

THE SOURCES OF MORALITY IN NATTY BUMPPO

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INTRODUCTION

With my first acquaintance with American Literature I was impressed by the westward movement and frontier literature. In reading The Deerslayer, I came across some historical facts embodied in a vividly presented narrative. It made me familiar with the habits and customs of the natives of this country, the Red Indians. Thus, in order to acquire some more facts concerning the frontier and its literature, I desired to deal with Cooper's Leather Stocking stories, to know how far a white man can affect and be affected by an environment completely different from that natural to white men. I realized that the best example would be Natty Bumppo and how he was morally influenced and how far he was able to resist some of these influences.

My reason for treating my subject, "The Sources of Morality in Natty Bumppo," according to the chronological sequence in which the novels were written by Cooper (The Pioneers, which was written in 1823; The Last of the Mohicans, 1826; The Prairie, 1827; The Pathfinder, 1840; and The Deerslayer, 1841), and not according to Natty's age, is that in this way the subject will follow more closely the mental development and growth of the writer; while in the second method there would appear a sort of confusion in that concern. If we were to deal with the subject according to Natty's age, we should have to start with the last story, The Deerslayer, then proceed to the fourth, The Pathfinder, and the second, The Last of the Mohicans, then the first, The Pioneers, and finally the third, The Prairie. It seems that this method would serve neither history nor the development of the writer, which to some extent can throw some light on the development of the hero. To my notion, in The Deerslayer, Natty, who is less than twenty-five years old, is wiser and calmer than he is in The Pioneers, where he is in his sixties. In The

Deerslayer, Cooper is in his old age, in the prime of his wisdom and maturity; while in The Pioneers, he is about twenty years younger and thus lacks that maturity. Consequently, to treat this subject in the chronological way is to follow, to some extent, Natty Bumppo's mental growth which is a reflection of Cooper's maturity. Natty, as we shall see, is religious, humane, and brave, as he says of himself, as Cooper says of him, and as other characters describe him. These superior qualities he gets from religion, the Indians, and from nature.

WHAT NATTY BUMPPPO SAYS OF HIMSELF

From his school and temple, the wilderness, Natty gets his moral education. In the beauty of the forest he glorifies the Almighty God and becomes a devout worshipper. From God's tiny creatures he learns discipline and duty. And from the child of nature, the Indian, he adopts what is good and useful and discards the bad and harmful. Finally, out of this melting pot, the wilderness, we face a moral creature, a Natty Bumppo. This great moralizer regards it as part of his duty to right the wrongs of others and to stop the wrongdoers within their limits or at least show them the right path. Consequently, when Judge Marmaduke Temple, in The Pioneers, invites him to take some of the fish he has caught, Natty in his reply shows his complete disgust at this wasteful way of killing God's creatures. And at the same time he teaches the Judge to catch enough to satisfy his needs.

"I eat no man's wasty way. I strike my spear into the eel or a trout, when I crave the creatur's; but I wouldn't be helping to such a sinful kind of fishing for the best rifle that was ever brought out from the old countries."¹

¹ James F. Cooper, The Pioneers, p. 272.

Natty is a just man and likes justice, and at the same time it is against his nature to have malice against others. In his speech with Major Duncan Hayward in The Last of the Mohicans, Natty says, "Now for myself I do love justice; and therefore I will not say I hate a Mingo, for that may be unsuitable to my color and religion."² (In spite of his hatred of killing and bloodshed whether of an enemy or an animal, Natty sometimes boasts of killing. He tells Major Hayward,

"There are not many echoes among these hills that haven't rung with the crack of my rifle, nor is there the space of a square mile atwixt Horican and the river, the 'killdeer' hasn't dropped a living body on, be it an enemy or be it a brute beast."³

Natty is always for justice and always against wrong; influenced by this trait in his character, he leads the Sioux to the squatter's camp, in his search for Inez, Middleton's wife.

"The Lord will forgive me for playing with the ignorance of the savage, for he knows I do it in no mockery of his state, or in idle vaunting of my own; but in order to save mortal life, and to give justice to the wronged, while I defeat the deviltries of the wicked."⁴

Of himself Natty also says that he is honest and a descendant of honest people. He and his people have striven to serve and help others. These words Natty delivers in his last moments:

"I am without kith or kin in the wide world!" the trapper said. "When I am gone there will be an end to my race. We have never been chiefs; but honest and useful in our way I hope it cannot be denied we have always proved ourselves."⁵

² James F. Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, p. 235.

³ Ibid., p. 159.

⁴ James F. Cooper, The Prairie, p. 264.

⁵ Ibid., p. 450.

Once again Natty emphasizes the fact that he does not kill unless he is forced to. He does not kill an animal unless his hunger forces him. Hence, when Natty hears an unfamiliar voice,

"Come forth, come forth!" he said aloud. "Be ye bird, or be ye beast, ye are safe from these old hands. I have eaten and I have drunk; why should I take life, when my wants call for no sacrifice?"⁶

His description of himself to Jasper Western, in The Pathfinder, is that he is patient, self-controlled, and against any rash action. This he says as advice to the young and hot-headed Jasper:

"You are young and hot-headed," returned the Pathfinder, with a dignity that impressed his listener with a keen sense of his moral superiority; "but my life has been passed among dangers of this sort, and my experience and gifts are not to be mastered by the impatience of a boy. As for courage, Jasper, I will not send back an angry and unmeaning word, to meet an angry and unmeaning word."⁷

Natty is born for the wilderness and not for settlement and settled life.

His reply to Sergeant Dunham on Mabel's view that he should "try to humanize his mind down to a wife and children," confirms this fact.

"Ah! sergeant, it is not Mabel that I distrust, but myself. I am but a poor ignorant woodsman, after all, and perhaps I'm not, in truth, as good as even you and I may think me!"⁸

But as Sergeant Dunham insists that Natty should marry Mabel, here the Pathfinder reveals another phase of his character. He shows humility instead of pride for he is, by nature, against pride. "But I'm afeared I'm too rude, and too old, and too wild to suit the fancy of such a young and delicate girl as Mabel."⁹ As far as Natty is for humility, he is for quietness; and as far as he is for justice, he is against killing. In his talk to Jasper Western,

⁶ Ibid., p. 92.

⁷ James F. Cooper, The Pathfinder, p. 51.

⁸ Ibid., p. 117.

⁹ Ibid., p. 118.

he recalls the past and longs for the peaceful days, for cruelty and war are against his nature.

"I sometimes wish for peace again," said the Pathfinder, "when one can range the forest without s'arching for any other enemy than the beasts and fishes. Ah's me! many is the day that the sarpent, there, and I have passed happily among the streams, living on venison, salmon, and trout, without thought of Mingo or a scalp! I sometimes wish that them blessed days come back for it is not my real gift to slay my own kind."¹⁰

His opposition to killing and scalping is firmly expressed in his reply to Tom Hutter or Floating Tom, in The Deerslayer, as he tries to convince Natty that it is desirable to take scalps.

