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UNCOMMON GROUND

*TOWARD
REINVENTING
NATURE*

New York / London

William Cronon, editor

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Reinventing Eden: Western
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Reinventing Eden: Western Culture as a Recovery Narrative

*Carolyn Merchant**

A PENOBSCOT INDIAN STORY FROM NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND EXPLAINS the origin of maize. A great famine had deprived people of food and water. A beautiful Indian maiden appeared and married one of the young men of the tribe, but soon succumbed to another lover, a snake. On discovery she promised to alleviate her husband's sorrow if he would plant a blade of green grass clinging to her ankle. First he must kill her with his ax, then drag her body through the forest clearing until all her flesh had been stripped, and finally bury her bones in the center of the clearing. She then appeared to him in a dream and taught him how to tend, harvest, and cook corn and smoke tobacco.¹

This agricultural origin story taught the Indians not only how to plant their corn in forest clearings but also that the earth would continue to regenerate the human body through the corn plant. It features a woman, the corn maiden, and a male lover as central actors. It begins with the state of nature as drought and famine. Nature is a desert, a poor place for human existence. The plot features a woman as savior. Through a willing sacrifice in which her body brings forth new life, she introduces agriculture to her husband and to the women who subsequently plant the corn, beans, and squash that sustain the life of the tribe. The result is an ecological system based on the planting of interdependent polycultures in forest gardens. The story type is ascensionist and progressive. Women transform nature from a desert into a garden. From a tragic situation of despair and death, a comic, happy, and optimistic situation of continued life results. In this story the valence of

women as corn mothers is nature ends as a good. The formed into life through a earth. Even death therefor

Into this bountiful world ing their own agricultural begins where the Indian s tures in the Garden of Ede to pick fruit from the Ti harvest the fruits of the g couple is cast out of the g to garden, as in the India desert. The Fall from para earth by the sweat of their central actress and, like th toward women. But the p comic as in the Indian sto in the beginning. The vale bad. Here men become th who through their own a lost garden on earth.³

According to Benjamin between the two accounts were apprised of the "I founded, such as the fall Indian orator stood up" "What you have told us . It is much better to make kindness in coming so far your mothers; in return l from ours."⁴

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women as corn mothers is good; they bring bountiful gifts. The valence of nature ends as a good. The earth is an agent of regeneration. Death is transformed into life through a reunification of the corn mother's body with the earth. Even death therefore results in a higher good.²

Into this bountiful world of corn mothers, enter the Puritan fathers bringing their own agricultural origin story of Adam and Eve. The biblical myth begins where the Indian story ends, with an ecological system of polycultures in the Garden of Eden. A woman, Eve, shows "the man," Adam, how to pick fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and to harvest the fruits of the garden. Instead of attaining a resultant good, the couple is cast out of the garden into a desert. Instead of moving from desert to garden, as in the Indian story, the biblical story moves from garden to desert. The Fall from paradise is caused by a woman. Men must labor in the earth by the sweat of their brow to produce food. Here a woman is also the central actress and, like the Indian story, the biblical story contains violence toward women. But the plot is declensionist and tragic, not progressive and comic as in the Indian story. The end result is a poorer state of nature than in the beginning. The valence of woman is bad. The end valence of nature is bad. Here men become the agents of transformation. They become saviors, who through their own agricultural labor have the capacity to re-create the lost garden on earth.³

According to Benjamin Franklin, Indians quickly perceived the difference between the two accounts. Franklin satirically writes that when the Indians were apprised of the "historical facts on which our [own] religion is founded, such as the fall of our first parents by eating an apple, . . . an Indian orator stood up" to thank the Europeans for their information. "What you have told us . . . is all very good. It is, indeed, bad to eat apples. It is much better to make them all into cider. We are much obliged by your kindness in coming so far to tell us these things which you have heard from your mothers; in return I will tell you some of those which we have heard from ours."⁴

Historical events reversed the plots of the European and the Indian origin stories. The Indians' comic happy ending changed to a story of decline and conquest, while Euramericans were largely successful in creating a New World garden. Indeed, the story of Western civilization since the seventeenth century and its advent on the American continent can be conceptualized as a grand narrative of fall and recovery. The concept of recovery, as it emerged in the seventeenth century, not only meant a recovery from the Fall but also entailed restoration of health, reclamation of land, and recovery of property.⁵ The recovery plot is the long, slow process of returning humans to the Garden of Eden through labor in the earth. Three subplots organize its argument: Christian religion, modern science, and capitalism. The Genesis story of the Fall provides the beginning; science and capitalism, the middle; recovery of the garden, the end. The initial lapsarian moment (i.e., the lapse from innocence) is the decline from garden to desert as the

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NEW ENGLAND EXPLAINS
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The Bible, however, offered two versions of the origin story that led to the Fall. In the Genesis 1 version, God created the land, sea, grass, herbs, and fruit; the stars, sun, and moon; and the birds, whales, cattle, and beasts—after which he made “man in his own image . . . ; male and female created he them.” Adam and Eve were instructed, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it,” and were given “dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” In the Genesis 2 version, thought to have derived from a different tradition, God first created the plants and herbs, next “man” from dust, and then the garden of Eden with its trees for food (including the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the center) and four rivers flowing out of it. He then put “the man” in the garden “to dress and keep it,” formed the beasts and fowls from dust, and brought them to Adam to name. Only then did he create Eve from Adam’s rib. Genesis 3 narrates the Fall from the garden, beginning with Eve’s temptation by the serpent, the consumption of the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (which in the Renaissance becomes an apple), the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden “to till the ground from which he was taken,” and finally God’s placement of the cherubim and flaming sword at the entrance of the garden to guard the Tree of Life.⁶

During the Renaissance, artists illustrated the Garden of Eden story through woodcuts and paintings, one of the most famous of which is Lucas Cranach’s 1526 painting of Eve offering the apple to Adam, after having been enticed by the snake coiled around the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Writers from Dante to Milton depicted the Fall and subsequent quest for paradise, while explorers searched for the garden first in the Old World and then in the New. Although settlers endowed new lands and peoples with Eden-like qualities, a major effort to re-create the Garden of Eden on earth ultimately ensued. Seventeenth-century botanical gardens and zoos marked early efforts to reassemble the parts of the garden dispersed throughout the world after the Fall and the Flood.⁷

But beginning in the seventeenth century and proceeding to the present, New World colonists have undertaken a massive effort to reinvent the whole earth in the image of the Garden of Eden. Aided by the Christian doctrine of redemption and the inventions of science, technology, and capitalism (“arte and industrie”), the long-term goal of the recovery project has been to turn the earth itself into a vast cultivated garden. The strong interventionist version in Genesis 1 legitimates recovery through domination, while the softer Genesis 2 version advocates dressing and keeping the garden through human management (stewardship). Human labor would redeem the souls of men and women, while cultivation and domestication would redeem the earthly wilderness. The End Drama envisions a reunification of the earth with God (the Parousia), in which the redeemed earthly garden merges into

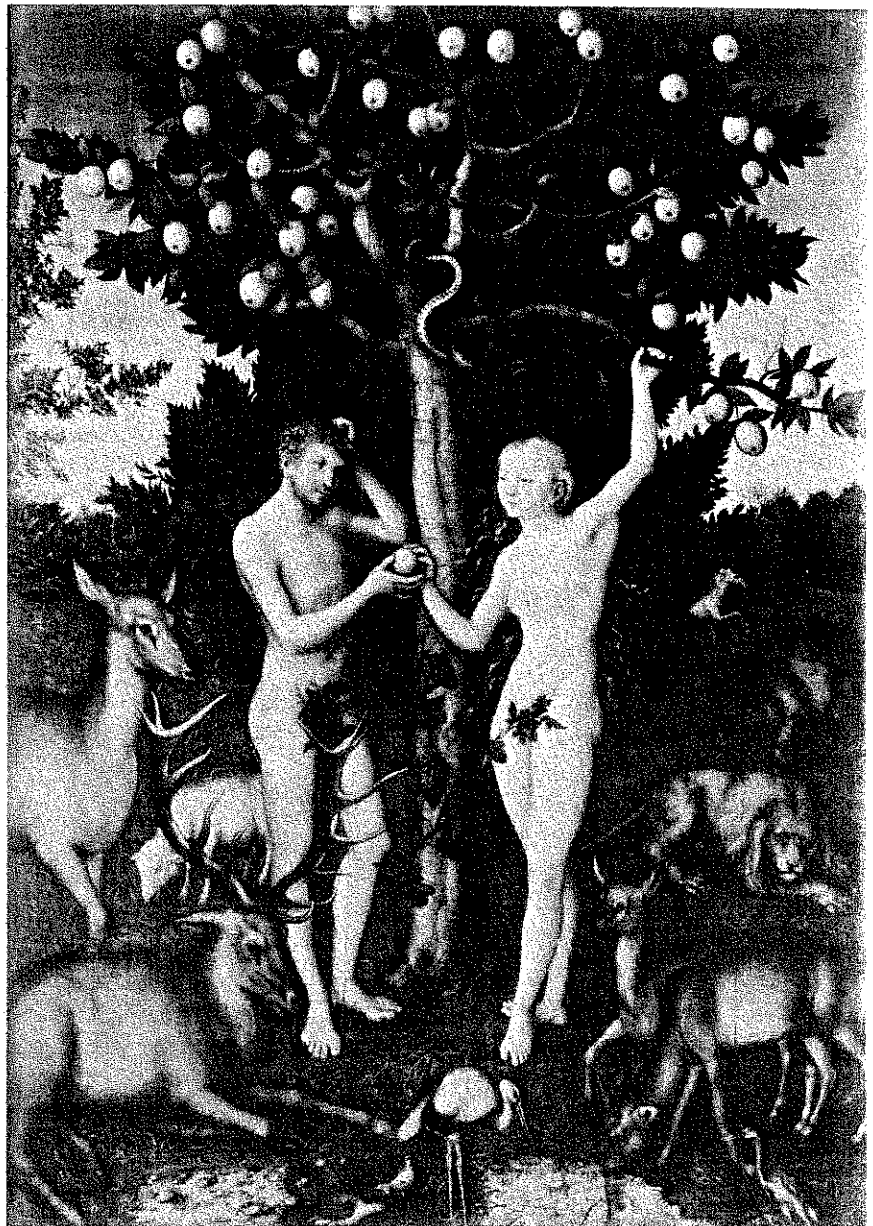


Lucas Cranach, *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden*

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Eden with its trees for food
and knowledge of Good and Evil
He then put "the man" in
the garden, beginning with
the creation of the fruit from the Tree
of Life. The Renaissance becomes an
earthly garden "to till the ground
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of the cherubim to guard the Tree of Life.⁶
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is the most famous of which is Lucas
Cranach the Elder's *Adam and Eve*,
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and Evil, the Fall and subsequent
expulsion from the garden first in the Old
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Lucas Cranach, *Adam and Eve*, 1526. (Courtesy Courtauld Institute Galleries)

a higher heavenly paradise. The Second Coming of Christ was to occur either at the outset of the thousand-year period of his reign on earth (the millennium) or at the Last Judgment, when the faithful were reunited with God at the resurrection.⁸

Greek philosophy offered the intellectual framework for the modern version of the recovery project. Parmenidean oneness represents the unchanging natural law that has lapsed into the appearances of the Platonic world. This fallen phenomenal world is incomplete, corrupt, and inconstant. Only by recollection of the pure, unchanging forms can the fallen partake of the original unity. Recovered and Christianized in the Renaissance, Platonism provided paradigmatic ideals (such as that of the Garden of Eden) through which to interpret the earthly signs and signatures leading to the recovery.⁹

Modern Europeans added two components to the Christian recovery project—mechanistic science and laissez-faire capitalism—to create a grand master narrative of Enlightenment. Mechanistic science supplies the instrumental knowledge for reinventing the garden on earth. The Baconian-Cartesian-Newtonian project is premised on the power of technology to subdue and dominate nature, on the certainty of mathematical law, and on the unification of natural laws into a single framework of explanation. Just as the alchemists had tried to speed up nature's labor through human intervention in the transformation of base metals into gold, so science and technology hastened the recovery project by inventing the tools and knowledge that could be used to dominate nature. Francis Bacon saw science and technology as the way to control nature and hence recover the right to the garden given to the first parents. "Man by the fall, fell at the same time from his state of innocence and from his dominion over creation. Both of these losses can in this life be in some part repaired; the former by religion and faith; the latter by arts and science." Humans, he asserted, could "recover that right over nature which belongs to it by divine bequest," and should endeavor "to establish and extend the power and dominion of the human race itself over the [entire] universe."¹⁰

The origin story of capitalism is a movement from desert back to garden through the transformation of undeveloped nature into a state of civility and order.¹¹ Natural resources—"the ore in the mine, the stone unquarried [and] the timber unfelled"—are converted by human labor into commodities to be exchanged on the market. The good state makes capitalist production possible by imposing order on the fallen worlds of nature and human nature. Thomas Hobbes's nation-state was the end result of a social contract created for the purpose of controlling people in the violent and unruly state of nature. John Locke's political theory rested on the improvement of undeveloped nature by mixing human labor with the soil and subduing the earth through human domination. Simultaneously, Protestantism helped to speed the recovery by sanctioning increased human labor just as science and technology accelerated nature's labor.¹²

Crucial to the structure encoded into the story. In it is male and the Fall is a bystander, being forced to develop both pastoralist inventor of the tools and technology becomes the nature that in tradition it is fallen nature. The goals are directed. The goals are invented, engineered, and organizes the labor needed to project.

