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Human adaptation to nature in the novels by Charles Frazier

*Lidská adaptace na přírodu v románech Charlese Frazier*

Bakalářská práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma Lidská adaptace na přírodu v románech Charlese Fraziera vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V ..... dne .....

Podpis .....

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## INTRODUCTION

Despite still being rather unknown author for many people, Charles Frazier can be considered one of the most significant contemporary American fiction writers. His contribution to American literature is important mainly because of Frazier's celebration and description not only of American culture but chiefly of its people and nature. In his three novels—*Cold Mountain*, *Thirteen Moons* and *Nightwoods*—that are the subject of this thesis, Frazier focuses on the individuals' relationship with nature and the importance and effect that the natural surrounding has on the characters. The author chose his native North Carolina with its mountains and woods as a setting for all three novels. The objective of this thesis is to explore adaptation of Frazier's characters to this natural environment. It focuses on reasons that force these characters adapt to nature, on whether they manage to adapt or not as well as on differences in degree and ways of their adaptation.

The first chapter discusses "setting" and mainly "place setting" as an essential term in the process of adaptation. Then, it focuses on the concept of "wilderness" that is put into contrast with the modern world and its impact on characters' relationship with nature. After describing these terms, I briefly introduce setting of the three novels and outline characters' view of natural as well as of the civilized world.

In the second chapter, I am concerned with the genre of historical novel. After introducing this term, the focus is on historical events that influence characters' connection and adaptation to the natural world. It discusses American Civil War on which background *Cold Mountain* is set and on Indian Removal Act and Trail of Tears that are the subject of *Thirteen Moons*. This chapter also mentions main pioneers of this genre and suggests one of them as a source of inspiration for one of Frazier's novels.

The subject of the third chapter are titles of the novels that contain natural elements and thus refer to the important role of nature in these books. The selection of these titles is not a coincidence as the contents of the novels show. The main objective of this chapter is to explain and demonstrate how are these natural phenomena, which appear in the titles, reflected in Frazier's novels.

The fourth chapter is concerned with the novel *Cold Mountain* and with adaptation to nature of its three main protagonists: Ada, Ruby and Inman. One of the main subjects of this chapter are factors that influence these characters' relationship to their natural environment. In the case of Inman, I pay attention to his participation in American Civil War and its impact mainly on his spiritual self. When occupying with Ada and Ruby, I focus on their distinct social and family background that determine the degree of their adaptation. This chapter occupies with Ada's change in her view of nature as well as with her increasing adaptation. My primary intention was to focus also on film adaptation of *Cold Mountain* but while writing the thesis, I decided not to include the film into my work and thus leave more space for the analysis of the novels themselves.

The penultimate chapter concentrates on Frazier's second novel – *Thirteen Moons*. In the first part of this chapter, I give historical context of the book, focusing on Indian Removal Act and subsequent Cherokee Trail of Tears. After that, I shift my attention to the main character of the novel, Will Cooper, observing his adaptation to the natural environment after his adoption by Cherokee people. This part of the thesis also discusses Will's attempt to protect his adopting tribe and Indian people in general from the Removal order. Additionally, I explain what this law and subsequent invasion of modern world meant for this main protagonist. In the last part of this chapter concerning *Thirteen Moons*, I discuss the significant role of Cherokee adaptation to nature in their disobedience after passing of the Indian Removal Act. This chapter is concluded with mentioning of the effects that this Andrew Jackson's law had on Native American people.

Frazier's third novel—*Nightwoods*—is the subject of the last chapter of this thesis. The novel features three characters whose adaptation to nature results from their personal traumatic experiences. In the first part of this chapter, I am concerned with Luce, the main protagonist, and with her voluntarily self-imposed lonely life in close connection to nature she accepted as a reaction to her sexual abuse. Then, I describe effects that the witnessing mother's murder have on twins'—with whom this chapter also occupies—relationship with other people as well as with the natural world. This chapter closes with explanation of what helps the children survive in hostile winter woods on their own.

In the end of the thesis, I compare factors that are essential for characters' adaptation as well as differences in degree of adaptation of these individual characters. In case of the protagonists who are going through the process of adaptation within the course of the novels, I explain whether they succeed in their adaptation to nature and, if so, in what way and to which degree.

## 1. SETTING, WILDERNESS AND THE CIVILIZED WORLD

When discussing the adaptation in this thesis, place and time have a very significant role. The characters try to adapt or are adapted to the place that they live in or are surrounded by. This surrounding has effect on the way they live their life, on their perception of the outer world and also on their personal development. In literary terms, “setting” is used for “the where and when of a story or play.”<sup>1</sup> In Frazier’s novels, the “where” are the mountains and woods of North Carolina and their adjacent villages. As John Peck and Martin Coyle say: “The setting is likely to strike us as either an attractive one, where characters should feel comfortable, or an unattractive one, where people are bound to feel unhappy and alienated.”<sup>2</sup> In the novels, the setting in nature rouses both these feelings. It can bring man to death as well as keep him alive. It is a source of struggle for some characters who are challenged to abandon their soft way of life and face the cruelty of the natural world. On the other hand, the nature is seen as an element that maintain the harmony and as a symbol of purity in otherwise corrupted world. This perception of nature is embodied in the concept of “wilderness”. In *Ecocriticism*, Greg Gerrard defines wilderness as “a construction mobilised to protect particular habitats and species, and is seen as a place for the reinvigoration of those tired of moral and material pollution of the city.”<sup>3</sup> This comprehension of wilderness is also apparent in the three novels. Some characters, after being disappointed with the modern world and the people that are part of it, seek refuge in nature. Some characters have not come into contact with the civilized world yet and they constantly fight to maintain their primitive way of life. To understand this struggle with the New World, it is necessary to look at the time periods, the “when”, in which the individual narratives take place. As a time setting for his novels, Frazier chose the periods and events that are among the most significant not only in American history but mainly for American people. These periods carried social, economic and moral

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<sup>1</sup> J.A. Cuddon, *The Penguin dictionary of literary terms and literary theory* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 812.

<sup>2</sup> John Peck and Martin Coyle, *Literary terms and criticism* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 121–122.

<sup>3</sup> Greg Gerard, *Ecocriticism* (Abingdon: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 59.



changes that made people doubt the New World and therefore return to nature and to rather wild way of life.

*Cold Mountain* is a novel set in towards the end of the American Civil War, capturing the deserting soldier's return to his homeland. He is a character representing all the young men disillusioned by the war. After seeing and tasting its horror, he realizes that it is not "part of the harmonious natural order where life and death are linked in a cycle."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, he decides to go back to his home, Cold Mountain, where he believes he can find his peace – in the land untouched by the devastating spirit of the war as well as in the arms of the woman he loves. When going through the territory that he was protecting in the war, Inman asks himself "how did he ever think this to be his country and worth fighting for?"<sup>5</sup> He comes to the conclusion that "all in his mind worth combat right now was his right to exist unmolested somewhere on the west fork of the Pigeon River drainage basin, up on Cold Mountain."<sup>6</sup> The war made Inman value not only the purity of nature but also the solitude that the wilderness offers. He dreams of Cold Mountain where he would live "so high that not a soul but the nighthawks passing across the clouds in autumn could hear his sad cry."<sup>7</sup> Inman, disgusted by war and by the company of the civilized world, decides to believe that woods and mountains of his homeland is where he should seek the purpose of his life.

While *Cold Mountain* deals only with the fight of an individual, the resistance to the new civilized world, which the settlers were trying to establish in America during the nineteenth century, is on a larger scale represented in *Thirteen Moons*. Its setting during the Trail of Tears gives better understanding of how important it was for American Native people to maintain their way of life in the wilderness, at the edge of the world already touched by the civilization. Will Cooper, the main protagonist and speaker of Cherokee people, opens and closes the novel with his negative view of the industrialized world he

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<sup>4</sup> Anne Crow, "Patterns in nature and life: Anne Crow explores the ways in which Charles Frazier's characters in *Cold Mountain* learn the importance of patterns," *The English Review* 18 (2007): 2+, accessed January 6, 2019, <http://go.galegroup.com>.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Frazier, *Cold Mountain* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2011), 80.

<sup>6</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 80.

<sup>7</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 80.

has witnessed shaping during his life. He remembers the old times “when America was no more than a strip of land stretching a couple of hundred miles west of the Atlantic,”<sup>8</sup> stating that he represents “an old America of coonskins hats.”<sup>9</sup> Despite living for a while in the civilized world and enjoying the advantages it offers, Will never ceases to blame it for destroying the beauty of the mountains, rivers and woods he is so familiar with. Frazier uses Will as a character who represents all the Indians resisting the pressure of the New World that is trying to make them leave the land their tribes have been occupying for centuries.

In *Nightwoods*, Frazier abandons the nineteenth century and moves the setting hundred years later, one decade after the World Word II. It is the time period which does not offer much opportunity to escape the civilized world. However, the author still uses the concept of wilderness as defined by Gerrard. The old lodge surrounded by forests and a mountain lake, the setting of the novel, serves as this place of isolation and freedom. The surrounding nature offers a retreat for mentally deprived children who lost their trust in people after witnessing their mother’s murder. It seems that they ignore everyone and everything but nature. When asked questions about their mother, they rather “wandered deeper into the garden”<sup>10</sup> than answering. Moreover, after encounter with their mother’s murderer, they decide to run into the woods because the “woods are for escapees.”<sup>11</sup> This decision, to escape into the wild and dangerous forest instead of telling anyone, demonstrates that it is easier and safer for them to trust the woods than to other people.

Characters turning their attention towards nature is a common point of all three novels. After being disappointed with people and events of the civilized world, it is the wilderness where they believe they can find their peace and freedom. Frazier uses American Civil War or Indian Removal as a source of this disillusionment and mountains and woods of North Carolina as a refuge and hideaway for these devastated souls.

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Frazier, *Thirteen Moons* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2007), 9.

<sup>9</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 9.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Frazier, *Nightwoods* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2011), 34.

<sup>11</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 257.

## 2. HISTORICAL NOVEL

The two novels, *Cold Mountain* and *Thirteen Moons*, can be classified in the genre of historical novel. According to Berman, Morton and Burto, it is “a term which refers to novels set in a period of time recognizably ‘historical’ in relation to the time of writing,”<sup>12</sup> adding that it “tends to encompass both public and private events.”<sup>13</sup>

The novels meet both these criteria as they take place—*Cold Mountain*—in the nineteenth century American Civil War and—*Thirteen Moons*—during the Trail of Tears. Thus, approximately two hundred years before the first editions of the novels, *Cold Mountain* in 1997 and *Thirteen Moons* in 2006, have been released. The war and the Removal, on which background the life stories of these fictional characters take place, have significant impact on their viewing of the world. These seemingly public events reflect the private struggle of the people that take, not only active, part in them. This is what the two Frazier’s novels are concerned with primarily. The author does not focus his attention exclusively on depiction of the historical events. Their recording and description have rather different importance. Through the agency of these events Frazier tries, rather than to educate the readers about history (even though it depicts it quite reliably mainly in *Thirteen Moons*), to show the contrast between “advanced” world full of conflicts and rather “primitive” way of life that is possible to find only in nature. Therefore, the Civil War and the Trail of Tears serve more likely as a source of doubt that the new world arouses. And this is what gives the characters the impulse to turn their attention to nature.

Similarly, the absence of direct participation of real historical figures (they serve only as secondary characters, if present) can serve as a proof that the novels are not supposed to be focused on mere historical facts in the first place. The concept of the historical novel as defined by Barnet, Berman and Burto says that “the protagonist may be either an actual figure from the past or an invented figure whose destiny is involved with

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<sup>12</sup> Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman and William Burto, *A Dictionary of Literary, Dramatic, and Cinematic Terms* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), 114.

<sup>13</sup> Barnet, Berman and Burto, *A Dictionary of Literary, Dramatic, and Cinematic Terms*, 114.

actual events.”<sup>14</sup> By not directly including any real figure from the history into his novels, Frazier makes impression that he wants to keep distance from the factual recording of historical events. This way the author has more space to concentrate on the impact of these events on the lives and behavior of his fictional characters.