"I've no such feelin', nor any wish to honor it, not I," returned the other. "My gifts are not scalper's gifts, but such as belong to my religion and color. I'll stand by you, old man, in the ark or in the castle, the canoe or the woods, but I'll not unhumanize my natur' by falling into ways that God intended for another race."¹¹

Again and again Natty emphasizes the fact that he does not kill an animal unless he is forced by hunger, or the need for clothing as he tells Judith: "I never yet pulled a trigger on buck or doe, Judith, onless when food or clothes was wanting."¹² His hesitation to kill a Mingo chief who threatens Natty's life is the peak of his hatred of killing. When Natty kills him he shows his sorrow. "I didn't wish your life, red skin," he said, "but you left me no choice atween killing or being killed."¹³ When Natty involves himself in a childish way in a contest with Chingachgook to see who is the better shot, he quickly realizes the sinfulness of this act, and says, "We've done an onthoughtful thing in taking life with an object no better than

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 30.

¹¹ James F. Cooper, The Deerslayer, p. 75.

¹² Ibid., p. 453.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 117-118.

vanity."¹⁴ Natty admires the just man for his qualities. To Natty, the just man is frank, and governed by his reason rather than by his desires. Accordingly in his talk to Chingachgook and Judith, Natty says:

"I love a just man, - Serpent; his eyes are never covered with darkness towards his inimies, while they are all sunshine and brightness towards his friends. He uses the reason that God has given him, and he uses it with a feelin' of his being ordered to look at, and to consider things as they are, and not as he wants them to be."¹⁵

Out of the above-mentioned facts concerning Natty's character, we are made aware that the man knows himself, and this is one of his virtues. Natty knows himself to be just, truthful, righteous, courageous and a great admirer of God's creatures.

WHAT COOPER SAYS OF NATTY BUMPPPO

It is very important to understand Cooper's idea concerning Natty Bumppo, this simple and silent moralizer of the woods, whom Cooper presents in the Leather Stocking stories. In the first three books Cooper lets Natty speak of himself as well as other characters speak of him. But in the last two books, The Pathfinder and The Deerslayer, we come across Cooper's intensifying idea of Natty as a moral man. Cooper pictures Natty, in The Pathfinder, as a constant worshipper of the Almighty God, but he worshipped in his own way. Cooper also presents Natty as a keen observer of his environment. It is this thoughtful observation that builds Natty's character. Consequently, Cooper says, "Pathfinder, though a man of quaint and peculiar habits and opinions, was always

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 463.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 203.

thoughtful, and disposed to view the thing around him with a shade of philosophy, as well as with seriousness."¹⁶ Natty's courage, prudence, simplicity and faithfulness are admired by all who meet him. His purity of soul and chastity of character take him from the erroneous level of man to the kingdom of saints and angels.

The fact was, few knew the Pathfinder intimately, without secretly coming to believe him to be one of extraordinary qualities. Ever the same, simple-minded, faithful, utterly without fear, and prudent, foremost in all warrantable enterprises, and never engaged in anything to call a blush to his cheek, or censure on his acts; it was not possible to live much with this being, who, in his peculiar way, was a sort of type of what Adam might have been supposed to be before the fall, though certainly not without sin, and not feel a respect and admiration for him, that had no reference to his position in life. It was remarked that no officer passed him without saluting him as if he had been his equal; no common man without addressing him with the confidence and freedom of a comrade.¹⁷

The long period of time Natty spends in the forest is enough to have his character stamped by his surroundings. A deep reflection of the calmness of the forest, regularity, freedom and simplicity is clearly discernible in Natty's behavior. He loves quiet and the simple life and worships peace and freedom. Thus Cooper says,

His feeling appeared to possess the freshness and nature of the forest in which he passed so much of his time, and no casuist could have made clearer decisions in matters relating to right and wrong; yet he was not without his prejudices, which, though few, and colored by the character and usages of the individual, were deep-rooted, and had almost got to form a part of his nature.¹⁸

Cooper's comparison between Natty Bumppo and Lieutenant Muir, the quartermaster, is no more than a comparison between the crooked ways of civilization and the simplicity of the wilderness. In the wilderness we

¹⁶ James F. Cooper, The Pathfinder, p. 407.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 121.

have truth and simplicity while in the city we have shrewdness and crookedness.

Pathfinder was as simple as the quartermaster was practiced; he was as sincere as the other was false, and as direct as the last was treacherous. Both were cool and calculating, and both were brave, though in different modes and degrees; Muir never exposing his person except for effect, while the guide included fear among the rational passions, or as a sensation to be deferred to only when good might come of it.¹⁹

Natty, throughout his life, is revealed to us as a man who strives for right and justice; and a man who is governed by reason rather than by low instincts; and a constant worshipper of his Master, the Master of the universe.

In short, it was said of the Pathfinder, by one accustomed to study his fellows, that he was a fair example of what a just-minded and pure man might be, while untempted by unruly or ambitious desires, and let to follow the bias of his feelings, amid the solitary grandeur and ennobling influences of a sublime nature; neither led aside by the inducements which influence all to do evil amid the incentives of civilization, nor forgetful of the Almighty Being, whose spirit pervades the wilderness as well as the towns.²⁰

But this man of reasoning, this great moralizer, sometimes acts as a child by submitting his great spirit to the passing passions; or when he realizes that his dignified soul is under-rated or hurt. Thus when Natty offers to marry Mabel, who tells him many reasons for the impossibility of such a marriage, he falls an easy prey to his emotions. This is due to the fact that he is angelic and unpracticed in the ways of the world.

Indeed in this respect the Pathfinder was a mere child; unpractised in the ways of the world, he had no idea of concealing a thought of any kind, and his mind received and reflected each emotion with the pliability and readiness of that period of life; the infant scarcely yielding its wayward imagination to the passing impression with greater facility than this man, so stern, stoical, masculine, and severe, in all that touched his ordinary pursuits.²¹

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 380-381.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 254.

Truth is one of the many virtues that characterizes Natty Bumppo; and nothing will come of Natty but truth. Hence, in The Deerslayer, when Judith asks him to be truthful and tell her if he has heard anything "light of her" from Hurry Harry that may have influenced Natty's feeling towards her, she soon discovers the affirmative answer on his honest face. Here Cooper says, "Truth was Deerslayer's polar star. He ever kept it in view; and it was nearly impossible for him to avoid uttering it, even when prudence demanded silence."²²

There is a sort of spiritual affinity and understanding between Natty and the wilderness. Thus in the forest he finds his abode and shrine; he finds the overwhelming glory and beauty of his Master. He worships God in the trees, in the rivers, in the clouds, and in His creatures. Cooper pictures the power of the wilderness on Natty's soul in this vivid way:

He loved the woods for their freshness, their sublime solitude, their vastness, and the impress that they everywhere bore of the divine hand of their Creator. He rarely moved through them without pausing to dwell on some peculiar beauty that gave him pleasure, though seldom attempting to investigate the causes; and never did a day pass without his communing in spirit, and this, too, without the aid of forms or language, with the infinite Source of all he saw, felt and beheld.²³

Thus, in his picture, Cooper presents Natty as a simple and an unpracticed man of the wilderness; a man whose guide is his reason although sometimes he submits himself to the power of his passions. He is courageous without being rash. He is almost without sin and a religious man in his own way. On the whole, Natty's character is that of an angel rather than that of a human being.

²² James F. Cooper, The Deerslayer, p. 570.

