

# Colonization and the 'Other': Psychoanalytic Trends in the Hudson River School of Art

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Art movements throughout history - and especially in the most recent centuries - demonstrate a reflection of society and provide commentary, whether it be a rejection of previous art movements and the values and features that characterize those movements or a response to the social and political happenings at the time. For example, the Neoclassical style that focused on ideals from Greco and Roman times was a direct rejection of the ornate and lavish style of the Rococo movement, and Dadaism arose in response to the "horrors... [of] the First World War."<sup>1</sup> Beginning in the 16th century with Italian Mannerism all the way to present-day movements such as Conceptual and Contemporary styles, artists have been using their art to tell a story beyond the iconography.<sup>2</sup>

At first glance, there is a movement that appears to lie outside of this commentary: the Hudson River School. This school is characterized by landscape paintings - both detailed and panoramic - that showcase the Hudson River Valley, as well as places from the Western United States and parts of South America. To a casual observer, the school seems to lack the commentary that exudes from other art movements, instead focusing on traditionally 'beautiful' depictions of nature, whether it be more pastoral or a representation of the wilderness. However, the Hudson River School is not so different

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<sup>1</sup> Raoul Hausmann, "Dada," Tate, 2022, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/d/dada#:~:text=Dada%20was%20an%20art%20movement,satirical%20and%20nonsensical%20in%20nature.>

<sup>2</sup> In this essay, the use of 'iconography' will be used in a broad sense to denote the subject matter of a painting, rather than used to decipher religious meaning or messages. 'Iconography' will be used in reference to the deeper narrative expressed within and by the imagery.

from those other schools: this paper argues that “America’s first true artistic fraternity”<sup>3</sup> is an invaluable tool in analyzing and mapping the course of the American empire through commentary on and representation of the sociopolitical events of the 19th century.

The Hudson River School spanned roughly from 1825 until 1900<sup>4</sup> meaning that Hudson River School artists were painting across distinct phases of development, from the late “new world” era into one that is more characterized by industrialization, and these elements contributed to and influenced the artists’ relationship with their subject. A survey of over 150 paintings from the school begins to reveal patterns and themes shared between canvases and across time. I argue that there are three broad categories into which a large quantity of Hudson River School paintings fall, and it is these categories that will provide a framework in which a more comprehensive understanding of the Hudson River School and its artists can exist, including commentary on the sociopolitical and environmental context of America from the 1830s until the Centennial. The first category is characterized by a distinct lack of people or civilization; so the artist is focusing primarily on the wilderness rather than anything else. The second category consists of paintings that have some signs of people and civilization, but not so much that they are the clear focus of the painting, while the third category embodies those paintings where it is obvious that the work is accentuating the depiction of civilization over the representation of nature. These categories are tools to understand the Hudson River School and facilitate a discussion regarding the artists’ relation to the colonization, industrialization, and alienation that was

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<sup>3</sup> Kevin J. Avery, “The Hudson River School,” Metmuseum.org, October 2004, [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hurs/hd\\_hurs.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hurs/hd_hurs.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Avery, “The Hudson River School,” Metmuseum.org, October 2004, [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hurs/hd\\_hurs.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hurs/hd_hurs.htm)

happening in the 19th century. They can help further delineate a holistic comprehension of the Hudson River School.

As this paper inquires about the relationship between artists, their work, and sociopolitical and economic events, it will rely heavily on concepts of alienation, separation, and the 'return', but most importantly will utilize the concept of 'otherness' that is prominent in the work of two eminent psychoanalysts: Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Freud - whose notable theories include those regarding the id, ego, and superego, as well as our libidos - lived and worked in Vienna, Austria in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Fanon was born in the French colony of Martinique and was an influential writer on issues regarding race, colonization, social formation, and language, among other issues<sup>5</sup> in the mid-20th century. Both of these psychoanalysts wrote on the pathologies that plague man, speculating on the causes and citing loss, alienation, and the 'other' as key elements in the development of pathologies such as neurosis or psychosis. In psychoanalysis, the loss of something (most often a facet of an individual's identity) causes alienation: an individual becomes estranged from themselves, and the 'other'<sup>6</sup> is the person, group, or entity that is distinct from them insofar as the 'other' either *is* the thing that they have lost, or *possesses* the thing that they have lost.

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<sup>5</sup> John Drabinski, "Frantz Fanon," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University, March 14, 2019), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/frantz-fanon/>.

<sup>6</sup> For additional reading on what Fanon's conception of the 'other' is, I suggest readers turn to the Introduction and first three chapters ("The Negro and Language," "The Woman of Color and the White Man," and "The Man of Color and the White Woman") of Fanon's book, *Black Skin White Masks* (1967). The book in its entirety will provide the reader with an even more succinct understanding on the 'otherness' that colonized - specifically Black - people are challenged with in the face of colonialism. Further reading on 'otherness' can be found in Peter Gay's *The Freud Reader* (1989), particularly in the Overture ("An Autobiographical Study") and Part Two: The Classic Theory ("Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality").

While Freudian literature provides a more individual account loss and alienation, it is Fanon who presents theories that are more applicable to the thesis of this essay: one of the main topics I am concerned with is colonization (or, most specifically, the colonial process), and Fanonian literature is prepared to analyze 'otherness' in terms of the power structures and dynamics that embody and emerge from colonization.<sup>7</sup> But let it first be noted here that the theories that Fanon wrote do not align exactly with what will be presented in this essay: Fanon was concerned with the effect colonization and a white-centric world had on the oppressed black individual, and wrote from the perspective of an oppressed black individual. This essay expands upon Fanonian concepts of colonization, and borrows and applies his framework to the colonization of a *place*, of an *environment* (as opposed to a group of people), nevertheless, this essay still deals with the damage that white people inflict when they colonize. The psychoanalytic concepts in this essay are Fanonian, but applied in a different context and through a different lens. The circumstances under which 'otherness' and colonization are dissected here are different from the circumstances under which Fanon wrote on 'otherness' and colonization, and most notably, I am a white individual and have never been oppressed by colonization because of my skin color, and so cannot speak to the experience of those who have been colonized. However, concepts regarding the relationship between the 'other' and the self that Fanon illustrates in his work are also useful tools in deciphering events *outside* of the framework that Fanon himself applied them in. So, despite there being dissimilarities between 19th century America and French colonization, as well as differences in *what* exactly the white man is

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<sup>7</sup> These power structures and dynamics revolve around race, value, and resources.

oppressing and colonizing, Fanonian alienation and 'otherness' are supremely beneficial tools in the analysis of the course of the Hudson River School.

### **Psychoanalytic Theories of the 'Other'**

Before delving deeper into the categories and Hudson River School art, I will briefly explain the concepts of the 'other' and how they function in the context of this essay. Both Freud and Fanon's conception of the 'other' are a result of *loss*, so two things are the same until one of those things loses something that the other still has. For Freud, loss occurs most commonly when an individual (namely, a child) begins to understand that something they once thought belonged to them or was a part of their self does not actually belong to them. For example, when a child becomes old enough to understand that their mother is an individual person in and of herself rather than an extension of the child, then the child experiences loss. Similarly, when girls become old enough to realize that they do not have penises and therefore are different and distinct from boys, they experience what Freud calls 'penis envy'. When children are younger, they possess a "sexual theory" that they are equals: "the assumption [is] that all human beings have the same (male) form of genital."<sup>8</sup> However, when children reach a certain age, they come to the realization that they are not the same: the little boy has something that the little girl *lacks*. Or, more precisely, the boy possesses something that the girl *used to* have, as far as she is concerned, something that she has lost. As soon as the girl becomes aware of this fundamental difference, she then seeks a return to the penis, to a time when she *was not* set apart from the other.