Nature, in the Edenic re-Eve, nature is virgin, pure that has the potential for and chaotic; a wilderness, and witchlike, the victim. Eve, nature is an improved ovary, maturity. Original activity. Fallen Adam appears as a hero who redeems the patriarch, law, and rule, the things of nature as female. The myths into American landscape needing the male hero, Adam do not represent character male. Rather, they are his origin stories of European practices transported to America they may appear to be essential Western history, not their

The Enlightenment ideal is lost in the Fall—the nature. The lapsarian origin of Enlightenment that lies in the image of Enlightenment is a cultivated garden. This comment components touches As a powerful narrative, legitimization for settlement technology provided the

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Crucial to the structure of the recovery narrative is the role of gender encoded into the story. In the Judeo-Christian tradition the original oneness is male and the Fall is caused by a female, Eve, with Adam, the innocent bystander, being forced to pay the consequences as his sons are pushed into developing both pastoralism and farming.¹³ While fallen Adam becomes the inventor of the tools and technologies that will restore the garden, fallen Eve becomes the nature that must be tamed into submission. In the Western tradition it is fallen nature in opposition to which male science and technology are directed. The good state that keeps unruly nature in check is invented, engineered, and operated by men. The good economy that organizes the labor needed to restore the garden is likewise a male-directed project.

Nature, in the Edenic recovery story, appears in three forms. As original Eve, nature is virgin, pure, and light—land that is pristine or barren, but that has the potential for development. As fallen Eve, nature is disorderly and chaotic; a wilderness, wasteland, or desert requiring improvement; dark and witchlike, the victim and mouthpiece of Satan as serpent. As mother Eve, nature is an improved garden, a nurturing earth bearing fruit, a ripened ovary, maturity. Original Adam is the image of God as creator, initial agent, activity. Fallen Adam appears as the agent of earthly transformation, the hero who redeems the fallen land. Father Adam is the image of God as patriarch, law, and rule, the model for the kingdom and state. These meanings of nature as female and agency as male are encoded as symbols and myths into American lands as having the potential for development, but needing the male hero, Adam. Such symbols are not essences, because they do not represent characteristics necessary or essential to being female or male. Rather, they are historically constructed meanings deriving from the origin stories of European settlers and European cultural and economic practices transported to and developed in the American New World. That they may appear to be essences is a result of their historical construction in Western history, not their immutable characteristics.

The Enlightenment idea of progress is rooted in the recovery of the garden lost in the Fall—the bringing of light to the dark world of inchoate nature. The lapsarian origin story is thus reversed by the grand narrative of Enlightenment that lies at the very heart of modernism. The controlling image of Enlightenment is the transformation from desert wilderness to cultivated garden. This complex of Christian, Greco-Roman, and Enlightenment components touched and reinforced each other at critical nodal points. As a powerful narrative, the idea of recovery functioned as ideology and legitimation for settlement of the New World, while capitalism, science, and technology provided the means of transforming the material world.

*Greco-Roman Roots of the
Recovery Narrative*

IN CREATING A RECOVERY NARRATIVE THAT REVERSED THE LAPSARIAN moment of the Fall, Europeans reinforced the Christian image of the precipitous Fall from the Garden of Eden with pagan images of a gradual decline from the golden age. Hesiod (eighth century B.C.E. [?]) told of the time of immortal men who lived on Olympus, where all was "of gold" and "the grain-giving soil bore its fruits of its own accord in unstinted plenty, while they at their leisure harvested their fields in contentment amid abundance."¹⁴ Ovid, in the *Metamorphoses* (A.D. 7), pictured the golden age as a time when a bountiful (unplowed) mother earth brought forth grains, fruits, honey, and nectar and people were peaceful, "unaggressive, and unanxious." Only in the decline of the subsequent silver, bronze, and iron ages did strife, violence, swindling, and war set in.¹⁵

Whereas Hesiod and Ovid offered elements that reinforced the Fall, Virgil and Lucretius introduced components of a recovery story that moved from "savagery" to "civilization." Nature was a principle of development, deriving from the Latin word *nascere*, "to be born." Each stage of development was inherent in the preceding stage, an actualization of a prior potential. The word "nation" derived from the same word; hence the state was born from the state of nature.¹⁶ Virgil (70–19 B.C.E.) depicted a narrative of development from nature to nation that moved through four stages mimicking the human life cycle: (1) death and chaos, a world filled with presocial "wild" peoples (winter), to (2) birth and the pastoral, in which people grazed sheep on pastured lands (spring), to (3) youth or farming by plowing and planting gardens (summer); to (4) maturity, or the city (Rome) in the garden (fall). For Virgil these four stages were followed by a return to death and chaos, whereas in the Christian myth the recovery was followed by redemption and a return to the original garden. Yet within each of Virgil's stages lies the potential to lapse prematurely into the earlier chaotic, or "savage," state. The second, or pastoral, stage is like the Christian Garden of Eden—its loss is mourned and its innocence yearned for—but in the Roman story, it passes "naturally" to the third, or agricultural, stage.

Virgil's *Georgics* narrates the agricultural period in which humans actively labor in the earth to cultivate it and themselves. Both society's potential and the earth's potential are actualized and perfected. When farmers till the ground and tend their crops, nature's bounty brings forth fruits: "Father Air with fruitful rains" descended on the "bosom of his smiling bride" to feed her "teeming womb."¹⁷ The *Aeneid* reveals the fourth stage—the emergence of Rome as a city of culture and civilization within the pastoral and agricultural landscapes—*urbs in horto*—the city in the garden. The four developmental phases of nature and nation exist both temporally as stages and spatially as zones. The city is an actualization of movement from a chaotic "wild" periphery to a pastoral outer zone, a cultivated inner zone, and

a "civilized" central place. ment, the decline and fall of ter and chaos. Yet out of ch of the ages is born anew." boy" appears "at whose co race will spring up in the wli tian versions of a second r cans the possibility of the n

Lucretius provides the el italism and the good state as tius' *De Rerum Naturum* Hobbes's *Leviathan*. For human nature is disorderly before the discovery of plo starvation was rampant.¹⁹ I fire and the cooking of foo wars were spawned by hun the state of nature as unruly down to the vilest lees o sought unto himself domin people voluntarily gave up nature and entered into a c held that people out of thei creation of civil law thus ir possibility of recovery fro

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a "civilized" central place. Because nature is viewed as a cyclical development, the decline and fall of Rome is preordained in the final return to winter and chaos. Yet out of chaos comes a second golden age as "the great line of the ages is born anew." The "virgin" (Justice) returns, and a "newborn boy" appears "at whose coming the iron race shall first cease and a golden race will spring up in the whole world." At this point the Roman and Christian versions of a second return converge, offering Europeans and Americans the possibility of the recovery an Edenic golden age.¹⁸

Lucretius provides the elements for Thomas Hobbes's origin story of capitalism and the good state as an emergence from the "state of nature." Lucretius' *De Rerum Naturum* (Of the nature of things) closely prefigures Hobbes's *Leviathan*. For both Lucretius and Hobbes the early state of human nature is disorderly, lawless, and chaotic. According to Lucretius, before the discovery of plow agriculture, wild beasts consumed humans and starvation was rampant.¹⁹ But early civilization, nurtured by the taming of fire and the cooking of food, foundered on the discovery of gold, as violent wars were spawned by human greed. Just as Hobbes saw individual men in the state of nature as unruly and warlike, so Lucretius lamented that "things down to the vilest lees of brawling mobs succumbed, whilst each man sought unto himself dominion and supremacy." Just as Hobbes argued that people voluntarily gave up their ability to kill each other in the state of nature and entered into a civil contract enforced by the state, so Lucretius held that people out of their own free will submitted to laws and codes. The creation of civil law thus imposes order on disorderly humans, offering the possibility of recovery from the state of nature.²⁰

Yet Lucretius' poem, as it came down to the Renaissance, ended not in recovery but in death, as plague and pestilence overcame Athens. The poem breaks off on a note of extreme pessimism and utter terror as piles of dead bodies burn on funeral pyres and all hope is forsaken. Like Lucretius, Hobbes (who was also deemed an atheist) offered a profoundly pessimistic view of nature, human nature, and divinity. Humans who are basically competitive and warlike contest with each other on the commons and in the marketplace in the creation of a capitalist economy.²¹

Like civilization, nature for Lucretius ends in death and a return to the chaos of winter. As did humans, the earth, whose name was mother, went through stages of life and death. She brought forth birds, beasts, and humans. The fields were like wombs, and the earth's pores gave forth milk like a mother's breasts. Yet when the earth had aged, she was like a worn-out old woman.²²

In the seventeenth century the Greek cyclical stories of nature and human society that ended in death and destruction were converted to the Christian redemption story during the battle between ancients and moderns. The declensionist narrative depicting a slide downward from golden age to iron age, from original wisdom to ignorance, from human giants to midgets was transformed by hope of recovery. Both nature and human nature were capa-

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ble of redemption. Science and technology offered the means of transforming nature; labor in the earth, the means of saving human souls. The earth could be plowed, cultivated, and improved as human beings mixed their labor with the soil. (For Locke, as opposed to Hobbes, the state of nature is good.) Thus both the cultivated earth and cultivated humans would be prepared for the final moment of redemption, or Parousia, when earth would merge with heaven, re-creating the original oneness. With the discovery of the New World, a new earth could be reconstructed with the image of the original garden as paradigm.

The American Heroic Recovery Narrative

IN AMERICA THE RECOVERY NARRATIVE PROPELLED SETTLEMENT AND "improvement" of the American continent by Europeans. Euramerican men acted to reverse the decline initiated by Eve by turning it into an ascent back to the garden. Using science, technology, and biblical imagery, they changed first the eastern wilderness and then the western deserts into cultivated gardens. Sanctioned by the Genesis origin story, they subdued the "wilderness," replenished the earth, and appropriated Indian homelands as free lands for settlement. Mercantile capitalism cast America as the site of natural resources, Africa as the source of enslaved human resources, and Europe as the locale of resource management. Timber, barrel staves, animal hides, herbal medicines, tobacco, sugar, and cotton were extracted from nature in the great project of "improving" the land. Men, as fallen Adam, became the heroic agents who transformed and redeemed fallen nature.²³

In New England, European settlers converted a "hideous and desolate wilderness" into "a second England for fertility" in the space of a few decades. The Pilgrim migration, as recorded in the text of William Bradford, conforms to the six elements of the mythic heroic narrative identified by the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp: (1) the hero's initial absence, (2) his transference from one place to another, (3) the combat between hero and villain, (4) the hero's receipt of a gift, (5) the victory, and (6) the final repair of the hero's initial absence.²⁴ In this case the hero, Bradford, leads his people through trials and tests in the struggle to re-create the garden in the New World.

In the preparatory, or first, phase of the New England recovery story, the land is absent of the hero. Indian lands are vacant, corn fields have been abandoned, and the Indians themselves have succumbed to disease. As John Cotton later explained it, "When the Lord chooses to transplant his people, he first makes a country . . . void in that place where they reside."²⁵ In the second, or transference, phase, the hero, William Bradford, is transported from Old England to New England by ship. A spatial translocation takes place between two kingdoms, that of the Antichrist (the fleshpots of Old England) and the New Canaan, or promised land of New England. In the

third, or combative, phase, the hero and villain is played out as a storm on the tempestuous ocean and the hero and wild men." Bradford's story is continually called on, as in the case of the *Mayflower*, and the little band of settlers on the shores of an unforgiving wilderness receive a gift from a helper, in this case through the Indian Squanto, who shows them how to procure other commodities. When the corn is harvested, the cabin survives its first year. Nature enters a climactic phase, the hero's triumph is liquidated, and the hero triumphs over wilderness by the re-creation of the garden. By the end of the garden in the New World myth created.²⁶

Pilgrim victory was followed by the Bay Colony added thousands of people repeating the heroic journey of recovery. As the *Arabella* refugees listened to John V. multiply, and replenish the land, Morton followed both the hero and the villain. He wrote in 1728 that because husbandry must be used to tillage, manuring, and drainage. Ames in 1754 helped to justify the terms when he informed that the body of man "after Eve's ingestion of the forbidden fruit fallen into disharmony with its parts."²⁷

In the Chesapeake region, the settlers had converted an "unimproved garden of pleasure" into a "Garden of the World," and the trymen's ability to overcome the danger became the means simultaneously improving the land in danger from new lapses into indulgence too much in laziness.

