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Displaced heroism in 18th and 19th century American literature

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Displaced heroism in 18th and 19th century American literature

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English (Literature)

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Ames, Iowa

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wonderful grandparents and my dog, Rocker. Although they are not with me in this world, I am grateful to feel their presence always.

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ABSTRACT

In this study, I argue that heroism requires displacement. This notion of heroism applies to a majority of hero tales because this displacement happens physically, mentally, or even psychologically. To analyze the displaced hero, certain 18th and 19th century American texts encapsulate instances of displaced heroism: women's Indian captivity narratives, Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly*, and *Life of Black Hawk*. Focusing on displaced heroism in these specific texts allows for further commentary on the discussion of Americanness and the issues America faced when encountering the Native Americans in what they perceived to be a wilderness. This study compares women's Indian captivity narratives with European fairytales to demonstrate how the heroine dealt successfully with her captivity in the wilderness. Conversely, Edgar Huntly becomes displaced when writing about his descent into the American wilderness, inverting the archetypal heroic journey and failing in his heroic efforts. And finally, Black Hawk represents a tragic hero figure. He became displaced in his attempt to fight the U.S. Government and save his people's way of life, and discouraged after touring the booming industry of the eastern American cities. In displacement, heroism can either hinder or help, depending on whether the individual chooses to rise above their predicament and achieve an innate sense of self. The meaning behind these important hero stories explores how to live life to the fullest even when displaced, shifted, challenged, and questioned in life.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Displaced Hero

Before stories were written down permanently, literature consisted of oral storytelling, encompassing cultural identity with rituals and religious practices that were maintained for the survival of a people. Throughout cultures, these oral tales passed down from generation to generation; all have legends that date to some unknown origin, telling of supernatural deeds of heroes that their people idealize. Each culture has its distinct way of performing its stories, whether through song or rhythmic diction, such as the dactylic hexameter of the Ancient Greek oral tradition. Most importantly, however, these legends, myths, and even fairytales, reflect the ideas, values, and traditions of the culture within which the story is told. Carl Jung in his “Approaching the Unconscious” even argues that stories from myth could not have been invented consciously. These stories go back to the primitive storytellers and their dreams, to storytellers moved by the stirring of their fantasies (78). If these “fantasies” resonated with the common folk, then there must be something within human consciousness that understands and can empathize with certain aspects of the human condition. As time progressed, these important stories were written down as “literature” in which themes of the human condition still resonate for those reading about the experiences of characters who battle in order to survive in their world.

Themes such as heroism speak to what it means to be human. Heroism has been defined and interpreted by renowned scholars such as Otto Rank, Joseph Campbell, and

Lord Raglan each of whom had distinct interpretations about the epic hero journey. Even with their varying approaches, each acknowledged an archetypal pattern within hero tales (Segal viii). Stories about heroism pervade cultures and the journey of the hero is described in many of these hero tales. I intend to contribute to the scholarship on heroism by explaining how a hero must be displaced in order to be heroic. This analysis extends Campbell's initial "call to adventure" that the hero experiences before starting his adventure. The "call" becomes an act of displacement which moves the hero from his initial state of being to an entirely new and unknown existence. My term *displaced heroism* emerges from the belief that the journey of a hero is the journey to what it means to be human. Human beings are constantly being displaced, shifted, challenged, and questioned about their identities and destinies. When certain forces reveal this predicament, it is the chance for heroic individuals to uncover their identity. This heroism can either hinder or help, depending on whether heroic individuals choose to transcend into a state of awareness and to acknowledge that he or she is, in fact, human. This notion of a hero within every human being applies to hero tales as this displacement can happen physically, mentally, or even psychologically.

To explain my definition of a displaced hero, I examine some 18th and 19th century American literature to show how the hero must be displaced in order to achieve transcendence and understanding. Furthermore, discussing displaced heroism in American literature allows me to comment on Americanness and the issue Americans faced when encountering what they believed to be an uncharted wilderness and the native people who inhabited that environment. As America grew as a nation, desire for new territory and the mythopoeic notion that America was God's "promised land" encouraged

America's divine destiny for greatness. The people who were able to survive this promised land were considered heroes who triumphed over the treacherous, but beautiful, American landscape.

In my first analysis chapter, entitled "Narratives of Survival: Displaced Heroism in Women's Indian Captivity Narratives and European Fairytales," I compare three women's Indian captivity narratives (Mary Jemison, the Panther Captivity Narrative, and Sarah Wakefield) to three well-known European fairy tales (*Cinderella*, *Rapunzel*, and *Beauty and the Beast*), to display how the heroines in each of these stories dealt successfully with her captivity. In the Indian captivity narratives, women are displaced physically, literally moved from one culture to another in an entirely unfamiliar environment in the American wilderness. These narratives displayed the dangers and realities of frontier life as America expanded westward and encountered many native tribes. These narratives were popular with the American public because they demonstrated adventure in the wilderness environment. These women, in surviving their captivity, became heroes who championed morals and virtues that America tried to embody as a nation. I use the fairytales as a filter of comparison when looking at the ideal heroic characteristics of these captive women. In comparing these stories to European fairytales, I claim that the displacement these women faced gave them the strength to accept the horror of what happened and to handle the situation in front of them in order to survive their predicament.

In chapter three, "Descent into the Woodland Underworld: Displaced Heroism in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly*," I focus my analysis on Brown's *Edgar Huntly, or Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*. In this novel, Huntly traverses the American

wilderness to retrieve Clithero and discover the truth of Waldegrave's murder. His journey into the woods resembles the literary trope of a *katabasis*, or descent to the underworld, true to the theme of the archetypal hero journey. However, Huntly's epistolary narrative reflects the problematic attempt for Huntly to qualify himself as a quintessential American hero. Brown, through Huntly, reconstructs the mythical heroism of Huntly's "descent" to question America's notion of heroism. With Huntly displaced within his story as a failed hero-figure because of his unreliable narration, Huntly's text remains elusive as a moral story, unlike mythological hero tales such as *The Odyssey* and *The Aeneid*. I use Huntly's story to incorporate the theme of displacement into the definition of the Gothic hero-villain when he writes about his descent into the American wilderness. Additionally, I contrast Huntly's journey with the classical *katabasis* and how the dangers of the unknown American wilderness transform into the underworld from which Huntly must emerge. Lastly, I posit that, while Huntly's narrative parallels the mythological hero's journey to the underworld and back, the portrayal of his displaced heroism inverts the archetypal hero story and challenges the morality of America as a new nation.

In chapter four, "Displaced in Defeat: Black Hawk as a Tragic Hero," I look at the *Life of Black Hawk*, an autobiography edited by John B. Patterson and translated by Antoine LeClaire. Black Hawk, a Sauk and Fox warrior leader, dictated the story of his life to explain his actions during the Black Hawk War of 1832 and to expose his thoughts on the U.S. Government's dealings when his and other native tribes were displaced in order to gain more land for the United States. I look at Black Hawk's narrative as a tragic hero tale since Black Hawk becomes displaced in defeat. He endeavored to stand up

against the U.S. military but failed to lead his people back to the lands of their forefathers and into safety. Black Hawk became a prisoner of war and was forced on a tour of eastern American cities in order to discourage any ideas of further warfare and demoralize him with the booming industry of American growth. His downfall from warrior leader to prisoner of war made him famous with the white American public and ultimately became the only reason he was able to tell the story of his life. I contend that Black Hawk's eastern tour and autobiography resemble a reverse captivity narrative. Many reverse captivity narratives could be explored because Native people, including Pocahontas and Sacagawea, were also held captive by European Americans. However, I chose to mainly focus on Black Hawk because of its autobiographical format, not unlike women's Indian captivity narratives. In his autobiography, Black Hawk invokes the oral tradition when telling his tale, explaining his life as a Sauk and delving into his views on life.

Without stories, there would be no insight to how differently people react to challenging events in their life. Padraic Colum, in discussing the significance of mythology, states that "mythology is made up of stories regarded as sacred that form an integral and active part of a culture" (viii). America, as a developing nation, desired organically, as a culture, to create and read stories that represented values encompassing who they aspired to be as Americans. While I do not solely focus on myth when including fairytales and autobiographies in my analysis, these stories revealed how people may have responded to their environment in America during the 18th and 19th century. But no matter how different these stories are from each other, their striking similarities show the admiration of remarkable human beings as heroes who exemplified values and morals. Like ceremonies and rituals, these stories live on and inspire a new

generation to live to the fullest, to not only look up to their heroes but also discern their own ability to become heroic and likewise achieve a state of understanding and transcendence. In observing displaced heroism in different American narratives, I hope to contribute further insight into what constitutes heroism and the heroic character and advance the academic discussion of how stories help an audience rediscover what it means to live a heroic life.

CHAPTER II

NARRATIVES OF SURVIVAL: DISPLACED HEROISM IN WOMEN'S
INDIAN CAPTIVITY NARRATIVES AND EUROPEAN FAIRYTALES

As an integral component of American literature, women's Indian captivity narratives allow an assortment of interpretations and analysis. This chapter examines a few women's Indian captivity narratives and compares them to European fairytales, confirming the displacement needed for heroism. Indian captivity narratives call forth reactions of horror and excitement, giving insight to the growing American nation's need to champion moral values amid danger. Not unlike what fairytales in other cultures attempt to do for children, Indian captivity narratives use various themes to showcase ideal American behavior. According to Bruno Bettelheim's *Uses of Enchantment*, fairytales show children "that the struggle against severe difficulties in life is unavoidable, is an intrinsic part of human existence" (8). For Americans, the search for a national American identity remained complicated as they traversed the uncharted wilderness. The danger became two-fold as displaced Americans from Europe in turn displaced the Native Americans, challenging a solid national identity. Reading these captivity narratives through a fairytale lens reveals the struggles and dangers inherently real to American citizens while simultaneously discerning heroism in the protagonists' determination to survive even amid physical displacement.

For this analysis on heroic displacement, I have chosen the Abraham Panther Captivity Narrative, Mary Jemison's narrative, and Sarah Wakefield's narrative. To enhance the comparison of these captivity narratives, I will use specific European

fairytale: the popular Grimm tales of *Rapunzel* and *Cinderella*, and Beaumont's *Beauty and the Beast*. A multitude of American Indian captivity narratives—narrated by both females and males—span from the 16th to even the 20th century. Whether fact or fiction, captivity narratives provide an avenue for comparing modes of individual heroism. In this same vein, since there is a vast array of fairytales and even variations of the same fairytale, it becomes complicated to compare the fundamentals of heroism among distinct stories. Using one version of each fairytale simplifies analysis since the story's core extends far beyond the "original" telling of the tale. The transformation resulting from the ordeal of the heroine's displacement defines the heroine. Therefore, a comparison between fairytale and captivity narratives focuses on the heroine's actions.

There are major authorship differences with each captivity narrative and fairytale. In fairytales, the passing down of stories from generation to generation distributed distinct variations encompassing different cultural perspectives before they were written down (Hallett and Karasek 2). Indian captivity narratives were written, among other purposes, as propaganda for "imperialistic expansion" (Castiglia 2), encouraging Americans to view Native Americans as dangerous, promoting the stories as a "vehicle for various historically and culturally individuated purposes" (Pearce 1). Authorship of women's Indian captivity narratives ranged from white males narrating the captive's story to autobiographies written solely by the captor. Skewed interpretations developed from the perspective of the editor or from the autobiographer seeking to add intrigue. Identifying authorship became difficult as editors would not "simply write the basic story but actually reoriented it as they saw it" making autobiographical captivity narratives, such as the autobiographies of Jemison's and Wakefield's, accounts that were filtered

through interpreters and editors (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier 12). Regardless, these narratives were popular with American readers since reprints of the same narrative appeared again and again (14). These captivity narratives must have touched a reading audience just as fairytales astounded a listening one. Stories about heroes, such as fairytales and captivity narratives, are essentially about humans attempting to understand and survive in the world. These stories appeal to an audience even if the audience did not have the same experience:

Fantasy...does not necessarily coincide with how we act or wish to act in the world. It does, however, represent symbolic forms (often repressed or unconscious) that clarify, codify, organize, explain, or even lead us to anticipate the raw data of experience. In that sense, fantasy may be mediating or integrative, forging imaginative (and imaginable) links between our deepest psychic needs and the world in which we find ourselves. (Kolodny 10)

Kolodny alludes to Jung's study of the collective unconscious when she discusses human imagination and symbolism in storytelling. Stories evoking this collective unconscious through heroism remain essential to understanding the world since humans are constantly displaced. Displacement may even be a necessary component for heroism. The heroine in both captivity narratives and fairytales must rely on her ability to work with or overcome her displaced situation, making her story of triumph significant to those reading or listening to the tale.

An immediate mode of displacement within a heroic narrative also involves the formatting of the tale. Mary Jemison, sold to the Senecas as a young girl, dictated her life story to James Everett Seaver. Although the autobiography is written in first person,

Jemison's displacement by a white, male author may have contradicted the veracity of her tale through his own editorialization and interpolation (Derounian-Stodola 120). However, Jemison's narrative resembles the oral tradition of storytelling that Sarah Walsh states dominates "preliterate Seneca traditions of self-telling" (51). The transculturation evident in Jemison's story further emphasizes her willingness to explain her decision to stay with the Senecas instead of reintegrating into European-American white culture, unlike other captives who were "redeemed." Even with Seaver's editing, there remains profound individualism steeped with moral insight that unites her narrative. At the end of her story she states stoically, "In regard to ourselves, just as we feel, we are" (207). The challenges she experienced did not begin or end with her captivity and her courage to surmount them all makes her narrative fascinating to read. She used her displacement to her advantage by adjusting to her environment and adopting Seneca culture.