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<sup>8</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (New York, NY: Norton & Company, 1995), 271.

Fanon's theory of alienation and 'otherness' is also concerned with loss (but not a loss that exactly parallels Freud's conception), because in the process of colonization, white individuals *take* from black individuals their sense of self, their language, their community and culture, and ultimately their personhood. The black individual is forced to adopt ways of life and identification that are not their own, but rather belong to white individuals. A fundamental example that Fanon focuses on is language - "Every dialect is a way of thinking... And the fact that the newly returned Negro [from France] adopts a language different from that of the group which he was born into is evidence of a dislocation, a separation."<sup>9</sup>

The 'other' that I talk about in this essay does not exactly result from loss in the same way that both Freud and Fanon distinctly characterize the 'other,' but rather is a mix of the two. For the purpose of this essay, the 'other' is nature - untamed wilderness - which is distinct from man in a way that is similar to how the mother is distinct from the child in Freudian literature - the mother never really was a part of the child just as nature is not a part of man, at least, nature is not a part of man at this juncture in human history; an argument could be made that hundreds or thousands of years ago, nature and man were one in the same. This relationship between man and nature and what has been lost is different from Fanon's conception of loss, where the thing that is lost did in fact once *belong* to the person who has lost it (i.e. personhood is taken from black individuals). However, in this essay, the manner in which the loss of nature occurs is more similar to Fanon's theory of loss. While Freud writes that the child loses the mother or that the little girl 'loses' the

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<sup>9</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York, NY: Grove Press, 1967), 25.

penis as she grows older, even though it might feel to the child like these things are being *taken* from them, this loss simply happens during the course of life: no person or agent is acting in a way to remove the mother or the penis from a child. This does not hold true for Fanon, however, who is nearly exclusively concerned about the loss that occurs when something is seized from someone by an entity (be it a person, persons, or society) with intentional agency.

For Fanon, in a colonized world, the black individual is 'othered' from the white individual *because* the black individual had their personhood taken from them by the white man, and in this paper I analyze the degree to which the colonization and industrialization of the United States 'others' nature from man as it is taken from him. In addition to all that has already been established regarding the psychoanalytic work that will be done in this essay, I must reiterate that the colonization this essay deals with is specifically of nature (I do not mean to suggest that the colonization of a place can be separated from the colonization of the peoples *of that place*, but that discussion is beyond the scope of this particular essay), while Fanon writes on the colonization of people: oppressed nature will not be as reactionary to colonization as oppressed people are. The responses to colonization that Fanon encouraged or witnessed will not be the same responses that will be present in this essay.

### **Thomas Cole's *Course of Empire***

Now that a foundation for an understanding of psychoanalytic concepts in relation to the Hudson River School has been laid, this essay will describe the groundwork for the three groups as valid categorization tools into which a large amount of Hudson River

School paintings fit. As previously mentioned, the three categories are 'paintings without signs of people or civilization', 'paintings with some signs of people and civilization', and 'paintings that feature people and civilization as the focus'. Interestingly, these categories align nicely with the first three paintings in a series entitled *Course of Empire* (1833-1836) by Thomas Cole (1801-1848), the painter who is often designated as the founder of the Hudson River School<sup>10</sup>. This series consists of five paintings that depict, as the name suggests, the course of an empire, at least, the course of the European and Western-centric empire, which is the only empire Cole would have witnessed.<sup>11</sup>

This series acts as Cole's warning to the new America, cautioning the new country against following the path that a number of European countries took, including England, where the artist was born. Cole watched as industrialization grew and spread in England, and as anti-industrial movements arose in response to the rapidly changing environment,<sup>12</sup> and thus used *Course of Empire* as an outlet to showcase the allegory of the empire. *Course of Empire* is a cyclical series "in which a civilization appears, matures, and collapses."<sup>13</sup> Cole paints destruction and desolation as final products of the course of empire, in fact, naming the final two paintings in the series *Destruction* and *Desolation*. Cole sees the empire decline into a state of corruption and does not want that same pattern to be repeated when

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<sup>10</sup> Avery, "The Hudson River School," Metmuseum.org, October 2004, [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hurs/hd\\_hurs.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hurs/hd_hurs.htm).

<sup>11</sup> Despite attempts to Americanize himself, "Cole was born in Bolton-le-Moors... in the English county of Lancashire... in the early years of the industrial revolution," and so would have been exposed not only to industrialization, but also to anti-industrial movements, including groups such as the Luddites. (Tim Barringer, "The Englishness of Thomas Cole" in *The Cultured Canvas* (ed. Nancy Siegel), (University of New Hampshire Press, 2011), 6. The series of paintings is in the collection of the New-York Historical Society and may be viewed online at: <https://digitalcollections.nyhistory.org/>.

<sup>12</sup> Barringer, "The Englishness of Thomas Cole," 6.

<sup>13</sup> "The Course of Empire: The Consummation of Empire," New-York Historical Society, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://emuseum.nyhistory.org/objects/54911/the-course-of-empire-the-consummation-of-empire>.

settlers moved westward.<sup>14</sup> The artist even depicts the taming of nature in such a way that it serves the empire and emperor,<sup>15</sup> a sentiment that is likewise found in other Hudson River School paintings. *Course of Empire* is a useful tool for analyzing and categorizing Hudson River School paintings because of the similarities between the first three paintings and phases of this series and a significant quantity of paintings by other artists in the school. It is not my intention to claim that the Hudson River School paintings that fit within the categories that are in part defined by *Course of Empire* are making the same sort of dire warning that Cole's series does: the first three *Course of Empire* paintings are simply tools used in an attempt for a more cohesive understanding of the Hudson River School.

Just as *Course of Empire* is a useful tool in this psychoanalytic examination of the Hudson River School, because of its acclaimed status as a series painted by a very well-known artist, these five paintings have been the subject of numerous contextual analyses. The works of Thomas Cole are keystones in literature revolving around the Hudson River School of art, especially this series which includes such rich iconography and allegorical elements. Furthermore, the series is uncannily relevant in terms of mapping out the trajectory of an empire, be it the European empire, or the American empire, placing *Course of Empire* at the forefront of discussions regarding the intersection between the Hudson River School and discourse on the historical and socio-economic state of America.