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third, or combative, phase, the hero is tested through struggle with the vil-
lain—the devil acting through nature. The mythic struggle between hero
and villain is played out as a struggle between Bradford and the wilderness—
the tempestuous ocean and the desolate forest, a land filled with "wild beasts
and wild men." Bradford's faith in God and his leadership of his people
are continually called on, as storms wreak havoc with the small ship, the
Mayflower, and the little band of settlers struggles to survive the grim winter
on the shores of an unforgiving land. In the fourth phase, the hero receives
a gift from a helper, in this case, "a special instrument sent [from] God,"
through the Indian Squanto, who not only speaks the Pilgrims' own lan-
guage but shows them how to "set their corn, where to take fish, and to
procure other commodities." The fifth phase is the victory of the hero, as
the corn is harvested, cabins and stockade are built, and the struggling band
survives its first year. Nature, as wilderness, has been defeated. In the sixth
and climactic phase, the hero's initial absence has been repaired, the misfor-
tunes are liquidated, and the Pilgrims are reborn. They celebrate their tri-
umph over wilderness by their first harvest, achieved through the miracle of
the re-created garden. By filling and replenishing the land, the recovery of
the garden in the New World has been launched and the American recovery
myth created.²⁶

Pilgrim victory was followed by Puritan victory when the Massachusetts
Bay Colony added thousands of additional settlers to the new land,
repeating the heroic journey across the Atlantic to advance the Edenic
recovery. As the *Arabella* left England for the New World in 1629, Puritan
refugees listened to John Winthrop quoting Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and
multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it." The Boston pastor Charles
Morton followed both the Genesis origin story and the Baconian ideal when
he wrote in 1728 that because of the sin of the first parents, agriculture and
husbandry must be used to combat weeds and soil sterility through fencing,
tilling, manuring, and draining the land. The almanac maker Nathaniel
Ames in 1754 helped to justify the mechanistic science of the body in Edenic
terms when he informed his readers that the divine artificer initially had
made the body of man "a machine capable of endless duration," but that
after Eve's ingestion of the forbidden apple the living principle within had
fallen into disharmony with the body, disrupting the smooth functioning of
its parts.²⁷

In the Chesapeake region, by the early eighteenth century, tobacco plant-
ers had converted an "unjustly neglected" and "abused" Virginia into a rav-
ishing garden of pleasure. Robert Beverley predicated Virginia's potential as
a "Garden of the World," akin to Canaan, Syria, and Persia, on his coun-
trymen's ability to overcome an "unpardonable laziness."²⁸ Tobacco culti-
vation became the means of participating in the European market, while
simultaneously improving the land through labor. But the recovery was ever
in danger from new lapsarian moments if people allowed themselves to
indulge too much in laziness, narcotics, or alcohol. During the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries, migrants from the original colonies and immigrants from Europe explored, settled, and "improved" the uplands west of the Atlantic coast, the intervals of the Appalachian Mountains, and the lowlands of the Mississippi valley.

In the late 1820s and 1830s Thomas Cole of the Hudson River school of painters depicted the American recovery narrative and the dangers of both the original and the subsequent lapsarian moments. His *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden* (1827–28) contrasts the tranquil, original garden on the right with the bleak, chaotic desert on the left, while in the center God expels Adam and Eve through a gate. (See p. 71.) The garden features a meandering stream and luxuriant vegetation, while the desert comprises barren rock, hot winds, a wild cataract, an erupting volcano, and a wolf attacking a deer. *The Oxbow* (1836) portrays the possibility of recovery through re-creating the garden on earth. The painting moves from dark wilderness on the left to an enlightened, tranquil, cultivated landscape on the right, bordering the curve of the peaceful Connecticut River. In the background, cutover scars in the forest on the hill apparently spell the Hebrew letters "Noah," which when viewed upside down from a God's-eye view form the word *shaddai*, meaning "the Almighty." God's presence in the landscape recognizes God's covenant with Noah and anticipates the final reunion of God and the earth at the Parousia. Humans can therefore redeem the land itself as garden, even as they redeem themselves through laboring in the earth.²⁹

In a series of paintings from the 1830s, Cole depicted the movement from "savagery" to "civilization" and the problem of lapsing back into the darkness of wilderness. Of an 1831 painting, *A Wild Scene*, he wrote, "The first picture must be a savage wilderness . . . the figures must be savage—clothed in skins & occupied in the Chase— . . . as though nature was just waking from chaos."³⁰ A subsequent series, *The Course of Empire*, followed Virgil's stages of emergence from "savagery": The Savage State, the Pastoral State, Consummation of Empire, Destruction of Empire, and Desolation, to warn of lapsarian dangers that thwart progress and end in the ruin of civilization.

Ralph Waldo Emerson eulogized the recovered garden achieved through human dominion over nature in glowing rhetoric: "This great savage country should be furrowed by the plough, and combed by the harrow; these rough Alleghenies should know their master; these foaming torrents should be bestridden by proud arches of stone; these wild prairies should be loaded with wheat; the swamps with rice; the hill-tops should pasture innumerable sheep and cattle. . . . How much better when the whole land is a garden, and the people have grown up in the bowers of a paradise."³¹ Only after intensive development of the eastern seaboard did a small number of nineteenth-century urban artists, writers, scientists, and explorers begin to deplore the effects of the "machine in the garden."³²

Similarly, Euramericans acted out the recovery narrative in transforming the western deserts during the second half of the nineteenth century. The elements of the story again conform to the elements of Propp's heroic narra-

tive. The land is absent of the transferred across inhospitable Indians, diseases, and starvation and free land; emerge victorious in the initial absence of the hero by land through settlement, the call for expansion into Oregon rose, to establish laws, to in we are commanded to do by likewise heard Thomas Hartwell Chase had "alone received the earth: for it is the only race even a New World, to subdue

With the Reverend Dwaine Central Pacific and Union human alteration of the land straight in the desert a high exalted, and every mountain shall be made straight and then and plowing the Great Platte turning the "Great American World." The reclamation through the technologies of the desert blossom as the rose is agriculture.³⁴

At the end of the nineteenth on the closing of the frontier recovery narrative. The six Turner's narrative, although closes. (1) The frontier is defined. "Up to and including but at present the unsettled transferred across space as they "adapt . . . to change Cumberland Gap and water to the salt lick, the trapper each other in succession; in the same succession again. (3) The land—again the wilderness, transfers the colonist." The end of European civilization an Iroquois." (4) The heroes Turner warns, "will such encounter with the frontier transforms the wilderness,

original colonies and improved" the uplands west of the Appalachian Mountains, and the

the Hudson River school of landscape painting and the dangers of both worlds. His *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*, the original garden on the right, the center God expels Adam from the garden features a meandering river, a wolf attacking a deer. The landscape is a wilderness on the left to the right, bordering the curve of the earth, cutover scars in the landscape. The letters "Noah," which when read in the word *shaddai*, meaning God, recognizes God's covenant with Adam and the earth at the Paradise. The land itself as garden, even as they

depicted the movement from the light of Eden, lapsing back into the darkness. In *Scene*, he wrote, "The first scene must be savage—clothed in the wild nature was just waking up. *of Empire*, followed Virgil's *of Empire*, the Pastoral State, the Pastoral State, the Pastoral State, and Desolation, to warn of the ruin of civilization. The garden achieved through the heroic: "This great savage coun-try must be harrowed; these foaming torrents should be loaded with prairies should be loaded with pasture innumerable the whole land is a garden, of a paradise."³¹ Only after the flood a small number of nine-ty, and explorers begin to

ly narrative in transforming the nineteenth century. The lands of Propp's heroic narra-

tive. The land is absent of the heroes—the migrants themselves. They are transferred across inhospitable desert lands; engage in combat with hostile Indians, diseases, and starvation; receive gifts from God in the form of gold and free land; emerge victorious over nature and Indian; and liquidate the initial absence of the hero by filling and replenishing the land. In filling the land through settlement, the migrants heeded John Quincy Adams's 1846 call for expansion into Oregon: "to make the wilderness blossom as the rose, to establish laws, to increase, multiply, and subdue the earth, which we are commanded to do by the first behest of the God Almighty." They likewise heard Thomas Hart Benton's call to manifest destiny that the white race had "alone received the divine command to subdue and replenish the earth: for it is the only race that . . . hunts out new and distant lands, and even a New World, to subdue and replenish."³³

With the Reverend Dwinell, they commemorated the 1869 joining of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads, using the Bible to sanction human alteration of the landscape. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway before our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain." And in settling, ranching, and plowing the Great Plains, they reversed the biblical Fall from Eden by turning the "Great American Desert" into yet another "Garden of the World." The reclamation of arid lands west of the hundredth meridian through the technologies of irrigation fulfilled the biblical mandate to make the desert blossom as the rose, while making the land productive for capitalist agriculture.³⁴

At the end of the nineteenth century, Frederick Jackson Turner's essay on the closing of the frontier in American history epitomized the heroic recovery narrative. The six phases of the heroic victory are again present in Turner's narrative, although it warns of impending declension as the frontier closes. (1) The frontier is defined by the absence of settlement and civilization. "Up to and including 1880, the country had a frontier of settlement, but at present the unsettled area has been . . . broken." (2) Europeans are transferred across space as the succession of frontier lines moves west, and they "adapt . . . to changes involved in crossing the continent." Stand at Cumberland Gap and watch the procession—the buffalo following the trail to the salt lick, the trapper, the miner, the rancher, and the farmer follow each other in succession; stand at South Pass a century later and watch the same succession again. (3) The individual hero is in combat with the villain—again the wilderness, Indians, and wild beasts. "The wilderness masters the colonist." The encounter with wilderness "strips off the garments" of European civilization and "puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois." (4) The heroes receive the gift of free land. But "never again," Turner warns, "will such gifts of free land offer themselves." (5) The encounter with the frontier transforms hero into victor. "Little by little he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe. . . . Here

is a new product that is American." (6) Democracy and American civilization "in a perennial rebirth" fill the land, liquidating the initial absence. "Democracy is born of free land."³⁵ With frontier expansion, temporal recovery through science and capitalism merges with spatial recovery through acquisition of private property.

Indians in the Recovery Narrative

THE HEROIC RECOVERY NARRATIVE THAT GUIDED SETTLEMENT IS NOTABLE for its treatment of Indians. Wilderness is the absence of civilization. Although most Euramericans seemed to have perceived Indians as the functional equivalent of wild animals, they nevertheless believed the Indian survivors had the potential to be "civilized" and hence to participate in the recovery as settled farmers. American officials changed the Indians' own origin stories to make them descendants of Adam and Eve; hence they were not indigenous to America. Thomas L. McHenry, who formulated Indian policy in the 1840s, said that the whole "family of man" came from "one original and common stock," of which the Indian was one branch. "Man . . . was put by his creator in the garden, which was eastward in Eden, whence flowed the river which parted, and became into four heads; and that from his fruitfulness his [the Indian] species were propagated." The commissioner of Indian affairs in 1868 deemed them "capable of civilization and christianization." A successor in 1892 argued that since Indian children were "made in the image of God, being the likeness of their Creator," they had the "same possibilities of growth and development" as other children. An Indian baby could become "a cultivated refined Christian gentleman or lovely woman."³⁶

Euramericans attempted to transform Indians from hunters into settled farmers first by removing them to lands west of the Mississippi, then to reservations, and later by allotting them 160-acre plots of private property. Thomas Jefferson saw them as capable of participating in the recovery narrative when he told a delegation in 1802 that he would be pleased to see them "cultivate the earth, to raise herds of useful animals and to spin and weave."³⁷ With Indians largely vanquished and moved to reservations by the 1890s, twentieth-century conservationists turned "recovered" Indian homelands into parks, set aside wilderness areas as people-free reserves where "man himself is a visitor who does not remain," and managed forests for maximum yield and efficiency. With the taming of wilderness, desert, and "wild men," the recovery story reached an apparently happy ending.³⁸

But Indians, for the most part, rejected the new narrative. With some exceptions, they resisted the roles into which they were cast and the lines they were forced to speak. They objected to characterizations of their lands as wilderness or desert, calling them simply home. As Chief Luther Standing Bear put it, "We did not think of the great open plains, the beautiful

rolling hills, and winding streams. The white man was nature a 'infested' with 'wild' animals: it was bountiful. . . ."³⁹

While adopting the Christian aspects compatible with traditional and celebratory aspects with otherworldly practices,⁴⁰ Altl rejected white society's scientific. Franklin satirized the colonist's opportunity to attend the College of considered the matter before refusing

Several of our young people from the northern provinces; they were come back to us they were brought from the woods; unable to bear either a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy therefore neither fit for hunting nor good for nothing. We are however tho' we decline accepting it; the men of Virginia will send us their education, instruct them