Published more than twenty times between 1787 and 1814, the fictional Panther Captivity Narrative deviates from factual biographical captivity narratives. The author, under the pseudonym Abraham Panther, uses an epistolary framework to tell the story of a woman successfully living alone in the wilderness for nine years (Derounian-Stodola 83). The "Lady" does get a chance to speak, albeit within the frame story. Even though it resembles oral storytelling, the author displaces her tale and nestles it in the framework of male explorers who "found her to be an agreeable, sensible lady" (13). The fairytale-like plot of this narrative invites a host of interpretations ranging from the mythic/historical to feminist (Derounian-Stodola 84). Reminiscent of the adventure narrative and the

sentimental novel, this story utilizes the basic archetypal pattern used in hero tales: separation, initiation, and return (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier 47).

Sarah Wakefield strays from the narratives of *Jemison's* and the *Panther Captivity Narrative* in her autobiography, writing with a style indicative of a spiritual testament to her faith and determination to survive. Her main reason for writing, which differs from those *Jemison* and the *Panther Captivity*, was for the "benefit" of her children. She did not look to gain popularity from her tale but rather to vindicate herself from the accusations in other verbal accounts of her captivity among the Dakota Sioux Indians (Wakefield 241). In her story, she cooperates with her captors and even praises the Indian lifestyle. She discredits the American government's form of justice especially since her Indian protector, Chaska, was wrongly hanged for another Indian's crimes. Her narrative strongly blames the U.S. government for its cruelty to Native Americans and questions the definition of justice for American citizens.

While these captivity narratives vary in style, all follow a narrative pattern that resembles the monocyte archetype of a hero's journey. The mythic hero archetype additionally applies to the fairytale hero or heroine because of the fairytale plot's similarities to plots in myth. Yet, in fairytales, the focus is on the ordinary human individual rather than on a demigod-like, legendary individual. Comparing women's Indian captivity narratives and fairytale heroines makes an interesting analysis because morals and life lessons stand prominent in both genres. As Max Lüthi states, "the focal point in the fairy tale stands man... The European fairy tale draws a picture of man and shows him in his confrontation with the world" (315-16). *Man*, meaning *human*, embodies the everyday, average human being encountering daily life. While magic

remains vital to the fairytale, it acts as a plot device to enhance the physical transformation and awareness of the hero/heroine: “While extraordinary transfigurations in the hero’s body occur as the story unfolds, he becomes a mere mortal once the struggle is over. At the fairy story’s end, we hear no more about the hero’s unearthly beauty or strength” (Bettelheim 57). The captives’ amazing tales come to a close and while transformed in many ways from their ordeals, the captives return to normal life. Life may be new, and perhaps better, but the story ends and life goes on, similar to those of the heroines in captivity narratives.

The structure of heroic displacement in both captivity narrative and fairytale coincides almost identically. When describing the general structure of captivity narratives, Richard Vanderbeets referred to the archetypal journey of initiation, taken from Joseph Campbell’s hero monomyth, involving “the separation of the Hero from his culture, his undertaking a long journey, and his undergoing a series of excruciating ordeals in passing from ignorance to knowledge... separation, transformation, and enlightened return” (553). However, in the captivity narratives, a physical return to white society does not necessarily occur. Regardless, the transformation prompted by the horrific ordeals of the captive women makes them heroic and encompasses an alternate definition of “return.” This return involves the heroine’s awareness and understanding of transcending her ordeals and telling others of her heroic journey, as like in Jemison’s narrative. In fairytales, an initial conflict (usually, an elder/parent dies or leaves) causes the heroine to leave home, experience hardship, struggle with a villainous character, and finally, undergo a glorious transformation, possibly with the help of magical aid, and all is set right again. Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of a Folktale* details the many functions

of the fairytale hero. While it is inefficient to incorporate all these functions, it remains a “measuring unit for individual tales...The application of the given scheme to various tales can also define the relationships of tales among themselves” (65). To simplify the comparisons here, I will refer to the following structure for captivity narratives and fairytales: separation/capture/conflict, ordeal/initiation, and return/transformation.

By the mid-eighteenth century, Indian captivity narratives represented “an emerging American Self undergoing assault and transformation” (Strong 2). The displaced female, removed from her home by captivity, experienced a range of horrors but also a sense of freedom. A white woman stolen by hostile Indians underscored the American cultural fear of innocent women being maimed in the dangerous wilderness. This anxiety about American women perpetuated the need for men to tame that wilderness to prevent further harm to American citizens because the family is in danger if women are in danger. In the Panther Captivity narrative, the male adventurers described this untamed nature as a “picturesque” abode in paradise, stating, “the land we found exceedingly rich and fertile... very comfortable living” (13,12). Vast, open, and seemingly uninhabited, the land became a place to conquer. Matthew Wynn Sivils purports that “Indian captivity narratives emerged as powerful artifacts of the conflicts that drove the repeated shifting and reformation of the American frontier” (85). The constant push to acquire this new land displaced the Native Americans already living on this land. Native contact with European settlers initiated the taking of white captives, but Native Americans took captives for a number of different reasons: revenge, ransom, adoption (to replace dead tribal members), and slavery (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier 2-8).

Indians sometimes took enemy captives and performed ritualistic ceremonies of torture and death to avenge a fallen comrade. According to Vine Deloria Jr., tribal religions consist of “attitudes, beliefs, and practices fine-tuned to harmonize with the lands on which the people live” (69). Since rituals and stories were tied to the land, white captives integrating into a tribe had to understand the Native way and the tribe’s connection with the land in order to survive. The various Indian belief systems on certain rituals mirror the power components essential in fairytales. The Witch, angry at Rapunzel for betraying her, cuts her long hair as revenge for her disloyalty, taking Rapunzel’s main strength away from her in what can be interpreted as a metaphorical scalping. The Witch then moves Rapunzel to a desert where “she had to live in great grief and misery” (76). Women captives throughout their ordeal in their perceived wilderness with the Native Americans had to live with the constant fear of torture and/or death, even if they remained alive and well for the time being. Sarah Wakefield exclaims, “I passed through death many times in imagination during my stay on that prairie” (254) indicating the mental torture she underwent thinking that her death could happen at any moment. Her imagination envisioned the worst kinds of horror because of the European American expectations surrounding the Native Americans and their beliefs.

Adoption of a captive into a tribe became a common practice in many Native American communities and many female captives who were adopted at a young age refused to leave. Even when their white families offered a ransom for their return, a majority of these women, such as Mary Jemison, refused to comply, stating, “I was fully determined not to be redeemed” (156). Jemison, in relating her tale to Seaver, mentioned that returning to white society would not be desirable considering that she had gained a

powerful position as a matriarch, living in her own house on her own land. By remaining with the Senecas, she had more ownership and freedom than many women of that time period (Derounian-Stodola 119). In the fairytale, *Beauty and the Beast*, Beauty, captive in the Beast's castle, does experience a sense of authority and freedom that seems odd to her role as prisoner. Being imprisoned in the magical castle gave her freedom, as the Beast proclaims, "Ask for whatever you wish. Here you are the mistress of everything" (127). Beauty crossed over into an enchanted environment that gave her the freedom of choice, which made her existence magical and separate from civilized society. Similarly, the freedom transculturated American women experienced came from the "captivity and crossing cultures" and thus "occasioned their revision of identities... which in turn became a way for white women to survive captivity not only by Indians but by patriarchal prescription at home as well" (Castiglia 9). The female captive's completed displacement due to her dual identity offered new world of opportunities that did not befall women who, as Annette Kolodny suggests, seem "to have been the unwilling inhabitant of a metaphorical landscape [they] had had no part in creating" (6). The pioneering men, out to conquer the wilderness, neglected women's place on that frontier. Captivity turned into liberty for those women who had more power in their adopted tribes.

Slavery, while sometimes a cruel experience for the captive, did not prevent the possibility of adoption or ransom. Depending on the captive's experience, the harshness of slavery may have been the crux of their entire ordeal. Sarah Wakefield, while not fully adopted into the tribe, did many menial tasks willingly as if she were a well-treated slave. However, she did encounter jealousy from Winona, the half sister of her protector,

Chaska. Winona's husband, Hapa, was a dangerous man from whom Chaska had to protect Wakefield. Wakefield believed Hapa influenced Winona's temperament towards her. Winona attempted to make Wakefield unhappy: not giving her clothes to wear, laughing at her when Wakefield was dirty and filthy, and tearing up her silk dresses, "All little articles... she would destroy before me, and would laugh when she saw I felt sad" (262). This treatment mirrors Cinderella's predicament when living with her evil stepmother and stepsisters: "They took her pretty clothes away from her... sisters did her every imaginable injury... she always looked dusty and dirty" (121). The conflict begins, as in many fairytales, with Cinderella's mother dying and then continues with the hardships of her ordeal, displaced within her own home and given a new name. The depiction of Indians' cruel treatment of their captives reinforced the image of Native Americans as evil. Although Sarah Wakefield praised her Indian protector, declaring, "Very few Indians or *even white men*, would have treated me in the manner he did" (271), the rhetoric that dominated narratives of captivity portrayed Native Americans as brutal captors in the wilderness.

Tensions exist when readers seek an exact representation of Native Americans in American literature, especially in Indian captivity narratives. The two sides of this tension propelled European Americans to decide what to do with the Native Americans living on the land they wanted for their own use, especially after the War for Independence. Jemison takes pride in "extolling" the virtues of the Indians and defends their "cruel" representations, claiming, "It is family, and not national, sacrifices amongst the Indians, that has given them an indelible stamp as barbarians, and identified their character with the idea which is generally formed of unfeeling ferocity" (143-144).

Acknowledging familial importance, some Americans advocated the Indian way of life, especially their relationship with nature and their positive results with democracy, taking the “Indian rhetoric of an almost anarchic personal liberty” because Americans felt displaced by their own European countries (Deloria 12). Captivity narratives reflect this image of “personal liberty” when independent people journey into the wilderness to reshape the land for individual use.

Conversely, the Native Americans reflected the untamed wilderness and were defined as “savages” to justify colonial conquests leading to native people’s displacement (West 10). Richard Slotkin suggests that with these two confrontational cultures, American culture and literature were “born out of... two conflicting modes of perception, two antagonistic visions of nature and destiny of man and the natural wilderness” (25). Thus, the European Americans perceived this uncivilized existence as a dangerous threat to their growing nation and an attack on the domestic sphere and on the citizens of civilized society. The Declaration of Independence stated that everyone has a right to freedom and property; that is, everyone white and male. Indian captivity increased because of American citizens trying to embody this new American identity. Hunger to gain a piece of land to call one’s own resulted in the racial “othering” and displacement of entire Native cultures. Unfortunately, violence became the means to forge an American identity, regardless of the exploration of “new moral grounds... a new beginning, a new creation of the moral universe” (Slotkin 370). Surviving on the American frontier with an awareness of its harshness created the desired heroism the American people determined to exemplify; but what suffered was the natural environment and its Native peoples.

The racial “othering” of the Native Americans also comprised an “othering” of the American landscape. As the land became something to possess, the savage quality of the wilderness, just as the Native Americans, would hopefully vanish. This racial and environmental othering also reveals tensions with interpretations of justice, especially for the Native Americans. With two hostile cultures fighting for land, avenging personal and environmental wrongs with death became an ongoing phenomenon. Wakefield unapologetically declares, “I could not think of any other cause than this—it may be right, it may be wrong; but such is my belief—: That our own people, not the Indians, were to blame... they knew no justice but in dealing out death for their wrongs” (286). First, by placing the culpability for the ill treatment of the Native Americans and their sacred land on white society, Wakefield sees the Indians’ dealing of justice with death as a moral act. After spending time with the Sioux, Wakefield understood that while death is a harsh form of revenge, it is within human nature to settle wrongdoings violently, especially when one’s home and way of life are constantly threatened. In danger from “a man of a gigantic figure,” the Lady in the Panther Captivity narrative took it upon herself to kill her captor and “resolved to die rather than comply with his desire... took up the hatchet he had brought, and summoning resolution I with three blows effectually put an end to his existence” (14). After dealing with the death of her lover and her own possible violation, she successfully defended herself by killing her captor, saving herself from further harm.

In many cases, both with captivity narratives and fairytales, outside circumstances cause the injustice to the heroine. When dealing with justice, fairytales paint clear-cut consequences of actions that create conflict. This conflict usually stems from the “villain”

character, to show that even the best of people suffer. This conflict then initiates the displacement of the heroine. In the beginning of *Rapunzel*, the Witch says angrily to Rapunzel's father, "How can you dare... descend into my garden and steal my rampion like a thief? You shall suffer for it... you must give me the child" (74). Echoing Native American sentiment over Americans stealing their land, the Witch does not tolerate this injustice and takes the child which precipitates the main conflict. Additionally, the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*, is "othered" within the story, and sees Beauty's father's actions as unjust, insisting, "I saved your life and opened my home to you and now you thank me by stealing my roses... Only death can pay for such a crime'" (124). To save him from death, Beauty bravely takes her father's place as prisoner, satisfying the wrongs the Beast claims her father incurred. Although a "monster," he asserts he has "got a good heart," even if he has been wronged (128). Beauty feels sympathetic and replies unashamedly, "Many men are worse than you." While she may not know other men besides her father and brothers, she believes because the Beast takes her hostage instead of killing or capturing her father, there is kindness in the Beast, even though he did not give her father any choice. In comparison, female captives had to pay the consequences of white societies' offenses, despite the fact that they did not directly commit the injustice. These women had to bear the hardship even when they had done nothing wrong.

