

The Romantic Adventure of Pathfinder: Love Bound to Nature & A Quest of Identity as Seen in Cooper's *The Pathfinder or The Inland Sea*

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Abstract

Not only does love concern with different sexes of human beings but it also is about God, nature, brotherhood, friendship, and humanity itself. Love does not demand but gives and more it sacrifices for the sake of itself. *Pathfinder* thus offers a great value of love.

Love, despite its universality and immense power embracing human life, might be bound by certain situation and condition as it occurred to Pathfinder. Through an objective approach, this paper tries to put forward how the main character, Pathfinder realized that his love was bound to nature, his nature. The problem emerging from the story concerns the kind of love within the personality of Pathfinder so that he can sincerely encounter, though painfully, his unsuccessful love based on his awareness of his nature.

Through a hard effort of easing his own bleeding heart of dealing with the failure in gaining his love, Pathfinder comes to his solution that he has to change his love, from a love of a man towards a woman into a love of a father to his daughter. He has to realize that his nature is different from that of Mabel's. His age, way of life, customs, neighborhood, and his identity show that he does not match Mabel and so hers to him. His nature calls him back and gives him enlightenment of who he really is. He is neither an Indian nor a white, but he is both an Indian and a white man. That is his accomplishment of his quest on his identity.

Keywords: *love, nature, identity, Indian, White*

I. Introduction

Natty Bumppo is neither the natural man nor the civilized man of European theorists such as John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau; he is the American individualist who is creating a new society by a code of personal fulfillment under sound moral self-guidance, improvising as he goes along. The central theme, which knits this complex web of people and adventures into the cycle of a single year, is the emergence of Leather-Stocking as the "American hero." Social concern of human relationship is the concern of the novel though the problem is almost submerged in the excitement, action, and vivid description and narrative presentation. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/james-fenimore-cooper>)

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Pathfinder is a reflection of American people's efforts in discovering new values for their own identity as a new nation. It is the notion of American people searching their identity to get the new one, which departs from an old tradition i.e. European. This story, as said by D. H. Lawrence is "a decrescendo of reality, and a crescendo of beauty," (<http://www.answers.com/topic/james-fenimore-cooper>). This story engages the popular sense of American history and presents romantic historiography in the nineteenth century.

Pathfinder is an interesting story of love. This paper would like to take the aspect of love from the novel due to some reasons. First, love is a never-ending story covering every side of life. Not only does love concern with different sexes of human beings but it also does towards God, nature, brotherhood, friendship, and humanity. Mabel's long journey to meet her father through such difficult and deadly barriers shows one kind of great love in human heart. Pathfinder's efforts to give in his heart for Mabel as a man to a girl and then to alter his feeling into another position as a father to a daughter prove another kind of great love in human's life. Second, the main character's love towards his friends and his nature, engaged with respect and honour, obviously overwhelms the atmosphere of the story. Even there can be seen a tender heart of Pathfinder when he does not kill his defeated enemies. Third, Pathfinder fails in gaining his love to Mabel Dunham. Love does not demand but gives and more it sacrifices for the sake of itself.

Love, despite its universality and immense power embracing human life, might be bound by certain situation and condition as happened to Pathfinder. Pathfinder realized that his love was bound to nature. Love is great. The greatness of love, as a matter of fact, creates the universe with all its content including human kinds. With love and through love humans take care of each other for the sake of togetherness and betterment of their kinds. Love manages the nature or the world, if people are aware of it.

There is a common opinion of the division of love. It is said that love has three kinds i.e. love based on sex, love for family or brotherhood, and love to the nature and God as the Ultimate power ruling the life of universe on whom then human beings depend and to whom they will return. Those three kinds of love are called *eros*, *philia*, and *agape* (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/love/>). These three kinds of love exist in the novel. In this frame of thought, it is assumed that the author of the novel believed in love from the goodness side of it, a good love represented by the main character, Pathfinder. This statement does not mean that there is a bad love. This, instead, would merely like to say that at certain extend love drives people to be blind and conduct harmful things to other people. Somehow, Pathfinder conducts otherwise.