Female Nature

AN ACCOUNT OF THE HISTORY and recovery narrative must be naturalized as female in the very settlement is filled with land transformed and men as the land to be subdued, as fallen nature fruitful garden to be harvested in which American lands were "nature's bosom," the penology, and the "seduction" of capitalist expansion.⁴²

Images of nature as female in history, art, and literature. Thomas Morton in praising the potential for development by the be sped and meet her love: full wombe, not being enjoyed by theists saw in plow technology. Calling Bacon "the grand n

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While adopting the Christian religion, Indians often emphasized those aspects compatible with traditional beliefs and participated in the ceremonial and celebratory aspects with greater enthusiasm than in the more austere, otherworldly practices.⁴⁰ Although taught to read and cipher, they often rejected white society's science and technology as useless for living. As Franklin satirized the colonists' effort, the Indians, when offered the opportunity to attend the College of William and Mary in Virginia, politely considered the matter before refusing:

Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the northern provinces; they were instructed in all your sciences; but when they came back to us they were bad runners; ignorant of every means of living in the woods; unable to bear either cold or hunger; knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy; spoke our language imperfectly, and were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, or counsellors; they were totally good for nothing. We are however, none the less obliged by your kind offer, tho' we decline accepting it; and to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them.⁴¹

Female Nature in the Recovery Narrative

AN ACCOUNT OF THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN SETTLEMENT AS A LAPSARIAN and recovery narrative must also consider the crucial role of nature conceptualized as female in the very structure of the plot. The rhetoric of American settlement is filled with language that casts nature as female object to be transformed and men as the agents of change. Allusions to Eve as virgin land to be subdued, as fallen nature to be redeemed through reclamation, and as fruitful garden to be harvested and enjoyed are central to the particular ways in which American lands were developed. The extraction of resources from "nature's bosom," the penetration of "her womb" by science and technology, and the "seduction" of female land by male agriculture reinforced capitalist expansion.⁴²

Images of nature as female are deeply encoded into the texts of American history, art, and literature and function as ideologies for settlement. Thus Thomas Morton in praising New England as a new Canaan likened its potential for development by "art and industry" to a "faire virgin longing to be sped and meete her lover in a Nuptiall bed." Now, however, "her fruitfull wombe, not being enjoyed is like a glorious tombe."⁴³ Male agriculturalists saw in plow technology a way to compel female nature to produce. Calling Bacon "the grand master of philosophy" in 1833, the Massachusetts

agricultural improver Henry Colman promoted Bacon's approach to recovering the garden through agriculture. "The effort to extend the dominion of man over nature, he wrote, "is the most healthy and most noble of all ambitions." He characterized the earth as a female whose productivity could help to advance the progress of the human race. "Here man exercises dominion over nature; . . . commands the earth on which he treads to waken her mysterious energies . . . compels the inanimate earth to teem with life; and to impart sustenance and power, health and happiness to the countless multitudes who hang on her breast and are dependent on her bounty."⁴⁴

A graphic example of female nature succumbing to the male plow is provided by Frank Norris in his 1901 novel *The Octopus*, a story of the transformation of California by the railroad. Here the earth is female, sexual, and alive. Norris writes,

The great brown earth turned a huge flank to [the sky], exhaling the moisture of the early dew. . . . One could not take a dozen steps upon the ranches without the brusque sensation that underfoot the land was alive, . . . palpitating with the desire of reproduction. Deep down there in the recesses of the soil, the great heart throbbed once more, thrilling with passion, vibrating with desire, offering itself to the caress of the plough, insistent, eager, imperious. Dimly one felt the deep-seated trouble of the earth, the uneasy agitation of its members, the hidden tumult of its womb, demanding to be made fruitful, to reproduce, to disengage the eternal renescent germ of Life that stirred and struggled in its loins. . . .⁴⁵

In Norris's novel the seduction of the female earth was carried out on a massive scale by thousands of men operating their plows in unison on a given day in the spring. "Everywhere throughout the great San Joaquin," he wrote, "unseen and unheard, a thousand ploughs up-stirred the land, tens of thousands of shears clutched deep into the warm, moist soil."⁴⁶ And Norris leaves no doubt that the men's technology, the plow, is also male and that the seduction becomes violent rape:

It was the long stroking caress, vigorous, male, powerful, for which the Earth seemed panting. The heroic embrace of a multitude of iron hands, gripping deep into the brown, warm flesh of the land that quivered responsive and passionate under this rude advance, so robust as to be almost an assault, so violent as to be veritably brutal. There, under the sun and under the speckless sheen of the sky, the wooing of the Titan began, the vast primal passion, the two world-forces, the elemental Male and Female, locked in a colossal embrace, at grapples in the throes of an infinite desire, at once terrible and divine, knowing no law, untamed, savage, natural, sublime.⁴⁷

The narrative of frontier expansion is a story of male energy subduing female nature, taming the wild, plowing the land, re-creating the garden lost by Eve. American males lived the frontier myth in their everyday lives,

making the land safe for capital by men, the land was safe for of a state of savagery and barbarism. This state of domesticated "womanlike" man. "The man *Monthly* in November 1880, "

But the taming of external internal nature, the exploitation of human nature. The civilizing pastoral lands of the garden; coeur in 1782 noted that on carnivorous animals . . . lived farmed the middle settlements; fied by the "simple cultivation reading and political discourse; civilizee shudders at the idea the farmer who subdues it with explorer, frontiersman, and the ax, the trap, and the gun. satanic forest of William Bra neer (fallen Eve) to the position Muir (original and Mother E As wilderness vanishes before preserved as test zones for hone male strength and skills

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John Gast depicts this asc *can Progress*.⁵³ On the left, active, alive, wild, dark, and put it, with "wild beasts and a dark disorder accompanied right, coming from the east nature ordered, civilized, and assaulted, she floats angelic emblazoned with the star of hand, symbols of the high through the air, the word of

Bacon's approach to recovery to extend the dominion of and most noble of all ambivalence whose productivity could help where man exercises dominion he treads to waken her mystery to teem with life; and to witness to the countless multitude on her bounty."⁴⁴

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ry of male energy subduing d, re-creating the garden lost myth in their everyday lives,

making the land safe for capitalism and commodity production. Once tamed by men, the land was safe for women. To civilize was to bring the land out of a state of savagery and barbarism into a state of refinement and enlightenment. This state of domestication, of civility, is symbolized by woman and "womanlike" man. "The man of training, the civilizee," reported *Scribner's Monthly* in November 1880, "is less manly than the rough, the pioneer."⁴⁸

But the taming of external nature was intimately linked to the taming of internal nature, the exploitation of nonhuman nature to the exploitation of human nature. The civilizing process not only removed wild beasts from the pastoral lands of the garden; it suppressed the wild animal in men. Crèvecoeur in 1782 noted that on the frontier "men appear to be no better than carnivorous animals . . . living on the flesh of wild animals." Those who farmed the middle settlements, on the other hand, were "like plants," purified by the "simple cultivation of the earth," becoming civilized through reading and political discourse.⁴⁹ Or as Richard Burton put it in 1861, "The civilizee shudders at the idea of eating wolf."⁵⁰ Just as the earth is female to the farmer who subdues it with the plow, so wilderness is female to the male explorer, frontiersman, and pioneer who tame it with the brute strength of the ax, the trap, and the gun. Its valence, however, varies from the negative satanic forest of William Bradford and the untamed wilderness of the pioneer (fallen Eve) to the positive pristine Eden and mother earth of John Muir (original and Mother Eve) and the parks of Frederick Law Olmsted. As wilderness vanishes before advancing civilization, its remnants must be preserved as test zones for men (epitomized by Theodore Roosevelt) to hone male strength and skills.⁵¹

Civilization is the final end, the telos, toward which "wild" nature is destined. The progressive narrative undoes the declension of the Fall. The "end of nature" is civilization. Civilization is thus nature natured, *Natura naturata*—the natural order, or nature ordered and tamed. It is no longer nature naturing, *Natura naturans*—nature as creative force. Nature passes from inchoate matter endowed with a formative power to a reflection of the civilized natural order designed by God. The unruly energy of wild female nature is suppressed and pacified. The final, happy state of nature natured is female and civilized—the restored garden of the world.⁵²

John Gast depicts this ascensionist narrative in his 1872 painting *American Progress*.⁵³ On the left, toward the west is *Natura naturans*, nature active, alive, wild, dark, and savage, filled, as William Bradford would have put it, with "wild beasts and wild men." Buffalo, wolves, and elk flee in dark disorder accompanied by Indians with horses and travois. On the right, coming from the east, advancing to the west, is *Natura naturata*—nature ordered, civilized, and tamed. No longer to be feared or sexually assaulted, she floats angelically through the air in flowing white robes, emblazoned with the star of empire. She carries telegraph wires in her left hand, symbols of the highest level of communication—language borne through the air, the word or logos from above. The domination of logic or

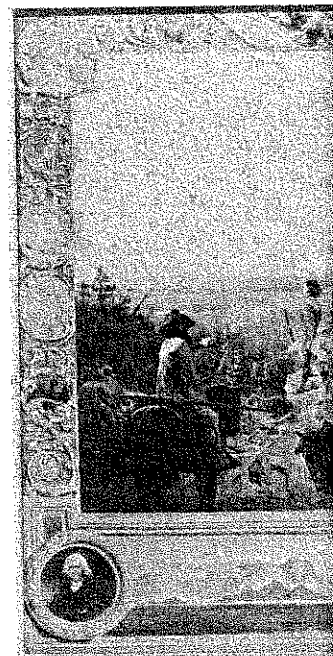


John Gast, *American Progress*. (Courtesy Gene Autry Museum, Los Angeles, California)

pure form is repeated in the book grasped in her right hand touching the coiled telegraph wires. She represents the city, the civil, the civic order of government—the highest order of nature. She is pure Platonic form impressed on female matter, transforming and ordering all beneath her.⁵⁴

Most important, however, it is American men who have prepared her way. They have dispelled the darkness, fought the Indian, killed the bear and buffalo. Covered wagons bearing westward pioneers, gold rush prospectors, and the pony express precede her. Farmers plowing the soil next to their fenced fields and rude cabins have settled and tamed the land. Stage coaches and trains follow, bringing waves of additional settlers. At the far right is the Atlantic civilization, where ships bearing the arts of the Old World arrive in the New World. The painting itself is a lived progressive narrative. Its east-to-west movement is a story of ascent and conquest.

A similar image was captured by Emanuel Leutze in his famous mural in the U.S. Capitol, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*, painted in 1861, illustrating a line from a poem by George Berkeley. At the center of the mural on a rock outcrop pointing west toward barren “virgin” land is a madonna-like grouping of a pioneer with his wife and child. Below pass men with guns mounted on horses followed by covered wagons bearing women representing civilization. Their way is prepared by men cutting the forest with axes and uprooting trees that lie in the party’s way. Below, in the mural’s frame, is a view of San Francisco’s golden gate flanked by portraits of explorers William Clark and Daniel Boone. Like Gast’s *American*



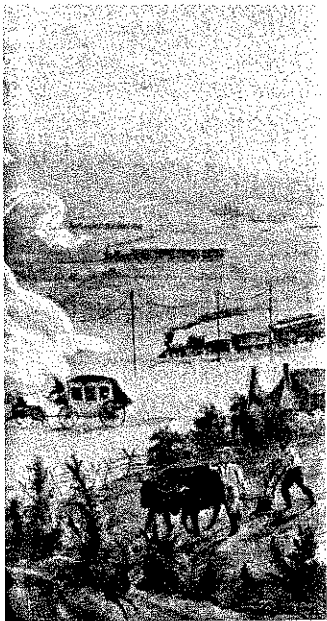
Emanuel Leutze, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*. (Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Upton.)

Progress, the scene is a dynamic nature into female civilized land.