The steadfastness and resilience to withstand hardship in an entirely new and dangerous environment reflect the heroic nature of both the female captive and the fairytale heroine. Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope, in analyzing the basic heroic pattern perceived by Lord Raglan, Dorothy Norman, Campbell, and Jung, conclude that, "An

exploration of the heroic journeys of women—and of men who are relatively powerless because of class or race—makes clear that the archetypal hero masters the world by understanding it, not by dominating, controlling, or owning the world or other people” (4-5). The captive women and fairytale heroines had to make certain choices in their physical displacement if they were to survive. Therefore, they needed to understand their displaced situation and stay true to self. Whether that meant cooperating with their captors, as in Wakefield’s case, or fighting back like the Lady, what becomes significant is their goodness of character rather than a domineering disposition to maintain ethics in their survival. Women, historically, embodied virtue and morality, which America as a country sought to maintain in its expansion. James Seaver in the Preface to Jemison’s story asserts that in biography, “those who have been sunk in the lowest depths of folly and vice... are enabled to select a plan of life that will at least afford self-satisfaction, and guide us through the world in paths of morality” (122). Thus, just as fairytales were related to promote goodness in children, captivity narratives such as Jemison’s have attempted to be didactic for the American public. Cinderella’s dying mother made sure that Cinderella promised to remain good, no matter the situation: ““Dear child, be good and pious, and then the good God will always protect you”” (121). Even if she wielded a hatchet, the Lady in the Panther Captivity Narrative championed virtue and morality, defending herself from sexual advancements and forgiving her father.

Maintaining one’s good character amid suffering encompasses a heroine’s determination to survive. Women’s Indian captivity narratives showed that it was possible to persist in the direst of circumstances. These are stories of human fortitude, as Christopher Castiglia comments: “Whether white women suffered their captivities

patiently, resisted or escaped capture, or remained with the Indians, their stories are consistent documents of strength and determination” (39). Jemison, Wakefield, and the Panther Captivity all have countless statements of this resolve. Jemison credits herself for surviving, acknowledging her strength despite her small stature: “My strength has been great for a woman of my size, otherwise I must long ago have died under the burdens which I was obliged to carry” (209). Wakefield describes in depth her mindset during her time with the Sioux: “I have passed through many trials and different scenes, but never suffered as I did then. God so willed it that a storm arose as the sun went down, and a furious storm it was” (259). While telling her story, the Lady in the Panther captivity cannot put into words her experience as it seems horrible to relive: “‘Tis impossible for me to describe my feelings—or for you to conceive a situation more wretched than mine” (Panther 14). But she tells her story anyway. In these narratives, the trials of the women’s displacement remain permanently documented through writing. Their victory in overcoming their situation and returning to tell their tale, raises these women to hero status. In analyzing Mary Rowlandson’s famous captivity narrative, David Minter concludes that writing a narrative reveals, “a capacity for giving heroic proportion and definite meaning to an individual adventure” (347). Just as classical heroes have done in epic tales, these captive women brought their survival stories to others so the American public could be inspired to act similarly in their own trying predicaments.

Derounian-Stodola and Levernier quote John Frost’s preface to *Heroic Women of the West*, stating, “The heroism of woman is the heroism of the heart” (127). Telling a story means opening one’s heart and sharing it with others. Sharing stories is what makes us human. What remains very human about these female captives is the freedom to

express emotions in their story and relay the times they have cried. While crying may retain its connotation as a weak act of femininity, tears allow for catharsis and should not be gendered. Crying does not identify women in peril but becomes the precursor to triumphing over their situation. All these captivity narratives and fairytales show the heroine crying. Rapunzel even saves the prince by crying: “Two tears wetted his eyes and they grew clear again, and he could see with them as before” (76). Tears, in her case, showed that all will be well again, even after her captive life in the tower. Her crying may be an act of desperation but it turns into an acceptance of what has happened to her prince, since she could not have known her tears would cure his blindness. This acceptance rings true for the female captives because after the initial horror of capture comes the reality of survival. In the moment of action, there is no time to cry. After the Lady in the Panther captivity finished her story, she shed “a plentiful shower of tears” (14-15). The relief in seeing other human beings sent a wave of emotion that she could not express when she killed her captor. It is during this let-down period that the crying occurs.

At this lowest point, through tears and sadness, prayer can become a guiding aid through troubles. Cinderella cried when could not go to the ball but she still wished and prayed to attend. Her mother’s grave represented the “magical/divine” aid that gave Cinderella the items she wished for in order to dance at the ball. While not exactly spiritual captivity narratives, fairytales relate women’s willingness to humble themselves and ask for help, displaying the morality of these fairytale women and reflecting the spiritual fortitude found in captivity narratives. When Jemison saw the scalps of her family, she tried to remember her promise to her mother: to say her prayers in English

everyday (136). In that moment of fear, even though she “durst not cry” or “durst not complain,” her only relief was “in silent stifled sobs” (137). Having no one familiar to turn to, the only comforting thing was to cry. Likewise, Wakefield states, “I know I prayed... sometimes I cried, then I would be calm... I thought I would not die despairingly” (263). Purposely spiritual, Wakefield’s narrative states over and over the importance of faith in God when hope seems lost. Having her children suffer along with her reminded her how she must stay strong for them even when she thought she would go mad with fear. However, putting on a courageous front does not last very long as even Beauty could not contain her sadness when alone in the Beast’s castle: “Now she was alone, Beauty broke down... But, because she was very brave, she quickly dried her eyes, put her faith in providence” (126). With the fairytale narrator ending this statement by alluding to “faith in providence” shows how spirituality and heroism coincide during the ordeal. The need to break down becomes the letting-go process after which these women can maintain a courageous front.

These captivity narratives invoked the importance of morality and faith, particularly Christian faith. Through belief passed down from the Puritans, European Americans saw this new world as the promised land and saw themselves as “Bearers of light of ‘human civilization’ into a ‘New Eden,’... charged with installing their ‘godly’ culture in this land” (Faery 25). This divine destiny becomes challenged when captives experience a liminal existence between the “hell” of the wilderness and the “goodness” of Christian society. In traversing the wilderness, the legendary frontier hero embodied more of a Native American identity in his reliance on survival skills rather than just a passive reliance on God: “Although his defense of European American frontier

settlements demonstrates commitment to the European American domestic order, he has internalized dissonance between the settlement and the wilderness and is not truly at home in either world” (MacNeil 70). While this perspective is predominantly male, this idea of the frontier hero can also apply to captive women who arguably become frontier heroes because of their displaced existence in the American wilderness. For captives like Jemison and the Lady, their survival depended on how they used this perceived wilderness to their advantage so it can become less of a wilderness and more of place of residence.

For displaced frontier women, the wilderness had a magical quality. The uncharted American wilderness represented the supernatural, the unworldly, and even an underworld of sorts, full of darkness and evil (MacNeil 24). As Wakefield expressed in her narrative, “think of me, being down in those deep, dark woods, I knew not where I was, or how long I might stay. I felt that my bones might at some future day be found; but O, what thoughts were mine that awful night!” (260). The fear of herself as an unburied body haunted Wakefield at this time as she visualized possible dangers from the Sioux in their wilderness home. Women disappearing into the void of the woods due to Indian captivity mirror the otherworldly disappearance of fairytale heroines and their adventures in wilderness. Many European fairytale plots gain momentum when the hero or heroine enters the woods, which becomes transformed into an area of enchantment, danger, and even discovery. This transformation parallels the American myth of the wilderness being an untouched landscape and exotic frontier also full of unknown danger and discovery. Jules Zanger thinks that both fairytale and Indian captivity tales exhibit “types of frontier literature since both deal with the trials and temptations of people living

very close to a line separating the familiar, the ordinary, and the accepted from the unknown, the terrible, and the forbidden” (125). Both the fairytale and women’s Indian captivity narratives are frontier tales of survival after displacement in the wilderness. The desire for adventure on the frontier stimulates the American imagination even with its proposed dangers and horrors. The land itself becomes feminized, even sexualized, especially in the Panther Captivity Narrative. The men adventure into the wilderness determined “to penetrate the Western wilderness as far as prudence and safety would permit” (12). But the Lady uses the wilderness to her advantage, surviving off the land, showing how this wilderness can be cultivated. Kolodny suggests that this story “adhered to the essential male fantasy of woodland intimacy while, at the same time, it offered a positive image of the white woman’s capacity to survive and plant gardens in that same wilderness” (66-7). Again, there exists a freedom for women in the wilderness not available in their domestic life. The adventure that captivity narratives convey is comparable to those of the fairytale heroine. Rapunzel, trapped in a tower in a “forest,” captures the attention of a prince riding by who hears her singing (74). When he manages to climb up her hair and into the tower, he captures her heart with the notion that he could free her. While inevitably a more romantic tale than most captivity narratives, women could act with more agency in the American landscape. Sivils states, “Such freedom can only be found in the wilderness, making this setting the engine by which women readers could plausibly imagine social liberation” (*American Environmental Fiction* 45). The idea of the American wilderness gives these women a chance to live a powerful and exciting life of adventure and freedom, accepting the hardship and sorrow that comes with it.

Women's captivity by Native Americans literally displaced them when they were separated from their families and taken to a new environment; but, this capture also displaces their identity as "pure" Christian white women. This victimization of "outraged virginity" encouraged the propaganda that "American Indians were despoiling the future mothers of a generation of whites, not merely the present ones, by either traumatizing or transculturating them" (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier 129). As these women were the bearers of future white generations, female captivity narratives awakened the national fear that revolved around the tainting of that future through Indian captivity. This transculturation would begin with the changing of European clothes to Indian ones, as Jemison details: "an Indian took off my shoes and stockings and put a pair of moccasins on my feet" (136). New clothes and then a new name, Dehgewanus, meaning "Two Falling Voices," completed Jemison's transition to her new Indian life (Derounian-Stodola 119). Her name reflected her liminal identity: a woman, fully integrated into Seneca life and culture but still displaying evidence of her race as a white American. The identity and even names of fairytale heroines also may change due to displacement. In "Cinderella," her stepsisters, aptly named her Cinderella, or "cinder girl" reducing her to a lowly servant status. But when she mysteriously arrives at the ball, her name switches from "cinder girl" to "foreign princess." Then the prince seeing her, declares her as "my partner" and later when fitting the slipper, as his "true bride." Her name change shows her movement from her initial displacement of forced servitude towards a higher status of freedom with the prince. Nada Kujundžić claims that:

In order for the encounter between the realistic and the marvelous, which constitutes a defining feature of the fairy tale genre, to take place, the protagonist

has to be displaced from his/her initial domestic space...displacement brings about some sort of transformation of the protagonist. (234)

The removal and displacement of these captive American women in the wilderness established their liminal American identity. As these women embraced their liminal existence in the wilderness, their constant movement and transition with the Native Americans encouraged their transformation or awareness of self in their heroic journey.

Captivity narratives end with the successful survival of the captive. Usually this survival is represented by the return and redemption of the captive, as with the Lady in the Panther Captivity and Wakefield; but Jemison, does not return. Her “return” lies in her transformation as she becomes changed from her experience:

...no one can pass from a state of freedom to that of slavery, and in the last situation rest perfectly contented; but as every one knows that great exertions of the mind tend directly to debilitate the body, it will appear obvious that we ought, when confined, to exert all of our faculties to promote our present comfort, and let future days provide their own sacrifices. (207)

The most important aspect of the hero's journey is this transformation or awareness arising from the hero's displaced experience, even though this transformation may contradict the norms of civilized society. Going against what was expected of her, Beauty decides to return to the Beast and marries him, deciding that she “doesn't need a handsome face and a clever tongue in a husband. She needs strength of character, goodness, and kindness” (131). She realizes her congested life at home and leaves because she sees the human within the Beast. Her choice breaks the spell of the Beast's enchantment and transforms him into a handsome prince. Campbell states that the hero

achieves “a transmutation of the whole social order... so that through every detail and act of secular life the vitalizing image of the universal godman who is actually imminent and effective in all of us may be somehow made known to consciousness” (389). This notion that heroism comes from finding the “godman” within indicates how displacement in the outside world leads the hero to find inspiration no matter the ordeal. The “godman” or “godhuman” within, displaces the ordinary human being into creator status. This movement allows the heroines in both genres to recreate their life in the stories told of and by them (regardless if history or fiction), inspiring others to become creators in their own lives. “The Hero Returns” trope from Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale* encompasses the hero’s transition from his or her first appearance. Cinderella no longer obeys orders from her stepfamily; she has risen above her status. But in her struggle, she learns that her kindness gave her strength. Wakefield started to understand the Indian way of life and saw how her own government forcefully took that way of life from them. The vehicle of displacement gave these heroines the opportunity and awareness to do right. Their reaction to this environmental displacement makes them heroic. Because these women are forced out of the known and comfortable, they seek to understand themselves and others from different cultures and environments.

