

**AMERICAN AS PERPETUAL TRAVELER: A STUDY OF
THE ONGOING PROJECT OF BUILDING AMERICAN CONSCIOUSNESS
IN AMERICAN TRAVEL WRITING**

**Thesis Submitted to the University of Calicut
for the award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English**

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This is to certify that the thesis titled “**American as Perpetual Traveler: A Study of the Ongoing Project of Building American Consciousness in American Travel Writing**” is a bonafide record of studies and research carried out by Ms. Sandra Juliet Jose under my supervision and submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English. To the best of my knowledge this research work has not previously formed the basis of award for any degree, diploma, fellowship or any other similar title. Its critical evaluation represents the independent work on the part of the candidate and its originality of the study has been ascertained with the help of University-approved software for plagiarism-check.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis titled “**American as Perpetual Traveler: A Study of the Ongoing Project of Building American Consciousness in American Travel Writing**” submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is an authentic record of analysis and bonafide research carried out by me under the guidance of Dr. Davees C.J., Associate Professor (Retd.) as my Research Supervisor at the Research and Postgraduate Department of English, St. Thomas’ College (Autonomous), Thrissur. I also declare that no part of this work has been submitted or published elsewhere for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship or any such title, or recognition. I affirm that the originality of the study has been ascertained with the help of University-approved software for plagiarism-check.

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This is to certify that all the suggestions recommended by the adjudicators of PhD thesis of Ms. Sandra Juliet Jose ((U.O. No.34717/RESEARCH-B-ASST-4/2014/CU dated 08.07.2014) have been incorporated and implemented in the thesis entitled “American as Perpetual Traveler: A Study of the Ongoing Project of Building American Consciousness in American Travel Writing”. The content of the CD is the same as in the hardcopy.

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SANDRA JULIET JOSE

A NOTE ON DOCUMENTATION

I would like to acknowledge that the documentation in the thesis is prepared in accordance with the style format suggested by *MLA Handbook* (9th Edition). The thesis has followed American spellings since the thesis is a study of American travel writing and most of the critical sources referred to in this thesis themselves follow American spellings. However, while quoting from the original texts, the grammatical usages and spellings found in the original sources are faithfully retained.

ABSTRACT

The thesis titled “American as Perpetual Traveler: A Study on the Ongoing Project of Building American Consciousness in American Travel Writing” examines the evolving nature of American consciousness as reflected in travel literature. Through the analysis of ten seminal travel books spanning four centuries—from Thomas Harriot’s 1588 account to Edmund White’s 1980 narrative—this study provides a comprehensive exploration of how American identity has been continuously constructed and redefined. Utilizing qualitative content analysis and comparative literary analysis, alongside interdisciplinary frameworks such as postcolonialism, feminism, and critical race theory, the thesis underscores the intricate interplay between narrative strategies and the broader socio-political contexts that inform them. The selected works encompass a diverse range of perspectives, including early explorers, European settlers, women travelers, African Americans, nationalist white Americans, and a gay writer. The thesis investigates six key dimensions of consciousness—historical, spiritual, racial, gender, geographical, and narrative—demonstrating how each has evolved and adapted to the socio-cultural demands of their respective periods. The findings reveal that American consciousness is in a perpetual state of flux, and the study also emphasizes the intersectionality within American consciousness, the continuity and change in thematic elements, and the impact of globalization, Puritan legacies, gendered perspectives, and racial dynamics on the national narrative. This research highlights the significance of travel literature as not only a documentation of physical journeys but also as a critical discourse engaging with and contributing to American consciousness. This process of becoming and rebecoming American underscores the thesis that the construction of American identity is an ongoing project, ever responsive to the changing landscape of American life.

Keywords: Travel Literature, American Consciousness, Narrative Strategies, Puritan, Globalization.

അബ്സ്ട്രാക്റ്റ്

“അമേരിക്കൻ എന്ന ശാശ്വത സഞ്ചാരി : അമേരിക്കൻ സഞ്ചാര സാഹിത്യത്തിൽ അമേരിക്കൻ അവബോധം കെട്ടിപ്പടുക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള പരിണാമ പദ്ധതിയെ കുറിച്ചുള്ള പഠനം” എന്ന തലക്കെട്ടിലുള്ള ഈ തീസിസ്, യാത്രാ സാഹിത്യത്തിൽ പ്രതിഫലിക്കുന്ന അമേരിക്കൻ അവബോധത്തിന്റെ വികസിതസ്വഭാവം പരിശോധിക്കുന്നു. നാലു നൂറ്റാണ്ടു കൾ നീണ്ടു നിൽക്കുന്ന പത്ത് സുപ്രധാന യാത്രാ പുസ്തകങ്ങളുടെ വിശകലനത്തിലൂടെ - തോമസ് ഹാരിയറ്റിന്റെ 1588 ലെ കൃതി മുതൽ എഡ്മണ്ട് വൈറ്റിന്റെ 1980 ലെ ആഖ്യാനം വരെ - ഈ പഠനം അമേരിക്കൻ ഐഡന്റിറ്റി തുടർച്ചയായി എങ്ങനെ നിർമ്മിക്കപ്പെടുകയും പുനർനിർവ്വചിക്കപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്തു എന്നതിന്റെ സമഗ്രമായ പര്യവേഷണം നൽകുന്നു. പോസ്റ്റ് കൊളോണിയലിസം, ഫെമിനിസം, ക്രിട്ടിക്കൽ വംശസിദ്ധാന്തം തുടങ്ങിയ ഇന്റർ ഡിസിപ്ലിനറി ചട്ടക്കൂടുകൾക്കൊപ്പം ഗുണപരമായ ഉള്ളടക്ക വിശകലനവും താരതമ്യ സാഹിത്യ വിശകലനവും ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തി, ആഖ്യാന തന്ത്രങ്ങളും അവയെ അറിയിക്കുന്ന വിശാലമായ സാമൂഹിക-രാഷ്ട്രീയ സന്ദർഭങ്ങളും തമ്മിലുള്ള സങ്കീർണ്ണമായ അന്തർധാര തീസിസ് അടിവരയിടുന്നു. തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്ത കൃതികളിൽ ആദ്യകാല പര്യവേക്ഷകർ, യൂറോപ്യൻ കുടിയേറ്റക്കാർ, സ്ത്രീ സഞ്ചാരികൾ, ആഫ്രിക്കൻ അമേരിക്കക്കാർ, ദേശീയവാദികളായ ‘വെളുത്ത’ അമേരിക്കക്കാർ, ഒരു സ്വവർഗ്ഗാനുരാഗ എഴുത്തുകാരൻ എന്നിവരുൾപ്പെടെ വൈവിധ്യമാർന്ന കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുകൾ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്നു. ചരിത്രപരം, ആത്മീയം, വംശീയം, ലിംഗഭേദം, ഭൂമിശാസ്ത്രപരം, ആഖ്യാനം എന്നിങ്ങനെ ബോധത്തിന്റെ ആറ് പ്രധാന മാനങ്ങൾ പ്രബന്ധം അന്വേഷിക്കുന്നു - ഓരോന്നും അവരവരുടെ കാലഘട്ടങ്ങളിലെ സാമൂഹിക - സാംസ്കാരിക ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്കനുസരിച്ച് എങ്ങനെ വികസിക്കുകയും പൊരുത്തപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്തുവെന്ന് തെളിയിക്കുന്നു. അമേരിക്കൻ ബോധം ശാശ്വതമായ ഒരു പ്രവാഹത്തിലാണെന്ന് ഈ ഗവേഷണത്തിന്റെ കണ്ടെത്തലുകൾ വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. കൂടാതെ അമേരിക്കൻ ബോധത്തിനുള്ളിലെ വിഭജനം, പ്രമേയ ഘടകങ്ങളിലെ തുടർച്ചയും മാറ്റവും, ആഗോളവൽക്കരണം, പ്യൂരിറ്റൻ പൈതൃകങ്ങൾ, ലിംഗപരമായ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുകൾ, വംശീയ ചലനാത്മകത എന്നിവയുടെ സ്വാധീനവും പഠനം ഊന്നിപ്പറയുന്നു. ഈ ഗവേഷണം യാത്രകളുടെ ഒരു ഡോക്യുമെന്റേഷൻ മാത്രമല്ല, അമേരിക്കൻ അവബോധവുമായി ഇടപഴകുന്നതും സംഭാവന ചെയ്യുന്നതുമായ ഒരു വിമർശനാത്മക വ്യവഹാരം എന്ന നിലയിൽ യാത്രാ സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ പ്രാധാന്യം എടുത്തു കാണിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. അമേരിക്കൻ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ മാറിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഭൂപ്രകൃതിയോട് എപ്പോഴും പ്രതികരിക്കുന്ന, അമേരിക്കൻ ഐഡന്റിറ്റിയുടെ നിർമ്മാണം തുടർച്ചയായി നടന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഒരു പ്രോജക്റ്റ് ആണ് എന്ന പ്രബന്ധത്തിന് അടിവരയിടുന്നത് അമേരിക്കക്കാരനാകുകയും ആ സ്വത്വം തുടർച്ചയായി പുനഃസ്ഥാപിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന ഈ പ്രക്രിയയാണ്.

കീവേഡുകൾ: യാത്രാ സാഹിത്യം, അമേരിക്കൻ ബോധം, ആഖ്യാന തന്ത്രങ്ങൾ, പ്യൂരിറ്റൻ, ആഗോളവൽക്കരണം.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in the thesis entitled “**American as Perpetual Traveler: A Study of the Ongoing Project of Building American Consciousness in American Travel Writing**” is based on the original work done by me under the guidance of Dr Davees C.J. and has not been included in any other thesis submitted previously for the award of any degree. The contents of the thesis are undergone plagiarism check using iThenticate software at C.H.M.K. Library , University of Calicut, and the similarity index found within the permissible limit. I also declare that the thesis is free from AI generated contents.

Signature :

Name of the scholar :

Signature :

Name of the Supervising teacher :

Place: Thrissur

Date: 14/03/2025

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Yet all experience is an arch wherethro’
Gleams that untravell’d world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move”
(Tennyson, lines 19-21)

Throughout the annals of history, the vibrant tapestry of nations unfolds, woven with the intricate threads of travel. A journey from one place to another has been a fundamental aspect of human existence. The Abrahamic era, circa 2000 BCE, witnessed nomadic tribes embarking on a transformative odyssey from the ancient city of Ur in Mesopotamia, present-day Iraq, towards the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Remarkably, even after four millennia have passed, we continue to observe people across the Middle East and various other regions embracing ‘nomadic’ lifestyles, embarking on journeys that span the entire year. This enduring tradition of travel, a defining feature of any nation’s story, might have materialized in the depths of proto-historic and prehistoric times, or at various junctures within the modern history of nations. The intricate and multifaceted concept we understand as a ‘nation’ is intrinsically tied to the inexorable currents of travel and migration.

This study focuses on the on-going project of the building of American consciousness as represented in the select travel writings of America (‘America’ in this thesis refers to the United States of America). The study uses the term ‘travel writing’ for two reasons: one, it includes different forms of writing like memoirs, diaries, narratives etc.; secondly, there is no clear pattern or style distinctively set as for travel writing, especially in American literature. The study focuses on the select

travel writings of America from Thomas Harriot, who published his book in 1588, which is considered as the first account of travel in America, to the book of Edmund White which got published in 1980. This exploration of the ongoing development of the American identity delves into American travel literature spanning from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, with a curated selection of two to three significant works from each century serving as our guides. Depending on the situation, references are also made to numerous other travel accounts. The study focuses on the American consciousness and how it has evolved over time in the light of various relevant factors, such as spirituality, gender, race, history, geography, narration, and aesthetics. The study has carefully avoided both writings by American travel writers on countries other than America and writings by non-Americans about America.

The phenomenon of travel is global. Travel can be just a simple physical movement or it can be a form of personal, spiritual, or psychological exercise. In literature, travel frequently takes on a variety of shapes, including exploration, migration, flight, exile, military campaign, tourism, pilgrimage, etc. Travelling physically (from one place to another) has its beginnings at the same time as humanity. The intentional, conscious attempt to travel found its meaning in its spiritual component and incidentally through conquests. The best illustration of this can be seen in the ideology of travel within Christianity, which posits pilgrimage as a life-changing experience that occurs through sequential movement through time and space. As Christianity spread, many philosophical facets became aligned with the concept of travel. Over time, travel and its literary representations evolved to explore the elusive abstraction of the self—how it is developed, shaped, and manifested through various social interactions. The nature of reflexivity in travel, both

philosophically and psychologically, extends to the creation of identity, making travel a significant discourse in understanding humanity.

The term 'travel writing' encompasses all written works related to travel. As a discipline, travel writing is associated with a wide range of terms, such as travel book, travel narrative, travel memoir, journey work, travel story, travelogue, meta-travelogue, travel journal, traveler's account, travel literature, the literature of travel, travel genre, or simply travel. Travel writing is "a collective term for a variety of texts both predominantly fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel" (Borm 13). This justifies the popularity of travel writing as suggested by the American author and journalist Bill Buford, in his comment that travel writing has a "wonderful ambiguity" in lying between "fact and fiction" (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 9). The multidisciplinary aspect of the genre originates from this ambiguity. In the recent discourses travel writing is identified as a "postmodern collage" encompassing and intersecting diverse pieces as suggested by Colin Thubron, a post-war British traveler (Hulme and Youngs 9). The presence of imagination and fantasy within non-fiction travel narratives distinguishes them from guidebooks.

The evolution of travel narratives encompasses a multitude of dynamic elements, embodying a diverse range of factors including culture, settlement, the traveler's personal identity, and the broader backdrop of civilization. The practice of exchanging travel experiences predates the formalization of organized societies. In ancient times, people conveyed their adventures and insights through various channels, such as the captivating depictions etched onto cave walls (cave paintings). These shared narratives transcended mere storytelling, forming an essential part of humanity's collective tapestry of knowledge and connection. These cave paintings can be seen as an early form of travel narratives, serving as a means of

communication to convey their travel experiences to others. During the early period, both men and women undertook journeys, not solely to narrate their adventures, but also in response to the demands of their respective times.

Across the globe, early written traditions frequently take the shape of travel narratives in one form or another. Among the most iconic examples are the ancient epics like *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* (written by Homer circa 8th century BCE), as well as the journey mentioned in the book of Exodus in *the Holy Bible*. These venerable narratives seamlessly intertwined physical voyages with symbolic representations. In the tapestry of Indian literature, which is exemplified by the two great epics, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*, the former, composed between the 7th and 3rd centuries BCE, revolves around the travels of Rama, a Hindu deity. This underscores the fact that the origins of travel narratives can be traced back to the earliest known literary works. The concept of travel, as a recurring theme, has consistently occupied a distinctive and enduring place within literary discourse, predating the emergence of the golden era of travel literature during the medieval period.

Even before the American traveler Burton Holmes coined the term “travelogue” in 1904 to advertise some of his first set of moving pictures, travel writing had a rich and long tradition in literature. The practice of travel writing can be traced as far back as the 2nd century CE, such as by the Greek traveler and geographer Pausanias in *Description of Greece* (Project Perseus). It is worth noting that the word ‘travelogue’ later acquired the meaning of a literary genre. This practice of writing accounts of travel was later followed by the Greeks and Romans, as reflected in their early epic poems, such as *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, and *The Aeneid* written between 29 and 19 BCE (Project Perseus). However, these works are not

considered as ‘pure’ travelogues or as part of travel literature, as they contain more elements of imagination than facts. Apart from travel literature, travel accounts can be found in descriptions of historical relics, such as the inscriptions on Egyptian tombs, which exemplify the utilitarian travels of ancient civilizations for mercantile purposes or journeys of exploration. Travel accounts can also be found in the early forms of historiography, such as in *The Histories* or *The History of Herodotus* (430 BCE) by Herodotus (Project Perseus). Another form of travel writing that existed in the early period, known as “periegesis,” was a geographical survey of lands with a special focus on travel, which is also called geographical writing. Prominent examples of this include Pausanias’ *Description of Greece* and Strabo’s *Geography* (23 CE).

In addition to the early travel narratives emerging from ancient civilizations, the medieval period played a pivotal role in shaping the initial phase of travel writing. These travel narratives of the middle ages not only contributed significantly to the early development of travel literature but also underscored the profound influence of religious motivations on the exploration and documentation of distant lands. The medieval travelogues of Marco Polo (*Book of the Marvels of the World and Il Milione*, c. 1300), Rustichello (*Romance of King Arthur*, c.1300 and co-author of *Travels of Marco Polo*, c.1300), and Mandeville (*The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, a travel memoir which first circulated between 1357 and 1371) put on a new robe of form to catch up with the overwhelming tide of Renaissance. It resulted in the increased popularity of travel writing in Europe during the time. The hallmark of the medieval era was the parallel travel of Arabs and Europeans, Muslims in search of new routes to East Asia and India, and Europeans to various parts of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The Muslim travelers Ibn Jubayr (*Rihlah*, 1183–1185), Ibn Battuta (*Rihlah*, 1353), and others are still regarded as the masters of travel writing.

The epochs of ancient and medieval travel writing paved the way for a subsequent era marked by a proliferation of exploration narratives. The surge in mercantile and utilitarian interests, notably among European nations, played a pivotal role in fostering the widespread appeal of travel writing. This trend gained remarkable momentum during the Age of Exploration (15th to 17th centuries), a transformative period that left an indelible mark on the literary landscape. The books of renowned explorers like Christopher Columbus' *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America*, 1492–1493, Ferdinand Magellan's *Pigafetta's Account of Magellan's Voyage* (1525), and James Cook's *The Journals of Captain Cook* (1784) documented their voyages and their detailed accounts not only provided invaluable insights into the uncharted territories they encountered but also laid the foundation for a burgeoning body of literature (Sherman 20-25).

In the history of American literature, travel writing holds a distinctive place as a genre with its own unique trajectory and significance. Travel writing in America possesses certain features that are distinctly American in spirit, and its origins are intertwined with the formation of the concept of the nation known as America. The early voyages of exploration undertaken by the Portuguese and Spanish, initially intended to find new trade routes to India and the East Indies, ultimately resulted in the unintended 'discovery' of America. According to the widely recognized historical narrative of America, the history of the country commenced with the European 'discovery' and colonization of the land. While numerous explorers traveled and 'discovered' America, the process of settlement was initiated by an English privateer and explorer Richard Grenville (1542-1591), who was a prominent figure involved in the events of the time, like plantations of Ireland, travel to and colonization of America, and repulse of the Spanish Armada in 1585 (Zinn 17). Travel narratives

from this period often served economic interests, tailored for patrons and sponsors supporting exploration ventures. Over time, these narratives evolved, reflecting the economic, cultural, and social shifts in the American society.

Wendy Martin, a distinguished scholar in American literature and cultural studies, emphasizes the centrality of travel in shaping North American history. In her analysis, she articulates that:

Travel is foundational to North American history. The continent presented explorers and settlers with a seemingly 'new' frontier to explore, exploit and subsequently define, and their narratives help us understand how North America and (later) the United States were imagined. Accounts from pioneer travelers inform much of American Literature. Later writing takes unique forms, ranging from slave narratives, to nature writing, to stories featuring the all-American road trip. From the sixteenth to the twenty-first centuries, travel narratives both solidify and dismantle a unified national identity. (252)

From the early writings of explorers like John Smith (*The General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles*, 1624) documenting their journeys to the 'New World' with the wonders and challenges of uncharted territories, American travel narratives evolved. These accounts shifted to depict cross-cultural encounters and describe the American landscape, often imbued with romanticized notions of the frontier during the colonial period. This evolution is evident in works such as William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* (c. 1630-1650), which chronicles the experiences of the Pilgrims in the New World, and James Fennimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), which vividly portrays frontier life and Native American interactions. These narratives not only illuminate early perceptions of North America

but also contribute to its mythologization and the construction of national identity during this formative period (Gould 16-20).

With the maturation of the United States in the 19th century, travel literature took a diverse turn, reflecting the evolving cultural and philosophical landscape. Transcendentalist philosophers, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, delved into the spiritual connection between individuals and nature, and added philosophical and introspective elements to travel literature. This transcendentalist attitude is captured in Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) and Emerson's essays, especially those on nature, which offer literary insights into the profound interaction between humans and the natural world. In American travel writing, there was a noticeable shift in emphasis in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) by Mark Twain provided a humorous viewpoint on American travelers in Europe, challenging social conventions and cultural preconceptions. Concurrently, the Harlem Renaissance brought forth travel narratives from African American writers, such as Zora Neale Hurston's *Tell My Horse* (1938) and Langston Hughes's essays, providing unique perspectives on cultural identity and the African American experience (Hamera and Bendixen 4 -10).

The mid-twentieth century witnessed a paradigm shift as the Beat Generation, led by Jack Kerouac, embraced a countercultural exploration ethos. His *On the Road* (1957) epitomized this spirit, capturing the freedom and adventure associated with American travel. Simultaneously, road trip narratives gained popularity, becoming emblematic of the pursuit of personal and collective freedom. The contemporary American travel writing accommodates a diverse spectrum of voices addressing issues such as multiculturalism, globalization, and environmental concerns. Bill Bryson's humorous observations in *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the*

Appalachian Trail (1998) and Pico Iyer's introspective journeys in *The Art of Stillness* (2014) exemplify this trend, showcasing how modern travel literature engages with a myriad of themes. American travel writing has undergone a dynamic evolution, mirroring the nation's changing cultural and societal fabric. This rich tapestry of perspectives, styles, and themes underscores the enduring significance of travel literature in contributing to the cultural narrative of the United States (Hamera and Bendixen 6-10).

Travel writing was gaining popularity in the early modern era as Europe began to show signs of a generic identity. Even back then, it was obvious how challenging it would be to combine all the different formats in which travel books were written under a single, general heading. While there is a broad understanding of travel writing as a genre, it is challenging to identify a linear progression in its history. The travel writings of the medieval period resonate with the nuanced interplay of both spiritual and chivalric elements. The profound significance of pilgrimage in the Christian tradition emerged as a catalyst for the creation of numerous medieval travel texts imbued with a spiritual import, such as *A Letter from Prester John* (c. 1165-1170) or *Mandeville's Travels*. These works focused on journeys with religious undertones and reflected the prevalent spiritual motivations behind travel during that period. In Christian symbolism, life is often depicted as a journey towards the ultimate goal of salvation (Sherman 18-20).

Some of the medieval travel writers have skillfully intertwined chivalric quest (as in Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605)) with spiritual quest motif as in Dante's *The Divine Comedy* (1320). This category allows for a greater degree of imagination and fantasy, often leading to a diminished emphasis on factual and authentic content. Poetry frequently falls within this category of travel writing. An exemplary work in

this regard is Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (1392). This complemented the narratives of exploration viz. Humphrey Gilbert's *Expedition to Newfoundland* (1583) written by Edward Hayes, the travel accounts on the forbidden city of China by the Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci in the year 1615, Jean de Lery's account on Brazil, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil* 1578, Christopher Columbus's *The Barcelona Letter* of 1493. In such narratives, the narrator assumes the role of both the traveler and the explorer. In Europe, this period also saw the rise of narrative descriptions of mercantile travels and a notable example of which are the writings of Richard Hakluyt, such as *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of English Nation* published in 1589. A work selected for the present study, Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia* (1588), also falls within this category (Sherman 8-24; Gould 14-19).

By the eighteenth-century travel writing became more scientific and objective. Explorers aimed to provide accurate observations of foreign lands, influenced by the ideals of reason and knowledge. One of the key transformations was the shift towards empiricism, where knowledge was derived from sensory experiences. This approach influenced travel writing, leading to the exploration of new concepts such as the 'picturesque' and the redefinition of beauty and sublimity. Unlike the subjective travel narratives of the past, writers focused on providing detailed and objective descriptions of the places they visited. The emphasis shifted from personal impressions and emotions to presenting factual observations about the external world, as seen in the practice of 'The Grand Tour', a northern European aristocratic practice, which is supposedly established by the English in the eighteenth century. The Enlightenment period, marked by a scientific and rational outlook, underwent a transformation in the nineteenth century as travel literature moved towards a romanticized narrative. This

shift was characterized by an emphasis on personal experiences, exploration of emotions, and vivid encounters with the exotic. The works of the pioneering figures such as Mary Kingsley (*Travels in West Africa* 1897) and Charles Darwin (*The Voyage of the Beagle* 1839) serve as classic examples of this shift (Buzard 40-46).

Transitioning from mercantile travels, the trajectory of travel narratives shifted significantly towards those of colonization. This evolution saw travel writing becoming inseparable from the overarching narratives of colonialism and imperialism, mirroring the expansion of European powers across the globe. This genre runs parallel to the Enlightenment period narratives. In these accounts, writers frequently depicted the ‘otherness’ of distant cultures, a portrayal that, at times, inadvertently reinforced prevalent stereotypes and prejudices. One of the best examples in this regard is Giles Fletcher’s *Of the Russe Common Wealth* (1591). The travels of the captives, exiles, and castaways also belong to the same category. *Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson* (1788) of Watkin Tench is one among many classics in Australian literature. During this period, the emergence of slave narratives became prominent. These narratives depicted travel experiences driven by compulsion or coercion, particularly in the travels of slaves or Black individuals. The slave narratives introduced a new subjective narrative tone to travel literature, combining realism with the agonizing experiences faced in foreign lands (V.W. Smith 200-203). A notable example illustrating this is *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) by Harriet Jacobs.

The same period marked the entry of another important phase in travel called ‘Home Tour’ or ‘Domestic Tourism’ in European travel, which in turn contributed to inculcate ‘domestic’ national values. It provided a greater knowledge of and pride in

the history and culture of the nation. According to Glenn Hooper, a scholar in the field of travel writing and cultural studies:

Literally cut off from continental Europe at the time of the Napoleonic wars (c.1790-1815), increasing numbers of British travelers turned to their 'own' countries from the late 1760s onwards, visiting the Peak District and the Lake District within England, while the more adventurous journeyed into Wales, and eventually towards the Scottish Highlands and Islands, as well as across the sea to Ireland. (174)

This shift underscores the burgeoning interest in domestic travel and the exploration of the British Isles during a period when continental travel was severely restricted.

"Picturesque traveler" as described by Christopher Hussey (qtd. in Hooper 174) also belongs to this category. *Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland*, A. D. 1803 of Dorothy Wordsworth, Dr Dalton's *A Descriptive Poem* and Dr Brown's *Letter to Lord Lyttelton*, both written in 1758, and William Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales* (1782) are some examples in this regard. The French Revolution is recognized as a catalyst for the rise of nationalism, which, in turn, had a profound impact on various aspects of travel discourses. This influence is evident in the development of favored destinations, gothic sites, scenic tourism, and landscape tourism, among others. Additionally, the narratives of the time incorporated the element of 'wonder,' adding to their distinctive character (Buzard 46-50).

The early twentieth century marked a departure from traditional travel writing styles as modernist writers experimented with form and language, reflecting the tumultuous times. Notable works, such as T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, exemplify this shift. In the latter

half of the twentieth century, travel writing experienced a diversification of voices, with contributions from writers representing non-Western cultures, women, and people of color (Carr 74). The advent of the internet further democratized travel narratives through blogs, social media, and online platforms. The trend gradually involved into the diverse narratives, unconventional journeys, and reflections on cultural identity. Memoirs, personal essays, and immersive storytelling gained prominence, representing a dynamic genre capturing the changing cultural, social, and literary landscapes. This evolution is evident in Jan Morris' *Destinations* (1980) and in contemporary works like Francis Tapon's *Hike Your Own Hike* (2006) and *The Hidden Europe* (2011). The impressionistic style of Morris and the off-the-beaten-path explorations of Tapon showcase a metaphorical and symbolic writing in travel writings.

The significant features of American travel writing have evolved over time, reflecting the cultural, historical, and social contexts of the respective periods in which these works were produced. In the early stages, American travel narratives primarily took the form of exploration or frontier narratives. There was a prevailing trend in these narratives towards meticulous documentation of every detail. Mariners and explorers, often sponsored by patrons and companies, were expressly instructed to provide comprehensive records of their journeys, complete with outline maps detailing the routes they had traversed. As the primary objective of European travels was to enhance the prospects of Europe, the narratives of that era predominantly took the form of reports, featuring a chronological account of the undertaken expedition, along with geographical and ethnographic findings and observations. This practice aimed to benefit future travelers, as evident in works such as Thomas Harriot's 1588 book *A Brief and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia*, John Smith's *A*

Description of New England (1616) and *Travels Through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida* (1791) by the Anglo-American botanist John Bartram. The surge in the popularity of travel writings, driven by the expansion of mercantile travels, played a crucial role in the gradual development of a generic style in early travel writing (Gould 14).

The features of early exploration narratives, such as providing firsthand descriptions of vast, untamed landscapes and encounters with Native American cultures, persisted and evolved in later frontier narratives like Lewis and Clark's *The Travels of Capts. Lewis & Clark* (1809). After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 and the Florida Purchase of 1819, Thomas Jefferson, who was the President of United States authorized Meriwether Lewis (1774–1809), William Clark (1770–1838) and their Corps to explore these vast territories and also to report on what they found. This Lewis and Clark Expedition not only changed the course of travel writing in America but also the history of the American West and even America, the nation. The publication of *History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark, to the Sources of the Missouri, thence across the Rocky Mountains and down the River Columbia to the Pacific Ocean* in two volumes in 1814, sparked a new-found interest in the American West among explorers, historians, and literary figures. This publication served as a catalyst, capturing the imagination of writers who were drawn to the allure of the untamed frontier. Notable examples of literary works inspired by the American West include James Fennimore Cooper (*The Prairie*, 1827), Washington Irving (*The Sketch Book*, 1819–1820) and even the works by Mark Twain (1835-1910) (Stowe 28-33).

These frontier narratives over time shifted their focus towards the spirit of Manifest Destiny, westward expansion, and the excitement and challenges of the

American frontiers and these became pivotal aspects of American travel writing. This transformation is evident in works like Washington Irving's *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835) and Charles Wilkes' *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition: During the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842* (1845), where the emphasis shifted more prominently towards the theme of American expansion. The discovery of gold in California in 1849 served as a significant catalyst for travel to the American West, resulting in a surge of travel accounts documenting the experiences of those drawn to the region during the Californian Gold Rush. Notable examples are John Woodhouse Audubon's travel narrative *The Illustrated Notes of an Expedition through Mexico and California* (1852), and Francis Parkman's *The California and Oregon Trail* (1849).

American travel writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries showcased a romantic idealization of nature and cross-cultural encounters. The works of Thoreau and Emerson, notable transcendentalists, celebrate the profound spiritual connection between individuals and the natural world. The nuances of personal discovery and enlightenment, evident in the transcendentalists' writings, often imbued their travel experiences with a sense of romance and sublimity. Margaret Fuller, another prominent transcendentalist, explores the sublime aspects of nature in her work *Summer on the Lakes* (1843), contemplating the spiritual significance of the landscapes she traverses. In addition to the celebration of nature, many travel narratives of the time documented encounters between European settlers and Native American populations, highlighting the complexities of cross-cultural interactions. Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682) provides valuable insights into the challenges and cultural clashes during the early colonial period. This cultural dichotomy in travel narratives persisted

until the American Civil War, shaping the literary landscape with its exploration of both the awe-inspiring beauty of nature and the intricate dynamics of cross-cultural encounters.

From the last decades of the nineteenth century, American travel writing embarked on a trajectory mirroring the European travel tradition. It began to embrace more personalized travel experiences and a quest for exploring different dimensions of the 'self.' Essentially, American travel writing of that era underwent a shift towards individualized journeys and a pursuit of self-discovery, embodying an exploration of various facets of one's own identity. These travels featured critiques of American society, as seen in the writings of Mark Twain, which offered a critical perspective on cultural stereotypes and social norms. Cultural identity was also a focal point, with writers of the Harlem Renaissance, such as Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes, who delved into issues of identity and culture. The countercultural exploration of the Beat Generation's travel literature, exemplified by Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, played a pivotal role. This genre explored themes of freedom, rebellion, and self-discovery on the open road, contributing to a broader narrative of individual and societal transformation (Hamera and Bendixen 9-10). Thus, American travel writing during this period became a multifaceted lens through which writers engaged with and reflected upon the evolving landscapes of both the external world and the internal self.

In the second chapter, this study explores deep into the intricate framework of American historical consciousness through a focused analysis of select travel writings. The primary theoretical framework employed for this exploration is cultural studies, with a particular emphasis on drawing inspiration from the influential work of cultural studies theorist Stuart Hall. Hall's extensive exploration of cultural identity and representation serves as a guiding beacon for the examination of how travel

narratives actively contribute to the construction and dissemination of cultural values and norms within the American context. Hall's emphasis on the dynamic and fluid nature of cultural identities aligns seamlessly with our overarching goal—to dissect the complex interplay between travelers and the diverse cultures they encounter in the realm of travel writing. By harnessing Hall's insights, the aim of research is to scrutinize how travel narratives portray cultural practices, identities, and power dynamics. In doing so, the researcher endeavors to unveil the intricate ways in which American historical consciousness is both negotiated and shaped through the discerning lens of cultural studies.

The study also integrates the cultural studies approach, the influential perspectives of Stephen Greenblatt, a foundational figure in the realm of New Historicism, in the second chapter of the thesis. Greenblatt's seminal contributions encourage an exploration of how literature, particularly in the form of travel writing, reflects and responds to broader socio-political and cultural conditions. In the analytical exploration of American travel writing, Greenblatt's insights serve as a guiding framework, directing the examination of how historical events, movements, and power dynamics are interwoven into the narratives, thereby shaping the historical consciousness conveyed within this genre. This investigation seeks to unravel how travel narratives not only contribute to but also challenge dominant historical narratives. The travel literature is thus recognized as a dynamic site for the negotiation and construction of American historical consciousness within the broader historical and cultural fabric, the researcher strives to offer a nuanced perspective that transcends conventional boundaries. Through these theoretical frameworks, the study seeks to capture the intricate dynamics, intersections, and transformative potentials that unfold within the narratives of American journeys across time and place. These

approaches also provide a richer understanding of how historical consciousness is both constructed and negotiated through the culture and history in the written accounts of American travelers.

In the third chapter on American spiritual consciousness, the study employs the theoretical frameworks of cultural studies and narrative identity formation. Within the realm of cultural studies, the insights of Homi K. Bhabha, add depth to the analysis. Bhabha's postcolonial perspectives, as articulated in his work *The Location of Culture*, provide a lens through which to examine the multifaceted expressions of spirituality in American travel narratives (32). Through this approach, the research aims to unravel how cultural contexts, shaped by colonial legacies, influence the articulation of spiritual beliefs, practices, and encounters in travel writings. This theoretical framework facilitates a more comprehensive exploration of how encounters with diverse landscapes and communities shape the spiritual consciousness of American travelers, while also considering the complexities of Puritan identity formations (in the postcolonial contexts).

The study also incorporates narrative and identity formation theory, drawing inspiration from the works of Paul Ricoeur alongside Bhabha's insights. Ricoeur's theories, particularly those presented in *Time and Narrative*, provide a profound understanding of how narrative structures contribute to the construction of both individual and collective identities. The researcher, thus, explores the narratives as dynamic tools for identity formation, seeking to unravel the intricate connections between spiritual experiences and the crafting of a sense of self in the context of travel writing. Through an analysis of narrative structures, language choices, and the representation of spiritual moments, this study, enriched by Bhabha's and Ricoeur's perspectives, aims to illuminate the ways in which American travel writing serves as a

profound medium for the construction of spiritual consciousness and the negotiation of identities within the cultural and personal landscapes of the journey.

The fourth chapter of this thesis focuses on the intricate contours of American racial consciousness within the realm of travel writing. This critical inquiry is underpinned by the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT) by focusing on the works of Derrick Bell, African American civil rights attorney, and Kimberlé Crenshaw, an American civil rights advocate. Derrick Bell's seminal work, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* (1992), investigates into the persistence of racial inequality and the ways in which it is ingrained in the American society. Bell's critical examination of legal and societal structures informs the CRT lens applied to travel narratives, emphasizing the systemic nature of racial dynamics. Kimberlé Crenshaw's development of intersectionality within CRT further enriches the analysis by exploring how various aspects of identity, such as race, gender, and class, intersect and contribute to nuanced experiences of discrimination.

The application of Postcolonial Theory in the study of American racial consciousness in travel writing can be substantiated by referencing the works of Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha. Said's *Orientalism* offers a foundational understanding of how Western perspectives have historically constructed and represented the racial and cultural 'Other'. When applied to travel narratives, Said's ideas provide a framework for examining how American travelers may perpetuate or challenge 'Orientalist' tendencies in their portrayals of different racial and ethnic groups. Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the "third space" and the negotiation of cultural 'hybridity' contribute to the Postcolonial Theory lens by highlighting the in-between spaces where cultural encounters occur. The concept of Orientalism and Bhabha's theories on cultural 'hybridity' allow a detailed exploration of how racial

consciousness is negotiated and represented within the complexities of American travel narratives.

For the fifth chapter on the construction of American gender consciousness through travel writing, feminist theory serves as a foundational lens. American Feminist scholar and gender theorist Judith Butler, in her work *Gender Trouble*, challenges conventional notions of gender as a binary construct. The insights of Butler into travel narratives allow for an exploration of how gender performances unfold in diverse geographical and cultural settings. As Butler notes, “Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame,” (55) and this framing emphasizes the repetitive and constructed nature of gender identity, shedding light on how travelers engage in ‘performative’ acts that both conform to and challenge societal norms during their journeys. Besides Butler Simone de Beauvoir’s existentialist exploration of women’s ‘Otherness’ in *The Second Sex* provides insights into how women’s experiences and identities are negotiated in different cultural contexts. Bell Hooks’ critique of the intersection of race and gender in *Ain’t I a Woman* offers a lens through which to analyze how gender consciousness is intricately linked to racial identity in American travel writing.

Queer theory, as advanced by theorists like Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, an American Queer theorist, extends the analysis beyond traditional gender norms. Sedgwick’s work, particularly in *Epistemology of the Closet*, invites a nuanced understanding of non-normative gender and sexuality expressions. By applying queer theory to travel narratives, the researcher investigates how American travelers negotiate and articulate gender and sexual identities outside normative frameworks. Sedgwick’s assertion that “people are different from each other, and being different from each other does not inherently mean a more or less privileged relation between

the different ones” (146) prompts a reconsideration of privilege, identity, and intersectionality within the context of gender in travel writing. The theory recognizes diverse experiences within the queer spectrum, challenging preconceived notions of privilege and prompting a more inclusive analysis of gender and sexual expressions in the narratives of American travelers. Sedgwick’s insight encourages the researchers to go beyond binary constructions and acknowledge the richness of individual experiences within the queer community.

Performance theory, drawing inspiration from Judith Butler’s notion of gender performativity, contributes a dynamic dimension to the study of American gender consciousness in travel writing. The Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman’s insights in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* complement this approach by emphasizing the theatrical nature of social interactions. His assertion that “all the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn’t are not easy to specify” encourages the researcher to consider the blurred lines between the performative and authentic aspects of social life (36). This notion becomes particularly significant when applied to travel narratives, where individuals navigate and perform their gender roles in the diverse landscapes encountered during their journeys. Goffman’s concept of the “front stage” and “back stage” in social performances, where “front stage is where the performer formally performs and the audience is present, and the back stage is where the performer can step out of the role and safely express themselves” (22), can be aptly adapted to travel writing, revealing the ways in which gender consciousness is curated and presented in the public and private spheres of the journey. Through the integration of feminist theory, queer theory, and performance theory, researchers can offer a comprehensive analysis of the

multifaceted construction of American gender consciousness in the diverse narratives of travel writing.

The study of American geographical consciousness through travel writing in the sixth chapter involves framework of theories that delve into the cultural, spatial, and postcolonial dimensions of the journey. Cultural geography theory, as articulated by David Harvey, a British geographer, emphasizes the cultural and social aspects of space and place. Harvey's work, particularly *The Condition of Postmodernity*, contributes to the examination of how American travelers engage with and interpret different landscapes. In the context of travel narratives, Harvey's assertion that "space is not a backdrop but a dynamic force shaping social life" (419) prompts researchers to scrutinize the intricate ways in which geographical spaces actively shape the consciousness of American travelers. Another theory that is used in the analysis of geographical consciousness, the Landscape theory, draws inspiration from the American landscape architect Anne Whiston Spirn's insights in *The Language of Landscape*, and provides a lens through which to explore the symbolic and experiential dimensions of geographical consciousness in travel writing. Spirn's emphasis on the significance of landscape as a cultural text encourages researchers to decipher the meanings embedded in the landscapes encountered by American travelers, as she contends that "Landscape is a way of seeing, a way of being seen, a way of participating in the natural world, and a way of participating in human culture" (108). This perspective invites a nuanced analysis of how travelers' interactions with landscapes contribute to the construction of American geographical consciousness.