²³ Ibid., p. 283.

WHAT OTHER CHARACTERS SAY OF NATTY BUMPPPO

So far we have discussed Natty Bumppo's ideas of himself and Cooper's ideas concerning the behavior of his creation, Natty. It is also worthwhile to know the points of view of other characters towards him. In The Pioneers, in his talk to Judge Temple, Edwards describes Natty as one who, though simple and unlearned, has a deep insight into the world. He is a man of feeling and loyal to his friends. And Edwards is proud of being a friend of such a man.

"Yes, he is my friend," cried Edwards, "and I glory in the title. He is simple, unlettered, even ignorant; prejudiced perhaps, though I feel that his opinion of the world is too true; but he has a heart, Judge Temple, that would atone for a thousand faults; he knows his friends, and never deserts them, even if it be a dog."²⁴

When in The Last of the Mohicans, Cora, William Henry's elder daughter, is taken prisoner by the treacherous guide Magua, Natty Bumppo willingly offers himself to be taken prisoner instead of her. This great sacrifice on the part of Natty makes Cora reveal her idea towards this angel. From her point of view he is above men; thus he is above their rewards.

"Look at that drooping, humbled child! Abandon her not until you leave her in the habitation of civilized men, I will not say," wringing the hard hand of the scout, "that her father will reward you - for such as you are above the rewards of men - but he will thank you, and bless you."²⁵

Middleton, in The Prairie, tells Natty the story that he had heard from his grandfather about one called Hawkeye, a virtuous and simple man who knows what is right and what is wrong.

²⁴ James F. Cooper, The Pioneers, p. 356.

²⁵ James F. Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, p. 381.

"Unlike most of those who live a border life, he united the better instead of the worst qualities of the two people. He was a man endowed with the choicest and perhaps rarest gifts of nature; that of distinguishing good from evil. His virtues were those of simplicity, because such were the fruits of his habits, as were indeed his prejudices."²⁶

The most accurate description of Natty is given by the aged Sioux, Le Balfre. He describes Natty as valiant, just and wise. The shortest and the truest sketch of the hero's character: "A valiant, a just, and a wise warrior, has gone on the path which will lead him to the blessed ground of his people."²⁷

As Natty Bumpo offers his life for the safety of others, there are some who readily offer theirs when Natty's honesty is questioned. Nothing is more reliable than Sergeant Dunham's reply to Major Duncan of Lundie in this connection. "For the Pathfinder's honesty, I will answer with my life, sir," returned the sergeant, firmly, and not without a dignity of manner that struck his superior. "Such a man doesn't know how to be false."²⁸ This is the fact about Natty: he "does not know how to be false." Last but not least, is Judith's comparison between Natty and Hurry. She compares Natty's manly qualities, honesty and truthfulness on the one hand, and Hurry's egoism, greed and cruelty on the other hand. "No one - man or woman - could think of naming your honest heart, manly nature, and simple truth, with the boisterous selfishness, greedy avarice, and overwhelming ferocity of Henry March."²⁹

From this brief exposition of the ideas of other characters concerning Natty Bumpo's behavior and their impression of him as a person, as a man,

²⁶ James F. Cooper, The Prairie, p.130.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 461.

²⁸ James F. Cooper, The Pathfinder, p. 176.

²⁹ James F. Cooper, The Deerslayer, p. 271.

we understand that everybody, young and old, man and woman, friend and foe, respects and admires his superior qualities. They all respect him for his bravery, honesty, loyalty, chastity, simplicity and truth. Everybody discerns Natty's superiority to ordinary human beings; and everybody raises him from the level of mankind and ranks him with the saints and angels.

THE EFFECT OF THE MISSIONARIES ON NATTY BUMPO

In The Pioneers, the first in the Leather Stocking series, we see that Chingachgook the Indian chief, Natty Bumppo's lifelong friend, turned Christian and "was baptized by the name of John; a Delaware, he was known as John Mohegan or Indian John."³⁰ This fact, perhaps, will affect the religious notions and concepts of Natty Bumppo. Being a friend of a believer he will have a strong tendency towards faith and belief. We may also regard Mr. Grant's teaching to Chingachgook as fundamentally important in building Natty's character. Grant's words to Chingachgook are not to be overlooked.

"Yes," continued Mr. Grant, laying his hand gently on the tawny shoulder of the aged chief, "but it is not enough to be there in the body; you must come in the spirit and in truth. The Redeemer died for all, for the poor Indian as well as for the white man. Heaven knows no difference in color; nor must earth witness a separation of the church."³¹

These ideas, equality of the people before God, the absence of discrimination of any sort and the oneness of church, ring again and again through Natty's speeches throughout the whole Leather Stocking series. The fact that Natty has been affected by some means or other by the religious teachings that his life-long friend Chingachgook was receiving from Mr. Grant, is not to be neglected. We can say, without exaggeration, that Mr. Grant's voice is

³⁰ James F. Cooper, The Pioneers, p. 77.

³¹ Ibid., p. 87.

echoing all the time through Natty Bumppo's speeches. The idea that God does not overlook any of his children, no matter who they are or where they live, has its early presence in Mr. Grant's words to Chingachgook. Grant continues:

"It is well, John, and I hope you will receive profit and consolation from the performance of this duty. The Great Spirit overlooks none of his children; and the man of the woods is as much an object of his care as he who dwells in a palace."³²

Furthermore, Natty with his friend and an Indian attend the service held by Mr. Grant who "commenced his service with the sublime declaration of the Hebrew prophet: 'The Lord is in his holy temple; let all earth keep silence before Him'."³³ After Natty attends one of the sermons, Mr. Grant shows his pleasure when he addresses him as follows:

"This is but time, my good friend," returned Mr. Grant, "but I would have you prepare for eternity. It is incumbent on you to attend places of public worship, as I am pleased to see that you have done this evening."³⁴

There is no stronger evidence to support the idea that Natty Bumppo has been under the direct and indirect influence of Mr. Grant, than his own words to Elizabeth Temple and Oliver Edwards, the hunter, before he leaves them.

"Trust in God, Madam, and your honorable husband, and the thoughts for an old man like me can never be long nor bitter. I pray that the Lord will keep you in mind - the Lord that lives in clearings as well as in the wilderness - and bless you, and all that belong to you, from this time till the great day when the whites shall meet the redskins in judgment, and justice shall be in the law, and not power."³⁵

³² Ibid., p. 88.

³³ Ibid., p. 120.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 131.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 476.

