

Themes of nature essay sample

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Some of the best well-known works of American literature have a theme about nature and how magnificent, beautiful and astonishing nature is. Out of all the possible literary works that have a theme about nature there's three in particular that are going to be described in this essay. These three works are "A Description of New England," by John Smith, "Rip Van Winkle," by Washington Irving, and "Thanatopsis," by William Cullen Bryant. Each has a very good way of conveying nature and how stunning it is to them.

In "A Description of New England," John Smith talks about how amazing the nature is in the new world. He did this to persuade people to come to the new world so they and he could profit from the abundance of nature that he sees while traveling. He talks about how wondrous nature is by saying, "From Penobscot (a river and bay on the Maine coast) to Sagadahoc (another river in Maine now called the Kennebec River) this coast is all mountainous and isles of huge rocks but overgrown with all sorts of excellent good woods for building houses, boats, barks, or ships, [and] with an incredible abundance of most sorts of fish, much fowl, and sundry sorts of good fruits for man's use." (Smith 57) He hopes that people will come and use the abundances of the nature he sees to get rich by building their own houses, shops, towns and to live a good life.

Then in "Rip Van Winkle," Washington Irving gives an illustrious description of the Catskills Mountains in New York. He says, "Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather,

indeed, every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and bring their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but, sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory" (Irving 718). In this story Irving uses the Catskill Mountains as the first feature to be introduced to the setting of the story.

He explains that these mountains are extremely tall and protective and gives it a majestic sense to nature. In relation to the weather, the mountain is portrayed as having the quality of a mysterious tint of blue and purple. The use of the color purple brings forward the idea of a royal color and it can be seen, by no means, a coincidence that this is why the color purple was used to describe the mountain. He also described the image of the mountain peak at sunset as being like a crown fit for a king which personifies the Catskill Mountains as being the English king's powers to watch over a village as means of protecting it. All of which appeals to the readers senses of what nature is like.

Also in "Thanatopsis," William Cullen Bryant describes how man's purpose should be to become one with nature. He does this by saying, "To him who in the love of Nature holds, Communion with her visible forms, she speaks, A various language; for his gayer hours, She has a voice of gladness, and a smile, and eloquence of beauty, and she glides, into his darker musings with a mild, And healing sympathy that steals away." (Bryant 877) Bryant is <https://assignbuster.com/themes-of-nature-essay-sample/>

trying to show that nature has a voice of gladness and eloquence of beauty. He also describes nature as a cause of happiness and wise doings. He strongly feels that nature makes him glad, loves him, teaches him, and heals him, and this too can happen to any man and that man should strive for this harmony with nature.

References:

Smith, John. "A Description of New England." *Anthology of American Literature*. George McMichael et al. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007. 55
Irving, Washington. "Rip Van Winkle." *Anthology of American Literature*. George McMichael et al. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007.

Bryant, William Cullen. "Thanatopsis." *Anthology of American Literature*. George McMichael et al. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007.