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Symbolism in "Rip Van Winkle" by Washington Irving

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I dedicate this work to my precious mother, the source of kindness and

tenderness, my father, and dearest friends.

My extreme appreciation and gratitude are addressed to my respectable teachers and supervisors Dr. Wassila MOURO who was abundantly helpful and supplied priceless support and to Mrs Souad BERBER for her patience, advice and guidance without which I could not have accomplished this task of research.

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I would like to express my sincere and warm thanks to Mr. Mustapha OUSSAR who granted me his help and advice, additionally, I would like to express my appreciation to my dearest Amel RAHMOUNI who supported me and never hesitated to stand by my side. Furthermore, I have to acknowledge all my friends for the nice times that we spent together helping each other. In American literature, Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) is an interesting symbolic tale, in which symbolism has been touched in every single corner in it. The objective of this work is to examine symbols in this short story that are used to interpret significant historical events in the American history, which were the American society's conditions before and after gaining its independence. This work intends to answer the following research question: to what extent did Washington Irving succeed to portray the American's situation before and after the Revolutionary War using symbols? And to approach the veiled corner of this question, pen is put on paper the following hypothesis that the interpretation of different symbols pictured through "Rip Van Winkle" may enhance an accurate comprehension of the story by decoding them and identifying diverse interpretations that they stand for. To fulfill this task, an analytical approach has been followed; it is utilized to analyze each aspect of the story to extract its symbolic meaning.

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General Introduction

Literature can be described as a broad world where the writer can expose his beliefs, ideas and emotions. In other words, it is the means in which the writer shares his outer and inner struggles and transforms them into literary pieces. Literature reflects social, political, economical and cultural values of any community. It seeks to depict any problem that society is faced with, and tries to suggest solutions if not solve the problem itself. Literary content differs from one nation to another and from one era to another.

American literature is a treasure container of many authors who create and shed light on several subjects in sequent periods of time that the American society passed through. American literature went by distinct literary movements such as Enlightenment, Romanticism, Realism and Naturalism. These waves came to build the American identity stone by stone. Romanticism is considered as an important movement that contributed in the development of American literature thanks to its brilliant authors.

The first appearance of Romanticism was in Europe i.e. Germany, France and England; then it reached the United States around 1820. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Americans had got their independence, but they had not yet gained their own cultural identity. So the Romantic writers took the first giant step in that concern. Thus, notable changes have been brought about the way that Americans view themselves and their assertion on nature as a guiding and elevated force.

The Romantic writers aimed to rebel against the Age of Reason or as it is known by the Enlightenment. The Romantics dealt with imagination as a critical power which permitted freedom from classical notions like reason, calculation and deduction. American Romanticism emphasized on the common man , childhood, strong senses, emotion, feeling, awe of nature, celebration of individuals, intuition and imagination.

Washington Irving is one of the brilliant American Romantics who shined in that period; he attempted to adopt in his literary pieces the main features of Romanticism like the excess use of imagination, symbolism and the centering on nature. "Rip Van Winkle" is a great example of symbolic short stories in American literature; it narrates fiction events about a modest American man named Rip Van Winkle who goes into a long slumber in the Catskill Mountain, and when he wakes up, he finds everything has changed. In fact, Irving's aim is not a mere fiction story with imaginative episodes, but his target goes further. This story is full of symbols in which the reader should deeply dig inside it to grasp the hidden message. In literature, symbolism is a craft used to convey the message in an indirect way to create a certain mood. It states something and represents something else, like a concrete object represents an abstract thing.

This research paper will examine the literary device symbolism in the short story "Rip Van Winkle", and explores the real meaning that Irving wanted to deliver. Thus each character, action and object in the story refers to a given state, event, place and feeling.

This research work will explore the following research question:

To what extent did Washington Irving succeed to reflect the American society's changes through the use of symbolism in "Rip Van Winkle"?

For the purpose of answering the aforementioned question, the researcher follows the analytical approach to dive deeper in the words of this tale and find the connection between the symbols and their significances.

This essay is divided into two chapters; the first one offers a broad background about the American Romanticism movement, the literary device 'symbolism', it gives some examples of symbolic literary works and an overview about Washington Irving who belongs to this wave.

As for the second chapter, it gives a general analysis of "Rip Van Winkle", examines symbolic themes and their interpretation, then it gives an analysis of the most prominent symbols, and finally it tackles the issue of symbolic American identity.

Chapter One: American Romanticism and Symbolism

- 1.1. Introduction
- 1.2. American Romanticism Movement
 - 1.2.1. The Notion of Romanticism and its Extension from Europe to America
 - 1.2.2. American Romanticism's Characteristics
 - 1.2.3. The Light and the Dark Romanticism
- 1.3. Symbolism in Literature
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- 1.4. Washington Irving's Biography
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1.1. Introduction

This chapter is devoted to talk about the concept of Romanticism in broad and the American one in particular. It also deals with the issue of symbolism as a literary device, and tries to give some examples of symbolism in some literary works. Furthermore, this part introduces Washington Irving as one of the most influential American Romantic authors.

1.2. American Romanticism Movement

Romanticism is a prominent movement that affected literature around the world as a whole and the American one as particular.