In his book *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Chris Baldick introduces Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper as “the pioneers of this genre.”<sup>15</sup> In *Thirteen Moons*, there are noticeable similarities with Cooper’s historical novels. Both Frazier and Cooper historical novels are deeply concerned with the American frontier and with the Indians occupying this territory, emphasizing and depicting their reliance on the natural world. In addition, the main character of Frazier’s novel, Will Cooper, and the chief protagonist of Cooper’s *Leatherstocking Tales*, Natty Bumppo, also evince some signs of resemblance. They both live on the interface of two cultures: that of white people and the one of North American Indians. Will was born into the white family, but he later accepted the offer of Cherokee chief, Bear, to become his son stating that he would “be honored to call him father.”<sup>16</sup> Eventually, Will becomes chief spokesman of Cherokee nation in front of the “white” world. Similarly, this cultural clash is also represented by Natty Bumppo who is “the white frontiersman [...] who lives with Indians in the wilderness and absorbs their culture.”<sup>17</sup> Frazier himself admits resemblance between the two characters. When Will is referred to as not being Cooper, the white Indian chief, he is amused thinking that “perhaps Natty Bumppo. Some mythic relief of the time when [...] most of the country was a sea of forest and savanna and mountains prowled by savage Indians.”<sup>18</sup> This reference to Cooper’s most famous character and Frazier’s similar approach to American frontier and the Native people in *Thirteen Moons* suggests that Frazier took Cooper and his conception of historical novel as a source of inspiration for his book.

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<sup>14</sup> Barnet, Berman and Burto, *A Dictionary of Literary, Dramatic, and Cinematic Terms*, 114.

<sup>15</sup> Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 99.

<sup>16</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 94.

<sup>17</sup> Saddik M. Gohar, “Navigating the colonial discourse in Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*,” *Forum for World Literature Studies* 8 (2016): 446+, accessed March 13, 2019, <http://go.galegroup.com>.

<sup>18</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 9.

Unlike the two preceding Frazier's novels, *Nightwoods* cannot be classified into the genre of historical novel despite its setting in the previous century, approximately fifty or sixty years before its first edition in 2011. The novel is not based on the background of any historical event. In *Cold Mountain*, the main character decides to entrust his life to the natural world before the war could destroy it entirely. *Thirteen Moons* main protagonist, Will Cooper, dedicates his life to protecting the "wild" piece of land from the corruption of the modern world that the Trail of Tears was about to bring. *Nightwoods* does not build on any such event. These are the private tragedies—witnessing the murder and sexual abuse—that shape characters' lives and make them turn to nature to rediscover their lost peace and trust in this world

*Cold Mountain* and *Thirteen Moons* fall into the genre of historical novel as they take place on the background of two important historical events – American Civil War and the Trail of Tears. Frazier uses these events not only to inform about the American history, but they mainly serve as means that highly influence characters' lives in which nature begins to or already plays one of the major roles. They are these crucial events threatening their lives that emphasize even more characters' physical as well as mental dependence on the natural world. In *Thirteen Moons*, Frazier exhibits signs of resemblance with James Fenimore Cooper, the pioneering father of historical novel, as both of them deal with North American Indian people on the American frontier. Moreover, their main characters, Will Cooper and Natty Bumppo, are both mixture of white and Indian culture. Both were born into white family but now living among the Native Americans and who consequently become the connection between the two cultures. On the other hand, despite being set in the half of the previous century, *Nightwoods* is the only Frazier's novel that cannot be classified as historical novel. In the case of this book, Frazier uses personal life traumas (not historical events) as a cornerstone on which his characters build their positive relationship with the natural world.

### 3. TITLES OF THE NOVELS AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH NATURE

While reading thorough all three Frazier's books, the importance of nature is clearly visible. Their place setting is in the natural environment, the novels are concerned with characters' survival in and struggle with nature or they focus on characters' attempt to protect their natural surrounding from the corruption of the modern world. However, the reader does not have to go beyond the title page to find out how important role nature plays in these novels. It is because the titles alone—*Cold Mountain*, *Thirteen Moons* and *Nightwoods*—clearly refer to some of the natural phenomena. Further reading then affirms that the choice of these titles was made with consideration and is not just product of mere coincidence. Frazier with his titles indicates the significance of nature in these narrations while the stories themselves then expand the meanings that these titles carry.

#### 3.1. Cold Mountain

Although Frazier sets all three novels approximately in the same area in the state of North Carolina, it is *Cold Mountain* that, with its title, attracts most attention to this region. With his first novel, Frazier established place setting that he has been working with during his writing career so far, using it also in the two following novels. Cold Mountain is part of the Blue Ridge Mountains within the Appalachian Mountains that is located in the state of North Carolina. This American state being his homeland, Frazier is highly concerned with history and people of the mentioned area. The author himself explains that he “had this real urge to get to know that place where [he] grew up,”<sup>19</sup> adding “to know the history of it, the folklore of it, natural history, the Indian legends, as many elements that make that place a distinct place.”<sup>20</sup> The fact that Frazier writes about the place he actually knows, gives a vivid imaginary of this described territory. What is more, not only does he know the area of Cold Mountain from his childhood, but he had also been revisiting particular areas of this region which repeatedly inspired his writing. Frazier confesses that it helped him “to go to those places and think if something happened here, if there was a

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<sup>19</sup> Charles Frazier, “Cold Mountain,” interview by Alan Cheuse, Miami Book Fair International, video, November 22, 1998, Series: Book TV, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?115757-1/cold-mountain>.

<sup>20</sup> Frazier, “Cold Mountain,” interview by Alan Cheuse.

confrontation here, how would this piece of landscape shaped that action would unfold?”

<sup>21</sup> This Frazier’s approach while writing *Cold Mountain* shows that not only the novel gives shape to the place of its setting but also the place itself gives shape to the novel. It has the same importance as the characters in the novel and what is more, according to Albert Way “Frazier treats the environment as a character itself, with as much influence as any other.”<sup>22</sup> It would be therefore rather false conjecture to think that by giving the book this title, Frazier wanted to simply says “the book is set in the area of Cold Mountain.”

In the novel, Frazier celebrates the significance of this place and indicates the special power that this place has over the characters. For Inman, it is place untouched by the corrupting new world. Although it is his homeland, after taking part in the Civil War, he sees it as a place of new beginning “where all his scattered forces might gather.”<sup>23</sup> Inman’s attitude to Cold Mountain manifests that it is not just a place to simply live in but—most importantly—it is a place that can possibly heal the wounds that one carries on its soul. In addition, Cold Mountain also represents a place that can provide characters with all they need to survive. Ruby is the one who keeps reminding us this unique quality of Cold Mountain surrounding claiming that “little she even needed that she couldn’t make or grow or find on Cold Mountain.”<sup>24</sup> She is so highly adapted to the place that she feels no need to move and live somewhere else, nor she can imagine why anyone should want to live elsewhere when Cold Mountain offers everything one needs in life.

In spite of the fact that Cold Mountain and its surrounding provide its inhabitants with plenty of means to survive, it is also a dangerous place to be. It can save man’s life by offering shelter to hide in and food to feast with, but there are also pitfalls one must count on when encountering this part of the land. During his long-lasting journey through wilderness, Inman finds himself in many life-threatening situations. When trying to cross the river on canoe, the boat capsizes and Inman with his companion just let themselves be carried away because “there was nothing to do but hang on and wait for a bend in the

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<sup>21</sup> Frazier, “Cold Mountain,” interview by Alan Cheuse.

<sup>22</sup> Albert Way, ““A world properly put together”: environmental knowledge in Charles Frazier’s *Cold Mountain*,” *Southern Cultures* 10 (2004): 33+, accessed March 2, 2019, <http://go.galegroup.com>.

<sup>23</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 20.

<sup>24</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 234.

river and hope that the evening would present something to their advantage.”<sup>25</sup> This simple decision not trying to fight back manifests how much power over the characters nature actually has. The place and its elements in many ways dictate characters’ behavior and have an impact on how they act in a particular situation.

Charles Frazier grew up in the state of North Carolina and he decided to use its territory, specifically the area of Cold Mountain, as a setting for all the novels he has written so far. The fact that Frazier named his first book after this piece of land—that is Cold Mountain—suggests this area has more important role in the novel than being just place of its setting. It served the author as a source of inspiration for his writing as he was trying to imagine how some action could shape in the particular piece of land and how the natural surrounding could influence the way in which the action develops. Furthermore, Cold Mountain functions rather as a character itself. It influences other characters’ behavior and it has special power over them in that their lives more or less depend on it. They can seek there for refuge or food that they need for their survival, but their life can also be easily taken if they do not manage to adapt quickly. With the title Frazier not only gives the setting of the book but he most importantly pays tribute to Cold Mountain that is essential for the novel, its characters and also for the author himself.

### **3.2. Thirteen Moons**

Frazier chose to name his first novel after its setting in Cold Mountain pointing out the natural surrounding that has become of great importance for the course of the narrative. With his second novel and its title—*Thirteen Moons*—Frazier continues to emphasize the significant role of nature in his work. Similarly as in *Cold Mountain*, a lot can be derived from the title itself. It can be assumed that the novel is occupied with the Native people of North America as it refers to the calendar used by these Indian tribes. The thirteen moons calendar derives from thirteen moon cycles that can be observed in the sky within the course of one year. Every moon cycle carries name unique to each Native American tribe,

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<sup>25</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 85.



reflecting the stories shared by these tribes as well as Indian's intimate connection with the natural world.<sup>26</sup>

However, the novel does not reveal us the stories that stand behind their names nor does it focus on the activities that occur during each moon phase. Frazier uses Cherokee thirteen moons, instead of months of the Gregorian calendar, simply to inform the reader about part of the year the narrative is in. The moons correspond to traditional division of months of the Gregorian calendar and they make their appearance one by one throughout the course of the story, namely—from January to December—Cold Moon, Bone Moon, Wind Moon, Flower Moon, Planting Moon, Green Corn Moon, Ripe Corn Moon, End of Fruit Moon, Nut Moon, Harvest Moon, Hunting Moon and Snow Moon. The author also points out this connection between the two calendars when talking about the Cherokee conception of time, explaining that “for them this wouldn't be March, it would be the [...] Wind Moon.”<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Frazier does not use the moons only as an abstract measurements of time, but he also often refers to their physical form as they appear in the sky. He usually does not use simply “moon” when referring to this natural phenomenon. Instead, Frazier is trying to be specific and employs names of the Cherokee moons, for example when “a thin final curvature of End of Fruit Moon falls down a milky sky”<sup>28</sup> and “the Harvest Moon waxed and waned”<sup>29</sup> during Will and Mullyay's journey.

Cherokee thirteen moons are the synonym for modern lunar calendar year. Frazier makes this correspondence clear when writing “the thirteen moons, the four seasons, and the great singular round of the year itself.”<sup>30</sup> The author uses the Cherokee terms but at the same time he keeps its connection with the modern calendar. Thus, he also maintains link between the Indians and the rest of the (white) world. Same as Will who also represents the mixture of both these cultures. He is a white man who was adopted by the Indians. Even though he uses the calendar of the Cherokee people with its moon phases, he often thinks—while narrating—in terms of and makes connection with the calendar of

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<sup>26</sup> “Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back,” last modified April 14, 2019, <http://oyate.org>.

<sup>27</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 31.

<sup>28</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 394.

<sup>29</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 324.