As the American identity fashions itself through bloody encounters with the Native Americans and the environment, so too does the individual identity of these captive women forge a new voice through their trials in the wilderness. As frontier narratives for posterity, women’s Indian captivity narratives are, as what Phillips D. Carleton says, “frozen on the printed page” and do not have a chance for “oral growth” (169). In comparing these “frozen” narratives with the constant “growth” of oral

narratives from the European fairytale, it is fascinating to see the similarities of displaced heroism even though they arose out of different cultures. The themes of displacement, heroism, survival, and determination in women's Indian captivity narratives help unravel the themes and processes of Native American and environmental othering, Americanness, and the expanding frontier that accompanied the developing American nation. Reading European fairytales with popular heroines such as *Cinderella*, *Rapunzel*, and *Beauty and the Beast*, helps generation after generation discover what it means to survive as humans when displaced in the world. Mary Jemison, the Lady in the Panther Captivity Narrative, and Sarah Wakefield sought to ensure their survival within their captivity, making their narratives stories of courage and stories to share for generations to come.

CHAPTER III

DESCENT INTO THE WOODLAND UNDERWORLD: DISPLACED HEROISM IN
CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN'S *EDGAR HUNTLY*

The archetypal hero in literature is the epitome of an individual who experiences a series of trials to test his or her relentlessness and achieve an awareness of self, eventually inspiring others to do the same. Most hero-tales speak about universal truths that echo the common knowledge of a collective psyche. In Charles Brockden Brown's novel *Edgar Huntly or Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*, the main character, Huntly, traverses the woods to retrieve Clithero and discover the truth of his friend Waldegrave's murder. However, having failed to aid Clithero, Huntly wakes to find himself in the wilderness with no recollection of how he got there. This journey into the woods resembles the classical literary trope of a *katabasis*, or descent to the underworld, that is at the core of the archetypal hero journey. Scholars have discussed archetypal and symbolic patterns in *Edgar Huntly* when looking at its use of mythological tropes. Marietta Patrick argues that Huntly embodies a typical hero figure, displaying "a movement toward these symbols of transformation [that] precipitates and defines the conflict as a journey inward" (360). In her view, Huntly achieves a mythical "spiritual maturation" (370) by the end of the novel. However, there remains a madness in the novel, and scholars like Philip Hughes, connect myth and symbolism with the mental landscape. Huntly's sleepwalking further complicates this mental landscape with the move from madness to awareness. Hughes concludes that after Huntly's symbolic "journeying... the hero, presumed dead, rises again, with a newfound identity and awareness" even though the novel does not end

happily (187). Furthermore, Dieter Schulz examines the novel within the tradition of the “quest romance” following the trajectory of the hero’s journey with the sequence, “separation—initiation—and return” (324). Schulz notes that the *Bildungsroman* motif, as well as the hero’s search for identity, transforms the individual for the better, learning from trials and returning to tell others of the experience.

While I concur with these scholars about the mythological and heroic processes applied to Huntly, he also exhibits traits of the Gothic hero-villain in his failure to learn from misguided actions when he tells his tale. Denise MacNeil acknowledges the importance of the hero’s learning when describing the emergence of the American frontier hero and Huntly’s journey into and out of the “wilderness underworld” (106-109). Even though Huntly’s journey involves archetypal heroic steps, his trial within the woodland Underworld, or *katabasis*, upends *Edgar Huntly* as a hero-tale due to Huntly’s inability to see the harm he inflicts on others. Huntly’s lack of awareness, or the absence of a heroic transformation, represses his chance to realize his mistakes, misdirecting his desired heroism. Since Huntly traverses the American wilderness, I intend to pair his displaced heroic efforts within the telling of his story with a discussion of the othered Gothic environment as an underworld. My concept of displacement describes Huntly’s position within an uncontrolled environment that reflects psychological turmoil. This displacement turns Huntly into a failed self-proclaimed hero, making him unreliable in the telling of his tale. While Huntly’s narrative parallels the mythological hero’s journey to the Underworld and back, the portrayal of his displaced heroism inverts the archetypal hero and maintains the presence of Gothic inaccessibility.

In not learning from or realizing his hurtful actions, Huntly qualifies as a Gothic hero-villain, not unlike Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick*. Charles L. Crow defines the Gothic hero-villain or “villain hero” as a “creature of powerful intellect suffering this Romantic agony... driven to misguided, cruel deeds, trying to set the world right, or to avenge a sense of courage or betrayal” (9). However, in committing heinous deeds to “set the world right,” Huntly displaces his heroic identity when recounting his adventures. Misguided by placing himself captive in the natural landscape, Huntly becomes othered. He first embraces the environment while his immediate emotions bolster a heroic identity; but after this othering, he fails to ascend to full hero status when he becomes destructive. Since I argue that displacement is required for heroism, Huntly becomes a displaced Gothic hero who never attains a sense of awareness. Not knowing where he is placed in his environment, he straddles a liminal space between the construct of the “savage” wilderness and “civilized” human society. Therefore, his standing as a “displaced hero” encompasses his need to find where he belongs in an environment that constantly shifts from civilized to savage in the American landscape.

The hero-villain aspect of Huntly springs from the anxieties of America as a new, developing country. In Crow’s introduction to his *Anthology of the American Gothic*, he surmises that creating the mythos of America enabled the Gothic lens to explore stories of progress, success, and opportunity in the nation and in the individual to “tell the story of those who are rejected, oppressed, or who have failed” (2). In Brown’s *Preface*, the heroic journey for *Edgar Huntly* reads as a “performance.” Brown intends to use the condition of the United States “to exhibit a series of *adventures*... connected with one of the most common and most wonderful diseases or affections of the human frame” (3, my

emphasis). According to Norman S. Grabo, Huntly's adventures in the summer of 1787 coincided with the events in Philadelphia when representatives from all the colonies gathered to answer fundamental questions for the new American nation: "how to harness the passionate and irrational aspects of human nature without destroying human nature itself" (xviii). As America attempts to find its footing as a nation representing liberty and freedom, the untraversed wilderness becomes an unexamined environment filled with unknown terrors that could inhibit or benefit that freedom. The landscape offers insight to the heroic nature of each individual encountering his or her understanding of the world and of oneself within this new nation. In the attempt to become heroic, fears of the unknown can creep around, and within, the individual. Leslie Fiedler states that Brown deals with "The exaggerated and the grotesque... as they correspond in quality to our deepest fears and guilts as projected in our dreams or lived through in 'extreme situations'" (155). Therefore, the Gothic inaccessibility within this novel opens the conversation to discover the darker side of an individual within an uncontrolled environment which makes *Edgar Huntly* a cautionary tale. Huntly even states, "If, by any chance, I should awake and find myself immersed in darkness, I know not what act of desperation I might be suddenly impelled to commit" (Brown 151). Sivils suggests that this darkness constitutes a perversion of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" since Huntly *does* emerge from the cave but is not enlightened, but rather, confused and violent (66). Huntly fears himself and the darkness surrounding and growing within him, but he remains unwilling to *see* the danger when trying to be heroic. In relating this danger to the wilderness, Huntly displaces himself in an environment outside his normal surroundings. The sleepwalking only expresses his unresolved heroic gestures, inverting his perceptions

of rationality into emotional instability. By existing in the othered and feared wilderness, he transforms into the other, feared in the woods and within civilized human society.

Consequently, to venture into danger within an uncharted landscape invites the Gothic trope of the sublime, enhancing “a negative experience because it reinforces feelings of transience (our passing) and insignificance (our smallness)” (Smith 12). The fear that we as individuals will amount to nothing in this vast world parallels Huntly’s perception of his liminal place in the wilderness: “On one side I seemed still upon the verge of a precipice, and, on the other, all was empty and waste” (96). His insignificance from feeling powerless and small next to the sublimity of nature frightens Huntly. He compensates by making himself a hero in this Gothic environment: “My wishes were now bent not only to preserve myself, and to frustrate the future attempts of these savages, but likewise to relieve this miserable victim [the captured female]” (168). Sivils, in his article, pinpoints the American wilderness as a “hellish labyrinth” because the dangers of the natural world also include the “demonic Indians” (87). Furthermore, Jared Gardner acknowledges that while there is an internal struggle within Huntly, the psychological “dark side” also represents a conflict for his identity as an American when he encounters the wilderness and the Native Americans (429). Subsequently, the Native Americans, in the story, othered within the hellish wilderness, mirror the other that Huntly fails to accept as conceptually American. The Native Americans murdered Huntly’s family, so in his revenge killings of the Native Americans, Huntly justifies “frustrating” future attempts of “savage” atrocities and sees himself as the hero protecting innocent captives (168). The Native Americans, placed within the realm of the wilderness

underworld, display another American fear, the fear of the civilized world succumbing to savagery.

Huntly encounters the dangerous “others” of the Native Americans and the wilderness in his descent into the woodland underworld. However, the reader may struggle to grasp the stages of his descent. Beyond the novel, the underworld represents the physical and mental terror the American citizens encounter, living with the dangers of possible death while establishing a unified nation. The physical component of this underworld contains the natural world, which Huntly describes as in a constant state of haunting decay which “eminently abounds in rifts and cavities... the gradual decay of their cementing parts...dear to my youthful imagination” (22). He juxtaposes the natural environment with a sublime visual description as the environment becomes alive. The wilderness haunts Huntly’s journey as he describes its terrifying environment:

Whatever nature left a flat it is made rugged and scarcely passable by enormous and fallen trunks, accumulated by the storms of ages and forming, by their slow decay...the haunt of rabbits and lizards. These spots are obscured by the melancholy umbrage of pines, whose eternal murmurs are in unison with vacancy and solitude, with the reverberations of the torrents and the whistling of the blasts.

(92)

His portrayal of these woods shows his determination to reveal the hidden dangers of a world unlike the environment of civilized society he has grown up in. Words such as “decay,” “melancholy,” and “haunt” suggest a darker aspect that Huntly perceives in his encounter with this wilderness and the confusion of his liminal existence. Of course, Huntly erroneously sees himself as an expert of this woodland underworld because he

takes walks. He concludes that, “Perhaps, no one was more acquainted with the wilderness as I” (92). However, when he becomes lost due to his own sleepwalking, he also gets lost in the wilderness of his thoughts: “My thoughts were wildering and mazy, and though consciousness were present, it was disconnected” (152). His stance as a hero remains unreliable as his thoughts have become “wildering” and “mazy,” as his underworld descent becomes a descent into his own mental confusion.

Edgar Huntly, as the protagonist, counteracts the sublimity of the hellish underworld wilderness because he is an unreliable narrator. Huntly’s psychological landscape within his own narrative inverts his perceived heroism. This heroic aspiration to conquer the untamed wild metaphorically, as well as psychologically, represents the anxieties of an America unable to control the environment, making *Edgar Huntly* a narrative of “Otherness toward its insubstantial shadows, and vice versa” (Savoy 6). This “shadow” reflects not only the otherness of the environment but also the mythical aspect of the human condition. Huntly’s character exemplifies C.G. Jung’s description of an individual’s shadow as the repressed, often frightening and shameful elements of the psyche. This shadow symbolizes “natural attempts to reconcile and reunite opposites within the psyche” (90). To “heal this split” (90), man is bound to become more adventurous and acknowledge his achievements as “splendid.” However, the “uncanny tendency to invent things... [and] become more dangerous” (91) unearths confusion within the psyche, blurring good and evil, which Huntly displays when suffering from thirst: “I felt a strong propensity to bite the flesh from my arm. My heart overflowed with cruelty” (156-57). This realization of the dangerous self can essentially be othered in the Gothic tradition, promoting inaccessibility to the awakening subconscious; the darkness

within the self must be acknowledged so that it can be healed. Since the dark side of the self remains frightening and horrific at times, the physical environment surrounding an individual mirrors this mental landscape which the individual may ignore. While *Edgar Huntly* represents the stumbling of the human figure attempting to understand his environment and where he belongs, Huntly does not acknowledge the hazardous nature of his “dark self” and fails to “heal the split” within his psyche. Hence, by his own pen, Edgar Huntly becomes the hero-villain displaced in his own work.

In light of Brown’s description of this story as a “performance,” Huntly remains displaced within his narrative as an unreliable storyteller, recreating events from a hazy memory. Unreliability is a common Gothic trope and MacNeil confirms that Huntly’s narrative voice “seems not to be his own but is rather the projection of his idealized vision of himself” (102). Since the novel consists of a letter written to his fiancée, Mary, Huntly symbolizes his life in writing. He demands, “There is a tale connected with it... Listen to me” (30). Huntly projects his persona onto the need for others to hear his “tale.” Written to inform Mary, his wandering narrative, typical of the Gothic, distracts the reader from the initial focus: what happened to Waldegrave? Huntly muses towards the end of his letter that “A tale like this could never be the fruit of invention or be invented to deceive” (264). Using “invent” twice allows Huntly to forge a narrative in which he expresses himself as a savior, covering up the fact that to follow his narrative remains an arduous task for the reader.