The first three paintings of *Course of Empire* are *The Savage State*, *The Arcadian or Pastoral State*, and *The Consummation of Empire*. For the purposes of mapping these three paintings onto the categories which I have identified, *The Savage State* relates to paintings

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<sup>14</sup> "The Course of Empire: The Consummation of Empire," New-York Historical Society, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://emuseum.nyhistory.org/objects/54911/the-course-of-empire-the-consummation-of-empire>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

that have no signs of civilization or people, *The Arcadian or Pastoral State* can be associated with paintings that depict some signs of people and civilization, while *The Consummation of Empire* correlates to paintings whose focus is people and civilization. A brief but necessary description of *The Savage State* reveals a landscape that is truly untamed by society. There are wild trees and bushes that twist and creep in all directions. The sky is split vertically; on the right side, dark clouds expel rain and mist through the hills and into the ocean, while on the left side, the dusk (or dawn) sky breaks through the clouds. The tumultuous relationship between the storm and the calm centers around a seaside mountain. In both the mid- and foreground there are people part of a hunting party who chase the wildlife and who are clothed by little more than loincloths. The people run from the left side of the painting, headed towards the right, from the lighter side of the canvas to the darker side - a subtle metaphor Cole no doubt intended to further allude to the pitfalls of an empire. In the same way that the tree trunks twist and the branches writhe in the wind so too the limbs of the hunters flail as they rush through the brush. In the distance there is a cluster of what appear to be nomadic dwellings that in no way impose upon or settle the land in the same way that colonial architecture does. Neither the hunters nor their dwellings suggest a dissonance between man and nature, but rather hints at a state where man is a part of nature, coexisting with one another because they are the same. A deeper analysis of the interaction between man and nature in *The Savage State* will come in the following pages. Henceforth, the first category (*The Savage State* and those paintings without signs of people or civilization) will be referred to as the 'New World' category, named for its distinct lack of

civilization. The term 'New World' serves to bring attention to the fact that only untouched and unblemished nature is represented in these paintings.<sup>16</sup>

The second category (*The Arcadian/Pastoral State* and those Hudson River School paintings that have some signs of civilization) will be referred to as the 'Arcadian' stage in the subsequent analysis. Cole's *Arcadian/Pastoral State* shows the same landscape as *The Savage State*, but this time with grassy meadows rather than unkempt greenery. Some of the gnarled trees from the first painting are now cut down in the pastoral scene, their stumps tucked away on the fringes of the canvas. The storm clouds have dissipated, leaving behind a mellow sky, the people who stand in the fore- and midground mill about rather than run. They also wear clothes and seem more interested in enjoying themselves than anything else. The stone structure in the midground replaces the earlier tents and brings with it an aura of permanence. Additionally, the herd of sheep that graze in a meadow are a further indication of the settlement that is taking place in the *Arcadian/Pastoral State*. The domestication of animals and the cultivation of the land and flora illustrates the step away from the 'New World', representing one of the first stages of the colonial process.

*Consummation* and those paintings where civilization appears to be the focus (paintings that constitute the third category) from here on will be referred to as

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<sup>16</sup> The reader may find the title 'New World' a bit ironic, considering Cole's *Savage State* does in fact represent people and some signs of civilization, rather than a completely unmarred landscape, which is the criteria I hold for the other Hudson River School paintings that will be grouped into this category. But, I argue, the sentiment is there. Cole represents people in a state that he and others at the time would have considered to be 'savage' and untouched by humanity (as most white colonizers think of any native peoples), and therefore separate from the Empire. The people represented in *The Savage State* seem to be, at their core, closer to nature and the wilderness than they are to the traditional colonial civilization that is exemplified in Cole's Empire. Additionally, this ever-growing footnote is an opportunity to remind the reader that while there are striking and significant similarities between the categories which I have identified and the first three paintings in *Course of Empire*, there are still notable differences as well. The mapping of categories onto Cole's paintings is accurate, but not perfect.

'Settlement'. *Consummation* is completely characterized by quarried, cut, and polished stone: huge buildings in the classical Roman style dominate the fore-, mid-, and background, standing taller than the mountain in the background (the mountain is a feature that is constant in all five of the *Course of Empire* series, enabling Cole to create a continuity between the scenes).<sup>17</sup> Long gone are the trees and wild brush, even the pastures and meadows have disappeared. They are replaced by a man-made lagoon, boats, colonnades, arches, bridges, fountains, silk draperies, and hordes of people. The empire, at this stage, appears to be prosperous, hence the title 'consummation'. The only greenery the viewer sees are manicured trees that line the buildings and lush ferns that sprout from pots and vases; the vegetation now serves an ornate purpose. Likewise, the only animals that Cole painted in *Consummation* are those that now exist to serve the city. In the foreground, an elephant-drawn chariot pulls a man in rich, red robes, who Cole referred to as a 'conqueror',<sup>18</sup> and horses carry what look like soldiers returning from a successful conquest. The very existence of flora and fauna revolves around humans in this painting, undoubtedly taking the backseat as the magnificent civilization steals the spotlight. The decadence of the empire at this stage is unsustainable, however, and while the scene is "Vividly graphic as a scene of glory, all is yet suggestive of catastrophe, as the dead luminous calm is often suggestive of the shadowy tempest."<sup>19</sup> The fall of the empire is the key element of Cole's allegory, and is represented in both the fourth and fifth paintings of

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<sup>17</sup> Just as the mountain is the only permanent element in this series, the Hudson River is a constant feature throughout the Hudson River School categories, working to provide some continuity to a mosaic of paintings.

<sup>18</sup> "The Fine Arts". *Knickerbocker, or, New York Monthly Mag.* 8: 629–630. 1836. hdl:2027/uc1.b2953217

<sup>19</sup> Noble, Louis Legrand (1853). *The Course of Empire: Voyage of Life, and Other Pictures of Thomas Cole, N. A., with Selections from His Letters and Miscellaneous Writings: Illustrative of His Life, Character, and Genius.* Cornish, Lamport. p. 233.

the series, but there are no two parallel categories within the Hudson River School that I have distinguished.

### **The 'New World' in Hudson River School Paintings**

The paintings in the 'New World' category are characterized by boatless rivers, dense forests, untrimmed greenery, dark and threatening clouds, or soft sunlight. There are no roads, no cattle, no humans and no technology.<sup>20</sup> Sanford R. Gifford's (1823-1880) *A Gorge in the Mountains (Kauterskill Clove)* (1862) depicts an almost birds-eye view of a deep gorge, the forest that carpets the hills glows with the setting sun and is untouched by man. The forest extends far into the horizon, giving the viewer a sense of the vast space that Gifford paints; even in such a panoramic representation of the mountains, the landscape remains pristine, adding to the perception that this is a painting of a new world. There is the same untamed wilderness in this painting that there is in Cole's *The Savage State*. Another painting that falls within this category is Joseph Antonio Hekking's (1830-1903) *Autumn Landscape with Deer and Ducks on River* (n.d.), where the artist depicts the wilderness removed from man and civilization, and where the wildlife goes about undisturbed. *Woodland Interior*, an 1880 painting by Benjamin Champney (1817-1907) likewise showcases nature lit up by the sun, but instead of the panoramic view that Gifford offers us, with Champney's painting the viewer gets a closer look at the details. In *Woodland Interior* there is a small rocky stream surrounded by trees that are speckled with

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<sup>20</sup> What I mean to express when I use the terms 'technology' or 'technological advancements' is *not* what the popular, contemporary understanding of 'technology' means (so, not an allusion to electronic devices such as phones and computers), but is rather a reference to any tool that was invented to make life easier, and that subsequently *did* make life easier. The term 'technology' and 'technological advancements' will henceforth mean any advancement that helps man harness natural resources or that assists man in accomplishing a goal.

the shadows from leaves, exuding an air of tranquility. Gifford, Hekking, and Champney give us representations of nature that exudes serenity: the scenes are peaceful and quiet.