Postcolonial Geography theory, as advanced by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, is instrumental in examining the impact of colonial histories on the representation of geographical spaces in travel narratives. Said's exploration of how Western

perspectives historically constructed and represented the racial and cultural ‘Other’ prompts researchers to critically analyze how American travelers navigate and portray diverse landscapes in the context of postcolonial legacies. Spatial theory, influenced by Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space*, contributes a theoretical framework to understand how spatial practices influence the construction of geographical consciousness in travel narratives. Lefebvre’s concept of the “social production of space” encourages researchers to explore how American travelers actively produce and negotiate space during their journeys. This spatial perspective enables an examination of the ways in which power dynamics, social structures, and lived experiences intersect within the geographical landscapes documented in travel writing. In the integration of cultural geography theory, landscape theory, postcolonial geography theory, and spatial theory, the researcher embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted nature of American geographical consciousness in travel writing. The diverse insights provided by these theorists offer a rich foundation for unraveling the complexities of how landscapes, spaces, and cultural contexts shape the perceptions and representations within the narratives of American travelers.

In the exploration of American narrative consciousness within the seventh chapter of this thesis, an array of theoretical perspectives is examined, encompassing the structural, postcolonial, generic, and archetypal dimensions inherent in these narratives. Structuralist Narratology theory, as influenced by Roland Barthes and Vladimir Propp, offers a lens through which researchers can analyze the underlying structures of narrative in travel writing. Barthes’ exploration of narrative codes and Propp’s identification of narrative functions provide a framework to dissect the organization and recurrence of narrative elements and forms within these texts. The chapter also explores Postcolonial Narrative Theory, inspired by Homi K. Bhabha and

Edward Said, to uncover the intricacies of how travel narratives engage with and respond to colonial histories.

Genre Theory, as advanced by Mikhail Bakhtin and Tzvetan Todorov, contributes to the study of how generic conventions influence the construction of narrative consciousness in American travel writing. Bakhtin's exploration of dialogism and Todorov's identification of narrative genres provide tools to analyze how these narratives conform to or subvert established generic expectations. Todorov's notion that "genres are more like games than works" encourages a playful exploration of how American travel narratives engage with and transform genre conventions to convey their unique narrative consciousness (Lem 227). Archetypal Narrative Theory is another theory that helped in the study of narrative consciousness. This study draws inspiration from Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, and contributes a mythic dimension to the study of American narrative consciousness in travel writing. Campbell's identification of archetypal hero journeys and the monomyth offers a framework to explore how American travelers, consciously or unconsciously, embody archetypal narrative patterns in their journeys. Campbell's idea of a hero as one who ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder prompts the researcher to consider the mythical dimensions within the narratives of American travel writers.

The study consistently explores the idea of American consciousness, recognizing its ongoing debate and incomplete dialogues. As Antony D. Smith and Homi K. Bhabha explain, a nation comprises a named populace, historical territory, shared myths, memories, public culture, and common legal rights—a collective cultural concept that contributes to its formation. The definition of 'nation' has transformed from its inception, intertwining with political self-determination and state

sovereignty, particularly after the influential impact of the French Revolution. Jürgen Habermas and Sarah M. Corse underscore the socially constructed nature of the nation, highlighting its emergence alongside the nation-state. Initially referring to people of shared ancestry, the term 'nation' has undergone a conceptual evolution since the 18th century, with the distinction between 'nation' and '*staatvolk*' (politically organized people) becoming less pronounced. This theoretical shift, as elucidated by theorists like Habermas, aligns with the historical development of the nation-state. The study acknowledges the abstract nature of the concept of the nation, primarily its consciousness, in literary discourses compared to political debates, emphasizing its fluid and evolving nature over time.

Focusing on the concept of American consciousness, distinct from exclusionary nationalism, the study explores how literature contributes to the development of a collective identity. It recognizes the socially constructed nature of nationalism, rooted in deeply internalized high cultures. The study further incorporates insights from Theodor Adorno, who underscores the constructed nature of patriotism and nationalism by the nation to serve its own interests. Though the focus of the study is not on the nation, these concepts play a pivotal role in shaping national identity, encompassing a shared recognition of common ethnic, linguistic, and cultural heritage. The concept of 'nation-identity' in America traces back to the early settlers, notably the Puritans, whose historical narratives, such as their arrival in Plymouth, along with ideas like 'Manifest Destiny' and 'American Exceptionalism,' have deeply influenced the American sense of self and identity. Manifest Destiny served as a philosophical belief justifying territorial expansion, while American Exceptionalism emphasizes the uniqueness of America compared to the rest of the world. The shared national identity fostered by national consciousness is crucial for

America, given its diverse origins and ongoing immigration. This collective identity promotes unity, belonging, and a singular national narrative. The ongoing process of building of American consciousness remains a complex project, navigating political, social, and cultural diversities through the lens of a unifying national consciousness.

The significance of this interdisciplinary and cross-cultural study is particularly pronounced in the era of globalization. It serves as a valuable tool for dissecting the construction of the American nation and explores into how this construction perpetuates certain narratives through the framing of its 'others.' The ongoing process of building of American consciousness is intricately connected to the dynamics of globalization. This interconnectedness is mirrored in the shared characteristics between the American concept and the broader ideology of Americanism. Critics define Americanism as more than a mere national identity; it encompasses an articulation of the nation's perceived role on the global stage. It encapsulates a set of traditions, a distinct political language, and a cultural style infused with political meaning (Kazin and McCartin). The narratives constructed within the American context and their global reverberations underscore the study's relevance in navigating the complexities of our interconnected world. As globalization continues to reshape socio-political landscapes, understanding how American consciousness intersects with this global paradigm becomes crucial. By examining the intricate interplay between the American consciousness and, its 'others,' and the global context, this study contributes to the understanding of the multifaceted dynamics influencing contemporary geopolitics and cultural discourse.

The review of literature is a crucial component of every research endeavor, providing a foundation for understanding the existing body of knowledge and identifying gaps that the current study seeks to address. In the field of American travel

writing, numerous research works have been undertaken, reflecting a growing interest in exploring how travel narratives contribute to the construction of American consciousness. Initially, academic disciplines were hesitant to give serious consideration to travel writing due to its interdisciplinary nature, which encompasses areas such as literature, history, geography, anthropology, and philosophy. However, with the rise of interdisciplinary criticism, the complexity involved in analyzing travel writing has become more manageable, leading to a deeper exploration of its role in shaping American consciousness. Early research endeavors in the field focused on providing surveys of the trajectory of travel writing from the 1500s to the present, covering a global perspective. These surveys aimed to identify and delineate the characteristic features associated with travel writing, laying the groundwork for more detailed analyses. *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (2006) edited by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs stands out as a seminal work offering a broad introduction to travel writing as a relatively new genre in research. This comprehensive volume takes a multi-disciplinary approach towards understanding the role of gender, race, and ethnography in travel studies, providing valuable insights into how these factors contribute to the construction of American consciousness.

The Cambridge Companion to American Travel Writing (2009), edited by Alfred Bendixen and Judith Hamera, is one of the most important books in the studies on American travel writing. Judith Hamera and Alfred Bendixen in the “Introduction: New Worlds and Old Lands- the Travel Book and the Construction of American Identity” investigate into the transformation of the ‘old land’ into the ‘new world’ and the complexities inherent in American travel writing. They argue against a simplistic survey of texts, highlighting the genre’s multi-layered and fluid nature within the American context. They also address the challenge of defining American travel

writing, emphasizing its significance in American literature's broader landscape. Philip Gould in his essay "Beginnings: the Origins of American Travel Writing in the Pre-Revolutionary Period" focuses on mapping the evolution of American travel literature up to the American War of Independence. His study contextualizes American travel writing within its historical and cultural milieu, shedding light on its formative years. Gould's work is complemented by studies such as Wayne Franklin's *Discoveries, Explorer's Settlers: The Diligent Writers of Early America* (1979) and David Shields' *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (1997) which indirectly reference American travel literature pre-Independence. These studies provide insights into the narratives of exploration, naturalistic travel accounts, and spiritual reflections that characterize early American travel writing. Together, these works offer a comprehensive overview of the evolution and peculiarities of American travel writing, contributing significantly to our understanding of its role in shaping American consciousness.

There is a significant body of research focused on the American landscape within the field of American travel writing. Robert Lawson-Peebles' *Landscape and Written Expression in Revolutionary America* (1988), Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), John Stilgoe's *The Common Landscape of America* (1982), William W. Stowe's *Property in the Horizon: Landscape and American Travel Writing* are all studies on American Landscape. These studies examine various aspects related to the landscape, including the discovery of meanings in relation to specific landscapes, the framing of social and subjective identities in relation to the landscape, the scientific observations made by naturalists regarding the landscape, the formation of individual and national identities influenced by the American landscape, and the connections between the landscape

and metaphysical concepts. Contemporary studies on the American landscape also explore aesthetics and picaresque perspectives in relation to the landscape. These research studies shed light on the intricate relationship between American travel writing and the landscape, providing insights into how landscapes shape identities, perceptions, and cultural understandings in the American context.

In recent times, researchers have also engaged in the study of landscape tourism, particularly in the context of America, which aligns with the global trend. These studies often concentrate on exploring scenes of awe-inspiring grandeur, particularly in naturally breathtaking locations. Researchers also delve into topics such as modes of transportation, notable American landscapes, places of amusement, and experiences that evoke a sense of sublimity. These investigations contribute to our understanding of the ways in which landscape tourism is experienced and appreciated in the American context. The researches in the field of landscape and landscape tourism continue in Barbara Korte's *English Travel Writings from Pilgrimage to Postcolonial Explorations* (2000), Peter L. Bernstein's *Wedding of Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation* (2005), Christopher Mulvey's *New York to Niagara by Way of the Hudson and Erie*, Elizabeth McKinsey's *Niagara Falls: Icon of the Sublime* (1985).

In addition to the studies on landscape and landscape tourism, the River Mississippi holds a significant place in American travel writing research. Researchers have conducted interdisciplinary studies examining imperialism, geography, philosophy (regarding the river as a symbol), modes of transportation on the river, and the history of expeditions related to it. The literary, political and sociological significance of the river is another remarkable area in the researches on Mississippi. Ben Lucien Burman's *Look Down that Winding River* (1973), Jonathan Raban's

essay “Mississippi Water”, Stephen E. Ambrose and Douglas G. Brinkley’s *The Mississippi and the Making of a Nation* (2002) and Thomas Ruys Smith’s essay “The Mississippi River as Site and Symbol” contribute to researches on Mississippi in American travel writing.

The ‘Southwest’ region holds considerable significance in the research on American travel writing. Starting from the early decades of the nineteenth century and continuing to the present day, New Mexico and California have been important destinations for travelers and travel writers. A prominent area of discussion in relation to the Southwest is the cultural difference that characterizes the region. Researchers have explored the unique cultural aspects and diversity found in the Southwest, examining the influences of indigenous peoples, the Spanish colonial heritage, and the blending of different cultural traditions. The landscapes, the prairies, the Rocky Mountain, Santa Fe, the Taos Trails, and the Grand Canyon are vital areas in research on Southwest in American travel writing. The researchers also focus on the ethnological peculiarities of the region, the elements of enchantment in the region, the process of industrialization and urbanization in the region compared to other parts of the United States, and the ‘symbols of incorporation’ into the United States. The major studies on the region include Brigitte Georgi- Findlay’s *The Frontiers of Women’s Writing: Women’s narratives and the Rhetoric of Westward Expansion* (1996), Martin Padget’s *Indian Country: Travels in the American Southwest* (2004), Vera Norwood and Janice Monk’s *The Desert is No Lady: South Western Landscapes in Women’s Writing and Art*, Tamara M. Teale’s essay “Beyond Purity and Pollution” in *Studies in Travel Writing* (2000) etc.

There has been a significant influx of research conducted on Americans abroad in American travel writing. Three major destinations that have garnered

considerable attention from American travelers and travel writers include Europe, the Holy Land, and regions beyond the Pacific Coast. There are also researches undergoing in American travel experiences in Latin America. Voluminous studies on American travel narratives on Europe before and after American Civil War are conducted. *The Journal of American Studies* (August 1978), Terry Caesar's *Forgiving the Boundaries: Home as Abroad in American Travel Narratives* (1995), William W. Stowe's *Going Abroad: European Travel in the Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (1994), William Merrill Decker's *Americans in Europe from Henry James to Present*, and Sidonie Smith's *Moving Lives: 20th Century Women's Travel Writing* (2001) are a few among the capacious studies conducted on American travel writing on Europe. Hilton Obenzinger's essay "Americans in the Holy Land, Israel and Palestine" (1978) elaborates on the various studies conducted in American travel into the Holy Land. America's overseas expansion and trade is another important area of research not only in literature, but also in other disciplines like economics and politics.

American women and travel writing, particularly the intersection of gender and travel experiences, is indeed a significant area of research within the field of American travel writing. Researchers have extensively explored how gender influences the experiences and representations of women's travels. The studies also explore how women's travel narratives challenge or conform to traditional gender roles, and how their writings contribute to the broader discourse on gender, identity, and agency. Sidonie Smith's *Moving Lives: 20th Century Women Travel Writing* (2001), Deborah Paes de Barros' *Fast Cars and Bad Girls: Nomadic Subjects and Women's Road Stories* (2004), and Cheryl Fish's *Black and White Women's Travel Narratives: Antebellum Explorations* (2004) are examples on the studies on gender in

American travel writing. The major focus areas in the discourses on gender are the concepts like home, domesticity, metaphysics, new knowledge/new identities and mobility. Sexuality is another crucial area of research within gender. Researchers have examined the impact of patriarchy, societal norms, the existence of sexually segregated spaces, and the associated risks and dangers faced by women travelers on the road among others.

The travel experiences of African Americans constitute a significant domain within the study of American travel writing. This body of literature encompasses a variety of themes including slave narratives, the roles of enslavers and oppressors, and the process of emancipation, the re-identification of self, Euro-American colonization, racial uplift, slavery, and both antebellum and postbellum experiences. These narratives provide invaluable insights into the African American experience and its profound impact on American history and culture. For example, Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789) offers a compelling first-person account of the horrors of slavery and the journey to freedom, illustrating the broader themes of displacement and identity. Similarly, Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) provides a poignant exploration of the struggles for autonomy and dignity under the brutal system of slavery. Post-emancipation, the works of figures such as Booker T. Washington, particularly *Up from Slavery* (1901), chronicle the challenges and triumphs of African Americans in the postbellum period, emphasizing themes of education, self-reliance, and racial uplift. These narratives not only document individual and collective journeys but also serve as powerful tools for understanding the complexities of African American identity and the broader socio-political landscape.

Scholars have also examined twentieth-century leisure-class tourists and authors who identify themselves as tourists, highlighting the evolving nature of travel and its narratives. Late twentieth-century American travel literature encompasses significant movements and genres, including the Beats, the counterculture of the 1960s, Gonzo Journalism, and a nostalgic engagement with road travel. These areas highlight the transformation of travel writing from mere exploration to a form of cultural and political critique. Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) epitomizes the Beat generation's quest for freedom and self-discovery through travel, while Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971) exemplifies Gonzo Journalism's blend of fact and fiction in travel narratives. Moreover, Casey Blanton's *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (1995) provides critical insights into how travel writers navigate their identities and perceptions of the world, emphasizing the subjective nature of travel narratives. Debbie Lisle's *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (2009) further explores the 'imaginary' of contemporary travel, addressing how global politics and cultural dynamics shape travel writing in the modern era. These works collectively enrich our understanding of American travel literature by examining its thematic diversity and socio-political implications.

This study distinctly focuses on American consciousness rather than American nationalism, setting it apart from previous examinations of American literature. The research takes a holistic approach, encompassing various dimensions such as spiritual consciousness, gender, race, history, geography, and narrative, by intricately weaving them into the fabric of American consciousness. To provide a comprehensive view of the evolution of American consciousness over time, the analysis is centered on ten travel writers from different periods of American history. In this thesis while quoting

from the original texts, the grammatical usages and spellings found in the original sources are faithfully retained without any interpolations. This approach ensures a faithful representation of the authors' expressions, contributing to the integrity and authenticity of the study. This commitment to accuracy enhances the scholarly rigor of this research, offering a nuanced exploration of American national consciousness through the lens of travel writing.

The first travel writer selected for study is Thomas Harriot (1560–1621), an American astronomer, mathematician, ethnographer, and translator. His travel account, *The Briefe and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia* (1588), serves as the primary text for this analysis. In the book, Harriot narrates his travels alongside John White (English colonial governor, explorer, and cartographer), Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Ralph Lane during their first attempt to colonize Roanoke Island in 1585. The book includes advanced maps for navigation, reflecting Harriot's contributions to cartography. As stated in the book, Harriot became a significant member of the team after learning the Carolina Algonquian language from two Native Americans, Wanchese and Manteo (i). He is known for his translation of the Carolina Algonquian language into English, and he even devised a phonetic alphabet to transcribe this language. His only publication outside the fields of algebra, mathematics, astronomy, and navigation is this book.

Harriot's travel account, *The Briefe and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia*, is considered the first travel account on America by a European. As stated in the introduction of the book, it is "the first book published by an English colonist in America" (i). The book provides valuable information on the lives of the native inhabitants, detailing their food sources, agricultural methods, living arrangements, political organization, and religion. The book is published with the support of Sir

Walter Raleigh, and its purpose was to incite both investment and settlement. The introduction notes that this “13,000-word account also gives many details of the ‘merchantable commodities,’ plants, animals, and economic opportunities to be found there” (i). It is the first book about North America by an Englishman who was an explorer and visitor to the American mainland; Harriot was neither an American writer nor did he settle in America. The book narrates his trip from Roanoke Island to present-day North Carolina in 1585-1586 and turned out to be one of the most important documents for the English settlement of America. The de Bry edition of the book includes illustrations by John White, who also accompanied Thomas Harriot.

John Smith (1580-1631), an American soldier, cartographer, explorer, and colonial governor, played a pivotal role in early American history. On his second voyage to the New World in 1614, he named the areas of Maine and Massachusetts under English control as ‘New England.’ His travel account, *A Description of New England* (1616), reveals that during this voyage, he was captured by French pirates and detained near the Azores for several months before escaping and returning to England. Smith was instrumental in the establishment and survival of the Jamestown colony in Virginia, the first permanent English settlement in America. His involvement with the Virginia Company in 1604 underscores the early profit motives that preceded the spiritual foundations laid by the Puritans. Smith’s remarkable adventures and leadership solidified his status as a prominent figure in American exploration. The uniqueness of his work is indispensable for studying the formation of American consciousness as depicted in travel writing, highlighting the economic and exploratory motivations that shaped early colonial endeavors.

Smith’s *A Description of New England* is included in the present study; in contrast to his later work *A General History of New England* (1624), where he

recounts conquests and conflicts with Native Americans, as the earlier book continues the propagandist tradition of Harriot. Its purpose was to persuade readers to migrate to the American mainland. Smith's detailed descriptions of the region's potential for wealth laid the foundation for America's materialistic culture. During his travels, Smith focused on exploring opportunities in the coastal areas north of Virginia, particularly in fisheries, fur trading, and settlement. The book's influence on future immigrants, who were inspired to seek profit in the New World, renders it a significant document for this study.

Mary Rowlandson (1637-1711) holds a prominent place in American history and literary tradition primarily for her captivity narrative, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, published in 1682. As a colonist, she was captured by Native Americans during King Philip's War (1675-1678) and endured eleven weeks of captivity before being ransomed for twenty pounds. Beyond her captivity accounts, little is documented about her life; except the idea that she was part of the Greater Migration of Puritans to America. Rowlandson's family migrated to the New World, a context that underscores the recurrence of strict Puritan values in her work. She lived during a period when newly arrived European migrants were shaping life and cultural principles in America. Many writings from this era explore cultural adaptations while expressing concerns about the potential loss of British or European culture and values in this new setting.

Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* is considered a seminal work in American literature, particularly within the genres of captivity narrative and American travel literature. It stands out as possibly the only instance in early

American literature where a white woman presents herself as a captive. This strictly Puritan book is also recognized as the first bestseller in America. Rowlandson's narrative provides a detailed account of her experiences among Native Americans, describing their food, behavior, and attitudes toward the English. In the opening pages, she reflects on the sovereignty and goodness of God that sustained her through her trials (1). Her writing addresses numerous challenges faced by the colonists, including conflicts with natives, diseases, death, climate hardships, cultural adjustments, and territorial negotiations with native populations. As one of the earliest accounts offering insights into native lives, Rowlandson's travel narrative remains an invaluable resource for understanding early American history and culture, making it indispensable for current research in these fields.

Sarah Kemble Knight (1666-1727) is celebrated as an American diarist and essayist, renowned for her notable journey from Boston to New York in the early eighteenth century, with stops in New Haven and various points in Connecticut, all undertaken on horseback. This solitary journey by Knight, who is a Puritan woman, stands as a remarkable event in early American history and literature, particularly for its uncommon nature during the period (1704-1705). Knight's travel through a multi-racial and multi-cultural route provides rich details for posterity, offering insights from the homogenous culture of Massachusetts to the diverse environment of Connecticut. The published volume *The Journal of Madame Knight* (1825) reveals that Sarah Kemble Knight was married to Richard Knight of Boston, described as "a Captain of a London trader" (v). Richard Knight's death abroad is noted, though the precise year remains uncertain. The journey in 1704 was documented as Knight's effort to claim some of her late husband's property in New York, as detailed in historical records. Her journey was driven by the purpose of acting as a legal proxy in

settling an estate, marking an early instance of a woman's venture into the realm of travel narrative without the didactic tone often found in contemporary works.

Knight's *The Journal of Madam Knight* (1704-1705), also known as *The Journal 1704-1705*, was published in 1825, stands as a significant narrative of colonial American experiences. Her account vividly portrays the social, religious, and economic conditions around 1700, while also highlighting gender and racial biases encountered along the primitive and often hostile roads of America. Unlike Mary Rowlandson's Puritan sermon-like narrative, Knight's journal serves as both an ethnographic account and a travelogue. As noted in the preface to the 1825 edition, despite Knight's five-month absence from home and interactions with several clergymen, she omits any mention of sermons she may have heard, suggesting her focus on more novel aspects of her journey (xi). Knight's skillful use of persona and humor further elevates the work, making it a pivotal text of its time. The cultural and racial perspectives of a middle-class Puritan woman from Massachusetts depicted in the book contribute significantly to the study of American consciousness. It underscores how Puritan and early Massachusetts cultures laid foundational elements for American consciousness, marking Knight's journal as an indispensable resource in understanding early American identity formation.

Jonathan Carver (1710-1780) was an American writer and explorer known for his ventures to find the Northwest Passage to the Pacific Ocean. He was the first English-speaking explorer to travel west of the upper Mississippi River. Carver's writing is notable for introducing the term 'Oregon' in print, both in text and on maps. His travels from 1766 to 1778, although rewarding in terms of discovery, did not bring him financial success. In order to seek recognition and recompense, Carver wrote about his experiences, which were published in 1778 and became widely read.

Despite dying in 1780 without proper recognition, his work remains significant for its insights into American consciousness during the strategic period following the American War of Independence. Carver's *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North America* provides valuable documentation of early American exploration and cultural encounters. He states his purpose of travel, “No sooner was the late war with France concluded, and peace established by the treaty of Versailles in the year 1763, than I began to consider... how I might continue still serviceable, and contribute... to make that vast acquisition of territory, gained by Great Britain in North America, advantageous to it (i)”.

Carver's book titled *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North America in the Years 1766, 1767, and 1768* was published in 1778, and became a bestseller in England. Shortly after Carver's death in 1780, debates arose over the accuracy of his travel accounts. However, today, the book is recognized as the first American work derived from an explorer's original expedition. According to historian Moses Coit Tyler, the book is invaluable for its precise information on the manners, customs, religion, and language of the Native Americans. Tyler notes its exceptional worth not only for instruction but also for its captivating narrative, highlighting the charm of Carver's sincere, powerful, and humane personality (150). The work is praised for its novel facts, noble ideas, and humane sentiments, all articulated in well-ordered and pure English. The book provides extensive insights into the history, manners, and customs of Native American groups, as well as the diverse wildlife and natural features of the vast Northwest regions of America.

Sarah Margaret Fuller Ossoli, commonly known as Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), was a prominent social and literary critic and is considered a pioneer of American feminism. She was raised in Massachusetts in an intellectually rigorous

environment by her father, and was closely associated with the transcendentalists in her youth. She is best known for her seminal work on American feminism, *The Great Lawsuit: Man versus Men, Woman versus Women* (1843), which she later expanded into *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845). This work celebrated the intellectual and creative potential of women. Fuller was part of Boston's radical bourgeois culture and was recognized for her extensive knowledge, being the first woman to use the Harvard College library. Critics have noted that, despite the lack of formal education opportunities for women, Fuller acquired wide-ranging knowledge early in life, though this intense self-education adversely affected her health. She remains a significant figure in the history of American intellectual and feminist thought.

The research focuses on Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*, written in 1843, which chronicles her travels to Chicago and Niagara, exploring themes of Native American treatment, westward expansion, and gender differences among white settlers. The influence of transcendentalism reflects on her journey as a contrast to the materialism of her contemporaries, akin to Henry David Thoreau's *The Maine Woods* (1864). Her work critiques capitalist ideals and offers insights into American development during a formative period. With clarity, Fuller discusses human potential and societal oppression, making her book essential for understanding American consciousness. Her journey, steeped in the transcendentalist ethos, critiques the utilitarian motives of white settlers and underscores the humanistic values often overshadowed by capitalist pursuits. This work, written by a Puritan (Unitarian) woman during a critical period of American development, serves as an authoritative account of the nation's evolving identity, with important digressions in favor of women's rights and social justice.

Harriet Ann Jacobs (1813/15-1897), born a slave in North Carolina, lived through pivotal events in American history, including the Abolitionist movement, the

Emancipation Proclamation, and the Civil War. In the preface to her book, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself* (1861), Jacobs writes:

I am aware that some of my adventures may seem incredible; but they are nevertheless strictly true. I have not exaggerated the wrongs inflicted by Slavery; on the contrary my descriptions fall far short of the facts. I have concealed the names of places, and given persons fictitious names. I had no motive for secrecy on my account, but I deemed it kind and considerate towards others to pursue this course. (5)

Later in life, Jacobs became an abolitionist. Her book, regarded by many as the most comprehensive slave narrative written by a woman, provides invaluable insights into the multifaceted nature of slavery and its impact on American national consciousness.

Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself* is a unique slave narrative, particularly as most such narratives were written by men. Jacobs focuses on the position of women, especially enslaved women, and the sexual exploitation they endured. Writing under the pseudonym Linda Brent, Jacobs narrates her life from birth as a slave, detailing the violence and exploitation she faced during her teenage years, and ultimately, her journey to freedom. For many years, the authenticity of her account was questioned but later affirmed. Despite criticisms of its sentimental domestic appeal and the narrative is considered by some as a work of fiction, Jacobs's vivid and detailed descriptions of slavery in the antebellum South, alongside her reflections on selfhood, womanhood, and motherhood, underscore the significance of her book in the American context.

Mark Twain (1835-1910), born Samuel Langhorne Clemens in Missouri, is renowned for his significant contributions to American literature. Mark Twain gained

international acclaim through his travel narratives, such as *Innocents Abroad* (1869), *Roughing It* (1872), and *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), as well as his adventure stories of boyhood like *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885). His humor and vivid descriptions made him one of America's most beloved writers. William Faulkner's designation of Mark Twain as "the father of American literature" (Jelliffe 140) underscores his central role in shaping the nation's literary heritage. Mark Twain's work is pivotal in understanding the construction of American identity during the crucial post-Civil War period. His incisive social commentary, particularly on issues of race, class, and regionalism, provides valuable insights into the evolving American consciousness. Mark Twain's portrayal of American life, with its blend of realism and satire, remains essential for comprehending the cultural and historical context of the era.

Mississippi plays a crucial role in Mark Twain's writings, symbolizing his deep connection to the river. Beginning in 1863, he adopted the pseudonym Mark Twain, a term meaning "two fathoms deep," signifying safe water for steamboats. This name underscores his bond with the Mississippi River. The research focuses on the book *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) and in this Mark Twain presents a travel narrative that enriches the historical context of the river, offering both authenticity and insight. As he writes, "The world and the books are so accustomed to use, and over-use, the word 'new' in connection with our country, that we early get and permanently retain the impression that there is nothing old about it" (7), he challenges the perception of America as a purely new entity, emphasizing its historical depth. This work is significant in the study of American consciousness through travel narratives, as it combines personal reflection with broader historical commentary. Mark Twain's portrayal of the Mississippi River and its surroundings provides a

nanced understanding of American identity, regionalism, and the evolving national consciousness.

John (Ernst) Steinbeck (1902-1968), a Pulitzer Prize winner and Nobel Laureate for Literature (1962), gained prominence for his insightful depictions of the social consequences and implications of the Great Depression. His notable works include *Of Mice and Men* (1937), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), and *East of Eden* (1952). He is born to German immigrants in Salinas, California and thus, Steinbeck's writings often reflect the liberal and open lifestyle of Californians. Despite his deep connection to California, he eventually moved to New York for broadening his perspectives. Steinbeck's travelogue *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962), which is considered for the present study, not only captured the essence of the American landscape but also delved into the socio-political undercurrents of the time, providing a critical lens on the American identity. His work remains a vital resource for understanding the complexities of American life and consciousness during a transformative period in history.

In Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* the title itself hints at a deeper exploration beyond a mere travelogue. He writes, "Once a journey is designed, equipped, and put in process, a new factor enters and takes over. A trip, a safari, an exploration, is an entity, different from all other journeys. It has personality, temperament, individuality, uniqueness. A journey is a person in itself; no two are alike" (1). Steinbeck's journey is not just travel; it is a quest to discover America, where each observation contributes to an evolving American consciousness. His journey in 1960 coincided with a pivotal moment when America was at the height of global power, and modern American ideals were being celebrated over traditional norms. Steinbeck's narrative captures the social, political, and cultural landscape of

the era, providing invaluable insights into the American identity. The book's significance in shaping the American consciousness of twentieth-century America makes it a critical text for the present study. His reflections even offer a nuanced understanding of the American experience, making *Travels with Charley* an essential work for examining the interplay between travel literature and national identity.

Edmund Valentine White III, commonly known as Edmund White, is a distinguished American writer whose works extensively reflect his experiences as a gay man. He is renowned for his contributions to cultural criticism and he has garnered praise from esteemed novelists such as Vladimir Nabokov and Susan Sontag. In the mid-1970s, White played a significant role in the Casual Club for gays in New York City and collaborated with influential figures like Violet Quill and six other gay writers. His unconventional upbringing in Cincinnati, Ohio, marked by complex familial relationships, profoundly influenced his literary voice. According to Nicholas F. Radel in *Understanding Edmund White*, White is positioned as the preeminent gay novelist in an era of evolving American perspectives on LGBTQ+ individuals, highlighting the shift from viewing them as psychologically deviant to recognizing them as integral members of society (1). White's work is pivotal in understanding the changing dynamics of American cultural and social norms regarding sexuality.

In his 1980 travelogue *States of Desire: Travels in Gay America* (1980), Edmund White provides a vivid chronicle of gay life in America during a transformative cultural moment just before the onset of the AIDS epidemic. This seminal work captures the flourishing of sexual freedom in the 1970s a period marked by significant movements in creative culture and political activism within the gay community. White's narrative spans diverse locales across the United States, from the

political arenas of Washington D.C. to the radical enclaves of New York and San Francisco, and from the butch communities of Houston to the conservative landscapes of Kansas City and Minneapolis. Through his observations, White illuminates the emergence of new cultural and political definitions in America, particularly highlighting the increasing fluidity of gender boundaries. As White reflects in the introduction, societal attitudes towards gender have evolved, with a growing acceptance of transvestites and transsexuals challenging traditional norms (xv). His narrative underscores how these shifts in perception have reshaped societal attitudes towards sexuality and gender identity, making *States of Desire* a critical document for understanding the cultural landscape of the time and American consciousness of the twentieth century.

The selected ten travel writings encompass narratives on America, spanning from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. This collection includes writings from early settlers, colonizers, white women, black Americans, white men, and a gay travel writer. The study focuses on the ongoing project of constructing American consciousness within the realm of American travel writing. American consciousness is an ever-evolving process, and thus, the study examines the continuity of this process from the earliest travel writings on the American mainland to the writings in the twentieth century. The scope of the studies in the twenty-first century is left unattended as the nation-building trend of the century is still in its nascent stage. The spirit depicted in these writings varies, ranging from the propagandist works of early travel writers to the Puritan narratives of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The Puritan accounts are succeeded by 'national-narratives' of varying degrees, with a focus on the process of nation-building, which are supplemented by writings from white men, women, black individuals, and gay writers.

The study on American consciousness as represented in the travel writings urges the researcher to adopt a nuanced and rigorous approach to the works selected for study here. The second chapter deals with the 'Making of America' or Americans historical consciousness. This chapter explores the process of America's transformation from a colonial power to a sovereign nation, and subsequently to a colonizer and superpower, through the examination of selected travel writings. This transformation serves as the foundation for American national consciousness. The chapter critically analyzes the commonly assumed 'unilinear' history of America, which is often perceived as the 'natural' history of the nation, in the light of these travel narratives. Through historical analysis, the study promotes the theory of a consciously constructed nation and its identity, as depicted in various narratives, including travel accounts, in order to align it with the 'natural' history of America.

In the third chapter, the focus is on America as a pilgrim and its spiritual consciousness, deeply rooted in Puritan ideology. This Puritan-based spiritual consciousness remains a fundamental component of American identity despite historical changes and global shifts. The chapter examines America's Puritan origins through selected American travel writings, highlighting how this spiritual consciousness persists and eventually shapes the national identity. Various spiritual movements specific to each period are scrutinized and compared, revealing their reflection in contemporaneous travel literature.

The fourth chapter explores the evolution of racial consciousness in America as revealed through American travel writing. It investigates into the concept of the 'other' within the framework of postcolonial discourse, examining how this 'othering' has contributed to the nation-building process. The study focuses on various groups perceived as 'others' in America, tracing their evolution and impact on American

racial consciousness through travel literature. It identifies four distinct categories of 'others' to Americanness and analyzes their development within American society. The chapter also references the emergence of 'neo-racist' sentiments and institutional racism during the twentieth century, exploring how these ideologies perpetuate racial divisions and influence the ongoing construction of American national identity.

The fifth chapter examines American gender consciousness, analyzing how perceptions of gender have evolved among both men and women in response to societal trends and needs. It explores the transition from English and Puritan influences to more materialistic and liberal perspectives, by reflecting on the changes in American identity. The study encompasses not only women's travel experiences but also considers how both men and women frame their American consciousness through their travel narratives. It highlights differences in how men and women perceive their national identity, emphasizing the diversity of women's voices compared to the often objective and panoramic view presented by the male gaze. This examination contributes to ongoing nation-building discourses by shedding light on the nuanced ways gender consciousness that shapes American cultural identity.

The sixth chapter explores American geographical consciousness and the concept of American as a naturalist. It deliberates on how the American landscape has evolved as a crucial component of national identity. The chapter examines frontiers, specific geographical landmarks, and significant locations such as the Mississippi and the Southwest, analyzing their contributions to and enrichment of the American self and consciousness. The study focuses on the concept of sense of place and how it imbues Americanness into narratives and the collective psyche. It also considers differences in the perspectives of male and female travelers as they engage with the American landscape, enhancing discussions on ongoing nation-building processes.

The seventh chapter focuses on the American as a storyteller. This narrative consciousness of Americans augments their American consciousness, as narration creates, redesigns, and reshapes the nation's history. Narration is a crucial component in the creation and selection of realities. The chapter also discusses the aesthetic consciousness of American travelers as seen in their style, gaze, language, and narrative techniques, and how these elements contribute to their consciousness. The nation-building project, meticulously constructed through storytelling, and its contribution to the American consciousness are analyzed in this chapter.

In the concluding chapter, the synthesis of key findings underscores how the six facets of American consciousness intricately contribute to and interact with the ongoing process of building of American consciousness, as elucidated through the analysis of chosen travel narratives. The study highlights its continuous evolution in shaping American identity, by emphasizing the dynamic nature of this project and also acknowledging that this process remains perpetually in flux. The study posits Americans as perpetual travelers, not only in physical journeys across the landscape but also in their collective quest to define and redefine what it means to be an American, underscoring the enduring relevance of travel narratives in this overarching discourse.

Chapter 2

American as Historian: American Historical Consciousness

“The concept of history plays a fundamental role in human thought. It invokes notion of human agency, the role of material circumstances in human affairs, and the putative meaning of historical events” (“Philosophy of History”).

What memory is to the individual, history is to the nation. It forms the ‘unconscious’ of the nation, thereby shaping its actions. Every action of a nation is not merely a reaction to sudden incidents; rather, it follows the nation’s conscience, which essentially emerges from its unconscious. The historical consciousness of a nation thus designs and decides the course of action of the nation. It can even influence the psyche and behavior of its people. Daniel Little, an American academician, in his “W.H. Walsh’s Philosophy of History”, agrees with the remarks of W.H. Walsh and R.G. Collingwood, two British philosophers, that history is concerned with conscious human action. They point to the element of human interference in the construction of history. For R.G. Collingwood, history is the science of the mind, and W.H. Walsh opines that the key intellectual task for the historian is to reconstruct the reasons or motives that actors had at various points in history (Daniel Little). The reasons and motives of ‘actors’ resulted in the creation of history which made history not a natural process but an outcome of ‘conscious’ human action.

This chapter seeks to explore American historical consciousness through the lens of American travel writing. As is evident, historical consciousness can be shaped by significant events or moments in history, as well as by the creation of a consciousness that aligns with the prevailing historical narrative of the nation. The construction of history in any country often reinforces the overarching narratives of the nation, particularly those that contribute to national consciousness. These

narratives possess a distinct value system with specific individuals playing defined roles as contributors. The chapter focuses on analyzing Americans as historians by examining how the construction and dissemination of historical consciousness occur in selected texts. The development of America's consciousness complements the creation of its history, which has traditionally been influenced by a European or Euro-centric value system.

The exploration of national consciousness within the context of history emerges from the discussions surrounding the assignment of meaning to historical events and national institutions, as well as the considerations of nationalism as an ideology in the formation of a nation. Barbara Weinstein, an American historian, argues that grand narratives in world history are carefully constructed and often present a postcolonial dilemma. These narratives selectively highlight certain events, individuals, places, and institutions while disregarding many others. Both historical events and national institutions contribute to the formation of nationalism and national consciousness. The history of a place constitutes a grand narrative that imparts meaning to numerous individual events within that location. Throughout this process, the narrative interacts with, challenges, and conceptualizes a predetermined set pattern of variables, thereby generating meaning.

The process of deciphering of meaning is important for a country like America which is formed out of diverse migrant communities. Many individual incidents are on a negotiation with history in order to ascribe meaning to various historical events. Barry Alan Joyce, an American historian, in his book *The First US History Textbooks* (2015) deliberates on "the construction and dissemination of the American tale", and the book identifies both the historic and the mythic compositions of the narratives on America. In the absence of a common religious, ethnic or linguistic factor, in the case

of America, it is the grand narrative of history and culture that constitutes the foundations of the nation. The negotiations of the individual incidents, thus, have a tremendous impact on the making of the history of the nation and thereby, on the state of being an American and its consciousness.

The narrative of America begins with the arrival of Christopher Columbus. Following Columbus, numerous European powers set their sights on this resource-rich and abundant New World. These explorers were sponsored by their respective mother countries, driven by the desire to extract wealth and riches from this land. The early attempts at establishing settlements by the English, such as the failed Roanoke Colony in 1585 and the short-lived Popham Colony in 1607, were eventually followed by the successful establishment of a permanent British settlement known as the Plymouth Colony (or Plimouth) in 1620. This marked the second official English settlement in America, with Virginia (established in 1607) being the first, primarily driven by trade interests. The decision to limit the historical narrative of the United States to the eastern coast settlements and the English arrival on the mainland of America carries political implications. However, as this study focuses on the evolution of American consciousness, these implications lie outside the scope of this research.

The settlers to the Plymouth Colony in 1620 were the Puritans (popularly known as Pilgrims) who came to the New World in the ship named 'Mayflower'. On facing religious persecutions in England due to their dissent from the Church of England, the Puritans left England to settle in Netherlands in order to propagate their faith. These Puritans later moved to the New World. The Plymouth Colony and later the Massachusetts Bay Colony (1630-1691) marked the beginning of a 'successful' settlement culture in America, whereas Virginia remained a proprietary colony under

Virginia Company (Proprietary colonies were the general form of colonies that existed in the early history of colonization, where charters are issued by the Crown of the mother-country, to individuals or companies in order to supervise and develop huge tracts of land in the 'new worlds'). The early history of America, British America, is thus a unilinear history of Puritans in America. The Puritans later expanded into thirteen British colonies in America, with most of them being proprietary colonies. In 1692, Massachusetts Bay Colony asked for a separation from the English Crown. During the time, through a new Charter, the Massachusetts Colony changed itself from the theocratic to a political and secular state. The literature of the time offers no explicit reference to the conditions of Blacks or the Natives in American society.