<sup>30</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 320.

the culture he was born into, as manifested when he is watching “thirteen moons rising and falling through the long round of the year.”<sup>31</sup>

As in *Cold Mountain*, Frazier shows the importance of nature straight with the title page of the novel. It refers to the calendar used by Native American people that is based on thirteen moon phases and the changing seasons that occur in course of one calendar year. Each Indian tribe use their own names for the moons that are derived from their unique stories. All the moon names, however, manifest tribes’ dependence on and their harmony with the natural world. Although Frazier does not share the stories that stand behind the names of Cherokee moons, it can be easily assumed that, for example, Nut Moon was given its name according to the time of the year when the nuts are growing. Frazier explains this when he writes that “the new moon in autumn, Nut Moon, with the apple all dead ripe on the trees, and hickory nuts and walnuts and chestnuts falling.”<sup>32</sup> Cherokee moons are used in the book to—instead of the months of the modern lunar calendar—set time of the year and the author also refers to them as they make their appearance in the sky as well as to indicate the time setting. The fact that Will, as a first-person narrator, uses the Cherokee calendar explaining very often its correspondence to the classical Gregorian calendar, can also manifest the cultural clash that he himself represents. He does not forget his “white” roots but at the same time he embraces Cherokee view of the world as represented by their Thirteen Moon calendar that reflects their strong connection with the natural environment. This is also something all Indian tribes have in common. Even though each of them uses different names for the moons with correspondence to different stories “all of them shared common spiritual ties with earth and with ambient nature.”<sup>33</sup>

### 3.3. Nightwoods

Of all Frazier’s novels, *Nightwoods* is definitely the most obscure one. A violent death of mother, a murderer trying to divest the witnesses that are his victim’s children or sexual abuse of the main character are all factors that create the gloomy atmosphere of the

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<sup>31</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 408.

<sup>32</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 164.

<sup>33</sup> Helena Hartlová, trans., *Spiritualita severoamerických indiánů* (Praha: Aurora, 2000), 27.

book. However, it is again the title itself that tells a lot about the book and sets the dark tone from the very beginning. Terry Gifford points out that the title is “the combination of two of the most difficult natural elements for humans to read, or rather to hear speak.”<sup>34</sup> However, as the narrative progresses, it starts to be evident that the interpretation of these two natural sources of fear does not have to be entirely negative.

Frazier sets the book on the Lodge where “whichever other direction you looked, mountains and forests and lake.”<sup>35</sup> This natural surrounding of the place where Luce and the children—the main protagonists—live, reflects both their outer as well as inner isolation from other people. Even though it might appear as a scary place to live in all alone, they are the very woods and nature that fill out their loneliness and give them sense of security. For Luce, they are creations of nature that serve her as a distraction from otherwise lonely and isolated life. “Breathe an autumn afternoon’s crisp breath, [...] observe ragged blue mountains lying in five folds to the sky,”<sup>36</sup> are examples of distractions and reimbursements that keep her mind busy and make her feel safe in this place.

However, the culmination of the novel—and the main source for the title—comes when the children, after the encounter with their mother’s murderer, decide to escape into the woods even after the sun had already gone down. The woods become refuge for the children. As they do not want to be found by their step-father, escaping into the woods where they can hide from him between the trees and bushes, seems to be the best and the only option. Similarly, the dark night is the most convenient time for them to escape as they try not to be seen and found. Therefore, combination of these two elements creates perfect conditions for children’s runaway. Although being in the woods during night could be considered as a terrifying experience for the kids, the woods and the darkness certainly provide them with the best hideaway. They give no indication of fear, believing that being in the woods is safer for them than being in the company of other

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<sup>34</sup> Terry Gifford, “Nature’s eloquent speech in Charles Frazier’s *Nightwoods*,” *The Mississippi Quarterly* 66 (2013): 565+, accessed March 9, 2019, <http://go.galegroup.com>.

<sup>35</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 12.

<sup>36</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 186-187.

people. Moreover, they are not even scared of the unknown territory because “being lost means nothing. Especially when being found seems like a thing to avoid.”<sup>37</sup>

The title *Nightwoods* that Frazier chose for his third novel sets the atmosphere of the narrative straight from the beginning. This rather dark interpretation of two elements that form the title is represented in the personal histories of the main characters as well as in the place setting of the novel. Luce being the victim of rape and the children witnessing their mother’s murder stay together on an isolated Lodge that is surrounded only by the woods, mountains and the lake. However, this natural environment has rather healing effect for the characters. Instead of arousing fear, it provides them with sense of security that they were not able to find in the company of other people. When the children see their step-father who murdered their mother, they “let themselves get scared again”<sup>38</sup> and decide to run away into the woods ignoring even the night time. For them, the night and the woods are not something they should be scared of. It is the other way round - an ally that offers them hideaway from their biggest fear.

In all three Frazier’s novels, nature is an important element that to a large extent influences behavior and lives of the characters and thus shapes the ways in which the stories develop. The significant role of nature is, however, evident from the very beginning—to be more precise—from the titles themselves. Each of them refers to some natural phenomenon that then keeps reappearing in these individual books. *Cold Mountain* was given its title after the area where most of the story takes place. Nevertheless, Cold Mountain being his home, Frazier attributes to this territory more important role than just that of a place setting. He treats it as a single character that has the same influence on the course of the story as other protagonists and what is more, has power over these characters as well as over their lives. In *Thirteen Moons*, the author makes reference to Native American people, who are the main subject of the novel, and to the calendar they use. The role of nature is, once again, contained in the title itself as Thirteen moons calendar reflects Indians’ dependence on the natural world. Growing particular vegetable or going hunting particular animal can be possible or convenient only

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<sup>37</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 295-296.

<sup>38</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 284.

at some point during the year. The moon phases serve them as measurement of time and tell them what part of year it is. It is thus essential for their survival in and life in harmony with nature. Frazier continues to use elements referring to nature even in the last novel - *Nightwoods*. Although this combination of words arouses unpleasant feeling at first, its interpretation may eventually result in rather positive meaning. As the children have lost their trust in other people, they seek for refuge in the dark woods to escape their fear that is their mother's murderer. The title does reflect gloomy atmosphere of the book but at the same time contains two elements—night and woods—that give the children sense of security they failed to find in the company of other people.

#### **4. COLD MOUNTAIN**

With his first novel, Frazier has introduced place setting he continues to work with throughout his whole writing career. North Carolina being his home, he is highly

concerned with history of this region, its people, their customs as well as with their ties to the place they grew up and live in. Cold Mountain, which is part of the Appalachian Mountains, became the main setting for this novel of the same name and plays major role in the book as it determines life paths of the novel's main characters. In the 1860s, specifically during the Civil War, most of the characters living in this mountainous part of the United States are highly dependent on nature and their survival hinges on whether they manage to adapt to this natural environment or not. In *Cold Mountain*, Frazier is concerned with the way nature and natural surrounding influence characters' life, behavior as well as their relationship with other people.

To demonstrate the important role that adaptation to particular environment in the matter of survival has, the author presents three considerably distinct characters: Inman, Ada and Ruby. The difference between them is mainly in their knowledge of the natural world they live in and in their ability to be in harmony with it. These are the factors that consequently determine their perception of the world. Albert Way explains: "The characters in Cold Mountain possess different types of environmental knowledge, and that knowledge of the ways people know and relate to the environment shapes the local view of the wider world."<sup>39</sup> Their ability to adapt to the natural environment they occupy mainly depends on place and social environment they come from. Characters, who originally come from urban environment and are of higher social status, are certain to possess rather low practical knowledge about nature, approaching it in more theoretical and abstract way. In contrast, the characters who have been dependent on their natural surrounding their whole life are equipped mainly with practical skills that help them survive in nature. These two opposite approaches are best represented by two main female protagonists: Ada and Ruby. As Way points out:

The populace of Cold Mountain, most vividly represented by Ruby, know the environment through labor [...] Monroe, a recently migrated Charleston preacher, and his daughter Ada, on the other hand, know the environment as an image; they

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<sup>39</sup> Way, "'A world properly put together': environmental knowledge in Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*," 33+.

have an intellectual appreciation of nature as something separate from themselves.<sup>40</sup>

This manifests difference in degree of adaptation to natural environment between the two characters. Unlike Ruby, who has already reached intimate connection with nature she has been living in her whole life, Ada is in the process of searching her place in and understanding of the natural world she finds herself in. While Ruby and Ada see their relationship with their natural surrounding of Cold Mountain as something that decide whether they survive or not, for Inman the significance of this place is more of spiritual character. After taking part in the Civil War, he believes that Cold Mountain is place where he can find, once again, order and harmony of the world as well as “his place in the natural world.”<sup>41</sup>

Cold Mountain plays the major role in the lives of Frazier’s characters although each of them has different relationship with the place as well as different expectations of what they want to find in there. For Ruby, it is place that offers everything she needs in life if one can learn to live in harmony with it as she has been doing since her childhood. On the other hand, Ada, who is influenced by her previous urban life, sees no practical use in nature. Nevertheless, as the time progresses, she is gradually finding out that—in order to survive—she has to rebuild her relationship with nature. Inman is the unique character that seeks for spiritual salvation and recuperation in his homeland. For place that would be safe for his soul rather than for his physical body. It is because Inman sees Cold Mountain as a place immaculate by the war corrupted civilization. The degree of adaptation of these characters to the natural surroundings of Cold Mountain is therefore one of the main factors influencing not only their ability to survive in this environment but also their chance of living a happier life than before.

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<sup>40</sup> Way, ““A world properly put together”: environmental knowledge in Charles Frazier’s Cold Mountain,” 33+.

<sup>41</sup> Crow, “Patterns in nature and life: Anne Crow explores the ways in which Charles Frazier’s characters in Cold Mountain learn the importance of patterns,” 2+.

## 4.1. Ada

Of all Frazier's characters in *Cold Mountain*, Ada is the one who undergoes the most apparent change and shift as for the relationship to and view of the natural world. Unlike most of the characters in the novel, she—together with her father Monroe—is incomer to the North Carolina Appalachian Mountains and thus completely unacquainted with this natural environment. Ada and Monroe come from Charleston town and their view of the natural world is therefore shaped mostly by their own imagination and their poetic reading of the books. Way describes the difference between Ada and indigenous people of Cold Mountain in the following way: "For the natives of Cold Mountain, the environment holds a very different meaning: while Monroe and Ada interact with the land intellectually, Frazier's mountain folks give meaning to the environment through a visceral connection with the land."<sup>42</sup> But their moving to the mountains and subsequent Monroe's death bring about Ada's realization that nature is not a mere abstract concept but that one can find and, in her case, has to find also its practical use.

At first, Ada and her father see mountains and woods of Cold Mountain mostly as a place that should have healing effect on Monroe's lung diseases, which is also the reason why they decide to move to and buy farm in this natural environment of North Carolina. As a Charleston preacher and investor, Monroe relies entirely on money in the matter of agriculture, ignoring the potential of the farm to be economically independent. As a man who does not need to worry about his finances, "he had held the opinion that if he could afford to buy feed corn and meal, why bother growing more than they could eat."<sup>43</sup> Despite the farm being occupied by the domestic animals, Monroe does not see them as a potential source of livelihood, breeding them only "for the atmosphere."<sup>44</sup> However, after her father's death, Ada ends up alone on the farm and without any financial resource because her income is cut off due to war situation. As she had been brought up only by her father and thus has never had any other example to follow, Ada is also left with no practical nor theoretical knowledge of the farming life. She realizes that her main

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<sup>42</sup> Way, "'A world properly put together': environmental knowledge in Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*," 33+

<sup>43</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 28.

<sup>44</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 28.



abilities—drawing and reading—do not seem “exactly to the point when faced with the hard fact that she now found herself in possession of close to three hundred acres of steep and bottom [...] but no idea what to do with them.”<sup>45</sup> In addition, she is struck by the loss of her father and her new situation to the extent that she initially shows willingness to do hardly anything on the farm. Engrossed in her sorrow and memories of her previous Charleston life, Ada lets the farm fall into despair and take care of itself. When trying, almost all her attempts to do at least something on the farm go unrewarded as she is limited by her own inexperience. Even if she wanted to change her situation and do more work on the farm—maybe apart from milking the cow—“she [does] not know how to do much more.”<sup>46</sup> Ada is basically a victim of her urban roots and her social status as well as Monroe’s lack of interest to let their farm be self-sufficient, leaving his daughter with no farming skills.

As Ada cannot rely entirely on herself in the matter of survival, she comes to conclusion that she will need to seek for help in other, stronger and more experienced, people. She is also forced to reconcile with the fact that “what she could see around her was all that she could count on.”<sup>47</sup> This acceptance of reality—the realization that what she has is what nature offers her—is the first manifestation of her attempt to adapt to the natural environment that surrounds her. Ada, as she is aware of her poor knowledge of breeding animals, growing plants and life on the border of civilization in general, needs to embrace the idea of hiring other person that could help in what appears to her as a desperate life situation. Because she knows that looking after the farm requires mainly harder manual work, Ada at first does not take into consideration any other option than looking for a male reinforcement. It seems to be, however, an impossible task as we are in the period of Civil War when basically all young man capable of hard physical work are “off warring.”<sup>48</sup> The reality that the war brought, caused that the women had to cope without men and do the male work themselves.