Other representations of nature that also fall into the first category include paintings by Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902) and Hermann Fuechsel (1833-1915), entitled *Domes of Yosemite* (1867) and *Kaaterskill and Haines Falls* (1865-1875), respectively. These paintings, while still depicting everyday landscapes of waterfalls, forests, and animals, emanate a different mood than Gifford and Hekking's paintings do: these paintings emphasize the grandeur and authoritativeness of nature. Bierstadt's depiction of Yosemite features a mountainside cliff that towers so high that it does not even fully fit on the canvas, and the water that falls from top left corner of the canvas must travel so far to the ground that upon impact, there is enough mist to obscure the forest behind it. Dark clouds form at the top of the painting, giving the scene the subtlest feeling of foreboding, and an undeniable sense of power. Likewise, Fuechsel's painting is misty, with layers of dark, silhouetted cliffs stepping up into what may be the dusky sky or yet another tree-covered mountain behind. Unlike Cole's first *Course of Empire* painting, there are no people represented in these four Hudson River School paintings, and there is no representation of humans in *any* of the Hudson River School paintings that have been categorized into the 'New World' type of painting.

In *The Savage State*, a lone man runs in the foreground, evidently part of the hunting party seen through the brush, but this representation of people is likely the closest to depicting nature and people as one. In Cole's painting, he has shown these human figures to be congruent and harmonious with the natural environment around them. Even though there is already a distinction being made between man and nature, *The Savage State* shows

that line at its thinnest. Cole makes this subtle distinction between man and nature alongside the faint suggestion that the painted people are on a path towards a developed civilization, but are still quite a distance away from the type of civilization Cole is trying to warn against. This representation of man and nature shows them as being more similar than different, such that man and nature can still be identified with one another. Just as the wolves and dogs chase the deer, the men also chase the deer. Man is within nature, and nature is within man. There is no 'other' in this painting. There is just man and nature together, rather than man acting in one way that is opposite nature. This painting is pre-colonization and industrialization, before humankind's technological advancements place nature and man at odds with each other, deepening the chasm between them.

Despite the fact that there are people in Cole's *Savage State* while the paintings in this category do *not* depict people, both representations depict a world before or separate from industrialization and colonization. The paintings in the 'New World' category are set apart from the mechanization and development that was happening in Europe at the time, and even ignore aspects of industrialization that are happening in America at the time these paintings were being executed (industrialization was well underway in the Eastern and Midwestern parts of the United States by 1840, and by 1870 - not even 10 years after completion of the four Hudson River School paintings mentioned here - "the East and the Midwest constituted the American Manufacturing Belt,"<sup>21</sup> "... a series of regional industrial systems... as one large industrial district"<sup>22</sup>). And because these paintings of the new world

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<sup>21</sup> David R. Meyer, "The Roots of American Industrialization, 1790-1860," EHnet, accessed April 27, 2022, <https://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-roots-of-american-industrialization-1790-1860/>.

<sup>22</sup> Gordon M. Winder, "The North American Manufacturing Belt in 1880: A Cluster of Regional Industrial Systems or One Large Industrial District?" *Economic Geography* 75, no. 1 (1999): 71-92. <https://doi.org/10.2307/144463>.

(including Cole's *Savage State*) do not show the divide between nature and man, and because there is no representation of the 'other' or of alienation, I argue that it is the colonial process that 'others'. In *The Savage State*, the absence of the colonial processes means that man and nature are still one. It is when man begins to exploit nature and its resources that it becomes different, separate from us, and then it is 'othered'.

These observations are important to consider as this essay begins to take into account what Fanonian and Freudian psychoanalysis means in relation to the 'New World' category. The artists of the Hudson River School who have paintings that fall into this first category situate themselves in relation to the 'other' in a unique way: they chose to not illustrate the divide between man and nature that the colonial process has created, but rather chose to either find places that are untouched by civilization or erase any evidence of civilization from their compositions. Some of the 'New World' paintings were completed early enough so that the settlement of the land was not as widespread, especially those paintings that were completed along the upper parts of the Hudson River, when there were not commercial steamboats that ran frequently,<sup>23</sup> but it is also the case that artists' later paintings will fit into the 'New World' category better than some of their earlier paintings. I suggest that such choices indicate a desire to return to nature and the untouched landscape.<sup>24</sup> The return is an important psychoanalytic concept, because this signifies a

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<sup>23</sup> Most of the 'New World' paintings that were completed before the commercialization of the steamboat (which happened in the 1840s, according to "Competition: 1824-1860: Better Boats and 'Cut Throat' Competition," New York State Library, accessed May 4, 2022, <https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/mssc/steamboats/competition.htm>) were paintings by Thomas Cole.

<sup>24</sup> Some artists I have in mind who exemplify this statement are Benjamin Champney and William McDougal Hart (1832-1894). Champney has paintings (*Autumn View of the Intervale, Mt. Chocorua & Moat Mountain, White Mountains*, 1859 and *Harvest Scene, Conway Valley*, 1870) that belong to the 'Arcadian' and 'Settlement' categories, yet predate his painting that was categorized into 'New World'. Hart likewise has at least four paintings that are characteristic of the 'Arcadian' category that were completed before the 'New World' painting. These later representations of 'New World' indicate that the artist is executing these paintings as

loss, and with loss comes the 'other'.<sup>25</sup> Any indication of a return implies that there is already an established 'other', and there *is* already an established 'other', because of the time that these painters were living in.

Cole's *Savage State* was able to depict people without emphasizing the 'other' because his inventive iconography is just that: inventive. The people that Cole represents in that painting are removed from the colonization, industry, civilization, and *people of* Europe, removed from what is understood to constitute the empire. This is why *The Savage State* and the other Hudson River School paintings belong to the same category, despite the differences in subject matter. The 'New World' Hudson River School paintings do not have the capacity to represent people in the same connotation that Cole did, mainly because the people that the Hudson River School represents are those people who *are* characteristic of the 'empire' and of the colonial processes, and adding these elements to their paintings would have tainted the 'untouched' element that their paintings have. I do not think that the artists who have artwork in the 'New World' category excluded representations of people with psychoanalytic 'others' in mind, but there are still uncanny similarities between Fanonian literature and this genre of Hudson River School paintings.

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more of a reactive response to the industrialization and development that was happening, rather than an unintentional illustration of the landscape.

<sup>25</sup> The return signifies loss because the individual who returns or who has the desire to return to something evidently has a longing for that thing that they would not have if they possessed the thing. The girl would not desire a return to her early childhood (to a time where she was not aware of her anatomical and metaphorical differences from her male counterparts) if she still 'possessed' a penis. Black individuals would not desire whiteness if they had not been stripped of their personhood. The 'other' is inherently part of loss too, as mentioned at the beginning of this essay, because loss means that an individual no longer has something that a different individual still has, making a distinction between those two individuals. This distinction is what makes the two individuals 'othered' from each other (specifically, the individual who has lost the thing that the other possesses *is* the 'other').

Especially considering the state of the world and the widespread and ever-growing popularity of technology, it is no surprise that there were people who longed for a pristine world. In a world where the colonial process is underway (the Hudson River in the 18th and 19th centuries certainly belongs to this world), nature has already been placed at odds with humans - nature and mankind are 'othered', *as a result of* the colonial process, which seeks to exploit all things and harness any sort of resource to serve the purposes of the empire. But, as with any other sort of loss, there is a desire to return to the thing that an individual has lost, which is what is seen with the paintings in the 'New World' category. There are differences between paintings *within* this category that must be addressed, that have already been briefly mentioned. Some artists (such as Gifford and Hekking) paint the new world as sedated in a way, where the artists' goal appears to be to express their contentment with nature. These works that show a quiet, undisturbed stream running through a forest, or that depict a deer standing in a shallow part of a glassy lake in the early morning express a more simple longing for an undisturbed and peaceful wilderness.