This unreliability shows Huntly no closer to attaining “spiritual” understanding than when he left on his self-appointed journey. He is the main storyteller speaking about his own “heroic” story, but certain aspects of his narrative create doubt in the audience

and further displace Huntly as a hero. For instance, Huntly mistakenly declares that he has become the “first” to walk certain paths: “Since the birth of this continent, I was probably the first who had deviated thus remotely from the customary paths of men” (99). He believes that no one has experienced what he has gone through, even in an epic hero sense: “Few, perhaps, among mankind have undergone vicissitudes of peril and wonder equal to mine. The miracles of poetry, the transitions of enchantment, are beggarly and mean compared with those which I had experienced” (229). With this statement, Huntly fails to grasp the importance of heroic stories, such as *The Odyssey* and *The Aeneid* as an array of different, yet similar, trials of the self. In making false assumptions with his “firsting,” he seeks to set himself above the common man and qualify as a heroic individual having “undergone vicissitudes of peril and wonder.” He sees his story as evidence of his prowess since the highest forms of classical epic “poetry” as the “enchantment” of the imagination cannot even concoct an adventure this complex and detailed (229).

Jung argues that the goal of every human is living the “symbolic life.” Thus myths and stories, especially those involving heroes, play a significant role in helping individuals search for meaning in their lives: “an understanding of the symbol-making propensities of man” is “analogous to primitive ideas, myths, and rites” (32). This idea closely ties to an inherent nature of every human being because there remains a “pattern of behavior,” according to Jung that links the individual with the common archetypes of human development through different stages of life. Rinda West states that “Images of these archetypal patterns can be found across cultures. The instinctual nature of the patterns explains why certain experiences and story types move people deeply” (13).

Brown, in his *Preface*, indicates that *Edgar Huntly* may relate to the human experience of journeying through life's trials. Huntly concludes that, "Intense dark is always the parent of fears" (96) as this journey into the "intense dark" further describes the trials of his physical environment and mental landscape. Since Huntly does not see the symbolic reference to his dark nature revealing itself in the dark woods, his past remains incomplete and inconclusive in this dangerous, uncontrolled environment: "I endeavored to recall the past, but the past was too much in contradiction to the present, and my intellect was too much shattered by external violence, to allow me accurately to review it" (153). This attempt to relive the past and eliminate contradictions revives a desire in Huntly to see himself as an authentic teller of his tale: "Such a desire to relive or repeat the past cannot be satisfied by the controlled retrospection of narrative... can only be fulfilled in the uncontrollable and compulsive realm of the unconscious" (Bellis 43). Huntly, through writing, has the unconscious need to connect what he has done to who he *is* and in turn, force the reader to see him as he *sees* himself: a hero, like Odysseus and Aeneas, who saves the day.

In his *Preface*, David L. Pike looks at the "descent to the underworld" trope as a "retrospective recreation" of the storyteller, stating that "By telling us what it is looking for, the autobiographical voice simultaneously recreates its past as the place in which such a thing could have come into being" (x). In a way, the first person narrative allows us as readers to see ourselves as the hero, projecting the need to be heroic in our lives onto the hero of the story. However, Huntly's narrative wanders far from the heroic ideal as his reflective narration inverts the classical hero story. Most classical hero narratives invoke a muse that inspires the traditional bard/omniscient narrator to retell the tales of

heroic individuals. Huntly, in explaining his story in first person, strays from this oral tradition and challenges its simplicity. George Lord quotes Jung in discussing the self of a first person narrative as a “traumatic plight of the personality that cannot develop beyond the ego-state because it is incapable of seeing... these ventures are aleatory wanderings rather than fulfilling quests” (4). Speaking “in propria persona” from the “fragmentation style... consequence of the disappearance of the controlling and authenticating myth,” contrasts with the usual role of an epic muse, challenging the authenticity of the tale the hero tells of himself (Lord 5). Therefore, the confusion of Edgar Huntly as a displaced hero relies on his misdirection in telling of his descent into the American wilderness.

The wilderness throughout Huntly’s tale reflects Gothic inaccessibility because the truth Huntly seeks lies hidden *within* the woods Clithero escaped to. When Huntly enters the woods, nature morphs into a place he fears, preventing him from discovering his desired truth. Huntly explains, “To persuade him [Clithero] to leave his desolate haunts might be a laborious and tedious task” (103). Huntly appoints himself to this “task” by travelling into an environment that reverts into a place of death, and thus an Underworld. The “task” indicates that Huntly willingly answered “the call” to venture into danger. To understand the ultimate descent of a hero, the general mythos surrounding the typology and archetype of the actual hero-figure needs categorization and then individualization. Huntly, even as a displaced hero, forges a story of complex ingenuity. Honor Matthews quotes Thomas Mann, who states, “For myth is the foundation of life, the religious formula... the moment when the story-teller acquires the mythical way of looking at things—that marks a beginning in his life... a new serenity in

his powers of perception and creation” (17). Campbell’s monomyth states that the start of the mythological journey, the “call to adventure” or the “summon,” signifies that “destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity... to a zone unknown... a forest... [and] can go forth of his own volition” (58). The underworld for the hero reflects the environment of the hero’s quest so the literal idea of the Underworld can become metaphorical, even allegorical. In Huntly’s case, the underworld transforms itself into the terror of the American landscape.

The second step, the “Initiation” or *The Road of Trials* from Campbell’s monomyth, mirrors Huntly’s need to survive in the dangerous hell-like woods, encountering death in different forms (97). The Underworld remains outside the civilized world so any misstep can lead to death. According to Huntly, at any time, he could “dash myself to pieces on the points of rocks” (96). The second half of the narrative goes into full Gothic hero-mode with Huntly killing a panther and several Native Americans, and saving a captive girl in the wilderness. Portraying Clithero’s fixture in the wilderness as a “desolate haunt” motivates Huntly to save Clithero from the natural world’s unsuspecting “hellish” perils, essentially initiating himself in a trial of ordeals filled with various horrors. Huntly feels his own pain but states somewhat selflessly that, “My languors, my excruciating heat, vanished in a moment, and I felt prepared to undergo the labours of Hercules” (173). Yet, in comparing himself to the Greek demi-god hero who suffered from goddess Hera’s multiple inflictions, Huntly sees himself as more than human and prepares to act as something other than human. This othering in turn reflects the wilderness, the animals, and the Native Americans, seen as figments of the hellish, evil landscape and as representations apart from the civilized, rational world. His descent to

the underworld wilderness then becomes a descent into “savagery.” As stated previously, Huntly’s descent embodies the liminal space between the underworld of the wilderness and the rational existence of his American society. West states, “Individuation/maturity and political commitment to the land and to those humans who have been exploited as Other are mutually reinforcing processes. Experience with extrahuman nature can itself be an aid in the process” (31). I conclude that Huntly could become “extrahuman” and heroic in order to bring together the separate worlds and eliminate his liminal existence; unfortunately, he drives nature and society further apart, bringing death, destruction, and psychological confusion.

Similarly, the underworld in classical literature resembles a literal place of death where there is a slight chance of returning. The hero must attempt that return journey but not until after encountering the fear of death itself. Nature remains feared as an underworld because of its unpredictability and potential for death: “what we call nature has long been a source of fear, danger, and contempt” (Hillard 692). Huntly’s adventure reveals this fear through the unlikelihood that he will return to the civilized world, as he states, “to prosecute an endless journey, and to return was scarcely a less arduous task than to proceed” (97). In Campbell’s monomyth, the hero receives some sort of “Ultimate Boon” to ease the hero in his or her quest (Campbell 173). Huntly awakes in the cave and finds a tomahawk, a savage weapon rather than a civilized musquet. He later decides that he would rather keep the tomahawk, sticking the musquet in the middle of the road (194). In choosing the tomahawk and securing a place in this wild environment, Huntly embraces his environmental othering: “The hero is always, and must be, a prodigy at weapon play, but his combats and confrontations tend signally to emphasize the trial of

strength... or the trial of skill or accuracy” (Miller 206-207). However, this boon transforms into the source of his insensitive, destructive nature: “Custom, likewise, even in so short a period, had inured me to spectacles of horror. I was grown callous and immoveable” (222). Managing to become hardened instantaneously morphs Huntly into a displaced Gothic hero-villain. While Dean Miller suggests that reversing the heroic patterns of eventual victory invites parodic treatment of the hero, reading about Huntly as an othered individual reveals him as a danger in and out of the wilderness, making harmful decisions and hindering his chance at rising to full hero status.

The Gothic inversion of the hero’s journey for Huntly shows that although he goes through trials and symbolic passages of initiation in his descent to the American wilderness, he fails to grasp the purpose of his descent. He intends to seek the truth about Waldegrave’s murder but shifts his focus to save Clithero, who probably should not be rescued due to Clithero’s mental instability. Clithero’s overbearing and self-inflicted guilt led to his unconscious sleep-walking into the woods. Nature’s “desolate haunts,” in addition, refers to Clithero’s sleepwalking hazards because he has no control of his own mind; he remains haunted by his past and excluded from human society. In needing to escape, Clithero enters a world outside of human contact. Moreover, Clithero could not relate his narrative until he felt secure in the woods. Since the wilderness encompasses anything not human, the underworld becomes the “otherworld” in terms of both the physical and mental state to which Clithero succumbs. Thus, the wilderness becomes an underworld to both Huntly and Clithero, perverting the *katabasis* as a heroic journey of truth-seeking and rescue into an excursion of losing oneself and becoming othered in an environmental horror.

Huntly and Clithero double each other in their descent into the woods: both experience being lost inside the woods and their minds. The underworld thus re-establishes itself as an unknown place of death both in the mind and in the environment. The uncontrolled mind, overwhelmed by basic urges, symbolizes a living hell that could lead to eventual death. The underworld of the obscure wilderness mirrors the classical *katabasis* while allowing Gothic distortions to question the place of human control on the landscape and within the mind. Sleepwalking, then, for both characters, represents another kind of inner psychological Underworld. According to George Toles, “The wilderness is no longer elusive and remote, but hard, dominating, reflecting the transformed nature of Edgar’s quest” (147). After failing to persuade Clithero to return to civilization, Huntly’s own descent into the wilderness mimics Clithero’s. Huntly asks, “Had some mysterious power snatched me from the earth, and cast me, in a moment, into the heart of the wilderness?” (164). Huntly, initially unaware of his own sleepwalking, first attributes his presence in the cave to some mysterious power that has “snatched” him from his home. This power equates to psychological power, an otherworldly force because it represents the emotional component to his fears and desires. The “heart” of the wilderness refers to these emotions *and* the dark pit in the cave he has fallen into “mysteriously.” The cave becomes the “subterranean prison” (202) from which escape seems futile.

Huntly’s narrative includes the hero’s third step, “The Return,” but his displaced heroism falls short of “bringing the runes of wisdom... back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may rebound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds” (Campbell 193). Huntly returns lacking wisdom and

sensitivity, thinking Clithero is misunderstood rather than mentally unstable and suicidal: “It was the instinct of self-preservation that swayed him (Clithero)... He acted in obedience to an impulse which he could not control, nor resist” (87). Raymond Giraud, when looking at late Romantic novels, noticed realism and the heroic ideal unfit in defining “heroism.” He states that the “unheroic” hero “does not dedicate himself to the defense of the people’s cause... and [has] momentary feelings of shame, regret, guilt, and complicity” (232). However, for Huntly, his only guilt is not saving Clithero. MacNeil contends that:

Ultimately Huntly fails at all aspects of the hero cycle as he unsuccessfully occupies multiple positions within it and within the fundamental captivity narrative... His forays into the mythological underworld confuse and weaken him, destroying his own marital and financial future... Huntly is a failed hero, whose effect on his countrymen, and countrywomen, as well as on Native Americans, is destructive. (109)

After the third stage of the hero’s journey, the hero should undergo some transformation of self, learning from his trials. However, Huntly returns to society unstable as his intent to save others turns into a failure in all efforts. With an ascent from the underworld as a point of learning and growth, his chance for heroism crumbles. He remains othered within both the natural and civilized environment, displaced by not learning from his experience. Even though Huntly states, “I was the instrument of their [his family’s] destruction” (186), he does not heed Sarsefield’s warning not to tell his wife about Clithero, hence her miscarriage, or secure himself romantically or financially. Huntly’s failure to learn reinforces the novel as a cautionary tale for the American public: if the

nation is to survive the challenges of a new government it needs good leadership that has learned how to govern freedom without limiting it. Since people feared Huntly as an individual due to his inability to transcend from his “spirit of mistaken benevolence,” (87) Huntly’s narrative reads as a journey of displaced heroism.

An adventure exposes a hero’s identity. Aristotle states in his *Poetics* that a one’s actions reveal character and whether that character exhibits a moral purpose (11-12). Huntly’s choice in implementing certain modes of action in his narrative displays his personal need to tell a unique American hero-tale. Huntly’s heroic journey to the underworld as a descent into the American wilderness hearkens back to the classical *katabasis* and establishes a narrative that looks at the environment as a place of adventure and horror. Arguably America’s first frontier hero, Brown’s *Edgar Huntly* offers a distinct view of an American identity when individuals confront the wilderness of the world and their inner fears. The Gothic lens suggests that these terrors invite a reading of the repressed other as an extension of discovering what the American identity actually consists of in its quest as a new nation with a new government. Inverting the archetypal hero’s journey by consciously and unconsciously traversing in an uncontrolled environment, Huntly embodies a displaced hero who brings destruction rather than enlightenment. Although failing to reach the heroic standards with his unreliable narrative, Huntly represents a common desire to find oneself, however inaccessible his story may read.