The second major incident in the unilinear or 'naturalized' history of America is the War of Independence in the second half of the eighteenth century. (The term 'naturalized' is often used deliberately in the chapter in order to stress on the external factors in the making of the history.) This event changed the status of this 'New World' from British America to America. American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), as termed by the British historians and the American War of Independence, as described in American history officially marked the end of colonial period in America. The 'settlers' in America were henceforth the citizens of the new nation. Until the Albany Plan of 1754, which proposed a union between the colonies and a more centralized government, the residents or the settlers of America identified themselves as people of British descent or as Britishers.

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence announced the birth of a new nation, America. The adoption and ratification of the Constitution in 1788 clearly defined what is meant by the nation called America, who are and are not Americans, even

though the colonial newspapers had started using 'America' instead of British colonies from the 1770s. The American experiment of being a republic, distinct from the rampant tradition of monarchy, was viewed with skepticism. Yet this became part of American national consciousness, as it is said, "this vulnerability of the young republic in a world of hostile monarchies provided a major incentive for the cultivation of an American identity" (American Foreign Relations).

American Civil War (1861–65), was another major incident in the unilinear history of America. A civil war in a nascent nation, which is a republic, and when the society was in a state of flux was considered as a crisis in American nationalism. But it ended up in a conflation of nationalism. The conflation was amid many disagreements; yet, the nation moved to one vision. Confederate nationalism, emerged in the background of Confederate States of America - an unrecognized union that declared secession from United States and eventually led to American Civil War, had its own impact in the process of the making of American nationalism during the period. The ideologies and perspectives of the Eastern/ Northern and the Southern states varied considerably from then onwards. According to Christian B. Keller, Professor of History in the United States Army War College, the period also witnessed conflicting relationships between ethnic and national identities especially from Irish and German Americans (qtd. in Engle 42). The consciousness of the Northern states gradually became the national consciousness of United States of America.

Peter J. Parish, a prominent historian has argued that the nineteenth century American nationalism has never fit the dominant models and remained an exception to most of the rules (qtd. in Trautsch). The nationalism that emerged during the time later diffused into the subconscious of the Americans as national consciousness. The

American model nation-making and national consciousness challenged the existing patterns and models in history-making. With the Treaty of Paris 1898, America gained independence for Cuba from Spain and acquired some important Spanish possessions, notably Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and the small island of Guam, and with these overseas dependencies, America became a colonial power. From a state of chaos, towards the final years of the last decade of the nineteenth century, the nation became a colonial power and later in the twentieth century it emerged as a super-power.

In the process of nation-building the first important aspect is the making of a fixed history for that nation; the ideas like national consciousness, nationalism, etc. later stems out of it. As mentioned earlier, the historical events and the national institutions design the nation-building process and lead to progression in historical consciousness. The fixed human nature in the form of a unilinear history is significant for a country like America, as it has no history to claim beyond the 'discovery of America' by Christopher Columbus or more precisely prior to the travels of Amerigo Vespucci. In the study of historical consciousness through American travel writing this fixity of history is apparent; with the first of such being the fixity of the European 'arrival' into the land. Thomas Harriot hints at this aspect of creation of a 'new history' with 'new settlers' even in the title of his book, *A Briefe and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia* (1588). He writes:

Of the commodities there found and to be rayced, as well marchantable, as others for vi^auall, building and other nece^l/₄arie v^oces for tho^e that are and ^ohalbe the planters there; and of the nature and manners of the naturall inhabitants: Di^ocouered by the Engli^och Colony there ^oeated by Sir Richard Greinuile Knight in the yeere 1585. which remained vnder the gouernement of

Rafe Lane Eſquier, one of her Maieſties Equieres, during the ſpace of
 twelue monethes: at the ſpeciall charge and dire^aion of the Honourable S I R
 WA LTE R R A L E I G H Knight, Lord Warden of the ſtanneries; who
 therein hath beene fauoured and authoriſed by her Maieſtie and her letters
 patents. (Title page)

He describes the resources available, both for trade and for the essential needs of those who will settle there, as well as the nature and customs of the native inhabitants. The English colony, established by Sir Richard Greinuile Knight in 1585 and governed by Rafe Lane Esquire for twelve months, conducted this exploration. This endeavor was undertaken under the special patronage and direction of Sir Walter Raleigh Knight, Lord Warden of the Stanneries, who received support and authorization from Her Majesty and her letters patent. Harriot's call to join the New World signifies an invitation to participate in a new chapter of national history, asserting the authorship and ownership of the land by the English, as established by Sir Richard Greinuile Knight under the supervision of Sir Walter Raleigh. This narrative subtly legitimizes the colonial claim and the transformation of the region into an English domain.

Harriot's narrative continues the indirect process of historical creation, notably when he writes, "Directed to the Adventurers, Favorers, and Well-wishers of the action, for the inhabiting and planting there" (1), inviting adventurers, supporters, and well-wishers of Britain to partake in the New World. He asserts British authority and ownership over the land, stating that the history of the region begins with Sir Richard Greinuile Knight, the English colony, and Sir Walter Raleigh. This act of 'history-making' or 'fixity' in Harriot's narrative make parallel with the deliberate selection of events to construct a specific national history, reflecting a broader pattern of how

nations create and legitimize their historical narratives. This aligns with David Hume's perspective, where the interpretation of history is based on ordinary actions, motives, and causes, devoid of theological interpretations (Hume). Hume's premise that explanations of the past are based on an assumption of fixed human nature highlights the significance of interpreting ordinary actions in the construction of historical narratives.

Harriot details the administrative processes in the New World, noting that some regions are governed by a single town under the authority of a Wiroans or chief lord, while others are controlled by multiple towns, with governance structures varying significantly across different areas (35). The detailing on the system and the structure of the government of the New World provides the variables for the fixation of history. Later, he describes how each government has a distinct language, with greater differences the farther apart they are. Harriot further assures that the people have no means of recording history, relying solely on oral tradition passed down from father to son (37), thus implying the potential for creating a new historical narrative for America. This lack of written records among the indigenous people provided an opportunity for colonial 'history makers' to establish and fix a new history.

A similar indication of the potential for nation-building and prosperity for Britain is evident in the second travel narrative selected for study, John Smith's *A Description of New England* (1616), particularly in his accounts of the prosperous fisheries in the north. For Smith, this was evidence of the region's rich resources and strategic importance, underscoring the need for England to establish permanent settlements. As suggested in the introduction of his book, "seeking a new arena for colonial opportunities in the new world, Smith saw New England as a place where English life could be transplanted to America, and this work is an extended

advertisement and prospectus for investors and settlers, with Smith to provide the expertise and leadership” (i). This narrative thus functions as a promotional text aimed at encouraging investment and settlement, highlighting the economic and strategic benefits of colonization for England.

The title page of Smith’s narrative is thus suggestive of his ‘new’ intentions in New World. When Smith writes, “Come, so that the businesse prosper, I haue my desire; be it by Londoner, Scot, Welch, or English, that are true subjects to our King and Countrey: the good of my Countrey is that I seeke; and there is more then enough for all, if they could bee content but to proceed” (56). Here, Smith expresses that his primary goal is the prosperity of the endeavor, regardless of whether it is achieved by Londoners, Scots, Welsh, or English, as long as they are loyal subjects of the King and country. He emphasizes that his pursuit is for the benefit of his country and that there is ample opportunity for everyone if they are willing to work together. Thus, he displays his intention of writing the book as to prosper in the New World for the benefit of his own country, Britain. He indicates colonizing the New World especially when he details on the richness. He is invoking his fellow citizens to exploit the new place than sitting idle and contented. This contributes to the formative stage of American national consciousness.

In addition to the process of history-making, another important variable in studying the construction of America’s historical consciousness is the politics surrounding the terminology used to describe the settlement of British or European individuals in America. Unlike the term ‘invasion’ often employed to describe the arrival of Spaniards in the history of Latin America, the use of the term ‘settlement’ for the British or European presence in America carries distinct political implications. This variable of study is evident in Harriot when he writes “there was no towne where

we had any subtle deuse practised against vs, we leauing it vnpunished or not reuenged (because wee sought by all meanes possible to win them by gentlenesse” (41). Harriot writes that no town where they encountered any deceitful schemes went unpunished or unavenged, as they aimed to win over the inhabitants through ‘gentleness’. The ‘gentleness’ with which the English won the people in the New World is suggestive of how the English is different from other explorers like Spanish of the time. Though the context of this is the Roanoke incident of 1586; it is suggestive of the difference of Britishers from other Europeans. This attuned to the ‘Puritanic’ ideology of Black Legend.

In the process of history-making, the Spaniards were often referred to as the ‘other’ (as used in the postcolonial context), knowingly or unknowingly by the writers in the British America. Black Legend is a historiographical phenomenon which exaggerated the negativity of Catholics and especially the military conquests of the Spanish. This xenophobic propaganda perpetrated against many nations and cultures, is visible from the beginning of the ‘history-making’ in America; for the Spaniards were the greatest rivals of English and other Protestant countries of Europe then. The ‘Puritan history’ of America begins with the arrival of the fabled ‘Mayflower’ to the coast of Cape Cod in 1620. This ideology lingers in American history and national consciousness as ‘fixity’. Puritans have deliberately avoided the Natives, the Blacks who had officially arrived in America before the Puritans and even other Europeans, especially the Spaniards. The history of America thus got reduced into the Puritan arrival into the land.

The extension of the British settlement narrative in America evolved into the idea of divine intervention in the creation of the nation, establishing ‘fixity’ in the new national history. This theological interpretation, perpetuated through myths and

legends, embedded itself into the American consciousness. In the absence of a direct theological framework, the history-makers projected the “City Upon a Hill” concept, initially articulated by John Winthrop and derived from the Bible (Winthrop). This concept, suggesting America as a “beacon of hope” to the world, laid the groundwork for ideologies such as Manifest Destiny, American Exceptionalism, and the American Dream. Manifest Destiny, coined in 1845, signified the belief that the United States was divinely destined to expand its dominion and propagate democracy and capitalism across North America (“Manifest Destiny”). American Exceptionalism posits that the U.S. is fundamentally unique in its values, political system, and historical development, suggesting a distinct and positive global role (“American Exceptionalism”). The American Dream embodies the ideal of equal opportunity for all Americans to achieve their highest aspirations. These concepts not only defined America in the twentieth century but also reinforced its self-image as the ‘watchdog of the world’ in the subsequent centuries.

The evidence to this variable in history-making is seen in Harriot when he emphasizes the workings of God’s Providence on various occasions. He writes:

the worke of our God through our meanes, and that wee by him might kil and slai whom wee would without weapons and not come neere them... did come and intreatevs that we woulde bee a meanes to our God that they as others that had dealt ill with vs might in like sort die; alleaging howe much it would be for our credite and profite, as also theirs. (41)

It suggests that they sought divine intervention to eliminate their enemies without direct confrontation, believing it would enhance their reputation and benefit both parties involved. The picture of God that Harriot projects is one who protects the Britishers from the natives and also from the hostilities in the region. This remained a

prominent ideology in the history of American historical consciousness till the American War of Independence. Almost all of the colonial travel writers from America were by the Puritans and held the same view.

John Smith expounds similar sentiments when he writes, “Had those worthe Fathers & their memorable off-spring not beene more diligent for vs now in these Ages, then wee are to plant that yet vnplanted, for the after liuers” (66). In other words, Smith suggests that if those worthy ancestors and their memorable descendants had not been more diligent in their efforts for us in these times than we are in planting what remains unplanted for future generations, progress would have stalled. He considers it as the divine call of the English to be the followers of Abraham and Jesus Christ in the New World. He calls it Divine intervention that America did not go into the hands of other European powers, as he writes, “[I] oft asked such strange questions, of the goodnesse and greatnesse of those spatious Tracts of land, how they can bee thus long vnknown, or nor possessed by the Spaniard, and many such like demands” (19). He views it as providential that America did not fall into the hands of other European powers, often questioning why such vast and fertile lands remained unexplored and unclaimed by the Spanish and others.

The comparison of places of New World (for Smith it is New England) with places in Europe and his attempt to change the place names in New England with English names are other attempts on history-making. He writes:

The Bay of Chisapeack and Sagadahock: but onely here and there wee touched or haue seene a little the edges of those large dominions, which doe stretch themselues into the Maine, God doth know how many thousand miles; whereof we can yet no more iudge, . . . But it is not a worke for euery one, to manage such an affaire as makes a discouerie, and plants a Colony. (21)

The author reflects on their limited exploration of the Bay of Chesapeake and Sagadahock, noting they have only touched upon the edges of vast territories extending possibly thousands of miles inland. They compare their situation to a traveler sailing between England and France who can only glimpse the harbors and dangers without fully understanding the richness and diversity of lands like Spain, Italy, Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary. They emphasize that exploring and establishing a colony is a significant endeavor requiring skill and dedication beyond ordinary means.

John Smith seeks permission from the King of Britain to change the names of places in New England from 'barbarous' names, it is another attempt towards the 'making' of history. He writes, "Cape Henry, and Cape Charles. Since then, it beeing my chance to range some other parts of America, whereof I heere present your Highness the description in a Map; my humble sute is, you would please to change their Barbarous names, for such English, as Posterity may say, Prince Charles was their Godfather"(3). He says that he has explored Cape Henry and Cape Charles. Since then, he had the opportunity to survey other regions of America, details of which he has provided to His Highness in a map. He even requested the Highness to rename these places from their current 'barbarous' names to English ones, so that future generations might recognize Prince Charles's role in their names. These efforts exemplify attempts to shape the historical consciousness of America through geographical exploration and the imposition of English names, reflecting a colonial desire to assert ownership and commemorate royal influence over the New World. Such acts underscore the early stages of constructing a narrative that aligned America with European cultural and political frameworks.

Mary Rowlandson's *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682) recounts her experience of being held captive by Native Indians and her eventual release. Within this Puritan narrative, the historical consciousness is deeply rooted in the notion of the 'City Upon a Hill.' Rowlandson's account reflects this belief as she states, "in my travels an Indian came to me and told me, if I were willing, he and his squaw would run away, and go home along with me. I told him no: I was not willing to run away, but desired to wait God's time, that I might go home quietly, and without fear. And now God hath granted me my desire" (30). The perceived Divine Providence experienced by the settlers in the New World, particularly when they were saved from the hands of what they considered 'barbarous' natives, further contributed to the shaping of the historical consciousness in America.

The Puritan belief in divine Providence, even in the face of adversity, and the conviction that they would be rewarded for their sufferings in the New World form another significant narrative of history-making among the Puritans. This narrative reinforces the idea that the land was already bestowed upon them by the Creator. Rowlandson emphasizes this when she writes, "I have learned to look beyond present and smaller troubles, and to be quieted under them. As Moses said, 'Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord'" (34). The reflections on Divine Providence indirectly suggest that the events that unfolded during the nation's formation were part of a larger divine plan. Rowlandson's narrative underscores the belief that amidst suffering and uncertainty, individuals finding solace in Divine Providence exemplifies a collective belief that America's destiny was shaped by the will of God, thereby influencing the nation's historical trajectory.

In the *Journal of Madame Knight* (1825) by Sarah Kemble Knight, she provides a detailed account of contemporary events, offering a valuable historical perspective distinct from the Puritan narrative of Rowlandson. Her direct references to historical circumstances make her work an essential document for understanding the period. For instance, Knight describes the Governor of Connecticut at the time, John Winthrop, as “A Gentleman of an ancient and honorable family, whose father had previously served as Governor here, and his grandfather had held the same position in Massachusetts. This gentleman is known for his courtesy and hospitality, and has earned the affection of the people through his commendable service in office” (60). Her observations provide insight into the governance and social dynamics of the era, enriching our understanding of historical contexts beyond the narratives typically associated with early American literature.

In another instance Knight provides a detailed account of religious practices both within and beyond Massachusetts. She observes that the majority adhere to the Church of England, served by a New England clergyman in a well-appointed church setting. Alongside these Anglicans, there are Dutch communities and various dissenting congregations such as Baptists and Quakers. While less stringent in Sabbath observance compared to Boston, they maintain precise adherence to their religious customs. Knight portrays them as sociable, courteous to one another, and hospitable to strangers. She notes the fashionable attire of English settlers and contrasts it with the looser garments and distinctive French hoods adorned with jewels worn by Dutch women, from the middle class to the elderly (68-9). This depiction not only enriches our understanding of daily life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony but also contributes to the broader historical consciousness of the period.

Knight's journal also offers a vivid portrayal of life beyond the Puritan stronghold, illustrating a significant shift in American national consciousness during her travels through Boston and New York. Despite some elements of racial prejudice in her narrative, Knight's observations on places and people are largely objective, providing an authentic glimpse into the region during that era. Her journal, alongside narratives like Rowlandson's, enriches the historical tapestry of America by detailing the everyday realities of the time in an unbiased manner. The introduction to her book underscores Knight's spirited and perceptive nature, highlighting her departure from the strict and narrow Puritan stereotype. For instance, she openly defied Sabbath norms by riding on Sundays and critiqued the Puritan prohibition on innocent merriment among young people as excessively stringent, reflecting her broader perspective on social norms and religious practices in early New England (xi).

Jonathan Carver in his *Travels Through North America in the years 1766, 1767, and 1768* published in 1778 contributes to the development of Manifest Destiny, particularly focusing on the less explored American West during the late eighteenth century. His exploration of these frontiers played a crucial role in shaping American national consciousness in the nineteenth century. Carver is recognized as a pioneer in the exploration of these regions, which later became a prominent theme in American discourse. In the introduction to his book, Carver articulates his dedication to uncovering the unknown parts of North America, despite the challenges posed by inaccurate maps and biased accounts propagated by the French. He acknowledges the strategic importance of acquiring accurate knowledge for the benefit of his fellow countrymen, highlighting his commitment to dispelling misconceptions and revealing the true identities and territories of indigenous nations (ii). His efforts underscored the

quest for territorial expansion and the ideological underpinnings that would later define Manifest Destiny in American history.

The spirit of Carver behind writing the book was purely nationalistic. He wanted to give an accurate account of North America, which he believed will eventually contribute to the nation building. It is this element that makes the book an important document in the study of American consciousness. The publication of a travel narrative just prior to American War of Independence on the idea of Westward Expansion contributed to the making of a new mental construct of America. When Carver writes, “as the seat of Empire from time immemorial has been gradually progressive towards the West, there is no doubt but that at some future period, mighty kingdoms will emerge from these wildernesses, and stately palaces and solemn temples...,” (v) it is identified as the earliest traces of the theory of American Exceptionalism in American travel writing.

Carver’s work *Travels Through North America*, despite containing racial remarks towards Native Americans, actively seeks to familiarize readers with the region and dispel fears about its indigenous inhabitants. His intention is clear in his assertion that European perceptions of Native Americans as savages are unfounded, based on his personal experiences of receiving hospitable and courteous treatment from every tribe he encountered in the interior parts. This narrative challenges established stereotypes and contributes to shaping historical consciousness in America by presenting a more nuanced view of Native American societies. Carver’s efforts to portray indigenous peoples in a positive light serve to encourage further exploration and settlement in the West, aligning with broader themes of American expansionism and the Puritan discourse of history. His book thus becomes a significant document in the study of American historical consciousness, offering a new perspective on the

West and influencing subsequent narratives of Manifest Destiny and frontier exploration.

Carver's account of the American Frontier, initially an unfamiliar territory, eventually became the authoritative history of the region. He observes that the Winnebagoes, originally from some provinces of New Mexico, were driven from their homeland by internal conflicts or Spanish conquests and sought refuge in the northern regions a century before his visit. He bases his conclusions on the Winnebagoes' strong connection to the Naudowessie Indians despite living over six hundred miles away, their unique and incomprehensible dialect, and their deep-seated hatred for the Spaniards, whom they call Black People (21-23). Despite acknowledging the superstitions of the natives, Carver positions the French and Spaniards as the 'other' in his narrative, rather than the indigenous people. On his way to Lake Pepin, he observed the ruins of a large town and learned from neighboring Indians that it was abandoned thirty years earlier when the Great Spirit supposedly appeared on a pyramid of rocks. He skeptically recounts this superstition, suggesting it was likely a scheme by the French or Spaniards for selfish purposes, though the exact method is unknown (31). Carver's narrative emphasizes that while the French and Spaniards have previously ventured into the region, he has 'educated' the Indians in favor of the British. Writing during a time when America was still under British rule, he urges the English to continue the westward expansion, positioning his account as both a historical record and a call to action for British colonial efforts.

Carver also elaborates on Mr. James Robert Adair, an English traveler who settled among the native people of America, to add credibility to his narrative about the American West. Carver re-narrates the history of the region as described by Adair, presenting a 'new' history that emphasizes divine intervention in America's nation-

building process. Carver elaborates on Adair's theory that Native Americans have origins linked to the Jews, citing organizational structures, divine precepts, governance, angelic beliefs, and linguistic similarities (208). While not explicitly endorsing this theory, Carver leaves the judgment to readers, subtly hinting at a possible connection to lend credibility to his own account (210). Adair's work, popular at the time, supported the colonization of Native Americans and projected American Exceptionalism, suggesting America's uniqueness and potential for westward expansion. This expansion not only made America more self-sufficient and self-reliant but also infused a new spirit into the national consciousness, particularly after gaining independence from England.

In his final notes, Carver's contribution to American consciousness becomes evident. He addresses the topic of discovering a north-west passage to India, which has been the subject of numerous debates and investigations. Additionally, various attempts have been made by him through Hudson's Bay to reach the Pacific Ocean, all ending in failure. Carver, however, chooses not to list the advantages that would arise from this much-desired discovery, as its benefits are already well-known to the commercial world and do not require further explanation. Instead, he focuses on outlining the methods that seem most likely to ensure success for future adventurers (534). The author omits to discuss the potential advantages while discussing the discovery of a north-west passage to India and Hudson's Bay's attempts to cross the Pacific Ocean. Instead, he concentrates on the techniques that are likely to make future explorers successful.

The nineteenth century witnessed numerous movements and events in America that played a significant role in shaping the national consciousness. The study of Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes* (1843) brings the reader's attention

to the transcendentalist movement, which is uniquely American and has no parallel elsewhere in the world. In this naturalist and transcendentalist account, we follow the journey of an American woman as she traverses a diverse and unique path in the nation-building process of America. The study of historical consciousness during this period reveals deliberate attempts by America, both in political and historical discourses, to fortify the foundations of a young nation. Throughout the century, there were conscious efforts to shape a distinct American identity and project the nation's sublimity.

During this time, tensions between Americans and the English had escalated into a war of words. Margaret Fuller, in her reflections on the future of New England, was acutely aware of the negative example set by England. American critic Susan Belasco Smith interprets *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* as a significant contribution to an early national "paper war" -- a prolonged debate over national superiority within the literary works of British and American writers (191). Fuller has actively shaped America's historical narrative by placing America within a distinct context, separate from Britain. She contrasts the mechanized landscape of industrial England with the capitalist North of America and the sublime scenic beauty of the South. Fuller portrays the ravaged English landscape, overwhelmed by material interests, as "noisy" (12), and critiques the destructive effects of capitalism on society. She notes how "old landmarks are broken down, and the land, for a season, bears none, except for the rudeness of conquest and the needs of the day, whose bivouac fires blacken the sweetest forest glades" (18). Fuller emphasizes how historical changes and the pressing needs of the time can alter the landscape, erasing old landmarks and disrupting the harmony of nature.

While Fuller expresses her disapproval of the capitalist mechanization prevalent in the American North, she holds a strong admiration for the unspoiled beauty of the American South and West. Her depiction of the American South, even in its pristine state, played a significant role in shaping the history of the nation. Her writings served as a definitive stand, contributing a new dimension to the emerging sense of nationhood in America. The untrodden paths she traveled with a pair of strong horses, capable of navigating through mud holes and around stumps, along with a knowledgeable guide who served as both a remarkable leader and companion, profoundly impacted American consciousness. This guide, well-versed in the natural and human history of the nation, has also possessed a keen hunter's eye that effortlessly discovered places of unparalleled beauty (37). Fuller's journeys brought a fresh spirit to American consciousness.

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, as America was in the formative stages of creating its unique identity, developing Americanness, and defining the American Creed, the writings of Fuller complemented the entire process. According to Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish economist and sociologist who is best known for his work on social issues and racial inequality in the United States, Americans from diverse national origins, classes, regions, creeds, and ethnic backgrounds share a common social ethos and political creed (3). He identifies this American creed as being deeply rooted in the philosophy of enlightenment, Christianity, and English law. It embodies the ideals of liberty, equality, justice, and fair treatment for all individuals (4). The early decades of the nineteenth century played a crucial role in the formation of this national temperament. The period witnessed people with varying religious inclinations, cultural practices, and ethnic origins gradually coalescing into a unified identity under the umbrella of American

national identity. This amalgamation of diverse backgrounds contributed to the strengthening of national and nationalistic consciousness during that time.

The shared sense of being American and the common historical experiences find their origins in the national identity discussed above. The writings of Fuller significantly contribute to historical consciousness by fostering this sense of shared history, despite its criticisms of materialism. She recounts the lingering indignation over the surrender of Detroit, a perceived national disgrace handed down through generations, stating:

At Detroit we stopped for half a day. This place is famous in our history, and the unjust anger at its surrender is still expressed by almost everyone who passes there. I had always shared the common feeling on this subject; for the indignation at a disgrace to our arms that seemed so unnecessary, has been handed down from father to child, and few of us have taken the pains to ascertain where the blame lay. (267-8)

This collective memory reinforces national identity and highlights the importance of critically examining historical narratives. During her travels through Oregon, Fuller reflects on the concept of “many histories,” emphasizing that history comprises multiple narratives beyond those of the powerful and famous (50). She, thus, elucidates that history is a tapestry woven from countless individual stories, each deserving recognition and remembrance.

As a transcendentalist, Fuller is driven to unearth hidden and unsung histories. She firmly believes that the individuals she encounters hold their unique theories about the history of the world. These people perceive a gap in the genesis of history and endeavor to fill it by attributing the intervention of some secondary power, guided by moral sympathies (214). Through her exploration of these untold narratives and

perspectives, Fuller actively contributes to charting a new and distinctive course in the history of America. By placing emphasis on these overlooked histories, she lays the foundation for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of America's past, thereby shaping a future that is inclusive and equitable for all.

The American Civil War which took place from 1861 to 1865 is usually considered as a watershed moment in the history of America as a nation. It brought about significant changes in the actors involved in shaping history, the ideals cherished by the nation, and even the interpretation of what it means to be an American. The historical narrative that emerged during this period played a crucial role in crafting a new national identity for America. Over time, this narrative became the ethical, moral, and political foundation of the nation. Paul Starr, a professor of sociology and public affairs at Princeton University, highlights the crucial decision of American political elites to adopt British liberal constitutionalism, which greatly influenced the subsequent development of the nation (38). This historical process also contributed to the formation of a collective identification with the United States as a nation.

Both the elites and the homogenized public culture of America played significant roles in shaping the fixed aspects of American culture and Americanism. Consequently, the historical incident of the American Civil War gradually became an integral part of the homogenized public culture, contributing to the emergence of a grand narrative in America that resulted in the formation of a common national identity. According to Philip Gleason, a historian and scholar known for his work on American identity and Americanization, American identity is rooted in ideology, characterized by a commitment to a specific set of values and political principles (32). After the Civil War, a significant trend in American writing was the process of nation-

making and legitimizing American identity by emphasizing shared commonalities. During the Reconstruction period, the focus was on establishing fixed ideological and traditional elements to create new and stable national institutions. These institutions played a crucial role in shaping the history of the nation and became essential components of the grand narratives for the new America. The literature, art, and politics of the time were centered on 'civic' or 'creedal' nationalism.

Mark Twain writes about the construction of "new American" identity in his book *Life on the Mississippi* (1883). The "development" he witnesses in the South after the civil war contributes to the new national identity and history. The "development" as suggested by Mark Twain turned into a new nation-narrative. He breaks the conventions till then about the history of America when he writes, "the world and the books are so accustomed to use, and over-use, the word 'new' in connection with our country, that we early get and permanently retain the impression that there is nothing old about it" (7). By focusing on the "historical history" of Mississippi, he constructs the 'antiquity' of the nation. Throughout his narrative, he is in the process of the creation of an institution for United States of America, as he states:

Let us drop the Mississippi's physical history, and say a word about its historical history—so to speak. . . . The world and the books are so accustomed to use, and over-use, the word 'new' in connection with our country, that we early get and permanently retain the impression that there is nothing old about it. We do of course know that there are several comparatively old dates in American history, but the mere figures convey to our minds no just idea, no distinct realization, of the stretch of time which they represent. To say that De Soto, the first white man who ever saw the

Mississippi River, saw it in 1542, is a remark which states a fact without interpreting it. (7)

Here, he highlights the importance of recognizing America's historical depth, noting that the common overuse of the word 'new' leads to an undervaluation of the nation's past. He emphasizes that stating De Soto saw the Mississippi River in 1542 provides a fact without conveying the true historical significance of that date.

In and around Mississippi, Mark Twain not only 'creates' a new history but also consciously elevates the Mississippi River into an essential national institution in the process of nation-building. Mark Twain believes that historical dates, such as 1542, might seem insignificant on their own, but when placed in the context of neighboring historical dates and facts, they add perspective and color. He emphasizes that the discovery of the Mississippi River is one such crucial American date that holds respectable age and significance (7-8). His journey along the Mississippi River leads him to create a fresh historical account while underscoring the river's significance as a cornerstone in the nation's development. He emphasizes the importance of contextualizing historical events and singles out the discovery of the Mississippi River as a pivotal moment in American history.

Mark Twain expresses astonishment at the fact that the Mississippi River remained unexplored by white settlers for a significant period. Nevertheless, his narrative brings a new tradition and glory to the Mississippi, particularly when compared to the history of Europe. He highlights that only a little less than twenty-five years after De Soto first glimpsed the river, Shakespeare was born, lived for a little over fifty years, and then passed away. Yet, it took more than half a century after Shakespeare's death for the second white man to lay eyes on the Mississippi. Mark Twain contrasts this timeline to the modern era, where people don't allow a mere

hundred and thirty year to pass before revisiting a marvel (10). His elaboration adds the richness and prosperity of the Mississippi River into the depth and antiquity of the nation America. His narration transforms the Mississippi into an iconic symbol and a national institution that contributes to defining America.

The book also offers a detailed description of the river towns, particularly highlighting the significance of Vicksburg in the post-Civil War Reconstruction era. Vicksburg's war history is rich with variety and incidents, encompassing all phases of warfare, from sieges and assaults to bombardments and famines (349). Mark Twain emphasizes that the resilience of the town and the establishment of the most beautiful national cemetery there memorialize the sacrifices made during the tumultuous period. He ensures that these sacrifices become an integral part of the history of America, and effectively incorporate them into the nation's fabric. As a result, Mississippi emerges as a crucial factor in the process of American nation-building, particularly after the Civil War. By weaving these events into the national narrative, Mark Twain portrays the Mississippi River as a unifying force in binding the nation's diverse voices into a single, cohesive identity.

Another unavoidable element in the history of America is the life and experiences of African-Americans. Due to their limited access to education and the traumatic nature of their lives in America, their stories were often underrepresented in the works of the eighteenth century. The study of historical consciousness in Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself* (1861) uncovers the factual exploration of the history of slavery in America. However, since the book reflects a post-American Civil War, abolitionist sentiment, the themes of slavery, travel, and freedom take on metaphorical interpretations. In Jacobs' travel narrative, the focus is primarily on the consciousness of black women during that era. Aligning

with the trends of the time, Jacobs presents her memoir as a travel narrative that details the experiences of her alter-ego, Linda Brent.

Jacobs' narrative exposes the harsh realities of slave life and the oppressive conditions under which black individuals, particularly black women, were forced to live, and bound by the laws of the land. She provides detailed insights into the impact of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 on the lives of slaves, making them vulnerable to capture and re-enslavement, with its enforcement even in Free States affecting the lives of their citizens. Linda, the protagonist, comes to accept the prevailing beliefs regarding the low status of blacks and women in society. This acceptance reflects the imprint of national ideals in the value system of black women during that time. The narrative also highlights the submissive nature of black women towards authority, the law, and white individuals. Characters like Mrs. Bruce, who purchases Linda's freedom, serve as projections of this aspect of American consciousness according to Jacobs' perspective. Her narrative is not only a factual account but also carries metaphorical connotations, revealing deeper meanings and symbolism.

In the Introduction, Jacobs discusses her hesitation to write her life's story but ultimately shares her experiences to awaken Northern women to the suffering endured by the enslaved women in the South. She seeks to join other writers in exposing the reality of slavery to the people of the Free States, hoping her effort will make a difference (6). The historical setting of the book throws light into slavery, slave trade, plantation life, Slave Resistance, Abolition Movement and the Fugitive Slave Act. The life of a slave is evident from the very beginning of the narration. She starts the narrative thus, "I was born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away.... They lived together in a comfortable home; and, though we were all slaves, I was so fondly shielded that I never dreamed I was a piece

of merchandise, trusted to them for safe keeping, and liable to be demanded of them at any moment” (11-12).

The historical details and complexities of slavery are evident in Jacobs’ narrative. She recounts the experiences of her maternal grandmother, a remarkable woman who was the daughter of a South Carolina planter. During the Revolutionary War, her grandmother and her mother, along with her two siblings, were granted freedom and given money to travel to St. Augustine, only to be captured, brought back, and sold to different owners. Jacobs describes their resilience and strength in the face of continued discrimination. The institutional practice of the slave trade is further detailed by the narrator, Linda Brent, at the death of her first mistress. Despite her grandmother’s long and faithful service, none of her children escaped the auction block, being reduced to mere property like “the cotton they plant, or the horses they tend” (16). This dehumanization, treating slaves as expendable commodities, illustrates the brutal reality of slavery in the nineteenth century.

The conflicting emotions experienced by the slaves amid the backdrop of the abolitionist movement are evident in Jacobs’ narrative, particularly when she describes the death of her father. Despite her desire to mourn and visit her father’s house the next morning, she is ordered to gather flowers for her mistress’s party decorations. She spends the day weaving festoons while her father’s dead body lies nearby. This callous treatment from her owners reflects their view of her father as mere property, disregarding his humanity. Moreover, they believe he has erred by teaching his children to recognize their own humanity (18). However, this questioning spirit that emerges with the abolitionist movement is often stifled by the inherent submissiveness instilled in them by the oppressive time they live in. In her concluding remarks, Jacobs portrays the resilience of a former slave who has lived a significant

portion of her life in bondage. Despite her lack of formal education, she diligently works to provide education for her children, facing challenges like fleeing from man-hunters and woman-hunters. Yet, she perseveres through these obstacles, recording her eventful life by the light of a midnight lamp (305).

In order to unite America as a nation, after American Civil War, attempts were made deliberately by the nation-builders, politicians and thinkers to re-define and re-design American ideals and its consciousness. The interpretation of these American ideals changed from time to time depending on the needs of the age. This validates the American ideals of the nineteenth century. As argued by Carl Degler, America needs “a nationally defined history”. With the changes in the ideals of the nation, the history got appropriated in order to make a grand narrative that will fit into all the political decisions made by America. These appropriations encompass a shift in the nation’s foreign policy, evident in America’s aid to the Cuban resistance in 1898. This marked a departure from the traditional practice of liberal nationalism. Furthermore, the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1898 led to America’s sudden transformation into a colonial power with overseas dependencies, including Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam. This sudden expansion of America’s territorial holdings marked a departure from its previous emphasis on territorial integrity within its own borders.

The acquisition of these territories also raised questions about America’s intentions and responsibilities as a colonial power, leading to debates about the appropriate approach to governing these newly acquired lands. This contributed to the emergence of a new type of national culture, as suggested by Percival Chubb, a British-American social reformer and educator, in his analysis of the divided worlds in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (4). According to Chubb, this new national culture possessed a modern spirit while distinctly embodying an “American” essence.

However, it was also derived from ancestral British sources and included influences from German, Celtic, French, and Norse peoples. The concept of the “American race” was connected to the “English race” and the Teutonic races of Western Europe, forming a discursive axis that linked modern, cultivated, and civilized peoples (4). He implies that the new national culture of America was a unique blend of modernity and traditional influences, with connections to both its British heritage and a diverse range of European influences.

The examination of John Steinbeck’s New Americanist writings in his book *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962) reveals a discussion about a new America that suited the needs of the time. As Steinbeck reaches Connecticut, he has a realization that the United States has become vast and seemingly impossible to traverse. This leads him to question his involvement in a project that appears insurmountable (20). The notion of an ever-unfinished project is not solely a mental construct of Steinbeck’s, but rather a reflection of the ever-evolving spirit of America. The country has always been in a state of constant change, growth, and adaptation to the challenges and opportunities it faces. This dynamic characteristic of America is manifested in its ongoing quest for progress, improvement, and the pursuit of its ideals.

It can be argued that twentieth-century America expanded its boundaries, adopting a new value system deeply entrenched with modernist features such as assimilation, patriotism, self-sufficiency, and the rule of law. This construction of “America” also incorporated Protestant values and a temporal narrative that linked the nation's past and future to a sacred-secular mission of redeeming individuals and the world (Chubb 4). The roots of the American Dream can be traced back to these foundations. Steinbeck delves into the changes in history, questioning the notion of

roots and their significance. He critiques the long history of humanity, pondering over how far back our species' history truly extends (68). He reflects on the evolution of human priorities throughout time.

Steinbeck's modernist perspective challenges the fixities and traditions of history-making by reflecting on America's thirst for history. He finds that historical markers, especially in states with shorter histories, reach a 'glorious best' in their prose of statehood, evoking a sense of lyricism. Drawing parallels to ancient Greece and England, Steinbeck underscores the intense desire for historical association among Americans. He notes how individual Americans, akin to ancient quarrels over Homer's birthplace or England's hunger for Geoffrey of Monmouth's fabricated kings, eagerly seek connections with their past. Steinbeck portrays genealogists as tirelessly sifting through ancestral debris in search of greatness, highlighting America's profound hunger for historical identity (54).

The twentieth-century brought about a challenge to any fixed notions in history with the emergence of modernism and later modernism. Steinbeck's references in his book serve as excellent examples of this shift. He expresses the idea that American history no longer adheres to fixed representations, as both Yellowstone National Park and Disneyland are celebrated as unique aspects of the nation (104). This new approach to history focuses on fragments and breaks away from traditional linear narratives, embracing a modernist way of history-making. This modernist perspective aligns with the evolving trend in national consciousness. During his travels through Idaho, the narrator encounters a man who questions the disappearance of the once powerful figures who shaped the nation. The man expresses the belief that the nation now lacks courage and mentions how only African Americans seem to

display true courage. This statement further challenges the unilinear history that had previously framed American historical and national consciousness (107).

The study of historic consciousness in Edmund White's *States of Desire: Travels in Gay America* (1980) is different from the other books that are selected for this study as it offers a unique perspective on alternate sexual identities. While the national consciousness underwent continuous redefinition based on the demands of those in power, the concerns of homosexuals were often marginalized and excluded from mainstream discourse. White writes in the Introduction of the book, "Talk of gay politics or gay culture or gay history usually was met with a smile, c'mon, it's all about getting laid!" (xii). White highlights the prevailing attitude towards gay issues, where discussions of gay politics, culture, or history were dismissed as being solely focused on sexual pursuits.

However, White's narrative delves deeper into the historical consciousness of the gay community, exploring their experiences and the impact of their consciousness on the shaping of their national identity. His focus is on understanding the history of the gay consciousness and its contributions to the broader national consciousness. Through his travels in various parts of America, White uncovers the diverse experiences of the gay community and sheds light on the struggles, achievements, and unique cultural aspects that have shaped their identity. In his experiences in San Francisco, he writes of some changes that happened in the course of his history. He writes:

Gerry is a twentieth-century phenomenon. In the past, as George Orwell has reminded us, the bulk of humanity passed almost instantly from being adolescents (amorous, high-spirited, open to experience) into being toothless, downtrodden, self-sacrificing Mum and Dad. Only the aristocratic few

escaped this sudden transition and prolonged the period of introspection, dalliance, egocentricity, physical beauty. Even so, this grace period ended in one's early thirties. (67)

He highlights how societal norms and expectations have changed over time, and how the concept of youth and adulthood has evolved in the twentieth century, particularly in the context of gay consciousness and identity. It touches upon the complexities of growing up and explores the impact of cultural and social norms on the experiences of individuals from different backgrounds.