On the other hand, there are artists such as Bierstadt and Fuechsel that, while they may also be expressing a longing for untamed wilderness, go one step further by painting their landscapes as having power and authority, ultimately acknowledging the intense forces that exist in and constitute the natural world. Sandra Phillips and Linda Weintraub talk about paintings like this in *Charmed Places: Hudson River Artists and Their Houses, Studios, and Vistas*. They focus on Cole, explaining that the artists "purposefully turned to incorporating notations of the human figure in the context of the wilderness, emphasizing

the idea of the vulnerability of the former to the immense power of the latter."<sup>26</sup> This analysis might not be specifically about *The Savage State*, especially because Cole does not appear to juxtapose man and nature in this painting, but the idea of the vulnerability of man in the face of the power of nature is certainly a theme that can be picked out in other 'New World' paintings, even those that do not feature people.

Paintings like this demonstrate the artist's reverence and recognition of the dynamism nature possesses. This power further demonstrates that nature is in fact the 'other', sometimes artists who depict the landscape in this way do it in such a way that nature almost seems to be a part of the divine world. Interestingly, Freudian literature might have something to add to this consideration of the divine representation of nature. The divine, namely God, are, in Freudian terms, substitutes for the father, or, at the very least, occupy in some sense the same area in an individual's psyche that the father does.<sup>27</sup> Longing for the father (longing for God, depiction of the divine in certain Hudson River School paintings) is a theme that is common in Freudian theories, including the Oedipal complex, wherein the child desires a parent (although this theory is often sexualized, that is not the only reading of this theory: desire is not necessarily sexual, and in this instance can refer to the fact that the parent has something that the child needs or wants). The Oedipal complex is more intricate than what has been explained thus far, but in general, the child desires a parent (often it is the mother, but there is plenty of room within this theory for

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<sup>26</sup> Sandra S. Phillips and Linda Weintraub, *Charmed Places: Hudson River Artists and Their Houses, Studios, and Vistas*, (Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, NY, 1988), 45.

<sup>27</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Schreber Case* (Psychoanalytic Remarks on an Autobiographically Written Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides), trans. Andrew Webber (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 39.

the child to desire the father) because the parent is the 'other'. Representations of the divine and of God are representations of the 'other'.

### **Hudson River School Paintings as 'Arcadia'**

The artist's relationship to the 'other' manifests a bit differently in 'Arcadia' because these paintings do not exclude people or civilization, but rather depict those things in ways so that they appear a natural part of the environment. Of course, the landscape has changed too; rather than wild and thick underbrush and dense forests, the 'Arcadian' category of paintings boasts serene meadows, dirt paths, and trees whose presence now appears to have a *function* - to provide shade to the cattle and pastoralists. In the Hudson River School paintings that are 'Arcadian', the artists do not as commonly employ the use of light to imply the divine, nor do they paint dark clouds to indicate the power and authority of nature. Of the five paintings I will discuss that represent this 'Arcadian' category, there are only two that depict clouds and light in a way that is reminiscent of the 'New World' divine 'other': Robert Havell Jr.'s (1793- 1878) *View of the Hudson from Tarrytown Heights* (1842) and Bierstadt's *View on the Hudson* (1870).

These two paintings are both riverscapes with bits of meadows and pastures in the foreground, and the composition is horizontally split, with the sky dominating half or more than half of the canvas. Both Havell Jr. and Bierstadt show darker clouds with breaks in them, and from these breaks shines a soft light, illuminating the hills and trees. Bierstadt's view of the Hudson features a cluster of trees on a near-manicured grassy hill that overlook a river that is speckled with boats - the trees stand far enough away from each other so that a person could easily walk through them. This detail stands in stark contrast to the

paintings in the 'New World' category, where the trees were so dense that sometimes even sunlight couldn't shine through. There are no people in this Bierstadt painting, unlike Cole's *Arcadian or Pastoral State*, but the boats on the river show the artist's conscious inclusion of signs of civilization.

Havell Jr.'s painting shows even more signs of settlement, including both a river full of boats as well as buildings that stand at the head of lawns. Notably, a large cream colored building faces the viewer and stands out in the landscape, just like Cole's Stonehenge-like structure, which catches the setting sun and reflects an off-white, creamish color. Havell's painting depicts a colonial process stage that is further along than the arcadian stage that is seen in Cole's series. Havell's painting barely shows untamed forest, but rather highlights far-spaced trees on the grounds of the estate, evidently beautified according to societal standards. The trees conform to a pattern that certainly is man-made. There are dark clouds here, and sunlight shines through and onto the estate, but rather than this light being used to hint at the divine 'other' like some of the 'New World' paintings, it is directed at showing settlement in a favorable light. The sun that shines on the house and its grounds makes the developed land seem more desirable than the land that is wild and cast in shadows.

There are other 'Arcadian' paintings that do not utilize light to send a message to the viewer. For example, a painting that fits well in this category is David Johnson's (1827-1908) 1867 painting entitled *West Point from Fort Putnam*, wherein the Hudson River and the surrounding mountains are painted in an autumnal setting. Some people sit in the trees in the lower right corner, and there is a stone structure on the right border of the painting that acts as a repoussoir. There are boats that traverse the river, and houses or other

buildings that flank the river's edge. On the right side of the river, the artist painted a larger building that has smoke coming out of it, possibly a mill or factory of some sort, while the left side has a row of trees that cuts across a pasture. Johnson illustrates civilization here but does not yet show the industrialization that was beginning to take place. The last two paintings that exemplify the 'Arcadian' category do not show the Hudson River, but are more focused on the pastoral scenes that were present in the 19th century.

Alfred Bellows' (1829-1883) *Down to the Brooks* (1863) and Dewitt Clinton Boutelle's (1769-1828) *Sunset* (n.d.) both show scenes of cattle being herded and looked after by one or two people. The domestication in these scenes make it easy to successfully map 'Arcadian' paintings onto Cole's *The Arcadian or Pastoral Stage*. The development is not too far along (there are not any drastic signs of industrialization), and yet the worlds that are painted here are very different from the scenes of wilderness that are seen in the 'New World'. In 'Arcadia', there is rarely a representation of dense, dark forest and overgrown brush, unless it is being depicted to juxtapose and highlight the other pastoral elements in the painting. All of the trees stand alone for the most part - they are individuated, standing as distinct entities, rather than crowded together into an impermeable wall of greenery - which makes their presence in the composition of the 'Arcadian' paintings appear to be more decorative, a stylistic decision intended to balance the arrangement, whereas trees in the 'New World' are massed together and represent nature in as more than simple ornamental features of the landscape. There are more man-made technologies present in the scenes, including boats, houses and bridges in the 'Arcadian' paintings as well, further delineating the colonial processes that were underway in America.

From the 'New World' category to the 'Arcadian' category, nature went from being depicted as wild and imposing, standing in opposition to the colonial process and development that was happening in the world,<sup>28</sup> to being represented as tame, pleasant, and utilitarian. The land changed from wild bushes, rocks, shrubs and plants into places that could be used to grow food or to feed animals, or, even for people to laze. The trees went from being gnarled and twisted, contorted and frightening to being a place to relax in the shade by a stream. The colonial process relies heavily on taking things and changing those things to fit the needs and the agenda of the colonizer, which is exactly what the viewer sees as parts of nature take on a functional role in 'Arcadia'. There is a sense that the colonial process and the development of America is both conquering nature and forcing nature to assimilate.<sup>29</sup> This concept of assimilation is another intersection between the art and the psychoanalysis in this paper: assimilation plays a large role in Fanon's conception of colonization.

