s fiction is brimming with history residing in the picturesque that he feels, somehow, is lacking in England.

Knickerbocker, himself something of a relic (because he is linked by name to the Dutch occupancy of New York), is wheeled out and his writings are given (almost excessive) credence by Crayon. Knickerbocker is quoted as having written: “I have even talked with Rip Van Winkle myself, who, when last I saw him, was a very venerable old man, and so perfectly rational and consistent on every other point, that I think no conscientious person could refuse to take this into the bargain” (41). This gives the account added credulity in

Crayon's eyes. As Rubin-Dorsky suggests, the use of "rational and consistent" by Knickerbocker "transcends the confines of such sets of terms as "real and imaginary," "fact and fiction"" (400), this undermines not only Rip's tale as not necessarily truthful, but also Knickerbocker's and by extension Crayon's (of most interest here) and Irving's. However, by including this in the text, Irving is therefore metatextually commenting on the validity of any text which is "rational and consistent", certainly one 'written' by Crayon. This idea is important not only for the non-Knickerbocker chapters in this volume, but in *A Tour on the Prairies*, the other book under the Crayon pseudonym covered here.

The world of the tales is steeped in the history which Crayon respects, namely European history; the settings for both are old Dutch settlements in northeast America. Sleepy Hollow is a living museum: "though many years have elapsed since I trod the drowsy shades of Sleepy Hollow, yet I question whether I should not still find the same trees and the same families vegetating in its sheltered bosom" (274). This place has the decency to remain unchanged as in the imagination of the author (unlike England). Rubin-Dorsky suggests that the legend is Sleepy Hollow itself, a harmonious meeting of picturesque landscape and man (404). This is an idea imbued with the American frontier psychology, though Irving's conception of this psychology is rudely shattered in the hunting episodes of *A Tour on the Prairies*.

As discussed in this work's first chapter, 'Rip Van Winkle' spans three distinct timeframes, just as 'Sleepy Hollow' is connected to the past; the pre-revolution colonial period or Rip, the exploratory time of Hendrick Hudson, and the post-revolution republic period in which Rip awakens. What is perhaps most telling about the periods, is that nothing has effectively changed when Rip wakes up: the pub is still named after a George – albeit George Washington rather than George III – with only cosmetic change performed to the sign:

He recognized on [it], however, the ruby face of King George... but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a sceptre, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.  
(37)

Both of the tales are ensconced in the mystery and history which Crayon was searching for in Europe, but found lacking. He returns, through a further layer of narration (Knickerbocker) to



his native land and to the familiar. It is in the country which he knows so well that Crayon can imagine the history, and the emptiness of European history (for him) which enabled it. Though it is telling that the idea of Europe as somehow more historical is not completely shattered; the characters are essentially European in European landscapes; yet they are part of Irving's – through Crayon's – through Knickerbocker's American imagination. Irving's views on England can be summed up with his views on "Little Britain": "though thus fallen into decline, Little Britain still bears traces of its former splendour" (197); splendour which Irving seems to believe Americans would appreciate more carefully.

It is also important to note here that Irving is interested in the Northeast of America when it was still a frontier region, and plays upon some of the fear associated with frontier living, most notably the unknown; in this case ghosts. Knickerbocker and Crayon believe these tales, as noted above, even if Irving obviously does not, and it is Crayon whom Irving takes to the prairies and who is spooked and excited by the proximity to real and present danger, though in this instance Irving is not necessarily immune from the fears of the frontier which accost his persona. There are several layers of point of view present in these tales; the frontier region is discussed by a narrator-character (Knickerbocker) within a narrator-character as persona (Crayon) by the author (Irving). These tales are also set in the past, and are discussed in European terms of the picturesque. All of these points of view recur throughout travel writing on the United States, as demonstrated; these points of view give the authors their impressions which are then given through yet another point of view as they are penned in their travel writings.

It has been noted that the transatlantic frontier is linked to the Western frontier in point of view, language and metaphor. In some of the descriptions of the transatlantic frontier in the previous chapter the sea is described in imagery which foreshadows the experience of the West. The two frontiers (as well as others) influence each other from both the point of view of the traveller and the point of view of the writer, extradiegetically. If the Western frontier influences the transatlantic, it is more likely that this is an extradiegetic consideration because of the chronology of travel: transatlantic frontier comes before Western. If the transatlantic frontier influences the description of the West, this could be either an intradiegetic or extradiegetic consideration.

In *A Tour*, Crayon likens the prairies to the sea; sublime in its vastness and emptiness: "a thunder storm on a prairie as upon the ocean derives grandeur and sublimity from wild and boundless waste over which it rages and bellows" (59); while Beatte hunting buffalo is "skirting along the horizon like a privateer in full chase of a merchantman" (98), populating

this ocean with civilised figures. Later, Crayon describes being on this vast “ocean” of “grassy undulating, or as it is termed, rolling country” which further calls to mind the waves and motion of the sea. Crayon also likens the journey over the plains to one at sea, with the boredom of unchanged landscape rendering anything different as disproportionately exciting:

After a tedious ride of several miles we came out upon an open tract of hill and dale interspersed with woodland. Here we were roused by the cry of Buffalo! Buffalo! The effect was something like that of the cry of a sail! a sail! at sea. (72)

And a little later: “the sight of any human being in this lovely wilderness was interesting; it was like speaking a ship at sea” (87). For Dickens, the plains are “not to be compared with even the tamest portions of Scotland or Wales. You... see the unbroken scenery all round you... like a sea without water... The excessive flatness of the scene makes it dreary, but tame”<sup>29</sup> (*Letters* 200). In *American Notes* the prairies are described as “a tranquil sea or lake without water, if such a simile be admissible” (201). However, as noted in the previous chapter Dickens’s transatlantic voyage was anything but “tame”: “the wind howling, the sea roaring, the rain beating: all in furious array against [the ship]. Picture the sky both dark and wild, and the clouds, in fearful sympathy with the waves, making another ocean in the air” (*Notes* 21). The two are associated in abundance, however, with the rain, the waves and the “ocean in the air” as oppressive as the “barren monotony” (202) of the plains. While viewing the plains of Nebraska, Robert Louis Stevenson writes: “we were at sea – there is no other adequate expression ... It was a world almost without a feature; an empty sky, an empty earth ... the green plain ran till it touched the skirts of heaven” (207). Such imagery returns to his description of the ocean which prefigures – both intra- and extradiegetically – the trip across the continent.

## Conclusion

The American West is just one frontier with which travellers contend; a liminal space which puts strains upon the traveller and the writer. Washington Irving, one of the earliest professional writers to head out West (Mrs. Trollope was not a professional when she travelled) created a persona that underwent the frontier experience and adopted a point of view from the margins of his society as seen in the climactic buffalo chase. As with the Mississippi, the transatlantic frontier, and Niagara (discussed in the next chapter), travellers

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<sup>29</sup> Letter to Forster on 15 April 1842.

from the East came with their own point of view and attempted to order the homogeneity and vastness of the scene with that point of view. The writer then had to either represent that point of view or present their retrospective. Crayon goes through a rite of passage but Irving responds to the West with fiction and from an Eastern point of view. After him the West becomes more fictionalised, more mythic. Dickens and Stevenson describe their West in terms of the transatlantic frontier. Twain was to continue the mythologizing of the West by using the point of view of fiction with his tall tales. He interacts with other tales to tell his story of the West but again uses vernacular and local knowledge to give his account his version of truth, just as Irving uses the fireside stories of Indians and ghosts. Twain's response to the West is from a significantly retrospective point of view, allowing for a greater role of fictionalisation while writing about a West which was becoming less of a frontier, both because of developments in travel technology and because of the spread of the culture and population of the United States. Without looking back, then, the possibility for a frontier point of view diminishes later in the nineteenth century and the West is seen as just another region of the United States. This is similar throughout the country as the liminality of travel is reduced, from the steamship on the Mississippi to the railroad across the plains to the Titanic. For James this meant that he didn't write on the West; an omission which signifies his view of the whole of the United States as a void. He can interact with his own personal history in the East; in the West there is nothing for him; no frontier and no history.

The next chapter discusses other European approaches to landscape and the point of view which works in the ordered Northeast but which fails when set against Niagara Falls.

## Four: The American Nightmare<sup>30</sup>

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Washington Irving begins his Western narrative in a landscape which is interesting and beautiful to his (recently returned from Europe) eye: “we were overshadowed by lofty trees, with straight smooth trunks, like stately columns... of a Gothic cathedral” (*A Tour on the Prairies* 25). I have described Irving attempting to view the West from a European viewpoint; he is also trying to utilise the picturesque. Crayon talks of a “picturesque march” (35) and adopts the Romantic approach for viewing the landscape: “the foliage had a yellow autumnal tint which gave to the sunny landscape the golden tone of one of the landscapes of Claude Lorraine” (41). Irving is trying to order the landscape through the work of Claude Lorraine, the seventeenth century French painter who used warm subtle tones and combined natural beauty with pastoral culture. Leo Marx states that “no painter, with the possible exception of Poussin, has tried harder to depict the Virgilian ideal [of myth and reality in nature] than Claude” (*Machine in the Garden* 89). There was a device for viewing landscapes in the style of Claude paintings, known as a “‘Claude-glass’, a darkened mirror with convex edges which not only reversed the scene viewed but softened its contrast and limits” (Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and Written Expression* 147). These devices were the clearest sign yet that the picturesque demanded the alteration of nature, or a mediating point of view between observation and expression. However, “none of the devices [Claude glass, camera obscura, perspective glass] worked. The Rockies, and the West generally, defied all attempts at description. They would continue to test writers and painters for the rest of the century” (ibid. 206).

The term ‘picturesque’ became common in the early 1700s and has a variety of possible etymologies (Nicholson 188) and definitions, but is conventionally “that which is suited to pictorial representation. There is already apparent, however, [in the early work of William Gilpin] the tendency to consider rough and irregular scenes of nature especially picturesque, to find in landscape the peculiar locus of the picturesque” (ibid. 192).

The word “‘sublime’ entered the European vocabulary in the late seventeenth century when the work of the Greek rhetorician Longinus was rediscovered” (10), writes Patrick McGreevy. An early theorist of the sublime, Edmund Burke suggested that a scene must

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<sup>30</sup> Elements of this chapter appeared in an earlier draft in an article in *U.S. Studies Online*, 14, Spring 2009. The article was entitled ‘Occidental Odysseys to Niagara, the Prairies and the Mississippi River: British and American Views on the Three Landscapes of the West’.

inspire terror but “could only be sublime if the actual danger was at a distance” (ibid.). Similarly: “the sublime draws its power from its ability ultimately to defeat (and ingest) the constraining force, reversing the threat of annihilation into a promise of liberation” (Wolf, *Romantic Re-Vision* 209). It is this threat which makes the liberation so much more rewarding; the liberation can be seen as the expression of the sublime in art. This expression aims to represent the sublime but does so from the point of view of metaphor (ibid. 236). With American scenery – as suggested in the earlier discussion of the West – this can leave *nothing but* metaphor. An issue for the sublime point of view is how to reconcile metaphor with nature; how to reconcile the text with the experience, writing with travel.

The sublime could offer the European traveller a point of view more suitable to the American landscape than the picturesque. However, like the picturesque, the sublime was also formulated for the European point of view on the European landscape. In this chapter I discuss Niagara Falls and the failure of the European sublime point of view when presented with the American sublime. Marjorie Hope Nicholson discusses the trend, most notable among travel writers, which devalued the terms ‘sublime’ and ‘picturesque’ as the scenery and convention became more familiar as a point of view:

The English traveler of the early nineteenth century now went abroad conditioned [to] ... self-consciously anticipat[e] the “sublime” experience. ... As [the century] went on, the traveler, armed with his “guides” and with the poems of Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley, gazed at the Alps or the lesser sublimities of the Lake District and felt, or thought he felt, or pretended to feel – as Burnet or Dennis or Wordsworth actually had felt. (372)

I begin my discussion of Niagara with guidebooks and suggest that my travel writers interact more with guidebook and other textual points of view than with the landscape itself. First, however, I wish to consider another point of view to order the American landscape: the grid.

### **Aerial America and the Grid**

The sublime and the picturesque are two points of view for ordering the landscape. Another prominent technique was to adopt an aerial point of view. One symptom of this is the arrangement of many American cities in grids. As with the railroad, straight lines are drawn over the contours of the land in an attempt to regulate, control and order the landscape. In some respects this is writing on the landscape. The city is the great antithesis to nature, and

American cities are predominantly arranged in grids, the least natural of forms which makes no allowances for the idiosyncrasies of the terrain (Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and Written Expression* 185).

Most American cities were planned before their construction, a vast grid which would accommodate the growing city and maintain order, in stark contrast to the ‘organic’ growth of European cities which generally expanded ad hoc. Dickens’s Eden in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, mentioned below, epitomises the American reliance on the grid. The grid is not new, having its antecedents in Dutch and Roman surveying and was therefore another European point of view imposed upon the American landscape. Most of the authors covered in this work, however, are following later European ideals of beauty whilst discussing the straight lines, as typified by William Hogarth in his *Analysis of Beauty* (1753) when he writes that “the serpentine line, as the human form, which line hath the power of super-adding grace to beauty. Note, forms of most grace have least of the straight line in them” (38). Anthony Trollope remarks that “a right-angled parallelogramical city, such as are Philadelphia and the new portion of New York, is from its very nature odious to me. I know that much may be said in its favour... Nevertheless I prefer a street that is forced to twist itself about” (I, 77). New York’s “gridiron plan of 1811 has been blamed for many of the unpleasant features of modern Manhattan: the narrow east-west streets, the congestion, the unimproved condition of riverside areas... one modern study has called it a drainage system” (Trachtenberg 29). Dickens feels oppressed and converted by the “handsome... but distractingly regular” city of Philadelphia:

After walking about it for an hour or two, I felt that I would have given the world for a crooked street. The collar of my coat appeared to stiffen, and the brim of my hat to expand beneath its quakery influence. My hair shrunk into a sleek short crop, my hands folded themselves upon my breast of their own calm accord, and thoughts of taking lodgings in Mark Lane..., and of making a large fortune by speculations in corn, came over me involuntarily. (*American Notes* 110)

The uniformity of the city reflects the uniformity of the people; how could they be anything else but “quakery” in cities such as this? Dickens is talking of Philadelphia’s historical association with the Quakers and finding that those early residents have influenced the form and shape of the city. However, when Dickens arrives he is influenced by the city; people’s influence on the landscape is seen as a natural relationship, when Dickens experiences the

relationship in miasmatic reverse, this is seen as unnatural. The cities in the travel accounts are typified by this uniformity; most are rectangular in layout with straight roads, most have a grand hotel, and even the colour scheme seems the same, as for example the red brick and green blinds of New England (ibid. 81).

Although most writers from Europe dislike the grid, Frances Trollope is not as scathing of it. She finds Washington – a city notably planned to accommodate a much larger population than that which inhabited it for much of the nineteenth century – “light, cheerful, and airy”. While noting that “it has been laughed at by foreigners, and even by natives, because the original plan of the city was upon an enormous scale, and but a very small part of it has been as yet executed”, she finds “nothing in the least degree ridiculous” (169). Trollope found Washington to be a polite city and one which was sufficiently ordered to overwrite (temporarily) her experience of Cincinnati and the West. The grid system, then, is an example of the early politicians and planners of the United States importing the uniformity of the Enlightenment, and ignoring or overwriting the landscape.

Thomas Jefferson shares Trollope’s appreciation of the grid (and had a part to play in the planning of the nation’s capital which she admired). Perhaps this is because they had both experienced the pre-domesticated American landscape: Trollope in Cincinnati and the Mississippi Valley, Jefferson in the colonies. The grid displays the importance of the bird’s eye view:

[Jefferson] wished to understand and control [the environment], and the aerial view was a favourite means to that end. His ‘Hints to Americans Travelling in Europe’ show how important the view, and books, were to his thinking... His collection of town plans, his part in the design of Washington, and – late in his life – his supervision of the construction of the University of Virginia by telescope from Monticello, provide further evidence of this interest in the aerial view. (Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and Written Expression* 167)

Mt. Vernon, George Washington’s residence, also overlooked the new capital city. The president’s residence was preferred as more in keeping with nature; Dickens and Anthony Trollope talk about the pleasing surroundings at Mt. Vernon. Henry James too professes affection for it, noting that:

The light of nature was there, splendid and serene; the Potomac opened out in its grandest manner; the bluff above the river, before the sweep of its horizon, raised its head for the historic crown. (*American Scene* 333)

Mt. Vernon has a more pleasing aspect as the scenery is more irregular and picturesque. However, it also allowed for an aerial point of view. Dickens talks about the importance of the aerial point of view when considering the city named after the first president when he writes that

It is sometimes called the City of Magnificent Distances, but it might with greater propriety be termed the City of Magnificent Intentions; for it is only on taking a bird's eye view of it from the top of the Capitol, that one can at all comprehend the vast designs of its projector, an aspiring Frenchman. Spacious avenues, that begin in nothing, and lead nowhere; streets, mile-long, that only want houses, roads and inhabitants; public buildings that need but a public to be complete.... One might fancy the season over, and most of the houses gone out of town for ever with their masters... Such as it is, it is likely to remain. (*American Notes* 129-130)

He describes “Washington, fresh in my mind and under my eye” (128), again suggesting an aerial viewpoint while creating an interesting conflict between the intra- and extradiegetic. The city was viewed by his eye as narrator-character but is now being recalled in the mind of the narrator-author; Dickens blurs the two – memory and perception – and suggests remembering is the same as seeing. Travel writing has been shown to be retracing the steps of the travel to some extent: the writing is a rite of passage as much as the original travel. This is a key point in the final chapter of this work concerning truth and point of view.

Anthony Trollope visited Washington during the Civil War. It was then very close to the fighting and literally on the border between the Union and the Confederacy. Believing the city to be doomed from the start and bemoaning the attempt to impose a capital upon a country and a city upon the land he says:

I have a strong idea, which I expressed before in speaking of the capital of the Canadas, that no man can ordain that on such a spot shall be built a great and thriving city. No man can so ordain even though he leave behind him, as was the case with Washington, a prestige sufficient to bind his successors to his wishes. The political



leaders of the country have done what they could for Washington. The pride of the nation has endeavored to sustain the character of its chosen metropolis. There has been no rival, soliciting favor on the strength of other charms. The country has all been agreed on the point since the father of the country first commenced the work. Florence and Rome in Italy have each their pretensions; but in the States no other city has put itself forward for the honor of entertaining Congress. And yet Washington has been a failure. (II, 5-6)

He goes on to become even more damning, noting the grand plan of the city, before presenting the harsh reality, describing it as

The most presumptuous in its pretensions. There is a map of Washington accurately laid down; and taking that map with him in his journeyings, a man may lose himself in the streets, not as one loses one's self in London, between Shoreditch and Russell Square, but as one does so in the deserts of the Holy Land, between Emmaus and Arimathea. In the first place no one knows where the places are, or is sure of their existence, and then between their presumed localities the country is wild, trackless, unbridged, uninhabited, and desolate. Massachusetts Avenue runs the whole length of the city, and is inserted on the maps as a full-blown street, about four miles in length. Go there, and you will find yourself not only out of town, away among the fields, but you will find yourself beyond the fields, in an uncultivated, undrained wilderness... There is much unsettled land within the States of America, but I think none so desolate in its state of nature as three-fourths of the ground on which is supposed to stand the City of Washington. (6-7)

James Young notes that the plan of the city was little more than a statement of intent:

Suggestive though it is... the plan for the Washington community, like the constitutional plan for government, remains in essence little more than a statement of the kind of governmental establishment the politicians *intended* to create. (9)

However, the growth of the capital – like the capitol building – stuttered for a long time: “dreams of a city of ‘160,000 in a few years’ were dashed against the reality of a village of less than 10,000 whites after twenty years of government residence” (ibid. 24).

Again it is the plan of the city and the attempt to order such desolate land which concerns Trollope; the intention – misguided in his opinion – is not validated until the plan becomes successful. At this point the grid’s ordering point of view is just a textual point of view. It is a fiction to be found on maps but not in reality. The grid commodifies the landscape, dividing it up to be sold more easily. The ‘city’ of Eden in *Martin Chuzzlewit* is another case in point of both the grid and the promise of future growth. Martin sees “a great plan” of

A flourishing city... an Architectural city! There were banks, churches, cathedrals, market-places, factories, hotels, stores, mansions, wharves; an exchange, a theatre; public building of all kinds, down to the office of the Eden Stinger, a daily journal; all faithfully depicted in the view before them. (340)

Though Mr Scadder is quick to point out to Martin that there is some scope for Chuzzlewit’s proposed architecture business when he reassuringly notes “Well! it ain’t all built ... Not quite” (341). When Martin and Mark arrive at Eden, however, they find it to be a miasmatic (“a fetid vapour, hot and sickening as the breath of an oven, rose up from the earth and hung on everything around” (363)) swamp with none of the above facilities; Martin has been stung by the Eden Stinger and becomes destitute. Dickens is fictionalising the extent of the figure of anticipation, and seeing Eden from the same point of view as Washington. However,

The figure of anticipation, or modifications of it, had virtually unlimited use. To every criticism of the physical or cultural shortcomings the new Republic, its boosters and friends could answer, in the immortal words of Henrietta Stackpole to Casper Goodwood, ‘Just you wait!’ [*The Portrait of a Lady* 628] (Fender, ‘American Landscape’ 57).

Anthony Trollope makes allusion to the myth that Washington was built on a bog and later returns to that point:

The President’s house is nice to look at, but it is built on marshy ground, not much above the level of the Potomac, and is very unhealthy. I was told that all who live there become subject to fever and ague, and that few who now live there have

escaped it altogether... The poor President cannot desert the White House. He must make the most of the residence which the nation has prepared for him. (I, 18-19)

While Dickens also notes the unhealthy landscape, linked, in *American Notes*, at least, with the scourge on the nation of slavery:

It is very unhealthy. Few people would live in Washington, I take it, who were not obliged to reside there; and the tides of emigration and speculation, those rapid and regardless currents, are little likely to flow at any time towards such dull and sluggish water. (130)

While it is true that the land was not of the best quality, this is an exaggeration and the nature of the land results simply in it being at the confluence of two rivers. This fear of the swamps (considering Malaria used to be present in the Southern U.S.) should not be downplayed, but the belief that the landscape somehow affects the people and by extension the government is a popular one in the nineteenth century, and comes from the earlier “miasmatic debate”. This refers to the idea that out of the many rivers, swamps and lakes of America comes a “syphilitic miasma that infected all who breathed it” and was a symptom of the general degeneracy of the U.S.—including its people and landscapes—which affected and infected Europeans (Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and Written Expression* 39;152). If the ordering point of view fails to contain nature there is the real fear that the landscape can affect the people. As with the Titanic, technology and culture cannot always succeed in containing nature.