In White's exploration of gay history in America, he presents a distinct trajectory that differs from the conventional or mainstream narrative. He highlights that during the forties, fifties, and even sixties of the twentieth century, the gay period was often seen as an "adolescent period." Here, the term "adolescent" is not used derogatorily but rather to convey that homosexuals were viewed as individuals who "arrested" their development and "refused to grow up," as described by White (67). Unfortunately, society often portrayed gay individuals as immature, contributing to biased and unfair perceptions of their identity and consciousness. As a consequence, gay experiences, ideas, and consciousness were frequently marginalized and excluded from public or mainstream discourses. This exclusion perpetuated misconceptions and limited the broader understanding of the diverse experiences within the gay community.

In the book, the American ideals of liberty, equality, and the American Dream are indeed present, but their representation takes on a different orientation. The historical consciousness of liberty, in particular, is often portrayed metaphorically rather than explicitly. The book sheds light on the challenges faced by gays and lesbians in society, which consequently affects their understanding of national

consciousness. White points out that society's tendency to place gays and lesbians outside the norms of "normal" society create a significant problem for their integration into the broader national consciousness. They are not considered part of the societal norm, as reflected in the lack of proper representation in mainstream media. Hollywood, as an influential medium, fails to adequately represent homosexual characters, relegating them to superficial or stereotypical roles, or sometimes omitting them entirely (6).

Nevertheless, the national consciousness, on the other hand, is not biased or varied according to their difference in sexual orientation, as White puts it:

When a gay teacher is asked if he would advocate his homosexuality in class, he responds: 'No. It's totally inappropriate to advocate personal matters in the classroom, whether they be religion, political philosophy, or sexuality.... We don't preach homosexuality to our students-we teach the subject matter of our classes English, history, math or whatever.... Gay teachers aren't much different from any others'. (317)

The national consciousness projected through institutions working in society and culture varies with changes in society and time. It has little influence on sexual and gender differences; instead, everything falls into the general or common American consciousness, which is continuous. Historical consciousness thus contributes to the progress of the nation, as history plays a vital role in the advancement of the country. It fosters loyal citizens, intelligent voters, good neighbors, promoting peace and tolerance, which are fundamental values in America. Historical consciousness helps shape stable and well-rounded individuals (Eltis).

American identity and national consciousness are deeply rooted in the history of America. Throughout history, various factors have redefined the concept of

historical consciousness, including cultural changes, scientific advancements, political discussions, and technological achievements. The idea of progressiveness and modernity has become more crucial in shaping historical narratives than the chivalric histories of kings and nobles from the past. From the propagandist historical consciousness of Thomas Harriot and John Smith, there is a shift to colonial English and Puritan consciousness seen in the works of Mary Rowlandson. Sarah Kemble Knight's account offers a more authentic description of places, people, and manners. Jonathan Carver contributes to the historical consciousness of America as a nation with frontiers.

Margaret Fuller, rooted in transcendentalism, provides a unique and distinct dimension to the historical consciousness of Americans, differing from British and European perspectives. The writings of Mark Twain and Harriet Jacobs, both occurring after the American Civil War, align with the abolitionist ideals and Reconstruction activities of the time. The writings of John Steinbeck are influenced by the New Americanist ideals, suit the needs of their respective periods and add a different dimension to historical consciousness projected into the national consciousness. Finally, Edmund White's work offers a different yet aligned perspective of historical consciousness, contributing to the understanding of the experiences and struggles faced by the gay community in America.

Chapter 3

American as Pilgrim: American Spiritual Consciousness

“I hear and behold God in every object, yet
Understand God not in the least,
Nor do I understand who there can be more
Wonderful than myself.” (Whitman, lines 1273-1276)

Spirituality and travel have been intertwined since ancient times. The quest for self-discovery or a connection with the divine has led travelers on pilgrimages, creating a deep connection between religion and travel. Religious texts from the oldest surviving times often depict physical journeys as symbolic representations of the journey of the soul. The accounts of such travels are as ancient as the origins of world religions. The journey of the Hebrews played a significant role in shaping Semitic religions, marking the beginning of religious travels. Pilgrim journeys were a prevailing trend during ancient and medieval times, with the medieval age being regarded as the last great age of pilgrimages. However, with the emergence of colonialism and industrialization, travel began to serve more utilitarian purposes, and the focus shifted towards materialistic needs. The non-utilitarian nature of pilgrimages gradually waned during this period, as the world witnessed a shift towards a more secular and practical approach to travel.

America was never a destination for the pilgrimages in the early colonial phase, yet America, as a nation, was founded on the spirit of pilgrimage. This chapter is an attempt to analyze the spiritual foundations of America as a nation and also American as a pilgrim (in the broader sense of the term and not the meaning of pilgrim corresponding to the Puritans) through the study of select American travel narratives. It also makes an inquiry into the trajectory of national consciousness which

stems from a spiritual consciousness. Hence, the impact of the American spirituality at different layers of social, cultural and political interactions and evolution of the idea through different periods, its impact and influence on the American national consciousness are elaborated in this chapter.

The accounts of pilgrimages throughout history have not only enriched our understanding of the past but also provided valuable insights into societal and cultural aspects of the time. Among these, Sir Richard Torkyngton's *Expedition to Jerusalem* in 1517 stands out as a significant milestone, not only in travel writing but in literature as a whole (Sherman 24). Likewise, Samuel Purchas' work *Pilgrimage* (1613) is considered a benchmark in religious travel writings, offering a comprehensive survey of people and religions from around the world (Sherman 23). Apart from religious pilgrimages, many non-religious travel accounts also shed light on the spiritual temperament of different regions. According to William H. Sherman's "Stirrings and Searchings (1500–1720)," there was a tendency among seventeenth-century travelers to draw parallels between their wanderings and sufferings and the concept of pilgrimage (24). William Lithgow's *Rare Adventures & Painful Peregrinations* (1632) is a notable example of this trend (Sherman 25).

The 'unified' or 'natural' history of America traces the origins of spirituality on the American mainland to the arrival of the Pilgrims in America. The Pilgrims were a group of dissenters among the English Protestants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They emerged from the Puritans of England and, under the leadership of Robert Brown, an Anglican Priest; they rejected the Puritan approach of reforming the Church from within the Church. Instead, they believed in a reformation outside the 'Established Church,' which, at that time, was the Church of England. This group of dissenters referred to themselves as 'Brownists'. Due to religious

persecutions in England, the Brownists later escaped to the Netherlands. However, they became concerned about their distinct cultural identity being diluted through integration with Dutch culture. As a result, they decided to seek a new settlement where they could freely practice their religion without compromising their beliefs.

The dissenters, upon learning about the New World, made the decision to travel there and thus entered into an agreement with the Virginia Company of London. Their objective was to establish a new colony in the New World, with the intention of improving the prospects of their nation, England, in this uncharted territory. These dissenters, who were later labeled as 'Pilgrims,' were originally the persecuted Brownists of England. Despite their religious motivations, the Pilgrims also recognized the economic opportunities that the venture presented. This dual purpose of seeking religious freedom and pursuing economic interests became integral to their journey to the New World. This complicated origin of the 'Pilgrims' who were originally the Puritans, continues to serve as the backbone of American identity. Their unique blend of spirituality and materialism, which may seem contradictory within the context of Christianity, has played a central role in shaping the history and culture of the United States.

Max Weber, a German sociologist and historian, deliberates on it as a confluence of contradictory variables of Christian ethics and modernity, in the context of America in his book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. According to Weber, "Puritanism gave Americans a sense of history as a progressive drama under the direction of God in which they played a role akin to, if not prophetically aligned with, that of the Old Testament Jews as a new chosen people" (125). The identity of the Americans as the 'chosen people', for him "supplied an ethics that somehow balanced charity and self-discipline. It counseled moderation within a

psychology that saw worldly prosperity as a sign of divine favor. Such ethics were particularly urgent in a New World where opportunity was rich, but the source of moral authority was obscure” (99). For a nation with no moral authority, Puritanism served as the foundation on which the British Americans could build on their concept of a nation.

American Puritanism indeed took shape during the seventeenth century, and this period also witnessed the emergence of another distinctive feature in American spirituality: materialism. As early travelers moved from England to America with the goal of improving their prospects and seeking material prosperity, this materialistic element became an unsung motto among the settlers. The early travel accounts of Thomas Harriot and John Smith subtly hint at this materialistic aspect of spirituality. The American Puritans saw the profit and riches of the land as a reward for their hard work and diligent efforts, which aligns with the ideology of the ‘covenant of work.’ The confluence of materialism and spirituality is evident from the very beginning of American spiritual consciousness, as reflected in John Smith’s writings. He acknowledges the abundant wealth and prosperity found in the New World, resulting from the settlers’ diligent endeavors. The early settlers’ pursuit of material wealth and prosperity was intricately connected with their spiritual beliefs, and this aspect of American spirituality continued to evolve and shape the nation’s identity over time.

As seen in history, the Pilgrims initially aimed to settle in Virginia, but due to unexpected weather conditions, their ship anchored in Cape Cod, leading to the establishment of Plymouth Colony in 1620. The Pilgrims, with the support of investors, settled in the New World, and their arrival contributed to the larger European settlement in America, known as the Great Migration of 1620-1640. In Plymouth, the settlers implemented a new system of governance and religious

practices. The various waves of Brownism in England influenced the timing and motivations behind different colonies' migration to America. In the early phase of settlement, there was a general agreement on the 'Puritan' values that formed the foundation of the nation. Over time, the Massachusetts Bay Colony, governed by relatively conservative Puritans, emerged as a prominent colony both in terms of religion and politics. The changing circumstances and challenges in the New World led to the development of distinct religious and cultural identities among the American colonies.

The study of spiritual consciousness in Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia* (1588) elaborates on the sense of spirituality among the settlers or travelers prior to the Pilgrim's arrival into the mainland of America. The spirituality that is reflected in this book is one with the essence of the European spirituality. This spirituality was less ideological and has its thrust on the Supreme authority of God, by placing God as the protector on sea, as a guide in need, and holds a call to be truthful to Him to be rewarded in the end. Harriot states:

ther some saide that it was the special woorke of God for our sakes, as wee ourselues haue cause in some sorte to thinke no lesse, whatsoeuer some doe or maie imagine to the contrarie, specially some Astrologers knowing of the Eclipse of the Sunne which wee saw the same yeere before in our voyage thytherward, which vnto them appeared very terrible. (43)

He says that some believed the comet's appearance was a divine act for their benefit, a sentiment shared by many despite opposition, particularly from astrologers who found the preceding solar eclipse alarming. He acknowledges the Providence of God throughout the journey.

The missionary travels in order to spread Christianity were respectable in the societies of Europe, and for this reason many propagandist travels incorporated missionary activities to give them a façade of respectability. Harriot's attempt in this regard is apparent when he writes on the places he visited. In his travels he made a point of discussing the contents of the Bible and sharing the teachings of the true and only God, as well as the miraculous events and important religious principles contained in the scriptures. He conveyed to the people that the Bible held the true doctrine of salvation through Christ. Harriot was mindful of his audience and communicated these ideas to the best of his ability, providing what he considered essential for their understanding at the time (39). Harriot also made sure to clarify that the power and virtue did not reside in the physical book itself, but rather in the spiritual teachings it contained.

While Harriot's travels may have had fewer explicit spiritual intentions, he does make deliberate remarks about his attempts to preach his God and make his work more acceptable to the people of England. In his descriptions of the religious practices of the natives, he inadvertently begins the process of othering, portraying them as Pagans in contrast to Christianity. These portrayals accentuate the differences between the natives' beliefs and those of the Europeans, indirectly attracting those with missionary zeal to the region, aligning with the nationalist propaganda prevalent in Europe at that time. He writes, "They beleeeue that there are many Gods which they call Montóac, but of different sortes and degrees; one onely chiefe and great God, which hath bene from all eternitie" (36). He goes on to mention that although they believe in one God, he accepts the natives' belief that all diversity of visible and invisible creatures was created by the gods from the waters (36). Here, Harriot acknowledges the spirituality that exists among the natives.

Harriot emphasizes the distinctions between Native American spirituality and Christian beliefs, particularly in their creation narratives. Though this consciousness got matured and received a definite form in the later centuries, Harriot's narrative made it purely distinct from the spirituality of the natives. According to Harriot, the natives believe that their origins trace back to a woman created first, who conceived and bore children through the intervention of one of their gods, affirming their belief in the immortality of the soul (37). This contrasts sharply with the Christian account of Adam, the first man, from whom Eve, the first woman, was created, illustrating fundamental differences in spiritual perspectives and creation myths between the two cultures.

The study of John Smith's *A Description of England* (1616) directs the readers to the consolidation of the ideas of the missionary zeal in the New World while also emphasizing reliance on the Providence of God despite the numerous challenges faced. The spiritual consciousness as evident in his narrative focusses on these two. He writes, "Please God to blesse me but from such accidents as are beyond my power and reason to preuent" (4), which says:

May God bless me and protect me from accidents that I cannot prevent or understand ... The next to this is Capawack, and those abounding Countries of copper, corne, peo-ple, and mineralls; which I went to discouer this last yeare: but because I miscarried by the way, I will leaue them, till God please I haue better acquaintance with them. (39)

He mentioned that nearby was Capawack and those regions rich in copper, corn, people, and minerals, which he had attempted to explore the previous year. However, since he was unsuccessful, he would wait to become better acquainted with them when God allowed. Smith's spiritual consciousness, as depicted in his narrative,

reflects a belief in God's guiding hand and a willingness to surrender to divine providence in all aspects of his life and endeavors.

The Puritan ideals of *Promised Land* and the chosen people which are deeply engraved in the missionary travels are apparent in his writing, "Had those worthe Fathers & their memorable off-spring not beene more diligent for vs now in these Ages, then wee are to plant that yet vnplanted, for the after liuers: Had the seede of Abraham, our Sauour Christ, and his Apostles, exposed themselues to no more daungers to..."(65). He reflected that if those worthy fathers and their notable descendants had not been more diligent for them in those times than they were in planting what remained unplanted for future generations, and if Abraham's descendants, their Savior Christ, and his apostles had not faced even greater dangers. Smith's account emphasizes the unwavering belief in the Providence of God. Despite facing daunting obstacles, including harsh environmental conditions, encounters with indigenous peoples, and various hardships, Smith and his fellow settlers looked to divine guidance for strength and perseverance. They saw God's hand in their journey and viewed their struggles as part of a larger plan shaped by divine Providence.

Smith views the English colonization as a divine calling to establish prosperity and to convert the indigenous people ("savages") to Christianity. However, this colonial mission of spreading the Gospel is not solely driven by genuine missionary zeal; it also serves to entice investors and settlers to explore the potential of the New World. Smith argues that for individuals with a taste for virtue and magnanimity, there is nothing more satisfying than building a foundation for future generations through hard work and divine blessing, without harming anyone. He contends that those with faith and religious zeal can do no harm by seeking to convert the native

inhabitants to Christianity and humanity. In fact, such efforts, carried out prudently, will greatly benefit the English, rewarding their endeavors threefold (42).

Smith's narrative also attempts to place other European's spirituality, especially that of the Spaniards as an unacceptable 'other'. Smith's narrative offers a sense of religious superiority and 'othering' towards the Spaniards' spirituality. He criticizes the Spaniards' efforts to convert the indigenous people to what he calls their "adulterated faith." Smith believes that, as religious people, especially the clergy, it is essential to demonstrate their faith through actions, such as converting the "salvages" (indigenous people) to "the knowledge of God" (52). He wanted his people from England to be examples of Christian life and thereby attract the "salvages". He writes, "Seeing our good deeds, or our badde, by faith in Christs merits, is all we hauetocarrie our soules to heauen, or hell and seeing by noemeaneswee would bee abated of the dignities & glories of our Predecessors; let vs imitate their vertues to bee worthily their successors"(67). Here he explained that by faith in Christ's merits, it was their good deeds or bad deeds that determined whether their souls went to heaven or hell. Since they did not want to be diminished in the dignities and glories of their predecessors, he urged them to imitate their virtues to be worthy of being their successors. He encourages people from England to be exemplary Christians, hoping that their good deeds will attract the indigenous people to Christianity.

The Weberian idea (the ideas proposed by Max Weber) of the Puritan and Protestant self of Americans finds its origins in the perception of America as a "promised land of milk and honey," a notion derived from the Genesis chapter of the Bible. Another significant concept as noted earlier is the image of America as a City on a hill, first articulated by John Winthrop in his inaugural speech in New England. According to Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Puritan

spirituality placed a strong emphasis on materialistic prosperity. Weber suggests that if God presents a way to acquire more profit in line with His principles, without causing harm to one's soul or others, choosing the more profitable course become part of one's calling. Refusing this opportunity is seen as a rejection of God's gifts and unwillingness to be His steward. The idea is to labor for God to become rich, not for the sake of indulgence in fleshly desires or sinful pursuits (146). Prosperity then was viewed as a potential indication of one's righteousness and justification in the eyes of God.

The American spirituality got a decisive turn with the arrival of Mayflower in 1620. This incident provided America with a concrete spirituality with its own unique characteristics, and made itself different from the European spirituality. For Brownists (and thus for the Pilgrims who arrived in America), 'true' church is voluntary and is formed by democratic communities. They rejected the notion of a Christian nation and, as a result, in Plymouth colony and Massachusetts Bay Colony, the congregation and the English state remained separate. The Puritans in America did not conform to the practices of the English Church (Church of England). In Massachusetts Bay Colony, their religious practices differed from the rest of the colonies. The church in Plymouth was independent, and worship and service were simple and austere, reflecting the dissent of the Brownists from the ecclesiastical practices of the Church of England. The primary focus was on the Bible, and long, learned sermons based on the scriptures were integral to their worship. Outside of Plymouth, the Puritans followed Presbyterian models, which had less autonomy and involved increased hierarchy in their religious practices.

The seventeenth century in America also witnessed one of the greatest religious controversies known as Antinomian Controversy (1636-1638) which has a

significant place in the spiritual fabric of the nation. This controversy revolved around differing views on the concept of salvation. The colonists adhered to the Covenant of Works, which emphasized the role of human actions in achieving salvation. On the other hand, Anne Hutchinson and a few others advocated for the Covenant of Grace, which emphasized salvation through God's grace. This faction led to political and spiritual division in America. John Cotton, an English clergyman who later became one of the early theologians in Massachusetts Bay Colony, supported the Covenant of Grace, and this theory gained prominence in American spirituality during that time. The book of Mary Rowlandson *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682) is in tune with the Covenant of Grace. When she writes, "... and I only am escaped alone to tell the News" (2), she affirms her faith in divine providence, and thereby adhering herself to the popular belief of the Covenant of Grace.

Rowlandson's narrative illustrates the multifaceted perception of God's power in American spirituality during her time. Firstly, she reflects on God's protective role in preserving her reason and preventing her from succumbing to despair, emphasizing God's goodness in sustaining her through distressing times (5-6). Secondly, Rowlandson acknowledges God's punishing nature, recognizing the consequences of her own sins and misspent Sabbaths, which she views as just in the sight of God (6). Lastly, despite her hardships, Rowlandson finds solace in God's redemptive mercy, noting how God both wounds and heals, demonstrating a Puritan belief in God's tough-love approach to spiritual growth and salvation. This narrative serves to highlight the deeply ingrained belief in divine providence and justice that characterized Puritan spirituality. Rowlandson's reflections offer insight into the ways

in which early American settlers interpreted their suffering as part of a larger, divine plan, reinforcing their faith amidst adversity.

Rowlandson's captivity narrative also reflects the early Puritan sentiments in America, including aspects like the Half-Way Covenant and the Puritan Jeremiad. Her account can be seen as an ideal narrative of the philosophy behind the Half-Way Covenant, which was a significant religio-political solution adopted by the 17th-century New England Congregationalists, or Puritans. "Half-Way Covenant is a religio-political solution adopted by the 17th-century New England Congregationalists, also called Puritans, that allowed the children of baptized but unconverted church members to be baptized and thus become church members and have political rights" ("Half-Way Covenant").

This practice was an attempt to extend and affirm discipline within church and thereby, to expand the church and thus to benefit the Church. Rowlandson writes of her journey into the vast and desolate wilderness, without knowing the destination, as a situation where she finds it difficult to put her emotions into words, but she acknowledges that God's presence and support were extraordinary, as He carried her along and lifted her spirits, preventing her from completely succumbing to despair (4). This is an affirmation for those who are in the mid-way, confused about religious affiliation, to move forward and take their path to the right God.

From the pre-colonial phase of American history, where cultural practices of religion were prevalent, the spiritual foundation of the nation evolved into a concrete religious fabric in the seventeenth century. The study of Native American religious practices before European settlement is beyond the scope of this narrative, but the mention of the 'Praying Indians' in Rowlandson's account highlights their significant role in the development of American identity and consciousness. Rowlandson

describes instances where some 'Praying Indians' engaged in acts of betrayal and violence against their own people, aligning with the Europeans and English settlers (24). However, with the outbreak of King Philip's War (1675) under the Wampanoag chief Metacomet, also known as King Philip, the relationship with the 'Praying Indians' soured. This estrangement is elaborated upon in Rowlandson's work, where the 'Praying Indians' became the new 'other' for the European settlers in America, replacing the Spaniards as the previously perceived outsiders.

Though Rowlandson's work is often viewed as a spiritual narrative, it holds strong political implications as well. It reflects the influence of Increase Mather, a powerful Puritan clergyman in Massachusetts Bay Colony and the President of Harvard College at the time. Mather's spirituality and ideals of morality, particularly in facing trials, are indirectly illustrated through Rowlandson's account. Billy J. Stratton, an American cultural critic, suggests that Mather might have had a more extensive involvement in the production of the book. Beyond being just a woman's narrative, the work's adherence to popular Puritan sentiments likely contributed to its success as the first bestseller from British America. The book sheds light on the emerging American spiritual psyche of the time, reflecting the prevailing religious and moral ideals of the Puritan community.

This narrative and Rowlandson's captivity later became archetypes for European settlers in America and contributed to the Puritan Jeremiad as suggested by Gary Ebersole and Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodala, who are scholars known for their work on American literature, culture, and history, particularly in the context of Puritanism and captivity narratives. The jeremiad was a favorite literary device of the Puritans in order to retain the power over the society of America, a society that had no single authority for moral, social, or political control. Rowlandson writes:

I have been in the midst of those roaring lions, and savage bears, that feared neither God, nor man, nor the devil, by night and day, alone and in company, sleeping all sorts together, and yet not one of them ever offered me the least abuse of unchastity to me, in word or action. Though some are ready to say I speak it for my own credit; but I speak it in the presence of God, and to His Glory. (30)

As propounded by Douglas McKnight, an American historian, in its initial puritan formulations, the Jeremiad stressed America's universal, historical, and spiritual importance in Biblical term of an "errand in the wilderness" to establish "America" as a special nation, chosen by God, to serve as the "New Jerusalem" and a "City upon a hill" that would bring the light and redemption to the world (3). These formulations resonate in the psyche of every American and the American spiritual consciousness from then on.

The Puritan Jeremiad on the trials and sufferings of the early Europeans in the New World and the reward of material prosperity for the sufferings are evident even in Rowlandson when she writes:

I had often before this said that if the Indians should come, I should choose rather to be killed by them than taken alive, but when it came to the trial my mind changed; their glittering weapons so daunted my spirit, that I chose rather to go along with those (as I may say) ravenous beasts, than that moment to end my days; and that I may the better declare what happened to me during that grievous captivity, I shall particularly speak of the several removes we had up and down the wilderness. (3)

This towards the close of the narrative she poses as, "I have learned to look beyond present and smaller troubles, and to be quieted under them. As Moses said,

‘Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord’” (34), all these incidents reflect the hope of Rowlandson for a better future with materialistic merits.

After the Seven Years War (1756-1763), the materialistic spirituality in America was made apparent, especially with the changes in power politics and the appropriation of wealth among the colonizers. The spiritual consciousness of America at this stage made a gradual shift from Puritanism to liberal Protestantism. New denominations like Adventism, Restoration movement, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormonism were added to Christianity. Yet, all of them complemented the capitalistic, materialistic culture of America. The travel of Sarah Kemble Knight in 1704-05 as narrated in *The Journal of Madame Knight* which was published in 1825, illustrates the gradual shift from strict Puritanism. It gives a picture of America and its consciousness contrary to that proposed by Increase Mather. She narrates an incident while travelling through Connecticut:

They are Governed by the same Laws as wee in Boston, (or little differing,) throughout this whole Colony of Connecticut, and much the same way of Church Government, and many of them good. Sociable people, and I hope Religious too: but a little too much Independant in their principals and, as I have been told, were formerly in their Zeal very Riggid in their Administrations towards such as their Lawes made Offenders, even to a harmless Kiss or Innocent merriment among Young people. Whipping’ being a frequent and counted an easv Punishment, about which as other Crimes, the Judges were absolute in their Sentances. (49-50)

The people of Connecticut are seen as somewhat independent in their principles, potentially suggesting a level of self-reliance and autonomy in their religious beliefs and practices.

Knight's spiritual outlook was notably progressive, advocating for a more liberal approach to enjoying life. Her narrative delves into the diverse religious practices of America, particularly those beyond the strict regulations of the Massachusetts Bay Colony during that era. In her reflections, Knight touches upon the historical tradition of strictness that may have inspired what became known as the "Blue Laws," citing an example: the prohibition against mothers kissing their children on the Sabbath or Fast day. This anecdote from her journal predates Samuel Peters' 1781 history of Connecticut, where he first introduced the notion of these laws (50). Knight's observations here highlight a contrast between the perceived severity of religious laws and the simple, affectionate gestures of everyday life, underscoring tensions between strict regulation and more spontaneous expressions of familial love.

She was even receptive in her narration of diverse spiritual practice in different parts of America, as thus, most of the residents are members of the Church of England, with a New England Gentleman serving as their minister. The community has a well-furnished church with all the necessary facilities. Besides the Church of England, there are also other religious groups like the Dutch settlers and various "conventicles," including Baptists and Quakers. While the Sabbath observance is not as strict as in other places, the people still maintain a certain level of correctness and adherence to their customs. They are known for being friendly and sociable with each other. The English settlers are fashionably dressed, while the Dutch, especially those in the middle class, have a distinctive fashion style, including loose clothing and unique headwear that showcases their ears adorned with numerous and sizable jewels (68-9).

From her time, the spiritual consciousness of America had become more accommodative. The detailing of different practices outside the Massachusetts Bay

Colony points to a liberal Protestantism that significantly differed from the stringent Puritan reign and the repercussions of the Salem Witch Trials (1692–93) in Massachusetts. Knight's observations in New Haven reveal that they were governed by laws similar to those in Boston throughout the entire Colony of Connecticut, with comparable church governance. She generally regarded them as good and sociable, though she noted they were perhaps overly independent in their beliefs. The accommodation of dissenting voices into the mainstream contributed to a more liberal phase of faith in America.

In these travel accounts, of both Rowlandson and Knight, the 'othering' of Native Americans was not merely a reflection of cultural differences but also a strategic tool in shaping colonial narratives and asserting cultural superiority. The portrayal of Native spiritual practices as exotic or primitive reinforced colonial ideologies of religious and cultural hierarchy. Additionally, as British Americans forged a more cohesive national identity, the 'othering' of Native Americans became instrumental in defining boundaries of inclusion and exclusion within this emerging American consciousness. Thus, these travel narratives not only documented encounters but also actively contributed to the construction of early American identity through the lens of cultural and religious difference.

In the study of spiritual consciousness in Jonathan Carver's *Travels through North America in the Years 1766, 1767, and 1768* (1778), it is evident that there is less emphasis on Puritanism or Protestantism. Instead, the focus lies on detailing the spirituality and religious beliefs of the Native Americans. Since the book is a travel into the American West, his focus is more on the life, manners and customs of the natives there. In the narrative of Carver fewer detailing is on the idea of American spirituality. He writes:

At a little distance from this dreary cavern is the burying-place of several bands of the Naudowessie Indians: though these people have no fixed residence, living in tents, and abiding but a few months on one spot, yet they always bring the bones of their dead to this place; which they take the opportunity of doing when the chiefs meet to hold their councils, and to settle all public affairs for the ensuing summer. (65)

During Carver's time, the religious and political landscape of British America was fraught with turmoil, marked notably by the First Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s, which stirred clashes among Protestant groups over worship methods. This period heralded a shift towards individualistic religious practices and heightened spiritual fervor in Anglo-American evangelicalism, distinct from traditional English influences. Amidst these dynamics, Carver's observations of Native American spirituality, though indirectly critical, reveal a nuanced perspective. He recounts encountering a young Indian deeply engaged in prayer to the Great Spirit, seeking protection and offering sincere devotion (68). Despite his Catholic servant's skepticism, Carver respects the prince's piety, recognizing the sincerity and significance of his rituals, which he views as genuine expressions of faith accepted by the divine (68). This interaction illustrates Carver's acknowledgment of spiritual earnestness outside conventional European religious norms, reflecting the evolving religious landscape and individualistic quest for connection with the divine in colonial America.

Carver's spirituality aligns with individualistic spirituality, which later became an important aspect of American spiritual consciousness. However, he emphasizes the differences between his own spirituality and that of the Native Americans. He finds it challenging to fully understand the religious principles of the indigenous people due

to their attempts to conceal their ceremonies and doctrines, possibly in response to European ridicule. Carver differentiates his British American version of spirituality from that of other nations, particularly the Jesuits and French missionaries, whom he believes have made Christianity difficult for the natives by adding their own tenets to it. While Carver's narrative does not directly discuss personal spirituality or morality, it indirectly contributes to a sense of Otherness both towards the natives and non-English Europeans.

The third significant incident that reshaped American spirituality was the American War of Independence, which culminated in the adoption of the American Constitution in 1788, establishing the United States as a republic. The war of Independence played a pivotal role in shaping the values and principles of American spirituality during this period. One of the most notable aspects of the new American approach to religion was the separation of Church and State, as advocated by Thomas Jefferson in 1801. This separation marked a distinct departure from traditional practices in other parts of the world, where religion often held a significant influence over state affairs. With this act of separation, the American Constitution placed the State above religious institutions, ensuring that no particular religion would be favored or endorsed by the government.

The culmination of significant events in American cultural history, including the Second Great Awakening, was profoundly influenced by the separation of Church and State and the celebration of religious freedom. This separation played a crucial role in fostering a religious revival that swept through America from the late 18th to mid-19th centuries. Scholars like Linford D. Fisher highlight how this environment facilitated the conversion of Native Americans to Christianity, supported by African American churches such as Methodists and Baptists, as well as the Russian Orthodox

Church. This period also saw various Protestant groups adopting an ‘Americanist’ temperament, emphasizing personal salvation and reaching out to the ‘unchurched.’ James Madison’s advocacy for “freedom of religion as birthright,” (“James Madison”) asserting that religious beliefs are matters of individual conscience free from legislative control, further shaped the cultural fabric of America. This era marked a shift towards individualism in spirituality, expanding the dimensions of American religious experience beyond traditional norms.

The study of Margaret Fuller’s *Summer on the Lakes* (1844) unveils the nuances of this individualism in religion and spirituality. Her individualistic spiritual consciousness is thus considered a forerunner to American spiritual consciousness of the twentieth century. As given in the studies of Lance Newman, even though she initiated serious discussions on personal/ individual salvation in the context of America; she questioned the historical progressiveness of capitalism and, like other Bostonian bourgeoisie, was against the ‘spirit of commerce’. This was different from the prevalent materialistic spirituality of America and she differentiates materialistic and utilitarian motives from spiritual or aesthetic aims. Despite her close association with the Unitarian church, she did not feel a strong sense of connection to the church itself. Her beliefs and spiritual inclinations went beyond the confines of any particular religious institution, reflecting her independent and individualistic approach to matters of faith.

In her travel to the American West, Fuller encounters a new spirit in American spirituality which she believes contributes to the building of Americanness:

The people on the boat were almost all New Englanders, seeking their fortunes. They had brought with them their habits of calculation, their cautious manners, and their love of polemics. It grieved me to hear these immigrants

who were to be the fathers of a new race, all, from the old man down to the little girl, talking not of what they should do, but of what they should get in the new scene. It was to them a prospect, not of the unfolding nobler energies, but of more ease, and larger accumulation. It wearied me, too, to hear Trinity and Unity discussed in the poor, narrow doctrinal way on these free waters; but that will soon cease, there is not time for this clash of opinions in the West, where the clash of material interests is so noisy. They will need the spirit of religion more than ever to guide them, but will find less time than before for its doctrine. (19)

The narrator is also critical of the narrow and contentious way in which religious discussions, particularly about Trinity and Unity, are being held on the boat.

However, the narrator believes that as the settlers face the realities of their new lives in the West and encounter the clash of material interests, their debates over religious doctrine will become less significant. The narrator emphasizes the importance of the spirit of religion to guide them in this new frontier, but also notes that the freedom of thought in the West is influenced more by practical circumstances rather than genuine intellectual curiosity or spiritual exploration.

Her spirituality was also rooted in transcendentalism which exposes in the narration of a spiritual awakening while travelling through the barren landscape of the late fall New England. Though it was against the materialistic spiritual consciousness which was in the making in America, the thrust on personal salvation and individuality in religion made her spirituality in tune with the American spirituality and the national consciousness of the time. She writes:

At first, the prairie seemed to speak of the very desolation of dullness. After sweeping over the vast monotony of the lakes to come to this monotony of

land, with all around a limitless horizon, --to walk, and walk, and run, but never climb, oh! It was too dreary for any but a Hollander to bear. How the eye greeted the approach of a sail, or the smoke of a steamboat; it seemed that anything so animated must come from a better land, where mountains gave religion to the scene. (35)

The presence of natural beauty and variation, represented by mountains, is seen as uplifting and spiritually significant for the writer.

This spirit of transcendentalism and accommodation of spiritual consciousness of the native Indians are evident when she writes that the Indian is steady to that simple creed, which forms the basis of all this mythology; that there is a God, and a life beyond this; a right and wrong which each man can see, betwixt which each man should choose; that good brings with it its reward and vice its punishment. Their moral code, if not refined as that of civilized nations, is clear and noble in the stress laid upon truth and fidelity (221). Fuller challenges the assumption that Native Americans are devoid of spiritual beliefs and a moral compass. She commends on the moral and spiritual richness of the Native Americans, their steadfastness in their belief in a higher power, their understanding of right and wrong, and their dedication to virtues such as truth and fidelity, which, despite being different from the moral codes of civilized nations, hold their own clear and noble significance within their cultural context which indirectly demonstrates her spirituality.

The study of spiritual consciousness in Harriet Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself* (1861), gives a concrete picture of Black Spirituality and personal salvation as proposed by the Second Great Awakening. Her work redefines the understanding of sin especially one from the context of black women. Linda, the protagonist, as the author herself says, “When he told me that I was made

for his use, made to obey his command in everything; that I was nothing but slave, whose will must and should surrender to his, never before had my puny arm felt half so strong”(29). The discourse surrounding the body, while ideologically Puritan, diverges significantly from the ideal of the Puritan chaste woman, as exemplified in the narrative of Rowlandson. This contrast not only elucidates the helplessness experienced by slave women but also sheds light on the prevailing ideology and consciousness in American society and religion. Consequently, the spiritual consciousness deliberated in the narrative of black women, particularly concerning ideals regarding their bodies, differs from that of white women. Their condition of “being a chattel, entirely subject to the will of other” (86) highlights the fact that, although the black woman does not own her body, she can still remain spiritually free—an idea that points to the concept of personal salvation.

In her reflections, Jacobs underscores the resilience and resourcefulness required to navigate the brutal realities of slavery. She recalls the constant vigilance needed to avoid the traps set by her oppressive master and acknowledges the deep fear and trembling that accompanied his presence. Jacobs admits her awareness of having done wrong but insists that the painful and humiliating memories of her actions will haunt her forever. She contends that enslaved women should not be judged by the same standards as others, arguing that the oppressive conditions of slavery necessitate different moral considerations (86). This perspective highlights the unique and harsh challenges faced by enslaved individuals and calls for a more nuanced understanding of their actions and choices within the context of their lived experiences. Her narrative intertwines with the broader theme of American spirituality, where the quest for personal salvation and redemption plays a central role. In this light, Jacobs’ story reflects the struggle to maintain spiritual integrity and moral agency amidst

overwhelming oppression, resonating with the Puritan belief in the redemptive power of suffering and endurance.

When she says, “The slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standard as others” (86) she opens up new discourses in the field of black spirituality, which stands against the conventional Christian spirituality of American whites or of Europe. Christianity was used as a tool against the enslaved; to control the oppressed slaves. Religion in all slave narratives is depicted as an institution that supports slavery. There are numerous instances of this in her narrative, which speak of obedience, like:

Obey your old master and your young master—your old mistress and your young mistress. If you disobey your earthly master, you offend your heavenly Master. You must obey God’s commandments. When you go from here, don’t stop at the corners of the streets to talk, but go directly home, and let your master and mistress see that you have come (107).

Her narrative frequently emphasizes strict obedience to both earthly and heavenly masters, urging slaves to follow the commandments of God, avoid idle chatter, and promptly return home to demonstrate their compliance to their masters.

The liberation of Black people from ‘White Christianity’ began with the Second Great Awakening. Individual efforts towards self-realization and liberation found acceptance in the discourses of spirituality, particularly in the context of Black Spirituality in America. After Jacobs’ death, her headstone bore the inscription, “patient in tribulation, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Jacobs, “Introduction by Bob Carruthers”). Despite not fitting the traditional Christian definition of ‘chaste,’ her obedience made her fervent in spirit. This stands in contrast to the perception of White woman spirituality, where Mary Rowlandson’s greatest virtue was seen as her

ability to remain 'chaste' even amidst captivity by natives. Jacobs' writings contribute to new discourses on the approach to sexuality within spiritual consciousness in America. For Black individuals, spirituality took on a more individualistic and materialistic nature.

The American Civil War and the abolitionist movement brought about a significant shift in the spiritual consciousness of America. While the political event itself may not have had an explicit religious connection, its aftermath saw the convergence of ideals, ideology, and consciousness from the Northern industrial states into the national identity, thus contributing to the spiritual fabric of the nation. The slave narratives that celebrated the abolitionist movements and those from the Reconstruction period can be seen as an extension of the Northern Puritan spirit. It is important to note that this historical period also witnessed the persecution of Germans and Catholics in America. Despite these challenges, the nation gradually unified, celebrating the ideals, tenets, and doctrines of White, Puritan materialism.

In the post-bellum phase of America, national institutions emerged as centers of respect and prominence. With the gradual embrace of modernity within American society, divinity and reverence shifted towards the ideals and objects that came to embody 'Americanness.' These new symbols and concepts influenced and reshaped the spiritual consciousness of Americans, essentially becoming a new form of religion. Despite modernity's tendency to be perceived as anti-spiritual or contradictory to spirituality, a convergence of these two aspects became evident in the cultural and spiritual fabric of America from the second half of the nineteenth century onward. An examination of Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) endorses the creation of institution and ideals rooted in Americanism for American spiritual consciousness.

According to Jeffrey R. Holland, an American educator and religious leader, Mark Twain frequently referred to his religious affiliation as ‘Presbyterianism,’ which was the faith of his mother’s family. In a recently discovered letter, Mark Twain confided in his brother about his aspirations and regrets in life. He revealed that he had two powerful ambitions: to become a pilot on the Mississippi River and to be a Presbyterian minister. He accomplished the former but failed in the latter because he felt he lacked the necessary religious conviction. Mark Twain acknowledged that he never truly had a “call” to be a minister, and his aspirations in that direction were merely presumptuous ecstasies. Instead, he realized that his true calling was in literature, particularly humorous writing, which he considered to be his strongest suit (qtd. in Holland).

In his efforts to forge new national institutions and consciousness after the American Civil War, Mark Twain makes direct and deliberate attempts to create new spiritual symbols that are both immortal and complex. One such symbol, as witnessed in the narrative *Life on the Mississippi* is the River Mississippi itself. Mark Twain infuses the imagery of the river with an entirely new and metaphorical appeal. Mark Twain often makes a visit to Mississippi and tries to find his soul, his spirituality there on its banks, “But beware— breathe not a word to any soul. Be silent, and wait” (544) is the mood of the book. However, unlike the transcendentalist narration or soul-searching as seen in the works of Margaret Fuller, Mark Twain deliberately constructs his sense of self and spirituality within the context of the Mississippi River as is seen in his observation “Why did these people want the river now when nobody had wanted it in the five preceding generations? Apparently, it was because at this late day they thought they had discovered a way to make it useful” (11).