1.2.1. The Notion of Romanticism and its Extension from Europe to America

Romanticism is originated from the word 'Romance', this term existed from the Middle Ages(1200-1500) and took the meaning of tales with knighthood, chivalric and king's legends that are full of risks and adventures. American literary Romanticism movement was transformed from Europe to America in the early of nineteen century. This movement came as a reaction to the 'Age of Reason' or as it is also known by the Enlightenment. The proponents of this wave support imagination and inner identity against reason and rational thinking, subjectivity against objectivity, and rebellion power against customs. Romanticism appeared in the United States of America with Emerson and Washington Irving as the latter produced several literary pieces using symbolism to convey his message, this method has been heavily noticed in his short story "Rip Van Winkle" (Harvey 01).

Romanticism refers to a literary, philosophical, and artistic style that emphasizes on nature as guiding force and the central significance of individual experience. The Romantic impulses were displayed gradually in literature in the beginning of the eighteenth century. They were expressed in Gothic novels which focused on mysterious and unexplainable forces of nature in human encounters. Besides, Washington Irving's short stories focus on memory, the past, and the significance of common experience. Moreover, Romanticism had come as a rebellion against the rationality of the classical period (Embarrato and Berkin 01).

American Romanticism is a term used to generalize the connection among several movements that occurred in the United States during the middle of the eighteenth century. This period was characterized by the American defensive expansion and industrialization on one hand, and sweeping religious and social reforms on the other one (Mazzeo 2005).

In the eighteenth-century, European Romanticism had been affected by the emergence of industrial cities which changed the meaning of nature and its beauty. Thus, admiration of the most scenery attractiveness of nature is supported by some famous artists like Salvator Rosa who produced in a new "aesthetics of the infinite" that came in parallel with varied religious visions of nature. This latter was considered as the only valuable world which gives people the opportunity to escape from the demolished scenes caused by human beings' hands (Mazzeo 2005). Furthermore, Romantic literature has been portrayed in the eighteenth century as the literature of revolution. The events in France started when a group of people tore down the Bastille prison in 1789. At that moment, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Thomas Paine, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and others were a generation of young writers who shared the enthusiasm for freedom (Bohls 03).

Romanticism flourished in Britain and that supplied the appearance of Romantic literature in America which "challenged conventional ways of thinking and aesthetic traditions and championed the authority of the individual mind responding to the environment without regard to social convention or moral prohibition" (Pakditawan 06). Chiefly, the Romantics asserted the value of art's meaning for both individual and society. In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson published his essay "Nature" for the purpose of achieving freedom and individual's independence in the Western society which was in parallel with "the west's economic embrace of capitalist ethic from the early modern period" (Murray 17). In 1844, Emerson wrote his essay "The Poet", in which he said "For all men live by truth, and stand in need of expression. In love, in art . . . in labor, in games, we study to utter our painful secret. The man is only half himself, the other half is his expression" (quoted by Van Spanckeren 26). This fragment exposes that the Romantic writers gave a height value for the inner sight, the emotion, and the experience of human beings. The American liberation from the British colonial rule is considered as the initial step of Romanticism revolution's influence. More than that, the ideals and enthusiasms of transcendentalism "sought metaphysical justification for the social ideals embodied in the American Declaration of Independence" (Murray 17).

The American writers during the colonial period and revolution tended to write on political issues. In Europe, Romanticism was a cultural movement that came as a reaction to the Enlightenment. Romantic writers were not interested in the same subjects that the Enlightenment has focused on i.e. reason, but they cared more about fictional stories that were centered on nature and "heroes who dramatically overcome obstacles and other imaginative" (Vook 2011). Noteworthy, American literary writers were more attracted to write in a non formal way by using the people's daily language (Vook 2011).

The most shining names in the Romantic period are Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, the Transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau. They contributed to the creation of the American Romantic literature. Furthermore, the Romantics were likely to express themselves through the way that Hawthorne called the 'Romance' which was not only limited on love stories, but it expanded to tackle more deep topics in novels that sought to convey social and moral meanings by using particular methods like symbolism (VanSpanckeren 2007).

1.2.2. American Romanticism's Characteristics

The major feature of Romanticism is "the dominance of imagination over reason and formal rules" (Pakditawan 06). German Romanticism was mostly charmed by the natural world and its beauty, patriotism and sentimentality. English Romantics kept on their nationalism, tried to escape from their social and political problems, and focused on the function of man in nature. However, the American Romanticism differs from the European one in some features; for instance, the American Romantics were constantly seeking to build their own literature and art since they have got their independence from the British colonizer in 1777. Moreover, American Romanticism focused on the idea that the nature of human being is good, pure, free, and they gave a high value to nature. Besides this, they have a faith that man's nature is corrupted by society and political rules as well as by civilization (Pakditawan06).

Romanticism can be described as "an ideological shift from conservative to liberal ideas" (quoted by Gieseler 04). The age of Reason and Enlightenment was known by "a complete confidence in unbounded power of human reason . . . reverence for natural science, and . . . insistence upon natural religion" (quoted by Gieseler 04); This age centered on rational thinking (Gieseler 04).

The Enlightenment is the era that preceded Romanticism; it had promised that reason and scientific process would guide to knowledge, success, and better society. The Romantics challenged this idea and changed it. Romanticism was accepted so quickly across Europe and then, America because it was a cure to hyper-accelerated period of the Industrial Revolution that caused dramatic shifts in all aspects of society, changing the way that people think, feel, work, and their relations with each other. Whereas the Enlightenment could be interrupted because it had drained creativity and nature out of life, Romanticism gave the hope of restoration through unexpected enjoyments, besides this, it encouraged people to dream again, imagine and discover the limits between conscious experience, unconscious dreams and desires. This literary movement is one of the strongest intellectual currents in American Literature (Smith 2011).