The grid provided one point of view for travellers and allowed for the American landscape to be ordered to a degree. It was not necessarily favoured by every observer, however. The grid was perhaps too structured for some travellers who preferred to adopt the picturesque point of view which had nature more lightly ordered by man’s touch. The grids seemed impossible to fill; a failure of city planners’ perspective when confronted with the American landscape. It wasn’t until after the Civil War and near the end of the nineteenth century that society had expanded to fill the grand plan of the capital city. In a subsequent section on Niagara Falls I show that by the end of the nineteenth century it was the fetishisation of point of view that led to society’s overrunning of the great waterfall, and a shift toward an interest in viewing rather than what is viewed. This is mirrored in a development towards an interest in narrating rather than what is being told, as seen in Henry

James's work at the beginning of the twentieth century. This process is a prime consideration of this thesis.

### Text and Language

Another possible ordering point of view is provided by texts and language. As with the grid, this point of view was often European in descent. Seeing the landscape through texts becomes significant in the discussion of Niagara later in this chapter, but also applies to other landscapes. Thomas Jefferson

Responded to the Sublime; but his response was directed through a text. Before Jefferson and Chastellux visited the Natural Bridge they sat up overnight reading extracts from that counterfeit bard of the Sublime, Ossian. It was as if they needed to prepare themselves for the terrain by undergoing a nocturnal rite of passage with an appropriate text. (Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and Written Expression* 180)

This is another example of the European, textual point of view and the complex relationship between text and landscape. In part this reduces the responsibility of the observer to describe or articulate the landscape in his own terms: the author could appropriate the language of a poet, critic, or guide and the painter could pastiche Claude Lorraine. The use of the term "rite of passage" also relates to the previous chapter of this work where I suggest that viewing and experiencing frontier locations is a rite of passage. Tourism holds a similar relation to tourist sites, with the actual scene often viewed through a camera's viewfinder or through a guidebook; postcards are only truly enjoyed safely away from the scene in question. It is, I think, no coincidence that the photographic camera was invented in the nineteenth century which saw an explosion of the means and the desire to travel for pleasure and therefore the birth of tourism. This supports the earlier assertion that the sublime can only be enjoyed after the fact. In Jefferson's case above, he cannot see the sublime unless removed from it by viewing from the point of view of a text on the sublime.

Jefferson continued this textual point of view and even passed it on to Meriwether Lewis. As the more educated captain of the famous expedition over Captain William Clark, Lewis was given extensive access to the works which Jefferson thought would aid Lewis when attempting to describe the West; some books were even taken on the expedition (ibid. 191). Twain's "six pounds of Unabridged Dictionary" (*Roughing It* 53) is a comic comment on this theme. Text and language were seen as essential in viewing landscape; they provided

an ordering point of view. The Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-6 shows a similar *attempt* at ordering the landscape by writing on it:

Naming was frequently used to convey order... The explorers also took up Benjamin Rush's suggestion... that the glory of the Republic should be imposed upon the terrain. In consequence the names of many of the Republic's leaders adorned the topography of the West. Their names remain. Those of republican qualities fared less well; Philanthropy River subsequently became Stinking Water, and Wisdom River sank to Big Hole. (Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and Written Expression* 202)

By the time the expedition reaches the Far West, however, "there is no sense ... that Lewis's writing is shaping the terrain. It is, rather, simply responding to it" (ibid. 213). The Lewis and Clark expedition was, then, as much an expansionist drive and colonial mission as an exploration and fact-finding assignment. As Tony Tanner points out,

You cannot really 'discover' the already named, any more than you should 'settle' (or take) the already domesticated or inhabited. So for the most part they [Lewis and Clark] impose hundreds of names of their own, sometimes merely literal and *ad hoc* ('Traveller's Rest'), sometimes invoking the legitimating authorities and politicians of white America ('Jefferson's River'). Most of the names did not take hold – but the whole venture can be seen as an exercise of territorial annexation by nomination. (*Scenes of Nature* 4)

Imposing Eastern and European points of view upon the landscape were doomed to failure, however and all attempts to view this landscape from the picturesque point of view ultimately failed. Later however, after the textual fabric of the American West was more established the library *could* aid the artist writing on America, as long as it was a library of texts specifically written on – and for – America.

The American artist Albert Bierstadt is one painter who tried to represent the West for audiences back East, and in some cases for European audiences: "he was the painter who best domesticated the West, eliminating its least pleasant aspects and making it an appropriate subject for a sitting-room wall" (Baigell 10). Bierstadt was trained in Europe and painted in the German Romantic style of the Düsseldorf School, though didn't attend the Düsseldorf

Academy (ibid. 9) which explains why he – like Lewis – attempted to view the West from a picturesque viewpoint. Although he paints the West he often uses small communities in the foreground of his work so as to view the landscape from a cultured point of view, as in *Surveyor's Wagon in the Rockies* (1859) [Figure III] of which Baigell writes: “for Bierstadt, the plains were probably impossible to organize into compositional units, a factor that might explain his preference for mountain-valley themes” (26). In *Surveyor's Wagon* the landscape is an indistinct background to the detail of the wagon and Bierstadt concentrates on what can be represented. To counter this difficulty, Bierstadt made the American sublime picturesque by employing the palette of Claude in many of his paintings. He frames the landscapes of Yellowstone and Yosemite with mountains and valleys so as to contain the wilderness as with *In the Mountains* (1867). Baigell notes that this painting – along with many of Bierstadt's other works – was probably painted abroad, in Europe (42). Bierstadt was therefore literally painting from a European point of view. He used sketches and possibly photographs (ibid. 13) so was viewing the landscape through other works (albeit his own) as well. The major similarity between Lewis and Bierstadt is that both were attempting to view the West from a European point of view, taking their European learning and using it as the means with which to see and record the West. Where Lewis failed, however, Bierstadt succeeded by domesticating the landscape in his painting because he was entering into the well established myth of the West which was not available to Lewis. Bierstadt produced works which conformed to Eastern conceptions of the West and were for consumption by an Eastern audience.



Figure III. *Surveyor's Wagon in the Rockies* (1859), Albert Bierstadt.

Marjorie Nicholson suggests the importance of precedence when she writes that “like men of every age, we see in Nature what we have been taught to look for, we feel what we have been prepared to feel” (Nicholson 1). If there is no precedent in language or in text then there is no point of view to order the impression. Robert Clark notes that

There is already in place a convention against which the author’s performance can be measured, one which will provide both sign of his writerly skill and sign of the writing’s experiential truth. To have seen is only credible if the seeing translates into the appropriate discourse. (81)

But in American landscape

The gap between the experienced nature and the imagined culture is so great that the honest writer cannot sustain allusions to the past, or to the cultural centre. The failed allusion renders absurd the formality of the language; poetic style itself becomes suspect; metonymy is broken and metaphor stretched to a point beyond which it can function as a way of expressing truth – even the truth of personal feeling. (Fender, ‘American Landscape’ 52)

Having said this, writers felt the need to try to express America. Christopher Mulvey suggests that writing comes before seeing:

We *write* before we see before we speak. The British then wrote on post-revolutionary North America before they wrote upon the pages of their variously named books about their travel in post-revolutionary North America. The British wrote on America and as they wrote on America they were able to see it, and then, and only then, could they talk about it. (‘Ecriture and landscape’ 101)

As has already been noted, in the work of writers like Mrs. Trollope and Charles Dickens, when the American landscape does not conform to any previous ideas of beauty, or is unwritten, the response was ambivalence, disgust, or silence. It is only once these conventions are established the landscape can truly be described.

The next section briefly discusses the landscape of the Northeast of the United States which – for most travellers – was their first experience of American landscape and conformed



(on a slightly larger scale) to their pre-conceived notions of nature in the New World. This region is the most ‘European’ of American landscapes as a point of contrast to Niagara, the Mississippi and the prairies in the following section.

### The Northeast

Before coming to Niagara Falls it is important to discuss the point of view with which travellers were coming to the falls. They arrived from the East Coast of the country where the landscape conformed to Jefferson’s pastoral and European ideas of the picturesque. It conformed mainly because the landscape was not too dissimilar from the European landscape written about by the Romantics: “American landscapes most readily appreciated were those that were most picturesque; these were at the same time the most English” (Mulvey, ‘Ecriture and Landscape’ 104). Where Europe had the Lake District and the Alps, America had the Appalachian Mountains:

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the growing interest in wilderness was sustained more by the values of the picturesque than by the higher principles of the sublime. ... It was the picturesque qualities of the wilderness, of the natural scenes of the Catskills and Adirondacks ... which also stimulated American enthusiasm for nature travel. (Bunce 28)

The states east of Mississippi attracted visitors from Britain largely with the interest and novelty of their cities and institutions, as with the prisons for Dickens and mail service for Anthony Trollope. However, as already noted, the

Hudson River and its great glacial valley through the Catskills never failed to excite an interested response. It became an occasion for a set piece in landscape description and always evoked comparison with the Rhine Valley or the Scottish Highlands” (Mulvey, *Anglo-American Landscapes* 11-12).

Mulvey describes this landscape as sublime, but it more properly conforms to the picturesque, as set out above. These Eastern landscapes were appreciated not for their wildness, as might have been claimed, but for their order and closeness to the “European standards of culture” (Sears 49); domesticated, pastoral and rural. It was rare, however, for

nineteenth century travellers to visit the United States with nature being their primary interest. It was more ordinarily the manners, politics, or institutions of the country. Frances Trollope – as discussed earlier – entered the United States through its back door, the Mississippi River, and therefore viewed the country through that experience. Travelling in the opposite direction to many of her contemporary and later travellers she settled in the West before moving East. Fanny left Cincinnati and her failed venture in early 1830 (“we left nought to regret at Cincinnati. The only regret was, that we had ever entered it; for we had wasted health, time, and money there” (144)) and began her tour of the United States which was to be chronicled in the second part of *Domestic Manners of the Americans*. She therefore imagines the rest of the United States from the point of view of her Western experiences. The change on entering the Allegheny region, which, she says “is a garden” (153) must have been dramatic. Mrs. Trollope effuses lavish praise upon the scenery, talking about its “endless variety” (154), which of course is just what the Mississippi lacks. However, even this scenery is too large:

Again and again we enjoyed all the exhilarating sensations that such scenes must *necessarily* inspire, but in attempting a continued description of our progress over these beautiful mountains, I could only tell again of rocks, cedars, laurels, and running streams, of blue heights and green vallies [sic], yet the continually varying combinations of these afforded us unceasing please... [Looking back presented] a stupendous view; but having gazed upon it for some moments, we turned to pursue our course, and the certainty that we should see it no more raised no sigh of regret. (155; emphasis added)

That Trollope felt no regret to be leaving this “unceasing pleasure” may seem confounding. As the scene “necessarily” inspires, this suggests that the homogeneity of further west has left its mark on Trollope’s senses. Echoes of the Mississippi experience abound here; the “mud banks, monstrous bulrushes, and now and then a huge crocodile luxuriating in the slime” (17) are replaced with “rocks, cedars, laurels, and running streams, of blue heights and green vallies”. As discussed above, variety is one of the most important features of a picturesque landscape. Here, the list of features seems to be varied, yet they are listed prefaced with “I could only tell again”, suggesting boredom of the scenery. Trollope was forced to be inspired by this landscape, and the pleasure was forced, there was no respite of civilisation and thus she became bored. This is not to say that this landscape was not beautiful to Trollope, simply

that – as with the less salubrious landscapes of the West – there was too much of it. Both intra- and extradiegetically the Mississippi has affected Trollope’s view of the East and the oppression of homogeneity influences a landscape which on the surface should be pleasing. The same feature is seen in Dickens, though with the later writer it is only the narrative which has been ‘infected’ by the miasma of the Mississippi. Dickens’s travel was in the ‘right’ direction from East to West so Dickens the traveller experienced the pleasing scenery of the East before the West, though the extradiegetic narrative is haunted by the Mississippi. Dickens’s earlier travels and experiences seem to be largely positive in the institutions of the North; it is not until he travelled south and west that the issue of slavery and the homogeneity of American landscape turned his experiences negative. In the final chapter of this work I examine the change in tone of response to the United States across Dickens’s letters, travel book, and fiction: the later experiences in the South and West infect the narrative for the extradiegetic narrator-author and therefore cast a negative point of view not only on those passages of *American Notes*, but Dickens’s entire North American experience.

Trollope seems to be appreciating the picturesque in the Alleghanies, sprinkled with the sublime which has been imported from Europe:

I have never been familiar with mountain scenery. Wales has shewn [sic] me all I ever saw, and the region of the Alleghany Alps in no way resembles it. It is a world of mountains rising around you in every direction, and in every form; savage, vast, and wild; yet almost at every step, some lovely spot meets your eye, green, bright and blooming, as the most cherished nook belonging to some noble Flora in our own beautiful land. (157)

Trollope is here mixing the language of the picturesque (“nook”) with that of the sublime (“savage, vast, and wild”) as if the sight of mountains arouses her affinity with the Romantic poets. The scenery in the distance is “vast, and wild” yet “at every step, some lovely spot” is encountered; the sublime is awful but at a distance (and therefore appreciated) with the quasi-European “cherished nook” the immediate impression. Trollope even describes the Alleghany Mountains as the “Alleghany Alps”, linking the American peaks to the most famous site of the Romantic sublime and suggesting a European point of view. Yet it is clear – as already stated – that she is expressing what she thinks she should feel when presented with mountains. It is the picturesque which is impressing Mrs. Trollope in the East, not the American sublime.

The Hudson has already been identified as one of the most pleasing American landscapes for European visitors. It has at every mile the “startling effect of the combination of rocks, trees, and water; there is no interval of flat or insipid scenery, from the moment you enter upon the river at New York, to that of quitting it at Albany, a distance of 180 miles” (ibid. 285). Again the “flat or insipid scenery” is mentioned; even in pleasurable river travel the Mississippi haunts the traveller and the author. Trollope goes on to describe the scenery as most definitely picturesque: the “wild and rocky character” set against “ever varying; woods, lawns, pastures, and towering cliffs”, as well the cultural addition of “several forts, generally placed in most commanding situations” [which] “still show by their battered ruins, where the struggle was strongest” (286). On this same trip up the Hudson, Trollope notes passing “the ‘Sleepy Hollow’ of Washington Irving” which is another sign of the landscape already being cultured and mediated and, she says, “restores the imagination to a better tone” (ibid.), presumably again referring to the Mississippi. Much as with Henry James and Washington Irving in Europe, Trollope is searching for signs of culture in order to make this landscape truly picturesque. When she finds it, it is pleasing to her and she can adopt the point of view of the picturesque. She can order the landscape through Irving’s fictional text and culture represented by the forts which frame the landscape and provide perspective for her European eye.

Stonington is described by Trollope as being “about two miles from the most romantic point of the Potomac River, and Virginia spreads her wild, but beautiful and most fertile Paradise... through scenery that can hardly be called forest, park, or garden; but which partakes of all three” (184). Here the nature myths of America are in full force: although only a short walk from civilisation, Trollope describes the scene as Edenic. The walk itself presents the perfect picturesque ideal of the wild but not dangerous forest, mixed with landscaped, ‘cultured’ nature of the park and garden.

Not far from the spot above described by Trollope is a true example of the sublime, a “tremendous scene” of “hideous rocks”: a waterfall. Trollope reveals knowledge of the distinction between beauty and sublimity when she says:

To call this scene beautiful would be a strange abuse of terms, for it is altogether composed of sights and sounds of terror. The falls of the Potomac are awfully sublime: the dark deep gulf which yawns before you, the foaming, roaring cataract, the eddying whirlpool, and the giddy precipice, all seem to threaten life, and

to appal the sense. Yet it was a great delight to sit upon a high and jutting crag and look and listen. (186)

Mrs. Trollope here notes the combination of beauty and terror of the Romantic sublime, the language is imbued with more violence than that of the earlier mountain scene, and conveys a true sense of being close to danger, if not actually in danger, though the added threat of poisonous creatures does in actuality make the danger real. In a foreshadowing of the noise of Niagara the falls are described as a “roaring cataract” while the “giddy precipice” foreshadows the urge to fall down Niagara; a vertigo of sorts which drags the observer into the “dark deep gulf” like an abyss. This scene does not compare with the Mississippi or Niagara in its scale, and is digestible from a single view. The description does in this way, in fact, make the scene seem more picturesque, with the falls being viewed as vignettes facilitated by nature with the flood “seen only at intervals; here in a full heavy sheet of green transparent water, ... there dashing along a narrow channel” (185). These falls are therefore presented to the reader as picturesque pictures with sublime elements, hinted at by the “slenderest, loveliest shrubs” (186) reconciling the scene with beauty. The falls do not figure as the true American sublime of immense scale or incomprehensible wildness though there are elements of it taken from Burke’s original meaning. The falls are “awfully” sublime. They are also significantly providing pleasure here, albeit from a safe distance (another requirement identified by Burke as mentioned above).

Another example of the sublime is the thunderstorm near Stonington – mentioned in the previous chapter – which is described as an awful visitation, but is related after the suspense of the moment has been banished by the statement: “when we were all again safe, and comfortably sheltered, we rejoiced that the accident had occurred, as it gave us the best possible opportunity of witnessing, in all its glory, a transatlantic thunderstorm” (225). Trollope – the extradiegetic narrator-author – therefore prefaces the episode with safety, and the comforting knowledge that no harm came from the scene which is then described in the language of the sublime. Recounting the storm, Trollope uses otherworldly and religious imagery, often associated with the beauty and violence of the weather: “the language which the gods speak when they are angry” (76) “heavens blazed and bellowed”; “fierce fires of heaven only blazed the brighter for the falling flood”; “the wind was left at last the lord of all” (226). However, as discussed above the episode can be appreciated extradiegetically because danger is removed. Within the diegesis it is suggested that this safety is not assured so the sublime appreciation (which needs to be from a position of safety) is retrospective and

extradiegetic. From the East and its European version of the sublime Trollope turned northwest and made her way to another frontier and a – perhaps the – nineteenth century example of the American sublime.

### Niagara Falls

Frances Trollope set off from New York City for Niagara Falls on 30 May, 1831 (285) by stage as far as Schenectady and then on the recently completed (1825) Erie Canal. As stated in chapter two, however, Trollope did not find much of her journey by canal boat pleasurable and made the remainder of the journey from Rochester to Lewiston by stage. It was developments in travel, specifically the Erie Canal which made Trollope's journey possible and began opening up the "high altar" (294) of the Niagara Falls to more visitors.

Niagara Falls was first mentioned by a European in 1603, though never actually seen by the explorer: he was informed of its existence by Indian guides but did not deign it worthy of a detour (McKinsey 7). The first reporter to have actually seen the falls was attached to the LaSalle expedition of 1678-9 and was named Louis Hennepin (ibid. 8). It was not until after the War of 1812 with Britain that settlement reached Niagara in any significant form, and even then the area around the falls were not densely populated and could be described as 'frontier' settlements. On the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, however, Niagara became probably the most important natural draw for travellers from across the Atlantic, as well as those closer to home. John Sears sets out the requirements for tourism in his *Sacred Places*: it requires

A population with money and the leisure to travel, an adequate means of transportation, and conditions of reasonable safety and comfort at the places people go to visit. It also demands a body of images and descriptions of those places – a mythology of unusual things to see – to excite people's imagination and induce them to travel. These requirements were not fully met in America until the 1820s. (3)

Patrick McGreevy has calculated that three quarters – 139 – of known nineteenth century traveller's books to the United States describe Niagara (6). Niagara could therefore definitely be said to have been written on by 1900. The nineteenth century was also the dawn of tourism in the modern sense, which differed from the Grand Tour of the previous century. The Grand Tour was a rite of passage for young men of means; one which ranks among birth, marriage, and death and those other once-in-a-lifetime rites of passages described by Turner. In fact

Niagara was often a stop of the American Grand Tour (Sears 12) and became something of a rite of passage destination for this, and its subsequent place as a honeymoon destination. Niagara is a liminal space for the rite of passage: adulthood, marriage, and death meet at Niagara. There are several ‘distractions’ from the falls at Niagara: the ever-present hotels, an institution in most American towns and cities at this time, but also the boat named *Maid of the Mist*, various viewpoints and staircases, and the book for visitors’ comments. The current boats for tourists below the falls are still (all) called *Maid of the Mist*. Niagara was becoming the first tourist trap of the United States. The authors did not evade the trap, nor could they, as they pandered to the requirements of the audience of their books. The falls were the first example of what is now odiously called a ‘must-see’. The amelioration of transport links, the increase of the middle-classes, and the aforementioned guide and travel books all played their part in raising the profile and popularity of Niagara Falls. The Romantic appreciation for the sublime in scenery was another major factor in the appreciation of Niagara:

In its more immediate cultural context, the Niagara literature is intimately connected with romanticism. The ascendancy of romanticism in the first half of the nineteenth century coincides temporally with Niagara's own ascendancy; more important, many of the central concerns of the romantics are also voiced in the Niagara literature. (McGreevy 11-12)

There are no falls to match Niagara in the Old World of Europe, with those to compare being in Africa and South America; Niagara “had absolutely no counterpart in the Old World” (Sears 12). Niagara Falls

Could not easily be anticipated in Europe; there were few ways of preparing emotion and language in advance and travellers felt their deficiencies strongly, humbly turning their attention to details that could be described. (Mulvey ‘Ecriture and Landscape’ 106-7)

Fanny Trollope claims to have “for years” (296) wanted to visit the falls, so must have been aware of the previous mythology of Niagara. She writes with excitement at the prospect of viewing “one of the wonders of the world” (283). In her own words she is not as a tourist but a pilgrim completing the arduous journey to the site of her pilgrimage:

We... felt every cup of coffee as a sin, so impatient were we, as we approached the end of our long pilgrimage, to reach the shrine, which nature seems to have placed at such a distance from her worshippers on purpose to try the strength of their devotion. (294)

By worshippers Trollope clearly means Europeans and those with a European viewpoint who can appreciate the falls through an appropriately reverent and sublime point of view. Trollope suggests the religious connotations of Niagara by discussing her long journey as a “pilgrimage” to the “shrine”. In fact, Trollope’s journey is considerably less arduous thanks to the canal system and was to become even more comfortable when rail could take the new tourists to the “shrine”. It is easier for travellers to make the pilgrimage thanks to travel technology, however, as suggested by Hawthorne in his ‘Celestial Railroad’, this can undermine the experience and the point of view gained from following the course of the pilgrimage without assistance from steam. The religious point of view of Niagara is not uncommon and is reflected in the conferral of the status of a shrine by Pope Pius IX who

At the urging of Archbishop Lynch of Toronto, established a “pilgrim shrine” at Niagara Falls in 1861. This action bestowed upon Niagara – in the eyes of the Catholic Church at least – the same status as the most famous of Old World pilgrim centers. (McGreevy 34).