In the aftermath of the American Civil War, Mark Twain urges his fellow Americans to confront the prevailing confusion by acknowledging the greatness of America. In his narrative, he sketches the biography of the River Mississippi and utilizes its imagery to develop not only his own sense of self but also that of all Americans. Throughout the narration, he frequently links the spiritual and physical survival of both himself and his fellow Americans to the River Mississippi. In one instance, he describes the experience of being in the midst of a vast, indistinct sea without visible shores or landmarks. The plantations along the riverbanks appear transformed by smoke, blending with the surroundings and resembling a part of the sea. In this uncertainty and isolation, he is tormented by the fear of not knowing whether he is staying within the river's course. He feels the constant dread of being dangerously close to the shore and destruction, even when he believes he is at a safe distance (112). His vivid imagery portrays the significant role that the River Mississippi plays in the spiritual and physical survival of the writer, Mark Twain himself, and his fellow Americans.

The spiritual consciousness of Americans in the twentieth century became intertwined with materialistic needs and the expansion of American frontiers. As America emerged as a superpower, the nation's spiritual consciousness catered to the material desires of its people, aligning itself with the political needs of the country. This emergent spirituality, evident in John Steinbeck's *In the Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962) exposes this new emergent spirituality. The narrator embarks on a quest to understand what Americans are like in the present day. The title itself suggests that he is in search of the new America, reflecting a sense of lost glory and apprehension about the future that permeates throughout the narrative. In his journey, the narrator's confused self, reveals a longing to go anywhere, indicating a

desire for change and escape (25). According to Richard Astro, an American critic and philosopher, Steinbeck's travel narrative sheds light on the author's personal search for meaning while also providing insights into the highly paradoxical nature of the American character (35-36). Steinbeck's work justifies the emergence of a new 'self' and a variant of individualism and personal salvation within the American spiritual consciousness.

Steinbeck's reference to the church in the narrative too is rational and less emotional. As suggested by critics, Steinbeck's relentless urge to secure an understanding of his native land and its diverse population surely speaks of a distinctly American author wanting to substantiate his innate patriotism with fresh material, to achieve an intimate knowledge of his country and his place within it (Dew 59). At this chaotic juncture in the history of America, Steinbeck realizes that "progress may be a progression toward strangulation" and that "[w]e have overcome all enemies but ourselves" (196-197). This is a reflection of the chaos between religion, nation and post-World War anarchy that prevailed all over Europe and America. He writes:

Sunday morning, in a Vermont town, my last day in New England, I shaved, dressed in a suit, polished my shoes, whited my sepulcher, and looked for a church to attend. Several I eliminated for reasons I do not now remember, but on seeing a John Knox Church I drove into a side street and parked Rocinante out of sight, gave Charley his instructions about watching the truck, and took my way with dignity to a church of blindingly white, ship lap. I took my seat in the rear of the spotless, polished place of worship. The prayers were to the point, directing the attention of the Almighty to certain weaknesses and

undivine tendencies I know to be mine and could only suppose were shared by others gathered there. (70)

The changes in the spirituality and the emergence of new forms of worship were common during the time. He calls the priest's emphasis on compulsorily conforming to the norms as "psychiatric priesthood". The faith that he projects is not only liberal, but something deeply materialistic. He writes:

The service did my heart and I hope my soul some good. It had been long since I had heard such an approach. It is our practice now, at least in the large cities, to find from our psychiatric priesthood that our sins aren't really sins at all but accidents that are set in motion by forces beyond our control. There was no such nonsense in this church. (70)

Steinbeck's spirituality, as depicted in this narrative, is deeply rooted in personal salvation and individualistic in nature. He describes a profound sense of spiritual awakening, stating that he "began to feel good all over." This personal connection with God, characterized by a sense of togetherness, reflects an intimate and almost paternal relationship, akin to a father playing softball with his son. However, this Vermont God also subjected him to severe trials, "kicking the hell out of me," which led Steinbeck to reassess his sins. What were once perceived as small and insignificant now gained "size and bloom and dignity" through the minister's perspective. This transformation allowed Steinbeck to see his sins as a source of pride rather than shame, recognizing himself not as a "naughty child" but as a "first-rate sinner" (71). This introspective journey highlights Steinbeck's belief in the redemptive power of suffering and the significance of personal spiritual growth, reflecting the broader themes of American individualism in spirituality.

Edmund White's spirituality poses a challenge, as homosexuality is considered one of the gravest sins in Christianity. However, his writing, as seen in *States of Desire: Travels in Gay America* (1980), gives new insights into the accommodative nature/ spirit of American spiritual consciousness. In his narration on the history of spirituality, he highlights the evolving attitudes towards the queer community. White mentions an early instance concerning gay marriages, where marriages are considered 'sacramental' or sacred in Christian beliefs. Initially, many gay progressives, including White himself, frowned upon the idea of gay marriage, viewing it as a form of assimilation. However, as the Christian Right vehemently opposed it, the perspective changed. They realized that fighting for gay marriage became essential because the opposition from bigots indicated that marriage was a defining institution for them. White argues that gays can never be fully accepted until they are allowed to marry and adopt, just like anyone else (xiii). Despite queers historically negating marriage as an institution, gay marriage marks a unique and significant chapter in the history of the gay community.

The narrative also deliberates on the spirituality of the gay people, which could at times be termed as gay spirituality. Their spiritual condition is often tied up with the experiences of the body; which again is against the basic spirituality of Christianity as it considers body as the source of sin. White attaches his spiritual experiences, of being in communion with God, with his experiences of the body. He writes, "I once met a pair of adolescent lovers who were identical twins. They appeared to enjoy perfect bodily and spiritual communication" (21). He highlights the interconnectedness of physical and spiritual experiences, suggesting that the depth of physical connections can have a profound impact on one's spiritual experiences and sense of communion with others. Regarding spiritual consciousness he writes, "we're

‘engaged in something new’: a true spiritual adventure, an expanding consciousness” (32). The term “spiritual adventure” suggests that individuals are embarking on a journey of self-discovery and growth, seeking a deeper understanding of their own spirituality and connection to the world around them which is not just about adhering to traditional or established beliefs, but rather exploring new and uncharted territories within their spiritual realm.

When White writes about one of his experiences at Denton, he deliberates on the spirituality of the queers, which indirectly points to the New Americanist liberal dimensions of spirituality that existed in America during the time. He describes his sexual liaisons as “carnal,” distinguishing them from a separate “spiritual” appetite. White perceives a gradual progress in the world towards increasing spirituality. He acknowledges that, personally, he doesn’t believe in the spiritual realm at all, which makes it difficult for him to fully comprehend these distinctions. However, he suspects that his own belief in the advancement towards political equality and sexual liberation is influenced by the Christian model of “Paradise Regained.” While White rejects Christ, he acknowledges that he has retained aspects of the evolving spirituality of Christianity (49).

In the book White also explores the contrast between heterosexual notions of spirituality and the unconventional beliefs in homosexual spirituality. He delves into the details of ‘gay spirituality’, particularly when he expresses, “my way of worshipping God (I know this sounds heavy) is to come here and make love to as many men as possible. You see, I think God is in people” (15). White argues that his queer spirituality is more liberating compared to traditional beliefs. He provides a summary of the tenets of the Church of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon faith) to highlight the restrictive nature of certain religious beliefs towards homosexuality. In this

religion, every man and boy over the age of twelve can hold the priesthood, which is divided into two branches, one dealing with temporal affairs and the other with spiritual matters. However, women are excluded from being priests, and an unmarried woman cannot attain the highest rank in heaven since a husband's intervention is required for this. Additionally, the belief in the literal resurrection of the body, albeit without blood, underscores the specific doctrinal views of this faith (102). He, thus, presents his own beliefs as a liberating and authentic way to connect with the divine, contrasting with religious structures that impose limitations and hierarchies based on gender and sexuality.

White, in the book, also argues that the claims of religion to hold a family together or run it are irrational and illogical. He points out that in the United States, where there is no public health system and limited free higher education, the financial burden of raising children falls on the parents. Having children in a city, in his view, is economically unproductive and more of a drain than a benefit. White argues that the advantages of raising a family today are mostly spiritual or conventional, rather than practical. He believes that religion serves as a last attempt to keep the family together amidst these challenges (151). The spiritual ideology as reflected in the book does not align with conventional structures, and thus making it difficult for him to fit into this new country while traveling through an 'all-male America' with a White American puritan consciousness.

The spiritual search of Americans has always been a dynamic and ongoing process, never static. The metanarrative of white, Protestant, and materialist ideology of spiritual consciousness has played a significant role in shaping the conscience of not only white Americans but also American women, African Americans, Native Americans, and the Queer community to some extent. Even at the intersection of

spirituality with gender, race, and sexual orientation, the spiritual consciousness has remained aligned with the aforementioned metanarrative. However, over time, this spiritual consciousness has evolved and adapted in response to changing perceptions of what it means to be an American and a part of the American consciousness.

In the writings of Thomas Harriot and John Smith, the allure of prosperity and welfare for England is evident, and their narratives emphasize materialistic pursuits, reflecting the spirit of materialism prevalent during their time. Mary Rowlandson's narrative represents a typical Puritan perspective, heavily influenced by the teachings of Increase Mather. On the other hand, Sarah Kemble Knight's journal stands out as she is more accommodating of diverse forms of Christianity outside the Massachusetts Bay Colony. From her narrative onwards, the spirituality of America grows more liberal and Protestant in nature and spirit. Jonathan Carver's focus is more materialistic than spiritual or moral, as his account revolves around economic considerations. His narrative aligns with the 'English line' of spiritual consciousness.

As a woman aligned with transcendentalism, Margaret Fuller's spirituality is rooted in nature, providing her with a unique standpoint different from other women concerning the study. Harriet Jacobs, being born as a slave during the antebellum period, reflects on the puritan spiritual consciousness, similar to Rowlandson. Both writers deliberate on the impact of abolitionist ideology on their spiritual beliefs. From Mark Twain to John Steinbeck a radical change in American spiritual consciousness is evident. There is a transition from liberal Protestantism to materialistic Protestantism, which aligns with the spirit of New Americanism- which is rooted in the country's emergence as a superpower and wealth accumulation. Edmund White, on the other hand, transcends the rigid structures of spiritual consciousness onto a new dimension, particularly in relation to sexual orientations.

He challenges conventions and traditions, bringing the spiritual consciousness into the new millennium by embracing the body and advocating for greater inclusivity.

Chapter 4

American as Self and the Other: American Racial Consciousness

“... your biographers never understand/ your father’s pain as he sells his stock
and another dream goes/ And though you’re poor it isn’t poverty that/ concerns you”

(Giovanni, lines 10-13)

Racism, or the discrimination on the basis of differences in race, like any other discrimination, is not natural; but a construct with specific intentions. Mary Louise Pratt in her work *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* suggests that travel writers played a significant role in reshaping and reinventing America to align it with the ideological, political, and economic agendas of their respective empires. Colonial encounters provided spaces where geographically and historically separated people came into contact, leading to conditions of coercion, racial inequality, and persistent conflict. This definition encompasses co-presence, interaction, shared understandings, and practices, often within highly imbalanced power dynamics (8). The social construct of racism magnifies differences in values, behaviors, and attitudes among various population groups. American Whites have historically viewed themselves as superior to ‘many others’ in America. This belief can be traced back to the writings of early European settlers in the New World.

This chapter explores racism in America through the lens of American travel writing. It examines how elements of racism have been present in these writings since the earliest works. While the history of racism in America encompasses various groups, including the natives, other Europeans (especially the Spanish), blacks or people of African descent, Asians in the twentieth century, and Muslims in the twenty-first century, this study focuses on the Natives and Blacks due to their significant experiences of ‘othering’ during the period under investigation. The

concept of racism is often depicted as the conflict between the Whites and the Blacks in America, and this chapter emphasizes that aspect. It traces the evolution of racial consciousness and its impact on racism, as well as how it intersects with national consciousness.

According to Adam Kuper, a South African anthropologist, racism is a relatively new concept whose origins can be traced back to the European colonization of much of the world, the rise and development of European capitalism, and the establishment of the European and US slave trade (844). In the discussions on race and racial supremacy, the concept of slavery—an institution where one group exercises and establishes superiority over another—is significant. Although slavery has existed in human society for thousands of years, particularly stemming from the military conquests of the Greeks and Romans, it was not initially based on race but rather on the status of the defeated for the enslaved individuals. The systematized form of racism or racial oppression emerged, as identified earlier, with the territorial expansion of Europe through colonies in Asia, Africa, and America and according to the general consensus, it originated around the 1600s.

As per the perspective of Hollis Lynch, an American historian, the uninterrupted history of Blacks in the United States began in 1619 when twenty Africans were brought to the English colony of Virginia. He clarifies that these twenty Africans were not “enslaved people” but rather indentured servants, bound to work for an employer for a limited number of years (Lynch). Prior to this uninterrupted history, Lynch states that the Blacks had assisted in the early explorations of the Portuguese and the Spanish in America. He even references “the most celebrated Black explorer of the Americas,” Esteban, who traveled through the South-West in the 1530s (*ibid.*). The name of Esteban is not mentioned in the ‘natural’ history of

America. The two earliest travel writings under our study, prior to the arrival of Dutch ship in America, have no mention of the Blacks or niggers in America. The ‘others’ (during the time) as represented in their narrative are the Natives and the Spanish (the major opponents to the colonial expansion of England).

The first reference to the natives in the book of Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia* (1588), is in the ‘Notes’ section; where it reads thus:

Harriot had learned the rudiments of the Algonkian language from two natives brought back to England from an earlier exploratory voyage, and he served as interpreter and liaison with the native peoples of the surrounding region. His Brief and True Report focuses largely upon the native inhabitants, giving much valuable information on their food sources, agricultural methods, living arrangements, political organization, and religion. (i)

Harriot primarily gives attention to the native inhabitants, providing valuable insights into their food sources, agricultural techniques, living arrangements, political structure, and religious beliefs. The narrator utilizes this information to offer a better understanding of the land. It is important to note that the natives are not discriminated against or portrayed as ‘others’ in this context. Instead, the narrator uses his understanding of their knowledge and experiences to further the colonialist agenda.

The purpose of Thomas Harriot in writing his book is to give an idea about the New World to the people in England and to invite settlements to increase the prospects of the nation, as he states on the title page. With a clear colonialist agenda, Harriot aims to entice settlers to the newly discovered land of Virginia by familiarizing them with the place and alleviating any apprehensions they might have had. Consequently, his narrative avoids presenting a gruesome picture of Native

Indians, instead portraying them in a way that serves to encourage English settlement. This approach reflects the era's burgeoning racial consciousness, wherein the depiction of indigenous peoples was strategically crafted to serve colonial interests. Harriot's narrative downplays potential conflicts and emphasizes the potential for harmonious coexistence, thereby promoting a vision of the New World that aligns with the imperial ambitions of England. By selectively portraying the Native Indians, Harriot contributes to the construction of a racialized narrative that supports the colonial project and its underlying racial hierarchies.

In an effort to gain the confidence of the English regarding the New World and dispel the fears arising from the Roanoke incident, Harriot, in the narrative, portrays the natives' awe towards the English. This depiction inadvertently underscores the perceived superiority of the English or Europeans over the natives. He elaborates on the respect the natives hold for the Europeans, emphasizing how everything European appears novel and different to them. Through this projection of awe and differences, Harriot establishes a clear distinction between 'us and them,' revealing underlying 'othering' sentiments. Despite the absence of explicit racism, the narrative subtly reinforces European superiority over the natives, aligning with the colonialist agenda of inviting settlers. This portrayal contributes to the emerging racial consciousness in America, where racial hierarchies began to take shape. The narrative, while aimed at persuading prospective settlers, also plays a role in constructing a racialized understanding of the New World, reflecting the early stages of racial ideologies that would later become more pronounced in American society.

The author discusses the availability of deerskins, which can be easily obtained from the native inhabitants through trade for insignificant items, and argues that these natives should not be feared for hindering the settlement and cultivation

efforts of the English. Instead, he anticipates that the natives will eventually develop both fear and affection for the settlers who choose to live alongside them (13). This emphasis on the difference in manners between the natives and the English, alongside the urging not to fear them, points to the nuances of the ‘civilized/uncivilized’ dichotomy that later influenced postcolonial discourses in the twentieth century. Throughout the narrative, the natives are often portrayed as uncivilized or savage, emphasizing their supposed inferiority in contrast to European settlers.

The author describes their appearance, noting they wear loose mantles made of deer skins and aprons around their middles, leaving the rest of their bodies naked, with a stature similar to that of people in England. Their weapons are rudimentary, consisting of bows made of witch hazel, arrows crafted from reeds, and flat-edged truncheons made of wood. Their means of defense include targets made of barks and armors constructed from sticks woven together with thread (34). These descriptions highlight their perceived uncivilized status and underscore the colonialist European agenda, which seeks to impose European supremacy over the natives and their territories. This portrayal aligns with the colonialist intent of the narrative, subtly reinforcing European dominance while ostensibly promoting settlement and cultivation efforts in the New World.

The study of the racial consciousness of America in John Smith’s *A Description of New England* (1616) focuses on the life, place and people of ‘New England’ with no mention of the Blacks in America. His portrayal of the region and its inhabitants serves the purpose of attracting new settlers to Virginia; similar to what is observed in Harriot’s narrative. However, in the writings of Smith racial sentiments are more evident than that of Harriot’s. At the beginning of the narrative, he seeks permission from the King of England to change the “barbarous” place names to

English. He writes, “my humble sute is, you would please to change their Barbarous names, for such English, as Posterity may say, Prince Charles was their Godfather” (3). Here, the speaker humbly requested that their barbaric names be replaced with English ones, so that future generations could say that Prince Charles was their godfather. He positions the ‘barbarous’ natives directly in opposition to the ‘civilized’ English. This representation fosters an ‘othering’ sentiment, emphasizing the perceived supremacy of the Europeans over the natives.

Smith, in the narrative, reflects on the duty of the English to spread the teachings of Christianity and civilization to the New World, suggesting that the early religious pioneers were more diligent in their mission than the current generation. He implies that had the forefathers and their descendants not faced dangers to propagate the gospel, the English themselves would have remained as savage and miserable as the most barbaric, uncivilized natives (65-66). This narrative underscores the perceived supremacy of the English race, life, and religion, revealing the early seeds of racial consciousness taking root in American society. Smith’s writings, with their clear delineation of civilized versus uncivilized peoples, played a crucial role in the emergence of racial consciousness in America. By portraying the natives as needing salvation and civilization, Smith contributed to a worldview that justified colonialism and the imposition of European values on indigenous populations, thereby laying the groundwork for racial hierarchies that would persist and evolve in American thought.

The study of racism is closely intertwined with the study of slavery. This is evident in the statement by the American sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois, which highlights race as a social construction with specific historical origins. The essay titled “From Indentured Servitude to Racial Slavery” published by PBS gives reference to indentured servants as, “during their time as servants, they were fed and

housed. Afterwards, they would be given what were known as ‘freedom dues,’ which usually included a piece of land and supplies, including a gun. Black-skinned or white-skinned, they became free” (Blight). Apart from the reference of the “White-skinned” into indentured servitude, the essay also defines the earliest forms of distinctions among groups that existed in the society of America. The essay reads thus:

Historically, the English only enslaved non-Christians, and not, in particular, Africans. The status of slave (Europeans had African slaves prior to the colonization of the Americas) was not one that was life-long. A slave could become free by converting to Christianity. The first Virginia colonists did not even think of themselves as ‘white’ or use that word to describe themselves. They saw themselves as Christians or Englishmen, or in terms of their social class. They were nobility, gentry, artisans, or servants. (Blight)

The study of racial consciousness in the narrative of Mary Rowlandson’s *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682) gives no mentions of the word Blacks or ‘niggers.’ The ‘othering’ of Rowlandson is against the “heathens” and they were the Native Indians, in the narrative. Though indentured servants were common during the time and they were discriminated, especially the Blacks, and Rowlandson makes no mention of it. This is probably because of the social conditions of the time. The first reference to a Negro in American history appears as early as 1625. The essay “From Indentured Servitude to Racial Slavery” discusses the traditional English belief that they had the right to enslave non-Christians or captives taken in just wars, categorizing Africans and Indians within these definitions (Blight). Despite a shortage of servants or slaves in Virginia and

other colonies, the 1625 Virginia census records the life of “Antonio the negro,” referred to not as a slave but as a “servant” (Blight).

Yet, over time, Antonio, who later became Anthony Johnson, gained his freedom, married an African American servant named Mary, and together they owned land and indentured servants. By 1650, Anthony was among only 400 Africans in the colony compared to nearly 19,000 settlers (Blight). In 1641, the Massachusetts Bay Colony legalized slavery, a practice soon adopted by other colonies. By 1662, Virginia redefined slavery to ensure children born to enslaved mothers would inherit their status, marking a significant legal shift towards racial slavery (Blight). Consequently, Anthony Johnson left Virginia for Maryland, and his Virginia property was seized on the grounds that he was a “Negro and by consequence an alien” (Blight). A landmark decision in 1705 further solidified racial slavery in Virginia by declaring that non-Christian servants would be slaves, treating black, mulatto, and Indian slaves as real estate (Blight). This period also saw the establishment of the Royal African Company in 1672, signifying the King’s direct involvement in the slave trade, thus cementing the foundation of black chattel slavery in America.

Rowlandson’s narrative, despite its focus on Puritan themes, notably omits any mention of slaves, Blacks, Negros, or the New England Confederation, underscoring its primary emphasis on Puritan religious concerns. However, within this context, Rowlandson’s attitudes towards Native Americans reveal pronounced racial biases. The earliest portrayal of Native Americans in her narrative portrays them as brutal and barbarous, as evidenced by descriptions such as, “he begged of them his life, promising them money... but they would not hearken to him but knocked him in head, and stripped him naked, and split open his bowels” (1). This depiction effectively ‘others’ Native Americans and introduces racist sentiments into early American travel

narratives. Despite identifying Indians as barbarous multiple times throughout her account, Rowlandson consistently elaborates on their actions, reinforcing their portrayal as savage and uncivilized. For instance, she recounts how Indians reacted to her nephew's broken leg, stating, "they knocked him on [his] head. Thus, were we butchered by those merciless heathen, standing amazed, with the blood running down to our heels" (2). Such descriptions clearly depict Native Americans as merciless and heathen, contrasting them sharply with Europeans or British settlers in Rowlandson's narrative, highlighting enduring colonial attitudes of racial superiority.

Regardless of all the sufferings she experienced at the Indians, including the death of her own child in her hands, the prayer she makes not only marks her ardent faith in God, but the way she handles the crisis makes her representative of noble, pious and God-fearing European women; this makes her different from the "beast"-like Indian women. Her pathetic experiences as that of a 'slave', begging for a spoonful of meal in return for her knitting, are another attempt to endorse her racist sentiments. She writes:

when all the company was come up, and were gathered together, I thought to count the number of them, but they were so many, and being somewhat in motion, it was beyond my skill.... I carried only my knitting work and two quarts of parched meal. Being very faint I asked my mistress to give me one spoonful of the meal, but she would not give me a taste. (9)

In another instance, when Rowlandson reminded the 'heathen' woman about the importance of observance of Sabbath, the native woman as a response to it 'hit' on the face of the narrator for not working (9). This depicts the 'ideal' God-fearing Puritan woman against the uncivilized native.

According to the sociologists, Mathew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer, as seen in their essay, “What is Racial Domination?”, “in the American context, the ‘Indian’ was invented within the context of European colonization, as indigenous peoples of the Americas were lumped together under one rubric to be killed, uprooted, and exploited” (338). Therefore, Rowlandson’s narrative exhibits direct racist sentiments towards the natives. Desmond and Emirbayer deliberate on the use of the umbrella term ‘natives’ or ‘Indians’ to denote different groups and cite this as another example of racism. In another instance they argue, “Choctaws, Crows, Iroquois, Hopis, Dakotas, Yakimas, Utes, and dozens of other people belonging to indigenous tribes existed. The term “Native American” flattens under one homogenizing heading the immensely different histories, languages, traditional beliefs, and rich cultural practices of these various tribes” (336). Such a homogenization is seen in the writings of Rowlandson, as she hardly differentiates between various Indian groups.

The references to the appearance of the Indians “they mourned (with their black faces) for their own losses, yet triumphed and rejoiced in their inhumane, and many times devilish cruelty to the English” (29) is a reflection of the abhorrence towards the natives that is ingrained in her writing. This sentiment perpetuates the ‘othering’ of the Natives and contributes to the beginning of both racial and national consciousness among the British Americans. As stated by Ania Loomba, a scholar in Postcolonial Studies, stereotyping involves simplifying and managing images and ideas, aiming to create an artificial sense of difference between ‘self’ and ‘other’ (55). The early American travel writings, including Rowlandson’s narrative, played a role in stereotyping and generalizing the Natives as the ‘other.’ This process facilitates the creation of fixed impressions about specific social groups. Although these

impressions might not be accurate, they became incorporated into the common belief system of the society.

The stereotyping of Natives in the early travel narratives from America continues in Sarah Kemble Knight's *The Journal of Sarah Kemble Knight* (1825), as evident in her references to Natives as "salvages" (savages) (54). For instance, she writes, "There are everywhere in the towns as I passed, a number of Indians the natives of the country, and are the most salvage of all the salvages of that kind that I had ever seen" (54). Among the works selected for this study, Knight is the first travel writer to make a reference to Blacks or African Americans. She notes a colony near Connecticut where farmers lived comfortably with their families. She criticizes their indulgence towards slaves, describing how slaves were allowed to sit at the table and eat with their masters, mixing their black hands in the food alongside their white counterparts, purportedly for the sake of efficiency (53). These observations not only reveal Knight's racial biases but also mark the emergence of a distinct 'other' within British American society. Knight's depiction underscores the early stages of racial categorization and hierarchy in colonial America, where African Americans were viewed through a lens of cultural and racial difference, setting the stage for broader racial dynamics that would shape the consciousness of America in the subsequent centuries.

Knight's writings reflect a clear racial bias evident in her depiction of interactions involving African American and Native American individuals in colonial America. She recounts an incident where a black slave stole a hogshead from his master and either gave or sold it to a Native American in the area, leading to the discovery of the theft. The Native American offender was brought before two justices for questioning, where a language barrier and cultural misunderstanding ensued. One

of the justices, referring to the Indian as “Tatapa,” attempted to communicate in broken English, questioning why he stole the hoghead, to which the Indian responded defensively, asserting his innocence in the misunderstanding (51-52). This exchange not only illustrates a moment of miscommunication and cultural clash but also underscores Knight’s racial consciousness in her portrayal of these interactions. It reflects broader societal attitudes of the time, emphasizing the racial categorization and prejudice that permeated colonial American society.

The increasing emphasis on mercantilism in American society from the mid-eighteenth century complemented the institutionalization of slavery and the process of ‘othering’ in America. Mercantilism treated humans as commodities, contributing to the growth of the slave trade. During this time, there was also a rise in the social status of wealthy Blacks, allowing for some upward mobility in the social structure. However, the Anglo-Saxon Protestants, the white Americans, continued to receive all the legally and socially sanctioned privileges in society. This mercantile culture of America is explicit from the writings of Jonathan Carver. The purpose of Jonathan Carver in the writing of *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America in the Years 1766, 1767, 1768* (1778) is to expose the experience of American West or the American Frontiers to the English-speaking world. The study of racial consciousness in the writing of Carver reveals that his focus was not on the ‘othering’ or to judge the Natives on racial bias. Yet, for a modern-day reader, the excessive thrust on the differences in manners, lifestyles, and religious practices could be read as part of the collective racial consciousness that emerged among English-speaking Europeans in America against the others, especially the Natives and the Blacks.

Carver’s writing has commodified the land, making it a marketable commodity and inviting exploitation. Despite the land belonging to the natives, the

commodification generates interest among the English, ultimately leading to the exploitation of both the land and its people. This process represents another shade of racist consciousness. Alongside commodification, which is rooted in the mercantile culture of British America, Carver's descriptions of the North-West region ignite the imagination of readers to explore this new territory. However, in these descriptions and the call to explore, there is an underlying attempt to dehumanize the natives. This act reinforces the establishment of racial supremacy of the Whites over the Natives.

In another passage, the author discusses the physical appearance of Native Americans, contrasting it with that of Europeans and reflecting on the origins of racial differences. He refrains from delving into debates over whether the Indians' skin color is a result of nature, art, or climate, but he asserts that it seems to be a natural tincture bestowed upon them by their creator. He acknowledges the variation in complexion and features among different nations, including the European whiteness, the dark hue of Africans, and the copper cast of Native Americans, without determining which might be considered the most perfect or original(142-143). Despite recognizing Native Americans as the original inhabitants of the land, the author's descriptions inadvertently perpetuate racist sentiments by emphasizing physical differences and categorizations based on skin color.

Carver's narrative reflects the emerging racial consciousness in early American colonialist ideology, particularly through the Puritan perspective. Despite not highlighting racial differences in physical appearance, Carver's distinction between the Spaniards and "them," the Puritans, underscores a form of othering rooted in American national consciousness from the earliest settlements (22). Referring to the Spaniards as the "Black People" (22), Carver illustrates how the Puritans perceived and categorized others, contributing to a collective cultural

consciousness that shaped American racial perceptions. This distinction, based on cultural and national identity rather than physical race, reveals how early American settlers navigated and defined their identities in relation to others, setting foundational elements for later racial consciousness in America.

The Atlantic Slave Trade, also known as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, is a significant historical event marked by the transportation of millions of enslaved Africans to the Americas starting from the 16th century. The Middle Passage refers to the part of the slave trade that involved transporting enslaved Africans to the Americas, especially before the triangular slave trade's practice of transporting slaves to Europe. Chattel slavery, on the other hand, refers to a system where slaves are treated as mere property and are considered the 'ownership' of their masters. These terms hold great importance in the history of the Blacks or African-Americans in America. Unlike the discussions on the Natives, the institution of servitude in America itself serves as a testament to the racist sentiments against the Blacks in America.

The forceful displacement of Natives from their own land through treaties and other coercive measures reflects the imposition of racial inferiority upon them. George Washington initiated a 'civilizing' process for the Natives, but the Trail of Tears, Indian Removal Act in 1830, Cherokee Nation Relocation in 1838 (largely driven by the Georgia Gold Rush), and similar events expose the creation of a new American identity that excluded the 'original' inhabitants of the land. These 'heathens' were addressed with scorn and contempt in the early travel writings of America, highlighting the racial discrimination and practices against the Natives. As time passed, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, racial discrimination and

its practices shifted towards the Blacks. Gradually, the Blacks replaced the Natives in the European practice of ‘othering.’

Margaret Fuller, being a transcendentalist, in her account *Summer on the Lakes* (1844) discusses an altogether different discourse on racism. As she is against the materialist culture of both Britain and America, she finds the vanishing of Natives, a result of the materialist aggression of the capitalists. Speaking of the “cancer of Slavery” in America, Fuller writes, “I listen to the same arguments against the emancipation of Italy, that are used against the emancipation of our blacks...—and lo! my Country the darkest offender, because with the least excuse, foresworn to the high calling with which she was called” (Lance, “Nature” 165). Hence, regarding the condition of both Indians and of the Blacks she maintained a path not in congruence with the conventional mental framework of national consciousness.

In *Summer on the Lakes*, the references to the Natives or Indians suggest that they are deeply connected to nature. According to the author, the Natives complete and give wholeness to nature. This connection is evident in the following passage, “the perpetual trampling of the waters seized my senses. I felt that no other sound, however near, could be heard, and would start and look behind me for a foe. I realized the identity of that mood of nature in which these waters were poured down with such absorbing force, with that in which the Indian was shaped on the same soil” (5). The author perceives a parallel between the powerful force of nature and the shaping of the Indian people on the same land. For the author, Indians or Natives are an inseparable part of nature, and just as nature cannot be possessed, she writes, “Yet we believe the Indian cannot be looked at truly except by a poetic eye” (32-33). In this statement, the author implies that understanding and appreciating the essence of the Natives requires a poetic and profound perspective.

Fuller contested the annihilation of the Natives from “their” soil. This act of the Europeans is described as “the rudeness of the white settlers, a primitive, un noble and artificial roughness that was destroying the uncontaminated nature of the West [American frontiers]” (18). Her statement conflicts with the prevailing Puritan materialist ideology in America. She denounced the Indian Removal Act of 1830, to enhance settlements in the West of Mississippi for the materialist gain of the nation, and an indirect reference to it is seen when she says, “I have no hope of saving the Indian from immediate degradation, and speedy death [...] Yet, ere they depart, I wish there might be some masterly attempt to reproduce, in art or literature, what is proper to them, a kind of beauty and grandeur, which few of the every-day crowd have hearts to feel, yet which ought to leave in the world its monuments, to inspire the thought of genius through all ages” (196). She appreciates the distinct qualities of the Indian people and expresses the desire to preserve their cultural significance and contributions even in the face of their difficult circumstances. It also emphasizes the power of art and literature in transcending time and leaving a lasting impact on the world’s collective consciousness. The national consciousness that she talks about is all-inclusive, with no discrimination towards any American on the basis of the difference from the European.

She is highly critical of the materialist expansion of America to its West, which was the most important political activity of the time. Fuller condemned the hypocrisy of calling slave-drivers and Indian traders Christians while deeming Native Americans less worthy than European settlers, stating, “Wonderful is the deceit of man’s heart” (197). Her references to events like the Black Hawk Trail reveal a sympathetic perspective towards Native Americans, lamenting their displacement from lands of striking natural beauty. This sentiment aligns with scholarly analyses by

David R. Roediger, a scholar in critical race theory, who in *The Wages of Whiteness*, explores how constructions of whiteness among the American working class were not solely driven by economic advantages but also by psychological and ideological mechanisms that reinforced racial stereotypes (Roediger 210). Fuller's writings underscore a growing American racial consciousness that questioned the moral and ethical implications of westward expansion, challenging the prevailing narratives of racial superiority and manifest destiny that justified the dispossession and marginalization of indigenous peoples.

The institutionalization of racial discrimination in America reached a pivotal moment with the establishment of slave patrols in the late eighteenth century. These armed groups were tasked with monitoring and controlling enslaved individuals, enforcing discipline and ensuring compliance with the rigid system of slavery. This period also saw the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, which criminalized any attempt by enslaved individuals to escape, thereby further entrenching systemic discrimination against Blacks as a state-sponsored practice. However, amidst these oppressive conditions, the early nineteenth century witnessed a burgeoning abolitionist movement, particularly in the northern states, where advocates vehemently opposed the institution of slavery. Abolitionists, driven by a moral imperative to challenge racial injustice, supported various efforts by Black communities to resist discrimination. A seminal event during this era was Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831, marking a significant moment of resistance against the dehumanizing effects of racial prejudice and systemic oppression.

Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself* (1861) stands as a testament to the pervasive racial consciousness in America during the nineteenth century. Jacobs' narrative portrays the harrowing experiences of Black

individuals under slavery, challenging the foundational ideals of American liberty. Her declaration, "I was born a slave," (11) and reflection on the profound impact of enslavement--The slave child had no thought for the morrow; but there came that blight, which too surely waits on every human being born to be a chattel" (15) -- powerfully illustrate the deep-rooted injustices faced by Blacks under the legal and social framework of slavery. This narrative not only exposes the brutal realities of slavery but also articulates a plea for empathy and understanding from her readers. The editor's introduction, penned by L. Maria Child, further underscores the abolitionist agenda of the text, aimed at shedding light on the plight of Blacks in society and challenging prevailing notions of racial superiority and entitlement. The narrative thus serves as a critical document in the study of American racial consciousness, highlighting the voices of those who endured and resisted the injustices of slavery during a turbulent period in American history.

According to Albert J. Raboteau, a professor at Princeton University, African American studies, explores into the deeper significance of the African American presence in the United States. This presence has always served as a litmus test for the nation's claims of freedom, democracy, equality, and inclusiveness for all its citizens (Coon 32). Consequently, the narratives and collective consciousness of African Americans were compelled to align with the spirit of American consciousness. The introduction by the editor of the narrative of Jacobs acknowledges the potential criticism of presenting the experiences of an intelligent and much-injured woman to the public. These experiences belong to a category that some consider delicate, while others label as indelicate. The aspect of slavery discussed in the narrative has often been concealed from public view. However, the editor also believes that the public

should be aware of its monstrous features and takes the responsibility of unveiling them (8).

The book's narrator frequently contrasts the conditions of the Blacks in the Southern States with those in Free States. During the antebellum period, the divide between the Northern and Southern states grew, especially in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Abolitionist movements gained momentum during this time, strengthening the anti-slavery dialogues in the Northern states. As a result, conditions for the Blacks in the Northern states were generally better compared to those in the Southern agricultural states. This fueled the abolitionist movement, which became a new nationalist agenda for the industrialist states of the North. The narrator expresses her desire to add her voice to the testimonies of more skilled writers in order to convince the people of the Free States of the true nature of slavery. She believes that only through firsthand experience can anyone grasp the profound darkness and foulness of the abominable system of slavery (6). The term "Free States" is mentioned fourteen times in the narrative, reflecting the narrator's strong longing to be freed from slavery.

The abolitionist movements, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the American Civil War played a significant role in redefining the racial consciousness of America. Over time, they contributed to the development of a collective class consciousness that emerged in the Northern states. As the distinctions between the Whites and the non-Whites and between the European settlers and the Natives became deeply ingrained in the American consciousness, a new racial consciousness evolved, aligning itself with the collective consciousness of capitalist and industrialist America. In the post-bellum period, this refined racial discrimination gave rise to a

new consciousness among the bourgeoisie, with a sense of white superiority that further fueled class distinctions and differences.

The post-bellum period in America underwent a re-design of its ideals to align with the demands of industrialist values prominent in the Northern states. During this period, nationalism emerged as a new consciousness, and the sentiments of nationalism gave rise to a compelling national consciousness in America. The 'unity and integrity of the nation' became the central agenda, and grand narratives were formulated to shape the nation's identity. However, these nation narratives were structured to cater to the interests of the White elites, perpetuating neo-discriminatory practices in America. Even the writings of the period, including those of African Americans like Harriet Jacobs, celebrated the liberal progressive ideals of the White population in America.

Mark Twain's description of Murels in his *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) is often associated with the heightened racism of post-bellum America. His consciousness played a significant role during the nationalist sentiments in the post-bellum period. He writes of Murels as follows:

There is a tradition that Island was one of the principal abiding places of the once celebrated 'Murel's Gang.' This was a colossal combination of robbers, horse-thieves, negro-stealers, and counterfeiters, engaged in business along the river some fifty or sixty years ago. While our journey across the country towards St. Louis was in progress we had had no end of Jesse James and his stirring history; for he had just been assassinated by an agent of the Governor of Missouri, was in consequence occupying a good deal of space in the newspapers. Cheap histories of him were for sale by train boys. (311-12)

Here, the people who are against the 'unified' sense of America are considered as the 'neo-others' in the post-bellum America. This marks the beginning of neo-racial consciousness in America which is in tune with the 'neo-national consciousnesses' in the context of post-bellum America. The book narrates instances where Negroes are living a normal life in the post-civil war America, whereas with the descriptions of various other characters who are working against 'the integrity of the nation', he addresses a 'new' other. Even the Natives are made part of the 'unified' American Creed.

The study of Mark Twain's racial consciousness reveals his perspective towards the natives. Despite treating them as inferior, Mark Twain sees them as preferable to the "divisive forces" that threaten the unity of America as a nation. In post-Civil War America, the primary concern is nationalistic sentiment and the desire for a unified country, rather than the differentiation between white and black Americans. As a result, Mark Twain celebrates the nationalistic spirit of both the natives and black Americans, depicting them in a similar light to nationalist white Americans. In one incident, he narrates how the explorers encountered the natives of the Arkansas region. The natives greeted them with the booming of war drums and the display of arms, much like how Marquette had been greeted before. This encounter with natives in the Arkansas region depicts a complex interplay of nationalism and cultural superiority. Mark Twain narrates how French explorers, like La Salle, asserted territorial claims under the guise of religious and national duty, setting up crosses and asserting possession for the French king, while priests consecrated these acts with hymns and gestures of conversion (36-7). He highlights the inherent nationalism driving such encounters, emphasizing desires for territorial expansion and national unity. Despite evident cultural differences and a sense of

superiority, Mark Twain finds a common thread of nationalism bridging the gap between white explorers and Native Americans.

However, Mark Twain's broader critique extends beyond these encounters, as seen in his commentary on the Mississippi River's role in American commerce, including the transportation of slaves and slave-grown cotton. According to Stephanie Le Menager, a scholar in Environmental Humanities, Mark Twain views the Mississippi as central to American identity, yet critiques the exploitative economic practices and nationalist narratives that underpin it (405). His critique reveals a racial consciousness that exposes the hypocrisy of a unified nationalist narrative imposed at the expense of marginalized groups, reflecting broader themes of racism and exploitation in American history and ideology. His examination of the Mississippi River and its role as a conduit for both commerce and oppression underscores his belief in the pervasive influence of racial dynamics in shaping American society and its narratives. By juxtaposing the river's economic vitality with its complicity in perpetuating racial injustice, Mark Twain offers a nuanced critique that challenges conventional nationalist narratives and interrogates the moral implications of American expansionism.