In the period of Romanticism, noticeable changes were seen in society as "the changes touched furniture, design, clothing, and even hairdressing: elegant or not, art was taken into consideration in all areas. The choice of a jacket or haircut or the growth of a beard showed aesthetic beliefs were considered as manifestos" (quoted by Rosenthal 28). Romanticism had swept across the whole of society; thus one may notice its signs everywhere.

1.2.3. The Light and The Dark Romanticism

It has been noticed that there are two sides of Romanticism; one of them is described as light while the other is seen as Dark. Some critics created new expressions for the movement like Morse Pekcham who wrote his article "Toward the Theory of Romanticism" (quoted by Dincer 219), he defines the term 'negative Romanticism' as "the expression of the attitudes, feelings, and ideas of a man who has left static mechanism but has not yet arrived at a reintegration of his thought and art in terms of dynamic organics" (quoted by Dincer 219). Experiencing

A period of doubt, of despair, of religious and social isolation, of the separation of reason and the creative power, the negative romantic is able to see 'neither beauty nor goodness in the universe, nor any significance, nor any rationality, nor indeed any order at all, not even evil order (Dincer 219)

Dark Romanticism is mainly a negative one where beauty and positive descriptions have no literary place; rather, it focuses on all what is negative, dark and gothic.

Furthermore, Eberhard Alsen defines the negative Romanticism as "the ideological core of Positive Romanticism is a worldview that is grounded in philosophical idealism" (quoted by Dincer 219). However, he defines the positive

Romanticism as "the imagination that reveals to the positive Romantics the spiritual world of essences beyond the physical world of appearances" (quoted by Dincer219). The light Romantics portray people as "good without evil" (Dincer 220), whereas the dark Romantics show them as predisposed to "sin and self-destruction" (Dincer 220). For the dark Romantics, individuals cannot change for better in their lives, while the light ones believe the opposite. They emphasize that people cannot stop the changes but they should not forget the past. The dark Romantics shed light on what is wrong with humanity, their stories contain gothic fiction, scary, terror, gloomy and lifeless scenes, mostly with unhappy endings. They focus on the personal weakness in the character which ultimately lead to tragedy. Unlike the light Romantics who solve their problems by searching for values in the past (Dincer 220).

Romanticism has left its trace in literature in addition to art, philosophy and politics; it came as a breath and an escape from official and traditional formation to a wide world that drives man's mind to imagination and freedom of spiritual thinking. The most important theme in Romantic literature is the magnification of nature. This latter is seen in the short story "Rip Van Winkle" in which Washington Irving strongly describes nature (Gale 2000). Irving is one of the literary figures who is deeply affected "by the early stages Romanticism in America" (Dincer 220) and that appeared clearly through his reporting of "Nature's beauty" (Dincer 220). He believes that nature is originally nice. With all these qualities, his works became a representative of light Romanticism (Dincer 220). The mentioned author is also famous for the use of symbolism.

1.3. Symbolism in Literature

Symbolism is a literary technique. It is considered as the most common aesthetic method used among the American writers. This literary device strongly helps the writer to express his ideas, and creates a strong impact in the reader's mind. Thus, the symbol has an effective function more than any direct word. The usage of symbols gives the passage deep meaning; it makes the reader looks between the lines for the hidden message, and calls inner conversations within the reader's mind. Symbols' meanings differ from one text to another according the context (Literary Devices Editors 2014).

Literature is a wide world where the writer can express his thoughts and feelings through several ways. Instead of conveying his ideas directly, sometimes he creates and transfers his art through symbols. "This is the reason why art, right from its beginning in various countries even in pre-historic times, has always been couched symbolism, though its symbolic meaning may not have been intelligible" (Sharma 01). Symbolism in novels has been noticed late in comparison with poetry and drama. The word symbol has different significances and reasons, "The symbol is a sign of something else in two different senses, literal and suggestive" (Sharma 02). The literal meaning can be the sign of something which it indicates and the accurate representation of the target. While in the suggestive meaning, the symbol can be the sign of something different from the idea or the object that is mentioned, the meaning goes to another level, to the inner sight of human being or the ambiguity of life (Sharma 02).

1.3.1. Definition of Symbolism

The root of the word 'symbol' came from the Greek word 'sumbolon' which means: sign, or mark regarding the Greek verb 'sumbolein' (Balla 19). A symbol is the real representation of an abstract reality. There are plenty of symbols in the world. For example a pair of scales (concrete representation) is the symbol of justice (abstract reality), a dove (concrete) is the symbol of peace (abstract), a flower (concrete) in general, and a rose in particular is a symbol of beauty or love (abstract), a lion (concrete) symbolizes power, majesty, or courage (abstract), a bird and its wings (concrete) is a symbol of spirituality or the transcendence of the soul over matter (abstract), a crown or a scepter (concrete) is the symbol of kingship or power (abstract), a snake biting its tail inside a circle (concrete) symbolizes a vision posting that life is nothing but an endless succession of circles, eternal repetition of the same comic phenomena (abstract) (Balla 20).