Many of those (including authors discussed below) who visited Niagara believed themselves to be on something of a pilgrimage, expressed in the reverence with which they approach the cataract, the religious language and the desire for quiet moments of reflection.

Trollope’s response to Niagara is typically sublime. Superlatives gush forth, mixing the terrific awe with pleasure, which typifies Burke’s idea of the sublime (“pleasure and pain” seems to be a direct reference). Trollope begins by expressing:

Terror, and delight completely overwhelmed me. I wept with a strange mixture of pleasure and of pain, and certainly was, for some time, too violently affected in the *physique* to be capable of much pleasure, but when this emotion of the senses subsided, and I had recovered some degree of composure, my enjoyment was very great indeed. (296-7; emphasis given)



At first it is the awful which strikes Trollope not the beauty. This perhaps represents an experience of the true American sublime, which only becomes beautiful in retrospect, as with the thunderstorm at Stonington. Does the intradiegetic narrator-character recover *composure* or is it only extradiegetically that the narrator-author can appreciate the beauty by *composing* Niagara? This section of the narrative is not specifically from Trollope's journals like the Cincinnati period and is therefore potentially illustrative of the distance between travel and writing.

Trollope attempts to see the falls on her terms not wishing for the first view of them to be imperfect and

Encountered a waiter who had a sympathy of some sort with us, for he would not let us run through the hall to the first gallery, but ushered us up stairs, and another instant placed us where, at one glance, I saw all I had wished for, hoped for, dreamed of. (296)

Fanny is trying to view the falls as a picture: a single view on the landscape, imposing the point of view of the observer upon it. This is not possible at Niagara. Niagara cannot be described, apparently. Niagara has been built in Trollope's imagination, but is too awful for words, leaving Trollope to give us the assertion that it is all she imagined. She goes on to say that "it is not for me to attempt a description of Niagara; I feel I have no powers for it" and later: "how utterly futile must every attempt be to describe the spot!" (302). Trollope then spends the next several pages attempting just such a description. Frances does her best, despite the evidence to the contrary, to assure us that she has no words. Later, she talks of a "shadowy mystery [that] not even the imagination can penetrate; but I dare not dwell on this" she says, "it is a dangerous subject, and any attempt to describe the sensations produced must lead direct to nonsense" (297). The idea here is that too long spent near the falls could cause nonsense, babbling, if you will. Just as with the biblical tower of Babel, if man attempts to become closer to God at this act of God, he will be punished and be plunged into a failure of language. Trollope identifies the falls with God, and specifically with Genesis and therefore Eden by saying "God said, let there be a cataract, and it was so" (299). The cataract is an example of the power of God, but also, as with the "shadowy mystery" something of the incomprehensible; why is Niagara? As Christopher Mulvey points out there is a "plunging into bathos that would leave the writer damned utterly before his or her public" (*Anglo-American Landscapes* 197). The falls are dangerous for other reasons too, as Patrick

McGreevy points out; they seem to be calling to the observer to jump: “as early as the 1830s, death had become part of the lure of Niagara. Guidebooks repeated the gruesome details of accidents, suicides, murders, and narrow escapes” (42). Remember Trollope describing the “giddy precipice” of a Potomac waterfall creating a sort of vertigo encouraging death. The rite of passage of Victor Turner and van Gennep looms large here with death another example of the liminal condition. Along with marriage (one of the falls is called the Bridal Veil), death is the main rite of passage associated with Niagara.

Trollope claims she will not discuss “minute local particulars” which “can be of no interest to those who have not felt their influence for pleasure or for pain”. In a flurry of negatives which nonetheless make fairly specific reference to those “particulars”, Trollope says she “will not tell of giddy stairs which scale the very edge of the torrent, nor of beetling slabs of table rock” (298). Again the word “giddy” is used to describe a waterfall and implies the danger – almost psychological – of waterfalls and the American sublime. Much as “to say that I was not disappointed is but a weak expression to convey the surprise and astonishment which this long dreamed of scene produced” (297) finds Trollope again retreating into negatives and self-denial in her accounts. She repeatedly draws attention to the impossibility of representing Niagara for both writers and artists when she notices one of her group “employed in attempting to sketch, what, however, [she] believe[s] it to be impossible for any pencil to convey an idea of to those who have not seen it” (300). Creating any pictorial representation of the falls is impossible because one cannot create an ordering point of view by which to see them. By viewing the falls through art and this artist, she is using art as a point of view between her and her subject. I return again to Fender’s three stages of response to the American landscape (‘American Landscape’ 52). It is the second stage which most often sees the adoption of a textual mediating point of view to *try* to express what is seen.

It is not only Trollope who is susceptible to adopting these points of view of the scene, she talks about a party who have crossed from the American side and

Began to examine (wrong side upwards) the work of the sketcher, in doing which they stood precisely between him and his object ... yet not one of them (there were eight) ever turned the head, even for a moment, to look at the most stupendous spectacle that nature has to show (301).

There are several points of interest in this passage. Firstly, while this episode is occurring Trollope, too is guilty of being more absorbed by the sketcher and his observers than the

cataract. In fact Trollope is here viewing the people viewing the sketch viewing the falls; there are several layers of point of view at work. Similar preoccupation with society displays a desire to retreat from the oppression of the falls themselves and the turning away from landscape seen when later authors travel by rail and turn their gaze inwards at the society of a train car. The other concern is that the party examine the sketch the wrong way up. As noted earlier the Claude Glass – one of the most significant points of view for the picturesque – reverses the image. Just as the first cameras also turned the image upside-down, so these visitors to Niagara see the cataract from the point of view of a sketch.

We are now in a position to think of Niagara as another frontier location. Not only is it the frontier between British and United States North America, but it is where nature meets culture, and culture, through language and art, is found lacking. Interestingly, Frances Trollope describes Niagara as “the fall of an ocean” (297), linking those two frontiers. Frontiers must be seen in time as well as space; it is almost as if Trollope desires to become closer to what she feels is a timeless, transcendental scene closer to God at Niagara. Several authors, including Frances Trollope, Dickens and Hawthorne also have Niagara as a frontier between God and man. It seems to draw the observer into the dual void of death of body and language. Mrs. Trollope speaks in a curiously frontier manner when she writes: “I believe I should have shut my eyes, and tried to sleep, that I might annihilate what remained of time and space between me and Niagara” (295). As with the Mississippi and the plains the homogenous distance between places is destroyed or desired to be destroyed. Trollope is unable to annihilate time and space between her and Niagara and finds that at Niagara she cannot annihilate them either: the cataract cannot be cut down for her point of view. Both intradiegetically and extradiegetically Mrs. Trollope’s point of view is found lacking: she often betrays an interest in anything but the falls, or attempts to frame them by looking from this window or looking at that sketch. In writing as in observing Trollope attempts the picturesque and European sublime point of view but falls into metaphor, and eventually silence.

Trollope was not alone in her issues with Niagara, and perhaps had the hardest job of the authors here covered, being the earliest and therefore least prepared. I will now continue to discuss other authors’ experiences at Niagara, concentrating on those issues with Niagara that are apparent in *Domestic Manners*: religion and pilgrimage; Niagara as a frontier; the failure of language; and Niagara and the sublime.

Anthony Trollope, seeing Niagara thirty years after his mother, also describes it in oceanic terms, imbuing that idea with the religious connotations used by the elder Trollope.

Anthony asks his reader to find the spot where “the waters are absolutely around you” (*North America* I, 105) – literally recreating the experience of a voyage at sea – “then you will flow away in your course to the uncompassed, distant, and eternal ocean” (106). As Conrad says: “travellers took up the challenge of Niagara and they attempted to act out the ritual of Romantic response in the face of a landscape that reminded them more frequently of the sea than of anything they had seen on land before” (188). I break up the chronology of responses to Niagara a little here by inserting Anthony Trollope in order to better show comparisons between mother and son.

Anthony Trollope first visited Niagara Falls at the tail end of travels described in *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (1860). Trollope uses a similarly roundabout way of describing the falls as his mother, saying that:

Nothing ever disappointed me less than the Falls of Niagara – but my raptures did not truly commence for the first half-day. Their charms grow upon one like the conversation of a brilliant man. Their depth and breadth and altitude, their music, colour and brilliancy are not fully acknowledged at the first moment. It may be that my eye is slow; but I can never take in to its full enjoyment any view or any picture at the first glance. I found this to be especially the case at Niagara. It was only by long gazing and long listening that I was able to appreciate the magnitude of that waste of waters. (367)

It is notable that both mother and son vehemently deny that they were “disappointed” rather than profess whatever it is that they were. Anthony Trollope also shares the initial inability to appreciate the falls for their beauty with his mother. Though for the elder Trollope it is fear rather than an inability to take in the scene in its entirety as the fear and awful of the American sublime is tempered by a desire to contain the falls in an artificial, cultured point of view. By the time Anthony reaches Niagara Falls the site has become organised around finding the best view, with numerous man-made additions to try and facilitate certain points of view like the “giddy stairs” identified by Mrs. Trollope. This scale is a clear feature of the sublime; the scene cannot be picturesque because it cannot be contained in one picture! Barbier points out that Gilpin thought “a waterfall or a torrent is a perfectly valid subject by itself, but in a landscape its movement can only be accepted if the eye is not distracted from considering the picture as a whole” (125); if the whole picture is the torrent it is unlikely Gilpin would classify this as picturesque.

Likewise, Anthony does not appreciate “prettiness at Niagara” (*North America I*, 107), here talking about rainbows created by the spray – surely a picturesque framing device. Trollope offers an exhaustive list of the best places to go, how much they cost, and directs his imagined charge around the sights to ensure that they have ‘done’ Niagara and carried out the rite of passage. He even advises the reader to pay for oil-clothes to avoid it seeming “to those whose trade it is to prepare them that you are injuring them in their vested rights” (110). They do in fact seem to preoccupy him in his account. Trollope is presenting the reader with an appropriately European point of view and echoes the cultural production in order to make the falls ‘fit’ that European point of view. While helping his reader see the falls, he is actually replicating his own point of view.

In both *North America* and *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* Trollope gives these directions speaking in the second-person. This is another example of adopting a certain point of view of Niagara, with Trollope choosing to live the experience through his reader: imagining the experience through the text which he is himself writing. Trollope is seeing Niagara from the point of view of his text, therefore. The text the extradiegetic narrator-author is presenting has the reader as the implied protagonist because of the use of the second-person and is in the style of the many guidebooks on travel in the United States. Ironically, guidebooks often display their subjectivity when discussing Niagara. While the *Handbook to the Diorama of Canada and the United States* (1855) does have a central figure (the artist of the diorama) who was supposed to have made the travels, the text itself addresses the reader as “We”. An amusing example occurs when discussing arrival in New York City:

Though the traveller for pleasure will find much there to interest him, we would advise all emigrants to hasten from it as soon as possible, for they are quite sure to be beset there with a flock of harpies, the pursuit of whose lives it is to beguile and entrap the unwary stranger, and plunder him in every way he can. (Friend 2)

This book, then, falls somewhere between the ‘factuality’ of earlier examples and advice as if from a narrator. In familiar language Niagara Falls are described:

Who can forget his first view of this stupendous spectacle!... The sublimity of the scene increases at every step; but when you come up upon the mighty cataract you gaze in speechless wonder. So ought everybody; and so, indeed, the majority of

people do; yet everyone, nevertheless, tries to say afterwards what he would have said at the moment... evoking imaginings of the unknown even more tremendous than the dread reality before you. (5)

After this come songs and a painting of the falls presumably included in the diorama. This language is familiar (“stupendous spectacle” is used by Fanny Trollope as quoted above) and exhibits a retreat to metaphor and figurative language common among the other travel writers here. It is also notable that the reader is being instructed to appreciate the falls from the same Romantic point of view. Bacon’s description of Niagara is more obviously out of the character of the rest of the *Handbook* and once more the reader is told that “the sublimity of Niagara is in the vast power displayed by a mighty current descending impetuously”. Again, metaphor and poetry (notably from the Romantic poet Byron discussing an Italian waterfall) is used, though this time with added ‘facts’: Niagara is

A mighty current descending impetuously first by rushing down the long inclined plane of rapids, and finally plunging in one unbroken vertical sheet into the deep abyss below.

It come like an eternity,  
As if to sweep down all things in its track,  
Charming the eye with dread – a matchless cataract.

The dull, thundering, unceasing road of the falling waters is sometimes heard as far as Toronto, 46 miles distant. (312)

That Byron is the chosen poet rather than an American writing on the American sublime is pertinent; these guidebooks look at Niagara Falls from a European point of view. Even the objective guidebooks are not exempt from the power of Niagara to draw the writer into metaphor. Further poems are then listed on the falls. *The Emigrants’ Hand-Book, and New Guide for Travellers Through the United States of America* (1850) says:

While curiosity constitutes an attribute of the human character, these falls will be frequented by admiring and delighted visitors, as one of the grandest exhibitions in nature. Well has an American poetess [Lydia H. Sigourney] said of this magnificent cataract:

Flow on forever, in thy glorious robe  
 Of terror and of beauty. God hath set  
 His rainbow on thy forehead: and the cloud  
 Mantled around thy feet. And he doth give  
 Thy voice of thunder, power to speak of Him  
 Eternally, bidding the lip of man  
 Keep silence, and upon thy rocky altar pour  
 Incense of awe-struck praise. (54)

The “terror” and “beauty” required by Burke; the religious connotations and the idea of Niagara as an altar at which pilgrims pray; and the “voice of thunder” in contrast to the silent “lip of man” are all typical of the European sublime and the response to Niagara which takes that point of view as its model. These guidebooks are interacting with texts showing European point of view (often of European landscape). Anthony Trollope is in turn seeing (and presenting) Niagara Falls through these texts. In part he is able to do this because of the profusion of guidebooks on the falls by the time he is writing. Niagara Falls exists textually and mythically, albeit these points of view are largely European and not adapting to the landscape, but rather trying to impose point of view upon it.

Anthony Trollope expresses difficulties in describing Niagara and states that “though I do not mean to make any endeavour to describe that latter place as such descriptions should be – and doubtless are and have been – written, I will say one or two words which may be of use to any one going thither” (*West Indies* 366). To some extent Trollope does this, although there are many attempts at mentioning the scenery in addition. Trollope realises his own reluctance to proceed to the falls and implores the reader: “we will go at once on to the glory, and the thunder, and the majesty, and the wrath of that upper hell of waters” (*North America* I, 105). Trollope wishes to see the falls immediately, wishing – like his mother – to annihilate space and time between himself and the cataract. He then continues with his empirical instructions. More language of the sublime arises in the account. The cataract is this time being linked to hell rather than God. Trollope compares the falls to the culture of the Old World, and claims that a journey to those sites “must be more valuable to a man – than a visit to Niagara” (101), yet “that fall is more graceful than Giotto’s tower, more noble than the Apollo. The peaks of the Alps are not so astounding in their solitude” (102) and so on. This is high praise indeed, and also places the falls in a category of their own, above the Romantic

sublime of the Alps and the beauties of the Old World, into a new category of the American sublime.

Commenting again on the impossibility of expressing Niagara, Trollope approaches a painter trying to capture the scene on canvas:

I came across an artist at Niagara who was attempting to draw the spray of the waters. ‘You have a difficult subject,’ said I. ‘All subjects are difficult,’ he replied, ‘to a man who desires to do well.’ ‘But yours, I fear is impossible,’ I said. ‘You have no right to say so till I have finished my picture,’ he replied. I acknowledged the justice of his rebuke, regretted that I could not remain till the completion of his work should enable me to revoke my words, and passed on. Then I began to reflect whether I did not intend to try a task as difficult in describing the falls, and whether I felt any of that proud self-confidence which kept him happy at any rate while his task was in hand. (102)

The failure of language is again alluded to, as are further examples of the point of view coming between the landscape and the artist, or the landscape and the author. Trollope recognises that he is failing to describe Niagara and that the use of this artist is another example of point of view coming between him and his subject. Trollope is seeing the artist’s impression as a fragment; like his own account and those of many other commentators it is incomplete. Niagara is so vast that any attempt to view the cataract as a whole will result in a fragmented picture. Once more comparisons can be made between mother and son here, with both having observed the difficulty in representing Niagara in the painting of others.

*Domestic Manners* is another of those texts which Anthony Trollope can draw upon to provide point of view for his Niagara. Henry James is interested in the concept of a fragment of the whole forming a picture. In *The Ambassadors* (1903) James has his protagonist (an author substitute) Strether appreciate a picturesque river scene, but finds it somehow lacking. Strether is the figurative composer or painter of the scene, creating a diegesis into which Chad and Madame de Vionnet float, showing the importance of framing point of view and the (inevitable) difficulty of fragmented perspective. After a picturesque description of the scene in pause, suddenly the picture comes alive:



What he saw was exactly the right thing – a boat advancing round the bend and containing a man who held the paddles and a lady, at the stern, with a pink parasol. It was suddenly as if these figures, or something like them, had been wanted in the picture, had been wanted more or less all day, and had now drifted into sight, with the slow current, on purpose to fill up the measure. (419)

James discusses the use of this point of view and successive levels of framing when he talks of a painter in his 1902 novel *Wings of a Dove* “watching her, as it were, through the successive windows of other people’s interest in her... my use of windows and balconies is doubtless at best an extravagance by myself” (*Art of the Novel* 306). These points of view and perspectives allow numerous truths to be present; an idea explored in the final chapter of this work.

All of the writers on the falls express their thoughts of Niagara spiritually. In their view it is not and cannot be of this world, and it is fitting that something they believe to be ethereal should be difficult to describe with the terrestrial language. But even this is not enough for the Trollopes, mother or son, not to both remark on the different viewpoints (or point of view) of the falls and best ways to view them. Frances gives a related story (which seems implausible) of the three ships sent over the falls after the war (presumably that of 1812), again connoting the effects of a storm at sea. These digressions from the sight which is apparently transfixing demonstrate two things: firstly the difficulty in describing the falls: “travellers felt their deficiencies strongly, humbly turning their attention to details that could be described” (Mulvey, ‘*Ecriture and Landscape*’ 107), and secondly the tendency towards boredom in Fender’s third stage as described earlier.

Both Anthony Trollope and Charles Dickens searched for tranquillity at Niagara and emphasised the need to be alone with one’s thoughts. Trollope writes: “oh, my friend, let there be no one there to speak to thee then; no, not even a brother. As you stand there speak only to the waters” (*North America* I, 111), while Dickens made precautions to be alone during his last visit in 1868 (Mulvey, *Anglo-American Landscapes* 195), presumably to avoid a repeat of the following occasion reported in a letter to Henry Austin on the first of May, 1842. His wife’s maid, he writes, “never looks at a prospect by any chance, or displays the smallest emotion at any sight whatever. She objects to Niagara that ‘its [sic] nothing but water’, and considers that ‘there is too much of that’!!!” (*Letters* 231). Later writers took their cue from Dickens who had “emphasized the calmness and the beauty of Niagara rather than its thrilling quality”; this suggests that they rejected the sublime in favour of the picturesque

(Sears 187). However, Dickens does try to write within the conventions of the sublime, being overwhelmed on his first sight of the falls. Later writers stood more of a chance than those earlier to adopt the calmness and beauty of Niagara because it had been framed to be viewed in such a way, both by other authors and the cultural attachments to the landscape to provide the tourist with manageable and appropriate points of view.

Dickens visited the falls in 1842 and found his senses battered on the approach:

I could see an immense torrent of water tearing headlong down from some great height, but had no idea of shape, or situation, or anything but vague immensity ... I was in a manner stunned, and unable to comprehend the vastness of the scene. It was not until I came on Table Rock, and looked – Great Heaven, on what a fall of bright-green water! – that it came upon me in its full might and majesty. (*American Notes* 220)

The author struggles to complete his sentence without an exclamation and is overcome with size. Here Dickens is inserting the “Great Heaven” extradiegetically as if it were within the diegesis to try and show the surprise of the narrator-character. Other than the bright-green water, the description in this passage lacks any detail, and there is precious little in the remaining four paragraphs specifically on the falls. It is as if Dickens is trying to view a painting from too close, and can only make out the scale of the thing, whereas everything else is a blur. Dickens is the opposite of Anthony Trollope, who resorted to details and a guidebook description; Dickens retreats to abstracts and capitalised concepts: “Peace. Peace of Mind”; “recollections of the Dead”; “thought of Eternal Rest and Happiness”; “Enchanted Ground”; “Darkness... Deluge - Light” (*American Notes* 220-1). Dickens links Niagara to God and writes in the convention of the sublime – and strangely out of style with anything else in the book, or even anything by the author. Christopher Mulvey offers something of an excuse: “it was an occasion when the most prosaic men and women might become poetical” (*Anglo-American Landscapes* 187). We are left wondering if with Dickens’s failure to describe the falls, he has retreated into tired conventions. Dickens sees something of the Romantic sublime in the falls, but cannot comprehend the scale so substitutes his own opinion with a poor pastiche. He has little to go on, after all. Writing fairly early in the history of writing on Niagara, Dickens was completely unprepared for the scene which met him. He attempts to write within the conventions of the sublime but cannot:

It is ironic that Dickens then goes on to criticise the volumes of “remarks and poetical effusions” which contain pages “scrawled all over with the vilest and filthiest ribaldry that ever human hogs delighted in” (241). He does not reprint any of the verse in *American Notes*, but it is hard to believe that his own lines would have been much superior given the failure of articulating Dickens’s own appreciation of Niagara. These “human hogs” with connotations of the many pigs Dickens described in cities like New York are essentially trying and failing – just as did many of the authors discussed in these pages – to describe the falls. This book can be seen as a poor mirror image of the authors’ own attempts at describing the falls, or more correctly a symptom of the impossibility. That the travel writers’ efforts aren’t lambasted in the same way is a testament to their skill and – dare one say it – their reputations, rather than any greater proficiency in the task. Tourism is coming to be viewed with more scorn by these writers: the visitors to the falls are, in the opinion of Dickens and Mrs. Trollope, visiting so they can say they have seen the great cataract rather than going to actually see it. By discussing the comments book Dickens is also interacting with other texts to avoid attempting to interact with the falls. By finding these texts inadequate one can see that Dickens is adopting the point of view, through these texts, that all writing is inadequate.