In the twentieth century, the racial consciousness in America took new directions, but the collective consciousness from the post-bellum period still emphasized the importance of unity and national integrity as the primary variables in America's racial consciousness during this era. Any attempt to challenge this unity was seen as a threat by the 'other' group. The process of creating 'others' in American society was ongoing process and had significant impacts on both national and racial consciousness. Historical events like the Emancipation Proclamation, the Thirteenth Amendment, and the implementation of Jim Crow Laws played significant roles in

institutionalizing racism. These laws indirectly contributed to white supremacy by supporting legal discrimination, perpetuating socio-economic inequality, and promoting racial stratification within the society. The notion of 'otherness' and the creation of distinct racial identities continued to shape America's racial consciousness and affected social, political, and economic interactions among different racial groups.

Charles W. Mills, an American philosopher, elaborates on the concept of racism in America in the twentieth century. According to him, the twentieth century racism is "global white supremacy", and it is by virtue of itself a political system; which is a refined version of racism. It is a "power structure for formal and informal rule, socio-economic privilege, and norms for the differential distribution of material opportunities, rights and duties" (Introduction 3). John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962) illustrates this refined form of racism, "I Have seen a look in dog's eyes, a quickly vanishing look of amazed contempt" this was the response of the writer while encountering racism in New Orleans. He continues, "and I am convinced that basically dogs think humans are nuts" (20). The idea of self-reliance exposes a 'New-Americanist' self of the twentieth century, which even includes an appropriation of the self into the changing global contexts.

In the narrative, Steinbeck reflects on his childhood encounters with race through his interactions with the Cooper family, the only African American family he knew in his youth in Salinas. He portrays the Coopers as exemplifying American ideals, challenging prevalent racial stereotypes by highlighting their cleanliness, work ethic, and financial responsibility (213-14). However, Steinbeck's portrayal also reveals underlying racial biases as he characterizes the Coopers as an 'unnatural' deviation from his expected norms. His fascination with their adherence to Puritan

values, when observed among African Americans, reflects a racist assumption that such qualities are exceptional rather than commonplace. Steinbeck's assertion that he never sensed racial prejudice in Salinas and that the Coopers were respected within the community is juxtaposed with his admission of feeling alienated when discussions about race arise, highlighting his limited perspective and reinforcing the implicit racial prejudices in his narrative.

The study of racial consciousness or 'othering' in Steinbeck's narrative reveals a subtle form of racism, wherein he perceives himself as an 'acceptable' American in contrast to various 'others' whom he deems as unacceptable. Throughout the book, Steinbeck's behavior is characterized by inclusivity and accommodation, which he considers to be the epitome of 'acceptable behavior' for a 'true' American. This perspective becomes evident in the following incident where he narrates of his encounter with the landowner on private property; Steinbeck's usual reaction of anger is subdued by the tranquil surroundings. He acknowledges the property's status and its rules, understanding the owner's concerns about campers. Rather than engaging in conflict, he calmly accepts the situation and offers to leave peacefully. In a gesture of goodwill, he even offers the owner a cup of coffee to foster a positive connection between them. This exemplifies his inclination to be an 'acceptable' American by respecting rules and avoiding confrontation (109-110).

The incident of the landowner exemplifies the creation of a new 'other' in America. In the post-World War II era, the concept of the 'modern man' has evolved to be highly self-centered, considering any attempt of trespass into 'his' territory as a threat, leading to the creation of an 'other'. This mentality extends beyond individuals to nations, where any action perceived as encroaching on America's territory or interests easily categorizes that nation as an 'other'. In a philosophical sense, the

modern man sees himself as embodying the nation, and any perceived trespass is seen as a challenge to his identity and sovereignty.

Edmund White, in his narrative *States of Desire: Travels in Gay America* (1980), uncovers the existence of the practice of racism in America in the twentieth century. He divulges it as, “there’s a lot of racism among white gays in San Francisco, partly because so many come from places like Oklahoma or South Dakota where they’re not used to dealing with Third World people” (60). In the direct reference to the ‘new others’ of America among the white- Americans, White bespeaks the new shades of racism in America. In another instance, he mentions of Texas, and its racism being different from the ideals of the ‘mainstream America’. He writes:

Texas is at least partly Southern, and it can never be understood if it is totally seceded from the Confederacy. Take the racism. In small towns and among older people it persists unchanged. Among the Houston young, the racism may be disguised by lighthearted “nigger” jokes told on the understanding that, of course, we’re both liberals, we all know better-and isn’t it fun to say ‘nigger,’ to use the real down-home word, the very word they use? (127)

In the narrative, Steinbeck illuminates the pervasive and complex nature of racism in America, revealing its deep-seated presence in societal consciousness and its varied manifestations across different racial groups. He points to the emergence of neo-racial groupings rooted in varying degrees of alignment with American ideals, challenging the hegemony of white supremacy in racial discourse. Steinbeck’s depiction underscores how racial discrimination evolved beyond earlier definitions with the advent of integration, where legal adherence to desegregation laws coexisted with underlying social tensions and micro-aggressions. He recounts instances where African Americans, accustomed to segregation, encountered scrutiny and discomfort

in desegregated spaces, illustrating a societal transition marked by strict adherence to legal norms yet entrenched racial divisions. Steinbeck's encounter with a rural Georgian setting further complicates these dynamics, where even individuals possibly affiliated with the Klan exhibited outward politeness amid racial tension (245). His narrative thus portrays a nuanced understanding of racism in America, reflecting on how legal reforms interacted with deeply ingrained social prejudices and nationalist ideologies, shaping the evolving landscape of race relations in the country.

In this narrative of *White*, the depiction of racism goes beyond the traditional dichotomies of whites versus natives or whites versus blacks prevalent in American history. Instead, he explores a form of racism deeply intertwined with the observance of American ideals and ideologies. During his time, individuals who did not conform to these ideals were often marginalized as 'others' and subjected to discrimination that transcended biological characteristics. This form of racism becomes a social construct rooted in national consciousness and ideals, reflecting broader societal norms and expectations. *White's* exploration of racial consciousness highlights how perceptions of belonging and exclusion were shaped by adherence to American values, influencing social hierarchies and cultural identities. The narrative also offers insights into how racism manifests not only through overt acts of prejudice but also through subtle forms of exclusion and marginalization based on perceived deviations from accepted norms of Americanness.

Racism, both as a concept and institutional practice, exists in complex layers, making any study of racism an ongoing and multifaceted process. In the earliest accounts examined, such as those by Thomas Harriot and John Smith, the sense of English identity against 'others' like the Native inhabitants of the New World, Spaniards, and French traditions in the New World, marked the traces of racism. The

writings of Mary Rowlandson and Sarah Kemble Knight further solidified the notion of ‘othering,’ as they portrayed the Native Americans as racial others to the Puritan settlers, reinforcing Puritanic ideologies and supremacy. While Jonathan Carver’s narrative primarily focuses on the nation’s expansion to the American West rather than creating others, there are instances where he emphasizes the differences between the life and culture of the natives and the Europeans, suggesting racist delineations by the writer. On the other hand, Margaret Fuller, as a transcendentalist, had a different approach towards both Native Americans and the Blacks, considering the natives as the original owners of the land.

Harriet Jacobs and Mark Twain represent the post-bellum neo-racial consciousness, rooted in the Puritan, abolitionist, White, northern, and industrialist agendas of the northern states. Despite their cherishing of the notion of a unified America, their narratives were discriminatory, erasing dissenting voices and perpetuating further discrimination. The post-Civil War reconstruction activities led to the creation of new ‘others’ alongside national institutions, continuing into the twentieth century. Neo-liberal racial sentiments emerged in America, leading to the categorization of many ‘others’ within the American racial consciousness, further exacerbated by institutional racism and socio-political inequality. John Steinbeck’s and Edmund White’s works expose these new in-roads of neo-racism, targeting individuals such as communists, religious conservationists, or anti-capitalists who may be considered as ‘others’ for failing to align with the American ideals and values. Hence, the narrative of racism in America is intricate and ongoing, shaped by historical contexts, ideologies, and institutions.

Chapter 5

American as Man and Woman: American Gender Consciousness

“I think you travel to search and you come back home to find yourself there”

(Adichie)

From time immemorial, women have traveled, migrated, or moved alongside their male counterparts, such as fathers, husbands, or brothers, for almost the same reasons. However, according to Annette Kolodny, a prominent American literary critic and cultural historian, the intentions of pioneer women travelers in the West were not solely driven by economic pursuits or the typical ‘colonial’ mindset of transforming the wilderness. Instead, their travel writings indicate a shift in emphasis (xii). These women’s journeys cannot be simply reduced to gender on the road or their travel narratives seen merely as literature for protest. Rather, woman travel writings offer a rich variety of travel experiences with diverse and unique narrative styles. The experiences of travel for women take an altogether different trajectory from mainstream travel experiences. This chapter does not restrict itself to only exploring ‘her’ experiences of travel; rather, it explores the evolution of gender consciousness in America.

According to Susan Bassnett, a British scholar in translation studies and comparative literature, travel has historically been considered more of a masculine activity, with men often embarking on journeys to discover new places and experiences. On the other hand, women’s travel is frequently seen as a means to escape from household duties and the constraints of society (226). This perspective highlights the various restrictions that culture and society logically imposed on women regarding travel. As there were cultural, biological and political restrictions on women travel as travel remained a masculine act, those who have travelled breaking

the stigma were generally perceived as ‘exceptional’ lives. Being less documented, history of women travel has no concrete or linear trajectory. These ideas go parallel to “the difference between men’s and women’s travel writing does not lie in the constituents of the text, but rather in the way that communities of readers evaluate and interpret those texts according to their social and historical positioning” (Foster et al. 4).

During the early Renaissance period and the initial stages of colonization, narratives of travel accounts did acknowledge the presence of women on the road. However, their travel experiences differed significantly from the conventional narratives of that time. It was after the spread of colonization, both in Europe and America that the number of women travelers surged. Notably, American women’s travel narratives took a distinct path compared to their European counterparts. These early American women travelers journeyed with specific purposes tied to the needs of the colonies they were traveling to. The narratives of these journeys often explored the intersection between the search for self and the moralistic standards prevalent in Europe, with a heavy emphasis on domesticity. Certain women travelers, such as Margaret Fuller, managed to interweave philosophy and travel in their accounts. As the nineteenth century progressed, women’s travel writing began to involve purposeful fictionalization processes, leading to a heightened emphasis on dramatization in their narratives. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the intention behind women's travels shifted more towards a search for self-discovery and identity.

Throughout different time periods in history, the reasons for the travel of women varied significantly. Therefore, attempting to compartmentalize women’s travel writing or categorize traveling women into a single homogenous group is not

feasible. Men, on the other hand, had diverse interpretations of women's travel experiences. Lewis Perry, an American historian studying antebellum culture, characterized male travelers as cultural bearers, while he saw women travelers as needing to prove they posed no threat to morality (185). As men's experiences differed from those of women, their descriptions of gender roles during travel often became exercises of imagination or constructs based on women's experiences while traveling. June Jordan, a black American writer, challenged the male interpretation of women's travel. She eloquently wrote, "They don't ask you what you are doing in the street, they rape you and mutilate you bodily to let you remember your place. You have no rightful place in the public" (qtd. in Gillian Rose 34) and it expresses the harsh reality faced by women when they venture into public spaces.

Prior to the arrival of the Mayflower in 1620, there were hardly any women travelers in America. The explorers and travelers who came from Europe across the Atlantic were predominantly men, and as a result, the first two travel narratives selected for the present study do not contain any reference to women or gender. The prevailing European sentiments regarding gender during that period could be seen as reflective of the gender consciousness in America at the time. The study of gender consciousness in Thomas Harriot's *A Brief and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia* (1588) is suggestive of European ideals in the construct of a 'true' woman in America. The first reference to woman in the narrative is to point out the difference between European and the native understanding of women. He writes, "For mankind they say a woman was made first, which by the woorking of one of the goddes, conceiued and brought foorth children: and in such sort they say they had their beginning" (37). That is, they believe that initially, a woman was created by one of their deities, who then conceived and gave birth to children, thus explaining their

origin. The natives are quintessentially different from the Europeans, as they believed in the evolution of mankind from women; this was in contradiction to the Semitic foundations of Europe.

In the narrative, Harriot reveals his Euro-centric perspective towards the women-centric beliefs of Native Americans, highlighting them as a cultural contrast between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of America. He recounts how the natives viewed the arrival of Europeans with awe, perceiving them as potentially divine due to their strange customs and the absence of women among them. This absence led some natives to speculate that the Europeans were immortal beings, not born of women, thus immortal (42). Harriot underscores this cultural misunderstanding and emphasizes the European tradition of treating women differently, which he portrays as a mark of English indifference. This portrayal reflects early European interpretations of gender roles in America, illustrating the beginnings of European-influenced gender consciousness in the New World.

The study of gender consciousness in John Smith's *A Description of New England* (1616) reveals only one reference to woman in the entire book. This reference is made by the narrator in order to 'perfect' (complete) the picture of a family. Alongside the man and "childe" (child), the woman is mentioned as occupying a place for the "pleasures" of man. He writes:

Heer nature and liberty affords vs that freely, which in England we want, or it costeth vs dearely. What pleasure can be more, then (being tired with any occasion a-shore) in planting vines, fruits, or hearbs, in contriuing their owne grounds, to the pleasure of their own emindes, their fields, gardens, orchards, buildings, ships, and other works, &c. to recreate themselues before their owne doores, in their owne boates vpon the Sea, where man woman and

childe, with a small hooke and line, by angling, may take diuerse sorts of excellent fish, at their pleasures? (47)

Smith describes the natural abundance and freedom of the New World, contrasting it favorably with the conditions in England. He highlights the joy of planting, cultivating, and enjoying the fruits of one's labor, whether on land or at sea, where men, women, and children can find recreation and sustenance through fishing with simple tools. Smith lists various pleasurable activities that are available in this location with ample nature and freedom and woman and the child completes the picture. This reflects the gender and gender role consciousness prevalent in English society during the Renaissance, and it is mirrored in the earliest colonialist writings from America.

Citing an example from the Induction scene of William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, Frances E. Dolan deliberates on the qualities of Renaissance women, particularly the attributes of being a gentlewoman and an obedient wife, in her essay "Gender and Sexuality in Early Modern England" (9). She also observes a trend in early modern English society where men are considered more valuable while women are often seen as "disorderly" (12). These Renaissance values find expression when "man, [his] woman, and childe" live peacefully in Newfoundland with abundant material prosperity. In this quote from John Smith, 'his' woman is merely viewed as an addition to his material wealth. Consequently, the gender consciousness that gradually emerges in America is built upon the foundation of European consciousness of gender.

In the travel accounts of Mary Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682), and Sarah Kemble Knight, *Journal of Madame Knight* (written in 1705 and published in 1825), being women travelers, their

narratives shed light on the gender experiences of travel and the prevalent gender consciousness during the colonial period. In the study of women's travel writings, two critical variables that determine the gender consciousness of the narratives are the intention of the travel and the gaze of the travelers (the areas on which the narrator focuses). Women's experiences of travel differ from men's experiences, and according to Eric Leed, an American critic, the way they position themselves in relation to "the materiality, the externalities, and surfaces" is inseparable from the "physical conditions of movement through space" (72). As the mental effects of travel differ for men and women, their consciousness contributes to the process of nation-building in distinct ways.

The intention and focus of Rowlandson's narrative are to provide a Puritan account of her captivity. Throughout her experiences, she perceives herself as distinct from the native women, positioning herself as an 'ideal' model of womanhood for British America. Rowlandson frequently contrasts native women with English or European women. One character in the narrative that demands attention in the context of gender consciousness is the "squaw," referring to the wives of native Chiefs. She writes:

My master had three squaws, living sometimes with one, and sometimes with another one, this old squaw, at whose wigwam I was, and with whom my master had been those three weeks. Another was Wattimore [Weetamoo], with whom I had lived and served all this while. A severe and proud dame she was, bestowing every day in dressing herself neat as much time as any of the gentry of the land: powdering her hair, and painting her face, going with necklaces, with jewels in her ears, and bracelets upon her hands. When she had dressed herself, her work was to make girdles of wampum and beads. (23)

The above passage highlights the differences between Native women and the English. The natives appear to be more concerned about dressing up, wearing ornaments, and powdering their hair, while the European or English women live a simpler and more austere life, as advocated in the Scriptures.

Rowlandson details on her adeptness at knitting serves as a recurring motif that underscores the cultural ideals of womanhood prevalent during her time. Rowlandson portrays herself as embodying these ideals through her skilful knitting, a domestic task that symbolizes femininity and domesticity in colonial America (13; 23). The exchange of her knitting for goods like stockings, hats, and handkerchiefs not only demonstrates her practicality and resourcefulness but also reinforces her role as a provider within the constrained circumstances of her captivity. Such exchanges highlight the negotiation of economic and social exchanges in a frontier setting where survival often relied on traditional gender roles. Additionally, Rowlandson's portrayal of herself as the 'ideal woman' is further emphasized by her adherence to English moral values amidst adversity. Her narrative underscores her ability to maintain moral integrity and piety, qualities highly valued in European society of the time. Even in challenging situations, such as interactions with her captors, Rowlandson describes instances where she is treated with unexpected civility, attributing it to her perceived virtue and piety as an English woman (27).

Throughout her narrative, Rowlandson's reliance on Providence and her devout religious beliefs are central to her portrayal of herself as a pious woman. Her frequent references to prayer and trust in God reflect the gendered expectations of piety and faith during the colonial period, where women were often depicted as the spiritual backbone of the family and community. This spiritual resilience not only serves as a narrative device but also reinforces her characterization as a devout

woman facing immense adversity. Furthermore, her emotional expressions regarding her children's fates (13) highlight another characteristic of women's travel narratives: a focus on personal and emotional experiences rather than external conquests. Unlike male narratives that might emphasize physical endurance or conquest, Rowlandson's narrative probes into her inner turmoil, grief, and maternal instincts, offering readers a poignant insight into her emotional journey through captivity. These aspects of the narrative collectively illuminate the complexities of gender consciousness, domesticity, and religious piety in colonial America, providing a nuanced perspective on women's experiences and cultural values during that era.

Normative femininity is another important idea that should be analyzed in the context of gender in America. It is an ideology that focuses on the ideal standards of femininity, which is evident in the women travelers and their travel writing, especially among early women travelers. Various factors, such as familial influence, physical limitations, religious beliefs, and legal and bureaucratic restrictions, exert their influence on the mobility of women. Susan Bassnett's famous statement, "when she was denied a role, women travelled in all roles" (231), does not necessarily mean breaking free from societal constraints. Instead, in the early travel narratives, women created 'spaces' of femininity for the purpose of their travel. The study of American women travel writers reveals that the basic tenets of an American woman were never transgressed in their travels. These women navigated their journeys while adhering to the norms and expectations placed upon them by society.

Cheryl McEwan explores the variations in the writing styles of women travel writers, as quoted in Bassnett (228). In American women travel writers' narratives, the thoughts and attitudes of white women tend to dominate the ideology of travel and gender. Among early woman travel writers, there is a noticeable dichotomy between

the dominant culture and the wild zones they encounter. Deborah Paes de Barros argues that American women travel narratives serve as personal documents created by ordinary women who use their texts to map and organize their sense of self. These women find meaning in their lives through travel, and their narratives delve into how they perceive the concept of mobility and their place in the world (qtd. in Roberson “American Women” 215).

Sarah Kemble Knight in her *Journal of Madame Knight* comments on the social, economic and religious conditions of the British America. The narrative serves as a reflection of the settlers’ attitudes towards gender during that time. Often identified as a social commentary, Knight’s writing style and perspectives are distinctly feminine, making her account a valuable document for understanding colonial life around 1700. Her purpose of travel was unconventional for a woman of the time. “Women she argues, have rarely been ‘commissioned to travel’, hence in the absence of a patron or authority figure women can afford to be more discursive, more impressionable, more ordinary” (Bassnett 226). She travelled alone; not in the company of her family and thus, “she contradicts the stereotypes of a delicate female, and the shy sheltered house wife” (Vowell). However, Knight’s concerns and experiences are still influenced by her status as a middle-class Puritan American woman.

Knight took her home and domesticity on to the road. The narrative is in the form of diary entries and was in fact the narration of her daily events while travelling. Her early reflections could be referred to as the initial traces of gendered perceptions on society, culture, religion, manners etc. The women travel is often encountered with danger on roads. She herself chooses to travel with a post rider or other reliable guides. Knight wrote in an entry dated “Thirsday, Octobr ye 5th”: “Here, by reason of

a very high wind, we mett with great difficulty in getting over—the boat tos't exceedingly, and our horsescapper'd at a very surprizing rate, and set us all in a fright" (32), it details the danger on road that awaits woman travelers. She narrates her experiences on road, which in fact reflects the personal impressionistic account (narrative style) of the women travelers. Her focus is on the challenges faced by woman travelers during their journey.

The gender consciousness that emerges reveals the unfriendly roads and routes for women, reaffirming travel as a masculine activity. Knight writes:

The rodes all along this way are very bad, incumbred with rocks and mountainos passages, which were very disagreeable to my tired carcass; but we went on a moderate pace which made yejourny more pleasant. But after about eight miles rideing, in going over a bridge under which the river run very swift, my hors stumbled, and very narrowly 'scaped falling over into the water; which extreemely frightened mee. (34)

The narrator described how the roads along the route were in poor condition, with rocks and steep mountainous terrain posing challenges for their tired body. They mentioned that despite these difficulties, they maintained a steady pace, which they found somewhat comforting. The narrator recounted that after traveling about eight miles, while crossing a bridge over a fast-moving river; their horse stumbled, almost falling into the water. This experience caused them significant alarm. The speaker describes a challenging journey on rough and rocky roads.

In Knight's writing, her religiosity and perspectives as a woman traveler are evident. She provides detailed descriptions of the places she visits, expressing her feelings throughout the journey, a characteristic often found in women's writings. The collective consciousness of the time is exposed through her constant anticipation of

danger at every moment of her travel. This reflects the prevalent societal concerns and restrictions on mobility for women during that era. Before crossing a particularly treacherous river, Knight is consumed with thoughts of drowning. She expressed how the account deeply affected her state of mind, leaving her consumed by thoughts solely centered on the treacherous river. Her imagination was haunted by grim possibilities, ranging from visions of drowning to scenarios where she emerged like a sacred figure, drenched and purified (13). These thoughts underscored the prevailing gender perceptions of the era, which linked travel experiences with peril and vulnerability, particularly highlighting the heightened anxieties women faced during journeys.

Knight's language and expressions are feminine, adding to the authenticity of her perspective as a woman traveler. She also acknowledges the restrictive mobility that women typically faced during that period. Despite these societal constraints, Knight emerges as an exception to the norm, challenging traditional gender roles and expectations by embarking on her adventurous journey. Knight's diary has also been important in the field of women's history and literary recovery, both of which are movements that seek to recover narratives often forgotten or neglected in favor of more mainstream, canonized works (Marsden 659). As a woman's diary, it is a unique piece for its uncharacteristically outward focus (as opposed to the typical, inwardly reflective, Puritan diary); and for the unique judgments and strong personality contained within it. The description of travelling through unfamiliar, dangerous landscapes with the elements of fear and apprehension, builds in the picture of woman's approach to woman travelling- which inevitably differentiates her travel from her male counterparts'.

Knight's travel is considered by many critics as an exceptional journey for a woman. Unlike the view of women during her time, she possessed a good knowledge of business and demonstrated great determination in pursuing her goals. This skill set sets her apart as someone deviating from the accepted norms. This is evident when she writes about an exchange concerning payment for an escort. Instead of accepting the offered amount, she decided to bypass the negotiator and directly dealt with the escort, fixing a price that she considered fair. Knight's attitude in this situation reflects the initial traces of a 'self-reliant' woman, which was exceptional for that period in American history. Nevertheless, it aligns with the prevailing national consciousness of the time.

The study of gender consciousness in Jonathan Carver's *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North America in the Years 1766, 1767, and 1768* (1778) exposes the idea of gender through the differences he projects in the manners and traditions of natives from the settlers during the time. The difference in fact points to the evolution of gender consciousness in the context of America. He narrates an incident upon reaching the great town of the Winnebagoes, situated on a small island at the eastern end of Lake Winnebago. The council and the chiefs of the town took Carver to their queen, who is the head of their council. In that community, women are not allowed to attend or come with an opinion, yet the head of the council is a woman, which the narrator calls as ancient woman:

She was a very ancient woman, small in stature, and not much distinguished by her dress from several young women that attended her. These her attendants seemed greatly pleased whenever I showed any tokens of respect to their queen, particularly when I saluted her, which I frequently did to acquire her favour. On these occasions the good old lady endeavoured to assume a juvenile gaiety,

and by her smiles showed she was equally pleased with the attention I paid her.

(21)

Here, Carver narrates about the unique position of women in Native American society. Their position is ancient and deeply rooted in their traditions. However, Carver appreciates that in their councils, the women do not raise their voices, which aligns with the tradition in England (or Europe in general).

In another instance, Carver writes, “when the Indian women sit down, they place themselves in a decent attitude, with their knees close together; but from being accustomed to this posture, they walk badly, and appear to be lame” (151). This observation suggests the accepted European behavior of modesty. The significance of this statement becomes apparent when he praises the graceful movements of the women of the western Native American nations. He notes that they dance very gracefully, carrying themselves erect with their arms hanging down close to their sides, moving with their feet conjoined, and shifting their toes and heels without taking any steps like a European would do (173). Carver cherishes the European-model of gender consciousness and appreciates the Native Americans when they closely follow European ideals.

Carver also expresses appreciation for the cleanliness and decency maintained by the Indian women during their ‘menstrual illness.’ He observes that this practice is common among those Indian nations that are distant from European settlements, such as the Naudowessies (152). Carver admires Indian women who show fewer adherences to their culture, and he is surprised to find the head of the Winnebago nation being a woman (166). From the perspective of a Puritan-patriarchal worldview, Carver believes that this female leadership affects the entire structure of their society. His sense of awe becomes explicit when he witnesses women being given more

respect and duties beyond just being ‘the family’ of the man, as projected in European ideology. His idea of gender is rooted in the Renaissance ideals of a man-woman dichotomy, according to which women should always be submissive and graceful.

The travel routes and the travel narratives of Margaret Fuller were different and unconventional. The prevalent Puritan consciousness of gender, spirituality and identity were at odds with the narratives of Fuller. Her *The Great Law Suits, or Man Vs Men, Woman Vs Women*, challenged the ‘traditions’ of Puritan society and she carved a new path all by herself which strikes at the need for a balance between masculine and feminine principles in the consciousness of a nation. The travel and philosophy of Margaret Fuller as seen in *Summer on the Lakes* (1844), and various other writings are different from the rest of the travelers. She holds a unique view of nature and she travelled in defense of her values. When Fuller asks (in this narrative), “has the Indian, has the white woman, as noble a feeling of life and it’s uses, as religious a self-respect, as worthy a field of thought and action, as man?” (181), the ideology and attitude of Fuller towards the American woman gets represented.

This ideology runs parallel to the shift in recurrent themes from American women travel writing of home and domesticity away from “home” (often highlighted by the woman travel narratives after 1800) to the travelers who were in search for “their spaces” in travel. The extensive focus on the spirit or feeling of the place is another important characteristic of women travel writing. The ‘her’ description of place is exclusively a distinctive feminine approach. The woman perspectives, gazes, and experiences of the place by a woman traveler are identified to be different from that of a male traveler. The discursive presence of women travelers are often identified in their texts. “Travel for some women, it seems, may have offered a means of redefining themselves, assuming a different persona and becoming someone who

didn't exist at home" (Bassnett 228). The social order, constraints of domesticity and discourses of the self with its complex self-representations are all features of women narratives.

According to William W. Stowe, Margaret Fuller's narrative represents a variety of voices. At times, she draws from conventions and established models while at other times she expresses her own unique perspectives. Through this literary approach, Fuller conveys a subtle and complex understanding of politics, culture, and the relationship of American women to them (251). In Fuller's travels to the West (American West), she meets both nature and people, especially Indian women; different from the materialistic externalities as suggested by the male travelers. Niagara Falls is a place which is generally conceived as rude and full of wilderness. But for her, it was an escape from the utilitarian New England and also from the prevalent spirit of commerce. It was for her the "long-awaited moment of self-transcendence in the face of the premier icon of the American sublime" (Newman, "Nature" 207).

Fuller's initial reaction to the prairies is a complex act of perceptual experimentation than locating her body close to the noise and mist of the falls. "At first, the prairie seemed to speak of the very desolation of dullness.... It is always thus with the new form of life; we must learn to look at it by its own standard" (22). She was disillusioned with the sight of the prairies yet soon she developed a liking towards it, for its wilderness and the wild arrogance it poses towards a single woman of the Boston elite travelling through it. She later says that she deliberately camps there in order to get lost in that feeling of wilderness (Newman, "Nature" 207). She challenged the physical conditions of travel and established a relation with the world of objects perceived.

Katherine Klebes makes a comparison between Carver and Fuller's accounts, particularly regarding the portrayal of women during their travels to the West. In Fuller's narrative, she describes Carver's encounters with the Winnebagoes, where he encountered a queen as the leader of the tribe instead of a male chief. Carver also noted that in some tribes, descent is traced through the female line. Despite her authoritative position, the Winnebago queen adhered to the gender norms of her tribe, displaying modesty and limited involvement in political matters. Fuller finds a resemblance between this queen and Queen Victoria, both of whom she sees as queens in name only. Throughout her narrative, Fuller draws numerous parallels between Indian women and white women, highlighting their similarities more than their differences (62). Klebes compares the depictions of women in Carver and Fuller's narratives, noting the portrayal of a queen among the Winnebagoes and her limited authority. Fuller's narrative draws parallels between Indian and white women, stressing their shared experiences and challenges, ultimately fostering a sense of unity among women from diverse backgrounds which offer definite perspective to gender of the time.

The gender consciousness of any nation is intricately tied to its culture, and America is no exception. The political, social, and cultural conditions of the nation play a significant role in shaping gender consciousness. However, the experiences and consciousness of Black women in America are distinct from those of White women. During the antebellum period, White women gradually experienced some liberation from the idealized norms of womanhood, while Black women continued to be bound by the restrictive 'cult of womanhood' in the American consciousness. Meanwhile, male perspectives on American manhood and womanhood remained largely puritanical. The split screen perspective of Knight as identified by Ann Brunjes can

also be identified in the Puritanical narrative of Harriot Jacobs. In her narrative *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself* (1861), Harriet Jacobs chronicles the life of her alter ego, the fictional main character Linda Brent. Through Linda Brent's story, Jacobs portrays her quest for freedom, empathy for sexually abused girls, and even the powerlessness experienced by white women.

Jacobs' abolitionist narrative as a slave woman provides a vivid description of her trials, perils, and eventual freedom, making it an important document for understanding gender dynamics. The portrayal of white women in the narrative exposes the pitiable conditions faced by middle-class and upper-middle-class white women during the antebellum era. Jacobs reveals infidelity stories of white men and white women encouraging their husbands to sell off their illegitimate children, highlighting the complexities of gender relations within the white community. The narrative also hints at the differences in gender consciousness between the South and the North. Jacobs' experiences and observations point to contrasting attitudes and roles attributed to men and women in these regions during that time. In black narratives, there is evident cooperation between black and white individuals for mutual benefit, showing a complex interplay of power dynamics within the African Diaspora experience in the Atlantic world. Re-reading black women's narratives offers a fresh perspective, leading to "a re-spatialization of the discursive and geopolitical maps of the African Diaspora experience" (Joyce Scott).

The alter-ego character Linda Brent feels empathy for Mrs. Flint, and she writes, "She felt her marriage vows were desecrated and her dignity was insulted" (33) by her husband's actions. Brent's focus is not solely on the conventional perspective of injustice towards her but rather on the American Puritan ideology of the relationship between White men and White women. At another point, when Linda

says, “it deadens the moral sense, even in white women, to a fearful extent, it is not altogether extinct” (36), she highlights how the institution of slavery impacts the moral values of White women. Linda knows two White women who have pressured their husbands into freeing their illegitimate children. By displaying the ‘superior nobleness’ of their character these wives gain increased ‘respect’ from their husbands, and ‘confidence takes the place of distrust’ in their marriages. Though the idea she discusses is typical of the perils of a black woman, she expounds the American gender sentiment deeply rooted in Renaissance- Puritan ideology.

Despite the instances of deep-seated racism, this also reveals the true feminine qualities of a Puritan woman-empathy, even at the cost of her own self and identity. Linda notices that Mrs. Flint pities herself as a martyr but lacks any empathy for Linda’s condition of shame and misery (33). The narrative also challenges the grand narratives constructed by upper-class American white men and dismisses them in certain woman descriptions. The gender consciousness projected in Jacobs’ narrative is not purely the sentiment of abolitionists. It is neither the submissive voice of a Black woman nor solely one of protest. Instead, the consciousness reflects a typically American perspective rooted in American ideals. The narratives of Black women are inherently different from the narratives of both White and Black men.

Mark Twain’s *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) to an extent is a product of post-bellum America, and the book’s main focus is on the reconstruction of the nation after the American Civil War. Mark Twain exhibits a gender consciousness in the narrative that aligns with the nationalistic consciousness of the time. While he delineates gender roles in the book, his remarks are more centered on America as a nation, and he does not specifically address women in America. Similar to other narratives of the post-bellum period, his primary emphasis lies on America itself rather than gender

disparities. During the post-bellum period, social changes contributed to shifts in gender consciousness. The emergence of new spaces and unconventional experiences, particularly for women, led to their travels and narratives taking different, off-beat tracks from conventional routes in the second half of the nineteenth century. Women's travel narratives of the time resembled quests for self-discovery and the cultivation of nationalist sentiments.

The study of gender consciousness in America became more complex at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Susan Bassnett, women's travel texts of this period transcended traditional genre and gender boundaries set by male writers, evolving into social commentaries and self-reflexive texts. These narratives defied easy categorization as autobiography, memoir, or travel accounts (225). The transcending of boundaries was not limited to women's travel writing; it also extended to the broader concept and practice of gender consciousness during the twentieth century. Consequently, the selection of travel writers for this study does not include women writers. This absence of women writers in the study suggests that America had by then evolved into a unified gender consciousness.

Women's narratives during the twentieth century continued in the vein of the previous century, but with variations in narration while maintaining the same spirit as men. Renowned writers like Edith Wharton in works such as *Fighting France* (1915), *French Ways and their Meaning* (1919), Mary Austin's *Land of Journey's Ending* (1924), Chara E. Laughlin's *So You're Going to Paris* (1924), explored different aspects of self, narratives of freedom or liberation, and attempts to transcend travel restrictions. The twentieth-century travel writing explores various shades of American womanhood and gender. The study of gender consciousness in America underwent

significant changes in the twentieth century. Women's travel texts broke traditional boundaries, becoming more reflective and socially conscious.

John Steinbeck, in his work *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962), encapsulates a nuanced view of American identity and gender dynamics. His narrative exploration with Charley, his dog, across America reflects a broader quest for personal and national understanding during a transformative era. This journey serves as a metaphor for America's exploration of its own identity and values amidst changing global dynamics. Steinbeck's portrayal of women in his literary landscape subtly reflects evolving gender roles, where women are depicted as equal partners in the quest for personal and societal liberation, mirroring broader shifts in American gender consciousness during the mid-twentieth century. His narrative not only captures the spirit of American exploration but also engages with the complexities of gender equality and cultural evolution in the modern era.

While visiting Yellowstone National Park, Steinbeck observed women working as park rangers, which prompted him to comment on the changing times and the increasing number of women taking up roles traditionally held by men. This observation reflects the evolving gender dynamics in the workforce during the early 1960s. Similarly, during his interaction with a waitress in Maine, he gained awareness of the everyday realities faced by women working in service roles during his journey. Though these incidents might have been brief, they offer insights into Steinbeck's gender consciousness during that era. These encounters with women in non-traditional roles and service positions provided the groundwork for a more widespread and public awareness of gender inequality. Steinbeck's observations likely contributed to the broader societal shift towards recognizing and challenging

traditional gender norms, leading to greater opportunities for women in various professions and sectors.

Edmund White's *States of Desire: Travels in Gay America* (1980), like his other works, takes readers on a journey through sexuality, self-discovery, and the unique experiences of various places. White's account explores not only his personal discovery of himself and his sexuality but also sheds light on the gay life during the tumultuous 1980s, providing new dimensions to the gender consciousness of America. The gay experience of travel in America, until the 1980s, was often associated with exploring the 'less travelled routes.' Its voice was distinguished and different from the perspectives of heterosexual males or females in travel writing. Gay or queer narratives challenged the accepted norms of heterosexuality, the boundaries of the body, the limitations of genre, and the canonization of literature, as well as the stereotypes of manhood and womanhood. The queer experiences of travel introduced new perspectives to travel writing, offering fresh gazes, perceptions, and experiences.

This discussion also touches upon the fluidity and viscosity of the female body and the queers, challenging the prevailing gender consciousness centered on the notion of a fixed 'body' in the twentieth-century America. The life and dimensions of travel are shown to be flexible and infinitely varied. Attempts to conform to traditions, collective memory, historical narratives, or homogeneity are continually questioned and subverted by women and queer writers in their travel accounts. White presents a nuanced and multifaceted exploration of gender consciousness within the gay community. The book challenges traditional gender norms and offers insights into the exploration of gay identity, fluidity of gender and sexuality, impact of AIDS crisis, intersectionality and complexities of desire and relationships.

The American gender consciousness resonates with European models of manhood and womanhood, which can be observed in the earliest travel narratives in America. Both Thomas Harriot and John Smith followed this path in their narratives. However, the early woman narrative of Mary Rowlandson, while conforming to the puritan version of a woman, exhibits a distinct gendered dimension. It incorporates elements of femininity in its themes and narration, offering a unique perspective from a woman's gaze into travel experiences. Sarah Kemble Knight's travel account best exemplifies the differences between women's and men's travel in British America through her distinctive narration and detailed observations of people and places. On the other hand, narratives like Jonathan Carver's echoes the European gender consciousness that places significant importance on men in society, while portraying women as loyal and obedient, fulfilling their social roles as mothers and wives.

Margaret Fuller, in her travels, diverges from the prevalent American and European ideals of family and motherhood while still embracing her feminine existence and identity. Her gender consciousness intertwines with nature, both in its wildness and wilderness. Harriet Jacobs' narrative describes the perils faced by a slave woman and, while upholding abolitionist principles, sheds light on the ideals of an 'ideal woman' from both African American and American perspectives. Mark Twain's narratives signify the evolution of a new American discourse on gender. The post-bellum period saw the celebration of the liberal spirit of Americans, projecting the idea of liberation for all and a unified America in his writings. This spirit continues in modern-day variants of Twain's ideologies, found in authors like John Steinbeck. Additionally, the narratives of alternate sexual orientations, as reflected in Edmund White's work, also align with the liberty of American national consciousness.

Chapter 6

American as Naturalist: American Geographical Consciousness

“Until I came to New Mexico, I never realized how much beauty water adds to a river.”

(Mark Twain 123)

The sense of place plays a pivotal role in shaping and determining travel experiences. As Judith Adler suggests, when travel is approached with a primary concern for the meanings discovered, created, and communicated as individuals move through geographical space, it has the power to bestow meaning on the self and the various realities-social, natural, or metaphysical-encountered during the journey (qtd. in Stowe, “Property” 26). In this way, travel contributes to the self-awareness of the traveler, enhancing their individual identity and fostering an intimate sense of selfhood. Landscape, as explored in this study, goes beyond merely natural scenes, habitats, or settings; it encompasses the social, economic, cultural, and historical dimensions of the people and the land in America.

This chapter serves as a comprehensive study of the relationship between the American landscape and its people, focusing on select travel narratives. The primary objective of the chapter is to explore the evolution of American geographical consciousness and its impact on the national consciousness of America. The chapter examines how the diverse geographical aspects of America shape and influence the self-perception of the American people, the connection between landscape and national identity, the significant symbols of national identity, and the role of the American landscape in formulating the country’s geographical consciousness. The sense of place in America and the concept of ever-expanding frontiers are thoroughly examined to analyze their contributions to American national consciousness.

Landscape is not simply limited to natural scenes, habitats, or settings; rather, it encompasses a comprehensive description of the American land, both socially and economically, and defines the nation in terms of its human inhabitants, their identities, and activities (Stowe 31). Some critics view the entire discourse on Landscape as a “construct of the mind and feeling” (Yi-Fu Tuan 89). In the study of this construct called landscape, two key variables are analyzed: the ‘act of seeing’ and the ‘process of narration’. Interpreting the geographical features then becomes a reflection of the different ways of seeing and interpreting the past, thereby directly influencing the creation and interpretation of history.