In The Last of the Mohicans, which is the second book in the Leather Stocking series, we see that at times, Natty is under the influence of a religious guide, and at others, shows this influence through his speeches. The religious songs that Natty hears are not without effect on his tender soul. On the contrary, these songs have the power to make him recollect his boyhood experience when he used to hear such songs, "in the settlements of the colony." Thus when David Gamut, the singing master, begins to sing accompanied by the rich voices of the females,

The Indians riveted their eyes on the rocks, and listened with an attention that seemed to turn them into stone. But the scout, who had placed his chin in his hand, with an expression of cold indifference, gradually suffered his rigid features to relax, until, as verse succeeded verse, he felt his recollection was carried back to boyhood, when his ears had been accustomed to listen to similar sounds of praise, in the settlement of the colony. His roving eyes began to moisten, and before the hymn was ended, scalding tears rolled out of fountains that had long seemed dry, and followed each other down those cheeks, that had oftener felt the storms of heaven than testimonials of weakness.³⁶

Such a description is applicable only to highly religious people, and it seems that Natty Bumppo is one of them. His words to his party on their start into the forest reveal a religious spirit and deep understanding. To him, God is the all-knowing. "Think over your prayers," he whispered as they approached him; "for He to whom you make them knows all tongues; that of the heart as well as those of the mouth."³⁷

The effect of religion on Natty is clearly shown by his belief that, in spite of the different religious practices of different people, there is only one path to which all the different paths will lead. Consequently, the scout tells Uncas, Chingachgook's son,

³⁶ James F. Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, pp. 61-62.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 240.

"Tell the Sagamore I never lost sight of him in my greatest trouble; and, as for you, think of me sometimes when on a lucky trail; and depend on it, boy, whether there be one heaven or two, there is a path in the other world by which honest men may come together again."³⁸

Furthermore, Natty's words to Chingachgook confirm his unshaken religious notion that notwithstanding their different colors, people, in the day of judgment, are destined to come together and to fall into one path. That is, they are the same before the Almighty God. So, when Chingachgook says that he is alone, the scout is ready to say,

"No, Sagamore, not alone. The gifts of our color may be different, but God has so placed us as to journey in the same path. I have no kin, and I may also say, like you, no people."³⁹

In The Prairie, the third book in the Leather Stocking series, the aged Natty Bumppo in his discourse with others, reveals the effect of religion on his behavior. Accordingly, it makes Natty's heart sore to see his fellow men ignoring God's teachings by laying a heavy emphasis on separation and discrimination. Thus, when Paul Hover, the bee-hunter, gives his account of Ishmael Bush, a pioneer to the West, Natty says,

"Each one knows the ties which bind him to his fellow creatures best. Though it is greatly to be mourned that color, and property, and tongue, and l'arning should make so wide a difference in those who, after all, are but the children of one father."⁴⁰

Time and again Natty's speeches and comments reveal him as a true believer and a good Christian. Ishmael, on hearing the trapper's words about the destiny of the creatures ("to my eye things seem ordered to meet each other in this creation")⁴¹ says, "Old man, to which people do you belong? You have

³⁸ Ibid., p. 380.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 423.

⁴⁰ James F. Cooper, The Prairie, p. 61.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 83.

the color and speech of a Christian, while it seems that your heart is with the red-skins."⁴² But later Ishmael is surprised to discover in this man of the wilderness a profundity of religious understanding unequalled except by the knowledge of bishops and preachers. Natty, as he tells Ishmael, has delivered himself to the One, the Supreme Judge and the Omniscient:

"I hold but little discourse except with one, and then chiefly of my own affairs," returned the old man, without the least observable apprehension, and pointing imposingly upward: "A Judge; and Judge of all. Little does he need knowledge from my hands, and but little will your wish to keep anything secret from him profit you, even in desert."⁴³

While the trapper and the bee-hunter are eating, the doctor Obed Bat comes, whom the trapper invites to join them by saying, "We are not ravenous beasts, eating of each other, but Christian men, receiving thankfully that which the Lord hath seen fit to give."⁴⁴ Again Natty emphasizes the fact of being a Christian and of believing in the Day of Judgment on which nothing will avail except one's good deeds. Thus when Hard-Heart, the young Pawnee chief, says to the trapper, "Let the wise chief have no cares for his journey,"

"Pawnee, I die as I have lived, a Christian man!" returned the trapper, "As I came into life so will I leave it. Horses and arms are not needed to stand in the presence of the Great Spirit of my people. He knows my color, and according to my gifts will he judge my deeds."⁴⁵

Furthermore, when Hard-Heart asks Natty to talk to the Pawnees about his acts of bravery and justice, Natty's reply is one of the most perfect expositions of a religious fact, the judgment of all according to their deeds.

⁴² Ibid., p. 84.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 91.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 111.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 455.

"A boastful tongue is not heard in the heaven of a white man!" solemnly returned the old man. "What I have done, He has seen. His eyes are always open. That which has been well done will he remember; wherein I have been wrong will he not forget to chastise, though He will do the same in mercy."⁴⁶

Natty Bumppo's interest in religious matters enables him to absorb and even, in some cases, to expound ideas of rewards and punishment which are too difficult for a primitive mind to understand. Once we see him teaching Mahtoree, the chief of the Tetons, some moral lessons through religion:

"The Master of Life looks with an open eye on his children who die in a battle that is fought for right; but he is blind and his ears are shut to the cries of an Indian who is killed when plundering or doing evil."⁴⁷

What Natty gains from the Moravians moulds his character and determines his actions. He abstains from carrying a heathen message because it contradicts what he has learned from the Moravians. Thus when Hard-Heart tells the trapper "Tell them that Hard-Heart has tied a knot in his wampum for every Teton!":

"Ah! that feeling would be a dangerous companion for a man with white gifts to start with on so solemn a journey," muttered the old man in English. "This is not what the good Moravians said to the councils of the Delawares, nor what is so often preached to white-skins in the settlement, though, to the shame of the color be it said, it is so little heeded. Pawnee, I love you; but being a Christian man, I cannot be the runner to bear such a message."⁴⁸

The sound of destiny, which is the basic element of all religious teachings, echoes once more through Natty's words. To him man's birth and death are governed by the Almighty God. Accordingly, when Obed Bat, the botanist, is brought before the Sioux, and talks about the loss to the civilized world that would be caused by his death, the trapper says,

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 455.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 248.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 331.

"There is but one birth and one death to all things, be it hound or be it a deer; be it a red skin or be it white. Both are in the hands of the Lord, it being as unlawful for man to strive to hasten the one, as impossible to prevent the other."⁴⁹

With the same notion about life in his mind, Natty tells an Indian savage, who threatens that old and young shall die if the Teton chief dies at the hands of "Long-knives", that life is not more than a gift from God, and He may take it whenever it pleases Him, and it is beyond man's control to make any alteration of His will.

"Life is the gift of the Wahcondah," was the unmoved reply. "The burnt-wood warrior must submit to his laws, as well as his other children. Men only die when he chooses; and no Dahcotah can change the hour."⁵⁰

In The Pathfinder, which is the fourth book in the Leather Stocking series, Natty Bumppo is shown to us as a Christian man, whose behavior and actions are governed by his religious concepts about right and wrong. Thus in order to calm the frightened girl, Mabel Dunham, Sergeant Dunham's daughter, who is advancing towards them, Natty says that they are Christians and that there is no cause for fear; this is another emphasis that he is a Christian. "Fear nothing, young woman," said the hunter, "you have met Christian men in the wilderness, and such as know how to treat all kindly that are disposed to peace and justice."⁵¹ Then the hunter, in order to clear every possible doubt possessed by others concerning his faith, tells Charles Cap, the old seaman and Mabel Dunham's uncle, "I have been Christianized by the Moravians, like so many of the Delawares, it is true, but I hold

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 363.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 58.