The symbolist movement was born in the nineteenth century. Zenaida Vengerova is a literary critic who studied and recorded the development of the western European symbolism as it appeared; she states that "Symbolism is everything that reflects the essential as a sign of the unincarnated. The symbolist is the one who does not merge with the existing moment, is not immersed in it, but perceives it as a search for the purpose of existence, as a path" (quoted by Neginsky 01).

Symbolism is undivided part from literature, thus, if there is no symbolism, there can be no literature, no language, no words themselves. Imagination is the key word that describes the symbolist movement (Neginsky 02). Because of imagination we can escape from an unsatisfactory environment to a more attractive world. The Saint-Simonists compare the function of imagination with artists, scientists and industrialists. They assert that the artist means a man with imagination including the painter, the musician and the poet (Neginsky 02). Symbolism flourished in Western and Eastern Europe, in England, France, Spain, and even Turkey.

The symbolist movement began in the middle of the nineteenth century. At first, symbolist aesthetic enlarged in France and England. French symbolic aesthetic was the first one that affected other countries. Symbolist art and literature came in opposition to the materialistic society and contested rationalist and positivist doctrines (Neginsky 02).

There is more than one sort of symbolism, thus, the smallest investigation of different periods of civilization exposes great differences in their attitude toward symbolism. For instance, during the medieval period in Europe, symbolism appeared to dominate men's imagination. "Architecture was symbolical, ceremonial was symbolical, and heraldry was symbolical" (Whitehead 01). As a reaction, man

tried to get rid of symbols as "fond things, vainly invented" (Whitehead 01), and focused on their direct concern of the ultimate facts.

There is another type of symbolism which is artificial symbolism that cannot be avoided. Language, written or spoken, is symbolic. The sound of the word and its shape on the paper is different. The word is a symbol, and its meaning is formed by the idea, the image and the feeling that affect the mind of the word's perceiver. There is another kind of language, solely written language, which includes the mathematical symbols of the science of algebra (Whitehead 02).

The difficulty in conveying the meaning of the word 'givenness' from its abstractness or generality, it symbolizes the total present experience, there are two important things that should be noted: the actual presence in the experience is necessary to 'givenness', and that the organism and the scenes are themselves oftenbut not always- given. Thus if someone is thinking about an absent object, the thinking and some substitutes for the thing are given, but the object as such is not provided (Morris 06).

Symbolism in literature interferes with religion and iconography. It is often embedded in the language itself and metaphors. Ernest Jones said that "if the word 'symbolism' is taken in its broad sense the subject is seen to comprise almost the whole devolvement of civilization" (quoted by Balakian 17). It is better to center on the sense of symbolism as a literary trend or movement at a given time in history.

Symbolism opposed society's ideas of science, aspiring to return to art and the priority of spirituals over the materials. Its believers addressed not scientific logic but intuition, subconscious and imagination. In literature, the mainstream that goes in the opposite of symbolism is realism. In the routine of life, symbolism goes up against mysticism. Looking for the implicit meaning of any image or event, symbolism sheds light on the mysterious world that we are living in, it makes the reader seeks to explore the secret reality behind its ambiguity (Brodskia 28). Symbolists did not mean literally the images coming to the artist in a dream, sung by them, both in literature and in painting. The dream was a demonstration and even a symbol of their exceptional imagination, capable of transcending reality. (quoted by Brodskia 29).

Generally, the artists sub consciousness' desires and ideas are transformed into dreams to be considered as symbols of their intuitions.

The symbolist fictional world is built on elements such as descriptions, characters, dialogue between them, actions and the narrator's or character's reflection. These elements are rarely to be understood on the direct referential level of their representation. The symbolist world is also built on gaps and spaces that the reader is supposed to full fill them with his own experience of the real world (quoted by Neginsky 171).

The literary critic Rosina Neginsky tries to expose the importance of events, portraying, persons and conversation between them, in the construction of fictional symbolism. These aspects cannot be understood from the first glance, but the reader should dig inside the words to discover their hidden real meaning. This latter may differ from one reader to another, each one according to his background knowledge, education and experience (Neginsky 171).

Regarding symbolism, there is a story about an emperor who gives an order to a local boatswain that he should come to his castle and answer three questions. Otherwise the king will kill him. The emperor's questions and the boatswain's answers should take the shape of signs or symbols. The boatswain felt scared from coming, so, a courageous chicken trader decided to go instead of him. When the merchant comes to the emperor's yard, the king raises up one of his fingers, the man raises up two fingers. The emperor takes out an egg; the man takes out a piece of cheese. The emperor throws a handful of wheat on the floor, the man picks up the granules one by one. At the end, the emperor stated that he is pleased. Later on, the boatswain wanted to know what happened; the dealer said that the emperor indicated to him with one finger, meaning to take out one of his eyes, so the trader pointed out with two fingers to say that he would take out both of his eyes, the emperor gave him some food but the chicken trader exemplified that he has food. The emperor threw some wheat on the floor, and the chicken trader considered wasting it as a mistake, so he picked them up. However, when the king has been asked by his servants about the meaning of the interchange, he said that he showed him one finger to tell him that he is the only ruler, the trader showed him two fingers symbolizing that there are two rulers, one is God in the paradise, and the other is the emperor on earth. The emperor showed him an egg to tell him whether it came from white or brown chicken; the trader showed him a piece of cheese to tell him whether this cheese came from white or black goat. Then, the king told him symbolically that the Jews have been scattered on earth, the trader replied him that the messiah will gather them again. This story may say that even though the symbols are the same, but they have been perceived differently by two different men, each one decodes the symbols according to his background thinking (O'Neill 09).