A third example is the 18 Tojetti. A female liberty figure mounted American eagle put Indians and buffalo flee into tion, while on the right beh. agriculture, medicine, mecl Women bearing a tablet sym ing commerce and light to a

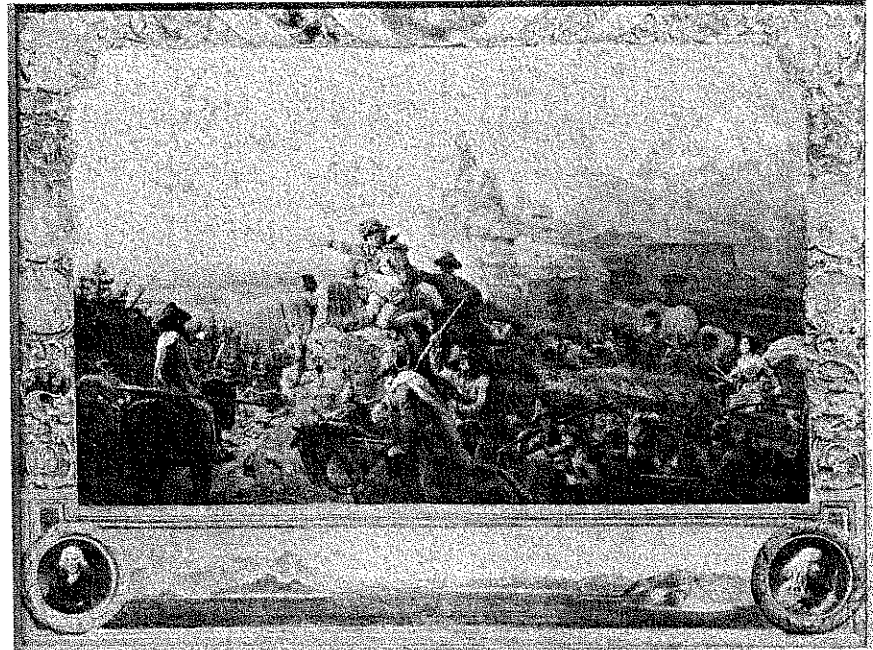
A fourth representation i loughby Maynard in 1893. seated on a throne decorat knowledge on her lap and enlightenment and educatio word from above. The figu ness of matter, darkness, an

All four images portray oped nature, or *Natura na Natura naturata*. In the firs tion from the undeveloped



Museum, Los Angeles, California)

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Emanuel Leutze, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes its Way*. (Courtesy National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Bequest of Sara Carr Upton.)

Progress, the scene is a dynamic moment in the transformation of "virgin" nature into female civilized form through the agency of men.

A third example is the 1875 painting *Progress of America*, by Domenico Tojetti. A female liberty figure personifying progress drives a chariot with a mounted American eagle pulled by two white horses. On the left, American Indians and buffalo flee into darkness and disorder in the advance of civilization, while on the right behind the liberty icon, female figures representing agriculture, medicine, mechanics, and the arts accompany her advance. Women bearing a tablet symbolizing literacy follow in front of a train bringing commerce and light to a barren "virgin" landscape.

A fourth representation is that of *Civilization*, painted by George Willoughby Maynard in 1893. A white female figure dressed in white robes is seated on a throne decorated with cornucopias. She holds the book of knowledge on her lap and points to its written words as the epitome of enlightenment and education. The book represents the logos, the light or word from above. The figure's Anglo-Saxon whiteness excludes the blackness of matter, darkness, and dark-skinned peoples.

All four images portray movement from dark, barren, virgin, undeveloped nature, or *Natura naturans*, to final Platonic, civilized, ideal form, *Natura naturata*. In the first two images, male agents effect the transformation from the undeveloped disorder of the desert to the ordered, idealized



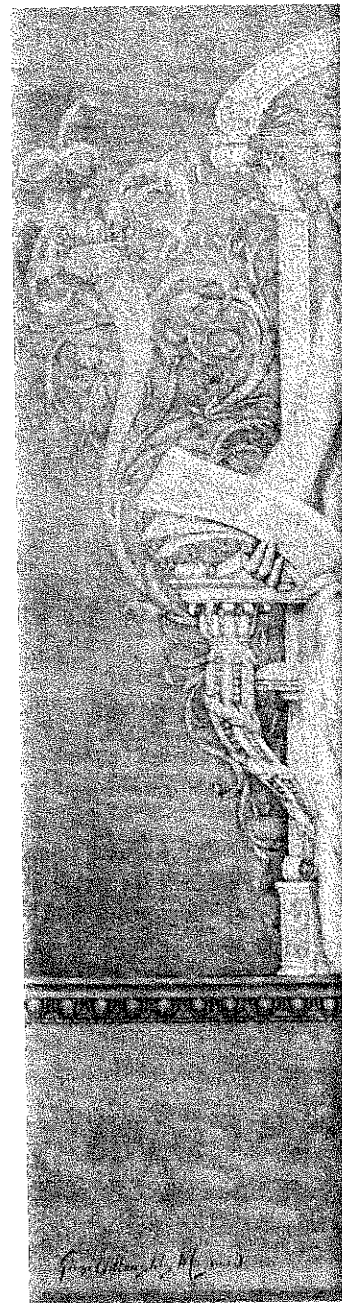
Domenico Tojetti, *Progress of America*. (Courtesy Collection of the Oakland Museum of California, Gift of the Kahn Foundation)

landscape. The final two paintings reveal the outcome, an enlightened world made safe for educated Euramerican men and women.

The City in the Garden

THE CITY REPRESENTS THE NEXT STAGE OF THE RECOVERY NARRATIVE—THE creation of the city in the garden (Virgil's *urbs in horto*) by means of the capitalist market. The city epitomizes the transformation of female nature into female civilization through the mutually reinforcing powers of male energy and interest-earning capital. Frank Norris in his second novel, *The Pit* (1903), reveals the connections.⁵⁵ In writing of Chicago and the wheat pit at the Board of Trade (a story brilliantly told in William Cronon's *Nature's Metropolis*, inspired in part by Norris's book),⁵⁶ Norris depicts the city as female. The city is the locus of power that operates in the natural world, sweeping everything towards its center. It is the bridge between civilized female form and the raw matter of the surrounding hinterlands, drawing that matter towards it, as natural resources are transformed into capitalist commodities. Chicago, writes Norris,

the Great Grey City, brooking no rival, imposed its dominion upon a reach of country larger than many a kingdom of the Old World. For thousands of miles beyond its confines was its influence felt. Out, far out, far away in the snow and shadow of Northern Wisconsin forests, axes and saws bit the bark



George Willoughby Maynard,



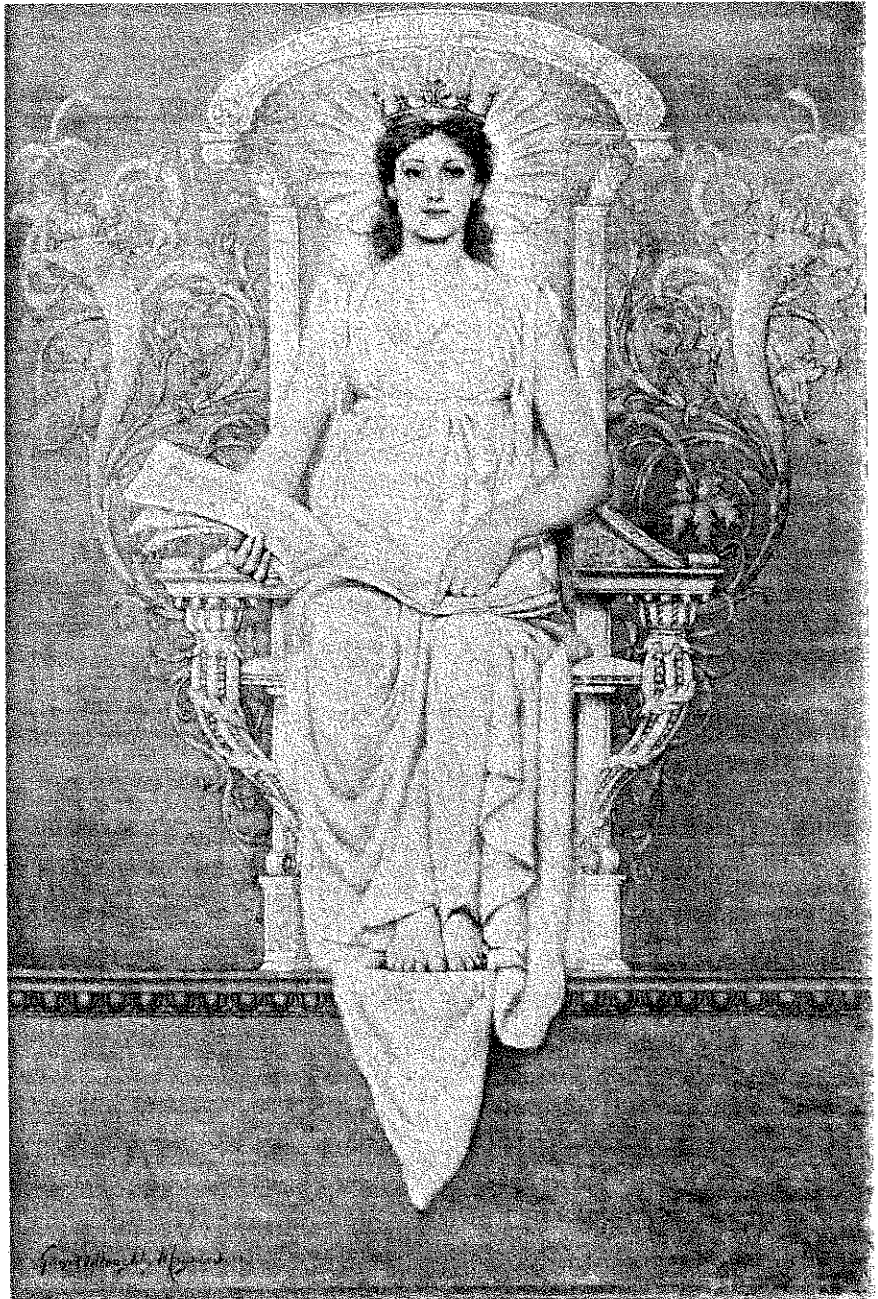
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George Willoughby Maynard, *Civilization*. (Courtesy National Academy of Design)

of century-old trees, stimulated by this city's energy. Just as far to the southward pick and drill leaped to the assault of veins of anthracite, moved by her central power. Her force turned the wheels of harvester and seeder a thousand miles distant in Iowa and Kansas. Her force spun the screws and propellers of innumerable squadrons of lake steamers crowding the Sault Sainte Marie. For her and because of her all the Central States, all the Great Northwest roared with traffic and industry; sawmills screamed; factories, their smoke blackening the sky, clashed and flamed; wheels turned, pistons leaped in their cylinders; cog gripped cog; beltings clasped the drums of mammoth wheels; and converters of forges belched into the clouded air their tempest breath of molten steel.⁵⁷

The city transforms the matter of nature in the very act of pulling it inward. Like Plato's female soul of the world, turning herself within herself, the city provides the source of motion that permeates and energizes the world around it, the bridge between raw changing matter and final civilized form. In Norris's novel, men at first seem subordinate to the city's higher force, acting merely as agents in the preordained purpose of transforming nature into civilization. They facilitate the change from *Natura naturans* into *Natura naturata*, from natural resource into fabricated product. Operating the steam engines, sawmills, factories, lumber barges, grain elevators, trains, and switches that make Chicago an industrial city, workers shout and signal as trains daily debouch businessmen bringing with them trade from country to city. This process of "civilization in the making," says Norris, is like a "great tidal wave," an "elemental," "primordial" force, "the first verses of Genesis." It "subdu[es] the wilderness in a single generation," through the "resistless subjugation of . . . the lakes and prairies."⁵⁸

Yet behind the scenes, other men, the capitalist speculators of the Chicago Board of Trade, attempt to manipulate the very forces of nature, pushing the transformation faster and faster. Capitalism mystifies by converting living nature into dead matter and by changing inert metals into living money.⁵⁹ To the capitalist puppeteers, nature is a doll-like puppet controlled by the strings of the wheat trade that changes money into interest-earning capital. Male minds calculate the motions that control the inert matter below.

To Norris's capitalist, Curtis Jadwin, nature is dead. Only money is alive, growing and swelling through the daily trade of the wheat pit. With the bulls and bears of the marketplace the only apparent living things he encounters, Jadwin fails utterly to account for the earth and the wheat as alive. Yet as Jadwin, the bull trader, corners the market to obtain complete control over the bears, driving the price higher and higher, the living wheat planted by hundreds of farmers throughout the heartland rises from the soil as a gigantic irrepressible force. The capitalist's manipulation of apparently dead nature has immense environmental consequences. Jadwin, Norris writes, had "laid his puny human grasp upon Creation and the very earth herself." The "great mother . . . had stirred at last in her sleep and sent her

omnipotence moving through the disturber of her appointe

But in the late nineteenth century and the land is made safe for the loss of wild nature. There is for men to test maleness, strength of men with nature.⁶¹ Similarly that suppresses internal sex become male, nor does civil called universal association called by Sherry Ortner.⁶² There is closing chapters of the story progress, males continue to female nature and civilized and men alike, suppressing internal nature.

Nor are nature and cultural universal or essential meanings. constructed concepts that change progressive narrative. So to roles that men and women powerful narratives as laissez destiny, and the frontier strength power and patronage. Their the new stories to the older library of Western culture. ordinary people read, listen their elders—the ministers, sors who teach and socialize

The most recent chapter of formation of nature through apples to Flavr-Savr tomato being redesigned so that the som as the rose. In the recent have fewer seeds, need less rated fat, and have longer nature is reaching too close depict the snake coiled around as the DNA spiral. But the lies that allow the recovery tions.