⁵¹ James F. Cooper, The Pathfinder, p. 13.

to Christianity and white gifts."⁵² This declaration also shows the effect of the Moravians on Natty. To Natty, as to any believer in God, the Lord does not stand for judgment only, but comes to deliver his children from their difficulties. Accordingly, Natty says,

"The Lord! He who has so often helped others in greater difficulties. Many and many is the time that my head would have been stripped of hair, skin and all, hadn't the Lord fi't of my side."⁵³

In The Deerslayer, which is the last book in the Leather Stocking series, Natty Bumppo is a young hunter but a great moralizer. His words reveal him as a Christian with deep understanding of the philosophy of this religion. Thus when Hurry Harry or Henry March, a white hunter and Natty Bumppo's companion, is trying to convince Natty that he should fight a man with his own "we'pons", Natty's reply comes to be a statement of religious principle condemning revenge and approving of forgiveness. The reply shows how deep is the Moravians' effect on him.

"That's not Moravian doctrine, which teaches that all are to be judged according to their talents or l'arning; the Injin like an Injin; and the white man like a white man. Some of their teachers say, that if you're struck on the cheek, it is a duty to turn the other side of the face, and take another blow, instead of seeking revenge."⁵⁴

And when Hurry still tries to convince Natty of the rightfulness of scalping and tries to support his justification by a false statement that, "Do as you're done by, Deerslayer; that is ever the Christian's doctrine,"⁵⁵ it is not easy to pass this false statement on one like Natty who, in spite of his

52 Ibid., p. 25.

53 Ibid., p. 25.

54 James F. Cooper, The Deerslayer, p. 78.

55 Ibid., p. 79.

simplicity, has absorbed the essence of religion and let his steps and soul be guided by its glorious light. Thus his reply is, "No, Hurry, I've asked the Moravians consarning that; and it's altogether different. 'Do as you would be done by,' they tell me, is the true saying, while men practyse the false."⁵⁶ Good and orderly things Natty attributes to God. To his point of view everything, in order to be perfect, should come into full agreement with God's ways; otherwise it would lose its benefit; even laws are distinguished on this basis.

"Laws don't all come from the same quarter. God has given us his'n, and some come from the colony, and others come from the King and Parliament. When the colony's laws, or even the King's laws, run ag'in the laws of God, they get to be onlawful, and out not to be obeyed."⁵⁷

According to Natty, Hurry's ideas are strange or at least they are in conflict with Natty's points of view. Thus, Hurry's division of people into white, black and red, putting the white at the top and the red at the bottom, does not meet Natty's approval. His answer is,

"God made us all, white, black, and red; and, no doubt, had his own wise intentions in coloring us differently. Still, he made us in the main, much the same in feelin's; though I'll not deny that he gave each race its gifts. A white man's gifts are Christianized, while a redskin's are more for wilderness."⁵⁸

In dealing with "religion" as one of the major sources in building up Natty Mumpo's character, we have come across certain facts. First, we find that his behavior, action and his dealing with others, are to a very great extent governed by the religious teachings that discuss man's relation with

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 79.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 36.

his fellow men. Another fact is that we do not meet any of the Moravians, whom Natty Bumppo mentions repeatedly in The Prairie, The Pioneers, The Pathfinder, and The Deerslayer, and to whom he attributes his Christianization and his understanding of religion. He only talks about them as the occasion calls for. But we see such men as Mr. Grant, the preacher in The Pioneers, and David Gamut, the singing-master in The Last of the Mohicans, under whose influence Natty has fallen for some time. Another important fact revealing itself from this study is that in The Prairie, the influence of religion on Natty Bumppo is stronger than in any of the other works of the Leather Stocking series. We will not be surprised at this when we realize that Natty is eighty-seven years old, for it is natural that at that age he should be a religious person.

THE EFFECT OF THE INDIANS ON NATTY BUMPPPO

Natty, the white man, in his early years, turns his back on white society and civilization, and seeks refuge in the woods and among the children of nature, the Indians. This early contact with the Indians, especially the Delawares, might make one expect to find in the hero a white man with red gifts. But this expectation must be qualified, because Natty has the power to judge and choose the most logical action, on the one hand, while on the other hand, Natty discards illogical actions and those that are in conflict with his religious notions and concepts. Thus we see in Natty a great admirer of honesty, loyalty, friendship and bravery on the one hand, and a great enemy to killing and scalping, on the other hand. And all of these are Indian gifts. Accordingly, in The Pioneers, when Mr. Grant shows his displeasure at Chingachgook's praising himself in his last moments, instead of the Redeemer, Natty tells Mr. Grant not to be surprised because the

Indians are not constant and loyal to Christianity. On the contrary, they have a strong tendency towards their own natural gifts and understanding. And we know that this is not the case with Natty who adapts his life according to Christianity and its teachings.

"Though all you say be true, and you have Scriptur' gospels for it, too," said Natty, "you will make nothing of the Indian. He hasn't seen a Moravian sin' the war; and it's hard to keep them from going back to their native ways."⁵⁹

As we have said, Natty Bumppo does not regard everything the Indians do as good, but from time to time he shows his disgust with certain Indian "gifts" and condemns them as cruel and inhuman. Natty abhors scalping, of which the Indians are proud and which they regard as a sign of bravery. Thus, in The Last of the Mohicans, when a Mingo kills and scalps a French officer in the woods, Natty expresses his disgust towards this cruel act although it is an Indian gift.

"'t would have been a cruel and an unhuman act for a whiteskin; but 't is the gift and nature of an Indian, and I suppose it should not be denied. I could wish, though, it had befallen an accursed Mingo, rather than that gay young boy from the old countries."⁶⁰

Natty also shows his dislike of the treacherous ways of the Indians. In spite of his humane nature and his opposition to killing, Natty finds himself tempted to killing in order to stop their treachery. Consequently, when Magua, the guide, arouses Natty's suspicion and distrust, he offers to shoot him so that he may stop his treachery for a while. "I can take him from where I stand, between the ankle and the knee, with a single shot, putting an end to his tramping through the wood, for at least a month to come."⁶¹

⁵⁹ James F. Cooper, The Pioneers, p. 439.

⁶⁰ James F. Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, p. 161.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 29.

But, generally, the Indian's concept of God does not contradict Natty's. To the Indian, God has the power to reward and punish, and at the same time He determines the fate of all his creatures. And once their fate is determined by God, no power can alter it. Thus in The Prairie, Hard-Heart says to Natty:

"The Wahcondah pours the rain from his clouds; and the fire, which scorches the trees, is the anger of his eye; but he fashioned his children with care and thought. What he has thus made, never alters."⁶²

In The Pathfinder, in his discourse with Charles Cap about his relation with Chingachgook, Natty shows that he does not adapt himself to the Indian ways, but selects what is good and refrains from what contradicts his set of morals. "The Serpent, here, has his fashions, and I have mine; yet we have fou't side by side, these many years, without thinking a hard thought consarning the other's ways."⁶³

In The Deerslayer, Natty's talk to Judith Hutter or the Wild Rose, Thomas Hutter's daughter, shows clearly that he does not accept everything the Indians believe, especially "fishing and hunting after death," because this is against Christian teachings. Thus Natty makes his choice and takes what is reasonable: "I am too Christianized to expect anything so fanciful as hunting and fishing after death; nor do I believe there is one Manitou for the redskin, and another for the pale-face."⁶⁴

As Natty Bumppo learns how to avoid certain Indian gifts, he learns how to adopt certain others. From the Delawares he learns how to be cautious, because caution in the wilderness is as important as courage. This he learns

⁶² James F. Cooper, The Prairie, p. 224.