Assimilation is identified as Fanon's first stage of colonization by Scott Morrison in his essay "Defining Hybridity: Frantz Fanon and Post-Colonialism in Louise Erdrich's *Shadow Tag*".<sup>30</sup> And by Fanon himself, assimilation is perceived as the first stage of the development of the colonized and national identity: "the colonized intellectual proves he

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<sup>28</sup> Although nature was never really *depicted* in the 'New World' paintings as clashing with the development that was happening in America or Europe, historical context tells us that this development was nevertheless happening.

<sup>29</sup> By this, I mean to emphasize that nature, under this stage of the colonial process, is being made to function according to the end goals of man. Nature has some degree of agency (in a limited sense of the term - of course I am not arguing that nature has a conscious will or the ability to reason and make decisions in the same way that people do), and therefore can be 'made' to do things, or prohibited from doing the things it 'wants'. The wildness and freedom that nature once had are gone (it can no longer grow just anywhere), and its resources are now being harnessed by man - arcadian nature resembles man because it is at this state being *shaped* by man.

<sup>30</sup> Scott Morrison, "Defining Hybridity: Frantz Fanon and Post-Colonialism in Louise Erdrich's *Shadow Tag*," (2014) *The Pegasus Review: UCF Undergraduate Research Journal (URJ)*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 1 , Article 5.

has assimilated the colonizer's culture... The inspiration is European."<sup>31</sup> Nature obviously is not an agent in the same way that a person is, and therefore cannot 'prove' anything, let alone prove that it has attempted to assimilate, so the reader must understand these differences between Fanon's unmodified account of assimilation and what assimilation means when it is being applied in the context of the Hudson River School categories. To find a common ground between these two interpretations of the concept of assimilation, take the following to be a broad definition: to assimilate is to shape something, or to make one thing like another. I understand Fanon's use of 'assimilation' in the quote above to refer to the absorption of an individual or a culture into another culture (via shaping said individual or culture to be more like another), in an effort to merge the two cultures, or to merge the individual with the culture. On the other hand, 'assimilation' in this essay is used more in the sense that nature is being taken in, changed, and shaped by mankind.

As previously established, nature does not have the same sort of agency in this situation that the colonized individual has, but it is unnecessary for the oppressed to have agency to see that the colonizer, the oppressor, requires that the thing they are colonizing be like them. The 'Arcadian' category demonstrates this process of conformity and absorption. There is acknowledgement of the 'other', of the divide and difference between man and nature, but it is brief and ephemeral, even furtive. The categories have quickly gone from the 'New World' where there was no representation of nature and mankind together, and so no acknowledgment of the 'other' or the divide between the two, to a category that recognizes (albeit subconscious) this divide and is already moving onto

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<sup>31</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth: Frantz Fanon*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2004), 158-159.

representations that ignore it. There is no depiction of the clash between two different things. While the wilderness is no longer wild in the 'Arcadian' category, it is not completely replaced yet by man-made structures, unlike what is seen in the third and final category of the Hudson River School: 'Settlement'.

### **'Settlement' and *Consummation***

*A Pic-Nic on the Hudson* (1863) by Thomas Prichard Rossiter (1818-1871) is a painting that falls into the 'Settlement' category while at the same time providing a nice transition to this category from a more arcadian representation of the Hudson River. This painting is more of a portrait than a landscape, owing to the fact that there are nearly twenty individuals (wealthy white individuals, at that) that lounge in the foreground. All of them strike a pose, while some look off into the distance or talk to another figure, others stare directly at the artist, returning the viewer's gaze. This returning of the gaze is not a radical challenge, like the gaze of French painter Edouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863) is a radical challenge, but it still gives the viewer a sense of discomfort, almost as if the figures in *A Pic-Nic on the Hudson* are establishing their presence and their dominance, telling the viewer with their eyes that the land they sprawl on is theirs now. The returned gaze suggests the oppressors' claim of land ownership. Even in the body positioning of the figures - especially the posture of the men - the viewer can see that the colonial process has moved along one step further: these figures obviously believe the land upon which they picnic is their land. Long gone are the representations of a powerful nature, and this painting does not even recall the paintings with cattle, boats, and meadows that were characteristic of 'Arcadian'. There are still some trees, and grass, and the artist included the

Hudson River with its steep, rolling hills in the background, but the outfits that the figures don are high class, completely impractical and removed from nature. The focus of this particular painting (and of most paintings in this 'Settlement' category) is the people and their civilization.

Another valuable 'Arcadian' to 'Settlement' transition painting comes from Albertus del Orient Browere (1814-1887), entitled *Catskill* (1849), which illustrates a well-worn dirt road that skirts the edge of the river, with a white house and fence on the other side of the road. There are a few trees, but they are lonesome, and if the viewer looks past the boats on the river to the opposite bank, they'll see that it boasts meadows, roads, and other buildings. This land is becoming more and more developed, yet the two paintings that have been categorized into 'Settlement' so far do not quite exemplify what is seen in Cole's *Consummation of Empire*. Cole's painting is busy and bustling with people, riches, ships, buildings, and artifacts, and this is reflected in a painting by Jim M. Evans (active ca. 1850-1870) of Poughkeepsie, New York (the painting goes by the same name as the city). *Poughkeepsie, New York* (n.d.) shows an east-facing view of Poughkeepsie - a city that was once prominent in the Hudson Valley - with the Hudson River in the foreground with no less than six boats on it, some sailboats and some steam powered. The midground features the city, with its crowds of houses, buildings, factories, and churches. There are no doubt more man-made elements in this painting than there are natural features of the environment, in fact, the only trees that Evans paints are those that seemingly belong to an orchard, surrounding a mansion that sits upon a hill. This is the painting that best embodies the 'consummation' aspect of the 'Settlement' category. *Poughkeepsie, New York* is a visual

representation of the peak of the colonial processes, where man has taken over and is exploiting the natural resources for self-serving purposes.

Exploitation of the land, and of nature is a common element in both this stage of the colonial processes, as well as in the 'Settlement' category. Winslow Homer's (1836-1910) *Hudson River* (1892) depicts a logger knee-deep in a river, pushing cut and striped trees. Homer ignores the details of the trees in the background (notably, the trees that are still standing), in fact, Homer does not even paint trees at all, he merely adds some floating branch shapes onto a dark green background. The painting instead brings its audience's attention to the logged trees. This is representation of mankind utilizing the resources of nature seems to be a sort of celebration, more of a genre painting<sup>32</sup> than a landscape. In *Hudson River* (1892), consummation is being depicted as destruction, just like Cole's *Consummation* had glaring hints of the empire's downfall and destruction. Whether or not Homer intended to warn against logging or other abusive behaviors (as Cole meant for his *Consummation* to be a warning amid the celebration of the empire) is not clear,<sup>33</sup> but nevertheless, both *Consummation* and *Hudson River* represent their subjects as oblivious to the damage that they are inflicting upon themselves and the environment. The 'other' faces serious exploitation and completely lacks independence from the endeavors of mankind.

The exploitation on behalf of the oppressor is represented in a few other Hudson River School paintings in the 'Settlement' category, but these representations do not leave

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<sup>32</sup> Genre paintings are scenes which depict everyday life (Tate, "Genre Painting," Tate, accessed May 5, 2022, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/g/genre-painting>).

