

## Introduction

## Speculation in “The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym”

Edgar Allan Poe's novel “The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym” is a powerful exploration of the complex geographies of space and race in nineteenth-century America. Through intense speculation, Poe paints an unsettling portrait of the violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples, as well as the racism that existed even while US borders were rapidly expanding. By exploring the connections between race and space, Poe's narrative serves as an important reminder of the struggles faced by people of color in the 19th century. In addition, “The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym” also anticipates what has yet to come, a future that is often unimaginable to readers today. By engaging in this speculative mode of writing, Poe challenges us to consider how our own imaginative capacities might be used to create a world of greater equality and justice. Therefore, the novel confronts readers with difficult questions about the social implications of race and space in nineteenth-century America.

Supporting Evidence

## Body Paragraph

In the 19th century, US America's borders were unstable and growing rapidly due to a succession of wars, treaties, and annexations. This expansion of US borders often led to violent dispossession for Indigenous peoples, as settlers pushed further into their traditional lands and resources became scarce. At the same time, slavery was carried along with this expansion into new territories, creating an even more oppressive situation for people of color in America. As these rapid changes occurred, it became increasingly difficult for Indigenous peoples to maintain their cultural identities and secure access to land which had been promised by the treaty since the

founding of the United States. It was a time in the US in which only the strong survived, and the weak were slaughtered just for fun. As Poe writes, "Such weakness can scarcely be conceived, and to those who have never been similarly situated will, no doubt, appear unnatural" (Poe 166). All of these factors together created a tumultuous environment in which race and space were tightly linked, and existing inequalities were perpetuated. This unstable environment of the 19th century served as a backdrop for Edgar Allan Poe's novel, "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym." Through this narrative, Poe examines how race and space were connected, delving deeply into the speculative geographies of America at that time. Therefore, it is important to consider the social implications of these changes in order to truly understand the complexity of Poe's exploration of race and space.

Edgar Allan Poe's novel, "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym," is a powerful work of speculative writing. Through his story, Poe explores the complex connections between race and space in nineteenth-century America, particularly in regard to the violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the racism experienced by people of color. By engaging in this kind of imaginative narrative, Poe encourages readers to think more critically about how their own conceptions and imaginations might be used to create a world of greater equality and justice. Poe explains the concept behind narrative by writing, "A narrative, let me here say, which, in its latter portions, will be found to include incidents of a nature so entirely out of the range of human experience" (Poe 96). Poe's use of speculative writing allows the readers to consider multiple possibilities not only for the past but also for the future. He anticipates many of the struggles faced by people of color as they navigate their way through an ever-changing world. By challenging readers to think differently about the connections between race and space, Poe's narrative encourages us to look beyond our preconceived notions and prejudices in order to

create a more just future. Thus, his work serves as an important reminder of the power of speculative writing, which has the potential to open up new possibilities for dialogue and understanding. Ultimately, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym" is a powerful example of how imaginative writing can be used to explore complex issues such as race and space.

In Poe's story, racism is portrayed as an ever-present force in nineteenth-century America. Throughout the narrative, Poe examines how race and space were connected and how this connection led to violence and dispossession for Indigenous peoples. He also explores the ways in which people of color were discriminated against and further marginalized due to their race. In particular, Poe focuses on the ways in which racism was used as a tool for oppression during this period. He shows how white supremacists leveraged racist beliefs to control both land and labor, thereby entrenching existing inequalities between whites and people of color. Through his portrayals of racism, Poe seeks to highlight its devastating effects on both individuals and entire communities. Moreover, Poe exposes some of the more insidious aspects of racism during this period, namely, its normalization within American culture. By portraying everyday experiences like walk-ins through town or visits to a white doctor's office, he shows how entrenched racism was within society at large and how it permeated almost all aspects of everyday life. This normalized racism was then used as justification for oppressive policies such as Jim Crow laws or forced removal from Indigenous homelands. Ultimately, Poe's portrayal of racism during this period serves as a powerful reminder that prejudice was endemic in American society during this time. By engaging with these difficult themes in his narrative, he encourages readers to reflect on their own contemporary views about race and space in order to create a more just future for all.

In Edgar Allan Poe's novel, "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym," he anticipates a future that is unimaginable today. In the story, Poe examines how racialized dispossession and violence can lead to ultimate destruction. Through his exploration of these themes, Poe reveals a disturbing prediction of what lies ahead if such injustices continue unchecked. He alludes to a world where racism is embedded in every aspect of life and has devastating consequences for both individuals and entire communities. This idea is particularly prophetic considering the current state of race relations in America today. By presenting this scenario, Poe encourages readers to think critically about the way racism has been institutionalized throughout society and its lasting impact on people of color. Furthermore, he challenges readers to imagine a different future where racism is no longer the norm and justice can be realized for all. In this way, Poe's narrative serves as an important reminder of the power of speculative writing and its ability to imagine futures that may not yet exist. Thus, "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym" anticipates a future that is unimaginable today by calling attention to the real-world consequences of unchecked racism and inspiring readers to work towards creating a more equitable tomorrow.

The imaginative capacity of readers can be used as a powerful tool to create a more equitable and just world. Through literature, readers are able to engage in self-reflection and consider the effects of racism on various aspects of life. For example, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym" challenges readers to think critically about how race is connected to space and dispossession and how it has been used as a tool for oppression throughout history. By exploring these themes, readers are encouraged to examine their own views about racism and injustice to create positive change. Additionally, speculative fiction can be used as a way for readers to imagine alternate futures that do not rely on oppressive systems or ideologies. In doing so, they can create a space to explore alternatives and envision a more

just world. Ultimately, by using their own imaginative capacities, readers can help create a more equitable future for all.

In conclusion, the novel by Edgar Allen Poe, “The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym,” is an important reminder that racism has been embedded in society for a long time and can have devastating consequences. Through his exploration of race, space, and speculation, Poe encourages readers to reflect on their own assumptions about racism and injustice in order to create a more equitable future. By understanding how racism affects the geographies of space today, we can better promote greater justice and equality. Ultimately, this novel serves as both a warning and an inspiration – reminding us of the dangers inherent in unchecked prejudice while inspiring us to work towards creating a brighter future for everyone.



Works Cited

Poe, Edgar Allan. *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. Broadview Press, 2010.