⁶³ James F. Cooper, The Pathfinder, p. 19.

⁶⁴ James F. Cooper, The Deerslayer, p. 455.

thoroughly and tries to teach it to others. Thus his advice to Hurry:

"So much the more reason for being prudent and silent. I do not think the enemy can have found their way into these hills yet, for I don't know what they are to gain by it; but all the Delawares tell me, that as courage is a warrior's first virtue, so is prudence his second."⁶⁵

Once more Natty emphasizes the idea of being careful and prudent in the forest and to avoid any rash act. He teaches Hurry Harry the lessons he learns from the Indians. Thus, when Hurry pulls the trigger at the buck, Deerslayer says,

"It was inconsiderate to pull a trigger afore we had reconnoitered the shore, and made certain that no enemies harbored near it," said the latter as his companion slowly and reluctantly complied. "This much I have learned from the Delawares, in the way of schooling and traditions, even though I have never been on a war-path."⁶⁶

It is proper to say that Natty's learning from the Indians is so apparent in his general behavior that here one may put him on the same level with them. Accordingly, when the Hurons capture him, they soon admire his qualities in spite of his being their enemy. They show their admiration in the person of Rivenoak, the Iroquois chief, who says, "Good! Hawkeye should have been born a Huron! His blood is not more than half white!"⁶⁷ And Natty emphasizes the influence of the Indians in his reply to Rivenoak. "I'm white in blood, heart, nature, and gifts, though a little redskin in feeling and habits."⁶⁸

From the above mentioned facts concerning Natty Bumppo, and how far his character is influenced by the Indians, among whom he spends more than

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 45.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 44.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 301.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 301.

sixty years of his life, we learn that he chooses what is good and reasonable and neglects what is wrong and unreasonable among Indian offerings. We also know that the greatest Indian influence on his character is in The Deerslayer where Natty is in his twenties. Growing up in the wilderness, he finds it necessary to adapt himself, to some extent, to the Indian habits and ways of life. The greatest borrowing and adaptation come when Natty is very young, in The Deerslayer.

THE EFFECT OF NATURE ON NATTY BUMPPPO

Besides the two major elements, the missionaries and the Indians, there is a third one, nature, which is not less important in forming the character of Natty. Natty Bumppo, who, by instinct scorns civilized life and society, finds in the wilderness, in nature, a place of purity, calmness and perfection. The quiet and beautiful forest becomes his shrine. In its beauty, he finds God's image reflected. In its perfection he discovers the glorious Lord. To him every simple phenomenon in the forest, in nature, reveals a certain aspect of the Almighty God. He admires the simplicity of the child of nature, the Indian, and wants him to stay away from being contaminated by the wickedness of civilization. His resentment of civilization is depicted in The Pioneers, where he openly shows his hatred and dislike of civilized people and their ways. Time and again he shows his longings for the happy past days, before the calmness was disturbed by the sound of the axe and the progress of civilization. In The Pioneers, he angrily asks the judge, Marmaduke Temple, to stop that maddened way of cutting the trees, because they are created by God for the welfare of his children. And man should be grateful and must not waste what God has made for his good.

"Put an ind, Judge, to your clearings. Ain't the woods His work as well as the pigeons? Use, but don't waste. Wasn't the woods made for the beasts and birds to harbor in? And when man wanted their flesh, their skin, or their feathers, there's the place to seek them."⁶⁹

In talking to Edward Effingham and Chingachgook, Natty shows his longings for the past happy and beautiful days near the Otsego; the days when comfort and ease were prevalent. But everything has been changed since the advent of Marmaduke and others from the settlements, and their "twisty ways of the law." "But it was a comfortable hunting-ground then, lad, and would have been so to this day, but for the money of Marmaduke Temple, and the twisty ways of the law."⁷⁰

Natty's dislike of clearings and civilized life is shown through his frank talk to Edward and his wife, Elizabeth, when they entreat him to give up living in the wilderness and live with them. He tells them of his intention to go westward, near the Big Lakes where there is neither white man nor clearings, both of which are the signs of civilization which Natty hates.

"Why, lad, they tell me that on the Big Lakes there's the best hunting, and a great range, without a white man on it, unless it may be one like myself. I'm weary of living in clearing, and where the hammer is sounding in my ears from sunrise to sundown. And though I'm bound to ye both, children - I wouldn't say it if it was not true - I crave to go into the woods ag'in, I do."⁷¹

In The Last of the Mohicans, in his talk to David, the singing master, Natty expresses his ideas about nature. Nature to Natty is an open book; through its pages every keen observer can read about the glorious God. It

⁶⁹ James F. Cooper, The Pioneers, p. 253.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 299.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 474.

is a teacher; it is perfect and its perfection is unequalled by anything. Thus, everyone must gain his knowledge from this perfect source.

"It is open before your eyes," returned the scout; "and who owns it is a niggard of its use. I have heard it said that there are men who read in books to convince themselves there is God. I know not but man may so deform his works in the settlement, as to have that which is so clear in the wilderness a matter of doubt among traders and priests. If any such there be, and he will follow me from sun to sun, through the windings of the forest, he shall see enough to teach him that he is a fool, and that the greatest of his folly lies in striving to rise to the level of One he can never equal, be it in goodness, or be it in power."⁷²

Nature is Natty's school; its ways are his books, of which he is a careful observer. Thus he does not let any incident pass without deep study and careful examination. By thus doing, he ever grows in understanding and knowledge. Consequently, when Major Duncan Heyward enquires whether they should proceed or not, Natty says:

"Softly, softly; we know our path; but it is good to examine the formation of things. This is my schooling, major; and if one neglects the book, there is little chance of learning from the open hand of Providence."⁷³

The Almighty God, as Natty believes, has his own ways to preserve the purity of nature and keep it from being spoiled by the hand of civilized man. One of His ways is the spacious prairie. Consequently, in The Prairie, when Ishmael Bush asks Natty whether he has been far to the west, Natty says, "You may travel weeks and you will see it the same. I often think that the Lord has placed this barren belt of prairie behind the States, to warn men to what their folly may yet bring the land."⁷⁴

⁷² James F. Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, p. 135.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 260.

⁷⁴ James F. Cooper, The Prairie, p. 19.

Natty also believes that only the powerful and strong can live in nature, while the weak must seek refuge in the city where he may enjoy the protection of "law". Hence, when Ellen Wade, Ishmael Bush's niece, tells Natty that she has no father and no friend,

"Why then do you venture in a place where none but the strong should come?" he demanded. "Did you not know that when you crossed the Big River you left a friend behind you that is always bound to look to the young and feeble like yourself."⁷⁵

And this is one of the instances when Natty in some way or other, says anything good about civilization and praises civilized life. Here Natty admits that in a civilized society the weak and the strong are equal, for the laws serve to protect the weak from the atrocities of the strong.