The discussion of this paper focuses on the love of the main character that is bound to his nature, as the central theme of the discussion, and the main character's quest of identity due to his two contradictory worlds. The problems arising to discuss will be based upon this focus, and the discussion is based on the story of the novel without stretching out into the external aspect of the novel. Abram's objective theory is thus applied. This approach is based on the principle that regards the work of art in isolation from all these external points of reference, analyze it as a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their internal relations, and sets out to judge solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being (Abrams 26)

Another approach, *The Myth and Symbol* by Henry Nash Smith, is also used as an attempt to see American experiences, the past and the present, as revealed through American literary works. In this approach, he said, "The best thing we can do, in my opinion, is to conceive of American Studies as collaboration among men working from within existing academic disciplines but attempting to widen the boundaries imposed by conventional methods of inquiry. This implies a sustained effort of the student of literature to take account of sociological, historical,

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and anthropological data and methods, and of the sociologist or the historian to take account of the data and methods of scholarships in the fields of arts. I am optimistic enough to believe that inquiries which have their starting points in various academic departments can converge as they are brought to bear upon a single topic, namely, American culture past and present." (14)

The quotation provokes an idea of disclosing the values of love and identity quest as a part of American experiences revealed in *Pathfinder*. The Myth and Symbol scholars believed that an analysis of a given work of art or literary work could explain the nature of society at the time.

The aim of this study is to dig out one of the moral values specifically the love explored throughout the story of the novel, *Pathfinder*. This is going to see what kind of love shown by the novel through its main character, Pathfinder or Hawkeye, a name he was called in the previous series, *The Last of the Mohican*. Moreover, this discussion tries to put forward how the main character, Pathfinder realized that his love was bound to nature. This is also the aim of this paper that readers will finally believe that the novel, *Pathfinder*, is a reflection of American people's efforts in discovering new values for their own identity as a new nation. By exploring and analyzing the love within the novel, readers may then see the notion of American people searching their identity to get the new one, which departs from an old tradition i.e. European.

II. Discussion

A. Love

1. Sexual Love

This kind of love is the one determined by the Ultimate nature or God for every creature especially human beings to commit for both procreation and recreation. A man loves a woman and a woman loves a man so that they unite into a sacred bound called marriage. It is this love that inspires most people in the world to create literary and art works. No one can get rid of this nature's gift for his/her being in the world is caused by this love.

Pathfinder cannot deny and reject the nature's call; he falls in love with a woman. Because of this love, tallied with respect and honour, he conducts the best for the sake of the lady's safety. This is not only a matter of keeping his promise to his dear friend sergeant Dunham to guard and guide this sergeant's daughter to safely meet her father in a fort deep in a forest, but also a matter of expressing his feeling and an attempt to win the heart of the lady. He has no doubt to sacrifice himself for keeping her safe. At the very first place, readers encounter the love of the fellow explicitly from the conversation between sergeant Dunham with his daughter, Mabel. There he says to Mabel about the feeling of Pathfinder towards Mabel.

"Thou knowest my choice, beloved girl; none other can make thee as happy, as the noble-hearted guide.

Mabel, he loves you, as I loved your mother. I have seen him weep like a child, when speaking of his feelings towards you." (Cooper 322-333)

Pathfinder himself in the later part of the novel admits his being in love with Mabel, the love that leads him, though with his own awareness and self-desire, into a sadly broken heart. He gives Mabel options to choose between him and Jasper, between obedience and love, between head and heart.