In the mid of the nineteenth century, the American Romantic writers like Emerson, Edgar Allen Poe tended to face their problems through using symbolic reality in their literary works. Feidelson's work of "The Symbolic Imagination" threats aesthetic aspects of modern symbolism. The clash between rational and irrational thinking was the main feature of Romantic literature as it is the case with Poe's literary pieces. Mr. Feidelson centered on the idea that the aim of Poe's works is not horror, but the anti-rationality (Fiscalini 85).

1.3.2. Some Literary Works of Symbolism

Symbolism has been noticed in many literary works in general and American Romantic literature in particular.

Herman Melville is considered as one of the most prominent American novelists in the Romantic period. *Moby Dick*, or in other words, *The Whale* is Melville's master work in 1851 that contributed in enriching the world's literary wealth. The writer employs symbolic techniques that make the novel more attractive with literary worth (Hao 14).

Symbolism is a method used in literature. The writer employs things to represent or to indicate something else in the literary work. *Moby Dick* is a novel written by Herman Melville who exposes the most common symbols in American literature. Even though the symbols are well known, they are not easy to be understood. At the beginning of the novel, the father Mapple's pulpit in the whaler's temple stands for ministry. Anything related to the temple reminds the tourist with survival or death at the sea. The father Mapple is the head of the boat and his team. The temple is pictured like a ship fighting the hard weather, and an angel who represents hope. The shipmates' crow are always fighting storms, whether accurately in the ship, or metaphorically in their daily life, so, they need the hope and solace of God, as it is indicated by the shape of an angel (Baldwin 2000).

Queequeg's coffin can have many interpretations. It symbolizes death and raring to the mother land. "The coffin is a symbol of hope and even rebirth when it springs from the vortex of the sunken Pequod to provide Ishmael with a means of staying afloat until Rachel rescues him" (Baldwin 2000).

Moby Dick represents a whale and nature that is attacked and destroyed by man. It symbolizes the captain's craziness and noticeable changing in the ship's right work (Baldwin 2000). Literary critics see *Moby Dick* as one of the important literary pieces that give an accurate image of America in nineteenth century. The story reflects several stances toward life. "The dramatic description of the hazards of whaling makes the book a very exciting sea narrative and builds a literary monument to an era of whaling industry in the nineteenth century" (Hao 17). The novel exposes the struggle between two major characters as well as the struggle is between good and evil. Symbolism has been also noticed in Edgar Allen Poe's tales. There are plenty of symbols in his story "The Black Cat", but the most prominent symbol is the title 'The Black Cat'. As it is known and familiar for many communities is that the black cat is always associated with evil, bad luck and misfortune, thus, if someone comes across a black cat, he / she expects to face a disaster and will pass the whole day badly. From the first glance of the title, the reader can grasp the general look of the story. The element 'cat' took the lion's share in the novel. However, the other sides of the tale cannot be neglected such as the murdered woman, the unhappy home, and the issue of drinking. All these mentioned elements are associated deeply with the cat (Djaafour 18).

Pluto is the name of one of the narrator's cats. Poe rarely names characters in his stories, but when he takes up to give names, he is aware of the value of their use. The term 'Pluto' is rooted from Greek Mythology which means "euphemism for Hades" who represents the lord of dead people and hell who was known upon several times in the Greek tales. Pluto is victimized by his holder when he lost one of his eyes because of his tipsy owner. The narrator aimed to blind his dearest pet to cover his lack instead of facing his weakness and changing his situation, because Pluto's eyes were like a mirror for the narrator, thus, he decided to get rid of his mirror.

In his once beloved and close friend he sees the disappointment and confusion for the change and violence that the cat experiences. The deed had not such an effect as he had wished for and by blinding Pluto he sets in motion the cause and effect that leads him to his own death, his self-destruction. (Djaafour 19)

In this story, symbols of awareness compromise the narrator's amputation of his cat Pluto, not only his cat is blind, but he himself is half blind, not only in the previous times but also in the present moment because he could not absorb the previous events. In the past, the narrator was half blinded by drink, faults and lack of desire to see positive things (Djaafour 20).

The cat can be embodied as a symbol for a child. As it appeared clearly in the novel, the man and his wife do not have any children. Here, there is an allusion for the notion of family and children. Animals and children seem like innocent creatures, they are under the care and the control of adults and owners. The writer Poe himself did not have children, so he substituted children with cats. He associated the other black cat's way of crying with the sobbing of a child (Djaafour 21).

The Scarlet Letter is mainly held as the first symbolic novel in America, it is written by Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1850. In this novel, the writer uses many symbols and the reader should grasp their meaning in order to understand them correctly.

First of all, the most prominent symbol in the whole novel is the title itself 'The Scarlet Letter'. The character Hester wears a notorious scarlet letter 'A' during her period of punishment, which is meant to be a symbol of shame as the initial of the word 'Adultery'. The letter's meaning changes as time passes; it becomes to mean new things to Hester Prynne as well as to the other people. It becomes a symbol of powerful 'Able'. The scarlet letter used to be a symbol of punishment for Hester, yet, it has not punished her. Throughout the whole book, the meaning of the scarlet letter differs from one person to another; thus, it means wealth to the butler, curiosity for Pearl, a sin for Dimmesdale, disobedience and vengeance for Chillingworth. The scaffold used to signify the scarlet letter, it was a place of dishonor for people who break or do not submit the law put by Puritans (Musick 2001).