Natty's unshaken belief in the perfection of nature and God's creatures makes him mock science and scientific method and regard both as inferior or as mere forgeries of reality. He expresses his ideas in this connection in his discourse with the botanist, Obed Bat.

"Ay! that is another of their wanton wickednesses!" explained the trapper. "They slay the buck, and the moose, and the wild cat, and all the beasts that range the woods, and stuffing them with worthless rags, and placing eyes of glass into their heads, they set them up to be stared at, and call them the creatures of the Lord; as if any mortal effigy could equal the works of His hand."⁷⁶

The Almighty God has designed everything with utmost care, but man, driven by his egoism, deforms the beautiful picture of God's creatures. And in his speech to the Doctor, Natty says:

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 114.

"Cruel enough would be the order, that should come from miserable hands as thine! A touch from such a finger would destroy the mocking deformity of mockery! Go, go; human folly is not needed to fill up the great design of God. There is no stature, no beauty, no proportions, nor any colors in which man himself can well be fashioned, that is not already done to his hands."⁷⁷

Again and again Natty insists on the perfection of learning gained by observing nature and its tiny creatures on the one hand, and the worthlessness of that sort of learning which is gained from books and away from nature on the other hand. His reply to the Doctor, who says that ignorance brings man to the level of brutes, while learning elevates him "to a communion with the great Master, spirit of all," is,

"Your l^larning, though it is man's boast, is folly in the eyes of Him who sits in the clouds, and looks down in sorrow at the pride and vanity of his creatur's. Many is the hour that I passed lying in the shades of the woods, and stretched upon the hills of these open fields, looking up into the blue skies, where I could fancy the Great One had taken his stand, and was solemnizing on the waywardness of man and brute below, as I myself had often looked at the ants tumbling over each other in their eagerness, though in a way and a fashion more suited to His mightiness and power."⁷⁸

Natty prefers to gain his knowledge directly from nature. By keen observation and careful study of God's creatures in the wilderness, Natty gets his knowledge. Books, as he repeatedly says, are worthless, except the "good book," which he believes in. In his argument with the Doctor about what is meant by the "Old World," Natty says,

"I am but little gifted in the fables of what you call the Old World, seeming that my time has been mainly passed looking natur^t steadily in the face, and in reasoning on what I've seen, rather than on what I've heard in traditions. But I shall never shut my ears to the words of the good book, and many is the long winter evening that I have passed in the wigwams of the Delawares, listening to the good Moravians, as they dealt forth the history and the doctrines of the elder times, to the people of the Lenape."⁷⁹

77 Ibid., p. 285.

78 Ibid., p. 211.

79 Ibid., p. 282.

Man's folly has no limits, as Natty thinks. Man's cruelty to man does not escape his observation. Man in order to satisfy his ego follows every crooked way for this purpose. What is worse from Natty's point of view is the restriction of man's liberty and mind. Thus when Middleton, the young officer, who was seeking his wife Inez, warns the Squatter, Ishmael Bush, against transgressing the law, Natty releases his anger against what is called "law" and against man's inhumanity to man.

"A wicked and troublesome meddling is that, with the business of One who has not made his creatures to be herded like oxen, and driven from field to field as their stupid and selfish keepers may judge of their needs and wants. A miserable land must that be, where they fetter the mind as well as the body, and where the creatures of God, being born free children are kept so by the wicked inventions of men who would take upon themselves the office of the great Governor of all."⁸⁰

Natty Bumpo, in The Pathfinder, gives a vivid description of what nature is; what it means to him and how far he is affected by it. In talking to Charles Cap, Natty contrasts civilized life and the life in the wilderness. The former leads to sin, while the latter to piety and purity. The wilderness is Natty's temple of worship. "The towns and settlements lead to sin, I will allow; but our lakes are bordered by forests, and one is everyday called upon to worship God in such a temple."⁸¹ When Mabel Dunham tells Natty that those who live in the wilderness "forget many of the deceits and vices of the towns," Natty simply tells her that this is true and natural, because man in the forest is near to the Almighty God and feels the power

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 411.

⁸¹ James F. Cooper, The Pathfinder, p. 19.

of his goodness. The forest is the real temple of God. And Natty contrasting the effects of the garrison church and of the Church of God, the forest, on his soul, is clearly pictured in his reply to Mabel,

"It is not easy, Mabel, to dwell always in the presence of God, and not feel the power of his goodness. I have attended church sarvice in the garrison, and tried hard, as becomes a true soldier, to join the prayers; for though no inlisted sarvant of the king, I fight battles and sarve his cause, and so I have ende'veored to worship garrison-fashion, but never could raise within me the solemn feelings and true affection that I feel when alone with God in the forest. There I seem to stand face to face with my Master; all around me is fresh and beautiful, as it came from his hand, and there is nicety of doctrine to chill the feelin's. No, no; the woods are the true temple, after all, for there the thoughts are free to mount higher even than clouds."⁸²

When Charles Cap asks Natty about the church he belongs to, his reply is direct and clear; that although he is a Christian, he does not belong to any church. His church is the forest where he worships God and where he gains his knowledge.

"Look about you, and judge for yourself. I'm in church now; I eat in church, sleep in church. The 'arth is the temple of the Lord, and I wait on Him hourly, daily, without ceasing, I humbly hope. No, no; I'll not deny my blood and color, but a Christian born, and shall die in the same faith. I'm a Christian already, and want to be neither Moravian, nor Churchman, nor Papist."⁸³

Natty believes that people in the settlements are far from the glorious work of God, from the forest and the wilderness; thus their knowledge concerning the Almighty is inferior to that of the children of nature. Consequently, he tells Charles Cap,

"Them that live in the settlements and the towns get to have confined and unjust opinions consarnin the might of His hand; but we who pass our time in His very presence, as it might be, see things differently."⁸⁴

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

With this high reverence of the wilderness in his mind, we must not be surprised to hear Natty say to Mabel and her fiance Jasper Western, the young sailor, that the forest is his last resort.

"You will go back to Oswego, and become man and wife as soon as you arrive; for all that is determined with Master Cap, who hankers after the sea again, and who knows what is to happen; while I shall return to the wilderness and my Maker."⁸⁵

Even in his first contact with nature, in The Deerslayer, Natty Bumppo knows its value and power. In the wilderness there is no deceit nor crookedness, but on the contrary, there is frankness. Thus, his advice to Hurry Harry, who tells him about his love of Judith in spite of her bad relation with the officers, is, "I would think no more of such a woman, but turn my mind altogether to the forest; that will not deceive you, being ordered and ruled by a hand that never wavers."⁸⁶ But when Natty is struck by the beauty of the lake, the Glimmerglass, and its surroundings, he feels that God's hand is at work; thus, turning to Hurry, he says, "Hurry, your Judith ought to be a moral and well disposed young woman, if she has passed half the time you mention in the centre of a spot so favored."⁸⁷ Natty says this because he believes that nature has a purgative and purifying power, and that everything coming within its bonds will be purified. Consequently, when Hurry says that his Judith has been spoiled by the settlers and "the gallantifying officers," Natty says, "If she has - if she has, Hurry, this is a school to set her mind right ag'in."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 423.