"... Now stand up, and choose atween us. I do believe Eau douce loves you as well as I do myself; ... The sarjeant left me your protector, and not your tyrant. I told him that I would be a father to you, as well as a husband, and it seems to me no feeling father would deny his child this small privilege. Stand up, Mabel,

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therefore, and speak your thoughts as freely, as if I were the sarjeant himself, seeking your good, and nothing else."
(Cooper 468)

When finally Mabel Dunham goes to the arms of Jasper, Pathfinder accepts the decision though it is a bitter moment for him.

"I have already known, Mabel Dunham, that men have their gifts," he said, " but I'd forgotten that it did not belong to mine, to please the young, and beautiful, and l'arned. I hope the mistake has been no very heavy sin, and if it was, I've been heavily punished for it, I have. I've had a bitter hour, Mabel. I've had a very bitter hour, lad —"
(Cooper 471)

This is a true love, a love that dares sacrifice for the sake of the beloved's happiness. A true love does not demand more than it deserves, rather a true love gives more than it is expected.

He, in fact, does not get a rejection from Mabel Dunham, but he understands that she does love him as he does to her. He knows that Mabel is in love with his young friend Jasper Western and so does he to her. However, Pathfinder is a man of great heart. He knows and believes that the place for Mabel is not by him but by Jasper, therefore, he painfully lets her be with the one she truly loves. His toughness is shown through the following poem,

"Oh! let me only breathe the air,
The blessed air that's breathed by thee;
And whether on its wings it bear
Healing or death, 'tis sweet to me!" (Cooper 475)

Love has summoned Pathfinder, and then hurts him, but then it heals him as well. He has surrendered to the greatness of love, but it does not sink him into despair. Instead, it brings him even tougher.

2. Brotherhood/family Love

This love is clearly shown throughout the novel. The relationship between Pathfinder and sergeant Dunham, Indian, and Jasper reveals this kind. The same thing happens between Mabel and her father and vice versa. Love is not a trade. Again, loves sacrifices for the sake of itself. Otherwise, love is not love but selfishness.

Sergeant Dunham has shown a good love of a father to his child by giving a chance to Mabel to object his great desire of matching her with Pathfinder to be his wife. His being very long in military makes him accustomed with words as order and command, but he does not apply it to Mabel when the rest of the child's life is to be risked. This may take place because he loves his daughter much.

"If I could see you promised to Pathfinder — know that you were pledge to become his wife, let my own fate be what it might, I think I could die happy. But I will ask no pledge of you my child — I will not force you to do what you might repent. Kiss me, Mabel, and go to your bed."
(Cooper 322)

On the other side, sergeant Dunham's daughter, Mabel has the same great love as Pathfinder does, but in a different form. She loves her father much. Thus for the sake of her love to her father, she has also no doubt to sacrifice herself to accept Pathfinder to be her husband when
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asked so, although she feels an inner conflict for this. She finds herself bewildered. With her great love, she resolves her mind.

..... and the warm-hearted, generous-minded Mabel was ready to concede to her affections, much more than she would ever have yielded to menace. At that touching moment she thought only of her parent, who was about to quit her perhaps forever, and all of that ardent love for him, which had possibly been as much fed by the imagination as by anything else, but which had received a little check by the restrained intercourse of the last fortnight, now returned with force that was increased by pure and intense feeling. Her father seemed all in all to her, and to render him happy, there was no proper sacrifice that she was not ready to make.

.....
"I will marry whomever you desire."
(Cooper 322)

The quotation shows clearly how deep the love, which leads her into a sincere fidelity and obedience, to her father. She tries to keep her promise to her father by preparing herself to marry to Pathfinder despite her own heart's saying another choice realizing that she has a fancy to Jasper. Even when Pathfinder tells her the fact that both the fellows fall in love with her and that the older is too old and unfit for her, she keeps arguing, though weakly, that they have already vowed before the dying old man.