Apart from landscape, the geographical study of travel writing contributes to the understanding of historical geography, political structures, and cultural variables of the nation. Landscape descriptions of any nation emerge from the ‘sense of place.’ The concept of the nation is primarily rooted in its geographical identity and corresponds to a specific location (at least in history). While setting aside the arguments of Benedict Anderson, who emphasizes the nation as “imagined communities,” a nation is a physical or material reality and identity (Anderson). Although the existence of a nation is conceptual and objective, the physical aspects also play a significant role in shaping the construct of a nation. Psychological geography complements the physical geography, making the sense of place crucial in the discourses about a nation.

In the study of American consciousness, especially for a country of relatively recent origin, geographical definitiveness is crucial to filling historical gaps. Simon Schama, an American historian, explores the relationship between landscape and tradition, which he terms “landscape-tradition,” in the formation of a nation in his work *Landscape and Memory*. The landscape tradition of America has been woven

into the nation's narratives since its inception (Schama 15). This unique condition is specific to America as a nation, as it lacks a 'chivalric' history or identity from the medieval period like many European nations. Instead, Americans cherish events and places in their colonial legacy. Schama emphasizes the importance of mystifying particular landscape traditions as part of enhancing the national identity (15).

The absence of monuments from history was thus filled into the grand American narrative by early travelers in America, who integrated farms, villages, cities, and even factories into their landscape descriptions (Stowe 26). This conscious creation of national identity through landscapes, a trend that gained momentum after the American Civil War, significantly contributed to the process of national consciousness. The celebrations of certain landscapes and places, thus, augmented the nationalist sentiments and thereby, the national consciousness. Stowe argues, "American travelers helped establish and maintain such a tradition, first by using the magnificence of the American landscape to claim superiority to European scenery, and later by describing the relations between people and the land in distinctly American contexts" (29). The two earliest travel narratives from America, Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia* (1588) and John Smith's *A Description of New England* (1616) despite their colonial agenda, attempted to assert the superiority of the American landscape over European scenery. Their colonialist propaganda contributed to the 'landscape' tradition of the nation's narratives.

Harriot, in his book, offers an ethnographic description of land and people. In the descriptions of the land, he exposes the places of profit, the areas good for settlement and also the vast richness of the land. He demarcated the areas of Natives and stretches of the fertile lands suitable for settlement. He writes:

I haue therefore thought it good beeing one that haue beene in the discouerie and in dealing with the naturall inhabitant especially imploied; and hauing therefore seene and knowne more then the ordinarie: to imparte so much vnto you of the fruites of our labours, as that you may knowe howe iniuriously the enterprise is slaundered. (6)

He states that he considered it beneficial, having been involved in exploration and interactions with the native inhabitants, especially in an official capacity. Through these experiences, he believed he had gained a deeper understanding than many others. He expressed his decision to share some of the outcomes of their efforts, aiming to clarify how unfairly their expedition had been portrayed. He invokes his readers to explore the land and to gain the fruits of labor even though the region has a gruesome past. He unveils the place to lure more settlements to the region.

Harriot offers a detailed account of the region, “Their townes are but small, & neere the sea coast but few, some containing but 10 or 12 houses: if they be walled it is only done with barks of trees made fast to stakes, or els with poles onely fixed vpright and close one by another” (34). (Their towns are small, especially those near the coast, with only a few houses, some numbering as few as 10 or 12. If they are fortified, it is usually with tree bark attached to stakes, or with closely spaced upright poles.) Often there are comparisons with the places and practices in England. He gradually places the New World, as a suitable world to live in, and he writes, some individuals, who were brought up in urban settings and had limited exposure to the world, found the new country they encountered to be miserable. They longed for the familiar comforts of English cities, fine houses, their favorite delicacies, and soft feather beds, which they couldn't find in the new land. As a result, their reports and accounts about the country reflected their discontent and unhappiness (8).

A similar comparison in favor of the landscape of America is seen in the travel narrative of John Smith's *A Description of New England* (1616). In his depiction, Smith characterizes the indigenous people and their land using feminine traits, viewing them as subjects of exploration and exploitation. He offers a detailed account of the native tribes' way of life and the unique geographical features of the region. For comparative purposes, Smith likens New England to several European provinces, such as Gascony, Languedoc, Avignon, Provence, Dauphine, Piedmont, and Turin in France, as well as cities in Italy like Genoa, Lombardy, Verona, and Venice. Additionally, he draws parallels with regions like Slavonia, Istria, Dalmatia, and various kingdoms in Albania, Greece, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Asia (28). Furthermore, Smith mentions the abundance of gold mines in places like "Chile and Baudiuia" (28), as well as the unexplored nature of many regions at similar latitudes.

According to Smith, the people of this place have an advantage over other places as they diligently used the peculiarities of nature. His mention to the abundance is seen in his description of the purest waters, "The waters are most pure, proceeding from the intrals of rockie mountaines; the hearbes and fruits are of many sorts and kindes" (40). He describes the purest waters come from within Rocky Mountains; the herbs and fruits are of many varieties and types. The early accounts of travel in British America highlight the abundance of resources available, including a variety of food and the richness of its harbors. The availability of fish, such as "Cunners and Pinacks, was plentiful, and even a young boy could catch more than a group could consume in a day, while using a casting net allowed for catching thousands of fish when desired" (40).

These rare and bountiful resources made the journey to the New World worthwhile. Huge deposits of fish- in many different varieties, along with fur were the

foremost attractions. Smith writes of the abundance of the land, “Of dry fish we made about 40000. of Cor fish about 7000. Whilst the sailers fished, my selfe with eight or nine others of them might best bee spared; Ranging the coast in a small boat, wee got for trifles neer 1100 Beuer skinnes, 100 Martins, and neer as many Otters; and the most of them within the distance of twenty leagues” (18). (They had produced around 40,000 dried fish and about 7,000 cor fish. While the sailors were busy fishing, he, along with eight or nine others who could be spared, explored the coast in a small boat. In exchange for small items, they acquired nearly 1,100 beaver skins, 100 marten pelts, and almost as many otter skins, most of which were obtained within a distance of twenty leagues).

The primary focus of these early travelers was on the potential commercial gains, particularly the fin and oil of whales, as well as valuable resources like gold and copper. However, the trade in fish and fur also contributed significantly to offsetting the expenses of their expeditions. In the beginning, many travelers to British America were naturalists and geographers, driven by a desire to explore the possibilities of the New World. However, as time passed, the narrative shifted, and a substantial number of people were attracted to America for religious reasons as well as due to the vast material and mineral resources available. The abundance of resources in the New World became a significant factor in drawing a larger population to the continent. Smith continues to elaborate on the fertile lands (36). Even after thousands of years of human settlement the land was fertile and pristine which was another attraction for Smith. The ‘land’ thus played crucial role in shaping the nation’s history, serving as a catalyst for exploration, settlement, and economic growth. The wealth of resources found in British America became a powerful driving force in the development and transformation of the nation.

Sense of place holds significant importance in the geographical consciousness of any country. This term finds application in both urban and rural studies, concerning the creation of a sense of place and the emotional bond that communities form with their environment or homeland (Groat et al.). Consequently, it becomes intertwined with the concept of identity, assuming the role of a persona that can be comprehended through historical and psychological lenses. This notion encapsulates not only the essence of a nation but also the individual; it encapsulates a nation's history, its ancientness, assertions of historical legacy, as well as the customs, traditions, and social fabric of the individuals inhabiting the nation. The evolution of a nation's geographical consciousness can be observed gradually through the writings of figures such as Mary Rowlandson in *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682) and Sarah Kemble Knight in *The Journal of Madame Knight* (penned in 1705 and published in 1825).

Rowlandson's portrayal of the landscape frequently mirrors her arduous encounters during her journeys. Both Rowlandson and Knight associate the Native Americans with the landscape, intertwining them with their surroundings. Rowlandson's words exemplify this connection when she writes, "The Indians were as thick as the trees: it seemed as if there had been a thousand hatchets going at once. If one looked before one there was nothing but Indians, and behind one, nothing but Indians, and so on either hand, I myself in the midst, and no Christian soul near me, and yet how hath the Lord preserved me in safety" (10). The tribulations and tumult she endured during her captivity are distinctly reflected in her portrayal of the landscape. Her descriptions vividly convey the omnipresence and overwhelming nature of her captors, emphasizing the intensity of her isolation and fear. The

landscape becomes a backdrop to her suffering, highlighting the profound impact of her experiences on her perception of the world around her.

The adversities she faces in her interactions with the Native Americans are often paralleled with the landscape in Rowlandson's narrative. As she describes her experiences, it becomes evident that her struggles with the indigenous people are symbolically linked to the physical terrain. She recounts:

They said, when we went out, that we must travel to Wachusett this day. At last, after many weary steps, I caught sight of the Wachusett hills, albeit many miles distant. Subsequently, we encountered a vast swamp through which we trudged, sinking into mud and water up to our knees—a challenging ordeal, especially for one already fatigued. (22)

The landscape, thus, becomes a reflection of Rowlandson's internal and external struggles, serving as a backdrop that magnifies the hardships she endures during her captivity. Her geographical consciousness deepens as the treacherous terrain mirrors her sense of entrapment and struggle. Through her vivid descriptions, the landscape not only charts her physical journey but also traces the contours of her emotional and spiritual resilience.

The narrative in Knight's account takes a turn towards racism. The practice of using the landscape to frame the presence of the indigenous population is an extension of the racism evident in travel narratives. This idea is deliberated by William W. Stowe who dissects the fictional persona of Mary Clavers created by Caroline Kirkland, exposing how class sentiments are interwoven with landscape. Additionally, Clarence King's portrayal of Sierra landscapes involving Native Americans further reinforces racial consciousness and supremacy. King's approach, where he populates his Sierra landscape with Native Americans as racial outsiders, portrays them as mere

curiosities—almost “picaresque” in nature—suitable for the observer’s gaze but devoid of significance in their own right (28). Within Knight’s travel writings, we witness the inception of the ‘picturesque cast’ assigned to Native Americans. Knight recounts an episode where she writes, “After about an hour, we went to the shore to hold a consultation. We then got into the canoe, with Mr. Rogers paddling about 100 yards up the Creek along the shoreline. Swiftly turning into the swift stream and skillfully steering, we swiftly crossed to the other side—a passage as swift as an arrow shot from a strong bow” (83). This dehumanizing process of assimilating them into the scenery exposes the gradual rise of white supremacy and underscores the colonialist agenda.

Knight in her narrative exposes the dangers faced by both men and women travelers on the roads, skillfully intertwining external challenges with her emotional responses. This narrative technique creates a vivid depiction of her travel experience, which serves as a microcosm of the nation’s expansion into uncharted territories and the obstacles encountered along the way. Describing a dangerous River they were about to cross, she conveys overwhelming fear and apprehension about the impending peril (27). Her portrayal of the landscape mirrors the challenges faced on the journey, particularly highlighting the specific difficulties encountered by lone female travelers. The unfamiliarity of the surroundings and its inhabitants instills a palpable sense of fear, reinforcing the significance of their travel. The presence of danger, the enveloping darkness, and the rugged terrain bordered by dense foliage all contribute to a narrative that unveils a new chapter in the nation’s history emerging from its wild frontier. Knight’s account also describes their deliberate progress through thickets and steep descents into darkness, encapsulating the precarious nature of pioneering journeys (28).

As opined by Thomas Cole, an American painter, “American scenery... is a subject that to every American ought to be of surpassing interest since it is his own land; its beauty, its magnificence, its sublimity- all are his” (Cole). The American scenery especially the scenery of the unexplored American West is delineated in the writings of Carver. The geographic and physical features in the narration of Jonathan Carver in *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America in the years 1766, 1767 and 1768* strengthen the claims of ‘possession’ of the land by the Americans. The abundance and prosperity witnessed in the Eastern states of America, as portrayed in the writings of Thomas Harriot and John Smith, undergoes a gradual transition towards the American West in the narrative of Carver. There is a shift from detailed accounts of resources to a greater emphasis on possessing and claiming American land. While Carver does provide details about the resources in the American West at the beginning of his narrative, a notable shift towards geographical consciousness becomes evident. He focuses on how Americans conquered challenging terrains and cherished the uniqueness of the American landscape.

Carver’s admiration for the American West is evident in his detailed description of its natural richness and unique features. He emphasizes the region’s fertile areas along waterways, noting how small brooks and rivers enrich the surrounding soil. His account specifically highlights the sand cherries that thrive exclusively on sandy terrain near the lake, renowned for their exquisite flavor and suitability for steeping in spirits. Additionally, Carver mentions the abundance of gooseberries, black currants, and juniper berries, underscoring the diversity and quality of the flora in this wilderness (19). Through his observations, Carver not only captures the physical beauty of the American West but also reveals a keen

geographical consciousness, appreciating and documenting the distinctive characteristics that define this region's natural landscape.

When Bayard Taylor declares, “no external picture of Alps can match Colorado” (35), he actively contributes to the deliberate shaping of the American identity and evokes a sense of patriotic pride akin to reciting the American creed. Throughout his narrative of the landscape, Carver intricately establishes a newfound authority over the land. Carver engages in contemplation about how Europeans perceive the land and, consequently, assert their dominance over it. This process unveils emerging trends in America’s geographical consciousness and effectively aligns with the burgeoning development of national consciousness in the country. His writings went beyond mere recognition of American West areas, contributing significantly to the formulation of a new historical geography and cultural heritage for the nation. His contemplation on the direction and effects of winds over the continent exemplifies his astute observations and endeavors to comprehend the natural forces that influence climate and weather patterns in specific regions (79).

The arguments of Timothy Dwight for a cheerful landscape in the nation-narrative are seen in Margaret Fuller in her *Summer on the Lakes* (1844). For Dwight, history formed an important part of landscape, even in a new country (4). And it comes evident in the conversion of the wilderness into a desirable residence for man, as he says, “the ideal landscape is neither sublime nor conventionally picturesque but ‘cheerful’, neat and prosperous” (7). The portrayal of the distinct characteristics of the landscape highlights the uniqueness of the emerging nation and contributes to the narratives surrounding this new nation. Margaret Fuller communicated to Emerson that she spent much of her time in the vicinity of a series of lakes, splendid bodies of water accompanied by expansive gently sloping banks, a common sight in this

country (Fuller, *Letters* 169). She consistently appreciated the traditional picturesque beauty. Her aspiration was to witness immigrants with noble intentions utilizing their talents and knowledge for honorable endeavors in the country, rather than compromising their principles for short-term gains, a tendency observed in many (Higginson197).

In *A Brief History of Nature and the American Consciousness*, Joshua Johns delves into the evolving perceptions of nature, noting that even from the early explorations or sporadic travels, Americans began to examine their relationship with the surrounding land. The concept of the American wilderness emerged as a significant aspect of American identity and national pride. Nature regained prominence in American art and literature, but the way it was perceived shifted to align with the changing American concerns regarding the altering landscape. Instead of portraying nature as a hindrance to civilization's establishment, American authors and artists started celebrating nature as the wellspring of the vibrant spirit defining the American character (Joshua Johns). This concept is evident in Fuller's narration, "the old landmarks are broken down, and the land, for a season, bears none, except of the rudeness of conquest and the needs of the day, whose bivouac fires blacken the sweetest forest glades" (18).

Fuller's antebellum writings distinguish themselves by focusing less on critiquing capitalism and more on nurturing a distinct American identity shaped by geographical consciousness. Brigitte Georgi-Findlay underscores Fuller's perspective, noting her discernment between an idealized West symbolizing pristine nature and the actual West depicted as a provincial and materialistic social realm (45). Fuller's embrace of transcendentalist principles provides a counterpoint to prevailing capitalist ideologies, as she highlights the human-crafted landscapes of the American

countryside. Describing the Rock River country, Fuller contrasts meticulously cultivated lawns, gardens, and parks adorned with deer and cattle, suggesting a deliberate human intervention shaping the landscape. This observation reflects her belief in a landscape molded by both nature and human agency, underscoring her contribution to shaping a nuanced American geographical consciousness during her era.

The tension between two prominent groups in America- one advocating for nature preservation and the other pushing for development through westward expansion- is clearly evident in her work *Summer on the Lakes* (1844). This tension represents the clash between an enduring belief in human potential to harmonize with the beauty of picturesque landscapes and a pragmatic understanding of the immediate profit-oriented social calculations. In her book, Fuller presents a contradictory portrayal of the physical landscape in western settlements. This portrayal alternates between disparagement and idealization, depicting the frontier as a ravaged terrain where the clash of material interests resonates loudly. Consequently, she contends that such an environment lacks the space for religious and spiritual considerations. The advancing capitalism erodes the picaresque spirit. The narrative meticulously illustrates the social and ecological devastation triggered by the displacement of indigenous tribes. In this context, Fuller also draws parallels between this destruction and the isolation and alienation experienced by women.

The nineteenth-century transformation of the American political structure brought about significant changes in its landscape. The realization of place, distinct from other regions, whether in terms of landscape or monuments, was a pivotal factor in shaping the nation's identity. As cities and towns flourished across the East and the Midwest by the mid-nineteenth century, individuals sought ways to alleviate the labor

associated with cultivating and harvesting in the American garden. The introduction of Robert Fulton's steamboat in 1807 and the expansion of Eastern railways marked the initial intrusion of what Leo Marx termed "the machine in the garden" (Johns). These early indications of the impending industrial age prompted Americans to reevaluate their relationship with the surrounding land, as noted by Joshua Johns.

During the antebellum and post-bellum periods the concept of 'places' took on immense significance particularly within various discourses. These places often became intertwined with notions of nation and nationhood. Beyond iconic national landmarks, institutions, and buildings, factors such as landscapes and prominent geographical features like the Mississippi River or, in the American context, the South-West region, could evoke a strong sense of national identity in individuals. This underscores the crucial role of the sense of place in shaping national consciousness. In the context of America, Timothy Brennan's reference to British cultural historian Raymond Williams in *The National Longing for Form* holds significance in understanding the ideology of the 'Sense of Place' (Brennan). The term 'nation' is inherently linked with 'native'. Our birth introduces us to relationships that are typically rooted in a specific place. This foundational and 'placeable' bonding holds profound human and natural significance. Yet, the leap from this concept to something akin to the modern nation-state is entirely a human construct (qtd. in Bhabha 45). This insight emphasizes that while the concept of 'native' is deeply connected to the idea of 'nation', the transition to a modern nation-state is an artificial construct, even though our primary connections to specific places are of profound importance.

In the study of geographical consciousness in Harriet Jacobs' *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself* (1861), she propounds the geography of slavery. She offers a minute description of seven years in a garret, thus:

A small shed had been added to my grandmother's house years ago. Some boards were laid across the joists at the top, and between these boards and the roof was a very small garret, never occupied by anything but rats and mice. It was a pent roof, covered with nothing but shingles, according to the southern custom for such buildings. The garret was only nine feet long, and seven wide. The highest part was three feet high, and sloped down abruptly to the loose board floor. There was no admission for either light or air. (173)

The cramped and suffocating attic space serves as a metaphor for the constricting and stifling conditions that slaves endured, both physically and metaphorically, in a system that denied those basic rights, freedom, and even the most fundamental human dignities.

The life of Linda Brent revolved around a cotton plantation. As William Boom suggests, places imbued with a strong 'sense of place' possess a robust identity deeply experienced by both residents and visitors (35). In her narrative, the imagery of slavery and freedom persistently pervades her descriptions of geography and landscapes. She primarily focuses on the lives of enslaved individuals within this context. Their spaces were marked by the harsh realities of slavery, encompassing struggles, physical and sexual transgressions, and recurring sites of violence. The notion of 'Free States' frequently emerges within her narrative. However, beyond its literal location, it functions as a metaphor that drives her will to survive and persevere. This metaphorical representation is a crucial element in the collective consciousness of Black individuals during that era.

The deliberate shaping of the sense of place aligned with the Puritan ideals of the 'new' America. This phenomenon of conscious place-making in the post-Civil War period is evident in Mark Twain's work, particularly in *Life on the Mississippi* (1883). Constructing a sense of place involves "both an interpretative perspective on the environment and an emotional reaction to the environment," as proposed by American geographer, John A. Agnew (Hummon 262). This era saw the depiction of America as a thriving land with a distinct identity. The emphasis on the uniqueness of landscapes and life situations signifies the emergence of a new national consciousness in the United States. In the symbolic geography of America, the Mississippi River occupies a significant role. Mark Twain portrays it as follows:

Never, perhaps, in the records of nations, was there an instance of a century of such unvarying and unmitigated crime as is to be collected from the history of the turbulent and blood-stained Mississippi. The stream itself appears as if appropriate for the deeds which have been committed. It is not like most rivers, beautiful to the sight, bestowing fertility in its course; not one that the eye loves to dwell upon as it sweeps along, nor can you wander upon its banks, or trust yourself without danger to its stream. It is a furious, rapid, desolating torrent, loaded with alluvial soil; and few of those who are received into its waters ever rise again, or can support themselves long upon its surface without assistance from some friendly log. (264)

During the 1870s, travel descriptions often portrayed a 'Picaresque America.' Writers like William Cullen Bryant and others indirectly depicted quintessential American scenes. These descriptions encompassed locations such as Niagara Falls, Pennsylvania's Brandywine Valley, the California Coast, Yellowstone Geyser Basin, and tourist destinations like Newport and St. Augustine. Mark Twain, for instance,

saw nature as a respite from modern anxieties, devoid of threats or worries (Robert and Keith Miller 39). The significance of the river in American geographical consciousness is exemplified through Twain's perception. He understood that the Mississippi represented both its physical form and its imaginative presence within the mind. For a steamboat pilot like Mark Twain, the mental representation held more weight. His mentor, Horace Bixby, advised him: "You can always steer by the shape that's in your head, and never mind the one that's before your eyes" (63).

South-West narratives, including those by Mark Twain, contributed to the formation of geographical and later national consciousness. The image of the South-West evolved as travel writers explored the region. James O. Pattie's journey in 1830 notably accelerated American interest in the area. His narrative *The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie* (1830) provided detailed accounts of interactions with Native Americans and the hunting of beaver, bears, and buffalo, offering insights into a little-known region. The concept of the South-West varies depending on the analytical approach used, encompassing geographical, cultural, and political interpretations. A convergence of Native Americans, Hispanic individuals, and Anglo-Americans over centuries has shaped the region's demographic, political, cultural, and literary aspects, revealing its inherent sense of Americanness. In narratives from the twentieth century, variables like the South-West, Mississippi, and Ohio played a pivotal role in nurturing a national consciousness in America.

The American frontier is characterized by the westward movement of European settlers from the original Atlantic coast of the seventeenth century to the far west of the nineteenth century ("American Frontier"). A frontier typically refers to the outermost part of a country—an unsettled region or one that borders another nation. According to the Frontier Thesis or Turner Thesis argument, the expansion of the

frontier was a process that bestowed upon the United States its distinctive national identity and the concept of American Exceptionalism. Turner contends, “American democracy was born of no theorists’ dream. It was not carried in the ‘Susan Constant’ to Virginia, or in the Mayflower to Plymouth. It came out of the American forest and gained new strength each time it touched a new frontier” (293). This underscores the crucial role of the frontier in shaping American nationalism and national consciousness.

By the twentieth-century, frontiers were expanding, wilderness areas were being settled, and the landscape shifted to a ‘peopled landscape,’ while American Indians were confined to reservations. The twentieth century witnessed the United States emerging as a global superpower. Amid the decline of grand ideologies and power dynamics, America advocated for simple living as a fundamental way of life. In the mid-twentieth century, shifts in the national and nationalist perspectives on the landscape led to a redefinition of state-sponsored themes in travel writings of that era. These books explored various aspects such as history, sociology, and even science, and their interplay with geography and landscaping. Travel narratives from this period showcased the ‘grandeur’ of the landscape while also presenting their own interpretations or constructions of history. Disparities between guidebooks for the Northern and Southern states hinted at the process of shaping history through these guides. Nevertheless, Native Americans were often relegated to the status of mere tourist attractions, reduced to local flavors to be savored by visitors.

John Steinbeck in his *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962) reflects on not having visited Mississippi and deems it a source of shame by the second half of the twentieth century. This notion delves into the concept of what constitutes a genuine American experience. A person’s American identity appears

more complete when they have visited and appreciated the nation's celebrated landmarks. Failure to do so is regarded as a 'disgrace' for an American. Steinbeck considers such visits not strenuous and provides a route for such trips. He also expresses pride in the magnificence of his homeland, evoking a sense of nationalism:

I must confess to a laxness in the matter of National Parks. I haven't visited many of them. Perhaps this is because they enclose the unique, the spectacular, the astounding—the greatest waterfall, the deepest canyon, the highest cliff, the most stupendous works of man or nature. And I would rather see a good Brady photograph than Mount Rushmore. For it is my opinion that we enclose and celebrate the freaks of our nation and of our civilization.

Yellowstone National Park is no more representative of America than is Disneyland. (99)

Edmund White's descriptions of nature in his work *States of Desire: Travels in Gay America* (1980) stand apart from those of other writers. He possesses a keen sense for detailing the environment and employs distinctive methods of interpreting geographical boundaries in the twentieth century. Based on diverse interests, gay individuals opt for different destinations. He says that on the weekends, many gay Angelenos leave the city. Less than \$60 will get you a round-trip ticket to San Francisco. They could also go to Laguna, a hill town by the water with a Positano-like appearance but a Pines-like way of life. Or they travel to Palm Springs, a desert city (10). West Hollywood is renowned for its vibrant bars, clubs, and inclusive atmosphere, which consequently shapes the travel experience of gay individuals and influences their sense of appreciation.

White further elaborates that during winter, skiers gravitate towards Mammoth due to its towering mountains and exceptional ski runs. The gay spirit harmonizes

with the landscape, effectively extending their gay identity to the environment. In San Francisco, the concept of cruising leads to an exploration of the sensuality of automobiles and the symbolism they convey (10). Different types of cars represent varying levels of intimacy among couples. Each image on the road and every landscape carry its own significance for White. Consequently, the geographical diversity of America encompasses an inclusive attitude towards the unique travel experiences of the gay community. The intersection of geography, identity, and travel weaves an intricate tapestry of experiences that collectively contribute to a profound sense of belonging and acceptance within the gay community.

When imbued with the interests and concerns of the writer and deeply rooted in the national consciousness, landscape becomes a foundation for the creation of identity within the geographical consciousness of Americans. The earliest travel narratives by Thomas Harriot and John Smith, despite their colonialist undertones, shed light on attempts to depict the American landscape as superior as and more fertile than Europe. This gradually fostered a sense of place among Americans and laid the groundwork for considering the land as a possession, forming the earliest versions of nation-narratives. Mary Rowlandson's account describes her perilous journey through native lands, offering a brief glimpse into nature. Sarah Kemble Knight's travel narrative focuses more on roads, travel, people, and life in British America. Jonathan Carver's writings initiated the discussions on frontiers and boundaries, which later became part of the landscape tradition in nation-narratives.

The state of Mississippi holds importance in both symbolic and physical geography. The post-Civil War era saw a conscious construction of America through the development of new geographical ideals. The Mississippi River, both in reality and imagination, flowed through the American geographical consciousness,

epitomized by Mark Twain's works. Alongside the establishment of various national institutions in the nineteenth century, Mississippi contributed to a sense of nationhood. The conjunction of national landmarks, institutions, and landscapes, including rivers, played a role in shaping the nation's consciousness from the post-bellum period to the present. Mark Twain's writings played a pivotal role in fostering this emerging nationalist sentiment. In the twentieth century, travel narratives often crafted geography to align with prevailing national consciousness. Steinbeck's and White's writings attest to this phenomenon.

Chapter 7

American as Story Teller: American Narrative Consciousness

“Narrative Imagining – story – is the fundamental instrument of thought. Rational capacities depend upon it. It is our chief means of looking into future, or predicting, of planning, and of explaining.”

(Turner 4-5)

The term narrative in the context of Semiotics and literary theory is a story or a part of a story where the stories included evolve out of personal or even cultural practices. Gerald Prince provides a definition of narrative as “the recounting (as product and process, object and act, structure and structuration) of one or more fictitious events communicated by one, two or several narrators to one, two or several narratees” (4). The narrator’s perspective, perceptions of the surrounding elements, ideologies, cultural contexts, moral values, and the historical, geographical, and political factors of the time all contribute to the process of narration. Thus, the act of storytelling or narration is an action that is both social and cultural in nature.

This chapter investigates into various aspects of narration within American Travel writing. The study also deals with the artistic and aesthetic awareness of Americans, analyzing narrative consciousness in American travel writing. The focal point of this chapter lies in examining the interrelation between the process of nation-building, the national consciousness of America, and the contributions made by narration in American travel writings towards this end. It also explores the connection between the artistic consciousness and its gendered and racial dimensions, as expressed through the perspectives, observations, and gazes of Americans. This investigation encompasses the construction of the nation, recurring themes and their implications, Nationalist discourse, Meta or Grand narratives, and the shaping of both

the past and future in the selected texts. Furthermore, the various components that contribute to the aesthetic sensibility of Americans are analyzed. The ultimate goal is to comprehend the narrative consciousness process within America, which in turn enriches its national consciousness.

Narration, or the act of storytelling, functions as a discourse that draws upon psychological, social, cultural, and cosmological dimensions inherent to both the narrator and the narratee. In the view of Mikhail Bakhtin, literary texts are not isolated entities but rather utterances intricately tied to specific subjects within particular contexts (Enos 282). This perspective underscores the idea that subjects, when positioned within their unique circumstances, generate the intended meaning of any given utterance. Consequently, these utterances assume a political dimension as shifts in the narrator or the arrangement of events in the narrative—referred to as ‘sequencing’—reveal the author’s choices and consciousness.

As expounded in studies of narratology, each narrative is subject to codification. This results in the modification, alteration, and enrichment of tales to such an extent that novel types and combinations emerge, fostering authentic development (Junod 221). This process involves appropriations and adjustments. Ernest Gellner, in his work *Nations and Nationalism*, asserts that nations are not inherent in the fabric of existence; they don’t embody a political manifestation of the concept of natural kinds (47). This underscores the notion that the concept of a nation is a construct grounded in foundational agreements. Therefore, the idea of a nation is conceptual, lacking a singular, concrete definition. Narratives of the nation run in tandem with the concept of the nation itself. The narrators behind these nation-centric narratives play a role in framing their stories. Paul Gilroy reinforces this notion, asserting that while nations might seem inherently natural and everlasting, they are in

fact products of intricate cultural, ideological, and political processes. These processes culminate in fostering a sense of unity among national subjects and the notion of a national interest that transcends apparent divisions of class, region, dialect, or caste (49).

The realms of nation and narration discourse extend to postcolonial predicaments. Homi Bhabha, in his introduction to *Nation and Narration*, suggests that while the imagery of a nation or narration might appear excessively romantic and metaphorical, it's from these traditions of political thought and literary language that the idea of a nation gains significant historical traction in the Western context (1). The emergence of the nation as a potent historical concept functions through codes, a universal pattern that operates within every text. Bhabha further observes that nationalist discourses persistently strive to construct the idea of a nation as an unbroken narrative of national progress (1). These constructions of the nation via the codes of Grand Narratives are integral to the literary tradition of every nation, and America is no exception.

The examination of narrative consciousness in early American travel writing reveals that initial travel narratives were often imbued with a colonial perspective. These accounts primarily consisted of factual portrayals of both the people and resources of the New World. However, the narrative consciousness evident in Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia* (1588) occasionally deviates from the customary patterns of colonial discourse. The Roanoke refugees, through their narratives, disseminated their own version of stories about the indigenous people of England. Compared to preceding and concurrent narratives concerning natives in the New World, Harriot's depiction of natives portrays them as

peaceful. This portrayal challenges the prevailing narrative of hostility and savagery often associated with indigenous populations in colonial literature.

Harriot's narrative exhibits an impartial study of the New World, resulting in a fairly accurate portrayal. The dignified image he presents of the Natives contrasts with the later-developed 'colonial view'. He notes that, "Seeing therefore the ayre there is so temperate and holsome, the soyle so fertile and yeelding such commodities as I haue before mentioned, the voyage also thither to and frobeeing sufficiently experimented, to bee performed thrise a yeere with ease and at any season thereof I hope there remaine no cause wherby the action should be misliked" (46). For Harriot, considering the mild and healthy climate, the fertile soil producing valuable commodities mentioned earlier, and the proven feasibility of making voyages there and back three times a year without difficulty, regardless of the season. He also noted Sir Walter Raleigh's reputation for generously granting large tracts of land, known to all, along with various supports and incentives, such as offering a minimum of five hundred acres to each person solely for their personal investment in the venture. He concluded that there appeared to be no remaining reasons to doubt or oppose the enterprise. These lines highlight the immense potential benefits of establishing a settlement in the new land. The region thus not only would provide opportunities for trade and expansion, but it could also serve as a strategic outpost for future explorations and conquests.

Harriot acknowledges the challenges faced during the exploratory journey through the New World and emphasizes the assistance received from the natives. He portrays the natives as generous and accommodating. The purpose of Harriot's book, as he articulates, is directed towards those who support and are interested in the colonization and settlement of the New World (1). The narrative, thus, aims to evoke

emotions that would allay apprehensions in the minds of people in England and attract them to settle in the New World. The book primarily constitutes an ethnographic and economic survey. Harriot's analysis and interpretation provide insights into distinctive non-European elements of the cultural and economic lives of the Algonquian peoples. This stands in contrast to the numerous biased and imaginative accounts of Newfoundland during the same era. Unfortunately, the accuracy, truthfulness, and reliability of Harriot's writing were eventually supplanted by narratives driven by colonialist motives.

The traveler guides the readers through their own perspective. This perspective allows readers to perceive the world through the travelers' eyes. "Historically, it is above all through seeing that distant places, landscapes, foreign people, animals, and objects seem to gain consistency. The gaze is then transferred into the text whether in written or visual form" (Giorgia and Patricia). This interaction introduces the ideology and culture of the traveler to the reader through an ongoing 'interpellation'. This dynamic interaction can shape the consciousness that the traveler intends to foster in the reader. Thus, traveling and seeing are distinct acts and the interplay between them assigns meaning to the visual experience. Travelers who are aesthetes derive a sense of beauty or taste from their interactions with physical, intellectual, and psychological variables. The precision with which Harriot details the riches and resources of America reflects the writer's 'curious eye'. Harriot's journey to the New World serves as a point of pride for the English people, and his focus is directed towards the materialistic exploitation of the New World. He notes, "the whole cuntry that either knew or hearde of vs, to haue vs in wonderfull admiration" (41). His gaze carefully situates him within the context of the New World, alluding to the potential for resource exploitation.

John Smith's work, *A Description of New England* (1616), is commonly regarded as a form of propaganda designed to endorse "the observations and discoveries in the north of America," (title page) aiming to demonstrate the advantages England could gain from it. This narrative acted as an advertisement for the fertile land, copious resources, and overall abundance found in the New World. Similar to Harriot's narrative, Smith's account also operated as a practical guide for those navigating the New World. Smith extends an invitation to his readers, urging them to participate in the historic endeavors of the New World. His tone carries an evocative quality when he queries, "Who would live at home idly (or think in himself any worth to live) only to eat, drink, and sleep, and so die? Or by consuming that carelessly, his friends got worthily?" (43). He encourages his fellow countrymen not to squander time in idle pursuits, passively hearing about the heroic deeds of others, as such inactivity amounts to being a burden to their country and a disservice to themselves.

The aim of this narrative is to incite and motivate readers, urging them to venture towards the abundant resources of the New World. The intended outcome he envisions is economic prosperity, evident in his words: "So that the business prosper, I have my desire; be it by Londoner, Scot, Welch, or English, that are true subjects to our King and country: the good of my country is what I seek; and there is more than enough for all, if they could but be content to proceed" (56). This propagandistic literature paints a portrait of an explorer striving for increased investments and settlements in New England. The narrator's colonialist perspective remains fixed on the natural wealth present in the New World, with the intention of aiding fellow countrymen from England in harnessing it for the benefit of their homeland. Smith's gaze, as an aesthete, remains fixed on the riches of the New World. The narrator's

depiction of New England's abundance highlights the notion of a self-reliant American life. Additionally, his perspective aligns with the colonialist needs of his mother country, England. This ideal eventually contributed to the American self-identity, which in turn laid the earliest foundations of national consciousness.

The colonial narratives of the early decades of the seventeenth century focused primarily on profit and the extraction of wealth from the New World. This colonial perspective was highly materialistic, with a singular emphasis on profit and the expansion of English colonial interests. As the narrative progresses, there is a shift from a mere colonialist perspective to that of a White-Puritan settler in the latter half of the seventeenth century. During this period, there is a gradual emergence of European supremacy and the reinforcement of racist sentiments, highlighting the white's perceived superiority. This trend is further strengthened by the consolidation of Puritan laws and principles, accompanied by a persistent emphasis on material gains. One of the most illustrative examples of this transition can be found in the narrative of Mary Rowlandson titled *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682).

Rowlandson's work exemplifies a Puritan narrative deeply rooted in didacticism, echoing the Restoration-era emphasis on literature as a moral guide. Her writing subtly imparts lessons and moral instructions, seamlessly weaving Puritan values into her everyday experiences rather than delivering direct theological or puritanical lectures. This approach reflects Puritanism's simplicity and materialistic aspects, which laid the foundation for American spirituality and established a white Puritan metanarrative in America. Rowlandson's narrative begins vividly with an account of the Indian attack on Lancaster in 1675, vividly illustrating the hardships faced by European settlers in British America and portraying Native Americans as

“heathens” in contrast to the chosen people of God, the English (1). These narratives served to reinforce societal values and structures, asserting European supremacy in the evolving American landscape.

The aesthete portrayed in Rowlandson’s narrative reflects the cultural context of her time. As per Mieke Bal’s perspective, “visual narration can sometimes serve different functions compared to textual narration, involving ‘showing’ rather than ‘telling’. This visual aspect functions as sign systems that operate ‘between information and persuasion’” (122). The impact of prioritizing ‘showing’ over ‘telling’ deeply embeds the aesthete’s ideology within the reader’s perception. In this context, sign systems allow for the interplay of various factors to generate meaning, consequently reinforcing specific ideologies. The sight, in turn, is construed and presented as the ‘reality’. Within Rowlandson’s narrative, her gaze is directed towards the Natives with a colonialist perspective, perceiving them as the ‘other’. The depiction of barbaric and savage heathens is often contrasted against the portrayal of pious Christian English individuals in her accounts. Her gaze consistently favors the English viewpoint, as demonstrated by the passage, “As we went along, I saw a place where English cattle had been. That was comfort to me, such as it was. Quickly after that we came to an English path, which so took with me, that I thought I could have freely lyen down and died” (10).

Though the narrative is a captivity narrative with the main theme being her travel during captivity, critics are of the opinion that if the narrator Rowlandson is replaced with any other outside observer, the story could be completely different. Since the book is written after the times of captivity, the major theme of her book is the providence of God. The work is not historically accurate, rather it is heavily biased. Yet, the value and relevance of the book is due to its references to specific

historical experiences. The narrative is charged with pathos and is filled with the sentiments of women being dragged into struggles between colonial Christians and Native American pagans especially during King Philip's War. The narration of Rowlandson is a summation of all these sentiments and thus contributes to the white, colonial, puritan national consciousness of America.

A distinctive feature of the narrative of Sarah Kemble Knight's *Journal of Madame Knight* (written in 1705 and published in 1825) stands out for its unique narrative style, characterized by original orthography and occasional rhymes, as noted by Rines. Knight employs poetic interludes throughout her journal to underscore moments of profound impact. In one such instance, she expresses the challenges faced as a lone woman traveler, describing her relief upon safely crossing a surly river and arriving at a rugged shore late at night: "Fair Cynthia, all the Homage that I may / Unto a Creature, unto thee I pay; / In Lonesome woods to meet so kind a guide, / To Mee's more worth than all the world beside" (31). Here, Knight's poetic expression reflects a transcendental gratitude toward the moon, which she personifies as a comforting companion in her moment of fear and helplessness. This portrayal diverges from conventional narrative structures, echoing Gillian Rose's observation in *Feminism and Geography*, where she contrasts the fluidity and viscosity of the female body with the linearity and solidity of the male body (qtd. in Bassnett 231). Knight's narrative, thus, aligns with the nuanced storytelling traditions of women, emphasizing flexibility and varied perspectives rather than rigid power relations.