<sup>33</sup> Even though Homer's works are not as transparently anti-industrialization as Cole's *Consummation* is, other paintings by Homer do suggest a pro-nature agenda, focusing on the relationship between man and nature ("Winslow Homer: A Post Civil War Vision of the Adirondacks," The evolution of art throughout Adirondack History - Winslow Homer - Hamilton College, accessed May 15, 2022, <https://courses.hamilton.edu/the-evolution-of-art-throughout-adk-history/winslow-homer>).

the audience wondering if the exploitation is being celebrated by the artist. *Foundry [Old Smelter]* (1876) by Hugh Jones Bolton<sup>34</sup> (1848-1927) depicts a semi-dilapidated building with a long smokestack that reaches towards the dark gathering clouds. Although there is no smoke that emanates from this particular smokestack in the foreground, there is a tower of smoke that rises from an unknown place, obscured behind the hills. This is not the same type of consummation that Evans shows in *Poughkeepsie, New York*, but through the presence of the well-used foundry, it is made known to the viewer that settlement, development, and the exploitation of natural resources are nonetheless occurring. This painting, along with Edith Wilkinson Cook's (active 1851-1875) *Golden Landscape* (1867) - a painting which portrays a field with no signs of civilization other than the remaining stumps from a cleared forest - have been categorized into 'Settlement', but are paintings that showcase the movement into different category, a different stage of Cole's empire. However, there are not enough Hudson River School paintings that depict this shift from consummation to destruction to comprise a fourth category, but I want to make it clear to the reader that there are paintings in the 'Settlement' category that suggest a transformation from 'Settlement' into something more sinister.

Consummation and 'Settlement' are similar to the 'Arcadia' regarding the Fanonian analysis, insofar as they both provide a large quantity of paintings that represent the assimilation stage of colonization. In fact, because the majority of the 'Settlement' paintings describe the development of the Hudson River Valley, this category seems like it is the peak of assimilation, the end result, whereas 'Arcadia' illustrates the assimilation process.

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<sup>34</sup> Bolton has multiple paintings that depict the same old foundry, including *Old Smelter* (1870). The subject matter, perspective, and palette are similar enough between *Old Smelter* (1870) and *Foundry [Old Smelter]* (1876) that this essay does not need to analyze both.

However, in artists such as Bolton or Cook, there begins to be a shift toward a rejection of colonial culture. Fanon describes the second stage of colonization as rejection, describing the thoughts and feelings of a colonized intellectual: "the colonized writer [whose work "can be easily linked" to a European influence] has his convictions shaken and decides to cast his mind back."<sup>35</sup> Other writings on Fanon's stages of colonization construe rejection as the growing feeling of resentment the colonized feels towards their colonizer,<sup>36</sup> or as the reclaiming of culture and identity.<sup>37</sup>

The sort of resentment and reclaiming what has been lost (a return, of sorts) by the colonized individual is not something that can be applied to a colonized nature due to certain agential limitations. The environment cannot become "'immersed' in the reclaiming of [itself],"<sup>38</sup> in the same way that a Black individual can. The rejection that I identify in consummation and 'Settlement' differs in another way from Fanon's conception of rejection as well, due to the fact that the artists like Bolton and Cook are seemingly defending the 'other' (or, at least, calling attention to the abuse that nature is suffering at the hands of mankind and settlement) from their place within the oppressive society. There might still be rejection of development or industrialization represented in these paintings, but it is the rejection of an oppressive society by an individual who is indivisible from that society. Despite this, and despite the inability of nature to become 'immersed' in reclaiming itself, *Golden Landscape* and *Foundry [Old Smelter]* are evidence of a rejection on behalf of the colonizer.

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<sup>35</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth: Frantz Fanon*, trans. Richard Philcox, 159.

<sup>36</sup> Morrison, "Defining Hybridity: Frantz Fanon and Post-Colonialism in Louise Erdrich's *Shadow Tag*," 48.

<sup>37</sup> Halford H. Fairchild, "Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in Contemporary Perspective." *Journal of Black Studies* 25, no. 2 (1994): 191–99. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2784461>, 198.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

It is important to observe the divide in the 'Settlement' category, where one side represents consummation in a positive light, while the other demonstrates a more negative take on the type of development that came with settlement. This dichotomy in the third Hudson River School category parallels the shift in Fanon's colonial stages from assimilation to rejection. While this essay has discussed paintings by Bolton and Cook that are characteristic of the negative stance, the large majority of the paintings in 'Settlement' are a celebratory representation. And, as noted earlier, even though there appears to be some sort of acknowledgement of the destruction that development and settlements causes, there is not a large enough quantity of these sorts of paintings to constitute a 'Destruction' category. In fact, the Hudson River School representations never progress past these three categories - almost every single painting in the School can be grouped into one of the three categories that are identified in this essay.

### **Beyond the Three Categories?**

The Hudson River School began to dwindle in the late 19th century and was "virtually forgotten" by the turn of the century.<sup>39</sup> In lieu of the landscape paintings that had been typical up until 1900, American art began to show an interest in a different kind of style (art began to resemble French Barbizon or Impressionism) and a different kind of subject matter (the Industrial Sublime). However, if the Hudson River School had not deteriorated, it might have been the case that the two final paintings in Cole's series (*Destruction* and *Desolation*) likewise foretold the concerns and subjects of the Hudson

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<sup>39</sup> Avery, "The Hudson River School," Metmuseum.org, October 2004, [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hurs/hd\\_hurs.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hurs/hd_hurs.htm).

River School artists. Rather than belonging to the 'Settlement' category, works like those of Bolton and Cook might have found a better home in a fourth category, while representations of desolation could have been created. These unpainted Hudson River School paintings also might have been such that the Fanonian psychoanalysis I have used thus far could be extended.

Where Fanon talks about rejection, and of the third stage of colonization, revolution, these concepts might also be applicable to the hypothetical fourth and fifth categories. Considering how well the Hudson River School paintings, Cole's first three *Course of Empire* paintings, Freud and Fanon's conceptions of 'otherness', and Fanon's concepts regarding colonization have mapped onto each other thus far, I argue that it is not a far cry to assert that if the Hudson River School had had a longer lifespan, then there would have been two additional categories that are characterized by representations of environmental exploitation (rejection) and of nature overtaking man-made structures. This overtaking by nature would signify a sort of revolution. Unlike Fanon's writings, which describe the three stages of colonialism from the standpoint of the oppressed, assimilation and rejection when applied to the Hudson River School are from the perspective of the artist, the oppressor. 'Arcadia' and 'Settlement' depict humankind's understanding of assimilation and rejection, rather than nature's assimilation and rejection. And, because nature cannot revolt in the same way that a colonized people can, the representations of revolution in these hypothetical categories might not appear as one would expect representations of revolution to look.

The war that is waged in Cole's *Destruction* demonstrates a revolution of sorts, the culmination of societal tensions, and most importantly, is a display of violence, which

Fanon notes is essential to both revolution and decolonization. "Because the colonized states were created and are maintained by the use of violence or the threat of violence, it is a necessity that it will take violence to reverse these power relationships."<sup>40</sup> Nature does not commit the same type of violence that people do, and so a traditional depiction of violence would likely be absent from the hypothetical categories. However, despite this there could still be a reversal of power relationships. Nature persists in ways such that it can utilize its environment, including an environment that has been changed and shaped by people.