3. Heavenly Love

This kind of love is the one reflecting an unlimited love as heaven loves the universe. A man filled with this love will understand that he is a creature of God and shall love God as well as other creations including other human beings and nature. In the case of Pathfinder, the novel shows how he respects nature living in it without any single intention to destroy it. He lives in accordance with the will of the nature. Even when he has defeated his enemy, he does not kill him when killing is not appropriate for the situation. Pathfinder has this humanity/heavenly love. The poem opening the first chapter of the novel is possibly applied to Pathfinder as a man of having this kind of love.

The turf shall be my fragrant shrine;
My temple, Lord! that arch of thine;
My censor's breath the mountain airs,
And silent thoughts my only prayers. (Cooper 9)

B. Nature

It is better to see first what is meant by nature so that this discussion will lead to an appropriate and make-sense analysis. In Longman Dictionary lie some definitions of nature, among those are: "1. the qualities which make someone or something different from others; character, 2. the whole world, esp. as something lasting and not changed by people, 3. the force which controls the world independently of people" (Procter 726).

This can be stated simple that those three definitions above are about the man, the environment, and God. What is meant by the man is that the features inherent within the personality of the man. One's character of smiling and kind to other people is considered a micro nature of a man. It is about someone's nature. His being a white, black, red, or yellow man is also micro nature. Pathfinder was born white, so he has his nature's destiny of having white's features on his body and appearance. His being a white man is his micro nature. It is a The Romantic Adventure of Pathfinder: Love Bound to Nature & A Quest of Identity as Seen in Cooper's *The Pathfinder or The Inland Sea* - RB. Edi Pramono *

nature by birth. It is already destined by nature that Pathfinder was born and grew up in a forest and made a living from it. He is a man of white race by nature but he lives and gets acquainted with Indians especially the Mohicans as his best friends.

The second one is the environment, the nature surrounding human living within. How a person behaves and conducts his/her life is influenced by this nature. Society, environment concept of running life, and neighborhood are considered this second kind. This second nature raised him into what he is now. This nature shapes his thought, his way of life, his way in believing in God though he is a Christian, and his conducts. The writer of this paper tends to name this kind as a social nature. The society and environment where people live in and self-awareness of their beings have taught them to be so.

The last nature is the Ultimate power ruling the life of all creatures and the universe. This concerns with God's will. Be born, fall in love, be married, and die are the will of this ultimate nature. This is the power beyond human, the power that destines the fate of human and mankind. The life of Pathfinder can be approached as the life determined by nature, although he has his own free will to make a choice for his own merit.

Nature has taught him to be as he is now, a skillful and experienced hunter as well as a tracker in forests from which he is then named Pathfinder. Pathfinder, when falling in love with Mabel is following his a nature of a man attracted to his opposite sex.

As for Mabel, she is also following her social nature when deciding to choose the one for her husband. The social and ultimate nature has led her to whom she might give in her life and love.

Love is worth fighting for, pursuing, and even sacrificing one's life. This is the nature's calling, and based on this assumption, it is no wonder that for the sake of her love to her father, Mabel sacrifices her heart by obeying her father's will to get married to Pathfinder. The same thing happens to Pathfinder. For the sake of his love, after realizing his own nature, he sacrifices his heart, though painful he feels so much, to let her be with Jasper in a marriage.

Pathfinder is really aware that every man is destined by his social and ultimate nature He considers a difference as a calling. This is his calling to live a life as red but white by birth and on gifts.

"A soldier's calling is an honorable calling, provided he has fit only on the side of right. The Sarpent, here, has his fashions and I have mine; and yet have we fou't, side by side, these many years, without either's thinking a hard thought consarning the other's ways. I tell him there is but one heaven and one hell, notwithstanding his traditions, though there are many paths to both." (Cooper 26)

"..... A red skin has his notions, and it is right that it should be so, and if they are not exactly the same as a Christian white man's, there is no harm in it." (Cooper 27)

Based on the above quotation, it is clearly seen that Pathfinder is a man of wise thought. He respects things, which perhaps are not in line with his thought. He honors someone's calling. Thus, when it, again, goes back to his dealing with his failed love to Mabel, he also honors and respects Mabel's decision to follow her heart, which means following her calling. He realizes that he is bound to his nature, a man of, considering his way of life, neither red nor white, a man of forest with very limited knowledge in pleasing and making a young girl like Mabel happy, and a man of being too old for a girl of Mabel's age.