CHAPTER IV

DISPLACED IN DEFEAT: BLACK HAWK AS A TRAGIC HERO

In the winter of 1832-33, Black Hawk, a war leader of the Sauk and Fox Tribe, temporarily resided in the Jefferson Barracks, located south of St. Louis. The U.S. military captured Black Hawk, who became a prisoner with other Native Americans after the Black Hawk War, an insurgency in the summer of 1832. After the U.S. Government dispossessed the Sauks of their lands, Black Hawk initially obeyed orders to move out from his homeland and remain peaceful. But when he thought he could regain his tribal lands, he sought to take back what he believed was stolen unlawfully from him and his people. After a few small victories, Black Hawk and his band failed to secure his people's safety, and surrendered. Following his time in the Jefferson Barracks, Black Hawk and the other Native Americans were sent east to Washington D.C. and other eastern cities to witness the growth of American power and to discourage any further Indian uprisings. His forced tour symbolizes a reverse Indian captivity narrative, demonstrating his stance as a tragic hero. As a defeated captive, Black Hawk suddenly became a famous, tragic Indian figure to the American public. With this fame, Black Hawk requested that he record his life's story to explain himself, his actions in the Black Hawk War, and the Sauk people's way of life. His autobiography, *Life of Black Hawk, or Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak*, ultimately challenged the notion of a unified American nation. As a tale of being displaced from his homeland, Black Hawk's autobiography resembles a tragic heroic tale that captured the life of a man who endeavored in his defeat to speak against the injustice inflicted on him and his people.

In examining America through Black Hawk's narrative, this analysis relies not on whether Black Hawk's autobiography is a "true" translation, but rather how his story reflects the tragedy of his heroic life and ultimate displacement of the Sauk and Fox people, and his captivity during his forced tour of the East. As with any translation, issues of authenticity arise. Black Hawk supposedly dictated his story to translator, Antoine LeClaire (French and Potawatomi mixed blood interpreter), who then told his English version to editor John B. Patterson.¹ Black Hawk reportedly was satisfied with the English transcription of the manuscript, but we cannot know exactly what was lost in translation in Patterson's 1833 publication. LeClaire states in the opening of the autobiography that Black Hawk "did call upon me [LeClaire]" and "expressed a great desire to have a History of his Life written" and claimed that he had "no hesitation in pronouncing it strictly correct." As this claim was intended to emphasize the authenticity of Black Hawk's story, we only have LeClaire's word that Black Hawk thought his interpretation of his life was correct.

Black Hawk's story, while autobiographical, remains "the consequence of a collaboration" (Krupat 7). The popularity of the autobiography in American society represented the "rise of the individual" but Black Hawk's autobiography inverts his supposed individuality when he tells his story to an English-speaking American audience with the collaboration of an interpreter and an editor. According to Laura Mielke, Black

¹ According to Kennedy's introduction, Black Hawk knew LeClaire since he had been the government interpreter since 1818. Black Hawk must have trusted LeClaire's translations enough (maybe due to his interracial heritage) to let him assist with his autobiography. LeClaire's then enlisted Patterson, who had served as acting editor of the *Galenian*, to help edit Black Hawk's narrative. Kennedy states that LeClaire's oral English version may have eliminated the importance of Black Hawk's Sauk "rhetoric and native nuances" (xvii).

Hawk's published autobiography answered "the demands of a public still eager to come in contact with the fallen leader" (256). For the purpose of this analysis, Black Hawk's autobiography, especially as a translated and edited manuscript, reflects the further displacement of Black Hawk as a tragic hero regardless of whether, in Larzer Ziff's terms, his Indian voice is "supplied by the ventriloquizing culture of the white" (173). This chapter does not focus on whether this translation of the narrative is literally true, but instead strives to determine how this translation from oral to written, and its issues of language, displace him and his story and reinforce his tragic heroism.

From the instant when Black Hawk orally composed a story about his life, he forged a tale that was his own, while simultaneously encompassing a whole Indian nation's tragic history. As Krupat argues when discussing Native American elegy: "Native American elegiac expression traditionally, orally, and substantially in writing as well offered mourners consolation so that they might overcome their grief and renew their will to sustain communal life" (3). If Black Hawk's autobiography is read as an elegy, his tragic tale gives insight to his readers, Native and non-Native, about his struggles as a Native American and his inability to overcome them. Since his main audience was a white audience, he felt a need to explain his reasons for fighting against the American government. However true his story seems, Black Hawk's displacement throughout his narrative marks him as a hero, albeit a tragic hero, which explains the sorrows that befell him and his band their effort to retain the land that he loved. In the Advertisement, strategically placed before Black Hawk's narrative, Patterson declares, "In his [Black Hawk's] opinion, this is the only method now left him to rescue his little Band." Black Hawk's written story, solidifies his position in American history, securing

the place of his beloved Sauk and Fox nation and showing the horror that plagued his people when Americans pushed westward. According to Wallace, the only power Black Hawk has in his defeat is to become “textualized” (484). This displacement within the text fastens itself to the archetypal hero’s journey of returning to share one’s story, which allows others to follow and learn from it. Since heroism involves returning to tell others, “bringing the runes of wisdom... to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or ten thousand worlds,” then Black Hawk relates his story, but with the knowledge that he will not change Americans’ desire to gain more native land (Campbell 193). Black Hawk’s story lives on, irrespective of the issue of authenticity, as a tragic heroic tale: he achieved fame in defeat and lived on through the printed words of an autobiography written to the American people.

Instead of “renewing” the nation, Black Hawk expresses the nostalgia that embodies the myth of the “noble savage.” Black Hawk, as a warrior, speaks wise words in his narrative and dedicates his story to his conquerors. In his loss, he elucidates how he cannot be the proud warrior of old: “The story of my life is told in the following pages; it is intimately connected... identified with a part of the history of your own: I have therefore, dedicated it to you.” Black Hawk acknowledges that Native American history has intertwined with America’s history in its growth as a new nation. Unfortunately, Black Hawk becomes a hero to the white American public only because of his failure to survive this growth. Newquist writes, “The most extensive cycles of culture-hero stories present characters often defeated and humiliated by human impulses” (87). The clashing of the two cultures over the American landscape was a battle of human beings who saw each other as vastly different from one another. Attempting to claim singular ownership

sparked the discussion of what each culture valued as heroic. The mythic American hero in American literature varies with perspective. Slotkin expresses this fact, declaring that, “The myth-hero embodies or defends the values of his culture in a struggle against the forces which threaten to destroy the people and lay waste the land” (269). Black Hawk, as a Native American, personifies that myth-hero, even if he is not a man of myth.

Unfortunately, white culture saw Black Hawk as a warrior to be feared, but also as one who could be overtaken, indicating that other Native American tribes could also be dispossessed of their homelands to make room for the growing nation.

However, valor lies in Black Hawk’s attempted victory over the American government; but this valor becomes part of a distant past that became romanticized. Benjamin Drake’s 1838 history of the Black Hawk War portrays how Black Hawk’s willingness to tell his story allows him to recover what was past: “Black Hawk may die, his name be forgotten, and the smoke of his wigwam be seen no more, but the ‘Black Hawk war’ will long form a page of deep interest, in the history of this country” (75-76). Black Hawk became a person of interest because of his willingness to fight for what he believed in, which Americans sought to embody, especially in the aftermath of the Revolutionary War. The nostalgia for the “Romantic Indian” stirred the American public into mythologizing his heroism, because like the American frontier hero, Black Hawk continued to fight back. Black Hawk’s place as a hero happened with circumstance, as Walker suggests that “heroes of a narrative already [were] framed by circumstances beyond their control, by a known future in which ‘American’ values will absorb the native past and reprocess it as part of an American Identity” (79). Therefore, in his defeat, “Black Hawk had become a celebrity and his defiance of the government, now under

control, had become a reason for public fascination rather than hate or fear” (Wallace 482). His forced tour of the east only cemented the reality that he no longer could be the warrior chief he once was and must learn to live with that knowledge of his futility. His eastern tour and autobiography “served the emotional needs of a significant portion of the American public” and “created an illusion of a personal connection between the public and the imagined heroic figure of Black Hawk, who became for them a symbol of all the Native Americans” (Trask 302). Black Hawk sought to bring peace to his homeland but only became a well-known Native American figure, displaced after his tragic defeat, humiliated and admired for his inability to keep his people safe from the power of the growing American nation.

Black Hawk begins his autobiography by explaining the origins of Sauk culture, relating stories passed down from generations of Sauk leaders. He explores how the Sauks came to be and how they settled in what was then Sauk territory. He relates how the Sauks met European traders and the importance of the relationships between the early white fur traders and the tribe. Black Hawk’s portrayal of himself referred to his warrior culture in describing his way of life, ultimately explaining his identity as a Sauk warrior. As a young man, Black Hawk showed “courage and bravery” (13) and did not back down from a fight. In his description of his earlier battles, he acknowledged, with great reverence, his ability as a warrior, “Fired with valor and ambition, I rushed furiously upon another [Osage enemy], smote him to the earth with my tomahawk—run my lance through his body—took off his scalp, and returned in triumph to my father!” (13). Timothy Sweet contends that “his self-identification as a warrior and his conduct in the war—depend[ed] on his ability to represent himself as following the way of the Sauk”

(481). As a warrior recounting the tale to LeClaire, Black Hawk follows the oral tradition of Native American storytelling. Storytelling, throughout Native cultures, embodies the sacredness of their beliefs. Bruchac emphasizes that it remains important to treat Native stories with respect because “They are not just ‘Indian’ stories, but beings which are regarded by Native people to be as alive as the breath which carries them from one person to another” (73). Black Hawk knew the power he could wield in telling his tragic story. While the English language will never encapsulate the gravitas of his Sauk language, what his American audience received in translation propelled his status as a figure who valued more than just a victorious fight. In painting himself as a fierce warrior, Black Hawk maintains that he has the authority to speak about his people and his people’s way of life and those listening and reading need to understand how sacred these were to him.

A critical image sacred to him that is repeated throughout the narrative involves the medicine bag, or bundle, given to Black Hawk by his father upon his death. Before Black Hawk left for his forced eastern tour, he gave his medicine bag to a Winnebago chief to keep it safe and to give it to his American captors. This medicine bag symbolized the “soul of the Sac nation” with Black Hawk going on to say that “it never had been dishonored in any battle—take it, it is my life—dearer than life” (86). This medicine is of great importance to Black Hawk as it connects him to his ancestors since a medicine bundle included a “variety of charms, objects or substances that could induce supernatural powers to aid the possessor for the bundle” (Reilly 67). Edward J. Reilly also discusses the role of the medicine bag for Black Hawk’s Sauk war party, stating:

The medicine bag was a bundle, likely made of animal skin, birch bark, or a fabric, containing a variety of objects that possessed spiritual and cultural significance... When going into battle, the keeper of the medicine bag led the band of warriors, holding the bag against his chest. While departing from the battle, he walked last with the bag on his back. This strategy ensured that the medicine bag always remained between the Sauk war party and the enemy. (66)

By giving his medicine bag away to the Americans, Black Hawk metaphorically displaces the Sauk nation as he himself became displaced in his defeat. Symbolically, he has no choice now but to put his life in the hands of the American government because he gave away his protection in battle to his conquerors. In his failed resistance against American occupation of his homeland, he acknowledged that he could not win. By surrendering the medicine bag that has never been “dishonored,” he gave away his lands without giving up his honor and pride as a Sauk warrior because of his respect for his people’s way of life in regards to the bundle. The displacement of his medicine bag also reflects the transferring of Sauk history to the American people, similar to the Native way of passing down stories to future generations. Krupat believes that in later life, Black Hawk found a way to retrieve the medicine bag so that “he would have continued the story of what it means to be a Sauk by passing the medicine bundle on to his son, that the People might live” (110-111). If this were the case, Krupat argues that as Black Hawk’s autobiography showed his desire to pass on his people’s way of life to the American public, so does the medicine bag also establishes the handing down of Sauk way of life to his son for the Sauk nation so “that the People might live” in America’s future.

As Black Hawk tells his tale, he intersperses descriptions of his life as a Sauk, relating legends, myths, and customs that dictated the Sauk culture. Newquist argues “In presenting mythic, historical, and cultural perspectives in narrative form, the book coheres” (81). Black Hawk describes happy memories of times long past and how fruitful and peaceful village life was. His village was situated on the north side of Rock River, east side of the Mississippi River, now Rock Island, Illinois and the surrounding area (parts of Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, and Indiana). He recounts that a mysterious good spirit lived in a cave on this island and was seen often by his people, “He was white, with large wings like a *swan*’s, but ten times larger” (45). While Black Hawk does not reveal the significance of this spirit, Black Hawk’s mention of it gives his audience a chance to peer into his tribal religion and beliefs. He explains how every aspect of Sauk life consists of the land and the spirits that inhabited every crevice of the earth. As this spirit is “like a *swan*,” it has elegance and poise that resemble a swan’s, but is not a swan itself, mirroring the beauty of the area that the spirit occupied. The notion that it had “wings” and was “ten times larger” than a swan indicates the magnitude of its power is beyond that of the actual animal, displaying an otherworldly implication. Black Hawk points out that the good spirit had disappeared since the white men built a fort, possibly scaring the spirit from this sacred place: “But the noise of the fort has since driven him away, and no doubt a *bad spirit* has taken his place” (45). Assuming that a bad spirit took over indicates that there is now an evil force at work brought on by the settlers’ invasion and destruction, disrupting the benign otherworldly forces at work throughout native lands. The disappearance of this spirit reflects the harm done to the land by American people, who Black Hawk believes have no reverence for the land.