The twentieth-century Garden orated with trees, flowers, nature at the Nature Comp

omnipotence moving through the grooves of the world, to find and crush the disturber of her appointed courses."⁶⁰

But in the late nineteenth century, as the frontier closes, forests disappear, and the land is made safe for civilization, American men begin to lament the loss of wild nature. There is an apparent need to retain wilderness as a place for men to test maleness, strength, and virility and an apparent association of men with nature.⁶¹ Similarly, women are symbolized as the moral model that suppresses internal sexual libido. But nature as wilderness does not *become* male, nor does civilization *become* female in a reversal of the so-called universal association of female to nature and male to culture identified by Sherry Ortner.⁶² There is no real reversal of male/female valences in the closing chapters of the story of frontier expansion. In the story of American progress, males continue to be the transforming agents between active female nature and civilized female form, making the land safe for women and men alike, suppressing both unpredictable external nature and unruly internal nature.

Nor are nature and culture, women and men, binary opposites with universal or essential meanings. Nature, wilderness, and civilization are socially constructed concepts that change over time and serve as stage settings in the progressive narrative. So too are the concepts of male and female and the roles that men and women play on the stage of history. The authors of such powerful narratives as laissez-faire capitalism, mechanistic science, manifest destiny, and the frontier story are usually privileged elites with access to power and patronage. Their words are read by persons of power who add the new stories to the older biblical story. As such the books become the library of Western culture. The library, in turn, functions as ideology when ordinary people read, listen to, internalize, and act out the stories told by their elders—the ministers, entrepreneurs, newspaper editors, and professors who teach and socialize the young.

The most recent chapter of the book of the recovery narrative is the transformation of nature through biotechnology. From genetically engineered apples to Flavr-Savr tomatoes, the fruits of the original (evolved) garden are being redesigned so that the salinated irrigated desert can continue to blossom as the rose. In the recovered Garden of Eden, fruits will ripen faster, have fewer seeds, need less water, require fewer pesticides, contain less saturated fat, and have longer shelf lives. The human temptation to engineer nature is reaching too close to the powers of God, warn the Jeremiahs who depict the snake coiled around the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil as the DNA spiral. But the progressive engineers who design the technologies that allow the recovery to accelerate see only hope in the new fabrications.

The twentieth-century Garden of Eden is the enclosed shopping mall decorated with trees, flowers, and fountains in which people can shop for nature at the Nature Company, purchase "natural" clothing at Esprit, sam-

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ple organic foods and Rainforest Crunch in kitchen gardens, buy twenty-first-century products at Sharper Image, and play virtual reality games in which SimEve is reinvented in Cyberspace. This garden in the city re-creates the pleasures and temptations of the original garden and the golden age where people can peacefully harvest the fruits of earth with gold grown by the market. The mall, enclosed by the desert of the parking lots surrounding it, is covered by glass domes reaching to heaven, accessed by spiral staircases and escalators affording a vista over the whole garden of shops. The "river that went out of Eden to water the garden" is reclaimed in meandering streams lined with palm trees and filled with bright orange carp. Today's malls feature stone grottoes, trellises decorated with flowers, life-sized trees, statues, birds, animals, and even indoor beaches that simulate paradigmatic nature as a cultivated, benign garden. With their engineered spaces and commodity fetishes, they epitomize consumer capitalism's vision of the recovery from the Fall.⁶³

Critiques of the Recovery Narrative

THE MODERN VERSION OF THE RECOVERY NARRATIVE, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN subjected to scathing criticism. Postmodern thinkers contest its Enlightenment assumptions, while cultural feminists and environmentalists reverse its plot, depicting a slow decline from a prior golden age, not a progressive ascent to a new garden on earth. The critics' plot does not move from the tragedy of the Fall to the comedy of an earthly paradise but descends from an original state of oneness with nature to the tragedy of nature's destruction. Nevertheless, they too hope for a recovery, one rapid enough to save the earth and society by the mid-twenty-first century. The metanarrative of recovery does not change, but the declensionist plot, into which they have cast prior history, must be radically reversed. The postmodern critique of modernism is both a deconstruction of Enlightenment thought and a set of reconstructive proposals for the creation of a better world.

The identification of modernism as a problem rather than as progress was sharply formulated by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in the opening sentences of their 1944 *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: "The fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant. The program of the enlightenment was the disenchantment of the world; the dissolution of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy." They criticized both Francis Bacon's concept of the domination of nature and Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's optimism that the control of nature would lead to advancement. They faulted the reduction of nature to mere number by mechanistic science and capitalism: "Number becomes the canon of the Enlightenment. The same equations dominate bourgeois justice and commodity exchange. . . . Myth turns into enlightenment and nature into mere objectivity."⁶⁴

Among the critics of modernism are many feminists and environmental-

ists who propose a reversal to the first century. Cultural feminists, the *terra mater* of the consciousness of differences between people and nature, leading patriarchy initiates a long decline. Plow agriculture took over from horse-mounted warriors in European culture, and male gods. In the proposed recovery, ultimate wisdom, and the goddess. Feminist religious history reclaims original oneness as both male and a feminist or an egalitarian.

Feminist science sees the difference between male and female as a problem, argue, who have invented market economies that have made such feminists the new narrative of the history of science and technology. Hence both.

Environmentalism, like feminism, seeing history as a slow decline, made the desert blossom as a garden has become a degraded garden. The decline from Eden to the present moment as in the Adam and Eve story, from the paleolithic to the present, and social changes that overtook nature, cultivation, and domestication, evolved, prehuman garden economy actually accelerated.

As the twentieth century since the birth of Christ approaches a crisis. The global warming, the destruction of the ozone layer, and wilderness are all subplots. Predictions of crisis, such as the Club of Rome's *The Limits to Growth* (1969), the Club of Rome's *The End of Nature* (1989) totally subsumed by human (civilized) nature.⁶⁸

Like feminists, environmentalists see the problem in the story. Having seen the plot, they nevertheless opt for a recovery.

chen gardens, buy twenty-layer virtual reality games in garden in the city re-creates garden and the golden age of earth with gold grown by the parking lots surrounding accessed by spiral staircases garden of shops. The "river is reclaimed in meandering bright orange carp. Today's with flowers, life-sized trees, as that simulate paradigmatic engineered spaces and colonialism's vision of the recovery

Narrative

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ists who propose a reversal that will initiate a new millennium in the twenty-first century. Cultural feminists and ecofeminists see the original oneness as female, the *terra mater* of the neolithic era, from which emerged the consciousness of differences between humans and animals, male and female, people and nature, leading to dominance and submission. The advent of patriarchy initiates a long decline in the status of women and nature. Men's plow agriculture took over women's gathering and horticultural activities, horse-mounted warriors injected violence into a largely peaceful Old European culture, and male gods replaced female earth deities in origin stories. In the proposed recovery, Eve is revisioned as the first scientist, Sophia as ultimate wisdom, and the goddess as symbol of female power and creativity. Feminist religious history redirects inquiry into the gendered nature of the original oneness as both male and female. The recovery would therefore be a feminist or an egalitarian world.⁶⁵

Feminist science sees the original mind as having no sex, and hence accessible to male and female minds alike. It has been men, many feminists would argue, who have invented the science and technology and organized the market economies that have made nature victim in the ascent of "man." For such feminists the new narrative would entail reclaiming women's roles in the history of science and asserting female power in contemporary science and technology. Hence both sexes can participate in the recovery.⁶⁶

Environmentalism, like feminism, reverses the plot of the recovery narrative, seeing history as a slow decline, not a progressive movement that has made the desert blossom as the rose. The recovery story is false; an original garden has become a degraded desert. Pristine nature, not innocent man, has fallen. The decline from Eden was slow, rather than a precipitous lapsarian moment as in the Adam and Eve origin story. Over the millennia from the paleolithic to the present, nature has been the victim of both human hubris and social changes that overcome "the necessities of nature" through domestication, cultivation, and commodification of every aspect of an original, evolved, prehuman garden. So-called advances in science, technology, and economy actually accelerate the decline.⁶⁷

As the twentieth century draws to a close and the second great millennium since the birth of Christ reaches its end, the environmental decline approaches a crisis. The greenhouse effect, the population explosion, the destruction of the ozone layer, the extinction of species, and the end of wilderness are all subplots in a grand narrative of environmental endism. Predictions of crisis, such as those of Paul Ehrlich in "Eco-Catastrophe" (1969), the Club of Rome in *Limits to Growth* (1972) and Bill McKibben in *The End of Nature* (1989), abound, as first (evolved, prehuman) nature is totally subsumed by humans and the human artifacts of second (commodified) nature.⁶⁸

Like feminists, environmentalists want to rewrite the modern progressive story. Having seen the plot as declensionist rather than progressive, they nevertheless opt for a recovery that must be put in place by the mid-twenty-

first century. "Sustainability" is a new vision of the recovered garden, one in which humanity will live in a relationship of balance and harmony with the natural world. Environmentalists who press for sustainable development see the recovery as achievable through the spread of nondegrading forms of agriculture and industry. Preservationists and deep ecologists strive to save pristine nature as wilderness before it can be destroyed by development. Restoration ecologists wish to marshal human labor to restore an already degraded nature to an earlier, pristine state. Social ecologists and green parties devise new economic and political structures that overcome the domination of human beings and nonhuman nature. Women and nature, minorities and nature, other animals and nature will be fully included in the recovery. The regeneration of nature and people will be achieved through social and environmental justice. The End Drama envisions a postpatriarchal, socially just ecotopia for the postmillennial world of the twenty-first century.⁶⁹

Chaos Theory and Partnership Ethics

SEEING WESTERN HISTORY AS A RECOVERY NARRATIVE, WITH FEMINISM AND environmentalism as reversals of the plot, brings up the question of the character of the plot itself. The declensionist and progressive plots that underlie the meta-narrative of recovery both gain power from their linearity. Linearity is not only conceptually easy to grasp; it is also a property of modernity itself. Mechanistic science, progress, and capitalism all draw power from the linear functions of mathematical equations—the upward and downward slopes of straight lines and curves. To the extent that these linear slopes intersect with a real material world, they refer to a limited domain only. Chaos theory and complexity theory suggest that only the unusual domain of mechanistic science can be described by linear differential equations. The usual—that is, the domain of everyday occurrences, such as the weather, turbulence, the shapes of coastlines, and the arrhythmic fibrillations of the human heart—cannot be so easily described. The world is more complex than we know or indeed can ever know. The comfortable predictability of the linear slips away into the uncertainty of the indeterminate—into discordant harmonies and disorderly order.

The appearance of chaos as an actor in science and history in the late twentieth century not only is symptomatic of the breakdown of modernism, mechanism, and, potentially, capitalism but suggests the possibility of a new birth, a new world, a new millennium—the order-out-of-chaos narrative of Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers. But chaos theory also fundamentally destabilizes the very concept of nature as a standard or referent. It disrupts the idea of the "balance of nature," of nature as resilient actor or mother who will repair the errors of human actors and continue as fecund garden (Eve as mother). It questions the possibility that humans as agents can control and master nature through science and technology, undermining the

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Recognition of history as the relativity of the histori own lives as participants in counterparts, we live our liv we have been socialized as c the story told to itself by th internalize narrative as ide power. Once we identify i but still only a story—we r to challenge the structures should be challenged.

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myth of nature as virgin female to be developed (Eve as virgin). Chaos is the reemergence of nature as power over humans, nature as active, dark, wild, turbulent, and uncontrollable (fallen Eve). Ecologists characterize “mother nature” as a “strange attractor,” while turbulence is seen to be encoded with gendered images of masculine channels and feminine flows.⁷⁰ Moreover, in the chaotic narrative, humans lose the hubris of fallen Adam that the garden can be re-created on earth. The world is not created by a patriarchal God ex nihilo, but emerges out of chaos. Thus the very possibility of the recovery of a stable original garden—the plot of the recovery meta-narrative—is itself challenged.

Recognition of history as a meta-narrative raises the further question of the relativity of the histories through which we are educated and of our own lives as participants in the plots they tell. Like our nineteenth-century counterparts, we live our lives as characters in the grand narrative into which we have been socialized as children and conform as adults. That narrative is the story told to itself by the dominant society of which we are a part. We internalize narrative as ideology. Ideology is a story told by people in power. Once we identify ideology as a story—powerful and compelling, but still only a story—we realize that by rewriting the story, we can begin to challenge the structures of power. We recognize that all stories can and should be challenged.

But can we actually step outside the story into which we have been cast as characters and enter into a story with a different plot? More important, can we change the plot of the grand master narrative of modernism? Where do I as author of this text stand in relationship to it? As a product of modernism, mechanism, and capitalism, I have internalized the values of the recovery narrative I have sought to identify. I participate in the progressive recovery narrative in my daily work, my wages for intellectual labor, my aspirations for a better material life, and my enjoyment of the profits my individual achievements have wrought. Yet I also believe, despite the relativism of environmental endism, that the environmental crisis is real—that the vanishing frogs, fish, and songbirds are telling us a truth. I am also a product of linear thinking and have set up this recovery narrative to reflect the very linearity of progressive history. This is history seen from a particular point of view, the view I have identified as the dominant ideology of modernism. I also believe my recovery narrative reflects a fundamental insight into how nature has been historically constructed as a gendered object.