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<sup>45</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 27.

<sup>46</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 25.

<sup>47</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 62.

<sup>48</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 48.

For women, who have been in touch with the farming life and the natural environment since the day they were born, it is easier to deal with this new situation. Unlike Ada, who lacks the agricultural knowledge, their limitation—if at all—is only physical. Therefore, when the girl named Ruby appears on the porch of the farm, offering her experiences and assuring Ada of her physical competence, Ada has no other choice but accept Ruby's help. By letting Ruby enter the life of the novel's inexperienced female protagonist, Frazier initiates process of Ada's adaptation. Ruby becomes the force that pushes Ada to find her place in the natural environment and constantly gives her lessons that bring her awareness of the gifts that nature has to offer. And Ada, reconciled with her new situation and with prospects for promising future, takes Ruby's advices and teachings responsibly although she realizes the difference between her current and previous life. So far, "her mind [...] had latched itself to the product - the food on the table - not the job of getting there."<sup>49</sup> Ruby's company is supposed to teach Ada to value the things she has previously taken for granted as she has never been involved in the process of making or procuring them.

Despite Ada's willingness to learn and do the hard work on the farm, she is initially immersed in her own thoughts and imagination. She is still influenced by her previous life that has thought her to think about almost everything as having deeper substance. She brings this approach to the surrounding world also to this new environment and her new life situation. At first, it is difficult for Ada to see mere simplicity in things because she "muses in metaphor and allegory."<sup>50</sup> This searching for hidden meanings in natural objects and phenomena occupy her mind with unimportant thoughts and thus distract her attention from things that are much more essential for her survival. It is then Ruby who takes responsibility for sorting Ada's thoughts out, making her leave the things that are not of practical use behind. This is also one of many differences between the two women. While Ada very often engages in a flight of fantasy, Ruby is much more rational in her perception of the surrounding world. When they encounter the heron trying to catch the

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<sup>49</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 100.

<sup>50</sup> Way, "'A world properly put together': environmental knowledge in Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*," 33+.

fish to eat, Ada remembers the tale she heard when she was studying Greeks<sup>51</sup>, thinking about the bird as having his own thoughts. On the other hand, Ruby cannot understand Ada's imagination arguing that "bird's not thinking about himself at all [...] he's thinking about what other thing he can stab and eat."<sup>52</sup> Ada believes that the bird's acting and behavior might be a sign of something beyond her rational thinking but Ruby does not allow any of these ideas enter her mind as she is looking only for practical explanations of things.

Ada realizes that her wandering imagination and her cleaving to her artistic and poetic skills are basically of no use in her stern reality. But at the same time, it is difficult for her to give up this part of her identity. Therefore, she decides to give her literacy more practical use and sets up a journal where she draws animals and plants she comes into contact with.<sup>53</sup> The additional commentaries that includes time and place of their encounter then help her to understand other natural phenomena. It makes her think, for example, about the daily hour which she can derive only, as she does not own any clock, from the phenomena she can see in nature, such as daylight or a moon phase. When she is making the heron's sketch into the journal, she asks Ruby "what time you guess it to be?"<sup>54</sup> The journal assists Ada in shifting from a passive receiver of Ruby's lessons about nature to person who is actively and voluntarily asking questions. Even though she cannot determine exact day's hour by means of the sun or the moon herself, Ada manifests her awareness that there is no need for modern technologies when there is nature that she can rely on in the matter.

Ada's rising effort to understand and get to know the natural environment she is now living in, is a great manifestation of her willingness to adapt to this place. She is eager to learn but she knows that there is still long way ahead of her. In fact, compared with Ruby, it seems as if she did not learn anything at all. When Ruby tries to give Ada one of her lesson, she asks Ada what she hears. Ada's reply that she hears the trees is an

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<sup>51</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 185.

<sup>52</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 185.

<sup>53</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 185.

<sup>54</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 186.

unsatisfactory answer for Ruby.<sup>55</sup> Being adapted to the place and understand the place means that one can recognize the smallest details of that environment. Ada is aware that until she could “tell the sound of poplar from oak at this time of year when it is easiest to do, she had not ever started to know the place.”<sup>56</sup> For many people it takes their whole life to get to know every aspect of the place they live in. For Ada, this process is even slower as she comes from completely different environment and thus not only she has to learn new things but also she needs to change some of her old habits. The habits that are not essential to or would only distract her from her work on the farm. Leaving her accustomed behavior behind, Ada gradually makes a progress in her perception of the surrounding world. Previously, she would be wandering in her thoughts, not focusing on the present moment. But as her time on the farm and in Ruby’s company progresses, she sometimes catches herself “go totally without thought [...] though [her] senses are alert to all around [her].”<sup>57</sup> Ada starts to perceive and pay attention to completely different things than before. She does not seek for metaphors, thinking about reasons for crow’s blackness<sup>58</sup> but rather sees surrounding things simply as they appear to be. This new view sets up her adaptation and as she herself points out, “those moments [are] the root of [her] new mien.”<sup>59</sup>

Additionally, as Ada begins to focus more on the surrounding nature than on her own thoughts, her previous interest in reading books is slowly on the decline. As the time progresses, she takes more pleasure in observing the animals, the sky and other natural elements. The reason for this is that Ada gets to the point when she does not consider important or interesting to wander in her mind to remote places or past. Instead, she pays more attention to her present situation, the place and time she finds herself in. While looking at the night sky watching beacons of the planets, Ada feels stuck in this one particular place. However, as she observes the natural world around her and thinks about the repetition of the moon cycles and the sun light, she thinks she could find joy in

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<sup>55</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 277.

<sup>56</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 278.

<sup>57</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 314.

<sup>58</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 314.

<sup>59</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 314.

watching these regular cycles for the rest of her days.<sup>60</sup> This regularity in nature is leading to the answer to her own question about her position in the world. That answer would be that “[she is] here, in this one station, now.”<sup>61</sup> Ada believes that having some order and periodicity, something that would have a permanent place in her life, could help her find her own position in the world as well as in this new environment.

Although Ada gets accustomed to the hard work on the farm quite quickly, it is not before the end of the novel, when she is finally able to tell the day time or find direction in the woods by means of natural phenomena. She comes to understanding that “to live fully in a place all your life, you kept aiming smaller and smaller in attention to detail.”<sup>62</sup> As she had to build her relationship with nature from the beginning, she has been aiming also to her adaptation step by step. First, she learns the hard work on the field and on the farm. Then, when she is able to procure food and other needs essential for her survival, she can start to appreciate the beauty of nature as well as feel its safety. Ada finds out that the simplest things nature can provide her with are the things that suffice her in life. Things like “the stone shelter warm and dry [...] matched her needs so much that she could just move in and live there.”<sup>63</sup> This newly gained certitude in the natural environment gives her basis for further steps leading to her adaptation. She finally improves in more advanced abilities that help her orientate in the surrounding natural world.

Despite the fact that Ada’s knowledge of the natural environment of Cold Mountain has progressed since her father’s death, she realizes that to adapt fully to this or any place in general, is not matter of few months nor years. At the very beginning of the book, Ada is a newcomer to the Cold Mountain and is entirely uneducated in the matter of farming and country life. She comes from the urban environment and as a daughter of rather wealthy father, she has never had to care about more than poetic side of nature. However, her very often metaphoric perception of the natural world changes when her father dies, and she is left alone on the farm she knows nothing about. However, as the time progresses, Ada, reconciled with her new life situation, starts the process of

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<sup>60</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 317-318.

<sup>61</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 318.

<sup>62</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 375.

<sup>63</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 366.

adaptation with the help of local girl Ruby. Gradually, she stops wander in her thoughts and begins to be alert to the world that is surrounding her. This observation of nature around her makes her realize that the simplest things the place provides her with are in fact all she needs not only to survive but also to lead a happy life. Ada does not reach the final peak of her adaptation to nature because it is, as she is aware, process that takes all human life. However, by the end of the novel, she understands the natural processes and phenomena and learns living life in harmony with nature. Ada transforms “from a detached admirer of nature to an active participant in nature.”<sup>64</sup>

## 4.2. Inman

*Cold Mountain* is set on the background of the American Civil War and its devastating impact is thus one of the novel’s themes. The devastation, however, is not reflected on the landscape nor on the losses of American population as whole. Frazier represents it in the soul of a single character. Inman, a confederate soldier, is treated in the military hospital for his serious neck injury that he sustained during the siege of Petersburg. Nevertheless, as he is waiting in the hospital to be conscripted into the war again once he is physically fit, Inman realizes that the wound which needs more healing is not—in fact—on his neck but on his soul.

The tall window in his hospital room opens him vista to the flatlands which appear dull and hideous in comparison with his homeland in Blue Ridge Mountains. Looking out through this window, Inman often recollects mountains, woods and banks of the place he was born in. These peaceful pictures make his homeland appear as a completely different and distant world as opposed to surrounding terrifying reality he has seen and experienced on the battlefields. Jonathan Burgess points out that Inman’s “hostility toward the lowlands is so strong that he views its fauna, animals, and topography as hideous and disgusting.”<sup>65</sup> Inman starts to believe that in order to heal his physic wounds,

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<sup>64</sup> Way, ““A world properly put together”: environmental knowledge in Charles Frazier’s *Cold Mountain*,” 33+.

<sup>65</sup> Jonathan Burgess, “Ambiguous Homecomings: *Cold Mountain* and the *Odyssey*,” in *Odyssean Identities in Modern Cultures* ed. Hunter Gardner and Sheila Murnaghan (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2014), 173-191, quoted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism* (2016), ed. Lawrence J. Trudeau, vol. 396, accessed March 27, 2019, <http://link.galegroup.com>.

he will need to find “another world, a better place, and he figured he might as well consider Cold Mountain to be the location of it.”<sup>66</sup> He sees this part of North Carolina as an innocent place, untouched by the corruption that the war brought with itself. With memories of his homeland and the horrifying prospects of being sent back to war and thus lose his last chance to repair his spirit, Inman accepts the idea that deserting is his only option. And it is Cold Mountain, as Inman realizes, where he can find peace and harmony in his life again.

The danger of the journey Inman decides to set out is nevertheless—for various reasons—similar to those that would await him in the war itself. First of all, the desertion from the army is declared by the government of the United States as an illegal act. All the soldiers trying to avoid their once accepted military duty were threatened to be hunted by the Home Guard.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, Inman has no choice but to take shelter in the woods to avoid as much people as possible. It is because the presence of such strange young man in towns or villages could arouse suspicion among inhabitants as he would be expected to fight in the war. Being aware of this threat, Inman realizes that he needs to step into the woods and confront another danger that raises from the unfamiliarity of the natural environment ahead of him. Although Inman has been living in nature of Cold Mountain most of his life, his participation in war rather weakened his assurance in this wild part of the world. His journey back home therefore becomes constant struggle for survival. Procuring food, looking for night shelter, facing adversity of weather and fighting animals are all obstacles of nature that Inman needs to deal with during his travel back home. These difficulties combined with his spiritual imbalance gives the surrounding natural environment control over Inman’s life. Anne Crow argues that “after four years of involvement in a bloody and unnatural conflict, Inman needs time to relearn to live in harmony with nature, and his 300-mile journey gives him from late summer to winter to

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<sup>66</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 15.

readjust.”<sup>68</sup> His homecoming is supposed to find again Inman’s already established relationship with the natural environment of Cold Mountain.