The failure to articulate the scene draws comparisons, according to Mulvey, with other pilgrim shrines. To return to the earlier metaphor of the falls:

The visitor to Niagara, like the visitor to the cathedral, felt frustration as well as fulfilment; the glory of the thing to be described went beyond the ability of the writer to describe it. This contradicted the whole purpose of the travel writer who planned to put into language his experience of the world. It brought him into painful confrontation with problems of meaning, consciousness, text, and communication that travel writing could usually avoid quite successfully, by its reliance on a record of personal fact and a retailing of general information. (*Anglo-American Landscapes* 195)

It is the problem of language which confronts the author at Niagara, and the lack of a new vocabulary for the landscape of the New World as also experienced by Meriwether Lewis. There is a lack of previous writing and ‘textual network’ for Niagara Falls, meaning even authors with the standing of Dickens and Trollope struggle without what Mulvey calls the “écriture of landscape”. There is no evidence of humanity, no precedence of writing on the landscape, other than the poor imitations and pastiches of the European Romantic sublime

imported from the Old World, put to ill-use, creating nothing but the “vilest and filthiest ribaldry”.

It was not just Britons who visited the falls, nor who felt that experience to be a religious one. Nathaniel Hawthorne first published his visit to Niagara anonymously in February 1835 and, just as Fanny Trollope, felt he was making a journey to a religious shrine. “Never”, he writes,

Did a pilgrim approach Niagara with deeper enthusiasm than mine. I had lingered away from it, and wandered to other scenes, because my treasury of anticipated enjoyments, comprising all the wonders of the world, had nothing else so magnificent, and I was loth [sic] to exchange the pleasures of hope for those of memory so soon. (*Travel Sketches* 55)

Hawthorne’s response here is very similar to Mrs. Trollope’s, writing as he does about his imaginary Niagara and his reluctance to lose that imagined, perfect Niagara. He intersperses his imagined Niagara with anticipation to view the scene: like Trollope he writes about Niagara as a wonder of the world. Later, just as Trollope’s every cup of coffee had been a sin – as if there was pleasure in delaying the inevitable pleasure of Niagara – Hawthorne is delayed at the toll-house as his “signature was required in a huge leger [sic], containing similar record innumerable, many of which [he] read” (56). Could this be the same book on which Dickens later poured such scorn? A later possibility is the “guide’s cottage” where those who have just been led around the bottom of the falls might receive “a certificate of their achievement, with three verses of sublime poetry on the back” (60).

There is something almost sexual in the way, on first hearing the “voice of ages” that Hawthorne throws himself back and closes his eyes (55). Such was Hawthorne’s initial response. This provides another example of the frontier and the rite of passage, with sex being identified by Victor Turner and van Gennep as a rite of passage and a liminal condition. There are similarities to Dickens’s response (complete with capitals) when the New England writer waxes lyrical about the “vapor that never vanishes, and the Eternal Rainbow of Niagara” (57). Still, the intradiegetic narrator-character has not yet seen the falls. The narrative serves the same purpose as Hawthorne’s delaying tactics: building suspense for the ultimate climax of the falls and delaying the quasi-sexual pleasure which he anticipates.

Hawthorne attempts to make the falls into a picture when he writes: “casting my eyes across the river, and every side, I took in the whole scene at a glance, and tried to

comprehend it in one vast idea”, though “after an hour thus spent” he descends, without sharing the image with his readers (57-8). The same issues which plague the British writers – scale and imagination – flummox Hawthorne. Hawthorne’s “mind had struggled to adapt these false conceptions to the reality, and finding the effort vain, a wretched sense of disappointment weighed” him down (58). Hawthorne wishes that he did not have a prior imagined Niagara (which of course is an impossibility given the intention he had to visit it) but also that he did not have to see Niagara through the effusions of praise in text.

Niagara becomes a nightmare for the author, and the immensity haunts his dreams, only for this nightmare to turn, on reflection, into appreciation for the sublimity of the falls. Extradiegetically Hawthorne the narrator-author is safe from the initial danger and shock of the cataract and lets the narrator-character revel in being alone with the falls. Trying to strip away various points of view – textual and imagined – the extradiegetic narrator-author can appreciate the scene from the point of view of distance in time and space from Niagara: “gradually, and after much contemplation, I came to know, by my own feelings, that Niagara is indeed a wonder of the world” (59). The American sublime also needs to be seen from a distance. The intradiegetic narrator-character finds this stripped down point of view after much reflection when he literally divests himself of point of view, seemingly looking from nowhere:

I sat upon the Table Rock... on the utmost verge of the rock, with my feet hanging over it, I felt as if suspended in the open air. Never before had my mind been in such perfect unison with the scene. (ibid.)

Still, however, he spots those who do not appreciate the scene and mildly scolds the child who “gave himself wholly to the enjoyment of a stick of candy” and the American who “produced a volume of captain [Basil] Hall’s tour, and labored earnestly to adjust Niagara to the captain’s description” (60). We can look back to Gilpin here, when he says that the “artist in the mean time, is confined to a *span*; and lays down his little rules, which he calls the *principles of picturesque beauty*, merely to adapt such diminutive parts of nature’s surfaces to his own eye, as come within its scope” (18). The American with Hall’s book was unable to see Niagara without adopting the point of view which that travel book provides, while Hawthorne himself is guilty of the same sin of the Trollopes, mother and son, when he is more willing to look at “very trifling causes” which “would draw my eyes and thoughts from the cataract” (59). He again shows the attraction of mediation of the scene. At last Hawthorne

is left alone, without the distractions, so that, he writes “my enjoyment became the more rapturous, because no poet shared it – nor wretch, devoid of poetry, profaned it: but the spot, so famous through the world, was all my own!” (61). At this point Hawthorne’s account of the falls stops. Without the distractions or the mediations Hawthorne seeks to find God and himself at the falls, but if he did we will never know, for he stops writing when robbed of these techniques for viewing Niagara and finds himself, without the aid of poetry, speechless.

Hawthorne is fairly honest in his appraisal of Niagara, finding it to be a gradual wonder, and urging all visitors to “cast aside all pre-conceived notions, and preparation to be dire-struck or delighted... suffering the mighty scene to work its own impression” (59). This is obviously easier said than done, as is apparent in some of the more conventional passages of Hawthorne’s sketch. However, Hawthorne does at least seem to partially recognise the importance of escaping those conventions, though when he is left without them, he finds nothing to replace them and simply has to stop writing. I have shown that falling into silence is a common problem which greets writers on the American landscape.

The failure of language at Niagara for the early writers is largely explained by a lack of precedent, both in the lives of those who view it and in the literature of the time. The falls cannot be likened to anything in the Old World: “the failure of comparative imagery suggests only that the Falls were like themselves and like no other thing” (Mulvey, ‘Ecriture and Landscape’ 199). Nor was anything written about falls of such scale. Writers therefore retreated into expressing the failure of language, before feeling that this short-changed their readers somewhat, and employed various points of view for description. These include Dickens, Mrs. Trollope and Hawthorne resorting to the staples of the sublime, speaking of terror and the spiritual. Anthony Trollope has greater literary precedent with guidebooks beginning to describe the falls, and the works of his mother and Dickens with which to relate. However, he attempts to provide a point of view not dissimilar to theirs and describes the particulars and prices of a visit, again showing a European viewpoint through other European texts and a lack of adaptation to the size of Niagara. None of these points of view is particularly successful.

So were Niagara Falls simply impossible to write about in the nineteenth century, and if so what (if anything) has changed?

Mark Twain wrote two tales with Niagara as the main subject, though his approach is considerably less reverential than earlier writers. The first tale, simply entitled ‘A Day at Niagara’, was written in 1869 and tells the story of the narrator, presumably Twain, who visits Niagara and is attacked by ‘Indians’ who turn out to be Irish from Limerick. This tale is

in the vein of Twain's other tall tales which can be found throughout his works, including in *Roughing It* and *Life on the Mississippi*. Twain is in a typically satirical mode when he writes of being attacked by the 'Indians' and, to "add insult to injury, they threw me over the Niagara Falls, and I got wet" (21). This colossal understatement fits the tone of the piece which is irreverent towards the falls and its "not at all exorbitant" hotels (16). The bathos employed here mocks the other writers' impressions as encountered in these pages (Twain literally plunges into bathos, as Mulvey figuratively suggests above). Bathos is employed in the service of satire. Twain parodies the many descriptions of the falls when he writes of the photographers and artists:

All looming up in their awe-inspiring imbecility before the snubbed and diminished presentment of that majestic presence whose ministering spirits are the rainbows, whose voice is the thunder, whose awful front is veiled in clouds, who was monarch here dead and forgotten ages before this hackful of small reptiles was deemed temporarily necessary to fill a crack in the world's unnoted myriads, and will still be monarch here ages and decades of ages after they shall have gathered themselves to their blood relations, the other worms, and been mingled with the unremembering dust. (17)

Twain goes on to further mock those who go to Niagara merely to have a background for their own portrait: "there is no actual harm in making Niagara a background whereon to display one's marvellous insignificance in a good strong light, but it requires a sort of superhuman self-complacency to enable one to do it" (18). There is (I think) deliberate irony here, as Twain is mocking the reduction of Niagara to a background, literally making it picturesque and robbing it of its majesty, while concurrently using Niagara as just that for his tall tale. It is only possible with "superhuman self-complacency", something which none of the authors who writes on the falls can claim. Niagara cannot be made picturesque and made into a background, no matter the point of view. Niagara is made use of by Twain as a device to show the hypocrisy and gullibility of those who visit the falls; his account lacks (or mocks) the religion or spirituality of the other authors. However, Twain is never lost for words, even when he says that "the most of the American cataract went down my throat" (18). Niagara is here being claimed by Twain and his brand of literature: an American literature which he was to 'perfect' with *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and his treatment of the Mississippi. His second satire of the falls again mocks the cataract and America's exploitation of it. In

‘The Diary of Adam and Eve’ (1893), Eve is the American who names the falls ‘Niagara’ and therefore attempts to control the nature of the Garden, bringing us back to the myths of American nature. In fact, Eve renames paradise as “NIAGARA FALLS PARK” (273). As Patrick McGreevy points out, “Eve soon brings trouble to paradise with her plan” (77) to make it into the tourist trap which Twain notes in his earlier tale. Eve “littered the whole estate with execrable names and offensive signs”, “THIS WAY TO THE WHIRLPOOL”, “THIS WAY TO GOAT ISLAND”, and “CAVE OF THE WINDS THIS WAY” (‘Diary of Adam and Eve’ 274). The reader sees the creation of Niagara as a site for suicide when Adam is beseeched by Eve to “stop going over the Falls”, even in a barrel (“not satisfactory to her”) as “they were only made for scenery – like the rhinoceros and the mastodon” (274), creating a suicide risk at this paradise-Niagara.

The exploitation of this American natural phenomenon is also noted by the expatriate writer Henry James, who occupies something of a middle-ground. Writing in 1871, he is not so overawed by the falls that he cannot see the kitsch of the village, but he appreciates the scene also. James has some sense of the coming scene, just as did Mrs. Trollope and Hawthorne. Echoing Frances and Anthony Trollope’s desire to annihilate the distance between them and Niagara, James describes “a certain dull vacuity in this episode of travel, a kind of calculated preparation for the uproar of Niagara – a pause or hush on the threshold of a great impression” (310). Narratologically a “pause” allows for a description without the passage of time, as if the reader was enjoying a static painting; there are obvious advantages to this technique when attempting to describe Niagara. James breaks it down into increments, both in his writing and in his travel, “little by little the elements become a picture, rich with the shadow of coming events. You have a foretaste of the great spectacle” and later: “the first act of drama of Niagara; for it is, I believe, one of the commonplaces of description that you instinctively convert it into a series of ‘situations’ ” (*Places* 311). James appears to be attempting, just as with the artists and the earlier authors, to see Niagara from the point of view of a picture. He succeeds somewhat using the knowledge and weight of previous attempts to inform his decisions and conventions. He is assisted, too, by the influx of civilization which frames the falls: “in the interest of the picturesque, let me note that this obstructive bridge tends in a way to enhance the first glimpse of the cataract” (*ibid.*). The pictorial metaphor is taken further when, after at first being appalled by the “horribly vulgar shops”, James notes that “a side-glimpse of the Falls, however, calls out your philosophy; you reflect that this may be regarded as one of those sordid foregrounds which Turner liked to use, and which may be effective as a foil” (312). James is still adopting a point of view



here (and indeed this is always inescapable), but despite the use of the term picturesque, it is not a traditionally European perspective. In England, James discussed Kenilworth in pictorial terms, writing that “trees overarched their boughs... so as to give it a majestic frame”, describing the background and the “soft-hued bosky country for the middle distance” (*English Hours* 124). James is once more concerned with perspective (as in Beerbohm’s parody ‘The Mote in the Middle Distance’) and the pictorial qualities of landscape in England. James attempts a similar practice at Niagara, but this time it is the man-made additions rather than trees which provide the frame – as with the train window – and James is able to write about Niagara and the frame; criticising both the falls and the cultural trappings which are intended to aid a certain point of view. The combination of realistic expectation and culture, which creates the sort of contrast beloved by the Romantics, has made Niagara into something which – by the late nineteenth century – no longer shocks and awes James, an American. James could use pragmatism (perhaps taken from the philosophy of his brother, William), and the fact that Niagara had entered the cultural zeitgeist as an image of excess and commercialism, to adopt a different point of view of the falls.

There are familiar metaphors and familiar ideas: for example Niagara is a cathedral which cannot be enclosed (313) to use the religious imagery and the idea of a shrine. James uses the double negative – like Mrs. Trollope and her son – when he describes the falls as “a spectacle in which nothing is imperfect” (314) and notes the difficulty and silence experienced by earlier commentators: “already you see the world-famous green, baffling painters, baffling poets”, however, for James “the whole picture before you is admirably simple” (313). James concludes by saying that “the perfect taste of it is the great characteristic. It is not in the least monstrous; it is thoroughly artistic and, as the phrase is, thought out. In the matter of line it beats Michelangelo” (315). He is still using pictorial metaphor here but finds himself able to “plunge into the village and the cataract” (311-2) in order to find his point of view. The cultural attachments do not ruin Niagara for James, rather they assist in his point of view and help it be “thought out”; he is using the wealth of previous textual Niagaras as well as the commodification and fetishisation of viewing to form a picture of Niagara which doesn’t leave him speechless. James sees Niagara as “admirably simple”.

Similarly, in Twain the grand scale is broken down to a local level and becomes a metaphor for the size of America and its aspirations. By incorporating these landscapes into his writing Twain leaves us with more fiction than fact, true, but fiction which is not driven by the myth and history stemming from European ideology or theory. Twain also seems to offer a means of coming to terms with the might of Niagara. As with the Mississippi (discussed

previously) Twain takes the subject and does not try to find in it the sublime, but instead finds the American art of speculating and dollar-worship. Writing a satirical examination of the commodification of the scene, Twain replaces the awe of earlier writers with irreverence and comedy.

Finally in this chapter I briefly discuss other instances of the American sublime towards the close of the nineteenth century and responses to that.

### **American Sublime towards 1900**

The opening up of the country even more after the Civil War, and the creation of the National Park system allowed Americans greater access to the more ‘American’ natural attractions which the continent could provide. The Hudson River Valley was replaced as the typical American scenery with Niagara Falls, the Mississippi, Yosemite and Yellowstone; all examples of the vast, the American sublime. Yellowstone – a less than traditional example of beauty in nature (“vast, strange, exotic, wild, and even grotesquely comic” (Sears 157)) – became the first National Park in 1872 after expeditions to ‘discover’ it in 1869 and 1870 were published in the New York Times (ibid. 159). While at Yosemite:

The Big Trees [Giant Sequoias], Americans could boast, were not only as old or older than the relics of the Old World, they were alive. They had outlived the entire history of Western civilization. (ibid. 144)

There are three interesting points to be made about these developments. Firstly it is important to remember that Yosemite and Yellowstone were made national parks and were therefore in some respects cut down to size by culture; made into gardens. Secondly, the ‘discovery’ of Yellowstone was published concurrently in the New York Times, showing that the landscape was being immediately textualised and able to be seen from that point of view; the landscape had been written on. It was the development of writing, (local) language, and myth which made the point of view to allow these sites to be narrated. Finally, it was the development of travel which made the consumption of these American landscapes possible and took the European point of view even further west:

By the 1880s tourists often travelled in luxury as far as Bozema, Montana on well-appointed Pullman cars, a mode of travel which, like the comforts of the Catskill

Mountain House, set them at strange odds with the wilderness around them. (ibid. 179)

So, while these vast examples of the American sublime could now be viewed as a result of improvements in travel technology and described because the language and text was there to describe them; it could be argued that travellers near the end of the nineteenth century were still viewing the American sublime from a somewhat picturesque, ordering point of view. Having said that, this marks an improvement on ellipsis and represents a development rather than a paradigm shift in point of view; it represents something of a coming to terms with the landscape.

### Conclusion

Over the space of forty years – from Fanny Trollope to Twain and James – Niagara became part of the textual landscape of America. Like the American West and the Mississippi River, Niagara Falls denied representation. European viewpoints tried to see these landscapes through the discourses of the picturesque and the sublime; however, the landscapes were unprecedented in size and could not be expressed from that point of view, leaving observers and writers alike in boredom or silence.

I have shown that even early writers at Niagara attempted to view the falls through the point of view of others' work; an example of mediation. Unfortunately this work was by the amateur sketcher or poet and this technique exacerbated the problem, leaving the traveller further removed from the landscape; the observer instantly becomes removed from the diegesis of the falls like the author writing extradiegetically:

The Painting, in other words, makes no sense except as a performance staged for an audience separate from the events it witnesses. We are consumers of the scene before us rather than participants in its drama. (Wolf, *Vermeer* 4)

Nathaniel Hawthorne realised that he could see Niagara through his own text and it was that removal from the scene and re-experienced travel which allowed him to look back fondly, if not entirely successfully in terms of his account of the falls. But it was Twain and James – writing after the Civil War – who showed the development of writing on the falls most successfully. Instead of taking part in the cultured point of view encouraged by the hotels, shops and guides at the falls, they criticised it and made this part of their account. It is true

that they needed Niagara to have been written on extensively, both in terms of imposing culture upon the landscape and travel or guide books on the subject. This technique allowed for them to see the falls in vignettes, “little by little”, as James says. Rather than trying to find a point of view which could make a grand picture of the scene they were happy to reduce it to the manageable, the glance and the specific. Almost using the same technique as Twain on the Mississippi, Niagara Falls were eliciting a response which was not from the point of view of the sublime, but of the local and specific. In James’s words, it was “admirably simple”, while Twain’s main response was: “I got wet”.

## Five: Some Stretchers

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*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain begins with the author's notice and explanatory suggesting conscientious attention to detail and threatening that those "persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot" (48), signalling from the outset that Twain is having some fun with his reader. The first page of the novel proper has the protagonist Huck talk about the author:

You don't know about me, without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, but that ain't no matter. The book was made by Mr Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody but lied, one time or another, without it was Aunt Polly, or the widow, or maybe Mary. Aunt Polly – Tom's Aunt Polly, she is – and Mary, and the Widow Douglas, is all told about in that book – which is mostly a true book; with some stretchers, as I said before. (49)

I quote the first paragraph in its entirety to show the preoccupation with truth and the expectation of "some stretchers" in any narrative. Twain is notorious for such "stretchers" and has Huck here acquit him, while metanarratively being aware of the reader; he is an autodiegetic narrator talking extradiegetically.

Twain is drawing explicit attention to the fictionality of his text here by proclaiming its truthfulness. This is a common technique, also used by Washington Irving with his Knickerbocker stories; however, to quote *Hamlet's* Queen Gertrude "the lady doth protest too much, methinks" (III, ii, 240). It is also a technique in travel writing, a genre in which, according to Barbara Korte, "it is no accident that the term omnium-gatherum is found repeatedly... in the medley of a travel account, everything can potentially be included which the traveller/writer sees fit" (5); it is "an essentially 'hybrid' or 'androgynous' literary form" (9). Aside from the implication that some literary forms are masculine and some feminine and perhaps the suggestion an empirical guidebook is more masculine than, say, the subjective interest in domestic manners of Frances Trollope, this presents the reader with a number of difficulties concerning genre and by extension fictionality. This chapter discusses truth and fictionality by returning to James's 'point of view'.

Issues of point of view have been omnipresent in this study. We are now in a position to see that point of view can alter the impressions of the traveller and the impressions of the writer; it can decide the experience and the documentation of that experience. In this chapter I argue that authors imagine, perceive, and imagine America again to explain the anticipation, the travel and the writing respectively. I explore the implications on truth of these imagined Americas, as well as question whether deliberate fictionalisation through point of view detracts from truth. I return to Henry James's ideas as expressed in the 'Letter to the Deerfield Summer School' when he states that "the field is vast for freedom, for study, for observation, for satire, for truth" (93).