The sun's shine is an important symbol in this book, and this has been seen when the sun shines always on Pearl, and not on Hester. There is a scene in which Hester, Pearl and Arthur were talking in the forest; they decided to go to England and stay there to have a stable life. Hester removed the scarlet letter to figure out that she is no longer linked with it. Through this action, Hawthorne shows that the sun shines on them as if he is saying that even nature is happy and satisfied with their decision (Musick 2001).

The forest is one of the main important symbols in this novel. For the puritans, the forest symbolizes darkness and evil because they see it as a place where sorceresses meet and practice their bad deeds, it is possible that the puritans were trying to keep people away from the forest as well as from the natural law; they wanted to keep them restricted only to the puritan law. This latter what Hawthorne was trying to go against, he attempted to expose the puritans in negative image (Musick 2001).

Pearl is a female character in this story; she is exposed as a vivid side of her mother Hester's scarlet letter. She came to the world as a result of a sexual guilt. However, Pearl's life was the reason behind her mother's survival, she supported her in hard moments, Pearl symbolizes unsolved secret (Spark Notes 10).

Washington Irving is one of the most shining stars that sparkled in American Romantic literature a long with Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville. These latter use symbolism to convey their messages in their literary works as Washington Irving did. This can be seen clearly in "Rip Van Winkle" and other stories of his own.

1.4. Washington Irving's Biography

Washington Irving is one of the significant pearls that shine in American literature during the Romantic Movement.

The Author and the editor Washington Irving was born on April 3, 1783 in New York City. He is the youngest of 11 children of a prosperous merchant family. He is the son of Scottish immigrant parents William Sr. and Sarah. His parents were great admirers of General Washington; they named their son after their hero of the American Revolution which has just ended at that time. He attended the first presidential inauguration of his namesake in 1789 (Biography.com Editors 2015). The Irving family was kind and generous people who helped and supported those who were less fortunate after the war. Washington was a playful and adventuresome young man; He was sneaking out to attend plays and frustrating his parents. Irving dreamed of travelling to far places and his dreams were stimulated by one of his favorite books *Robinson Crusoe* written by Daniel Defoe (Merriman 2007). He saw travelling as a life-long passion. Although he was not a keen student, he studied law and became a clerk in Josiah Ogden Hoffman's law office. The Hoffmans would become great friends to Irving (Merriman 2007).

In Washington's early age, he was influenced by the literary tastes of his older brothers William and Peter; he went into a law office as an attempt to avoid business which he used to hate. However, he worked in different law offices until 1804. During this time, he wrote articles for *The Morning Chronicle* and *The Corrector* (Grade Saver 2015).

1.4.1. Washington Irving as a Literary Man

Washington Irving is a famous American author who was highly acclaimed in Europe during his life time. Irving was a creative author of fiction. He wrote plenty of short stories, biographies, histories, and tales of his travels. The character of Rip Van Winkle is considered now as the image of American culture. Many of Irving's works have been adapted to films (Merriman 2007).

Washington Irving started to write essays for periodicals. He travelled to France and Italy in (1804–6). He wrote fanciful journals and letters, and then he returned to New York City to practice law by his own admittance. In 1806, he hardly passed the bar. Washington and his brother William Irving and James Kirke Paulding wrote the literary tastes of his older brothers William and Peter (Biography.com Editors 2015).

He wrote *The Salmagundi* papers (1807–8) that contain a collection of humorous essays and short pieces prodding fun at the life of New York City. Irving's second success was in 1809 with *A History of New York* written under the

name of "Dietrich Knickerbockers". It talked about the Dutch dynasty from the beginning until the end (Biography.com Editors 2015).

In 1815, he moved to England to work with his family in the branch of business affairs. In three years, the company has been broken. At the age of thirty five, he decided to earn his living by writing, thus he began to record his thoughts and descriptions, these pieces make up *The Sketch Book* under pseudo name of Geoffrey Crayon. *The Sketch Book* contains thirty parts: about English sketches, four general travel pieces, six literary essays, two description of the American Indian, and three short stories "Rip Van Winkle", the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow", and "The Specter Bridegroom". The book received a great attention and it was sold quickly. Irving became the first international literary celebrity. *The Sketch Book* emboldened Irving to devote his full time to writing; soon he published *Brace Bridge Hall* in 1822 which centers on a fictitious English clan that Irving had introduced in *The Sketch Book*. After 1824, Irving moved from fiction to write histories and biographies (Schurtz 2014).

The pen name of Dietrich Knickerbockers refers to a person from New York where the basketball team of the New York Knickerbockers (Knicks) has got its name from. *The Sketch Book* of Geoffrey Crayon introduces the modern short story form in the United States. It is the first work by an American author that gained abroad appreciation. Irving proved to the world that the American literature has interesting subjects and themes. "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" in *The Sketch Book* are models for the modern American short stories (Wallin 2009).

In 1822, Irving traveled to Germany and France. For several years, he lived in Spain and became a civil servant at the US embassy in Madrid. He was secretary of the US legation in London (1829–32), later, he returned to Spain as the US ambassador (1842–6). He spent most of his life at his estate, 'Sunnyside', near Tarrytown, turning out a succession of mainly historical and biographical works including a five-volume life of George Washington. Irving also advocated for writing as a legitimate career and argued for stronger laws to protect writers from copyright infringement. In 1999, the director Tim Burton released his film "Sleepy Hollow" which was based on Washington Irving's story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (Schurtz 2014).

