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## Manifest Destiny And The Works Of Thomas Moran

The American dream of Manifest Destiny began to take the nation by storm during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this was an era of westward expansion and exploration. Breathtaking land was discovered; however, Congress was more concerned about modernizing and settling the land than taking care of and preserving its beauty. Thomas Moran took on the responsibility, along with other artists and photographers, to capture the stunning land and conceal it for future generations. In Moran's painting, "Tower Falls and Sulphur Mountains, Yellowstone," Moran creates an image inspiring the viewer to go on adventures and discover more of the world around them. Moran's painting unveils the beauty of Yellowstone and expresses the importance of getting out in nature and exploring.

Moran was born in 1837 in Bolton, Lancashire and moved to the United States of America when he was seven. His parents were handloom weavers but, as a result of industrialization during the 1900s, both of his parents lost their jobs. Because of this, his family was forced to move to Kensington, Philadelphia. Once he turned sixteen, he started working at a wood engraving business and began to take his art seriously. Edward Moran, Thomas Moran's brother, was also an artist and helped teach and critique Thomas Moran's artistic work. Thomas used his talent alongside other artist, writers, and photographers, to capture the beauty of Yellowstone and The Grand Canyon.

As mentioned previously in the essay, Manifest Destiny was a popular concept during the nineteenth century. The citizens believed that the "United States had a God-given duty and right to expand its territory and influence throughout North America." Throughout this time Congress was encouraging citizens to move west and settle the land, however settling the land would endanger valuable landmarks such as Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon. Congress did not understand the importance of preserving such features and ignored those pushing to create national parks. Because the desire for citizens to move west was so great at this time, Congress did not want to be bothered by seemingly unimportant matters such as creating parks.

Moran's paintings inspire people to go outside and explore the world. In this painting, Moran conveyed this feeling by using bright, yet earthy, colors to generate feelings of a calm, yet mysterious place. Throughout the painting, the viewer can grasp the beauty of Yellowstone. The jagged lines along the rocks help the audience perceive the texture and gives the painting a more realistic feel. In 1872, shortly after Moran created this piece and displayed it for Congress, Congress passed the document, "An Act Establishing Yellowstone National Park," and officially began to preserve and protect Yellowstone.

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National parks not only preserve unique landmarks, but they also provide a safe place for people to go and explore more of the world around them. Exploring in nature can improve mental and physical health and can help increase knowledge of the world around you. One research project showed that “people who live near or spend time in ‘open, undeveloped land with natural vegetation’... have lower rates of disease, increased sleep duration, and less salivary Cortisol (an indicator of stress) than people with the least access to green spaces.” A similar study conducted in 2010 showed that “just five minutes of outdoor or ‘green’ activity — walking or gardening — has noticeable mental health benefits, including improved mood and self-esteem.” Moran recognized the value of these places before anyone else and worked hard to achieve his goal.

Americans are not getting outside as much as they should result in more stress and illness in the individual. Because of Thomas Moran’s paintings, the United States now has national parks which provide citizens with a safe way to explore and discover more about the world. Moran and his fellow artists worked hard to provide citizens with national parks, we should take advantage of their hard work. Getting outside was important back then and is still important today, spending time in nature can increase mental and physical health, improve grades in school and help people gain more knowledge of the world around them.

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