After he saw establishments out east, he states, “I reflected upon the ingratitude of the whites, when I saw their fine houses, rich harvests, and every thing desirable around them” (87). He explains how gratitude for the land and its contents remains of the utmost importance in Sauk culture: “We thank the Great Spirit for all the benefits he has conferred upon us. For myself, I never take a drink of water from a spring, without being mindful of his goodness” (50). Treating the land as a living entity was an aspect of the traditional wisdom of Native Americans that fed into many tribal religions and philosophies. According to Vine Deloria Jr.:

The structure of [American Indian] religions traditions is taken directly from the world around them, from their relationships with other forms of life... The places where revelations were experienced were remembered and set aside as locations where, through rituals and ceremonials, the people could once again communicate with the spirits. (65-66)

Furthermore, Deloria Jr. mentions that the lands sacredness “does not depend on human occupancy but on the stories that describe the revelation that enabled human beings to experience the holiness there” (278). Even the way Black Hawk relates how the corn first came paints a broader picture of how Sauks observe their ties with the land. When explaining the corn origin myth, he evokes the voice of storyteller, beginning the tale with, “According to tradition, handed down to our people” (50). Black Hawk’s storytelling tone and delivery to describe his way of life read tragically when he reminds his audience that his village “had stood for more than a hundred years, during all which time we were the undisputed possessors of the valley” (46). His attempt to protect his people’s way of life on the land that they have possessed “undisputed,” positions Black

Hawk as a tragic hero, making his narrative a poignant afterthought of a war he could not win.

Black Hawk's narrative speaks to his heroic status, not because the Advertisement declared that he lived the "life of a Hero," but rather in his decision to defend his people and his way of life at all costs. As he declares in the Dedication to General Atkinson:

I am now an obscure member of a nation, that formerly honored and respected my opinions. The path to glory is rough, and many gloomy hours obscure it. May the Great Spirit shed light on your's—and that you may never experience the humility that the power of the American government has reduced me to... who, in his native forests, was once as proud and bold as yourself.

In the 1833 edition of the narrative, there is a transcription of this dedication in the Sauk language precedes the English translation as a way to further authenticate Black Hawk's sorrowful words. Whether this was effective or not, the Sauk transcription separates the American audience even further from Black Hawk culturally. Although it displaces Black Hawk's voice further, it is a reminder that only through the lens of the editor does an English-speaking audience get to read an "authentic" Indian autobiography (Scheckel 113). Despite this reminder, the English text reveals to a downtrodden heroic figure surrendering his life's story with his own words. Krupat points out that while "... victory is the enabling condition of western autobiography, defeat is the enabling condition of Indian autobiography" (48). Walker elaborates on this notion, stating that Black Hawk's narrative "reveals that national narrative is often simply a tale told by the winners, not in itself a justification for the displacement and murder of vast numbers of indigenous people over three centuries" (83). Furthermore, Walker suggests that Black Hawk's

autobiography “remains a document of fierce moral (rather than merely personal) outrage” (71). The only stories that American society may have wanted to listen to are ones of Indian defeat because it emphasizes and reinforces the dominant society as winners, regardless of the successful attempts of other Native tribes against the American government. In regards to retelling history from the defeated side, Neil Schmitz mentions that Black Hawk “speaks to a History that is not American History... In captive utterance” (4-5). While Native American history is the quintessential history of America that has intertwined with European-American history, Black Hawk’s account of the Black Hawk War was not seen as recognizable history until he dictated his autobiography. Black Hawk concedes that the only reason he is even allowed to dictate a narrative of his life is because of his “captive” and conquered status. Black Hawk still respects his conqueror, Atkinson, asking the Great Spirit to bless Atkinson’s life and maintain his standing as a noble individual. In subdued language, a tinge of sadness haunts these words as Black Hawk refers to the American government “reducing” him to nothing but a shadow of obscurity though he once boldly defied the U.S. Military. He uses “obscure” again, referring to his own life’s path to warrior pride and glory, acknowledging that his path ended in “humility” and tragedy. Displaced from his “native forests,” Black Hawk solemnly tells his version of the Black Hawk War to “vindicate my character from misrepresentation.” With President Andrew Jackson and the U.S. government coming to the consensus that Black Hawk attacked the U.S. army and abrogated the signed Treaty of 1804, Black Hawk holds firm to his main reason for fighting the white army, stating, “my object was not war” (67). In his dedication to General Atkinson, Black Hawk does not elaborate how he, as a Sauk, was wronged, but alludes to how the displacement from

his homeland initiates a conversation about the struggles of living in a country based on liberty and justice for all citizens. He does not want Atkinson to experience the “humility” that he has now been “reduced” to, highlighting the problem of America’s structure of freedom. He then allows his narrative to clarify how he was wronged by a government that claimed his lands as their own. Black Hawk essentially displaces his anger towards the general American public in his last opportunity to claim a small amount of justice as a Sauk warrior. Scheckel asserts, “Black Hawk speaks with defiance even as he acquiesces in defeat and makes claims for equality even as he confirms his status as a humbled, vanquished foe” (113). Black Hawk channeled his warrior spirit when dictating his narrative to LeClaire and Patterson, showing that in his defeat, his voice, albeit displaced through writing, can remain his lasting heroic legacy to those who read his autobiography.

In order to “vindicate” his character, Black Hawk conveyed his convictions while pondering the differences of morality between the whites and the Indians:

I am of opinion, that so far as we have *reason*, we have a right to use it, in determining what is right or wrong; and should pursue that path which we believe to be right—believing, that ‘whatever is, is right’ ... We are *nothing* compared to His power, and we feel and know it...I have no faith in their [white man’s] paths—but believe that every man must make his own path. (49)

As an old man looking back at his life, Black Hawk reveals the wisdom that developed from living with the choices he has made as a triumphant warrior and fallen leader. Since defeat allowed him to dictate his life’s story, he now has the opportunity to speak his mind on issues that may digress from his autobiography, yet enhance his character as an

ordinary man who lived an unforgettable life. His chance elaboration on the topics of “reason” and “right or wrong” displays Black Hawk as a man who sought to understand the motive behind the government’s displacement of his people. The romantic and idealistic idea that, according to Newquist, involves how each person is “in a state of becoming,” cycles back to the notion of how the Native American outlook upholds an open belief system that accepts others in all walks of life; this challenges the majority of western society’s limiting views (87). As Newquist elaborates, Black Hawk says that “True knowledge” is “reached by many paths, and one should choose the paths that one knows how to follow best” (83). The desire to “make his own path” and the belief that everyone, even the white man, should follow their path as well, makes Black Hawk heroic because he has arrived at the stage of awareness and understanding required for all heroes.

With his autobiography, Black Hawk secured his place among the tragic heroes in history and literature. Gordon M. Sayre writes:

Indian leaders of wars of resistance against European invaders were the tragic heroes of America. The Indian leaders’ nobility, ambition, and courage as well as their flaws and their demises were portrayed...the catharsis of this Indian tragedy...is the resolution of a wrenching moral and political ambivalence with regard to the Indian hero. (5-7)

Aristotle discusses *catharsis* in his *Poetics* (12) as well as *hamartia*, or tragic flaw that accompanies the character of a tragic hero (24). Krupat, in *For Those Who Come After*, states that the narrative of an Indian hero “replicates the general ideology of the period formally by structuring that life as a story of decline and fall...as tragedy” (49). In

analyzing the fall of the tragic hero, McCollom discusses four typical situations. Black Hawk's autobiography fits in well with two of these. In the third situation, "The hero is destroyed not because of his own fault but through fate or external evil" (53). Here, McCollom cites Oedipus, who as a tragic hero cannot escape his fate as a doomed man, not too good or too bad but rather, "exceedingly human" (53). Black Hawk represents a human being with flaws and virtues, "exceedingly human" when having to confront the unfortunate circumstance regarding the displacement of his tribe and his eastern tour. The fourth situation concludes, "The hero's action is guilty from one point of view and innocent from another" (53). Innocent or guilty, the hero has to pursue what he started, and for Black Hawk, that was to defend himself and battle against the military force that believed him and his British Band guilty of breaking the treaty. As McCollum states, the hero experiences "'existential' anxiety and dread. But he chooses and acts" (54). Thus, the choices of Black Hawk, regardless of whether they were noble or right, caused his downfall. Nichols, in *Black Hawk and the Warriors' Path*, ends his analysis stating that Black Hawk was a leader who based his actions on his strong Sauk traditions in the wave of changing, turbulent times. Black Hawk's belief that Indians dealt with others "honorably" prompted his defeat because he trusted that everyone remained honest and true (158-59). In his defense, Black Hawk attempted to follow this "honorable" path to save his innocent people and return to the land they already owned; however, it resulted in their destruction.

The Sauks' failure to claim their homeland reads as an elegiac homage to a past that Black Hawk can never reclaim. Black Hawk, in his sadness, exclaims, "But, how different is our situation now, from what it was in those days! Then were we as happy as

the buffalo on the plains—but now, we are as miserable as the hungry, howling wolf in the prairie!” (46). Black Hawk’s lament of what he has known from “those days” gone by reaffirms his tragic heroism when he reflects on times of happiness, when buffalo roamed aplenty on the prairie. Ensuing annihilation of the buffalo has been widely linked to the near extermination of the Native American’s way of life. Black Hawk’s reference to the happiness of the “buffalo on the plains,” speaks to an important food source for Native American survival. Black Hawk’s elegiac story consequently extends to his need to cling to his identity as a Sauk even with U.S. governmental policies that declared his country no longer belonged to him. In trying to hold his position as a warrior leader, Black Hawk claims his right to speak as a Sauk, which remains a moving incident in the text. During negotiations in which Black Hawk remained unwilling to depart from his village, General Gaines asked repeatedly, “Who is *Black Hawk*? Who is *Black Hawk*?” and Black Hawk responded with an ardent reply, “I am a *Sac*! My forefather was a SAC! And all the nations call me a SAC!!” (65). This self-identification, according to Krupat, involves the “synecdochic” mode in which “one’s identity is foremost a matter of the larger whole or collectivity to which one belongs” (*That the People Might Live* 109). Declaring himself as a Sauk descended from a long line of Sauks, Black Hawk identifies his ties with the land of the Sauk tribe, underscoring his love for his homeland and his reasons for defending all that he holds dear.

Black Hawk’s identity connects to the Sauk land, which for him is more than property to own and live on but rather a sacred bond with the land. Vine Deloria Jr. speaks on the sacredness of the land to many Native American tribes since “American Indians hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning” (61). So

subsequently the land in relationship to the Sauks goes back to an aspect of Native tribal practices which are, “actually complexes of attitudes, beliefs, and practices fine-tuned to harmonize with the lands on which the people live” (Deloria Jr. 69). However, the Sauks were forced from their tribal homes by the Jacksonian policy of Indian displacement to create more land space due to American expansion, disregarding the Native American’s reverence for the sacredness of their land. The American government signed treaties with Native tribes as tribal chiefs were coerced to cede their ancestral homes for a very small fee. President Jackson’s campaign of Indian removal in 1830 was designated to “protect” eastern tribes and to prevent them from standing against American westward expansion by placing them west of the Mississippi (Kennedy ix). The Indian Removal act of 1830 did not authorize Jackson to deny Indian treaty rights in the removal process. However, according to Alfred A. Cave, Jackson’s abuse of power went against the initial act and hurt the Native people in their forced removal from their homelands:

By disregarding the obligations placed upon him by legislation providing for protection of Indian property, by denying the legitimacy of prior federal treaty commitments to Indian nations, by ignoring the promises written into his own removal treaties, and by tacitly encouraging the intimidation and dispossession of Indians, Jackson transformed the voluntary removal program authorized by Congress into a coerced removal sanctioned by the White House. (1353)

Jackson essentially wanted more land for the American people and his efforts were not much more than an illegal land grab. However, for Black Hawk, the land was more revered. Echoing the principles of many Native peoples, Black Hawk explains how the

land holds the identity of the people working on it, reflecting a spiritual relationship with “The Great Spirit”:

My reason teaches me that *land cannot be sold*. The Great Spirit gave it to his children to live upon, and cultivate, as far as is necessary for their subsistence; and so long as they occupy and cultivate it, they have the right to the soil—but if they voluntarily leave it, then any other people have a right to settle upon it.

Nothing can be sold. (56)

The view that “land cannot be sold” shows Black Hawk’s disdain toward the white attitude of land ownership. As he philosophizes on the reverence he places on the earth, he critiques the morals of white culture and how white American power revolved around “land ownership” and wealth. Scott L. Pratt states that, for Black Hawk, “displacement of the Sauk and Fox—and the displacement of the whites... was to reassert meaning in terms of place where ‘place’ is not land acquired by purchase or conquest, but is... a process of understanding things... through a given land” (12). The impulse to “reassert meaning” through “a given land” complicates the question of who belongs in America. With the rise of colonization and land disputes in Europe, many Europeans sought a new existence in America because of the idyllic portrayal of the American landscape romantically depicted in popular travel narratives, such as the writings of Coleridge and Southey in their “Pantisocracy,” the escape from British tyranny to an exotic paradise that is America to live a free existence (McKusick 107). Those displaced by their own country, either by religion or disputed land ownership, looked to America as an opportunity to start again. However, those emigrating to America displaced the Native Americans already living on the land. By endeavoring to resist the growing power of

American colonization, Native Americans became stigmatized, giving white Americans a reason to destroy and displace tribes who, centuries earlier, cemented their identity within the American landscape. Black Hawk even questions, “Why did the Great Spirit ever send the whites to this island, to drive us from our homes, and introduce among us *poisonous liquors, disease and death*? They should have remained on the island where the Great Spirit first placed them” (23). The American land became a place of dispute and a liminal space for multiple cultures, each struggling to establish a solid identity with the same American land. The Native people’s identity was never lost, but it has been challenged since European arrival.