Yet both history and nature are extremely complex, complicated, and nonlinear. What would a chaotic, nonlinear, nongendered history with a different plot look like? Would it be as compelling as the linear version, even if that linear version were extremely nuanced and complicated? A post-modern history might posit characteristics other than those identified with modernism, such as a multiplicity of real actors; acausal, nonsequential events; nonessentialized symbols and meanings; many authorial voices, rather than one; dialectical action and process, rather than the imposed logos

of form; situated and contextualized, rather than universal, knowledge. It would be a story (or multiplicity of stories) that perhaps can only be acted and lived, not written at all.

I too yearn for a recovery from environmental declension—for my own vision of a postpatriarchal, socially just ecotopia for the third millennium. My vision entails a partnership ethic between humans (whether male or female), and between humans and nonhuman nature. For most of human history, nonhuman nature has had power over humans. People accepted fate while propitiating nature with gifts, sacrifices, and prayer (often within hierarchical human relationships). Since the seventeenth century, however, some groups of people have increasingly gained great power over nature and other human groups through the interlinked forces of science, technology, capitalism (and state socialism), politics, and religion.

A partnership ethic would bring humans and nonhuman nature into a dynamically balanced, more nearly equal relationship. Humans, as the bearers of ethics, would acknowledge nonhuman nature as an autonomous actor that cannot be predicted or controlled except in very limited domains. We would also acknowledge that we have the potential to destroy life as we currently know it through nuclear power, pesticides, toxic chemicals, and unrestrained economic development, and exercise specific restraints on that ability. We would cease to create profit for the few at the expense of the many. We would instead organize our economic and political forces to fulfill peoples' basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, and energy, and to provide security for health, jobs, education, children, and old age. Such forms of security would rapidly reduce population growth rates, since a major means of providing security would not depend on having large numbers of children, especially boys. A partnership ethic would be a relationship between a human community and a nonhuman community in a particular place, a place that recognizes its connections to the larger world through economic and ecological exchanges. It would be an ethic in which humans act to fulfill both human needs and nature's needs by restraining human hubris. Guided by a partnership ethic, people would select technologies that sustained the natural environment by becoming co-workers and partners with nonhuman nature, not dominators over it.

A partnership ethic implies a remythicizing of the Edenic recovery narrative or the writing of a new narrative altogether. The new myth would not accept the patriarchal sequence of creation, or even the milder phrase "male and female, created he them," but might instead emphasize simultaneous creation, cooperative male / female evolution, or even an emergence out of chaos or the earth. It would not accept the idea of subduing the earth, or even dressing and keeping the garden, since both entail total domestication and control by human beings. Instead, each earthly place would be a home, or community, to be shared with other living and nonliving things. The needs of humans and nonhumans would be dynamically balanced. If such a story can be rewritten or experienced, it would be the product of many new

voices and would have a common mother origin story, women agents. The new ending, he and reread the story into what ten only through action.

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and reread the story into which we were born. The new story can be rewrit-
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coordinated with the World Wildlife Foundation and the Field Museum of Natural History. They include a "Save the Rain Forest" (two words) poster, picturing a baby jaguar on a leafy log, and a Rain Forest Imperative Video, designed to help students in grades 6–12 "unearth the complex and urgent issues in preserving the tropical rain forest."

19. I thank Professor Joe Antos of the University of Victoria, a specialist in plant ecology of the Pacific Northwest, for his professional evaluation of the photo. I also thank Michael Barbour for putting me in touch with Professor Antos.

20. After Jim Proctor and Michael Barbour confirmed that the vegetation in the picture could not be tropical, I wrote to the McDonald's Corporation to ask where the picture was taken. Mr. Jerry Horn of the Customer Satisfaction Department wrote back that "the photo on the 'Did You Know' #5 leaflet is a tropical forest in South America" (personal communication, June 14, 1994). When I called Mr. Horn on June 28 to ask where exactly this rain forest might be located, he informed me that an outside firm "scoured all over in the Amazon for it." Asked who could give me the precise location, he replied that the photo was a stock photo from the Leo Burnett archives and that no one could say "where in the world it came from, except that it is definitely a tropical rain forest in South America."

21. Mary Louise Pratt suggests the possibility of release from the rigidity of genre "not by doing away with tropes (which is not possible) but by appropriating and inventing new ones (which is)." See Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1986), 50.

22. Alcida Ramos makes this point in her "Indian Voices," in *Rethinking History and Myth: Indigenous South American Perspectives on the Past*, ed. Jonathan D. Hill (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1988), 214–34.

Reinventing Eden

*An earlier version of this paper was presented as a keynote address to the Fifth International Conference on Narrative, Albany, N.Y., April 1–4, 1993. I am grateful for suggestions and comments from Zelda Bronstein, J. Baird Callicott, Anthony Chennells, Yaakov Garb, Debora Hammond, David Igler, James McCarthy, Charles Sellers, Hayden White, and members of the Reinventing Nature seminar at the Humanities Research Institute at the University of California at Irvine.

1. Roland Nelson, Penobscot, as recorded by Frank Speck, "Penobscot Tales and Religious Beliefs," *Journal of American Folklore* 48 (Jan.–March 1935): 1–107, on 75. This corn mother origin story is a variant on a number of eastern U.S. and Canadian transformative accounts, recorded from oral traditions, that attribute the origins of corn to a mythical corn mother who produces corn from her body, grows old, and then instructs her lover or son how to plant and tend corn. The killing of the corn mother in most of the origin stories may symbolize a transition from gathering-hunting to active corn cultivation. The snake lover may be an influence from the Christian tradition or a more universal symbol of the renewal of life (snakes shed their skins) and / or the male sexual organ. On corn mother origin stories, see John

Witthoft, *Green Corn Ceremonies* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1949), 77–8 Aug. 1910, as recorded by W. L. G. Printing Bureau, 1914), 87–88; *American Folklore* 3 (1890): 214; for "Myths and Tales of the South," *Ethnology*, no. 88 (1929): 9–17; *of the Longhouse* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1914), 144 (1910): 36–39; Gudmundur Gudmundsson, *Anthropos* 46 (1951): 853–914. Southwest include the Pueblo and the light of the fourth world, where See Ramón Gutiérrez, *When Was I Born?* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1991). For to mother earth, see Sam Gill, *of Chicago Press*, 1987), 4, 125

2. On Great Plains environment see William Cronon, "A Place of American History" 78 (1992): be interpreted from a variety of diverse narrative formats I have mentioned, the concepts of desert motifs that change valences over

3. Genesis, chap. 1. On the corn mineral, and unformed worlds (Harcourt, Brace, 1963), 19–20 community, the animal world vegetable world is a garden or with precious stones and starlight tragic state or vision, the human is filled with beasts and birds vegetable world is a wilderness with rocks and ruins, and the tragedy moves from a better state from an initial tragic state, to this reference. On history as natural *Imagination in Nineteenth* Press, 1973); idem, *Tropics of* Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1991 *course and Historical Representation*

4. Benjamin Franklin, "Remarks," ed. Richard E. Amacher, ed., *Franklin* Rutgers Univ. Press, 1953), 89 literal.

5. The concept of a recovery period. See the *Oxford English*

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note address to the Fifth ril 1–4, 1993. I am grate- Baird Callicott, Anthony gler, James McCarthy, enting Nature seminar at fornia at Irvine.

k, “Penobscot Tales and -March 1935): 1–107, on iber of eastern U.S. and ditions, that attribute the rn from her body, grows id corn. The killing of the ransition from gathering- be an influence from the ewal of life (snakes shed r origin stories, see John

Witthoft, *Green Corn Ceremonialism in the Eastern Woodlands* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1949), 77–85; Joe Nicholas, Malechite, Tobique Point, Canada, Aug. 1910, as recorded by W. H. Mechling, *Malechite Tales* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), 87–88; for the Passamaquoddy variant, see *Journal of American Folklore* 3 (1890): 214; for Creek and Natchez variants, see J. R. Swanton, “Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians,” *Bulletin of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, no. 88 (1929): 9–17; on Iroquois variants, see Jesse Cornplanter, *Legends of the Longhouse* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1938), and Arthur Parker, “Iroquois Use of Maize and Other Food Plants,” *New York State Museum Bulletin*, no. 144 (1910): 36–39; Gudmund Hatt, “The Corn Mother in America and Indonesia” *Anthropos* 46 (1951): 853–914. Examples of corn mother origin stories from the Southwest include the Pueblo emergence from the dark interior of the earth into the light of the fourth world, where corn mother plants thought woman’s gift of corn. See Ramón Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1991). For a discussion of the relationship of the corn mother to mother earth, see Sam Gill, *Mother Earth: An American Story* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), 4, 125.

2. On Great Plains environmental histories as progressive and declensionist plots, see William Cronon, “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,” *Journal of American History* 78 (1992): 1347–76. The Indian and European origin stories can be interpreted from a variety of standpoints other than the declensionist and progressive narrative formats I have emphasized here (such as romance and satire). Additionally, the concepts of desert, wilderness, and garden are nuanced and elaborate motifs that change valences over time in ways I have not tried to deal with here.

3. Genesis, chap. 1. On the comic and tragic visions of the human, animal, vegetable, mineral, and unformed worlds, see Northrup Frye, *Fables of Identity* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1963), 19–20. In the comic state, or vision, the human world is a community, the animal world consists of domesticated flocks and birds of peace, the vegetable world is a garden or park with trees, the mineral world is a city or temple with precious stones and starlit domes, and the unformed world is a river. In the tragic state or vision, the human world is an anarchy of individuals, the animal world is filled with beasts and birds of prey (such as wolves, vultures, and serpents), the vegetable world is a wilderness, desert, or sinister forest, the mineral world is filled with rocks and ruins, and the unformed world is a sea or flood. The plot of the tragedy moves from a better or comic state to a worse or tragic state; the comedy from an initial tragic state, to a comic or happy outcome. I thank Hayden White for this reference. On history as narrative, see Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1973); idem, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978); idem, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987).

4. Benjamin Franklin, “Remarks concerning the Savages of North America,” in Richard E. Amacher, ed., *Franklin’s Wit and Folly: The Bagatelles* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1953), 89–98. Franklin’s story is probably satirical rather than literal.

5. The concept of a recovery from the original Fall appears in the early modern period. See the *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “recovery”: “The act of recovering

oneself from a mishap, mistake, fall, etc." See Bishop Edward Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae* (London, 1662), II, i, sec. 1: "The conditions on which fallen man may expect a recovery." William Cowper, *Retirement* (1781), 138: "To . . . search the themes, important above all, Ourselves, and our recovery from our fall." See also Richard Eden, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India* (1555), 168: "The recouerie of the kyngedome of Granata." The term "recovery" also embraced the idea of regaining a "natural" position after falling and a return to health after sickness. It acquired a legal meaning in the sense of gaining possession of property by a verdict or judgment of the court. In common recovery, an estate was transferred from one party to another. John Cowell, *The Interpreter* (1607), s.v. "recouerie": "A true recouerie is an actual or reall recouerie of anything, or the value thereof by Judgment." Another meaning was the restoration of a person or thing to a healthy or normal condition, or a return from a lapsed state to a higher or better state, including the reclamation of land and of resources such as soil. Anonymous, *Captives bound in Chains . . . the misery of graceless Sinners, and the hope of their recovery by Christ* (1674); Bishop Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed* (1736), II, 295: "Indeed neither Reason nor Analogy would lead us to think . . . that the Interposition of Christ . . . would be of that Efficacy for Recovery of the World, which Scripture teaches us it was." Joseph Gilbert, *The Christian Atonement* (1836), i, 24: "A modified system, which shall include the provision of means for recovery from a lapsed state." James Martineau, *Essays, Reviews, and Addresses* (1890-91), II, 310: "He is fitted to be among the prophets of recovery, who may prepare for us a more wholesome future." John Henry Newman, *Historical Sketches* (1872-73) II, 1, iii, 121: "The special work of his reign was the recovery of the soil."

6. On the Genesis 1, or priestly, version (Genesis P), composed in the fifth century B.C., versus the Genesis 2, or Yahwist, version (Genesis J), composed in the ninth or tenth century B.C., and their relationships to the environmental movement, see J. Baird Callicott, "Genesis Revisited: Muirian Musings on the Lynn White, Jr. Debate," *Environmental Review* 14, nos. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 1990): 65-92. Callicott argues that Lynn White, Jr., mixed the two versions in his famous article "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-7. On the historical traditions behind the Genesis stories, see Artur Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development*, trans. Dorothea M. Barton (New York: Association Press, 1961).