⁸⁶ James F. Cooper, The Deerslayer, p. 12.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 22.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

As the forest is Natty's temple and shrine, so also it is his sweet-heart and lover. He admires the different phases of nature, its trees, rivers and birds, for they are God's gifts to his thankful children. Hence, Natty tells Judith who asks him about his sweetheart,

"She's in the forest, Judith - hanging from the boughs of the trees, in a soft rain - in the dew on the open grass - the clouds that float about in the blue heavens - the birds that sing in the woods - the sweet springs where I slake my thirst - and in all the other glorious gifts that come from God's providence."⁸⁹

As far as there is the wilderness which reflects God's glory and might, there is no need for churches, because churches are man's creation. Natty, consequently, tells Judith, who shows her desire "to live nearer to civilized beings - where there are farms and churches,"

"It seems to me that the people who live in such places must be always thinkin' of their own ends, and of universal decay; and that, too, not of the decay that follows waste and violence. Then as to churches, they are good, I suppose, else wouldn't good men uphold 'em. But they are not altogether necessary. They call 'em the Temples of the Lord; but, Judith, the whole 'arth is a temple of the Lord to such as have the right mind."⁹⁰

Again and again Natty shows his pride and his satisfaction with his education. Nature is his teacher and the natural phenomenon is his precious book. It is the only book that he can read and meditate on. His reply to Judith, who asks Natty to read the newspaper in order to know some facts about Thomas Hovey or Thomas Hutter, is,

"My idication has been altogether in the woods; the only book I read or care about reading, is the one which God has opened afore all his creatur's in the noble forest, broad lakes, rolling rivers, blue skies, and the winds, and other glorious marvels of the land! This book I can read, and find it full of wisdom and knowledge."⁹¹

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 132.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 268-269.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 432.

This book which the Almighty God has printed, is truer than any book printed by man. This notion is an implication of the perfection of nature. Natty expresses this idea to Judith and he tells her about books and learning.

"There's some that do say, all that stands in print is true; in which case I'll own an unlearned man must be somewhat of a loser; nevertheless, it can't be truer than that which God has printed with his own hand, in the sky, and the woods, and the river, and the springs."⁹²

Natty Bumpo, who spends more than sixty years in the wilderness, learns some of his moral lessons directly from nature. He begins his moral education in The Deerslayer, and at the same time applies these moral lessons in his daily life and in his dealings with others. Later, in the remaining part of his life we also see that the process of learning goes on without interruption and hand in hand with the process of applying what he has learned. In The Deerslayer, nature as it seems to Natty, is frank and truthful. It has the power of correction and purification. It is his church and temple. It is a book truer and better than any book, because its pages tell the story of the glorious God. It is his sweetheart and lover. To Natty, everything in nature seems to be regulated and ordered by the Lord. In The Last of the Mohicans, nature is his book and his school; and in The Prairie, nature is perfect but man's folly spoils it. But here nature, to Natty, is the place of the strong. In The Pathfinder, it is the place where man feels God's power and sees his glory. Thus we see that in The Deerslayer, and in The Prairie, Natty is more influenced by nature than in any of the remaining books of the Leather Stocking series. In the former, Natty, in his youth, falls under its influence; while in the latter he is in his old age and is still influenced by it.

⁹² Ibid., p. 432.

CONCLUSION

From this investigation into the sources of morality in Natty Bumppo, we understand that he is born a Christian as he tells us in The Prairie, and he is proud of his Christianity. But in his very early age he turns his back on white society and civilization and finds refuge in the wilderness. We meet Natty in The Deerslayer, where he tells Hurry Harry that he has lived among the Delawares for eight years. There he falls under the direct influence of the Moravians, from whom he learns most of his religious lessons. He learns that the Almighty God has created the world, the wilderness as well as civilization. He learns that God is just and all are equal before Him, whether they are white, red or black, for all are His children. Moreover, he learns how to treat others in the manner he likes to be treated. From the Moravians and other missionaries Natty, also, learns the lessons that deal with honesty, chastity and humility.

Consequently, in The Deerslayer, we meet a young man with all these riches of religious practices. But this young man proves to be different from many others in his conception of religion and religious teachings. In religion he is not after theory but after practice. Thus, Natty puts into practice what has been learned in theory; and the whole wilderness becomes his field for application as well as his school for learning. In this wilderness he watches God's tiny creatures, the ants, and realizes that God has an end in his creatures. He observes everything around him and understands that everything is for a certain end. In other words, Natty applies his religious knowledge and learns other religious lessons.

In his contact with the Indians, he learns how to be brave, loyal and patient, because these are religiously approved traits; but at the same time

he learns how to avoid cruelty and treachery for they are against religion. In other words, Natty adopts such qualities as those which are within his religious code, and discards the ones that are in disagreement with it.

These facts will bring us to the conclusion that Natty Bumppo is basically a Christian, who first falls under the influence of the Moravians and other missionaries. This religious influence, strengthened later by other influences, nature and the Indians, makes of Natty a religious moralizer, who puts his religious theories into practice and comes out with his own point of view concerning religion and humanity. He sees religion as one and indivisible; all the world is the church of the Lord and all the people whether civilized or uncivilized are equal.

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THE SOURCES OF MORALITY IN NATTY BUMPPPO

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Natty Bumppo, early in his life, turns his back on white men and civilized society, seeks the wilderness and finds refuge among the Indians. Here, in the wilderness, he falls under the joint influence of the Moravians, the Indians and nature. Being a Christian by birth and faith, he shows deep interest in the teachings of the Moravians and other missionaries. From the Moravians he learns their basic ideas, equality of people before God, the absence of discrimination of any sort and the oneness of the Church. These principles, Natty occasionally repeats in his speeches and applies in his actions. He employs them to support his point of view whenever necessity arises. Consequently we can say that Christianity is the first factor to mould Natty's character, while nature and the Indians serve to strengthen his notions in this concern.

With this deep religious influence on Natty, his adventures in the wilderness and among the Indians provide him with rich sources both for application and for learning. His early contact with the Indians, especially the Delawares, might make one expect to find in the hero a white man with red gifts. But this expectation must be qualified because Natty has the power to judge and choose the most moral actions, and discard immoral ones that are opposed to his religious notions and concepts. Thus, we see in Natty a great admirer of honesty, loyalty, friendship and bravery on the one hand and a great enemy to killing and scalping on the other hand, all of which are Indian qualities. The greatest borrowing from the Indians and adaptation to their lives takes place in The Deerslayer.

The third major element which influences and forms the character of Natty is nature. In its beauty and perfection he finds God's image and glory

reflected. His admiration of the wilderness makes him reveal his resentment of civilization, and shows his longing for the happy past days before the calmness was disturbed by the sound of the axe and the progress of civilization. To Natty, nature is a power that purifies the soul; it is the book which the Almighty God has printed and it is truer than any book printed by man. The Deerslayer and The Prairie offer the greater influence of nature on Natty.

The joint influence of these three factors, gives us a moralizer above the level of ordinary men. To Cooper, Natty is a constant worshipper of the Almighty God. He is courageous, pure, and chaste. To Cora, he is above men and thus he is above their rewards. To Sergeant Dunham he is honest and "doesn't know how to be false." To Judith, he is truthful and honest. These views of Cooper and other characters put together give us a true picture of Cooper's creation, Natty Bumppo.