Beginning his journey in the eastern North Carolina Raleigh, the destroyed landscape Inman encounters while traveling through this region even more deepens his desire to sight the beautiful nature of his homeland. He is disgusted by this territory he has been fighting for in war, “criticizing its every feature.”<sup>69</sup> Inman’s increasing hatred of this unknown land leads to his bigger appreciation of the familiar places and natural phenomena that awaits him in Cold Mountain. On the other hand, he also admits that it was this steadiness of the surrounding world and the repeatability of the natural cycles that made him, as many other men, go fighting.<sup>70</sup> Back then, Inman was convinced that “war took a man out of that circle of regular life and made season of its own, not much dependent on anything else.”<sup>71</sup> However, almost four years spent in war made him realize that although the war gets man out of his daily routine, it also produces some kind of repetitions—soldiers dying and killing each other—that are much worse than those that compelled him to leave his homeland. In consequence, as Inman is receding from the war place, approaching the natural environment that is close to his home, he welcomes all the familiar trees, animals or plants. Crow asserts: “Inman learns that although war makes life and death random and unpredictable, it does not affect the cycle of the season, the patterns of nature, and that he can, once again, find his place in the natural world.”<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, the harsh reality and disorder Inman has witnessed on the battlefields of the Civil War make hard for him to accept the harmony in nature he once used to take for granted. Although he feels cheered seeing these unchanged features of nature and appreciates the fact that at least something remained the same, Inman, at the same time admits that “he [fears] deeply at variance with such elements of the harmonious.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Crow, “Patterns in nature and life: Anne Crow explores the ways in which Charles Frazier’s characters in Cold Mountain learn the importance of patterns,” 2+.

<sup>69</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 80.

<sup>70</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 266.

<sup>71</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 266.

<sup>72</sup> Crow, “Patterns in nature and life: Anne Crow explores the ways in which Charles Frazier’s characters in Cold Mountain learn the importance of patterns,” 2+.

<sup>73</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 266.



Inman senses the roots of his being in this natural environment but his war experiences and recollections make it difficult for him to readapt. When Inman reaches the point, which provides him clearly and unmistakably with vista of his homeland and enumerates all the familiar places,<sup>74</sup> he realizes that this is where he belongs. He feels that this is his safe place where he does not have to fear anything and anyone. Yet, this assurance that he has found his place in this world does not change the fact that he is “ruined beyond repair.”<sup>75</sup> Inman manages to partially revive his adaptation to the natural environment of Cold Mountain but at the same time, he realizes that there are scars on his soul that not even familiar places nor faces can heal.

### **4.3. Ruby**

Until now, the thesis has been occupied with the characters of *Cold Mountain* that are, in some way, going through the process of adaptation to the natural environment. Ada, as an urban girl, is building her relationship with nature basically from scratch while Inman, after participating in the Civil War, tries to find his place in the natural world again. Unlike these two protagonists, Ruby is the unique character whose adaptation is already complete in the moment of her first appearance in the novel. Frazier gives Ruby, who knows how to live in harmony with the natural environment of Cold Mountain, role of a teacher of Ada that helps her find the way to her own adaptation.

Ruby is a contrasting character to Ada. She was born in Cold Mountain and has been living there her whole life. Her mother having died and with her father being drunkard, “feeding herself was Ruby’s to do as soon she was old enough to be held accountable for it, which in [her father’s] opinion fell close after learning to walk.”<sup>76</sup> She has been dependent on herself and her natural surrounding since her childhood and her adaptation thus started very early in her life. The struggle of saving her life she has always been dealing with in this natural environment, made her learn about the natural elements and phenomena that were essential for her survival. Ruby learned the patterns of the natural cycles and learned to find the right direction by observing particular features in

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<sup>74</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 343.

<sup>75</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 406.

<sup>76</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 102.

nature. She knows which plant to grow in specific season of the year or how to kill animals and utilize its every bit. Unlike Ada, who initially takes nature as something metaphorical, “Ruby sees something concrete in the lessons she takes from nature.”<sup>77</sup> She has never sought for any poetic side of landscape as she has always been focusing only on its practical use that can secure her survival.

Ruby’s adaptation to natural environment of Cold Mountain comes from her deep understanding and knowledge of her surroundings. In Ruby’s opinion, every person is destined to belong to one place that provides everything one needs in life. It is the reason why she does not understand anyone’s need for exploring different places. Ruby believes that “world properly put together would yield inhabitants so suited to their lives in their assigned place that they would have neither need nor wish to travel.”<sup>78</sup> For Ruby, this place, clearly, is Cold Mountain with its woods and mountains. The fact that she had to take care of herself in this environment as a child and has never had anyone to teach her about the laws of nature, made her to get to know this area by method trial and error. As an example, Frazier mentions Ruby’s attempt to find out which parts of the bird were edible by simply tasting it<sup>79</sup> as she had no one to instruct her in this matter. This cognition of her surroundings made Ruby focus on very small details and thus deepened her adaptation.

Unlike Ada and her father, who have always seen money as a main source that provide them with livelihood, Ruby is completely immune to and independent of any financial means. Her life attitude says that money is of no use if one can grow, breed or find everything in nature and therefore she and Ada can be “about as well off without it.”<sup>80</sup> Ruby believes that nature offers all the necessities in life if one understands and listens to it. She is kind of superstitious in sense that she believes that every work should be done in particular time of the year and thus that everything “[falls] under the rule of

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<sup>77</sup> Way, ““A world properly put together”: environmental knowledge in Charles Frazier’s *Cold Mountain*,” 33+.

<sup>78</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 234.

<sup>79</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 329-330.

<sup>80</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 91.

the heavens.”<sup>81</sup> According to her assumptions, in April is the best time for planting the corn and old of the moon for cutting firewood.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, as a person strongly dependent on the sources that the surrounding natural world provides her with, Ruby avoids wasting any of those gifts that are offered to her. Every yard of land, every component of the fruit or vegetable or every part of the animal must find its use.

Ruby’s knowledge of the farming life and of usability of the natural objects and elements is manifestation of her high degree of adaptability to this natural environment. But it is also her sense of orientation that demonstrates Ruby’s close relationship with the area of Cold Mountain. Her deep understanding and knowledge of all the natural features and places in her closest surrounding gives her base for always being able to find or give the right direction. Manage to orientate in the woods of Cold Mountain is one of the lessons that Ruby is constantly trying to teach Ada. Ruby’s ability to tell the cardinal points by course of the water or colors of the trees seems fascinating and almost unattainable to Ada. She gradually understands that “what was required to speak that language was a picture held in the mind of the land one occupied.”<sup>83</sup> Ruby masters that language and her influence upon Ada’s adaptation is therefore significant and fundamental.

Under Ruby’s “command”, Monroe’s daughter understands the law of nature that if you contrive to live in harmony with your natural surrounding and make use of the resources it offers, you should feel no need to look for it elsewhere. In contrast to Ada, Ruby does not undergo the process of adaptation to the natural environment of Cold Mountain during the course of the novel as she already comprises the surrounding natural world. She represents the populace of Cold Mountain and thus her knowledge of this area has been acquired since her childhood. Her unstable family environment caused that she had been dependent only on herself all her life and had to learn to understand and get to know her surroundings by herself. Way describes Ruby as being “a part of nature rather than apart from it.”<sup>84</sup> Her adaptation is reflected in her knowledge of the farming life, her

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<sup>81</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 129.

<sup>82</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 129.

<sup>83</sup> Frazier, *Cold Mountain*, 374.

<sup>84</sup> Way, ““A world properly put together”: environmental knowledge in Charles Frazier’s *Cold Mountain*,” 33+.

orientation in the woods of Cold Mountain and in her capability to survive exclusively with the help of natural resources.

Even though *Cold Mountain* might be considered more as a novel about heroic homecoming of the deserting soldier, Inman, from Civil War back to his homeland in Cold Mountain and to the woman he loves, the book is at the same time celebration of North Carolina's landscape. Frazier's interest in the area of Cold Mountain is reflected in his detailed description of characters' connection to this natural environment. Different degrees of adaptation are represented by three main protagonists – Ada, Ruby and Inman.

First, Ada is the character who undergoes the most fundamental transformation as for her relationship with nature. At the beginning of the novel, as an urban girl who has never been instructed in life in the natural environment, she finds herself in desperation when she is left alone on the farm after her father's death. However, with the help of Ruby, Ada gradually finds her place in the natural world. Initially submerged in her metaphorical view of nature and disoriented in the surrounding environment, she at least partially manages to understand the natural process and finds her way to live in harmony with nature. At the same time, Ada comprehends that being adapted to some place requires knowing all its features which one cannot achieve within just few months. It takes human life, as manifested by Ruby, to connect to your land.

Ruby's adaptation differs from Ada's in that we cannot see its development throughout the novel as she already possesses a great knowledge of the natural environment she lives in. She has been building her connection to the landscape of Cold Mountain since her childhood and thus had more time to come to know the environment in detail than Ada had. She claims that every person belongs to some particular place that can provide everything one needs in life and thus feels no need to search the fortune somewhere else. Ruby's ability to orientate in the natural environment of Cold Mountain and her knowledge of usability of the natural elements manifests that this part of North Carolina Appalachian Mountains is that place for her.

While Ada and Ruby consolidate their connection to nature by agricultural life, Inman is searching for his place in the natural world as a traveler. After taking part in the

Civil War, Inman realizes that if he wants to revive his spirit, he needs to discover place where he can find harmony again. And he comes to conclusion that this place is his homeland in Cold Mountain. Making himself a deserter, Inman steps into the woods and begins his long journey back home. Wounded and exhausted, he manages to survive this dangerous travel and as he takes the first steps on the familiar ground, Inman feels that he has found his place in the world again, though marked by his war experiences to a degree it is difficult for him to fully readapt.

## **5. THIRTEEN MOONS**

### **5.1. Indian Removal Act and the Cherokee Trail of Tears**

The importance of nature and the dependence of people on their natural surrounding continues to be one of the major themes also in Frazier's second novel. The North

Carolina author focuses his attention on the Cherokee nation and their forced removal from the territory east of Mississippi River in the nineteenth century. The resistance that the Cherokee people offered to the removal was caused not only by the disruption of their traditions and way of life but also by the attempt to make them leave the land they were strongly connected to. Once adapted to the natural environment they occupy, the removal to the unknown territory would be a life-threatening experience they were trying to prevent. This relocation to the hostile and unfamiliar part of the western territory meant a dark time in the history of Native American people and it is thus rightfully called the Trail of Tears.

After the first cession of their territory to the Europeans in 1721, the Cherokee tribe was left with the land of present-day eastern Tennessee, northeastern Alabama, western North Carolina and north Georgia<sup>85</sup>. Alfred Vick explains the importance of this environment for Cherokee people in his essay:

The landscape is embedded with meaning, history and spirit. The landscape provided the narrative that told the story of the creation of the world, the origins of the Cherokee people, the lessons for survival, and the inspiration for the future.<sup>86</sup>

The Cherokee nation had been continuously challenged to protect their territory and the cultural heritage it carried. The Indian Removal Act that passed during Andrew Jackson's presidency was, nevertheless, one of the greatest threats that the Cherokee people had to face.

In the late 1820s, the American government headed by the president Andrew Jackson came to the conclusion that Native people, as "savages", were unable to assimilate to the new civilization and thus needed to be removed from their southeastern territories making space for the European settlers. As a result of this inference, the Indian Removal Act came into force in 1830. The law secured the government the exchange of

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<sup>85</sup> J. Norman Heard, *Handbook of the American frontier: Four Centuries of Indian-White Relationships, Vol. 1: The Southeastern Woodlands* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1987), 91-92.

<sup>86</sup> R. Alfred Vick, "Cherokee adaptation to the landscape of the west and overcoming the loss of culturally significant plants," *The American Indian Quarterly* 35 (2011): 394+, accessed April 3, 2019, <http://go.galegroup.com>.

the territory west of the Mississippi River for southeastern land occupied by the Indians.<sup>87</sup> This meant that all the Indian tribes had to leave this territory and move the American frontier westward. This order did not meet, as could be expected, with positive response by the Natives. Although some people of the Cherokee tribe obeyed Jackson's command, most of them put up resistance, resulting in their forced removal—the Trail of Tears—to the territory of Oklahoma between the years 1838 and 1839. This relocation had a serious impact on the Cherokee Indians. Besides the death that awaited many of them on the journey itself, it was the ignorance of their final destination that could threaten the existence of the tribe.<sup>88</sup> It was because their previous way of life had to be left behind in the territory east of Mississippi River while there was a whole new landscape ahead of them to adapt to.