Irving published the first volume of *Mahomet and His Successors* in 1849 as a contribution of studying Islam and its prophets. In the first volume, Irving focuses on the life of Mahomet .i.e. his land, his birth, his death, while the second volume discusses the early spread of the Islamic empire; it was published in 1850. Stanley T. Williams suggests that Irving started studying the life of Muhammad in 1826. Although he was working on the Life and Voyages of *Christopher Columbus*, Irving was also collecting information for other writings dealing with Spanish and Arabian history, including *Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*and and the life of Mahomet. In 1831, Irving published *The Legendary Life of Mahomet*. He shelved his study of Mahomet until his return to Spain, as the US ambassador, in 1842. Although this post kept him unexpectedly busy, as he indicates in his preface to *Mahomet*, he found time to return to his biography on the Prophet. For the next few years, he periodically would work *on Mahomet and His Successors* and the *Life of Washington* (Lacina 3).

1.4.2. Washington Irving's Private Life

Washington Irving was engaged to marry Matilda Hoffmann. Irving's blissful social life and literary success were shadowed by the death of his fiancée who died on April 26, 1809 at the age of 17 of tuberculosis. This accident made him floundered, hesitant between legal and writing career. Irving never became engaged or married anyone after that tragic love. In response to an inquiry about why he had never married, Irving wrote to Mrs. Forster, saying: "For years I could not talk on the subject of this hopeless regret; I could not even mention her name; but her image was continually before me, and I dreamt of her incessantly" (Lombardi 2015).

1.4.3. The Last Years from Washington Irving's Path

Washington Irving served four years as minister in Spain, and then he returned to the United States and retired permanently at age of sixty-three in Sunnyside where His brother Ebenezer and most of Ebenezer's family had resided since 1838. The Life of George Washington is the main literary project during the final twelve years of Washington Irving's life. At the end of this work, Irving was extremely nervous, fatigued and unable to carry on his creativity. This made Irving not the man that people really loved. He was good writer and biographer in "Goldsmith" and "Columbus". He was convinced that the extended efforts of writing the five-volume biography of Washington had broken his nerves. About one year before Irving's death, he became more nervous. Pierre Irving had helped him with various literary projects; he was extremely helpful to his uncle during the writing and publishing of The George Washington biography. Irving made Pierre his official biographer who recorded in his journal much of Irving's last days. For example Irving was nearly calm and good-natured person, but in his last year he became fearful and unsettled at night, often he was requesting his nephew or niece to sit with him and read to him late at night. For months he refrained from visiting New York City. Although he willingly received calls from family and close friends, he was unusually unwilling to see strangers, not trusting his disturbed state. He was not able even to pick up a pen because of his nervous state. Washington Irving spent the final years of his life at Sunnyside, his country home near Tarrytown, New York. He thought about his own participation in the "American (literary) Renaissance" that was the result of the Romantic Movement (Guggenheim 2015).

Washington Irving is considered as one of "the first notable fiction writers of the American Romantic Movement". *The sketch book* made him the first American author to attain an international reputation. In 1865, the Civil War was ended and different ways of thinking had emerged as a result of the war, and that appeared clearly in Irving's fiction short story "Rip Van Winkle" (Gieseler 03).

1.5. Conclusion

The aforementioned titles treat different aspects regarding the American Romanticism and its effects in the world of literature. Besides, it highlights the significance of symbolism as the most prominent literary device that is applied mainly to convey certain messages in an indirect way. A symbol can be embodied in an object, character or event that represents diversity of ideas, thoughts, and emotions. This method has been applied by many Romantic authors, particularly, by Washington Irving whose work "Rip Van Winkle" is to be analyzed in the following chapter. Chapter Two : The Study of Symbolism in « Rip Van Winkle »

Chapter Two: The Study of Symbolism in "Rip Van Winkle"

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2.1. Introduction

The short story "Rip van winkle" is considered as one of the German folk tales that Irving was interested in during his life. It is found among the papers of Diedrich Knickerbocker. Irving seeks to give the United States some traditions that the ancestors had. He borrowed the European plots and transformed them to the American setting. "Rip Van Winkle" treats the issue of the American Revolution's impact on society at that time. This tale belongs to the collection of *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent* and it is set in New York Catskill Mountains.

"Rip Van Winkle" is put over twenty years. It is divided into two halves; the first half occurred around 1770, while the second part took time after Rip's awakening in 1789. The initial events of the tale held place before the American Revolutionary war when the United States did not even exist because it was still a colony under England's reign. While, the second half of the story happened after the war was over and the United States has become a free country. This time coincided with the presidential elections that would result in the designation of George Washington as a president. During the twenty years of Rip Van Winkle's sleep, an important event happens which is the American revolutionary war. All these episodes have been portrayed in a professional way through the use of symbolism as a literary technique.

2.2. A General Analysis of "Rip Van Winkle"

This short story holds many aspects that build its events and provide the reader with a unique fictitious literary piece. The mentioned story is going to be analyzed in order to achieve the target meaning of the writer.