7. John Prest, *The Garden of Eden: The Botanic Garden and the Re-creation of Paradise* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), 1-37; J. A. Phillips, *Eve: The History of an Idea* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984).

8. "Paradise" derives from the old Persian word for "enclosure" and in Greek and Latin takes on the meaning of garden. Its meanings include heaven, a state of bliss, an enclosed garden or park, and the Garden of Eden. "Parousia" derives from the Latin *parere*, meaning to produce or bring forth. The Parousia is the idea of the End of the World, expressed as the hope set forth in the New Testament that "he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead." See A. L. Moore, *The Parousia in the New Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966). I thank Anthony Chennells for bringing this concept to my attention. Capitalism and Protestantism were initially mutually reinforcing in their common hope of a future golden age. But as capitalism became more materialistic and worldly it began to undercut the church's Parousia

hope. Communism retained the nity and future direction (ibid., the church's missionary work is The age of glory was a gift of (God (JHWH) into history (pp. radically transformed earth. The sudden catastrophic moment, which it was anticipated that pring the central figure in the av some visions the figure of Mess always represented as under t divine intervention in history [T]his would involve a total trar of world renewal enhanced son (pp. 25-26). "The fourth Eclog fundamental contrast to apocal is the hope of revolution from (p. 28).

9. Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press

10. Francis Bacon, *Novum Or*, Ellis, and Douglas Devon He 247-48, 114-15. See also Bac civil causes) in this great plea (whereby the human race seek herself and the arts upon inte and Experimental History," *Nature* (New York: George B of Nature: Women, Ecology, and Row, 1980), 185-86; Ch Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1986

11. Marshall Sahlins, *Culture* Press, 1976), 53: "The develop myth of Western capitalism."

12. On the definition of natura merce (London, 1870), 2. Tho vols. (reprint ed., Aalen, W. Two Treatises of Governmen Univ. Press, 1960), Second Tr

13. The Fall from Eden may b note 1) as representing a tran Garden of Eden, Adam and E in the earth (Genesis 1:29-30; "in the sweat of thy face" and Genesis 4, Abel, "keeper of ground," is the farmer. Altho

Edward Stillingfleet, *Origines* 1 which fallen man may expect 1: "To . . . search the themes, m our fall." See also Richard a (1555), 168: "The recouerie r" also embraced the idea of rn to health after sickness. It ssion of property by a verdict tate was transferred from one 17), s.v. "recouerie": "A true r the value thereof by Judge- rson or thing to a healthy, r igher or better state, including Anonynous, *Captives bound pe of their recovery by Christ Natural and Revealed* (1736), lead us to think . . . that the r for Recovery of the World, 2 *Christian Atonement* (1836), vvision of means for recovery ws, and *Addresses* (1890–91), very, who may prepare for us *storical Sketches* (1872–73) II, very of the soil."

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hope. Communism retained the idea of a future golden age in its concern for community and future direction (ibid., 2-3). The Parousia hope was a driving force behind the church's missionary work in its early development and in the New World (p. 5). The age of glory was a gift of God, an acknowledgment of the future inbreaking of God (JHWH) into history (pp. 16, 17). "The scene of the future consummation is a radically transformed earth. The coming of this Kingdom was conceptualized as a sudden catastrophic moment, or as preceded by the Messianic kingdom, during which it was anticipated that progressive work would take place" (p. 20). "Concerning the central figure in the awaited End-drama there is considerable variation. In some visions the figure of Messiah is entirely absent. In such cases 'the kingdom was always represented as under the immediate sovereignty of God' " (p. 21). "The divine intervention in history was the manifestation of the Kingdom of God. . . . [T]his would involve a total transformation of the present situation, hence the picture of world renewal enhanced sometimes by the idea of an entirely supernatural realm" (pp. 25-26). "The fourth Eclogue of Virgil presents the hope of a 'golden age' but in fundamental contrast to apocalyptic expectation; although it is on a cosmic scale, it is the hope of revolution from within rather than of intervention from without" (p. 28).

9. Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1991), 49–60.

10. Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, in *Works*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Devon Heath, 14 vols. (London: Longmans Green, 1870), 4: 247–48, 114–15. See also Bacon's statement "I mean (according to the practice in civil causes) in this great plea or suit granted by the divine favor and providence (whereby the human race seeks to recover its right over nature) to examine nature herself and the arts upon interrogatories." Bacon, "Preparative towards a Natural and Experimental History," *Works*, 4: 263. William Leiss, *The Domination of Nature* (New York: George Braziller, 1972), 48–52; Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), 185–86; Charles Whitney, *Francis Bacon and Modernity* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1986), 25.

11. Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1976), 53: "The development from a Hobbesian state of nature is the origin myth of Western capitalism."

12. On the definition of natural resources, see John Yeats, *Natural History of Commerce* (London, 1870), 2. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), in *English Works*, 11 vols. (reprint ed., Aalen, W. Germany: Scientia, 1966), 3: 145, 158. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1960), Second Treatise, chap. 5, secs. 28, 32, 35, 37, 46, 48.

13. The Fall from Eden may be interpreted (as can the corn mother origin story; see note 1) as representing a transition from gathering-hunting to agriculture. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve pick the fruits of the trees without having to labor in the earth (Genesis 1:29–30; Genesis 2:9). After the Fall they had to till the ground “in the sweat of thy face” and eat “the herb of the field” (Genesis 3:18, 19, 23). In Genesis 4, Abel, “keeper of sheep,” is the pastoralist, while Cain, “tiller of the ground,” is the farmer. Although God accepted Abel’s lamb as a firstfruit, he did

not accept Cain's offering. Cain's killing of Abel may represent the ascendancy of farming over pastoralism. Agriculture requires more intensive labor than either pastoralism or gathering. See Oelschlaeger, *Idea of Wilderness*; Callicott, "Genesis Revisited," 81.

14. Hesiod, "Works and Days," in *Theogony and Works and Days*, trans. M. L. West (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 40.

15. Publius Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1955), bk. 1, p. 6, lines 100–111.

16. On the meanings of "nature" and "nation" and the following interpretation of Virgil, see Kenneth Olwig, *Nature's Ideological Landscape* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), 3–9. In the *Eclogues*, Virgil characterized the pastoral landscape as the grazing of tame animals on grassy hillsides. Human labor domesticated animals, transformed the forest into meadows, and dammed springs to form pools for watering livestock. But the shepherd was relatively passive, watching flocks while reclining in the shade of a remnant forest tree.

17. Olwig, *Nature's Ideological Landscape*, 6. Agriculture is initiated by Jove, who "endowed that cursed thing the snake with venom and the wolf with thirst for blood." "Toil . . . taught men the use and method of the plough." Agricultural instruments were hammered out by the use of fire, becoming "weapons hardy rustics need ere they can plow or sow the crop to come." Virgil, *Georgics* 1.151–52, as quoted *ibid.*, 6.

18. Olwig, *Nature's Ideological Landscape*, 3–9; Virgil, *Georgics* 2: 106–7; *Eclogues* 4: 4–34. Virgil's temporal and spatial stages prefigure Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier stages and Johann Heinrich von Thünen's rings, discussed by William Cronon in the conversion of hinterland resources (first nature) into commodities (second nature) in Chicago. See Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: Norton, 1991), 46–54.

19. Lucretius, *Of the Nature of Things*, trans. William Ellery Leonard (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1950), bk. 5, lines 922–1008. Lucretius' image of the "state of nature" was strikingly similar to that of Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* (1651). Lucretius wrote that in the early days "men led a life after the roving habit of wild beasts." They chased and ate wild animals and were in turn hunted and devoured by them. In the state of nature they "huddled in groves, and mountain-caves, and woods" without any regard for "the general good" and did not "know to use in common any customs, any laws." Just as Hobbes characterized life before civil law as "nasty, brutish, and short," so Lucretius wrote that "the clans of savage beasts" would make "sleep-time horrible for those poor wretches." Men were "snatched upon and gulped by fangs," while those who escaped, "with bone and body bitten, shrieked," as the "writhing pangs took them from life." In a time before agricultural plenty, starvation was rampant as "lack of food gave o'er men's fainting limbs to dissolution." Procreation, for Lucretius, was likewise beastlike and brutal. Men took women "with impetuous fury and insatiate lust" or bribed them with berries and fruit. When finally women moved "into one dwelling place" with men, "the human race began to soften," as they saw "an offspring born from out themselves." Neighbors intervened on behalf of women and children and urged compassion for the weak.

20. Lucretius, *Of the Nature of Things*, heads instructed men to found the might consent to follow laws. . . . by force . . . of its own free will y hand made ready in its wrath to t people voluntarily submitted to "f

21. Lucretius, *Of the Nature of Things*, men did mightily esteem the old I did overmaster."

22. *Ibid.*, bk. 5, lines 811–70.

23. On Edenic imagery in American literature, see *Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and the Garden: The Central Myth in the American Imagination* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955); David Watt, *The Garden: The Central Myth in the American Imagination* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1968); David Watt, *The Garden: The Central Myth in the American Imagination* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1968); David Watt, *The Garden: The Central Myth in the American Imagination* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968).

24. Vladimir Propp, "Morphology of the Folktale," *Journal of American Folklore* 24, no. 4 (Oct. 1911), 139–41.

25. Quoted in Peter N. Carroll, *The American Imagination* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991), 191.

26. William Bradford, *History of the City of New York*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1912).

27. Charles Morton, *Compendium of the Colonial Society* xxix, xxiii, xxxi; Nathaniel Ames, *Draper*, 1758), endpapers.

28. Robert Beverley, *The History of the Colony of Virginia* (1705), 246–48.

29. Matthew Baigell, *Thomas Cole*, 16. On Cole's use of Eden as an inspired vision of the Prescient Vision.

30. Baigell, *Thomas Cole*, plates.

31. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Plough," *Complete Sermons*, 489, 491.

32. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Age of Mechanization* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), 11.

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mountain-caves, and woods"
"know to use in common any
e before civil law as "nasty,
of savage beasts" would make
re "snatched upon and gulped
ody bitten, shrieked," as the
agricultural plenty, starvation
imbs to dissolution." Procre-
al. Men took women "with
with berries and fruit. When
men, "the human race began
hemselves." Neighbors inter-
passion for the weak.

20. Lucretius, *Of the Nature of Things*, bk. 5, lines 1135-85: "So next some wiser heads instructed men to found the magisterial office, and did frame codes that they might consent to follow laws. . . . For humankind, o'er wearied with a life fostered by force . . . of its own free will yielded to laws and strictest codes." Because "each hand made ready in its wrath to take a vengeance fiercer than by man's fair laws," people voluntarily submitted to "fear of punishment."

21. Lucretius, *Of the Nature of Things*, bk. 6, lines 1136-1284. "For now no longer men did mightily esteem the old Divine, the worship of the gods: the woe at hand did overmaster."

22. *Ibid.*, bk. 5, lines 811-70.

23. On Edenic imagery in American history, see R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955); David Noble, *The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden: The Central Myth in the American Novel since 1830* (New York: George Braziller, 1968); David Watt, *The Fall into Eden: Landscape and Imagination in California* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986); Cecilia Tichi, *New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans through Whitman* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979).

24. Vladimir Propp, "Morphology of the Folktale," *International Journal of American Linguistics* 24, no. 4 (Oct. 1958): 46-48; Roland Barthes, "The Struggle with the Angel," *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Noonday Press, 1977), 139-41.

25. Quoted in Peter N. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness, 1629-1700* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1969), 13-14.

26. William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647*, ed. Worthington C. Ford, 2 vols. (Boston: Published for the Massachusetts Historical Society by Houghton Mifflin, 1912).

27. Charles Morton, *Compendium Physicae*, from the 1697 manuscript copy Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, vol. 33 (Boston, 1940), pp. xi, xxix, xxiii, xxxi; Nathaniel Ames, *An Astronomical Diary or Almanac* (Boston: J. Draper, 1758), endpapers.

28. Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia* (London: R. Parker, 1705), 246-48.

29. Matthew Baigell, *Thomas Cole* (New York: Watson Guphill, 1981), plates 15, 16. On Cole's use of Eden as metaphor, see Henry Adams, "The American Land Inspired Cole's Prescient Visions," *Smithsonian*, May 1994, 99-107.

30. Baigell, *Thomas Cole*, plates 10, 15.

31. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Young American," *The Dial* 4 (1844): 484-507, quotation on 489, 491.

32. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964).

33. John Winthrop, "Winthrop's Conclusions for the Plantation in New England," in *Old South Leaflets*, no. 50 (1629) (Boston: Directors of the Old South Work, 1897), 4-5; John Quincy Adams, in *Congressional Globe* 29, no. 1 (1846): 339-42. Adams omits the biblical phrase "replenish the earth." Thomas Hart Benton, *ibid.*, 917-18, reverses the biblical ordering from "replenish the earth and subdue it" to "subdue and replenish the earth."
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36. Francis Paul Prucha, *The Indians in American Society* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985), quotations on 7, 10.
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