Transcendental Mirrors: Thoreau's Pond, Poe's Sea, and Melville's Ocean

Leslie Straight, University of New Orleans

Date of Award
Summer 8-4-2011

Degree Type
Thesis

Degree Name
M.A.

Degree Program
English

Department
English

Major Professor
Malmgren, Carl

Second Advisor
Hazlett, John

Third Advisor
Lackey, Kris

Abstract
Three seminal 19th-century North American literary works feature bodies of water which serve both as key elements in their narrative structure and as symbolic entities within their meaning systems. The protagonists in Henry David Thoreau's Walden, Edgar Allan Poe's A Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket, and Herman Melville's Moby-Dick literally define themselves in terms of their relation to these bodies of water. The best way to determine the function of water in the texts is to analyze the initial relationship between water and the central character, the way that water serves as a reflection of the Self, and the way that its Otherness suggests the ultimate possibility of transformation.

Rights
The University of New Orleans and its agents retain the non-exclusive license to archive and make accessible this dissertation or thesis in whole or part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. The author retains all other ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation.

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.uno.edu/td/346
a formal doctrine. They were distinct and independent individuals who accepted some basic premises about man's place in the universe.