Sarah Kemble Knight's narrative in her *The Journal of Madame Knight* provides a vivid portrayal of colonial America through a distinctly gendered lens. Her attention to urban manners and customs, particularly in New Haven, reveals her keen observations of architectural details, local traditions like Election Day and Training

Day, culinary practices, and marriage customs. Knight's description of New Haven as "a very pretty place, well compact, and good handsome houses, clean, good and passable Rodes, and situated on a Navigable River, abundance of land well fined and Cleerd all along as wee passes" (59) underscores her appreciation for the physical and social landscape she encounters. Faye Vowell lauds Knight's narrative as "fresh," "delightful," and "humorous," noting peculiarities in Knight's style that blend middle-class sensibilities with literary aspirations akin to the upper class (Vowell, "A Commentary" 48). Knight's empathy shines through in her depiction of a poor family, where she juxtaposes her own fatigue with their enduring hardships, reflecting a sensitivity uncommon in many travel narratives of her time (41). Women travel writers like Knight often focus on everyday affairs, aiming to capture the physical reality and nuances of daily life as ends in themselves, rather than as a means to an end (Bassnett 230).

 Knight's narrative consciousness of America extends beyond mere observation to critique and satire. Her picaresque characterizations reveal a keen eye for social dynamics and a penchant for satirical commentary. Through her narrative, Knight not only documents the physical landscape but also subtly critiques social hierarchies and norms. Her occasional use of verse and rhyme further enriches her narrative, illustrating her literary ambitions and enhancing the reader's engagement with her experiences. Knight's ability to blend personal observation with broader social commentary highlights her role as a shaper of narrative consciousness in colonial America. By infusing her narrative with humor, empathy, and critical insight, Knight offers a multifaceted portrayal of early American society, contributing to a nuanced understanding of gender roles, social interactions, and cultural practices in the colonial context.

The Travels of Jonathan Carver offers a different narrative experience, when compared with the travel writings from America till then. For Edward Gaylord Bourne, an American historian, “the book [of Carver] was not only widely popular, but it took high rank among descriptions of Indian life. In literary merit it stands far above the general level of American writing of that period” (287). Bourne asserts that Carver offers accurate and precise information about the manners, customs, religion, and language of the Indians. Additionally, the narrative possesses a didactic quality and offers a sense of delight, making it captivating. Carver’s travel narrative showcases “the charm of a sincere, powerful, and gentle personality- the charm of novel and significant facts, of noble ideas, of humane sentiments, all uttered in English well-ordered and pure” (Bourne 287).

The purpose of the travel narrative of Carver is given as, “an Account of those Parts of North America, that, from lying adjacent to the Back-Settlements, have been frequently described, I shall confine myself to a Description of the more interior parts of it, which having been but seldom visited, are consequently but little known” (11). The purpose of his narrative is to give a detailed and true account of the interior regions in the American West. The narration of his speech at Great Caves (89) is suggestive of many variables in nation-building say, he considers the natives as equals/ brothers, the native community to whom he speaks is powerful, he had a long stay with them and hence his writing is experiences after a long stay with natives, his tongue in their language is imperfect, yet he attempts to be one among them, and he speaks of “Great King”, his God. The aesthete within him goes hand in hand with the scientific observer. The meticulous detailing found in the art of topographical description in early travel narratives, especially in exploration narratives, offers an aesthetic appeal intertwined with the sense of ownership of the land. This authorial

perspective and the sense of creating new perspectives are evident in Carver's narrations.

Summer in the Lakes (1843) of Margaret Fuller is an eclectic mix of prose, poetry, proverbs and dialogue. Fuller's narrative presents an element or variable of wonder like the narrative of Carver. According to William W. Stowe, the writing style of Fuller is "vigorous, witty and charming" (251). He continues, Fuller's "travel narratives served as vehicles for multiple voices- males and female, marked and unmarked, real and invented- without establishing a hierarchy among them or a sense of irreversible progress from one another" (242). This polyphonic approach allows Fuller to explore diverse perspectives and experiences without privileging one over the other. Her work also fosters a rich, inclusive dialogue that challenges conventional narrative structures and invites readers to engage with a multiplicity of viewpoints.

Fuller sharply laments the loss of the 'picaresque' in the American West to the harshness of the 'capitalist frontier'. She believed in balance and harmony between human beings and also between human beings and nature. She writes, "Farewell, ye soft and sumptuous solitudes!//Ye fairy distances, ye lordly woods..../I go, —and if never more may steep/...Hast looked on that which matches thy mood..../A tender blessing lingers o'er the scene,/Like some young mother's thought, fond, yet serene,/And through its life new-born our lives have been//” (42-43). Fuller here bids farewell to the peaceful and luxurious solitude of the surroundings, the enchanting vast spaces, and the majestic woods. It is an expression of leaving behind a place of tranquility and beauty.

Fuller's narrative displays an element of fantasy. But it is different from the insertion of fantastical into the text's visual imaginary. Fuller gazes at the plenty of the American West. Even though it is different from codified western systems of

seeing, it takes place within the cultural context. Fuller's fantasy is not for the creation of 'other'. Fuller wanted to see settlement without despoilment. It is evident when she writes, "there was neither wall nor road in Eden [and] those who walked there lost and found their way just as we did" (40). The conscience of the writer is more liberal and freer. As construed by Newman Lance Newman, although she was travelling through the most contentious frontiers of America, she sees land as a poet, adding the beauty and leaving out the dirt ("Nature" 208).

The black travel narratives in general are usually in the form of memoirs. The blacks rarely travelled for pleasure or according to their wish. They were most often compelled to travel. The study of narrative consciousness in the *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself* (1861) by Harriet Jacobs reveals that the narration has artfully combined the genres of slave narratives and sentimental novels. She chronicles the life and travel of her alter ego, Linda Brent. The narrative of Harriet Jacobs ostensibly conforms to the life and struggle of the blacks in America; but critics consider the narrative repertoire of Jacobs as "the black cultural tradition of 'masking', a technique of double meaning that allows the story teller to make accessible a hidden message only to those readers attuned to secretive signs embedded within the story" (Whitsitt 73).

Her journey through slavery symbolized the collective journey of the entire African race into enslavement. Janis P. Stout, in her work *The Journey Narrative in American Literature: Patterns and Departures*, identifies five recurrent patterns in journey narratives: exploration and escape, home-seeking, return, heroic quest, and wandering. The complexity of a travel narrative is determined by the extent to which these patterns are interwoven in its expression. These patterns are typically influenced by the direction of the journey, its motivation, and its connection to historical

precedents. Jacobs' slave narrative offers a unique trajectory - the experience of travelling from freedom to slavery and then from slavery to freedom.

Her narrative style aligns with the grand narratives of America. The introductory part of her narrative explains the purpose of the book. She, in a way, shields the practitioners of slavery, despite her strong criticism of the institution of slavery. As explained by C.L.R. James in his book *The Black Jacobins*, in order to achieve social mobility, black individuals needed to adopt white ideology. Jacobs' narration is in harmony with this notion. Her narrative provides a skillful analysis of the social dynamics of the time. In the preface of the book, Linda Brent writes:

Reader, be assured this narrative is no fiction. I am aware that some of my adventures may seem incredible; but they are, nevertheless, strictly true. I have not exaggerated the wrongs inflicted by Slavery; on the contrary, my descriptions fall far short of the facts. I have concealed the names of places, and given persons fictitious names. I had no motive for secrecy on my own account, but I deemed it kind and considerate towards others to pursue this course. (6)

The writer emphasizes the authenticity of her narrative. She wants to ensure that her narrative focuses on the collective struggle and injustice, rather than singling out individuals. Her commitment to truth and empathy shines through, as she seeks to shed light on the horrors of slavery without causing harm to anyone involved.

Metanarrative or Grand Narrative, as conceptualized in the postmodern critical theory, holds a significant place in the discourse of narrative consciousness. Grand narratives refer to "narratives about narratives of historical meaning, experience, or knowledge, which offers a society legitimation through the anticipated completion of a master idea" (Lyotard 29). While the early traces of grand narratives can be

observed in works like Rowlandson's narrative, they reached maturity during the Reconstruction period following the American Civil War. Examination of grand narratives reveals the intricate interplay of codes that carry diverse meanings within each work. These codes indirectly convey implications related to racial, gender, class, and religious ideologies through the semiotic interplay of words. The metanarratives encompass and represent the collective knowledge and experiences of a nation. They shape and define how experiences and knowledge are understood. Thus, discussions about national consciousness and the process of nation-building are fundamentally connected to the concept of grand narratives.

The variables of Americanism and nationalism in American travel writings from the antebellum period align with the trend of metanarrative formulations. The metanarratives of the nation typically take shape to portray the nation's aspirations and future by organizing purposeful events in a sequence. The United States, in particular, required state unification and the embracing of American ideals such as equality and fraternity after the Civil War. Therefore, these diverse variables, conveyed through various codes, manifest as metanarratives of that era. A prime example of this phenomenon is evident in Mark Twain's narrative *Life on the Mississippi* (1883). Mark Twain through his narration in *Life on the Mississippi* gives a new meaning and history to the river Mississippi. This is a conscious effort for nation-building, with an intentional 'creation' of history for America.

Mark Twain declares, "The basin of Mississippi is the body of the nation. All the other parts are but members, important in themselves, yet more important in their relations to this" (1). When he makes Mississippi the body and not the 'head', the nationalist discourse in America after the civil war is apparent. The northern states make the 'head' of the nation, but by making Mississippi the body of the nation, he

offers an entirely new nationalistic discourse as ‘head’ has no existence in the absence of the ‘body’. In another instance he compares River Mississippi with the other major rivers of the world:

No other river has so vast a drainage-basin: it draws its water supply from twenty-eight States and Territories; from Delaware, on the Atlantic seaboard, and from all the country between that and Idaho on the Pacific slope--a spread of forty-five degrees of longitude. ... The area of its drainage-basin is as great as the combined areas of England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Turkey; and almost all this wide region is fertile; the Mississippi valley, proper, is exceptionally so. (22)

The examination of narrative consciousness within Mark Twain’s work on the Mississippi explores the technique of ‘defamiliarization,’ consequently giving rise to the creation of a new history rooted in the grand narratives presented in Mark Twain’s work. Given that narrative techniques wield the power to shape a reader’s perception and even disrupt conventional viewpoints, Mark Twain’s use of defamiliarization elevates his work to a significant document within national narratives and the discourse of nation-building. Defamiliarization is harnessed by Mark Twain to align the thoughts and imagination of readers with a nationalist perspective. This history emerges as a cohesive entity following the American Civil War, facilitated by tools such as memory and myth. Moreover, this process engenders both national and individual memories, alongside the potential creation, if not construction, of nationalistic myths.

Mark Twain writes, “there never was so wonderful a book written by man; never one whose interest was so absorbing, so unflagging, so sparkingly renewed with every re-perusal” (118). He assigns splendor and profundity to Mississippi and

makes it a symbol of grandiose for posterity. It is complemented with the elements of romantic mystique and the fecundity of the River. Michel Imbert says, “While regional accents are captured in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the vernacular tends at times to be neatly recontained within the framework of picturesque vignettes. In *Life on the Mississippi*, Mark Twain goes against the current, so to speak, as he attempts to plumb the depths of stereotyped sketches and thus to free the flow of memory” (51). The narrative on Mississippi is like an inlet into the meandering mind (Imbert 49). This departure from the norm redefines the artistic consciousness of America, ushering in a new and definitive perspective of his masterful portrayal.

In the twentieth century, American values, ideals and spirit were popular and celebrated across the globe, especially after the Second World War. This new context in the global politics resulted in the creation and addition of new values into Americanism or Americanness. Yet, these new values were not ‘new’; rather they complemented the values that were intertwined from the founding of America as a nation. Hence, they contributed to and polished the Grand narratives of America. As suggested by critics, “the compulsion to celebrate ‘Americanness’ in the form of capitalism continued to create human relationships based on money and fraught with competition. Thus, America continued to define itself exclusively in familiar terms: progress, advancement, material comforts, and personal gratification” (Dew 52).

The continuation of the new spirits within American ideals and its consciousness is evident in John Steinbeck’s narrative consciousness, particularly in his travel narrative, *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962). Critics argue that Steinbeck assumes the role of a social investigator, positioning himself as the main character in a “national work-in-progress” in this travel narrative (Dew 49). For

Steinbeck, writing about the nation is an overwhelming task, a seemingly never-ending one, as he reflects in the book:

When I face the desolate impossibility of writing five hundred pages a sick sense of failure falls on me and I know I can never do it. This happens every time. Then gradually I write one page and then another. One day's work is all I can permit myself to contemplate and I eliminate the possibility of ever finishing. So, it was now, as I looked at the bright-colored projection of monster America. (20)

In this passage, as Steinbeck characterizes America as vibrant and attractive yet also monstrous and unconquerable, he captures the national consciousness of America as a superpower. This concept of America as a superpower is a prevailing theme that emerges through the narrative consciousness of the writer. This narrative aligns with the sentiment expressed in Walt Whitman's preface to *Leaves of Grass*: "the United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem" (Poetry and Prose 3). It can be viewed as the culmination of the grand narratives that have been present since the post-Civil War period.

According to Jason Dew, Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley* reflects his fervent effort to grapple with what was then a predominant ideological issue in America: "Cold War intra-imperialism" (Dew 49). This term describes the ideological dominance America imposed on itself to establish a national identity rooted in democratic ideals, distinct from Russian Communism. This ideology demanded "consensus thinking," which involved the social or political intimidation of those who didn't conform to the sanctioned "right" (Dew 49). This concept justified the legitimization of American actions in the twentieth century and underscores the fluidity of the American identity during the Cold War era. Steinbeck's narrative also

touches on the relaxed lifestyle of the post-World War America and how people had become too comfortable and complacent as he notes:

I saw in their eyes something I was to see over and over in every part of the nation—a burning desire to go, to move, to get under way, anyplace, away from here. They spoke quietly of how they wanted to go someday, to move about, free, and unanchored, not toward something but away from something.... Nearly every American hungers to move. (10)

The study of narrative consciousness in Edmund White's *States of Desire: Travels in Gay America* (1980) unveils the distinct narrative style and structure of the book as his travel is to represent the gay sexuality and identity politics. The cultural, political and historical circumstances conditioned the gay sexuality and their travel in America; and White's narrative is a narration of that journey. The purpose of the travel account is to give words to this gay history:

Since this book came out in 1980, the world of gays has evolved more quickly than any other in peacetime since the beginning of history. Violence and war have been able to effect sudden and usually disastrous changes, but the changes that occur peacefully are most often slow and sedimentary. In fact, this book shows a past world preserved in amber, despite the way that world was full of plans, impregnated by what it imagined was a utopian future. (6)

White's narration in the book celebrates the ideals and modernization of America. He frequently emphasizes the 'greatness' of the nation, aligning with the overarching metanarratives of America. Significantly, his narrative often provides novel interpretations of 'in-between' spaces, a term that gained prominence in the late twentieth century. The rise of semiotic studies has enriched the interaction between words and images. Peter Wagner highlights that this relationship creates "in-between

spaces,” fostering not just mutual illumination but a dialogue between image and text. He introduces the concept of “iconotexts,” denoting intermedial texts capable of generating spaces where images and text may convey distinct narratives (10). This conceptual space engages readers in conversation. White’s gay narrative introduces a fresh storytelling tradition, contributing to the process of American nation-building.

Narrative techniques are integral elements that infuse distinct effects into a work and are intrinsic to all forms of discourse. An exploration into the narrative consciousness of earlier texts reveals tales of adventures involving exploration and escape. This category encompasses the writings of figures like Thomas Harriot, John Smith, and even Mary Rowlandson. Rowlandson’s narrative, while steeped in Puritan values, also carries traces of metanarratives as it aligns with the puritan materialist perspective of the nation. Metanarratives, particularly in the case of America, a nation with a predominantly ‘settler’ history, create new national identities and histories that conform to Puritan materialist views. Sarah Kemble Knight’s narrative differs, focusing on women’s experiences during her ‘woman’ travels. Margaret Fuller’s narrative employs a mixture of prose, poetry, proverbs, and dialogue, evoking wonder and awe akin to Jonathan Carver’s work. The fantasy element present in Fuller’s narrative structure contrasts with Harriet Jacobs’ more diary-like ‘chronicling’ style. Despite Jacobs’ unique narrative style, its tone aligns with the grand narrative of America, rendering it a significant work in the post-bellum era.

The themes of Americanism and nationalism in travel writings from the antebellum period resonate with the trend of metanarrative formulations. Mark Twain’s narrative style contributes to the creation of a historical backdrop. The Mississippi River serves as a critical component of American identity, frequently featured in the travel narratives selected for this study from Mark Twain. John

Steinbeck and Edmund White contribute to the grand narrative of 'narration-culture' that evolved in the post-bellum superpower era. Steinbeck captures the ongoing spirit of American ideals and national consciousness, portraying America as both captivating and, at times, monstrous. Edmund White's narration echoes modernization and aligns with the grand narrative of a Great America.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Afoot and lighthearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose meaning
(Whitman, "Open Road" 1-3)

The concept of the perpetual traveler embodies the restless quest for identity, knowledge, and expansion that transcends geographical boundaries. It reflects a continuous journey driven by the desire to explore, conquer, and redefine oneself in relation to the world. This study examines the ongoing project of building American consciousness as reflected in selected American travel writings, identifying the American as a perpetual traveler. The study encompasses ten travel writings, ranging from Thomas Harriot's work in the sixteenth century to Edmund White's work in the twentieth century. The study aims to analyze the evolution of various intricate elements contributing to the ongoing project of building American consciousness, encompassing history, spirituality, race, gender, geography, and storytelling. In the context of globalization, travel writing has capitalized on Westerners' growing concerns about cultural homogenization. It positions itself as an exciting alternative to the standardized experiences of mass tourism. Travel narratives offer insights into the world's heterogeneity, complexity, and the potential for bewildering experiences (Holland and Huggan 15). The notion of nation and its associated consciousness are integral to every individual's identity. Therefore, an exploration of the concept of consciousness through the lens of travel narratives remains relevant.

The formation of American consciousness is often recognized as a state-sponsored project aimed at maintaining authority and power. The development of

American consciousness also arose from the nation's urgent requirements. This process contributed to the establishment of discernible power structures within society. Living in subservience to the ideology of those who safeguard one's life and earnings, and yielding to these power structures, became essential for individuals. Societal power structures dominate and narrate every 'event' within society, and the dynamics of power within politics give rise to the emergence of consciousness. Therefore, this study investigates the specific needs of America and how its consciousness was manifested. These two questions serve as the core of this dissertation. The significance of this study lies in the constancy of the foundational structure of this consciousness, while the superstructure built upon it undergoes periodic changes, signifying an ongoing project. This consciousness is evident even in the earliest travel writings of America.

The second chapter of the present study explores the evolution of the concept of American historical consciousness through selected travel writings. The aim is to assess how history is constructed, framed, and subsequently integrated into American consciousness. The progression of America, initially established as a settlement by European colonists and later transformed into a British colonial expansion known as British America, followed by its transition into an independent nation in the 1770s, necessitated a robust historical foundation. This process of 'historical construction' and nation-building, if not directly contributing to American consciousness, is both intentional and ongoing. The colonial narratives that emerged in the early stages gradually gave way to Puritan narratives. The 'nation builders' following the American Civil War recognized the absence of definitive traditions, national symbols, and institutions for America and hence they took deliberate and meticulous steps to construct 'national identities,' consciously intertwining them with the historical fabric

of America. Despite its evolutionary progression over time, the historical consciousness of Americans remains rooted in Puritan ideals, adapting and aligning itself with the changing needs and desires of the American society.

The grand narrative that effectively shaped the historical consciousness and the broader history becomes evident through Thomas Harriot's persistent emphasis on 'God's Providence' at work in America throughout his narrative. His indirect allusions to the Roanoke colony and direct accounts of his interactions with the natives and the regional hostilities underscore this perspective. The strategic use of the term 'settlement' by the British rather than acknowledging the European 'invasion' of North America, along with the influence of the Black Legend, contributed to a particular historical consciousness. John Smith, in alignment with the ideology of Divine Providence, highlighted the English's divine calling to civilize the pristine American lands. His alteration of place names directly contributed to the shaping of historical narratives. Mary Rowlandson's Puritan narrative further reinforced the dominance of White European descent in shaping America's history. The temporal variables present in Sarah Kemble Knight's narrative make her book a valuable resource for objectively understanding the historical context of the time. Jonathan Carver expanded America's territorial boundaries, effectively crafting a history for the American frontiers. He establishes a parallel history to the nation's narrative, particularly during a turbulent period, drawing a connection between the Americans and the ancient history of Hebrews.

Margaret Fuller deliberates on an unparalleled history of America which is transcendentalist and naturalist in nature. The historical consciousness she muses out of the ravaged landscape of the American West in contrast to the mechanical landscape of the industrial England, and the 'many histories' of the American West

designs a new course of uniqueness into the built of American history. Mark Twain and Harriet Jacobs created new national identities and institutions during the post-Civil War Reconstruction phase. The New Americanist writings of John Steinbeck contribute to the on-going project of building of the American consciousness which is innately neo-American at the outset of globalization. This neo-historicity complements the political consciousness and often intersects with the requirements of the nascent nation which was on its way to becoming a superpower. The historical consciousness offered by the gay writer Edmund White aligns with the unilinear history of America, thereby contributing to the broader American historical consciousness. While White's 'gay history' takes a unique path distinct from the mainstream, it remains consistent with the 'acceptable' versions of American history, particularly in its adherence to American ideals.

The study focusses on the aspect of spiritual consciousness in the third chapter. The spirituality of Americans has a definite place in the project of building of American consciousness and also in the creation of a unified spirit in that consciousness. American spiritual consciousness has its roots deeply in the Puritan ideals of the early settlers. With the passage of time this Puritan spirituality evolved into liberal Protestantism and later to liberal materialistic spirituality. The distinctive American spirituality or the Americanness in spirituality focuses on its materialistic-Puritan foundation. The mercantile materialistic motive of the earliest settlers of America got appropriated into spirituality during 1750-1850 and Americans adopted the concept of prosperity as 'the land of milk and honey' designated to the Lord's favorite in the Bible which made the spirituality liberal and materialistic. The idea of prosperity diffused into American spirituality and hence to be rich and prosperous

have become the motto of every American and this dream - the American Dream - has gradually disseminated into every American.

The foundations of American spiritual consciousness could be traced in Harriot and Smith--a spirituality which is rooted in materialism. The fewer references made by Harriot on God and spirituality were to make his work acceptable in the religion-bound England. The long narrations on the differences in the practice of religion by natives contributed to the later-developed postcolonial sense of 'othering', which he hurls against the Spaniards in a few instances. With the arrival of the Pilgrims in Mayflower in 1620, a new saga got added into American spiritual consciousness, a Puritan-Protestant spiritual consciousness. The travel writings of women especially the narratives of Rowlandson and Jacobs fit smoothly into the grand narrative of spirituality. The spiritual consciousness of women was constructed and propagated by the male spiritual leaders of the time in order to retain their dominion over the land and the female body in the New World. The strong footing of Puritanism in America, especially with the Antinomian Controversy and Half-Way Covenant, is perceptible in the writings of Rowlandson. Even though the narrative is generally perceived a spiritual narrative, strong political favors towards Increase Mather is unambiguous, making it an important document for the study on the evolution of spiritual consciousness in America.

A shift in American spirituality towards liberal Protestantism is conspicuous in the descriptions of accommodative spirituality of Knight. The First and Second Great Awakening reshaped the spirituality and made it more liberal. Jonathan Carver's narrative manifests the earliest traces of individualistic spirituality. Margaret Fuller's spirituality, as exposed in the selected book, is rooted in transcendentalism and thrusts on personal salvation and individuality in religion. Even though she is rebellious

towards materialism, her narrative highlights individualism and advocates liberal spiritual consciousness. Harriet Jacobs, on the other hand, offers a concrete picture of Black Spirituality and personal salvation as proposed by the Second Great Awakening.

Spirituality in the post-bellum phase of America underwent a major shift towards individualism. During the time, the national institutions turned out to be the centers of respect and prominence. With the gradual embrace of modernity in American society, the divinity and reverence shifted to ideals and objects that could induce Americanness. The national institutions became the new religion and hence the spirit of modernity and the spirit of progress runs through the spiritual consciousness of the Americans as are apparent in the writings of Mark Twain, and John Steinbeck. Edmund White, on the other hand, offers new insights into the 'accommodative' spirit of American spirituality. He projects the changing conditions in America through his detailing on the change in approach towards the queers. His spirituality is intertwined with the experiences of body, which contributes another dimension to American spirituality.

The study also explores the evolution of American racial consciousness and the making of the American consciousness in the fourth chapter. The racial consciousness of America, as is seen from the select texts, is rooted in the Puritan-European standards and hence believed is based on the supremacy of the Whites as well as the Puritans. The study of racial consciousness anticipates the creation of an 'other' (a concept which became popular with the development of postcolonial studies in literature and indicates person or a group of people who are significantly different from the 'self' in many ways). In the context of the study, this process of othering or the creation of the 'other' was done against the Natives in the early years of

settlement, but later it was targeted against the Blacks. The concept of racism or 'the other' in the context of America is not fixed or static; it keeps on evolving with the changes in the society of America. Different variants of racial discrimination are evident in the history of American racial consciousness.

From the study of the select travel writings, it is identified that Thomas Harriot and John Smith, through the descriptions in their books, portrayed the Native Americans as different from the Europeans in their life, manners, religion and culture. A similar 'othering' is effectuated against the non-British; especially the Spaniards and the French. The stereotyping and generalization of the natives and considering them as the 'other' marked the beginning of racial consciousness in these writings. The 'differences from the natives' gradually developed racist hues especially from the writings of Mary Rowlandson onwards as she identifies the natives as pagans and savages. Sarah Kemble Knight's writings mark the first identification of Black people as comparable to natives for their 'bad use of their mouths,' reflecting perceived savagery and barbarism. The increased thrust on mercantilism in American society from the mid-eighteenth century augmented the institutionalization of slavery.

Margaret Fuller, being a transcendentalist, presents an altogether different discourse on racism. She denounced the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the materialistic expansion of America to its West. Fuller contested the 'annihilation' of the natives from 'their' soil. Harriet Jacobs elaborates on the sufferings of the Blacks in her narrative. Even though she exposes the ills of slavery, the sense of 'unification' of interests that she projects at the outset of post-bellum reconstruction activities, makes the work an important document in the study of racial consciousness. The post-bellum America redesigned its ideals and hence neo-discriminatory practices emerged in the context of America. The 'fundamental national plots' that began with Mark

Twain imposed new national-narratives and created new ideals for America. The focus on the collective consciousness for the 'unity and integrity' of America made all the divisive forces to this ideal a new 'other' for America. The racial prejudice and discrimination scaled new heights in the twentieth century with the increased complexity in the society and economy of America as is seen in the writings of John Steinbeck and Edmund White. All these writings formulated their own set of 'others' who dissented to the sense of united America both in deeds and spirit.

Another facet of American consciousness that is deliberated in the study is the gender consciousness of America and it is elaborated in the fifth chapter of the study. Both the men and women travelers have their own unique path in the course of the building of the consciousness of America. The conformities to gender in America have its foundation from England which gives its thrust on the social roles of a Renaissance woman being an ideal wife, a mother or a gentle woman. Gender is not an important area of discourse in the early travel narratives under study. Except for some passive remarks on the native women, and their difference from the women in England, Thomas Harriot and John Smith make no elaboration of women in the New World. The differences they project in the way and manners of the native women accentuates the European ideal, modeled on the Renaissance spirit, that is deep rooted in the consciousness of the writers. This renaissance consciousness of gender and gender roles resonates in the evolution process of American gender consciousness.

Mary Rowlandson and Sarah Kemble Knight discuss extensively about the women in American society and also about the women travel during the time. Their gaze and spectacle are different from that of the male travelers. They give a new dimension to the gender--especially on the peculiarities of the women travel. Rowlandson's consciousness was rooted on the ideals of Renaissance morality. Her

normative femininity is founded on the Puritan ideals of colonialist America. The narrative of Sarah Kemble Knight, on the other hand, is more like a social commentary. She took her home and domesticity on to the road. The narrative in the form of diary entries is an account of her daily travelling. Her reflections could then be identified as the earliest perspectives of a colonial woman - the gendered perceptions on society, culture, religion and manners. This exceptional travel of a woman is an important discourse in the study of the evolution of gender consciousness in America, especially in the field of women's history brought to light through literary recovery.

Jonathan Carver's focus is on the exploration to the American West and he makes an account of native women by placing them against the practices in European society. Margaret Fuller gives a new dimension to the American gender consciousness as she travels through the untrodden ways, to the American Frontiers and hence offers a new consciousness to the gender consciousness of Americans. Her travel is more like the self-exploration narratives of men. Her narrative has a reversal of dominant images from that of her male counterparts and her feminine perception of travel make the narrative a classic among the narrations by women. Harriet Jacobs' narrative, though detailing the perils of a slave woman, upholds abolitionist ideals of womanhood, blending Puritan and African American perspectives while aligning with mainstream gender consciousness.

The post-American Civil War period witnesses a 'unified' gender consciousness, which is more liberal in approach towards woman and her travel as the thrust was more on the cherishing of American ideals and unity. Even though Mark Twain did not make any specific remarks on the women in America, the social changes that occurred during the time contributed to the gender consciousness of the

time. The transgressions in the compartmentalization of gender augmented with time and also with the travel by women. The American gender consciousness in the late nineteenth century and in the twentieth-century became more porous. The experiences of gender got transgressed; the boundaries of compartmentalization got broken and exposed its futility during the time. The writings of John Steinbeck testify the process and these writings bespeak the redefinition of the ideals of gender by conforming to the New Americanist ideals, especially to the ideal of self-reliance. The gay experiences of travel by Edmund White detail the viscosity and fluidity of the concept of gender and body.

The study researches the nuances of the building of American consciousness through its analysis of the evolution of geographical consciousness the sixth chapter. The chapter mostly deals with American boundaries and frontiers, and how they have contributed to American consciousness, as the construction of the nation called America is also related to the evolution of geographical consciousness. The interpretive and perspective emotional reaction to the sense of place also contributes to this consciousness. The geographical consciousness of the American began with the process of political and cultural landscaping of the nation. It is the specialties of the New World that reflected in the earliest narratives of Thomas Harriot and John Smith; and they both deliberated on it with colonialist agenda. The 'fertile' and 'prosperous' land of the New World laid the foundation for the nation America and its consciousness. The later developed 'sense of place' is another important variable in the process. John Smith's attempt to rename various places in America resulted in offering a new narrative to those 'places'.

Mary Rowlandson, in her narrative, details the hazardous trials along the way, offering an account of her consciousness of places in colonial America. She even

leaves a scanned perception of nature which often intensifies her hard experiences in captivity. The writing of Sarah Kemble Knight details the difficulties on the road and the travails of a lone woman traveler especially with her descriptions of the landscape. The anonymity of the place and people in her narration generate a fear which unveils a new history of the wilderness. Jonathan Carver details the resources in the American West and he shifts the geographical consciousness of America to its frontiers. His consciousness appended a new consciousness of the conquering of difficult terrains and cherishing the distinctiveness of the American landscape.

Margaret Fuller is often nature herself. Being a transcendentalist and naturalist, her geographical consciousness has rather more spiritual than the physical or the later developed political undertones. Every aspect of nature, like a stream, is fresh, natural and life-giving for Fuller. The geographical consciousness of Harriet Jacobs is centered on the sense of place, especially in the context of the seats of slavery. The tabernacle of slavery lingers around throughout her narrative. Her narration often gets limited to the abolitionist ideology and the sense of geography in the expressions of slavery and freedom. Yet, during the post-Civil War period the travel writers constructed new national symbols and identity, and thereby, rendered new geographical dimensions to the nation called America. The conscious construction of the sense of place and of America is a prominent phenomenon seen in the writings of the time.

The construction of American geographical ideals is phenomenal in the work *Life on the Mississippi* by Mark Twain. The work is often cited as a classic example of the theory of 'history creation' in America. The geographical consciousness of the Americans redesigned and reshaped to augment the nationalist feelings during the time. The picaresque America got celebrated in the post-bellum travel writings and

offered new equations to the New Americanist ideals. The American Frontiers, the South-West, Mississippi etc. became important areas of discourse in the twentieth-century. The narrow and dangerous travel routes continued to attract American travelers with an altogether different zeal. The uniquely impressive natural ecosystem, the love for the rustic and traditional scenic beauty, and the search for the scattered fragments of American uniqueness through difficult terrains were made the features of American travel in the twentieth century. The different experiences of gay travel and their experience of the sense of place are seen in the study of Edward White's geographical consciousness.

In the study of the ongoing process of building of American consciousness, another crucial aspect explored is the American narrative consciousness, which is detailed in the seventh chapter. This narrative consciousness is dissected through the perspectives of narration and aesthetics. The chapter reveals that America's identity is deeply entwined with storytelling, particularly due to the absence of a definitive historical past. America is continuously molded and shaped by redefining its values, ideals, and the myriad factors associated with nation-building. The aesthetic consciousness of Americans becomes apparent through their perceptions and the act of 'seeing.' This narrative consciousness is not devoid of politics; rather, it reflects a deliberate gaze. Travelers, through their aesthetic consciousness, guide and manipulate readers' imaginations. Their perspectives construct and reconstruct America's consciousness.

The early narratives of Thomas Harriot and John Smith were modeled on the European values. The detailed descriptions of the land and the people of the New World have reduced the people and the prosperity of the land to the utilitarian needs of Europe and the early settlers. Their remarks on beauty have its foundation on

European standards. The thrust of the narrative of Mary Rowlandson is the Puritan consciousness and the ideology of Increase Mather. The aesthete in Rowlandson is strictly puritan, with the natives being 'ugly' and 'disorderly' for her. Sarah Kemble Knight's narration is another puritan narrative but modeled on liberal Protestantism. Knight's aesthetic consciousness is also built on puritan consciousness. All these narratives were instrumental in the building of the American aesthetic consciousness and thereby contributed to its consciousness. Jonathan Carver's focus is on the materialistic expansion of America to its West and a national consciousness with a thrust on the prosperity and the material wealth of the nation. The narrative of Carver is identified to be a continuation of the early narratives of Smith and Harriot. His gaze is the colonial gaze in search for prosperity.

Harriet Jacobs' narrative is fully into the abolitionist ideology in order to project the perils of slavery in contrast to the freedom in Europe, or the Free States. The narrative of Jacobs presents the aesthetic consciousness of the abolitionists and thus contributes the later developed post-American Civil War consciousness. Margaret Fuller's writing is different from all the prevalent narratives and artistic consciousness of the time. She was an independent woman traveler who took untrodden ways and was in love with nature as against materialistic prosperity. Her work is an eclectic mix of prose, poetry, proverbs and dialogue. It also offers a variable of wonder as in the narrative of Carver. She gazes at the plenty of American West. Even though she traveled through the contentious frontiers of America, she was more a poet and comments on the beauty of the place which itself is another version of the narrative consciousness of America.

All the narratives after the American Civil War molded themselves into the unity and integrity of America as a nation and later as a superpower. The variables of

Americanism and nationalism in American travel writings from the post-bellum period are attuned to the trend of formulations of metanarratives. Mark Twain creates a new conscious history of Mississippi and offers a new grand narrative to America. The untrammelled and independent life in post-World War America, which otherwise is a challenging idea to make real, is made to happen through the continuation of the new spirits in American ideals and American consciousness. This is apparent in John Steinbeck. The symbols of modernity offered by Steinbeck and the modernization ideals as cherished by Edmund White are attuned to the metanarratives of America. The travel accounts of Mark Twain, and Steinbeck suited the political and materialistic American aesthetic consciousness of the unified America and also America the superpower. The narrative of Edmund White celebrates the consciousness of America that accommodates the queer and the marginalized. His writing is a different stable, yet that too projects the cosmopolitan, liberal self of American consciousness.

The study reveals that the process of building American consciousness, as observed through the selected travel writings, remains an ongoing endeavor for America. Similarly, the development of American consciousness is a continual process. This process is far from being static; it evolves over time, adapting to the prevailing needs. Americans are in a perpetual state of 'becoming' Americans, with travel and travel narratives playing a pivotal role in shaping this evolution. The notion of the perpetual traveler carries significant implications across economic, political, legal, and sociological dimensions. This idea is often linked with the concepts of global nomadism and global citizenship. Those who consider themselves Americans essentially identify as travelers. Since its inception, America has been a nation formed

by individuals who migrated from Europe. From that point onward, this notion has persisted, and both the nation and its people have continued their journeys.

Yet, this study keeps aside all the legal and economic complications of the term, and focuses on American, as a person, as a concept and as an ideology, who is on move or is a traveler. American as a concept defines who is an American. Even the concept of 'not being an American' keeps on changing. In this concept of 'not being an American', there is a spirit of the 'other' in the postcolonial context. The 'other' in America defines who is 'politically ineligible' to be an American. This politics defines and designs the meaning of the nation and even builds the nation at various stages in history. The third concept, in this regard, is the ideology of American. Even the 'ideology' of American is not static, i.e., it is moving. It keeps spreading especially with the spread of globalization. At the outset of globalization people who become part of the American ideology embrace the 'global culture' of modernity whereby they think, dress and even feed themselves as Americans and thereby add profit to America.

Americans are still on the move. The creation of history through literature and social discourse became the order of the day. The process of building American consciousness continues to date. With changes in the geopolitical landscape, Americans continue to evolve and construct their identity as Americans, a process that persisted throughout the twentieth century and continues into the twenty-first. Under the guise of liberalism and amid global movements towards globalization, American consciousness has firmly established its emblem. Globalized Americans are in constant motion, influencing others to move as well. This evolution is reflected in contemporary travel writing, which often seeks to shed its colonial heritage by emphasizing the harmonizing effects of globalization. As Debbie Lisle notes, such

writing employs a cosmopolitan vision that confronts readers and writers with the challenge of forming a global community based on shared values, norms, and sensibilities (4). This travel is directed towards a cosmopolitan Self and a cosmopolitan order, revealing the dynamic interplay between American identity and global interconnectedness.

The sense of American is then a continuous process, one that transcends the boundaries and keeps moving in the spirit of globalization. It makes everyone a traveler to embrace the 'virtues' of the 'global' materialist self, which offers an immense sense of being 'shared' - through social networking sites, 'shared' national identities, 'shared' cultural identities and many others. Travel writing occupies a liminal space within literary, social, and cultural studies, being too literary and subjective to serve as objective knowledge, yet too pragmatic to qualify as aesthetic literature. Rather than fitting neatly into either category, travel writing represents topographical and chronological depictions of social realities, contributing to the cultural and intellectual conditioning of readers.

The geopolitical equations of the time have made the travel of the American a global phenomenon. The travel of American now triggers the travel of almost every individual of the world. It compels a transformation into the American or the 'Other of the American'. Thus, the travel is to offer transcendence. The travel contributes to the physical, psychological and spiritual spaces of the traveler. The search for the unencumbered spaces with a sense of liberating the self is the vogue of the time. In such travels, there occurs the exploration of the self. The road then accommodates to the needs of the Self. In the constant negotiation with the transcendence, it affords a re-emergence of the transcendental self.

Chapter 9

Limitations and Recommendations

The present study does not intend to offer a comprehensive analysis of American consciousness but seeks to contribute to its understanding through a focused examination of select American travel writings. By engaging with concepts such as the perpetual traveler and the evolving nature of American consciousness, the research highlights these phenomena as fluid and ongoing processes. Acknowledging its own limitations, the study provides insights that may serve as a foundation for future scholarship, encouraging further investigation into the complex interactions between travel narratives, national identity, and cultural consciousness.

1. The American nation continues to expand, and so does its consciousness. This expansion is evident through various political actions and statements, such as political interventions in Afghanistan or comments made by the US Secretary of State regarding the spread of the corona virus by the Chinese. However, it is important to note that the present research did not endeavor to incorporate such political dimensions into the study of American nation-building or consciousness.
2. The researcher has selected only ten travel writings as representatives from a relatively open-ended genre.
3. This study of national consciousness is limited to six aspects: historical, spiritual, geographical, racial, gender and narrative consciousness.
4. A vast portion of the process of building national consciousness from each century, starting from the sixteenth century, has been left unattended.
5. The study of national consciousness in the context of different political landmarks of the nation is untended.

6. The socio-political intersections in the travel writings of America are not examined.
7. The researcher limited the research to only three representative writings from each century, focusing on male, female, and black writers. There is potential for including a broader range of representations, such as natives, Muslims, Chinese, Asians, etc.
8. The study solely focused on Americans writing about America. Exploring the objective or subjective viewpoints of non-Americans regarding their travels in America could be another area of study.
9. Exploring American travel writers' perspectives on the world outside of America and studying their consciousness in that context could be considered an additional potential area of study.
10. Investigating the economic aspect of American national consciousness, especially in the wake of globalization, through American travel narratives could be a further area of study.
11. Examining the relocation and disappearance of the natives in the formation of the American nation through American travel writings is another significant area of study.
12. The narrative choices, the style, and the motives of the traveler determine the difference in content and subject. The various discourses especially through its narratological differences can be explored as a new area in the study of nation-building through American travel writing.
13. The political power structures and the process of nation-building in the context of American travel writing could be explored as another area of study.

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