In *Thirteen Moons*, Frazier's characters reflect the struggle and resistance that the Cherokee nation offered to Jackson's law. Through his characters, Frazier explains the significance that the land had for Native people and their fight when their homeland was threatened to be taken away from them. The book is therefore also concerned with the clash between the traditional Indian culture and expanding European civilization in the nineteenth century. The novel's main protagonist, Will Cooper, represents both these cultures and consequently becomes the connection between the Cherokees and the whites. Therefore, it is his adaptation that will be of discussion as first.

## **5.2. Will Cooper**

The strong connection—that is so much apparent in the book—of the Cherokee people to the landscape their Nation has been occupied for centuries is even more highlighted by the character of Will Cooper. His great disagreement with the removal from the place that is not originally his homeland, but to which he managed to adapt during his long life, even intensifies the desperation of the Indians. Even though for Will this land—the area of

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<sup>87</sup> Heard, *Handbook of the American frontier: Four Centuries of Indian-White Relationships, Vol. 1: The Southeastern Woodlands*, 366.

<sup>88</sup> Heard, *Handbook of the American frontier: Four Centuries of Indian-White Relationships, Vol. 1: The Southeastern Woodlands*, 366.

North Carolina Wayah—has been his home most of his life, for Cherokee people it is the territory where are the roots of their whole Nation.

As Frazier is occupied with the intercultural conflict between white and Indian people (Cherokee respectively)—concerning the American frontier—he creates character that itself represents this clash, standing on the border of these two fighting nations. At the age of twelve, Will Cooper (a white boy by origin), is sent to run the trade post that lies on the edge of the Indian territory. The journey that he needs to overcome to get to his destination, is the beginning of Will's adaptation to wilderness. He encounters it as a little boy who possesses hardly any knowledge of the surrounding natural environment. Even though he carries—during his travel—a map that is supposed to help him get through the woods and mountains to the border of the Indian territory, Will is completely disoriented in the natural world. Even late in life Cooper realizes “that you could not just set out direction and necessarily get somewhere [...] to travel through that place, you needed to know not only where you wanted to go but also that roundabout was often the only way to get there.”<sup>89</sup> The struggle Will needs to face during his journey does not rise only from the difficulties to find the right direction, but also from the fear being alone (apart from the company of his horse) in the woods. His encounter with the bear creates paranoia in Will's mind thinking that the threat awaits him in every bush and behind every tree. Nevertheless, it is this moment and his first night in the dark woods that set his mind to the decision to “bury the knife deep into whatever”<sup>90</sup> would threaten his life. Will realizes that he will need to adapt to the laws of nature if he wants to survive and eventually he even starts to feel safe out in the woods alone as “the calls of night birds and the first spring peepers [calm his] loneliness.”<sup>91</sup>

Reconciled with the new reality, Will finally finds the way to the trading post at the edge of Nation where he comes into contact with the Cherokee people who, especially their chief Bear, change Will's relationship with the surrounding natural world. Bear's opinion that “refusal to fear [...] general terms of existence is an honorable act of

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<sup>89</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 28.

<sup>90</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 40.

<sup>91</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 66.



defiance”<sup>92</sup> provokes courage in Will to step into the woods and face his own fears. And he gradually succeeds to do so, finding his security in the natural environment. But it is his adoption into the Cherokee tribe that deepens Will’s connection with the land that eventually becomes his home. His admission to the clan means the adoption of its culture, rituals and way of life in general. And in the case of Cherokee people, adoption of their strong connection with the natural world.

Despite his newly gained identity, Will is interested in his intellectual growth that started before his arrival to the western frontier. Therefore, when the Indian Removal Act passes in 1830, Will—as a self-made lawyer, and an Indian chief despite the white man by origin—is sent to the Washington D.C. to defend the interests and the territory of his tribe. On Will’s stay in the capital city, Frazier shows the two cultural identities that intermingle in him. He represents Indian interests on the white ground. Will enjoys the lures of the white, modern world—expensive clothes, alcohol or parties—but at the same time he sticks to his main purpose to claim the land his tribe rightfully owns and to which it is so strongly adapted to. As he himself. Will, as Frazier stays loyal to the American frontier past, does not succeed in this very attempt and the Cherokee nation has to go on the infamous trail. Heard describes beginning of the removal, writing that these Indians who refused to leave the territory were rounded up and confined in stockades in preparation for forced removal.<sup>93</sup> Consequently, Will has to witness the disaster it meant for Cherokee culture but also destruction of the landscape that was once their home.

As he encounters the soldiers that are sent to superintend the removal, Will sees the resemblance between some of these men and his old self and realizes the transformation he underwent during the years living in nature. Initially being a boy scared of every sound and move, now “[he finds] the woods narcotic.”<sup>94</sup> And it is the mountains, woods and coves where he believes he and his people can be safe also when the Civil War

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<sup>92</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 86.

<sup>93</sup> Heard, *Handbook of the American frontier: Four Centuries of Indian-White Relationships, Vol. 1: The Southeastern Woodlands*, 366.

<sup>94</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 239.

comes in the 1860s. Therefore, Will and his tribe hide from war in the woods because “in [...] cool elevated world, it was rather hard to tell what it was fighting season in Virginia.”<sup>95</sup>

Although fighting the new civilized world, Cooper remains to be caught between the two worlds till the rest of his days. Frazier starts and ends his novel with Will’s musing on and disgust at the new world that the Removal and the War brought. Living his last years on the land he has been desperately purchasing for his people, Will is forced to watch the modern world destroying the landscape around him that once was their home. He remembers the times before the discovery of America when the “landscape was what it was during throughout one’s brief life.”<sup>96</sup> This past greatly contrasts with the reality Will is facing when looking out of his window. Trees cut down and the new railroads with passing trains only rouses desperation and sensation of loneliness in Will. He regrets living long enough to “find [himself] in a transformed world peopled by strangers. Lost in places [he has] known as intimately as the back of [his] hand.”<sup>97</sup> Despite his white origin keeps manifesting in Will throughout his whole life, he fully adopts the Indian way of life. Cooper is looking for his identity as well as for his place in this world basically his whole life. First, Will is forced to adapt to the natural environment when he is sent alone into the woods as a young boy. Then, later in life, when he thinks he finally found his place in the natural world, he is commanded to leave the land he has finally adapted to and has to get used to live in the new world, which he—mentally—never succeeds to do so.

### **5.3. Cherokee adaptation and the threat of the Indian Removal Act**

The preceding chapter discussed the struggle of an individual when he is forced to move from the place of his adaptation to the unknown territory. The fact that this character is a white man and the land he is adapted to is a place that has been occupied by the Cherokee Indians long before his arrival, even stresses the tragedy that the removal order means for these Native people. In his fictional Cherokee tribe and in Bear, one of their chiefs, Frazier reflects the real desperation of losing home that the Natives had to deal with less than two centuries earlier.

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<sup>95</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 354.

<sup>96</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 411.

<sup>97</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 418.

Cherokee people, and the Native Americans in general, have always had an intimate relationship with nature as they were highly dependent on it in the matter of their survival. Their religion itself reflects the significant role of the natural surroundings in the lives of Cherokee tribe. James Mooney states that in the Cherokee culture “the elements and the great powers of nature are deified.”<sup>98</sup> Plants and animals were an important factor in their everyday life and their dependence on them remained even long after the first contacts with the Europeans. However, it was gradually more difficult to maintain their connection with the land when the easterners kept winning over them, taking over their territory since 1721.<sup>99</sup> Setting the book in the nineteenth century, Frazier thus introduces the Cherokee nation already broken and slightly modified in their way of life. Initially being hunters, Frazier explains in the book that Indian men had to switch to farming life as there are very few animals left in the woods after all the fights with the whites.<sup>100</sup> Jahoda states the Indian farming as one of the reasons for the Removal order, explaining that “the more agricultural the tribes became, the more of an autonomous threat they were.”<sup>101</sup> With their statements, Jahoda and Frazier affirms that the Native people and their previous way of life became victims of European expansion and their attempt to establish civilization in the United States. First, Indian people were deprived of their life as hunters and then commanded to leave the land as their agriculture became competition for the eastern settlers.

Bear, a chief of one of the Cherokee villages and Will’s adopting father, is the main character that author uses in the book to explain the readers what the land and the Removal means for the Indian people. After all the losses of his people against whites, Bear and his tribe finally find their place in the mountains of North Carolina and here he sets “as his job to see that the world they inhabited remained recognizable.”<sup>102</sup> In Bear’s opinion, to have a place to belong to is one of the things that shapes one’s identity.

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<sup>98</sup> James Mooney, *Sacred formulas of the Cherokees*, in *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred formulas of the Cherokees* (Nashville: Charles Elder, 1982), 340.

<sup>99</sup> Heard, *Handbook of the American frontier: Four Centuries of Indian-White Relationships, Vol. 1: The Southeastern Woodlands*, 92.

<sup>100</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 71.

<sup>101</sup> Gloria Jahoda, *The Trail of Tears* (New York: Wings, 1995), 39.

<sup>102</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 74.

Through his character, similarly as through Ruby in *Cold Mountain*, Frazier once again explains what it means to find your place in the world. In one of the conversations between Bear and Will, the full-blood Indian chief states that “having a place means being bound in many directions [...] to the land, the animals, and the people.”<sup>103</sup> And the Cherokee people in this novel are bound to the mountains of North Carolina in all these ways. Their survival depends on the food the land and the animals provide them with as well as on their companions as it is always harder to survive as an individual.

It is therefore this close connection to and dependence on the natural environment they live in that make them disobey Jackson’s Removal law. For them, their intimate relationship with nature is stronger and more important than any governmental order threatening with their forced removal. Bear summarizes this attitude of the Indians stating that “the diameter of their world was tightly drawn [...] and its topography was confined to the coves and ridges and watercourses they had seen with their eyes and walked with their legs.”<sup>104</sup> With his fictional characters, Frazier refers to the refusal of most of the real Cherokee people to leave the land that led their Nation to the Trail of Tears. The author reflects the disaster that this forced removal had for Cherokees. Although some Indians obey Jackson’s order, the majority of them decides to rebel against this law. Frazier reconstructs one of the rebellions by employing the character of Charley, based on the real Cherokee Indian of the same name. He serves as an example what people are capable of when they are threatened to lose the land they have a strong connection to. Originally being a mere farmer, Charley is driven to kill the soldier who endangers his family and his territory. Mooney describes the attack of the real Charley as being “so sudden and unexpected that one soldier was killed and the rest fled, while the Indians escaped to the mountains.”<sup>105</sup> Although Frazier and Mooney differ in Charley’s capturing—Mooney stating his voluntary surrender while Frazier describing his apprehension—they both concur in the two fundamental facts. Charley is eventually shot

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<sup>103</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 93.

<sup>104</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 206.

<sup>105</sup> Mooney, *Sacred formulas of the Cherokees*, 131.

by the soldiers for his rebellion after being hunted like an animal in his own land.<sup>106</sup> For Cherokee people, the Removal and the subsequent Trail of Tears changed their safe home and its landscape into a life-threatening place.

Frazier's novel can be understood as a reflection of the desperation of Native people over the incoming modern, civilized world. Through Bear's character, he explains the changes that the Cherokee people had to undergo since the white people disturbed their life in harmony with nature. As stated in the first lines of thesis' opening chapter concerning this novel, the Cherokee people had pious respect for the surrounding nature, including also animals. Bear explains that in the early days, animals were hunted and killed exclusively of hunger and every dead animal was properly mourned. With the appearance of money, the primal purpose of hunting from necessity turned into hunting for trade for some Indians.<sup>107</sup> However, to show the resistance of the Native people to the modern world, Frazier employs mainly strong Indian characters who do not succumb these enticements of the civilization they are promised to find in the west. It is the argument of being adapted to North Carolina landscape and of not knowing "any place but here"<sup>108</sup> that causes Cherokee disobedience. Although their opposition had serious consequences, Frazier points out that it is these people who remained faithful to their way of life that ends up as real victors. At the end of the novel, Will points out that he sees the fact that Bear had never been captured on camera "as an enviable resistance against the modern age."<sup>109</sup> On the other hand, despite being survivor, Will is described as a loser because he lives long enough to watch the modern conveniences swallowing the natural world that was once his home.