The main subject of this chapter is an examination of primary travelogues to chart the changes between original note-takings and finished travel books in four authors: Frances Trollope, Dickens, Twain and James. The chapter begins with a further discussion of point of view using the notebooks, letters and criticism of Henry James, considering the importance of 'impression', 'intention' and 'truth', before moving on to discuss Herman Melville's early 'travel writing', specifically *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847) which have been considered both as travel writing and novels since their publication. I will present these, guidebooks, and the primary texts of this study as falling within a spectrum of truth, depending somewhat on intention. Finally, I analyse Dickens's writings on the United States from his letters, through *American Notes*, to *Martin Chuzzlewit*, examining the fictionalisation and truth which Dickens develops.

Henry James discusses the difficulty of categorising fiction in 'The Art of Fiction'. I will argue that travel writing essentially falls within James's definition of art and is therefore about 'selection', but nevertheless truthful:

Many people speak of it as a factitious, artificial form, a product of ingenuity, the business of which is to alter and arrange the things that surround us, to translate them into conventional, traditional moulds. This, however, is a view of the matter which carries us but a very short way, condemns the art to an eternal repetition of a few familiar *clichés*, cuts short its development, and leads us straight up to a dead wall. Catching the very note and trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life, that is the attempt whose strenuous force keeps Fiction upon her feet. In proportion as in what she offers us we see life *without* rearrangement do we feel that we are touching the truth; in proportion as we see it *with* rearrangement do we feel that we are being put off with a substitute, a compromise and convention. It is not uncommon to hear an

extraordinary assurance of remark in regard to this matter of rearranging, which is often spoken of as if it were the last word of art. Mr. Besant<sup>31</sup> seems to me in danger of falling into this great error with his rather unguarded talk about “selection.” Art is essentially selection, but it is a selection whose main care is to be typical, to be inclusive. For many people art means rose-coloured windows, and selection means picking a bouquet for Mrs. Grundy<sup>32</sup>. (54)

James is careful to point out that art is not about selecting that which does not *represent* his subject; just as a painter employs various techniques (which I might describe as points of view) he is still attempting to represent the truth of his subject. This is also the case for travel writing. However, the writer must create narrative and therefore can be said to necessarily move away from his subject and employ that point of view.

This chapter leads towards the conclusion of this work and will therefore chart the development of writing on the United States. It argues that in some respects the gap between landscape and what is written is no less than when Lewis was left in silence, to when James’s *American Scene* discusses the East Coast (and ignores the West).

### Fact, Fiction, and Truth

This opening section looks at truth, fiction and travel accounts; how there is a complicated spectrum in which different travelogues can be places. There then follows a section looking at some examples concerning the New World with particular reference to the first two ‘novels’ of Herman Melville.

There are three factors which contribute to a text’s fictionality. Firstly, does a text (within the narrative itself) proclaim its factuality? The second factor contributing to a text’s fictionality is how it is received and perceived by its readers. A third factor contributing to a text’s fictionality is whether the author sincerely tried to make his text factual or fictional.

It is important to note, as suggested earlier, that fact and truth are not necessarily synonymous, nor truth and fiction antonymous. While talking about fiction, Henry James talks about finding “the superior truth” (*Art of the Novel* 13) which suggests that there is some element of craft and therefore some point of view that needs to be applied to facts.

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<sup>31</sup> Nineteenth century novelist Walter Besant whose 1884 lecture ‘The Art of Fiction’ prompted James to respond in his own essay with the same title (Spilka 101). “Besant was a kind of parody of seriousness about art; ... he was anything but a serious thinker and could not even follow his own good advice” (ibid. 103).

<sup>32</sup> A character from Thomas Morton’s play *Speed the Plough* (1798) “who is proverbially referred to as a personification of the tyranny of social opinion in matters of conventional propriety” (*OED*).

However, James does not mean that he is the only one to be able to find “the superior truth”, but that each truth is individual. If there are many points of view, then there are many truths; William James and his brother again share similar views:

Our account of truth is an account of truths in the plural... Truth for us is simply a collective name for verification-processes... Truth is *made*, just as health, wealth and strength are made, in the course of experience. (*Pragmatism* 107)

It must be asserted that in reality there are some claims which can never be verified and must be considered false. Anything which falls into the realm of uncertainty or opinion, however, could indeed be considered as true if the author believes it. This forms a working definition for the ‘reality’ of America and the truth of the travelogues. Impression and experience are the building blocks of truth in this sense.

Simon Blackburn describes the Measure Doctrine concerning the nature of truth in the following way:

Try to think of us human beings as instruments, put into an environment, things impinge upon us. Just as a thermometer registers the temperature, so we respond to causal impacts: energies and photons and pressures of touch and sound. I, as an instrument, respond to this continuous causal flux one way – a way determined by the state of my sense organs and brain – and so do you. But if I respond one way, and you a different way, where is truth or falsity? I am an input-output device which gives one output, and you are a similar device which gives another. And isn’t that all there is to it? What else does nature contain? (32)

This approach can be seen as representing the point of view. When writing a travelogue, there is a double “input-output” of the original travel and the subsequent writing; the author must apply his point of view to the memories or impressions (to use James’s word) which themselves are seen through various mediating points of view.

Bryan Jay Wolf talks more specifically about travellers when he says that they “must blur the world around him, rendering what is literal more suggestive” (*Romantic Re-Vision* 7), while W.M. Verhoeven points out:



Distortion or misrepresentation of the object, then, appears to be an inherent aspect of the travel narrative, but what is perhaps more interesting is that that very same distortion can indirectly be credited with having given the genre its vitality and diversity in textual format. (187)

Verhoeven seems to be exonerating the distortion and misrepresentation because they provide pleasure for the reader, whereas I suggest that distortion and misrepresentation are inevitable and necessary because point of view is always present. For the travel writers discussed in this study to write in their own style (as predominantly novelists) rather than adopt the dry language of guidebooks, they must adopt this point of view. Let it also not be forgotten that travel writing with the author as the narrator-character, an intradiegetic figure, is – at least in part – autobiography.

To return to the three factors which affect the truth of travel narratives, we can note that the quotation used at the beginning of this chapter represents the first: with the text proclaiming its own truth. Another example taken from an author central to this study is Washington Irving, whose *Sketch Book* has the narrator – himself a pseudonym for the author – assert that he has found the stories of ‘Rip Van Winkle’ and ‘Sleepy Hollow’:

Among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker, an old gentleman of New York, who was very curious in the Dutch History of the province and the manners of the descendants from its primitive settlers. His historical researches, however, did not lie so much among books as among men; for the former are lamentably scanty on his favorite topics; whereas he found the old burghers, and still more, their wives, rich in that legendary lore, so invaluable to true history. (28)

The above is intended to confirm the truthfulness of the narrative by giving the narrator, Knickerbocker, a brief history of his own and describing him as a historical researcher whose work’s “chief merit is its scrupulous accuracy, which indeed was a little questioned on its first appearance, but has since been completely established; and it is now admitted into all historical collections, as a book of unquestionable authority” (ibid.). Thus Irving is attempting to make his text verisimilar, with the appearance of truth. Further accuracy is proclaimed by having Knickerbocker speak of meeting the lucid and “perfectly rational and consistent” protagonist of Rip Van Winkle and having “seen a certificate on the subject taken before a country justice, and signed with cross, in the justice's own handwriting. The story,

therefore, is beyond the possibility of doubt” (41). Irving’s fictionalised persona, Crayon, is representing a largely true journey which expresses the truth of the impression wrought by the original traveller, Irving, perceiving England. In much the same way, Crayon is again utilised to describe the prairies, as discussed earlier in this work. Irving, like Twain, is a writer who indulges in conscious fictionalisation whilst managing to produce something which is both fictitious and true, indelibly linked to the act of travel: see Wolf’s assertion Irving interested in “man’s mythy mind in active commerce with the world” (*Romantic Revision* 113-4), quoted in full in the third chapter of this work.

The second factor, a text’s reception by its readers, presents an early and famous example of a traveller whose writings were thought of as verisimilar and widely thought to be fictitious, Marco Polo. His *Le Divisament dou Monde*, better known as *The Travels of Marco Polo*, is an account of Polo’s travels to the land of Kublai Khan and the Mongol Empire in the late thirteenth century. Polo travelled with his father and uncle. The authorship of the book is contestable, with the most commonly held belief being that the text arose from a conversation between Polo and an author named Rusticello (Jackson 84), though many contemporary manuscripts remain to shed doubt on this theory. Peter Jackson states that Polo is unequivocally not the author of the *Travels* (85). Despite many claims since its distribution that the travels are legitimate<sup>33</sup>,

Marco Polo's reliability has been a matter of dispute from the beginning. It has recently been proposed that the incredulity he met with on his return to Venice sprang from an unwillingness to accept his depiction of a highly organized and hospitable Mongol empire that ran counter to the traditional Western Christian view of the 'barbarian' and especially the view of the barbarian Mongols that had obtained since the 1240s. (Jackson 82)

While the contemporaries of Marco Polo might be forgiven for finding some of the scenes described fanciful, they are now not contentious and Peter Jackson draws on the wealth of research conducted into the historical accuracy of the *Travels* to support the validity of the writings on the whole. The above quotation also suggests that the “incredulity” was not universal at the time as there was a dispute from the beginning, suggesting claims for and

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<sup>33</sup> See for example the assertively titled 1933 *Science News Letter* article, ‘Marco Polo Tales Become Fact through Research into History’, which claims to prove the legitimacy of the *Travels* but in fact sheds almost no light on the matter.

against believing Polo. He does point out that the importance of the Polos in the book is a symptom of “a wider tendency to magnify their role in the east” (19), but this could be to improve their standing as traders rather than fictionalisation which results from point of view. *Travels*, then, seems to fall into the category of a book which was unfairly called wholly false, when it more likely no more than the exaggeration of a protagonist.

The third and final factor contributing to a text’s fictionality is whether the author sincerely tried to make his text factual or fictional. There are varying degrees of success with this which largely depend on the author’s perception and whether they choose to write about themselves as the subject, or the world around them. Most travelogues combine the two with the account often including elements of autobiography:

The relation, in an account, between reference to travelling subject and travelled world can vary to a great extent. Where an account is object-orientated, that is where the imparting of geographical and anthropological knowledge is foregrounded, the subjectivity of the traveller will often be hardly discernible. At the other end of the spectrum, the travelling subject is firmly at centre stage. (Korte 6)

When an account of travel is written by a novelist, it often occurs that the travelling subject does come to the fore to allow a more personal narrative centred around a protagonist, or ‘hero’ as Korte mentions (*ibid.*). In this situation the United States ceases to be the main subject. Another prominent factor in the quest for factuality in travel writing is distance from subject when writing. By this I mean both in terms of space and time. For both of these the term point of view may again be used; the author sees the scene (and indeed themselves) through a personal lens and these scenes can often be mediated by temporal and geographical distance. The difference in the diegeses between the traveller and the writer enables these fictions and reveals the fictionalisation and development in various points of view and imagined Americas: “the text becomes a record of its own figurative evolution, exposing in the tension between tenor and vehicle the larger patterns of dissimulation essential to the making of fictions” (Wolf, *Romantic Re-vision* 3). Throughout this work I show that disparity between diegesis and writing shows a change of point of view and the space for fictionalisation within travel texts. During the nineteenth century the development was away from strong intradiegetic narrator-characters towards knowing extradiegetic narrator-authors who revel in their subjectivity and their fiction-making, the contributing factors of which have been discussed in these pages.

### Travel Writing, Fiction, and the New World

This section is largely concerned with the perception of travelogues which have the New World as their subject. It examines the early ‘novels’ of Herman Melville, *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847) but begins with some brief context of New World novels.

Percy G. Adams writes that “the continent that gave birth to the great majority of untruths about topography was North America, with its politically important Mississippi Basin and its elusive Northwest Passage” (*Travelers and Travel Liars* 45) which was already prominent in the minds of the Elizabethans (134-5). The fictionalisation of the American continent began early and continued into the nineteenth century (or as I will argue has never ceased, despite no longer including mythical beasts and the fantastical). It is a New World which has inspired both travel fiction and travel truth. Barbara Korte notes Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* – which explores and plays with the already prominent tradition of finding the unbelievable in the Western hemisphere – on one hand aligns the “travelogue and the fantastical” (29) while on the other takes as one of its sources “contemporary reports of an actual shipwreck in the Bermudas” (30). *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) continue the tradition of locating fiction in the New World and allying it with the fantastical. Both have the added interest to this study of being texts with their own mythology. *Crusoe* is purportedly based – if not on the story – then the survival of a real castaway, Alexander Selkirk (Howes 32), and concerns an island off the coast of South America, “near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoke”. *Gulliver’s Travels* was originally published as *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World in Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of several Ships* and contained letters from that fictional gentleman and a portrait to perpetuate the myth. Lemuel also offers a response to those Yahoos who “are so bold as to think my Book of Travels a mere Fiction out of mine own Brain; and have gone so far as to drop Hints, that the *Houyhnhnms*, and *Yahoos* have no more Existence than the Inhabitants of *Utopia*” (7). The fictional land of *Gulliver’s* second book Brobdingnag is appended to North America and inhabited by giants. The period directly before that covered in this work, “produced such authors of travel books as d’Aulnoy, Courtilz, Hennepin, Lahontan, François Misson, Defoe, Psalmanazar, Pöllnitz, Dr. Brickell, Benyowski, Jonathan Carver, and Chateaubriand, as well as dozens of others whose works are wholly or partially fake” (Adams, *Travel Literature* 87). James D. Wallace talks about the reliance of early ‘travel writers’ on other sources, often repeating the same errors and fictions. One such writer was Gilbert Imlay who influenced Chateaubriand (7). The

reliance of some of the less honest writers on America on outdated accounts links to Herman Melville's early books as discussed later in this section.

John Seelye in his *Beautiful Machine: Rivers and the Republican Plan 1755-1825* writes about "a line of mendacious travellers that begins with Mandeville<sup>34</sup>, who start out in recognizable terrain and then move on through realms of possibility to the territory of the probable with occasional forays into sheer fantasy" (177) when discussing writings on America in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. These fictitious or dubious travelogues emanating from the Americas often had frontier regions as their setting, with the authors playing upon the fears and beliefs of their readership and compounding or surpassing previous travelogues with more exotic and fantastic scenes: "often travellers themselves, both the truthful and untruthful ones, ironically contributed to the bad reputation of their fraternity by attacking the credibility of all travellers, or just those who preceded them to a particular spot in order to uniqueness as dependable reporters" (Adams, *Travel Literature* 87). D.W. Meinig makes special mention of a map which is "honestly incomplete" (1993, 61; emphasis added) and does not fill in the blanks of terra incognita with mythical beasts, northwest passages or Native American cities, which might inform both maps and those travelogues which relied less on first-hand information and more on precedent. However, how much this 'honesty' is a deliberate attempt to dispel myths is questionable; it could simply be a result of incomplete, insufficient information.

The final texts examined before placing the texts within a loose spectrum of truth and returning to the primary texts – specifically the work of Frances Trollope, Dickens and Twain – are Herman Melville's *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (1846) and its sequel *Omoo: A Narrative of the South Seas* (1847). These books, even prior to their publication, had courted controversy regarding their status as autobiographical travel writing. Melville's early works have been chosen as an example of the reception and importance of verity in the nineteenth century American travel text. They are of interest because of Melville's rapid rise to popularity and fame at the time; his place in the American literary canon nowadays; the interest in the South Seas and the truth of his account generated on their publication; and because his works interact with some of the themes and issues which arise in the main primary texts of this study, namely those of the frontier. Hetherington talks of the South Seas as "a sort of more exotic frontier" which Melville evoked "in that year 1846, when the South Seas were newly discovered by poetic fancy and frontier attitudes were particularly

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<sup>34</sup> A fourteenth century 'travel' writer.

dominant” (65). Similarities can be made between *Typee*, *Omoo*, and all of the texts which concern this study (including between Melville and Stevenson, who was also preoccupied with the South Seas), but particularly Washington Irving’s three stories of the West: *A Tour on the Prairies*, published in 1835, *Astoria* and *The Rocky mountains; or, Scenes, Incidents, and Adventures in the Far West* [*The Adventures of Captain Bonneville*]. Both *Typee* and *Omoo* are concerned with:

Cannibalism – the theme of suspense which comes to dominate *Typee* and most of the subsequent South Sea romances modelled upon it. *Typee* discovered a new milieu for the romantic novelist ... Melville furnished a new and exotic motive of terror for the sentimental reader. (Anderson 100)

These novels and Irving’s slightly earlier *Tour* hold complex views of the natives: they are both admired and feared. In *Typee*, “Melville consistently adopts a romantic attitude in his account of the Noble Savages that he found in Typee Valley” (Anderson 121), while at the same time exaggerating the threat of cannibalism to the point of fiction. Compare this to *A Tour*, which begins with a description of the Osage: “stately fellows; stern and simple in garb and aspect... the finest looking Indians I have ever seen in the West” and the Creek (Muskogee): “There is something... oriental in the appearance of this tribe” (15). These descriptions of the noble savage are in marked contrast to that of

The Pawnees, into whose hunting grounds we were about entering. There is always some wild untamed tribe of Indians who form for a time the terror of a frontier, and about whom all kinds of fearful stories are told. Such at present was the case with the Pawnees who rove the regions between the Arkansas and the Red River, and the prairies of Texas. (42)

*Astoria*, published in 1836, the year after *A Tour*, has Irving chronicle the economic prospecting of John Jacob Astor, the famous American businessman of German birth. In both this novel and *Bonneville*, Irving is not the traveller, merely the narrator, so there is less of interest to this study. However, Irving’s descriptions of the landscape and ideas of Western writing in these later books are relevant in the context of *A Tour*. K. A. Spaulding states that in *Astoria* “no less than three incidents were essentially the product of invention” (151); not in the Robert Stuart Manuscript, source for the fifty pages in question, which begs the

question: from where did Irving draw inspiration for these passages? Irving largely ‘filled in the blanks’ and made the narrative his own by firstly drawing on his imagination, which is to be expected from a novelist, but also by drawing on his own experiences in the West and using some of the techniques he had acquired for writing on vast empty spaces from *A Tour*. In this sense, Irving and Melville populating their narratives are similar to earlier map-makers filling in the blanks of the West with monsters and mythical creatures. The same charges can be made against *Bonneville*, which exhibits a significant amount of artistic licence from Irving who expands, exaggerates and diverts from the source material. Melville and Irving are both using the frontier as sites of possible fictionalisation; they are ‘empty’ borderlands which are set to be filled with myths and fictions: “Irving’s greatness was to have discovered that modern man stands at the margins of his own achievements, a baffled and engrossed spectator in a drama he neither controls nor understands”; Irving “defines in his fiction the limits of the observable and commonsensical world, displaying the vulnerability of empirical thought before the pressures of the imagination and the individual’s insatiable desire to know” (Wolf, *Romantic Re-Vision* 115; 114). From the margins, then, it is necessary to adopt a point of view and therefore present the scene (seen) in a personal way. The traveller is always on the margins and must adopt a point of view; each impression is therefore valid. Compare this to another prominent writer on the West (and Irving’s inspiration for writing his own Western works) James Fenimore Cooper. Cooper disliked Irving’s *Sketch Book*, according to Wallace, and preferred to write as closely to ‘history’ as possible in a democratic form which was not highly stylised (and fictionalised) as he perceived was the case with Irving (119-121). While Robert E. Lee unfairly discounts Cooper’s *The Prairie* (1828) as “written out of whole cloth by a man who had never been west of the Finger Lakes” (59) and Barrie Hayne identifies the “uneasiness about the verisimilitude of the speech of Cooper’s Indians” (73), Christine Bold finds Cooper’s writing more nuanced than many of the dime novels which took it as a model, dealing with “social conflict and historical inevitability” (10). However, Cooper is not writing histories or even travelogues, but novels. Cooper therefore takes sources (such as the song ‘The Hunters of Kentucky’ (J. Tanner 103)) and real historical events (Crawford 414) to create verisimilitude in his novels. Where Irving used narrative techniques to assert the truth of his narrative, Cooper used sources other than his own experience. This technique was to be used by Melville, whose sources support and lend verisimilitude to his travel ‘novels’ which – as we will see – led to a discussion amongst early readers about the truth of these books.

Herman Melville had already made a journey to Liverpool and back as a deck hand when, in 1841 at the age of 21 he joined the crew of the *Acushnet* (Butterfield 14). The following year, a week after Dickens had arrived safely back in England (*Letters* 252), Melville was on the island of Nukuheva. As Dickens returned to plum pudding ‘reality’ after his American nightmare, Melville was heading even further away from Dickens’s conception of culture to an island where he

Deserted and headed inland. Having become separated from [Toby] Greene, he arrived back at the coast exactly a month afterwards and on 9 August signed on as an able seaman on the trading vessel *Lucy Ann*. This month’s residence on Nukuheva was to be the stuff of *Typee*, with *Omoa* opening ‘in the middle of a bright, tropical afternoon’, that 9 August, as he boarded his new ship” (Butterfield 14).

This four week stay became four months in *Typee* (Anderson 70).