His feeling so painful of losing her also shows that his love is bound to nature. He, for sometimes, let himself drown into sadness.

....., he was almost overcome with a sense of loneliness. Never before had he been conscious of his isolated condition in the world, for his feelings had gradually been accustoming themselves to the blandishments and wants of social life, particularly as the last were connected with the domestic affections. Now, all had vanished, as it might be, in one moment, and he was left equally without companions and without hope. (Cooper 475)

He also believes that sadness will be healed by nature as he said to June in giving consolation to her when losing her grieving husband's death.

"..... But June, you're not deserted, nor will you be soon. Let your grief out — let it out, according to nature, and when the time comes, I shall have more to say to you." (Cooper 477)

His broken heart will also be healed by nature as time goes by

C. Quest of Identity & Romanticism

Pathfinder is considered as a novel of identity quest due to the fact that despite the main character's inner conflicts of dealing with his failed love affair, he is in his doubt of living his double world: the world as a white and as a red. Although he is the child of white parents, he grew up with Native Americans, becoming a near-fearless warrior skilled in many weapons, one of which is the long rifle. He respects his forest home and all its inhabitants, hunting only what he needs to survive. The adventure of Pathfinder in his quest of identity is obviously presented by the author. From the very start of the story he was confused by other characters upon his being.

"Arrowhead is but half right," whispered Mabel, "for there are two Indians and only one white man."

"Pale face," said the Tuscarora, holding up two fingers; "red man," holding up one.

"Well," rejoined Cap, "it is hard to say, which is right and which is wrong.; but the third chap is half-rigged; being neither brig, nor schooner." (Cooper 18)

Pathfinder claims himself as a Christian white man as he said to Mabel on their first meeting, "Fear nothing, young woman, ..., you have met Christian men, in the wilderness, and such as know how to treat all kindly that are disposed to peace and justice." (Cooper 20) He believes in similar and equal justice for every one despite his/her skin although Pathfinder himself stresses himself as a white man rather than an Indian, "... though it is a law with me to fight always like a white man, and never like an Injin. The Serpent, here, has his fashions and I have mine. ... I tell him there is but one heaven and one hell, notwithstanding his tradition, though there are many paths to both." (Cooper 26) In other parts of the story he again emphasizes his being a white man, "'Tis the Serpent, as sure as I'm a white man, ..." (Cooper 49); "... I will not revile you, like a Delaware, or a Mohican, for my gifts are a white man's gifts, and not an Injin's; and boasting in battle is no part of a Christian warrior; ..." (Cooper 49); "... I am not a red skin born, and it is more a white man's gifts to fight openly, than to lie in ambushment." (Cooper 73)

His life among Indians along with his adopting their ways of life and his awareness of his being

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as a white man lead him into a long search of what he should really be. The quest of identity is accomplished. He is neither an Indian nor a white, but he is both an Indian and a white man.

Pathfinder was written and published in nineteenth century an era called a Romantic period in both England and America. Here are some quotations concerning the meaning of romanticism according to some great authors.

the exploitation... of the realm of the supernatural and of "the far away and the long ago" ... objects are charged with a significance beyond their physical qualities. "I always seek in what I see," as Shelley said, "the likeness of something beyond the present and tangible object."

.....

External nature – the landscape, together with its flora and fauna – became a persistent subject of poetry, and was described with an accuracy and sensuous nuance ... The important romantic poems are in fact poems of meaningful meditation about an important human problem.

.....