The Sauks, as well as many other Native American tribes, did not “voluntarily” leave their homes. Tribal leaders touched the quill, to signify that they consented to giving away their lands. Touching the quill was the conquering tool of “civilized” white society, since most native tribes were oral cultures with no written language, releasing their affiliation with the land by a signature that they did not write. And if tribes refused, as in the case of Black Hawk, the American government viewed the tribe as a hostile force that needed to be subdued. Realizing that he could no longer live on the land which housed “the bones of our people” (56), Black Hawk reluctantly signed the document that reinforced the Treaty of 1804: “I touched the goose quill to the treaty—not knowing, however, that, by that act, I consented to give away my village” (44). The suspicious Treaty of St. Louis in 1804, signed by four or five drunken representatives (according to Quahsquame, a Sauk chief) of the Sauk and Fox Tribe, ceded their lands to the American government for an annuity (Jung 20). Traditionally, negotiation of land cession treaties involved the entire leadership of a tribe, not the whim of drunken delegates who were not

representatives of the tribe (20). Unfortunately, the Sauk and Fox tribe did not understand that this treaty ceded a majority of their land to the United States when President Jackson enforced the cessation of Indian lands. Seething at this injustice, Black Hawk takes the time in his narrative to question his white audience on the justification of his people's displacement: "I will leave it to the people of the United States to say, whether our nation was properly represented in this treaty? Or whether we received a fair compensation for the extent of the country ceded by those *four* individuals?" (19). This erroneous treaty, along with the encroaching white population, pressured Black Hawk to start on the war path as his yearning to return to the lands that housed "the bones of our people" pushed him to try to reclaim his homeland.

As with many recurring patterns within history, Black Hawk's attempt to regain former Sauk land ended in bloodshed. The Black Hawk War consisted of multiple skirmishes between Sauk warriors and the military forces plus the Illinois volunteer militia. The British Band was successful for a time, and even managed to avoid the soldiers. But when Black Hawk's band did not receive promised aid from the other Native nations and the British, Black Hawk decided to discontinue fighting and to return to the Iowa side of the Mississippi River. Unfortunately, the U.S. military hunted down Black Hawk and his band, and massacred many members of his tribe, including women and children, and took Black Hawk prisoner. Black Hawk surrendered to a U.S. Indian agent but the U.S. did not immediately grant his freedom. Black Hawk initially thought that he would be put to death, stating, "I intended to give myself up to the American war chief, and *die*, if the Great Spirit saw proper" (86). As mentioned earlier in this analysis, Black Hawk and some of his fellow braves were confined in the Jefferson Barracks and

then taken on a forced tour of the eastern cities. At this time, artists such as George Catlin and Robert Sully captured Black Hawk's image as he became "an object of study, a figure of tragic dignity" (Kennedy xiv). In the summer of 1833, Black Hawk became subject to public exhibition during his eastern tour, which catapulted him to celebrity status, "commodified and symbolically consumed by the American public" (Helton 498). The Americans consumed the image of Black Hawk and Scheckel argues that he represented "the doomed chief—noble in his wish to die fighting, unchangeable in his primitive violence, pathetic in hopeless resistance to his inevitable fate—... was precisely the kind of Indian Americans needed to see... in order to justify American Indian policy" (110). As an American captive, Black Hawk was a specimen, showcasing the tragedy of his doomed people, and reinforcing the image of the vanishing Indian, removed from the American landscape.

Black Hawk was taken from his homeland and displaced in a new environment. His eastern tour and autobiography illustrate a reverse captivity narrative. Most captivity narratives depict white settlers as innocent victims of Indian cruelty, and Indians as destroying American civilization by their savagery against the untainted Christian citizens of the United States. As mentioned in the first chapter, in female captivity narratives, the redeeming of the captive and her return to civilized society represent the victorious white society prevailing against the hostile Indian tribes. Of course some captives chose to never return, and were completely displaced into a new culture and environment. Since with Black Hawk the American people took an Indian captive, the reverse captivity inverts the displacement: native culture is displaced onto the civilized structure of American society. Scheckel points out that "Black Hawk, as spectacle, served

as a mirror in which Americans could see a positive reflection of themselves... The exhibition of a conquered enemy... reflect[ed] back upon the conqueror a vision of his own strength, given that the former threat has become a measure of the power that has triumphed over it” (108-09). As the Native Americans, in their rituals of captivity, personified that “former threat,” the satisfaction of the American public to have a defeated Indian captive reassured them encouraged them and to believe that Native Americans were no longer an enemy to be feared, but rather an adversary that could be expelled and displaced.

While displaced physically as a national leader and literally as an American captive, Black Hawk is also displaced emotionally. In “The Captive as Celebrity” Kathryn Derounian-Stodola states that “the way to captive celebrity is almost always accidental fame, since a captive’s reputation is consolidated as a result of having been taken hostage” (69). This “accidental fame” came at the cost of Black Hawk’s pride even as he held on to his honor: “I felt the humiliation of my situation; a little while before, I had been the leader of my braves, now I was a prisoner of war! but had surrendered myself” (88). His descending movement from leader to captive displaces his warrior identity and reinforces his tragic heroism. Helton also mentions that while Black Hawk and his group were captives, they had a “special mobility” (502). Throughout his captivity, Black Hawk claimed that he was treated with kindness, “I feel grateful to the whites for the kind manner they treated me and my party, whilst travelling among them...the tomahawk is buried forever” (98). With this friendly treatment came the understanding that he would not take up arms against the United States and that he must acknowledge his place in the new America. Jackson, while attempting to further disgrace

Black Hawk and demoralize him with a display of booming American industry, made Black Hawk a celebrity whose “image was incorporated into the iconography of American national identity” (Walker 77). The kindness offered to him came at the behest of President Jackson who asked Black Hawk what was the “*cause* of...going to war against his white children” (91). Black Hawk did not have the words to say to President Jackson, even with the interpreter around, so he kept silent. Arguably, his autobiography was his chance to speak up against the wrongs done to his people when he failed to do so in front of the President.

However, Jackson’s attempt to demoralize Black Hawk succeeded. Black Hawk was awed by the many “wonderful sights,” but not overwhelmed by the vastness of civilization. He was more saddened by the fact that his home was disappearing. Black Hawk laments, “Having been accustomed, throughout a long life, to roam the forests o’er—to go and come at liberty—confinement, and under such circumstances, could not be less than torture!” (88). For Black Hawk to live confined in the nation that founded itself on liberty heightens the irony of this statement. Like Edgar Huntly’s underworld wilderness description in Chapter three, the “forests” or wilderness Black Hawk loved to “roam” was seen as a hell or underworld for the white American public because unknown dangers lurked there outside civilized society. However, in his reverse captivity, Black Hawk’s descent to captive status was a descent to his personal underworld. Wallace describes Black Hawk’s tour of the eastern cities as “some sort of hell which he has to move deeper and deeper into before he can emerge...emerges a defeated man, however defiant, whose way of life has been destroyed” (488). Black Hawk observes his new

environment and tries to understand the need for the Americans to try to gain more than the vastness of civilization that they already had:

...I surveyed the country that had cost us so much trouble, anxiety, and blood, and that now caused me to be a prisoner of war...and recollected that all this land had been ours, for which me and my people had never received a dollar, and that the whites were not satisfied until they took our village and our grave-yards from us, and removed us across the Mississippi. (87)

Satisfied with being in his forest home, it baffles him how there was this desire for more. He realizes that his people were compensated unjustly, his lands stolen, and his people displaced. His reflections were then dictated and written down, leaving a lasting legacy on American history and essentially, American identity.

Black Hawk lived the remainder of his life in Iowa by the Des Moines River. At the end of his narrative, he states, "I am now done. A few more moons, and I must follow my father to the shades! May the Great Spirit keep our people and the whites always at peace—it is the sincere wish of BLACK HAWK" (98). His narrative was a catharsis for his tragic life, displaying how in mourning the displacement of his nation, he can leave something that will live on after he has gone. He finishes his narrative with the invocation of ending a story, closing his tale with the declaration of how he is "now done." Issues of authenticity and translation may hinder our understanding of Black Hawk's message. However, even through this displacement in language, Black Hawk became a historic figure that represented the destructive consequences of constructing a unified American identity. In establishing this cohesive national identity, the displacement of native tribes marred America's stance on justice for all and contradicted the inclusion of all peoples.

As an outside force going against the grain of the growing American civilized society, Black Hawk ventured to retain his identity as a Sauk leader and warrior who defended the ancestral lands of his forefathers. His failure to do so ended in the tragedy of his people and transformed him into a tragic Native American hero. Displaced from his home and as a leader of the Sauk and Fox, Black Hawk surrendered his honor to the power of the United States government which humiliated Black Hawk and overemphasized its power in his defeat, which made him famous in the eyes of the American public. When dictating his life's narrative, Black Hawk's displaced heroism triumphs as a poignant account of his last stand against his conquerors, an oral legacy recorded in the words of his victors, but expressed through the voice of a tragic hero.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Displaced heroism in women's Indian captivity narratives, *Edgar Huntly*, and *Life of Black Hawk*, not only encapsulates the heroic journey of each character, but also gives insight to America as growing nation. The challenges these heroes faced in their environment coexist with the hardships the Native Americans faced when expelled from this same environment, creating conflict within a solid American identity. Clarissa Pinkola Estés states in her introduction of *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, "Fairy tales, myths, and stories provide understandings which sharpen our sight so that we can pick out and pick up the path left by wildish nature...the tracks we all are following are those of the wild and innate instinctual Self" (4-5). While a psychoanalysis of the wild woman archetype may not apply to *Edgar Huntly* or *Black Hawk*, the environment in which each of these heroes was displaced gives insight to knowing that sense of self when encountering the trials from their environmental displacement. Since the American identity focused on the freedom of the individual who must be self-reliant in order to survive the perils of the wild American landscape, this innate sense of self became a powerful symbol of America's idea of heroism.

Women's Indian captivity narratives exposed this fear of the American wilderness as innocent white women were stolen by hostile Indian forces who were seen as destructive to America's growing civilized society. The fear and horror these women faced in being taken from their families and being transculturated into a new culture and environment revealed each woman's determination and strength of will to survive in a

way that challenged and supported their identities as women. The “return” for these women represented their willingness to understand the world around them and adapt amid their struggles. Similarities between European Fairytales and these captivity narratives highlighted how these women became aware of their sense of self to overcome their predicament.

Conversely, Edgar Huntly failed to transcend into awareness or understanding because he became a destructive force, harming others and his environment for the sake of his own “heroic cause.” Unreliable in his narrative, Huntly saw the wilderness as his home that became his hell, not willing to see past the heroic character he forged for himself in his writing. He believed he conquered the wilderness and his Indian foes; but his mental and physical displacement only described his position within an uncontrolled environment that reflected his psychological turmoil. He could not come to terms with this displacement so he constructed a heroic sense of self that inverted the archetypal hero and disqualified him as a heroic individual, unable to learn from his mistakes.

However, as a man who acknowledged his errors, Black Hawk transformed into a hero who became famous for his tragic life story and his failure to regain the lands of his people. He believed standing up against the American government would be the spark that could prevent the U.S. military forces from displacing his people further. But his courageous attempt to reclaim his homeland only ended in his defeat and his captivity. Black Hawk’s sense of self as a Sauk warrior was tied with the lands of his forefathers; with that taken away from him, Black Hawk had to accept his displacement with defeat. With his new identity as a tragic Native American hero, he was able to dictate an

autobiography and tell his side of the Black Hawk war as his attempt to salvage what was left of his displaced Sauk and Fox nation.

These stories of heroic displacement may give insight to America as a growing nation, but when establishing an innate sense of self, the theme of displaced heroism can have relevance in many other hero tales throughout all cultures and communities. I hope to establish an extended view of the hero's journey with this understanding of displacement to encompass a broader application to oral tales and written literature. Stories are essential to human life. Universal truths told through many stories connect individuals regardless of race, gender, or culture. Stories about heroism speak to a desired past of noble deeds and virtuous character. However, I suggest that heroism can also be seen through people's exposure to everyday life. Even though everyday life remains different for everyone, people relate trials endured by the characters of hero stories. The intriguing theme of heroism applies to the power of narrative and can be understood cross culturally. Throughout time, people have been displaced and have had to learn how to handle the consequences of said displacement. Ultimately, we want to know how a story ends. At a tale's conclusion, the essence of the story sinks into our psyche unconsciously. With stories resonating in our core as individuals, we can see the meaning behind these important hero tales and perceive how we can live life to the fullest and be the hero within our own life stories, even amid constant displacement.

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