Melville is the final case study in this look at fiction and truth in travel writing because the fictionality of his books did not, in his view, undermine their truth. Melville was writing in a climate of ‘factual’ sea narratives; by the 1840s many sea narratives were written by real seamen, like Melville (Blum 92). Where he differs is by deliberately engaging in fictionalisation in the narrative, more so than occurs simply by constructing narrative. Nina Baym’s essay discusses “Melville’s quarrel with fiction” and notes that he felt constrained by the genre of fiction and “found himself impatient with the indirections and partialities of fiction’s heavily mediated discourse” (911). The use of mediation in the previous quotation suggests a link to point of view. Melville seemed unable to separate the mediation (or point of view) from the discourse, whether writing fiction or not. While some of Baym’s claims about Melville’s later works suggest a view which I do not necessarily hold of Melville as struggling with his role as “poet-bard searching out and saying the truth” (921) her comments on his earlier work support this thesis. I believe the assertion that Melville “adds plot element that may, from some interpretive points of view, contain inherent, archetypal, psychological significance; but his purposes, so far as can be determined, are less to convey profound insight than to create a more suspenseful, entertaining, salable [sic] work” (911); however, even this can be disputed, as it was the truth of his narrative which most interested publishers. After failing with a New York publisher who felt the narrative of *Typee* could not possibly be true (Butterfield 15), Melville’s brother took the novel to London and publisher John Murray who was at first sceptical of the veracity of the work, but “after receiving further chapters he



became sufficiently convinced in that regard to publish it on 27 February 1846, in his Colonial and Home Library, a series devoted to supposedly true accounts of exotic, foreign travel. Two weeks later it was published in the United States” (ibid. 15). Melville’s *Typee*, then, had joined the ranks of verisimilar travel writing, but with more truth than most: Melville *had* been on the island in question and *had* deserted spending some time (though not as much as his protagonist) on the island. “Melville had made his bow before the world not as a novelist but as a travel writer” (Hetherington 21). Charles Roberts Anderson examines some of the possible sources for *Typee*, *Omoo* and Melville’s other South Sea writings, finding that Melville may have ‘borrowed’ descriptions which he could not remember from several sources:

This conclusion is that *Typee* itself is a compilation, similar to the literary ethnologies which quote it as an authority, and which cite in proof the very sources whence it was drawn. And the answer is that Melville gathered almost every shred of this information from contemporary travel books. (190)

Taking this argument, these ‘borrowed’ descriptions may be no more indicative of fictionality than Twain’s use of his brother’s “memorandum book” mentioned earlier. Anderson also notes that *Moby-Dick*’s Father Mapple might be inspired by a real meeting with Father Taylor described in *American Notes* with inspiration taken from that volume, or wholly inspired by that travelogue (28). *Moby-Dick* is another interesting example of Melville’s work, coming after a series of ‘facts’ concerning whales and various quotations from other sources, the novel is introduced by the sub-sub-librarian (8) as Irving’s tales are introduced by Crayon and Knickerbocker. Hester Blum suggests that *Moby-Dick* could be read as a footnote to the work of the sub-sub-librarian (129), implying that the novel is the facts turned into narrative. This section of *Moby-Dick* is almost revealing the method of the novelist in gathering facts which inform his story and add to its truth. Anderson sums up his own views on Melville’s work with the following:

His South Sea experiences, stripped of their romantic trappings, are still bright with high-hearted adventure. The books that embody them are here set forth less as masterpieces of creative imagination than as deliberately manufactured travel record – on the whole joyous – partly borrowed from the writings of other voyagers, partly

fictionized [sic] autobiography, embellished and pointed for the sake of propaganda.

(7)

Anderson also makes the distinction between ethnological truth and autobiographical truth (though there are many other kinds of truth, as we have seen), which is more important for narratives which deal with locations which are not widely discussed. The same distinctions can be made with the travelogues of this study; however, the truth of the place can also be subjective, even if the descriptions are true. This idea will gain greater importance later in this chapter where it is not just the scenes and events that are fictionalised, but the land itself in the shape of America. Anderson comes to the conclusion that ethnologically *Typee* and *Omoo* are truth, but autobiographically there are more liberties taken with the essential facts (191).

Hugh Hetherington notes that the reception of *Typee* was largely positive on both sides of the Atlantic, despite the debates over the work's authenticity (31). John Foster, Dickens's biographer who will feature prominently in the letters which became *American Notes* to be looked at later in this chapter, was one of those British reviewers who doubted the veracity of *Typee*. Nonetheless, Foster was willing to believe the book and the impression it gave him (Hetherington 23), this may be telling with regards to Dickens's malleability with truth. The British reviewers were split almost equally as to whether the novel was a work of fact or fiction (ibid. 31). The American reviewers, on the other hand, seem to have been more ready to believe Melville's word: "America was proud of Herman Melville; England enjoyed him. And her seasoned critics took his measure more accurately as a light-hearted raconteur of picaresque travel fiction, comparable to Defoe in *Robinson Crusoe*" (Anderson 181). Perhaps because of a nationalistic bias – "the American pre-Toby statistics were six doubters... and sixteen believers" (61) – Melville seems to have painted a convincing picture, particularly to his countrymen who were probably still reeling from the various negative impressions written about their country from such authors as Mrs. Trollope and Dickens.

The publication of *Omoo* marked a new appreciation of the truth of Melville's first work, and enabled the treatment of the two books as complementary: While *Omoo* was the second most popular of all of Melville's novels in terms of sales, it actually surpassed *Typee* in the initial rush, reportedly selling out the entire American edition of 3,000-3,500 copies in its first week (Machor 55-6).

Another significant turning point in the reception of Melville's work was the arrival on the scene of one of the characters from his book: "the resurrection of Toby, and the

continuation of Melville's adventures in *Omoo*, a more autobiographical work, settled the doubts about actuality – except for the few die-hards, chiefly British” (Hetherington 54). *Omoo* and its predecessor *Typee* were finally considered as travel books in Melville's lifetime. William James makes a point which aptly describes the situation of both Marco Polo and Herman Melville when he writes that

Truth lives, in fact, for the most part on a credit system. Our thoughts and belief's 'pass', so long as nothing challenges them, just as banknotes pass, so long as nobody refuses them... We trade on each other's truth. (*Pragmatism* 203)

However, it is now clear that while Melville's settings were true to life, the adventures were not always. We are now in a position to see that the protagonist and his adventures are often the first point of fictionalisation. Rewriting the landscape also allows for fictionalisation. These small adjustments to the 'facts' engender further fictionalisation and perpetuate a myth which soon encompasses the setting to create a mythic, fictional South Seas (in the case of Melville) or America. The frontier nature of these locations aids and abets this fictionalisation as I will show. Melville's subtle exaggeration of the threat of cannibalism, like Irving's of Pawnee attacks, begins to paint a picture of a frontier more hostile and wilder than the reality. From then on the myth is born.

### Travel Fact to Travel Fiction

Guidebooks and handbooks to the United States and Canada sit at one end of a spectrum of truth: with varying amounts of narrative, they present 'facts' about the country often without a narrator character. At the other end are texts like *Martin Chuzzlewit*; novels which are openly fictitious, albeit with some sections based on real events; the impression of the United States in these texts is certainly fictionalised, but nevertheless is an exaggerated response to the real impression of Dickens the traveller and the subsequent revisiting of those impressions from the point of view of Dickens the author.

The many guidebooks and handbooks which proliferated on both sides of the Atlantic in the nineteenth century concerning the United States take as their model earlier propagandist pamphlets from the pre-revolution states, and geographical and topographical writings like that of Bartram and Jefferson as mentioned in previous chapters. Some of these nineteenth century texts take the form of obvious propaganda, such as *The Immigrants Guide to the Most Fertile Lands of Kansas...* (1880) which is aimed more at prospective permanent

settlers than interested readers. This pamphlet gives details of resources, churches and schools, as well as “the total value of live stock in Kansas, in 1879... \$54,705,497, an increase over the valuation in 1878 of \$8,532,548.50” (n.p.). This pamphlet, openly funded by the Union Pacific railway company is designed to paint a certain picture of the land and its slavish devotion to facts and figures does not necessarily equate to truth, though Hester Blum suggests figures are less open to fiction (147). However, other texts are less obviously propaganda and some indeed proclaim their ‘factuality’ and objectivity, such as *Bacon’s Descriptive Handbook of America* (1866) which claims:

As the authors have been careful to collate all reliable facts of general interest, so they have been solicitous to exclude all opinions, prejudices and speculations of a sectional or party character, being desirous rather of strengthening those sentiments of international amity which should subsist between England and America. (iv)

This proclaims objectivity before openly expressing an agenda, and an agenda which is counter to the kind of honesty and truth expressed in *Domestic Manners* and *American Notes*, for example, which were poorly received by the Americans. The *Emigrant’s Handbook for the United States... Especially the Great Western Valley* (1848) likewise claims to be “pointing out the present condition of the United States, and the *real* prospects those visiting our shore may indulge in” (3). Once more the suggestion is that other texts are fictitious and this guidebook provides the truth. Another *Emigrant’s Hand-Book, and New Guide for Travellers Through the United States of America* (1850) professes that

The materials for this little volume have mostly been drawn from official documents, and from information procured by agents who have travelled over most of the territory herein described, and it will be hence found as perfect as it is possible for a work of this character to be made. (‘Preface ’ n.p.)

The use of “official documents” is significant here, as those official documents are unnamed and also presumably have the same space for point of view as do other texts, despite point of view often being disavowed just as it is in these guidebooks. That the “agents” are absent in the text allows for the information in these guidebooks to be presented as mimesis. There is no narrator and there are no characters. This removes the autobiographical element of travel

writing generally considered in this thesis and one of the most obvious opportunities for fictionalisation and point of view.

These guidebooks also repeat the findings of earlier travellers, often unaccredited. However, one such book, *America & England Contrasted: Or, The Emigrant's Hand-Book and guide to the United States* (1842) openly quotes vast sections from a number of sources including William "Cobbett's 'Emigrant's Guide' " (7), "C. Knight's 'Mechanics and Labourer's Guide' " (14) and finishes with a collection of letters from Americans, some of which were written more than twenty years previously, including one by a Dr. John Smyles who has something to say about

English writers on America. With very few exceptions their books are the most trashy affairs that ever wounded the vanity of a vain people, or administered to the prejudice or ill nature of the English Tories... They, after a few months, conclude to give a sketch of America and the Americans as if they knew all about it and them. (52)

That this book contains an attack on writers such as Basil Hall and Fanny Trollope (who spent considerably longer than a few months in the United States) whilst offering little in the way of original material is interesting in that the sources for this "*Hand-Book*" are often hopelessly outdated. To chastise English writers on the United States for their impressions, presented as such without the air of objectivity or impersonality evident in these texts, is an interesting comment on the different agendas of travel writing and the reinforced view that all Americas are imagined.

I have already identified several occurrences of the objective mask of these guidebooks falling when confronted with Niagara. But in general these books sit at the 'factual' end of the fiction spectrum, albeit with the occasional slip into metaphor. In this study, the travelogue most similar to a guidebook is Anthony Trollope's, though there is abundant authorial presence and point of view. The works of the primary writers of this study sit in the middle of the spectrum, with Twain and Irving closer to the 'fictional' end. At this 'fictional' extreme sits the work of Melville, as discussed above. The guidebooks offer less in the way of narrative; there are fewer attempts to tell a story and therefore less room for fictionalisation. Where the travel texts of this study differ is that they are written by those whose careers are to make narrative and they consequently make narrative of America allowing room for fictionalisation in the gap between travel and narrative.

### Persona and Pseudonym

One of the central elements of fictionality in travel writing, and an important interest throughout this work, is persona. Of the central authors covered here three – Clemens (Twain), Dickens (Boz) and Irving (Crayon [Knickerbocker]) – make extensive use of a persona; two – Hawthorne and Anthony Trollope – accentuate their bumbling characteristics; with Stevenson seeing himself as something of an amorous hero, James as an unobserved observer, and Fanny Trollope as a haughty English lady of impeccable reputation. Thoreau writes about the effect of nature upon himself and W.T. Stead writes little about himself as subject, so are perhaps the exceptions here. Each of the novel-writing authors above therefore makes use of persona either overtly with a pseudonym, without pseudonym but with a deliberate playing up of the public’s perception of them, or subconsciously to affirm their status (as is probably the case with Mrs. Trollope). Persona and pseudonym suggest that the (somewhat) fictionalised narrator will form an integral part of the book and its potential for entertainment: Victorian exploration “accounts not only have an exciting travel plot, but they also make the travelling persona an interesting character within this plot” (Korte 88).

The use of pseudonym presents the reader with a sign that the writing will be somewhat fictionalised. The use of persona, however, is less easily discernible and raises the possibility of a factual world and a fictional narrator within the same work. In other words, the main character might be from a different diegesis to the world he inhabits. Barbara Korte points out that the first-person narrative in travel writing engenders an assumption that the narrator is the traveller, and therefore the author, masking the fictionality that occurs between the diegetic levels: “the narrator of the account and the travelling persona in the plot are fused in the union of first-person narration; the autobiographical nature of the text arises from the further extension of this union to the author him or herself” (Korte 12).

Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768) appears to fall into the category of travel book with a fictional narrator following the real route of his author in the real world<sup>35</sup>. Sterne’s narrator Yorick is loosely based upon the author and the work is based in the real world and based upon Sterne’s eight month travels. Barbara Korte sees this work as instrumental in the formation of the travelogue (56). Percy G. Adams also finds Sterne to be influential on this work’s primary authors, as well as many other travellers with dubious claims to truth: “although Sterne’s *The Sentimental Journey* is now a ‘novel,’ in the eighteenth century it was a travel book and inspired a huge school of sentimental travel

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<sup>35</sup> Having said this, the idea of a wholly unfictionalised textual world will be problematised later.

accounts” (*Travel Literature* 198). These travels – as well as Yorick himself – also appear in Sterne’s more obviously fictional *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759-1767). The seventh volume of this novel was published in 1765, the same year Sterne had been in Europe and shows the close link between the verisimilar *Sentimental Journey* and fictitious *Tristram Shandy*:

Sterne at first planned it as one big Grand Tour novel ... Then in the final version he employed the Grand Tour in a variety of ways. First, Tristram tells of having accompanied Mr. Noddy’s eldest son through Europe in 1741. Second, Walter, with Sanson’s atlas and a book of post roads in front of him, is laying out Bobby’s Tour route when Bobby dies. And third, Volume VII is the story of Tristram’s second Grand Tour. On this one he is in the company of death – hardly the most congenial of tutors and one he manages to leave behind. (Adams, *Travel Literature* 190)

The practice of reporting from the new democracy has its antecedents in the letters and accounts of earlier settlers to the New World who hailed from Europe; as does the use of pseudonym, which is evident in one of the most famous early correspondences from America. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) has the character of James describing the birth of the American people. These letters speak for the first time of “individuals of all nations” being “melted into a new race of men” (Crèvecoeur 44).

I have shown how the narrator of travelogues is often fictionalised by the frequent use of persona – whether in the overt form of pseudonym or not – which constitutes just one of the aspects of a travelogue which becomes fictional. I will now turn my attention to the central consideration of this chapter: fictionalisation in Dickens’s American writing. This will look not only at persona but the fictionalisation of scenes and, most importantly the landscape and in turn America itself.

### **From Fact to Fiction?**

This section charts the fictionalisation of travels in three authors: Mrs. Trollope, Charles Dickens and Mark Twain, but concentrates on Dickens. I argue that the point of view applies not only to the act of travelling but the act of writing and that therefore the United States can be viewed through two mediating lenses as the author revisits his or her travels. In some cases the difference between the writer and the traveller is minimal (as in the case of Frances

Trollope), whilst Dickens and Twain both undergo significant changes in point of view from traveller to travel writer. I also argue that this second point of view does not undermine the truth of the impressions to any greater extent than the first. Examining the changing rhetoric and impressions of the three writers from their initial perceptions (in notebooks or letters) to composed pieces of writing for publication is one way to chart the altered Americas being put forth and therefore look at points of view which colour the country, the narrator, and subsequent travels.

Fanny Trollope's method of composition was discussed in the first chapter of this work: she used three notebooks, what she describes as "six hundred pages of griffonage" (314) as the basis for *Domestic Manners of the Americans*. She makes claims to having not seen Basil Hall's book until close to the end of her travels, implying that her travelogue is not influenced by his *Travels in North America*, published two years before *Domestic Manners*. Trollope is therefore denying seeing America through the point of view of (specifically one) other travel text. Trollope's notebooks contain numerous musings as well as a list of American vocabulary, including: "that's a fact; smart = clever; lovely = good; elegant = excellent; to fix = to arrange; I expect = I suppose; I guess; Go the whole hog; To learn = to teach" (Notebook 3, 16-17). Dickens makes similar notes on the use of vocabulary and uses the terms he discovers to enrich the speech in his travelogue, as shown later in this section. In particular the verb "fix" amuses and provides later imaginative inspiration for *American Notes*. These phrases also all appear (especially 'fix') in Trollope's narrations and it is reasonable to assume that this list of phrases served the same purpose for her. Using the vernacular and vocabulary of the travelling diegesis is one way to ensure that even if fictionalisation takes place, the narrative is constructed in a way which makes it of the diegesis and therefore truthful.

Dickens's composition of *American Notes* was not quite as textually based as Frances's *Domestic Manners*, with Dickens apparently foregoing the notebook (and the immediate retrospective) for letters to friends. Despite talking in a letter to his most frequent correspondent John Forster about his intention to travel to the United States and to "keep a note-book, and publish it for half a guinea or thereabouts, on [his] return"<sup>36</sup> (*Selected Letters* 53) the majority of Dickens's material for that book actually occurs in the various lengthy letters he sent Forster as opposed to a notebook. These letters are already separated in space and time from the diegesis in which they occurred and show a conscious desire to construct

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<sup>36</sup> 22 September 1841.



narrative out of the day's events. Even these, written shortly after the experiences related in them, show Dickens as a storyteller.

Though Dickens was understandably nervous about his trip, he remarked that “the advantages of going, however, appear by steady looking-at so great, that I have come to persuade myself it is a matter of imperative necessity”, though he adds “Kate [his wife] weeps whenever it is spoken of” (ibid. 54). Dickens was optimistic even on viewing his quarters onboard the ship in which he was travel to America: “we are in the best spirits, and full of hope. I *was* dashed for a moment when I saw our ‘Cabin’; but I got over that, directly, and laughed so much at its ludicrous proportions, that you might have heard me all over the ship”<sup>37</sup> (*Letters* 10). This brief humorous description is expanded to become the introduction of *American Notes*, the passage forming a narratological pause, with the first look at the cabin being stretched to accommodate the comic tone which Dickens is trying to create in his travel book. Dickens's first description of the sea in his letters suggests a boredom, or overwhelming unease with the vastness of the scene, a figure which would appear later in *American Notes* whilst discussing the plains: “the sea, running as it does and has done, is very stupendous, and viewed from the air or some great height would be grand no doubt. But seen from the wet and rolling decks, in this weather and these circumstances, it only impresses one giddily and painfully”<sup>38</sup> (*Letters* 11). It can be seen in this letter that Dickens is not impressed by the immensity of the ocean, perhaps even foreshadowing his future opinions of the immense which he would discover in America. The boredom and sickness of the sea voyage no doubt played its part – though subconsciously – on Dickens's appreciation of all that comes after; the prairies, the Mississippi and Niagara. The passage over was an inexorable rite of passage and frontiering experience which changed the author and his imaginary America. The journey is also described in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, with the protagonist accompanied by the inimitable Mark Tapley, aboard the ship named the *Screw*, presumably because of the feeling that the boat is always turning, causing Tapley's heels to be “looking down at him, as he afterwards observed, from a nearly perpendicular elevation” (241). This journey is actually less eventful than Dickens's account in *American Notes*, as it omits running aground “upon a bank of mud” (28) near Halifax. The pilot who was evidently to blame is admonished slightly in *Notes* with “the pilot's folly” (*Letters* 14) being replaced with “some error on the pilot's part” (*Notes* 29). This letter also contains Dickens referring to himself as “the inimitable” (15), another possible example of persona, this time in a letter to a

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<sup>37</sup> In a letter to Thomas Mitton, 3 January 1842.

<sup>38</sup> In a letter to Forster dated 17 January 1842, but added to later.

close friend. “Inimitable” is an interesting term which suggests that Dickens cannot be imitated. This indicates that the narrator-character – “the inimitable Dickens” – cannot even be represented adequately by the narrator-author writing of the letter. Dickens is again suggesting that the role of the narrator-author is one which necessarily fails to adequately represent the narrator-character. The examples above demonstrate that the author in Dickens reverts to persona even with those who know him personally as opposed to through his fiction. Dickens the author also abstains from a vivid description of the storm in *Chuzzlewit*; instead he concentrates more on the steerage passengers and character interaction. Dickens the traveller is rightfully more interested in the journey than his interaction with fellow passengers.

Anticipation is the first important factor in the discourse of travel. All travellers create or hold an idea of their prospective travel and the land to which they are voyaging. This is the first opportunity for the traveller to create a fictional United States: the United States of anticipation, be it positive or negative. Dickens and Mrs. Trollope expressed great excitement and optimism before visiting the United States. These preconceptions of the United States and positive anticipations probably made the reality all the more disappointing. It also meant that America in the minds of Dickens and Frances Trollope was elevated into a mythical utopia before they went and the negative experiences seem to have infected any positive perceptions of the country after they had travelled, much like a miasma. For Trollope: “what notions she did have about the land to which she was travelling had come chiefly from Frances Wright. According to her *Views of Society and Manners in America*, there had never been such an even-tempered people as those in the United States” (Johnston 73).

The imagined United States of *American Notes* slowly taking shape through his work, a conception which began before Dickens arrived and which continued after he left the country; visions of America revisiting him in dreams which became nightmares. This first preconception of the United States formed not only from the hopes or trepidations of travellers, but from the myth of the country and the canon of literature already written about the country. It is from the anticipatory point of view that the United State is first viewed; this is also the first fictionalised United States, seen through other texts and the imagination. Henry James talks about this phenomenon when he notes that

The sentimental tourist makes images in advance; they grow up in his mind by a logic of their own. He finds himself thinking of an unknown, unseen place, as having such and such a shape and figure rather than such another. It assumes in his

mind a certain complexion, a certain colour which frequently turns out to be singularly at variance with reality. For some reason or other, I had supposed Saratoga to be buried in a sort of elegant wilderness. (James, *Portraits of Places* 277)

Although James is specifically talking about Saratoga, New York, his words could apply to any anticipated, imagined place or experience. In this passage on the fictionalisation of travel, “sentimental” could also be a direct reference to Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey*; a fictionalised account of a real journey.

Dickens, though optimistic about his trip, was truly amazed at the reception he received on arriving in the States:

I was standing... beside the captain, staring about me, when suddenly, long before we were moored to the wharf, a dozen men came leaping on board at the peril of their lives, with great bundles of newspapers under their arms. “Aha!” says I, “this is like our London-bridge”: believing of course these visitors were news-boys. But what do you think of their being *editors*? And what do you think of their tearing violently up to me and beginning to shake hands like madmen? Oh! If you could see how I wrung their wrists! And if you could but know how I hated one man in very dirty gaiters, and with very protruding upper teeth, who said to all comers after him, “So you’ve been introduced to our friend Dickens-eh?”...