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<sup>106</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 206.

<sup>107</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 326.

<sup>108</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 348.

<sup>109</sup> Frazier, *Thirteen Moons*, 416.

## 6. NIGHTWOODS

With his last novel that is the subject of this thesis, Frazier deviates from the two preceding books in the matter of genre. *Nightwoods* cannot be classified—despite its setting in the 1960s—as a historical novel. It concentrates more on psychological features than on any historical events. But it is identical with *Cold Mountain* and *Thirteen Moons* in that the strong focus is put on the natural environment and its significance in the lives of its characters. George Hovis confirms that “Frazier’s first two novels and most of this third show [author’s] natural inclination [...] to be a desire to penetrate the mystery of the palpable world, including the lives of people who inhabit it.”<sup>110</sup> The author thus continues in his already traditional place setting in the landscape of North Carolina Appalachian

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<sup>110</sup> George Hovis, “The Legacy of Thomas Wolfe in contemporary Appalachian fiction: four recent North Carolina novels,” *Thomas Wolfe Review* 36 (2012): 70+, accessed April 6, 2019. <http://link.galegroup.com>.

Mountains. This time at the old Lodge named Wayah, standing on the lake bank and surrounded by the mountains and woods, rather isolated from the rest of the world.<sup>111</sup>

Although this setting arouses sentiment of loneliness at first sight, it is this isolation and mere company of nature that are essential for sanity of the characters who suffer some psychological depression caused by their past traumatic incident.

### **6.1. Luce**

After the Lodge had ceases to serve its original purpose as a summer resort for wealthy people from town, its inhabitants reduce to Luce, who stays in the residence as a housekeeper. This self-imposed lonely life and inclination to her natural surrounding is a result of sexual abuse of which Luce was a victim earlier in her life. It is the location of the Lodge at the town outskirts surrounded by the mountains, as she realizes, that made her stay and not leave the place which would be expected after her horrific experience.<sup>112</sup> Her abuse is what awakens Luce's affection for nature that she strongly cherished already in her childhood. Frazier describes Luce as a character, who would rather wander the woods alone and look at "the way weather goes always different from moment to moment"<sup>113</sup> than attending school in her early years.

This admiration and observation of nature around her is one of the habits that Luce retains throughout her life and that keeps appearing also throughout the course of the novel. After her rape, when other people fail to help her, Luce retires to her own personal world at the isolated Lodge where looking at the sky and watching other creations of nature become her biggest relief. She is of the opinion that there are so many attractions and entertainments in the natural surrounding that one does need any modern conveniences. Moreover, most of the things Luce necessarily needs in her life can be provided by her agricultural activity and by nature around her. Luce's adaptation to her natural environment therefore reaches the point in which she can claim that "she had observed and learned nearly a hundred [...] parts of the local world."<sup>114</sup> All these

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<sup>111</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 5.

<sup>112</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 92-93.

<sup>113</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 57.

<sup>114</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 171.

activities—growing plants, breeding animals, observing nature—occupy her mind enough to serve as distractions from the loneliness she might feel.

However, Frazier invades her isolated life with two children who seem to be even more psychically ruined than herself. All of a sudden, she gets into situation that does not allow her to take care only of herself and to fill all her free time with observation of the sky and the animals. Besides, the new reality Luce is brought into becomes a great challenge for her as the children do not manifest any interests, as previously she herself, in company of or communication with other people. So it is eventually nature through which Luce finds her way of interaction with them.

## **6.2. The children**

Although Luce may appear as the main protagonist in the novel, they are the children—Dolores and Frank—who undergoes most significant transformation throughout the course of the book. Right thanks to their aunt Luce and nature. Frazier creates some kind of parallel between the two young characters and the Lodge housekeeper. Just as Luce's sexual abuse makes her withdraw from social life and reduce her contact with people to a minimum, the children also suffer mental shock that shakes their relationships with other people. After having witnessed their mother being murdered by their stepfather, Frank and Dolores build up distrust in people that prevents them from communicating with anybody. It is only language of nature, as Luce gradually finds out, they are willing to speak and listen to.

On these two young characters, Frazier demonstrates the strong and positive impact the natural surrounding can have on someone's life. At the beginning of the book, the children are placed in their mother's sister custody, wrecked and reluctant to interaction with other people. This means a great challenge for Luce as she herself has been living isolated and lonely life previous couple of years, communicating mostly with her natural surroundings. Therefore, when she notices children's deep fascination with fire—one of the natural elements—Luce decides "to share her own expansive view of the



natural world with [her sister's] orphaned children."<sup>115</sup> Luce's agricultural knowledge and activities are what kept herself busy during her lonely years and through which she thus attempts to capture twin's attention. It is the explanation of her way of gardening as well as of the processes of getting the food on table she believes can restore Frank and Dolores' speech. But initially, even though they do perceive Luce's lessons about agricultural life and accepts their regular walks in the woods without objections, they do not exhibit any "apparent interests"<sup>116</sup> in what they are told or showed. They are enclosed in their private bubbles and seem not to pay much attention to their surrounding world.

Although they seem to be fearless, as manifested in their encounter with the black hole to which lip they go straight away without thinking<sup>117</sup> or in their entertainment with fire, Frazier suggests that it is only some kind of defense mechanism that helps them to escape their real fear. Fear of human interaction. Luce keeps conjecture that the kids want to "put an end to days where every moment begins in fear [...] shift the load somewhere else."<sup>118</sup> And unlike Frank and Dolores, she realizes possible destructiveness of their dangerous distraction. She understands—after their first encounter with Luce friend's pony Sally—that if it is not the communication with people that could take their focus off playing with fire, then communication with animals might be the clue. Until then, all Luce's intention of verbal communication with the children fail. It is after their ride on the mare's back when they finally say their first words in the novel. Although it is only an exclamation of mere pony's name "Sally,"<sup>119</sup> the importance of this word in children's transformation is fundamental. Their direct interaction with the mare seems to crack the wall they have built around them. And apart from this moment, Dolores and Frank start to show willingness to lead some kind of conversation with their aunt. Luce continues in her attempt to communicate with the orphans in terms of natural elements asking them, for instance, about their favorite weather. Despite their respond is, once again, of one word

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<sup>115</sup> Hovis, "The Legacy of Thomas Wolfe in contemporary Appalachian fiction: four recent North Carolina novels," 70+.

<sup>116</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 86-87.

<sup>117</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 88.

<sup>118</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 141.

<sup>119</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 145.

“lightning,”<sup>120</sup> what is more important is the fact that the question does not remain without answer.

However, this beginning of children’s transformation is invaded by their encounter with Bud – their stepfather and their mother’s murderer in one person. This moment is the climax of the novel as the children who appear to start to recuperate their relationship with other people are suddenly facing the main source of their fear and distrust. Being threatened by the human world again, Frank and Dolores entrust their lives to nature rather than put their trust into Luce’s or any adult’s hands, as would be preferable for the children. They prefer escaping into winter mountains, taking the mare as their only company.

Although there are many things in the woods, especially in winter time, that can put person in immediate danger, the twins seem not to fear anything out in the mountains. Their inner resistance they built up in the last months helps them deal with all difficulties they might encounter on the way. Despite being able to make a fire, they find themselves in situations where facing cold is inevitable. But for them, “cold is more like a discomfort, one more thing to take.”<sup>121</sup> The twins manifest confidence and strong connection to the surrounding natural world. Their stay in the mountains is not fight for survival as could be expected for the children to be. Ironically, Frank and Dolores even seem more relaxed in the dark woods. They talk with each other, play games to distract themselves and even sing together. For them, the woods are a safe place. A hideaway from the society that failed to protect them. The children are of opinion that “the horror is other people,”<sup>122</sup> not dark caves or wild animals.

On the last pages of the novel, the twins are eventually found and rescued from the woods. Although the word “rescued” does not really apply in their situation as they never felt endangered in the surrounding mountains. Unlike Luce, who thinks there is a serious reason to worry about their safety, Frank and Dolores see their stay in the woods more like an adventure. When they encounter Luce again, they talk “about the swapping

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<sup>120</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 145

<sup>121</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 283.

<sup>122</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 304.

of the hat, the lightning of the great dead balsam [...] sawn and the ice in the trees.”<sup>123</sup>

They are so attracted by nature that they do not even realize the dangers that surrounded them every second of their journey. Their survival in the hostile mountains proves strong adaptation of these children to their natural environment. Gifford assigns their successful stay in nature to two factors: “Listening to the voices of their inner nature and the voices, via Luce’s, of external nature has sustained their lives in the harsh winter mountains.”<sup>124</sup> After witnessing their mother’s murder, Dolores and Frank built up strong mental resistance that prevents them from feeling any fear. However, this mental state is disturbed by the encounter with their mother’s murderer. The woods thus become the refuge where they feel the safest. And the lessons that Luce gives them about the surrounding natural world as well become one of the factors that are essential for their ultimate survival.

## CONCLUSION

In this bachelor’s thesis, I tried to demonstrate the importance of nature in the work of Charles Frazier by focusing mainly on the adaptation of his main characters to the natural environment. The books that I analyzed in the thesis are: *Cold Mountain*, *Thirteen Moons* and *Nightwoods*. The significant role of nature is a common point of these novels, as its influence on their characters is clearly visible in all of them. To link his novels, the author uses the setting of North Carolina woods and mountains. Frazier was born and spent his childhood in Ashville, North Carolina, near Blue Ridge Mountains as well as near former Cherokee nation borders. In his books, Frazier explores his homeland, its culture and primarily its people and their connection to the land they occupy. In his three novels, the North Carolina author employs characters whose lives and behavior are tightly bound to the natural surroundings, although in different ways, on different scales and for distinct

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<sup>123</sup> Frazier, *Nightwoods*, 315.

<sup>124</sup> Gifford, “Nature’s eloquent speech in Charles Frazier’s *Nightwoods*,” 565+.

reasons. In all cases, however, their ability to live in harmony with nature is essential for their survival. The degree of adaptation to the natural environment in Frazier's novels varies from character to character. Some of them undergo fundamental transformation, some revive their relationship with nature while others enter the story as already adapted characters. All these protagonists are subject of this thesis.

In the first novel, *Cold Mountain*, I discuss connection to nature of three main protagonists: Ada, Inman and Ruby. Each of them manifest different degree of adaptation and their relationship with their natural environment differs as well. Ruby is the unique character in the novel whose relationship with nature does not undergo any change throughout the course of the story. It is because her adaptation to the natural environment of Cold Mountain is basically complete in the moment of her first appearance in the book. She represents the populace of Blue Ridge Mountains whose lives so far have been tightly connected to this region. Ruby's deep knowledge of this area and her experiences from childhood, when she had to rely only on herself in the matter of survival, contrast with ignorance and inexperience of Ada, the novel's main female protagonist. Unlike Ruby, whose approach to nature is mostly practical, Ada sees it as something more abstract and metaphorical. The source of her view of nature can be found in her social background as she is a daughter of quite wealthy preacher with whom she is coming to Cold Mountain farm from Charleston urban environment. After her father's death, Ada finds herself in a desperate situation, being left on the farm she is incapable of taking care of. She realizes that her father, who always relied on the power of money regarding agriculture, did not provide her with any useful abilities that she could utilize in her new life situation. Therefore, Ada decides to look for help with other people and thus encounters Ruby who becomes her mentor and consequently also person who has the greatest credit for change in Ada's view of the surrounding natural world. The main female protagonist of the novel gradually understands that she has to stop looking for metaphors in nature and start focusing primarily on practical utilization of natural elements that can secure her survival. And she eventually succeeds in finding common ground with her natural environment. Although Ada's understanding of her surroundings,

as she is aware of, is far beyond Ruby's lifelong learning, we can declare Ada's adaptation as successful taking into consideration her initial absolute ignorance of her natural environment and of nature in general.