Alongside this paper, I completed a painting that is what I understand to be a contemporary conception of the Hudson River School. This painting features remnants of civilization, the composition and ruins inspired by Franny Reese State Park in a sort of *Destruction/Desolation*-esque manner. Present in the painting is the type of power relationship reversal that is prominent in Fanon's writings. This reverse power relationship is represented by nature (trees, rocks, bushes, etc.) becoming wild again, a reversion back to the type of wilderness that was illustrated in *The Savage State* and 'New World'. The only difference is that this time, my painting includes traces from consummation and settlement. Vines grow on and obscure old buildings, trees sprout from places that used to be completely dominated by human-occupied spaces. The ruins are nothing more than part of the environment, if anything, they are tools that nature can use to climb higher towards the sunlight. The power relationships are being reversed because, just as nature was forced to assimilate to the development of a place in the midst of the colonial process, now those very same colonial structures are being assimilated into nature,

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<sup>40</sup> Fairchild, "Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in Contemporary Perspective," 192.

losing the identity that it once had as a colonial structure, and becoming nothing more than the rocks and trees around it.

The 'desolation' work that I painted features the ruins of the Cedar Glen estate in Franny Reese State Park. There is a staircase which stands alone, leading to nowhere, and is intended to mirror Cole's *Desolation*, which exhibits a lonesome and ruined column that stands tall in the foreground. Both the staircase and Cole's column are reminders of a civilization which once thrived but has since been forgotten; they are objects which were deliberately built with a specific and instrumental purpose, but have since dissolved into a functionless and nonsensical state. I do not know that this representation would be considered to be an example of decolonization by Fanon, but it is undeniable that the structures of colonialism that were increasingly present in the three established Hudson River School categories do not hold the same position in the Franny Reese State Park painting as they did in 'Arcadia' or 'Settlement'. Structures of colonialism have been overcome by the thing that was oppressed.

Although the Hudson River School and Frantz Fanon's psychoanalysis and colonization/decolonization literature are two different worlds from two different disciplines, the framework which Fanon supplied as a tool for thinking about the colonial process and the response to that process is a framework that supports a holistic understanding of the School. Additionally, the *Course of Empire* series by Hudson River School founder Thomas Cole provides an influential visual representation of Fanonian concepts. In using both Fanon and Cole to categorize Hudson River School paintings into different groups, this paper was able to elucidate the direction that the School took, as well as speculate on the reasoning behind some of the artists' representations of the Hudson

Valley (which artists appeared to celebrate the colonial process and settlement, and which artists were hesitant about the development that they witnessed). This paper extends liberation literature to the Hudson River School, a place where it might not have been exercised before, and compels readers to consider the implications of the colonial process (i.e. alienation and 'otherness'), not only on people and their cultures, but on the environment and on the legacy that art leaves as well.

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'New World'	'Arcadian'	'Settlement'
 <p><i>View on the Hudson Looking Across the Tappan Zee Toward Hook Mountain, 1866, Bierstadt.</i></p>	 <p><i>View of the Hudson from Tarrytown Heights, 1842. #17.</i></p>	 <p><i>Foundry [Old Smelter], 1876, Hugh Jones Bolton</i></p>
 <p><i>Domes of Yosemite, 1867, Bierstadt</i></p>	 <p><i>View on the Hudson, 1870, Bierstadt. #20.</i></p>	 <p><i>Golden Landscape, 1867, Edith Wilkinson Cook</i></p>
 <p><i>Autumn on the Hudson River, 1860, Jasper Cropsey. #25</i></p>	 <p><i>West Point from Fort Putnam, 1867, David Johnson #33.</i></p>	 <p><i>Storm King on the Hudson, 1866, Samuel Colman<sup>43</sup> #52</i></p>
 <p><i>Wild Coast, Newport, 1885-1895, Homer Dodge Martin</i></p>	 <p><i>Down to the Brooks (1863), Alfred Bellows</i></p>	 <p><i>Red Hook Point on the Hudson, opposite Kingston, New York, n.d., Andrew W. Warren<sup>44</sup> #64</i></p>
 <p><i>On the Hudson (Near Peekskill), n.d. (but I am assuming later in</i></p>	 <p><i>The Mill, 1861, Alfred Bellows</i></p>	 <p><i>Hudson River, 1892, Winslow Homer #98</i></p>

<sup>43</sup> “Samuel Colman painted both small sailboats and larger steam-powered tourist launches and freight boats, focusing on the changes taking place in commerce and leisure activities on the river. The painter’s nod to the transition from sail to steam interjects a modern note about progress in a classic landscape.” (<https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/storm-king-hudson-5183>)

<sup>44</sup> Howat, *The Hudson River and its Painters*, image 64.

<p>his career, as this is much more Impressionistic than it is Durandian), Homer Dodge Martin<sup>41</sup> #29</p>  <p><i>On the Upper Hudson</i>, 1862, Régis François Gignoux #43</p>  <p><i>Kauterskill Falls</i>, 1862, Sanford R. Gifford</p>  <p><i>Autumn View from Olana</i>, n.d. Frederic Church<sup>42</sup> #75</p>	 <p><i>Figures in a Hudson River Landscape</i>, n.d., Bierstadt</p>  <p><i>Sunset</i>, n.d., Dewitt Clinton Boutelle</p>  <p><i>View of the Highlands from West Point</i>, 1862, John Ferguson Weir #40</p>  <p><i>View from West Point</i>, n.d., Thomas Chambers. Found in John K. Howat's <i>The Hudson River and its Painters</i>, image #36.</p>  <p><i>Looking North from Ossining, New York</i>, 1867, Samuel Colman #23.</p>	 <p><i>A Pic-Nic on the Hudson</i>, 1863, Thomas Prichard Rossiter #45</p>  <p><i>View Near Fishkill</i>, 1820-1825, William Guy Wall</p>  <p><i>Poughkeepsie, New York</i>, n.d., Jim M. Evans<sup>45</sup></p>  <p><i>Catskill</i>, 1849, Albertus del Orient Browere</p>  <p><i>View of Glen Falls, New York: Preparatory Study for Plate 6</i>, William Guy Wall<sup>46</sup></p>
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<sup>41</sup> John K. Howat, *The Hudson River and its Painters*, (Viking Press Inc., 1972), image 29.

<sup>42</sup> Howat, *The Hudson River and its Painters*, image 75.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>46</sup> Be aware of William Guy Wall, might not fit into the thesis too well.

	 <p><i>River Scene</i>, 1854, Asher Durand #26</p>	 <p><i>Esopus Creek, Saugerties, New York</i>, n.d., William Guy Wall<sup>47</sup> #68</p>  <p><i>Villa on the Hudson near Weehawken</i>, 1850, Thomas Chambers #8.</p>
<p>'New World'</p>	<p>'Arcadian'</p>	<p>'Settlement'</p>

Thomas Cole's Course of Empire series of paintings is in the collection of the New-York Historical Society. It may be viewed online at <https://digitalcollections.nyhistory.org/>.



<sup>47</sup> Howat, *The Hudson River and its Painters*, image 68.

Thomas Cole, "The Savage State" from *Course of Empire*, 1833-1836



Cole, "The Arcadian or Pastoral State" from *Course of Empire*, 1833-1836



Cole, "The Consummation" from *Course of Empire*, 1833-1836



Cole, "Destruction" from *Course of Empire*, 1833-1836



Cole, "Desolation" from *Course of Empire*, 1833-1836



*Destruction/Desolation* imitation painting of Franny Reese State Park by the author.