How can I tell you what has happened since that first day? How can I give you the faintest notion of my reception here<sup>39</sup>; of the crowds that pour in and out the whole day; of the people that line the streets when I go out; of the cheering when I went to the theatre<sup>40</sup>; of the copies of verses, letters of congratulation, welcomes of all kinds, balls, dinners, assemblies without end?<sup>41</sup> (*Letters* 33)

This account is omitted from *American Notes*, largely because of Dickens’s desire to abstain from naming individuals in his book when speaking derisively:

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<sup>39</sup> See below.

<sup>40</sup> At both these points, *Letters* contains footnotes providing contemporary descriptions of these occasions and the exuberant fervour of the crowd.

<sup>41</sup> Continuation of letter to Forster, 29 January 1842.

[*American Notes*] comprehends no small talk concerning individuals, and no violation of the social confidences of private life. The very prevalent practice of kidnapping live ladies and gentlemen, forcing them into cabinets, and labelling and ticketing them whether they will or no, for the gratification of the idle and the curious, is not to my taste. Therefore I have avoided it. (275)

The “kidnapping live ladies and gentlemen” seems to be a reference to Dickens’s own treatment and the exhausting performance he was expected to maintain in public. While *Notes* does not contain a mention of Dickens’s reception, the passage beginning chapter sixteen in *Chuzzlewit* is, however, a fictionalisation of the greeting Dickens received, with the editors on the whole replaced by news boys, and the vulgarly cunning and conceited Colonel Diver, editor of the New York Rowdy Journal replacing the useful and obliging Doctor S.–, another editor. Whilst Doctor S.– helped Dickens and his wife settle then left them to their own devices, however, the fictional editor is not so sensitive to Martin’s needs: already Dickens’s prejudices of the trip to America are shown in his fiction. That an editor would be interested in Martin at all seems unlikely, so here the fictionalisation acts perhaps as catharsis for Dickens’s treatment as he was unable to vent his displeasure without the veil of fiction.

In the first chapter of this work I identified the three basic forms of fictionalisation in travel writing as exaggeration, deliberate fictionalisation and subconscious fictionalisation as a result of distance in time and space from the experience and travel as the primary diegesis. Any of these can be escalated by the author’s desire to create a narrative. Dickens can be seen to exaggerate within the space of twenty four hours: in a letter to Forster on the 21 March 1842 Dickens writes that “another gentleman (no doubt of great fashion also) sent a letter to me two hours after I had gone to bed, preparatory to rising at four next morning, with instructions to the slave who brought it to knock me up and wait for an answer!” (*Letters* 142). The very next day however, Dickens writes to Thomas Mitton: “as it is, a slave comes to me now and then *in the middle of the night* with a letter – and waits at the bedroom door for an answer!” (ibid. 161); Dickens is already subtly fictionalising his journey within the space of a day. Whether this is an accidental exaggeration or a deliberate attempt to add drama to the narrative is unclear, but Dickens, even within the diegesis of a personal letter, becomes a less reliable narrator.

The constant invasion of Dickens’s privacy was at first amusing, as in the above quotation; however he quickly became shocked at the lengths the Americans would go to catch a glimpse of him: “there never was a King or Emperor upon the Earth, so cheered, and

followed by crowds, and entertained in Public at splendid balls and dinners, and waited on by public bodies and deputations of all kinds”<sup>42</sup> (*Letters* 43); the repetition of “public” in this fragment shows how the American people behave, treating everything and everyone as public. In a letter to Daniel Maclise on 22 March 1842 Dickens is distressed by his lack of privacy and the refusal of the American people to see and treat him like a human being:

Imagine – but you can’t imagine, without seeing them – how now and then a republican boy, of surpassing and indescribable free and easiness comes in among the company, and keeping his cap upon his head, inspects me at his leisure. We had one the other day who remained two hours, and took no other refreshment during the whole time than an occasional pick at his nose, or survey of the street from the open window, whence he invited other boys to come and do the like...

Whenever we come to a town station, the crowd surround it, let down all the windows, thrust in their heads, stare at me, and compare notes respecting my appearance, with as much coolness as if I were a Marble image. (*Letters* 154-5)

This letter is transformed in a page of *American Notes*, where Dickens remarks that

Men and boys who happened to have nothing particular to do, and were curious in foreigners, came (according to custom) round the carriage in which I sat; let down all the windows; thrust in their heads and shoulders; hooked themselves on conveniently, by their elbows; and fell to comparing notes on the subject of my personal appearance, with as much indifference as if I were a stuffed figure. I never gained so much uncompromising information with reference to my own nose and eyes, and various impressions wrought by my mouth and chin on different minds, and how my head looks when it is viewed from behind, as on these occasions. Some gentlemen were only satisfied by exercising their sense of touch; and the boys (who are surprisingly precocious in America) were seldom satisfied, even by that, but would return to the charge over and over again. Many a budding president has walked into my room with his cap on his head and his hands in his pockets, and stared at me for two whole hours: occasionally refreshing himself with a tweak of his nose, or a draught from the water-jug; or by walking to the windows and

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<sup>42</sup> Letter to Thomas Mitton, 31 January 1842.

inviting other boys in the street below, to come up and do likewise: crying, “Here he is!” “Come on!” “Bring all your brothers!” with other hospitable entreaties of that nature. (127-8)

Comparing these two passages we can see that the greater length of the passage in *American Notes* shows Dickens constructing and crafting the passage to a greater extent, fictionalising and working techniques employed in his novels to heighten the absurdity of the scene. The travelogue passage has Dickens not as a marble figure, a statue or bust but a stuffed figure, somewhat like a toy and without the distinction of the former, which while not viewed as human is at least generally appreciated by the viewer. The crowd in the second passage actually touches Dickens, whereas there is no mention of this in the letter, a fact which is unlikely to have been omitted. Also, the boy who remained for two hours in the letter is now the norm, and not a “republican boy” but a budding president, elevated in his status to show that all of society in America can be guilty of this invasion of privacy and aggressive equality. In the travel book passage the crowd gathers at the window of the carriage, forcing themselves into Dickens’s point of view: his subsequent experiences and writing betray the fact that he saw the American people through this mob. Always the mob is just outside the window and when Dickens does look out he sees more boys wishing to have a look at him. The function of these windows is reversed and instead of the window framing Dickens’s impression Dickens becomes the object of interest. It is notable that in *American Notes* Dickens really is the subject of his account, even more so than in his letters. Dickens, the extradiegetic narrator-author is framing his impressions through the crowd which is in turn looking at the author as if a picture through the window of the carriage or room. Dickens the narrator-character becomes the subject of both the crowd’s fascination, and Dickens’s book.

This familiarity amongst all inhabitants and visitors to the United States is also noticed by Frances Trollope who was appalled at the “brutal familiarity” with which a citizen accosted General Jackson (then President):

“General Jackson, I guess?” The general bowed assent.

“Why, they told me you was dead. ”

“No! Providence has hitherto preserved my life.”

“And is your wife alive too?”

The general, apparently much hurt, signified the contrary, upon which the courtier concluded his harangue by saying “Ay, I thought it was the one or the t’other of ye.” (*Domestic Manners* 117)

Dickens, as J. Hillis Miller argues, returns the compliment of the United States treating him as a unreal figure: “the style of *American Notes* is the style of the letters: a transformation of the prosaic reality into an oblique poetic reality through the use of hyperbole, metaphor, personification of inanimate objects, and the depersonification of human beings” (470). The greater the separation from that country – both in time and place – the greater the transformation into the “oblique poetic reality” to be found in *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. This could be said to be the fictionalisation inherent in making narrative. As discussed earlier, there is something cathartic about the process of fictionalising the United States, which allows the author to come to terms with unsettling aspect of being in a frontier: “by weaving ‘here’ and ‘there’ together in the space of the imagination, the writer uses fiction to resolve the worst terrors of dislocation and anomie” (Kaplan 39). In the Old World, then, the fiction can stem from the linguistic and textual history of a place, whereas in the New it arises specifically because there is none. In the Old World the scene is unable to change, in the New it is unable to form.

Dickens shows an increasing awareness of the ‘peculiarities’ of the American language in his letters, peculiarities which he was then to attribute to his ‘characters’; figures such as the brown forester in *American Notes*, and countless Americans in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The narrator-author once again assumes control of the narrative, almost seamlessly in these cases as Dickens successfully provides “the sublimated essence of comicality that”, he says, “I *could* distil, from the materials I have!” (*Letters* 211). The brown forester’s soliloquy (described as such), theatrical and comic down to the accenting of his speech, would not be out of place in a work of fiction. I will quote the entire passage:

“This may suit *you*, this may, but it don’t suit *me*. This may be all very well with Down Easters, and men of Boston raising, but it won’t suit my figure no how; and no two ways about *that*; and so I tell you. Now! I’m from the brown forests of Mississippi, *I* am, and when the sun shines on me, it does shine – a little. It don’t glimmer where I live, the sun don’t. No. I’m a brown forester, I am. I an’t a Johnny Cake. There are no smooth skins where I live. We’re rough men there. Rather... This company wants a little fixing, *it* does. I’m the wrong sort of man for ‘em, *I* am. They

won't like me, *they* won't. This is piling of it up, a little too moūntainoūs, this is." At the end of every one of these short sentences he turned upon his heel, and walked the other way; checking himself abruptly when he had finished another short sentence, and turning back again.

It is impossible for me to say what terrific meaning was hidden in the words of this brown forester, but I know that the other passengers looked on in a sort of admiring horror, and that presently the boat was put back to the wharf, and as many of the Pioneers as could be coaxed or bullied into going away, were got rid of.

When we started again, some of the boldest spirits on board, made bold to say to the obvious occasion of this improvement in our prospects, 'Much obliged to you, sir:' whereunto the brown forester (waving his hand, and still walking up and down as before), replied, "No you an't. You're none o' my raising. You may act for yourselves, *you* may. I have pinte d out the way. Down Easters and Johnny Cakes can follow if they please. I an't a Johnny Cake, *I* an't. I am from the brown forests of the Mississippi, *I* am" – and so on, as before. (169)

Dickens is in full swing here, with the inflections of the character's speech, his idiosyncratic movements and colloquialisms all represented verbatim. By presenting this soliloquy in direct discourse, the text is implied to be the exact words, relayed word for word by the narrator-character from the primary diegesis. However, given the detail of this account right down to the aforementioned inflections of speech it is fair to suggest that this account – which has no counterpart in his letters – has been extensively reworked, if not created by the extradiegetic narrator-author. The use of direct speech serves the dual purpose of authorising the legitimacy of the speech and imbuing the event with humour which could not be attained by simply relating the essence of the story or the speech in indirect style.

In an early letter to Forster, dated 29 January, Dickens says:

But for an odd phrase now and then – such as *Snap of cold weather*; a *tongue-y man* for a talkative fellow; *Possible?* As a solitary interrogation; and *yes?* For indeed – I should have marked, so far, no difference whatever between the parties here and those I have left behind. The woman [sic] are very beautiful, but they soon fade; the general breeding is neither stiff nor forward; the good nature, universal. (*Letters* 36)



He uses “snap of cold” in chapter fourteen of *American Notes*, in the dialogue between BROWN HAT and STRAW HAT:

STRAW HAT. There was a snap of cold, last week.

BROWN HAT. Yes, sir.

STRAW HAT. Yes, sir.

A pause. They look at each other very seriously.

STRAW HAT. I calculate you’ll have got through that case of the corporation judge by this time, now?

BROWN HAT. Yes, sir.

STRAW HAT. How did the verdict go, sir?

BROWN HAT. For the defendant, sir.

STRAW HAT. (Interrogatively.) Yes, sir?

BROWN HAT. (Affirmatively.) Yes, sir.

BOTH. (Musingly, as each gazes down the street). Yes, sir. (210-211)

From its place in the text – chronologically much later than Dickens first heard the phrase as noted in the letter – as well as the comically bizarre conversation displaying the taciturn nature of those Americans from the West and the creative use of punctuation, it would be a reasonable assumption to make that this is a fictional conversation. This is, then, a way for Dickens to interject American speech and its colloquialisms into his travel book, at once making it believable and fictional. Likewise, “tongue-y” is used in *Martin Chuzzlewit*: “ ‘You air a tongue-y person, Gen’ral. For you talk too much, and that’s fact,’ said Scadder. ‘You speak a-larming well in public, but you didn’t ought to go ahead so fast in private. Now!’ ” (338). These hyphenated words imply a certain accent and improvisational style to speech in the United States, creating verisimilitude.

Another example is the oft-noticed over-use of the verb ‘to fix’, mentioned earlier in reference to Fanny Trollope In *American Notes* Dickens describes “fix” as “the Caleb Quotem of the American vocabulary” (*Notes* 163), while in a letter to Foster dated 28 March he explains:

I told you of the many uses of the word “fix”. I ask Mr. Q on board a steamboat if breakfast be nearly ready, and he tells me yes he should think so, for when he was last below the steward was “fixing the tables” – in other words, laying

the cloth. When we have been writing, and I beg him (do you remember anything of my love of order, at this distance of time?) to collect our papers, he answers that he'll "fix 'em presently." So when a man's dressing he's "fixing" himself, and when you put yourself under a doctor he "fixes" you in no time. T'other night, before we came on board here, when I had ordered a bottle of mulled claret and waited some time for it, it was put on table with an apology from the landlord (a lieutenant-colonel) that "he feared it wasn't fixed properly." And here, on Saturday morning, a Western man, handing the potatoes to Mr. Q at breakfast, enquired if he wouldn't take some of "these fixings" with his meat. I remained as grave as a judge. I catch them looking at me sometimes, and feel that they think I don't take any notice. (*Letters* 172)

Dickens uses this knowledge obtained during his being "grave as a judge"; an impartial observer as he would have those around him believe, to describe a stereotypical American, in this case a "boot artist" in *American Notes*:

A gentleman in a stiff cravat, within a year or two on either side of thirty, entered, in his hat and gloves; walked up to the looking-glass; arranged his hair; took off his gloves; slowly produced a measure from the uttermost depths of his coat-pocket; and requested me, in a languid tone, to "unfix" my straps. I complied, but looked with some curiosity at his hat, which was still upon his head. It might have been that, or it might have been the heat – but he took it off. Then, he sat himself down on a chair opposite to me; rested an arm on each knee; and, leaning forward very much, took from the ground, by a great effort, the specimen of metropolitan workmanship which I had just pulled off: whistling, pleasantly, as he did so. He turned it over and over; surveyed it with a contempt no language can express; and inquired if I wished him to fix me a boot like *that*? (*Notes* 272)

This anecdote, whether true or not, is given greater plausibility by Dickens's use of the Americanisms he perceived; he is trying to portray these figures as real, and can achieve some sense of reality by employing the American mode of speech. A final example of Dickens taking a small piece of vernacular eccentricity – as he sees it – and making an entertaining anecdote of it is the conversation with a waiter in *American Notes* at the end of the second chapter and the transatlantic confusion of "directly" and "right away" (32). In the letters, this is simply: "I intended going "right away," as they say here" (88). These examples

from the diegesis of Dickens's travel book have little or no precedent in the letters he sent home. The characters created by the extradiegetic narrator-author to create a narrative make use of the phrases and language observed by the intradiegetic narrator-character and disclosed in letters. Dickens is therefore taking the language and setting of the diegesis in order to tell a story which *represents* that diegesis truthfully but may not be representing events as they happened for Dickens the traveller.

In many ways Dickens's treatment of the Americans in *Martin Chuzzlewit* is unfair: there are almost no worthy Americans who are innocent of at worst swindling – or at best boring – Martin. The pestering and attention directed towards Martin is frankly ridiculous; Dickens is here conflating himself with his protagonist and lashing out at all those who would not leave him alone during his time in the United States. The American chapters of *Chuzzlewit* are amusing for the reader, but obviously fiction, and clearly – at least in part – the means for Dickens to exact revenge on those who wronged, or bored him. The literary ladies are a case in point. In a letter to C.C. Felton (dated 14 March) Dickens writes:

What do you think of this incendiary card being left at my bar last night?

‘General G. sends compliments to Mr. Dickens, and called with two literary ladies. As the two L.L.’s are ambitious of the honour of a personal introduction to Mr. D., General G. requests the honour of an appointment for tomorrow.’ I draw a veil over my sufferings. They are sacred. (*Letters* 130)

The anguish at yet another requested meeting is clearly evident here, and we are led to believe that those who have designs upon Dickens's time with literary pretensions are perhaps the worst of all! The republican boys discussed earlier are at least (brutally) honest in their motives and interests. This note is parodied in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, with Pogram substituted for Dickens;

Two literary ladies present their compliments to the mother of the modern Gracchi, and claim her kind introduction, as their talented countrywoman, to the honourable (and distinguished) Elijah Pogram, whom the two L. L.'s have often contemplated in the speaking marble of the soul-subduing Chiggle. On a verbal intimation from the mother of the M. G., that she will comply with the request of the two L. L.'s, they will have the immediate pleasure of joining the galaxy assembled to do honour to the patriotic conduct of a Pogram. It may be another

bond of union between the two L. L.'s and the mother of the M. G. to observe, that the two L. L.'s are Transcendental. (512)

However the note is not purely the subject of mocking: the literary ladies and their ilk have, in Dickens's opinion, taken something of his youth and his beauty with their incessant demands. Just as Martin and Mark fall gravely ill in America, and all those who go there are affected by miasma (as described earlier in this work), becoming sallow, grey and pale imitations of their former selves, Dickens feels he too is physically altered by the country:

The LL's have carried away all my cheerfulness. There is a line in my chin (on the right side of the under-lip), indelibly fixed there by the New-Englander I told you of in my last. I have the print of a crow's foot on the outside of my left eye, which I attribute to the literary characters of small towns. A dimple has vanished from my cheek which I felt myself robbed of at the time by a wise legislator.<sup>43</sup> (*Letters* 194)

Dickens therefore has a strong reminder of the negative aspects of America and sees it as ageing him and causing him ill (he died in 1870, not long after his second journey to the United States in 1867-8 which seems to have debilitated him). These negative aspects of the United States have literally written themselves upon his face.

Dickens takes his strongest impressions of the United States back home with him, both in his memory and his letters, leaving behind all that which did not impress itself on him sufficiently in the 'real' America. These strong memories (which are more often than not the bad ones) write over and mutate the others, just as they write over and erase his facial features. Thus, the Mississippi overwrites the Ohio; the prosaic, verbose bore covers the intelligent articulate (with spittle); the feasts suppress the modest meals; the swamps and decaying forests cancel out the beautiful scenery of the Northeast, and the endless sea imposes itself upon Niagara and the plains. Dickens's America is made up of 'real' experiences and observations on one hand; on the other there is no room for a complete picture and Dickens's memories swiftly poison each other, or more correctly consume one-and-other.

Dickens quickly tired of his American life and his high sense of disappointment is expressed by his failure on the international copyright issue:

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<sup>43</sup> To Forster 15 April.

I believe there is no country, on the face of the earth, where there is less freedom of opinion on any subject in reference to which there is a broad difference of opinion, than in this.— There!— I write the words with reluctance, disappointment, and sorrow; but I believe it from the bottom of my soul.<sup>44</sup> (*Letters* 81-2)

It is also expressed by his desire to go home: “it would be impossible to say, in this compass, in what respects America differs from my preconceived opinion of it, but between you and me – privately and confidentially – I shall be truly glad to leave it”<sup>45</sup> (*Letters* 120). Dickens’s expectations of the United States were unfairly high, perhaps because of his hope for the institutions which he went to see and the promise of equality; two of the positives which he discovered, though the equality seemed to go too far and descend into rudeness. His subsequent account of the United States as expressed firstly in *American Notes* and then in *Martin Chuzzlewit* is a symptom of three factors: his novelistic tendencies (his views of character and sense of the dramatic); the oppressive, inexpressible landscape; and his treatment by the American people. These factors contributed to the United States he serves up, in which the reader becomes a tourist whilst reading *American Notes*.

Dickens expresses his disappointment in terms of a sickness in both *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The landscape itself causes illness and can infect even the most optimistic observer and traveller to America. This is often in terms of a miasma: noxious vapours becoming airborne and spreading sickness from bodies of water and marshes. In *Notes* Dickens writes of this miasma:

On we go, all night, and bye and bye the day begins to break, and presently the first cheerful rays of the warm sun come slanting on us brightly. It sheds its light upon a miserable waste of sodden grass, and dull trees, and squalid huts, whose aspect is forlorn and grievous in the last degree. A very desert in the wood, whose growth of green is dank and noxious like that upon the top of standing water, where poisonous fungus grows in the rare footprint on the oozy ground, and sprouts like witches’ coral, from the crevices in the cabin wall and floor; it is a hideous thing to lie upon the very threshold of a city. (212)

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<sup>44</sup> To Forster, 24 February 1842.

<sup>45</sup> To Albany Fonbanque 12 [and ?21] March.

The landscape here is seen as infecting the city (an idea which has already been discussed with regards to Washington and slavery in the previous chapter of this work) with nature here overpowering civilisation and the “cabin wall and floor”. These tendrils of the American landscape seem to be infecting Dickens’s imagination. Later in *Notes* Dickens makes the point about the landscape infecting natives and visitors alike:

In so vast a country, where there are thousands of millions of acres of land yet unsettled and uncleared, and on every rood of which, vegetable decomposition is annually taking place; where there are so many great rivers, and such opposite varieties of climate; there cannot fail to be a great amount of sickness at certain seasons. (273)

In *Martin Chuzzlewit* this manifests itself when Mark and Martin are at a settlement in ‘Eden’, which is a fictional representation of Cairo at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, which held vastly different places in Dickens’s heart. Surrounded by water, the new residents join the old in becoming sick, with even the eternally cheerful Mark Tapley falling victim to the miasma of America.