The last character—Inman— that I focused on in this novel, stands somewhere in between the two preceding female protagonists. He is not fully adapted to the environment of Cold Mountain nor his adaptation starts from very scratch in the book. Inman's connection to nature is rather in a stage of revival. The Civil War on which background Frazier set his novel left not only physical but also mental wounds on the soldiers. Inman is the character who represents these soldiers. Although he is treated in the hospital for his neck wound, Inman realizes that it is rather his spirit that needs to be healed. And he comes to conclusion that his homeland, Cold Mountain, is the place where his soul can find peace again. Therefore, Inman deserts and his homecoming becomes essential for rediscovering of his place in the natural world. Despite Inman's realization that he will never be able to heal the wounds which are not visible to the eye, he is contented with the thought that there is place in the world—that are the mountains and woods of Cold Mountain—where he belongs.

The second book that was the subject of this thesis is *Thirteen Moons*. This novel reflects on one of the darkest periods in the history of Native American people. Frazier is highly concerned with events that happened after the Indian Removal Act had passed in 1830 and the impact it had on Cherokee nation that occupied the territory of North Carolina. This law that ordered the Indian tribes to abandon their land and move their borders westwards meant a big threat for Native people. The reason is that they have been living in intimate relationship with nature of the territory they occupied their whole life. Already adapted to their natural surroundings, it is unacceptable and unimaginable for most of them to start their life anew somewhere else. Through his characters, Frazier explains that it was the ignorance of Cherokee people of other places that led to their resistance which resulted in infamous Trail of Tears. This disaster that the Removal meant for Native people is even more emphasized by novel's main character – Will Cooper. The North Carolina author employs Will as the main spokesman of Cherokee nation although

he is born as a white man. Initially being a boy scared of the woods and of every noise, Will is eventually adopted by one of the Cherokee chiefs, adopting his new tribe's culture and way of life. Frazier shows the irony that first, as a young boy, Will needs to adapt to the new environment he was adopted into, only to fight for his and his people's right to retain their territory later in his life. The novel's main protagonist does not succeed in his attempt to secure the land his tribe has been occupied for centuries and although he manages to live to a ripe old age, he sees his longevity as a life failure. Will's suffering while watching modern world destroying the land that has been his home most of his life gives a little idea of the disaster it meant for people whose nation has occupied this territory for centuries.

The last novel that was of discussion in this thesis is *Nightwoods*. Unlike in the two preceding novels, in *Nightwoods* the survival is not the main reason why the characters incline to nature. In this case, the book's main protagonist—Luce and the twins Frank and Dolores—see nature as a safe place that can protect them from otherwise harmful society. All three characters were in some way let down by company of other people and therefore seek for loneliness at the isolated Lodge and the surrounding woods. Luce's voluntarily chosen life in seclusion only in the company of natural world has healing effect for her mind that is dealing with memories of Luce's sexual abuse. Her agricultural knowledge and the knowledge of the surrounding natural world is also essential for the twins—the children of her deceased sister—she gets into custody. Frank and Dolores, who witnessed their mother's murder, seem to suffer even more as they are not initially able even of verbal communication with others. However, they eventually find words through the interaction with a mare named Sally. Their regained willingness to talk and interact with other is, nevertheless, threatened when they encounter their greatest fear – their mother's murdered. Believing in help of nature more than that of people, they run into winter woods where they manage to survive thanks to Luce's lessons as well as thanks to their own resistance they developed when the society failed to protect them.

As we could see, nature and adaptation to it play major role in the lives of Frazier's characters although it can be manifested in different ways. The survival of some of them—

Ruby, Ada, Cherokee people and also Frank and Dolores in later stages of the story— depends on their adaptation to their natural environment and their ability to live in harmony with it. On the other hand, Frazier also employs characters—Inman, Luce and the twins— who are rather looking for spiritual relief in nature. There are characters— Ruby, Cherokee people and partially Luce—whose adaptation is already present when they enter the story as well as characters—Ada, Inman, Will Cooper and the twins—who are building or reviving their adaptation to nature throughout the course of the novel. And, in their own way and degree, each of them manage to do so.

## RESUMÉ

Charles Frazier je americký autor románů narozen ve městě Ashville v severoamerickém státě Severní Karolína. Toto město se nachází v pohoří Blue Ridge Mountains, které je součástí Apalačského pohoří. Právě lesy, hory a pohoří zmíněného regionu jsou Frazierovým významným zdrojem inspirace pro jeho příběhy. Severokarolínský autor ve svých románech *Cold Mountain*, *Thirteen Moons* a *Nightwoods*, jež jsou předmětem této práce, věnuje velkou pozornost zmíněnému přírodnímu prostředí, stejně jako se zabývá tradicemi a lidmi, kteří jsou s oblastí Blue Ridge Mountains spojení. Hlavním tématem mé bakalářské práce bylo zkoumání vztahů Frazierových postav k přírodě a jejich adaptace na přírodní prostředí, v němž žijí. Svoji pozornost jsem věnovala především historickým událostem, sociálnímu původu a rodinnému zázemí jednotlivých postav, jakožto hlavním faktorům ovlivňujících jejich adaptaci.

V úvodní kapitole práce jsem se zabývala pojmem prostředí (*setting*), neboli místním a časovým zasazením děje. Nejprve jsem výše uvedený pojem definovala a

následně popsala dvě odlišné stránky přírody, které se v románech projevují. V návaznosti na toto srovnání jsem svoji pozornost soustředila na pojem divočina (*wilderness*), jakožto na místo v přírodě nedotčené moderním světem. Ve zbývajících částech první kapitoly jsem romány místně a časově zasadila. Nakonec jsem rozebrala postoj jednotlivých postav k moderní civilizaci, na který jsem nahlížela jako na jeden z důvodů, proč hlavní protagonisté obracejí svoji pozornost na přírodu.

Knihy *Cold Mountain* a *Thirteen Moons* se řadí mezi historické romány. Z tohoto důvodu jsem se ve druhé kapitole práce věnovala právě tomuto literárnímu žánru. Nejprve jsem pojem historický román definovala a na základě této definice popsala faktory, díky kterým se Frazierovy knihy řadí do uvedeného žánru. Dále jsem vysvětlila, jaký vliv má volba žánru na vztah postav k přírodě. Konkrétně jsem pozornost věnovala historickým událostem, a to Americké občanské válce a Trail of Tears, na jejichž pozadí se jednotlivé romány odehrávají, a které ovlivňují pohled postav na okolní přírodní svět. V této kapitole jsem také zmínila Waltera Scotta a Jamese Fenimora Coopera jakožto průkopníky tohoto žánru. Na druhého z nich jsem nahlížela jako na možný zdroj inspirace pro jednu z Frazierových knih. Závěrem jsem krátce popsala důvody, proč nelze *Nightwoods* zařadit do stejného žánru jako dva předchozí romány.

Ve třetí kapitole bakalářské práce jsem se soustředila na tituly jednotlivých knih a na jejich spojitost s přírodními jevy. Ve třech podkapitolách, věnujících se jednotlivým románům, jsem rozebrala význam těchto jevů, stejně jako způsob, jakým se v dílech odrážejí. V první podkapitole jsem se zabývala zasazením místa děje v oblasti Cold Mountain, jež dala románu jeho název. Ve druhé části třetí kapitoly jsem se zabývala kalendářem, na který odkazuje titul Frazierova díla *Thirteen Moons*. Pozornost jsem soustředila na spojitost tohoto kalendáře, který byl používán indiánskými kmeny Severní Ameriky, s přírodními cykly. V kapitole jsem jej také srovnala s tradičním Gregoriánským kalendářem. Ve třetí podkapitole jsem vysvětlila význam slovního spojení *night* (noční) a *woods* (lesy), kterým je pojmenovaný třetí Frazierův román, *Nightwoods*. Mým hlavním cílem bylo demonstrovat, že kombinace těchto jevů, které na první pohled budí strach, má v knize spíše pozitivní interpretaci.



V následující čtvrté kapitole jsem se věnovala adaptaci tří hlavních protagonistů románu *Cold Mountain* na přírodu. Ve třech podkapitolách, z nichž se každá zabývala jednou z postav, jsem se soustředila na faktory ovlivňující vztah jednotlivých postav k přírodě. Hlavními předměty diskuze se stala Americká občanská válka, rodinné zázemí a sociální postavení. U každé z postav jsem se také věnovala tomu, zda, jakým způsobem a v jaké míře probíhá jejich adaptace na okolní přírodní prostředí. Závěrem jsem porovnala jednotlivé protagonisty s ohledem na jejich pohled a adaptaci na přírodu na začátku a na konci románu.

Předmětem zkoumání předposlední kapitoly byl Frazierův historický román *Thirteen Moons*. Zde jsem v první podkapitole představila Indian Removal Act a Trail of Tears, jakožto historické události, na jejichž pozadí se román odehrává a které výrazně ohrožují adaptaci postav na přírodu. Vliv těchto událostí na vztah hlavních protagonistů k přírodnímu prostředí a jejich boj proti nim jsem následně popsala ve dvou dalších podkapitolách. Nejdříve jsem se zabývala tím, jak probíhalo přizpůsobení se hlavního protagonisty románu na přírodu a jeho snahou o udržení si intimního vztahu s přírodním prostředím. Poté jsem vysvětlila dopad Indian Removal Actu na kmen Čeroků v románu, na to, co znamenal pro jejich adaptaci a z jakého důvodu se kmen tomuto zákonu snažil vzdorovat. Nakonec jsem shrnula příčiny, proč tyto historické události znamenaly hrozbu pro kmen Čeroků a pro jejich závislost na okolní přírodě.

V poslední kapitole jsem se zabývala adaptací tří hlavních postav knihy *Nightwoods* na přírodní prostředí a také faktory, které je donutily obrátit se na přírodu. V práci jsem se věnovala tomu, jak události, jež prožili, ovlivňují jejich vztah k ostatním lidem a k přírodě. Dále jsem zde popsala přírodní jevy jako zdroj vytržení postav z jejich osamělosti a okolní přírodu jako jejich útočiště před společností.

V závěru práce jsem shrnula podobnosti a rozdíly v adaptaci hlavních postav na přírodu ve všech třech Frazierových románech. Uvedla jsem také hlavní faktory, které měly na adaptaci jednotlivých postav největší podíl, míru jejich počáteční a konečné adaptace a jejich celkový vztah k přírodě a pohled na ni.

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## **ANOTACE**

Příjmení a jméno: Přílučiková Anna

Katedra: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Název práce: Lidská adaptace na přírodu v románech Charlese Frazierera

Vedoucí práce: prof. PhDr. Michal Peprník, Dr.

Počet stran: 63

Klíčová slova: Charles Frazier, historický román, adaptace, příroda, místo a čas děje, *Cold Mountain*, *Thirteen Moons*, *Nightwoods*, Čerokiové

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá tématem lidské adaptace na přírodu v románech Charlese Frazierera, jmenovitě v *Cold Mountain*, *Thirteen Moons* a *Nightwoods*. Příroda, která hraje ve Frazierových knihách důležitou roli, má výrazný vliv na chování i na život jednotlivých postav. Mým cílem je nalézt hlavní faktory, jež jim pomáhají navázat dialog s přírodou a

které ovlivňují vztah těchto postav k přírodnímu prostředí, ve kterém žijí. Tato práce se soustředí na osobní zkušenosti a prožitky těchto postav, na jejich sociální původ a rodinné zázemí, a také na historické události jako na klíčové faktory, které jejich adaptaci na přírodu ovlivňují.

## **ABSTRACT**

Surname and name: Přílučiková Anna

Department: Department of English and American Studies

Title of the thesis: Human adaptation to nature in the novels by Charles Frazier

Supervisor: prof. PhDr. Michal Peprník, Dr.

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Key words: Charles Frazier, historical novel, adaptation, nature, setting, *Cold Mountain*, *Thirteen Moons*, *Nightwoods*, Cherokee

The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to explore the theme of human adaptation to nature in Charles Frazier's novels *Cold Mountain*, *Thirteen Moons* and *Nightwoods*. Frazier gives nature an important role in all his three novels and it has a major power over characters' lives and behavior. My objective is to identify the main factors which determine or influence characters' relation to nature and establish a dialogue with nature. The thesis discusses characters' personal experiences, social and family background as well as historical events as the crucial factors of their adaptation.