And whether the romantic subject was the poet himself or someone else, he was no longer part of an organized society but, typically, a solitaire figure engaged in a long – and sometimes infinitely elusive – quest; often he was a social nonconformist or outcast. (Abrams 106-107)

Pathfinder has the quality or features of romanticism. The following quotations will further signify the relationship between *Pathfinder* and the romanticism era in America. A romantic novel is "A type of novel marked by strong interest in action and presenting episodes often based on love, adventure, and combat." (Thrall & Hibbard 379) *Pathfinder* has successfully 100% represented the statement. Love, adventure, and combat dominantly deal with the story of the novel.

Furthermore, the Romantic Movement may be listed as follows:

Sentimentalism; primitivism; love of external nature; sympathetic interest in the past, especially the medieval...; mysticism; individualism; romantic criticism;

..... Dr. F.H. Hedge, thought the essence of romanticism was inspiration, having its origin in wonder and mystery. (Neilson) calls romanticism the predominance of imagination over reason (classicism) and over the sense of fact (realism)

.....

... idealism of rural life (Goldsmith); enthusiasm for the wild, irregular, or grotesque in nature and art; unrestrained imagination; enthusiasm for uncivilized or "natural"; interest in human rights the love lyric, the reflective lyric, the nature lyric,, the "sentimental novel" (Thrall & Hibbard 380-381)

.....

In literature strong romantic influences manifested through individualism, interest in nature, the man and nature relationship, and supernaturalism. (Thrall & Hibbard 527)

Coming back to the very previous analysis on the love and nature of the novel in parts A and B, this discussion obviously demonstrates the tight connection between all the quotations above and the novel. The last quotation mentions about the relationship between man and nature, and the previous one from Abrams states a solitaire figure engaged in a long quest. Most of *Pathfinder's* life engages with nature from which he gets his various kinds of names. He is also

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in fact a solitaire figure, a white among red Indians. His journey of life is as a matter of fact a long quest of acquiring a real identity of his being. *Pathfinder* is not yet the final discovery of the hero's real identity, nevertheless, from the story and all the conflicts he encounters, it can be said that he has come to a steady state of his being. Within his Indian life, he possesses the blood and features of a white. In the realm of white blood and features, he runs an Indian way of life. Thus, he is none of both, but he is both. He is neither an Indian nor a white, but he is both an Indian and a white. He is an American.

III. Conclusion

Pathfinder is an interesting love story. Love is a never-ending story covering every side of life. Not only does love concern with different sexes of human beings but it also is about God, nature, brotherhood, friendship, and humanity itself. Love does not demand but gives and more it sacrifices for the sake of itself.

As already discussed in the previous parts, it is obviously seen that the love within Pathfinder's heart is a great love, a pure love that he dares sacrifice for the sake of the happiness of the one he loves. He has no selfishness for his own joy but he takes any risks for the joy to gain by Mabel. This characteristic of love is supported by his belief on the nature's calling. Furthermore, though he has to suffer a great "bleeding" heart and a sudden deep loneliness from his unreachable love, he keeps firm and stays tough. He does not hate nor break his good relationship with both Mabel and her husband Jasper, his friend. Through a hard effort of easing his own "bleeding" heart of dealing with the failure in gaining his love, Pathfinder comes to his solution that he has to change his love, from a love of a man towards a woman into a love of a father to his daughter. He keeps friendship with them, and he loves them both still.

Pathfinder realized that his love is bound to nature, his social and ultimate nature. He has to realize that his nature is different from that of Mabel's. His age, way of life, customs, neighborhood, and his identity show that he does not match Mabel and so hers to him. His nature calls him back and gives him enlightenment of who he really is. Through his long and deep self-introspection and thought of his existence compared to Jasper's and Mabel's existences, he comes to a self-resolution that he may not match the engagement. His quest of identity is accomplished. He is neither an Indian nor a white, but he is both an Indian and a white man. Through this conclusion part, the writer of this paper would like to dare say that, considering the characteristics and personalities, Pathfinder is a true American. He is what and how Americans today should be without strictly considering any different backgrounds attached to any individuals.

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