*American Notes* can be seen as a half-way point between Dickens’s letters and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, then. While some of the fictionalisations which occur in the travelogue are deliberate exaggerations for dramatic effect, which would be turned into obvious fictionalisations in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, some of these changes were more sinister. Dickens wanted to portray the American press in a bad light and the American people as grasping after the ‘almighty dollar’, so turned any experiences relating to these themes, however minor, into complete fictionalisations. Likewise, the Westerners and provincial characters of *American Notes* are lavish Dickensian creations to accentuate the language, customs and (ill) manners of these people. The International Copyright question, slavery, and the negative press reviews conspire to infect Dickens’s narrative in *Notes*, becoming even more influential after the negative reviews of that book for his subsequent *Martin Chuzzlewit*. These three issues of immorality in Dickens’s work infect and ultimately destroy the Tapley-esque optimism which he held before he visited the United States, just as the landscape’s miasma infects the people and cities.

Dickens’s subsequent, negative point of view of the United States is being applied to his original impressions; the negativity of those is magnified by this second mediating layer.

The visual point of view created the impressions of the letters, the author's subsequent point of view occurs from re-reading those letters and the work of time on those original impressions. The disappointment is even greater because of the original imagined United States and the excitement of the journey. Dickens's letters and the two books which came from his travels express the disappointment first of the traveller, as we can see in the statement to W.C. Macready on 22 March 1842 when Dickens states: "I *am* disappointed. This is not the Republic I came to see. This is not the Republic of my imagination" (*Letters* 156). This disappointment is made worse by the elevated position the initial imagined America held. The United States is then seen – by the travelling narrator-character – through this point of view of disappointment, before being turned into narrative and the disappointment being magnified by time and space away from the travelling subject as well as fictionalisation inherent in narrative creation.

I now briefly return to Mark Twain, the most obvious proponent of fictionalisation of the authors discussed here, and perhaps the only who does not intend to produce something which could be viewed as truth. Twain's lack of respect for the truth is revealed in a letter to Jane Lampton Clemens and Pamela A. Moffett<sup>46</sup>:

We had a very gay time, if it was Sunday. I expect I told more lies than I have told before in a month... I have been working like sin all night to get a lecture written. I have finished it, but don't think a very great deal of it. I call it "Frozen Truth." It is a little top-heavy, though, because there is more truth in the title than there is in the lecture. But thunder, I mustn't sit here writing all day, with so much business before me. (*Letters* 62)

Twain's fondness for evading the truth is well known and has been mentioned throughout this work, especially in the previous chapter. However, he is also keen to have the facts for his book *Roughing It*, if only to depart from them at a later date as shown in this letter to his brother Orion quoted in the first chapter of this work. While Twain's point of view (and influence) of the 'facts' or at least the original point of view of the travel is the most obvious and therefore most distorting, it can be argued that he still, as shown above, intends to represent *a* truth, albeit one with a greater influence from the writer than that of the traveller. As novelists, the travel writers discussed herein are interested in the craft of narratives and

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<sup>46</sup> 8 Jan. 1868.

can therefore be said to adopt an interfering attitude towards their original impressions, making them fit the current mood and temper of the extradiegetic author rather than the traveller. This is how they differ from the guidebooks discussed earlier. Dickens talks about having Washington, D.C. “fresh in my mind and under my eye” (*Notes* 128), but truly it is the American scene, rather than the American seen which interests these writers, as implied by the addition of the mind (and therefore the imagination) to the eye; two points of view which contribute to a certain kind of truth. To return finally to James, we see the “double analogy” of the philosopher and painter whilst discussing the role of the novelist; these writers are novelists and it is that which creates these fictionalised, yet truthful travelogues.

### Conclusion

There is a tendency towards fiction for all narrated travel and indeed all experience when told as a story; turned into narrative. The travellers of this study are perhaps more prone to fictionalising their experiences because they are known as writers of fiction; they are more susceptible to the impulse and more interested in the making of the narrative: “all travel narratives display ambivalence when it comes to choosing between reality and fiction – for it is in the nature of narrative to fictionalize the journey” (Bony 7). But there is also a subconscious fictionalisation, particularly when the travel was traumatic and there is little precedence for description. The negative or positive preconceptions are either realised or overturned leaving the author reconciling themselves with their travels and their Americas. As I have already stated, to take Christopher Mulvey’s: “we *write* before we see before we speak” (‘Ecriture and landscape’ 101) a little differently: we imagine before we see before we imagine.

With persona and pseudonym, travel writers actively fictionalise themselves and therefore their experiences. These experiences, often uncomfortable, lead in turn to the fictionalisation of place to come to terms with the fictional self; the two go hand in hand: Crayon’s (a fictionalised Irving) maturation occurs on fictionally dangerous (or at least exaggeratedly dangerous) plains, for example.

One of the central facilitators and causes of these various fictionalisations is point of view. Whether it be through the windows of a train, earlier travel writing, expectations and preconceptions, paintings and sublime rhetoric, narration, or merely time and space; mediation by point of view is the one fact of viewing the United States. I do not mean to say that these points of view are not present when travelling in other countries, but the frontiering experience and the youth of the United States in the nineteenth century lend particular



prominence to the mediatory aspect of American travel writing. The myths of the young United States are not yet fully formed and writing in this mythic frontier between ‘reality’ and the future of the country’s identity makes writing on America both exciting and daunting, particularly from a European point of view. American authors aim to create an America using the frontier as a backdrop for its formation, attempting to incorporate the empty spaces of their continent and fill it with new stories and language or celebrate the space for its own sake, where British authors (and those who share their point of view) struggle to impose their Old World values upon an area and a process they do not have the vocabulary to describe. Fictionality is inevitable in both cases. When there is no precedent, it falls to these writers whose occupation is creating fiction, to write America. The conclusion of this work looks at the various points of view that have been identified in this work in more detail, and discusses the role of those points of view in creating imaginary Americas. It will also discuss the implications of British and American authors writing different Americas and propose that writing travel (which is not necessarily confined to travel writing) had become a distinctly American form.

## Conclusion

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This thesis has charted the development of perceptions of the United States from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth. Travellers came to the United States or travelled within it with preconceptions which were imagined, made their travels and then turned those travels into narrative, representing another imagined America. This conclusion recaps the findings of the chapters which began by examining the various impacts on point of view for travellers and the links between those points of view and the narratives which came from them.

Technological advancements in the nineteenth century meant that steam power was being harnessed to propel vehicles on both land and water. The mechanization of travel led to shorter journeys and the possibility for travellers to experience the landscape less. The divorce of travel from the landscape came as the undulations of the land and direction of river current no longer prescribed the route or direction of travel. Straight rods of iron were laid across the North American continent tunnelling through mountains and bridging valleys and rivers. As the cabins of the boats and trains became more comfortable, effectively providing a continuation of ‘culture’ and ‘society’ between departure and arrival, so nature outside of those cabins became less interesting. Travellers could now amuse themselves with books, newspapers and observations of the other passengers, as they were separated from the landscape which presented no clues to its harshness from behind the window pane.

The transatlantic voyage was also made swifter and less arduous – somewhat annihilating the space and time of the Atlantic Ocean by the beginning of the twentieth century. The Titanic was supposed to exemplify man’s dominion of the seas and nature, inflicting none of the hardships of previous (see for example Dickens’s) transatlantic passages due to the size of the vessel and the amenities provided onboard; it was as if the passengers never truly experienced the between space of the Atlantic Ocean. This famously failed, but the use of technology to separate the traveller from the land or seascape continued.

These advancements encouraged a separation from the landscape which increased up to the moment of the Titanic disaster and beyond; this in turn encouraged a pictorial point of view, with the landscape seen as a picture framed by travel and the frame of a window. However, some landscapes, such as the Atlantic Ocean, the Mississippi River, Niagara Falls, and the prairies defied such representation. Improvements in technology also reduced the liminality of travel, which is the major concern of the third chapter of this work.

Combined with the westward movement of American ‘civilization’ during the nineteenth century and the incorporation of more of the North American continent into the United States, technological advancements reduced the extent of the frontier and its significance in travel. This made it increasingly difficult for the traveller to undergo a frontier experience and see from a liminal point of view. The liminal point of view is essential for travel to be a rite of passage and for the traveller to undergo a transformation. As this avenue became closed for Henry James, he could only look at the United States from a Eurocentric point of view by the time of *The American Scene*.

On the surface it seemed that there could be no more frontiering in the twentieth century and therefore no rebirth, or alienation from which to view the country. I do not believe this to be the case, however. John Steinbeck found his own personal frontier by moving away from the highways and corporate America in *Travels with Charley* (1962). Although he did not always like what he saw, Steinbeck wrote memorably on the country which he loved, also returning to the Salinas Valley – subject of much of his fiction – to find it much altered, just as James had found the Northeast. William Least Heat Moon’s *Blue Highways* (1982) demonstrates a similar success in finding a frontier off the beaten track. Jack Kerouac found his frontier with drugs and jazz in *On the Road* (1957), using the Beat counterculture as his liminal point of view for the country which he crisscrossed with Neal Cassidy, the Dean Moriarty of the novel. There is also usefulness in the apocryphal story of the novel’s conception and writing (written in the space of three days on one long scroll) with the narrative literally coming on like the journey: the ultimate reimagining of the physical journey through narration. The reality is slightly less romantic, with several drafts having surfaced, but the intent and the scroll prove that this novel was written closely analogous to the road and the travel itself. Likewise, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1972) takes drugs as a major influence on the perspective of the new West. However, it is the gonzo journalistic style and fusion of ‘fact’ and fiction which marks this as a work which continues the spirit of Twain’s writings on the United States<sup>47</sup>. It is notable that the main vehicle and therefore significant point of view for all of the above journeys is the automobile, which corresponds closely to the perspective of river travel. It can be said that motorway travel is perhaps closer to train travel in that it fractures the traveller from the landscape through which they are

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<sup>47</sup> This style is typical of New Journalism which displays narrativisation and an unashamedly subjective style. Point of view is embraced rather than disavowed. Tom Wolfe’s *The New Journalism* (1973) is a collection of work by a number of New Journalists, among them Hunter S. Thompson, as well as a manifesto for the technique.

travelling. The smaller, more intimate and contour-hugging roads (blue highways) lead to a narrative flow closer to that of river or stage travel. It is fitting that this mode of transport has become synonymous with the United States and become engrained into the popular culture and mythology of travelling America in song, film and print.

Anthony Trollope, after returning from America, wrote that

An Englishman visiting the United States, if he have any purpose of criticism in his mind,— any intention of judging the manner of life there is a good manner, and of making comparison between British and American habits, should be ever guarding himself against the natural habit of looking at things only from his own point of view. (*Australia* 62)

Trollope seems to be supporting moving out of one's own society and adopting a liminal point of view; however, even when a liminal point of view is achieved the experience and the subsequent writing on the American landscape can be difficult.

In the fourth chapter of this work I examined Niagara Falls as a case study of a frontier environment which shares an important feature with other frontier locations discussed in this thesis: Niagara was at a scale unprecedented for the European. Still, as with the West and the Mississippi travellers came to Niagara with a European point of view and attempted to adapt the landscape to their language, and picturesque or European sublime point of view. Time and again when presented with these features of nature this European viewpoint fails, leaving the traveller overwhelmed and the writer in silence. As the cultural trappings for viewing Niagara increased (special viewing areas, hotels, tours and souvenirs) and the falls became a site for fetishising viewing, writers like Twain and James could see Niagara from the point of view of that culture of perception.

The final chapter discussed the fictionalisation of travel and experience when it is made into a narrative; when America is made a story. I argue that America is imagined (with scope for fictionalisation) before travel, experienced through that point of view, and then seen retrospectively and imagined once more. When using language, metaphor and narrative to express the United States, fictionalisation is inevitable. Nineteenth century travellers were often faced with no adequate precedent in text or language for the country they came to see and could therefore fictionalise to a greater degree because of the inadequacy of their points of view. As the textual and linguistic precedence for the United States grew, however, so did the opportunity to write on America by interacting with these texts and vernacular. As the

point of view became increasingly textual and interested in prior narratives (which themselves were somewhat fictionalised) so fictionalisation became increased. However, this does not make the United States of Twain, for example, any less *true*, as I discuss in the previous chapter. As the anticipatory America became richer through texts and myths, so the retrospective America became richer through an acknowledgement of the extradiegetic point of view and the role of the author in telling the story of travel and the story of their America.

Bryan Jay Wolf, discussing Descartes, talks about the crossover between the visual point of view and the room for “critical reflection” which allows the author to take the initial impressions and work them into a new truth through subsequent point of view:

[Descartes] invokes through his spatial metaphor [looking through a window] a process for removing himself from the constraints of ordinary thought, not by stepping, like Archimedes, outside the room, but by invoking a procedure for critical reflection, a practice of self-examination, that allows him to imagine a horizon from within the language game he inhabits. (*Vermeer* 106)

This is an excellent description of the work of this secondary, writing point of view on the travels, the United States, and the traveller which are presented in the travel writings of authors. This description by Wolf supports my initial points on James and point of view in the first chapter. Each point of view is privileged and valid and it is the author’s job to be involved in the process of “critical reflection” to turn the initial travel into narrative. From Frances Trollope through to Henry James the acceptance of this process and its necessity has grown. James writes:

My recovery of impressions, after a short interval, yet with their flush a little faded, may have been judged to involve itself with excursions of memory – memory directed to the antecedent time – reckless almost to extravagance. But I recall them to-day, none the less, for that value in them which ministered, at happy moments, to an artful evasion of the actual. (*American Scene* 90)

This is a key perspective on truth in travel narratives. James admits that the intervention of time and space on his impressions brings memory in to play. James the writer, concocting an “artful evasion of the actual” still finds these altered (by retrospective point of view) impressions valuable.

Through persona and different narrative techniques in Irving and Dickens, through critical reflection in Anthony Trollope and Stevenson, we come to the tall tales of Twain and finally the “self-examination” and interest in point of view itself in James. Throughout this work I have identified instances where the extradiegetic narrator’s point of view has overwritten the intradiegetic narrator-character’s point of view. The same factors which affect travelling point of view can affect writing point of view: mode of travel prescribes the form of narrative, frontiers allow for rite of passage narrative, and overwhelming American nature can lead to discussing the impossibility to narrate.

As the twentieth century grew nearer travellers became more interested in the initial imagined America of texts and their own imaginations; this in turn created a stronger influence of point of view on the traveller, aided by the divorce of travel from landscape brought about by advancements in travel technology. The writer then employs a retrospective point of view on the travel, turning it into narrative and employing the imagination once more. Earlier in the nineteenth century both the initial imaginative America and the separation from the landscape are less pronounced; there was more of an effort to engage with the United States rather than with conceptions of the United States. However, without these imaginative United States the authors could not adopt a suitable point of view; America had to be written before it could be seen. As such, a look at the development in perceptions of the United States in the nineteenth century through to James at the beginning of the twentieth, finds a move from silence to writing, but also from the landscape to writing. By this I mean that later authors, particularly James, were more concerned with the imaginative America and the construction of it in their own narrative than with the travel itself. The gap between anticipated America and retrospective America narrows so much that there is little room for *trying* to come to terms with the actual experience of America. Having said all of this, there is something of a middle ground (and indeed I do not believe that the United States cannot be experienced today, though Jean Baudrillard and Bernard Henri-Levy have taken James’s route to the extreme, demonstrated below). Adopting a liminal point of view and becoming well-versed in the local, the specific and the vernacular allows a point of view which is less concerned with that point of view. James talks about experience and personal point of view being the important element in writing; however, I believe his interest in finding that “particular window” sometimes meant James was more interested in the effect of impressions on himself than on the impressions themselves. Moving to the margins of culture (and not attempting to view through that culture as in travel by rail and on the Titanic) is possible only to an extent, but this is when travellers could garner an impression of the United States which

is less structured by European ideas. When presenting this travel to the reader in narrative form fictionalisation is inevitable. However, fictionalisation does not spell an end of truth. The travel writer merely uses the tools at his disposal: language, description, and metaphor to give an accurate representation of his impressions and his experience in narrative. By accepting that travel must be turned into narrative and therefore embracing the creation of what James calls the superior truth, we are in a position to see that point of view necessarily impacts upon travel and on travel writing; fictionalisation is inevitable.

Jean Baudrillard's *America* (1987) and Bernard Henri-Lévy's *American Vertigo: On the Road from Newport to Guantanamo* (2006) are two texts which take James's interest in point of view even further. Where James believes each impression can represent a personal truth and that it is the author's job to bring forth that truth through narration and (the inevitable metaphor), Baudrillard talks about "joy in the collapse of Metaphor... For [him] there is no truth of America" (27). To some extent the collapse of metaphor occurs at Niagara for the nineteenth century travel writers. However, James and Twain offer an approach using metaphor and the point of view of the metaphorical surrounding Niagara.

Where James looked at Niagara Falls as the beginning of the touristification and metaphorical America, Baudrillard takes Disneyland as the epitome of modern America. Likewise, Bernard Henri-Lévy's work paints itself as following in the footsteps of de Tocqueville against the backdrop of the presidential election. However, it is in fact similar to Baudrillard's work in that there is very little concrete said about people and places: it would again be impossible to track Henri-Lévy's route and visit what he had visited, making it impossible (for the reader) to hope to find any truth whatsoever (as Baudrillard suggests). These two texts take Henry James's interest in the personal observation and point of view to such a degree that the text which comes from these points of view is no longer a travel text and the America of that text is indeed a simulation. However, it is a simulation created by the author. For these writers the diegesis of travel is insignificant and there is no balance between point of view of travel and point of view of writing. Baudrillard's work in particular is an important look at myth and culture in the United States, but fails as travel writing (which in fairness it is not claiming to be, unlike Henri-Lévy's book) and only works on a theoretical level: "a bomb may be an image or a piece of text to a French social theorist such as Jean Baudrillard, watching the Gulf war on television, but it is not an image or piece of text to the person whom it kills or maims, or who has lost a child or parent to it" (Blackburn 170-1).

Henry James's *American Scene* and writings on point of view do indeed preference the extradiegetic reflection on impressions and travels as experienced. They discuss the

search for a certain point of view. They are concerned with the boiling down of “so many facts in the alembic, so that the distilled result, the produced appearance, should have intensity, lucidity, brevity, beauty” in order to present the “superior truth” (*Art of the Novel* 13); however, James – unlike Baudrillard – believes that it is the responsibility of the writer to provide a superior truth. James was interested in the point of view of the traveller as well as that of the author.

James does, I believe, astutely comment on issues of point of view; however, sometimes he places too much emphasis on point of view itself rather than on that which is being viewed. I have argued that this is in part as a result of developments in travel technology which aimed to cut the traveller off from the landscape and country through which they travel, culminating in the realisation that technology was not sophisticated enough to achieve complete disassociation from travel as in the Titanic disaster. In Mark Twain we have, in my opinion, the beginning and the end of the closest nineteenth century travellers came to writing the United States and its landscape. For Twain there was sufficient textual material in order to offer language and description of the impressions – particularly those which did not have precedent from a European point of view such as the plains, Niagara Falls and the Mississippi River. However, Twain is looking back in his writing, suggesting a difference between the extradiegetic narrator-author and the intradiegetic narrator-character. This is where fictionalisation comes into play more in the work of Twain. He is looking back at his own travels where he achieved something of a liminal point of view after ‘returning to society’. Even in Twain, therefore, we have the adoption of a certain point of view in order to make travel into narrative. However, Twain is writing the landscape using the and myth of that landscape rather than the language and tradition of European writing. He can (or could) still get close to the landscape on his stagecoach journey and river trip and these provide an ordering point of view for the travel, but not one which runs over the landscape like an inflexible rod. Twain and James have the gift of hindsight. They write on what has already gone, like Frederick Jackson Turner. It has gone and been made into myth. James uses Hawthorne and his own memories to write on what he perceives as the void of the United States; he populates it and imagines it through his texts. Both authors need – and make use of – history, myth and story in order to write their own story.

Over the period discussed in this work, narration itself took on greater importance at the expense of experiencing the United States. The factors discussed within these pages aided this shift. In order for later authors to reconnect with the landscape they would need to find a new point of view, one less steeped in the traditions of the Old World. They would have to



rediscover a new frontier and throw off the culture of the railway carriage and European point of view in order to cut down the layers of point of view which help James to write but hinder him seeing.

The gap between landscape and understanding and therefore writing was huge at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but James's writing at the beginning of the twentieth century encourages us to believe that landscape and writing are closer: we see what we write about. This is not the case, however, as James still needs to adopt a particular point of view in order to present his individual America; he uses his writing to give this appearance. He is aided in doing so by being able to interact with other texts and his own memories of the United States; however, his intradiegetic travels are more removed from the landscape than at any time previously. As such, by the time of James's *American Scene* the extradiegetic narrative point of view allows for the creation of an imagined America which is well-informed by what has gone before. Yet the intradiegetic travel imposes that same point of view on the landscape more than ever before as James is viewing the United States from the point of view of those texts (where possible, though he often decries the lack of them) and windows (of a train, for example). Thus, the two points of view become closer and impact upon both travel and writing more than in the nineteenth century. James has more to write about but has seen less. For all that, James's America is no less true as a personal impression than that of any of the other authors who perhaps saw more but could write less because of their point of view.

Imagined Americas are constructed through the points of view of the traveller and the author; they produce an individual impression of the United States which truly reflects those points of view. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, these two points of view are much closer together and represent a greater departure from the American landscape. The extradiegetic point of view takes on more importance; greater distance from the object (further layers of point of view) becomes *de rigueur*. Claude Levi-Strauss writes: "travel and travellers are two things I loathe and yet here I am, all set to tell the story of my expeditions. But at least I've taken a long while to make up my mind to it" (17). This thesis has noted that narrative became more valued and prominent during the period covered by this study, to the extent that because of the separation from the American landscape which increased during the nineteenth century, narrative could take place before the travel was completed. The story increasingly overwrites the travel. Henry James demonstrates the confusion of the travelling point of view, the writing point of view, and fictionalisation inherent in points of view

working upon impressions in his notebook, showing that “the reality of America is selective, optional, fantastic: there is an America for each of us” (Conrad 4). James writes:

My troubled mind overflows with the whole deep sense of it all – overflows with reflection and perception... Things of observation and reflection and fancy: life is full of them – they meet me at every turn. (*Notebooks* 232)

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