2.2.1 Plot Summary

Diedrich Knickerbocker is an old gentle man from New York; he gives a big attention to the histories and anecdotes narrated by the successors of the Dutch colonizers in New York at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He tells a story of a plain, kind man named Rip Van Winkle who dwells in a small town in the Catskill. Rip comes from a family which is known by its gallant and brave military men; however, Rip has nothing to do with these things. He always tries to evade from his duties toward his house and family, like while avoiding his nagging wife, preferring to talk to people in the inn, chasing squirrels and helping on farms of other people rather than his own.

Once, Rip could no more resist his wife's harassment, so, he decided to go to the forest taking with him his gun and dog. He starts following squirrels in the Catskill Mountain, then, when he feels tired, he takes a nap. Just as the sun is fading, Rip readies himself to go down the mountains, where he finds odd men playing ninepins (those men are the ghosts of Hendrick Hudson and the crew of the Half Moon). Rip has been ordered to render the pigmies so tempting drink; yet secretly Rip savors it, and then he drinks a large amount of it to finally fall asleep.

After twenty years, the protagonist wakes up, having in mind that he has slept only for a while, he was afraid from his wife's reaction once coming back home. But soon, he realizes that something bizarre has occurred, and many things have changed. He hardly knows the way back to his home. He finds unfamiliar faces of people and children, and no one could recognize him even his dog.

When Rip comes near his old house, he expects to hear his wife screaming, but she never does. Besides this, the house looks very old as if nobody has lived in it for a long time. After that, Rip goes to the inn with the hope of finding his old friends, but he finds it replaced with the Union Hotel. He introduces himself to the strangers at the hotel as a loyal citizen to the king; but he has met with anger. Now, he discovers that he has missed twenty years, and the American Revolution is over. His friends and neighbours Nicholas Vedder and Brom Ducher died. His son Rip Van Winkle Jr. has matured and looks just like his father. His daughter Judith married and got a child 'Rip Van Winkle III'. The citizens come to listen to the anecdote of the mountain from Rip's lips. Finally, Rip decides to live with his daughter and spend his time as he did before his departure; enjoying liberty, freedom, and calmness as his nagging wife disappeared.

2.2.2. Setting

The story starts five or six years before the American Revolution and finishes twenty years after. The events take place in a town in Eastern New York, by side the Hudson River and the Catskill Mountain. The river is named after the English Henry Hudson's discovering in 1609. The Catskill Mountains derives its name from *Kaaterskill*, "the Dutch word for a local stream, Wildcat Creek. The Catskills contain many other streams as well as lakes, waterfalls, and gorges" (Cummings 2006).

2.2.3. Characters of The Story

Several characters contribute to build the events of the story, each character holds a certain position through which makes the anecdote coherent and structured.

Diedrich Knickerbocker: He is the imaginary narrator of the story. He died just after producing this account. He is an old gentleman of New York. He is interested in the histories of the Dutch settlers in that state (Florman and Kestler 2016).

Rip Van Winkle: Rip Van Winkle is a character rooted from German fairy stories; he is still used as an allusion for anybody who passes most of his time in sleeping. Throughout this character, the writer tries to expose the reality of human's tendency to sleep during the hard periods of time. Rip Van Winkle is described as modest, good-tempered and kind person, who respects his neighbours. He is lovable among his neighbourhood's women who support him. Further, the children of the village love Rip because he is always ready to play with them. Rip is controlled by his wife because of his unwillingness to work, his hedgerow is always in wrack, his
court yard is full of weeds, and he has the worst garden among his neighbours (Cullina and Kissel 2009).

The only truthful friend for Rip is his dog Wolf. When the protagonist wakes up from his long sleep, he becomes astonished as the world around him has changed. He missed important events that mark the whole American society. Besides this, his physical appearance has changed, he became no longer as young as before; rather, he has now a white long beard, so, now he can enjoy his life as a story teller, amuses the children of the town with incredible tale of his own about the adventure that he has experienced in the mountains, the nine pins and the long slumber that lasted for twenty years (eNotes.com 1998).

Dame Rip Van Winkle: She is Rip's wife who has sharp tongue. She is always nagging at her husband for his laziness and irresponsibility toward his family and house. She never satisfies with his deeds. The events of the story show that she is the reason behind her husband's sadness especially that her harassment has been mentioned regularly. This wife shares no conversations with her husband who discovers that she died when he comes back after his long years of being asleep (Cullina and Kissel 2009).

Rip Van Winkle, Jr.: He is the son of Rip Van Winkle and Dame Van Winkle. He is shown by Washington Irving as a character who grows up to take his father's physical and mental features, in other words, he represents the extension of the existence of Rip's personality in the American society (Florman and Kestler 01-02).

Judith Gardenier: She is Rip Van Winkle's daughter and the mother of his grandson Rip Van Winkle III. When Rip comes back from the mountain he decides to pass the rest of his life with Judith (Florman and Kestler 03).

Rip Van Winkle III: He is the grandson of Rip, and the child son of Judith (Florman and Kestler 03).

Derrick Van Bummel: He takes the role of the schoolmaster; he is an educated man, who is always ready to participate in discussions about the past with the town people in the old inn. He becomes a great militia general during the revolutionary war and a member of the Congress after the war (Florman and Kestler 03).

Wolf: Is Rip's loyal dog and the only real faithful friend for Rip Van Winkle (Cummings 2006).

Man Carrying Keg up the Mountain: He is the spirit of Englishman Henry Hudson who explores the Hudson River (Cummings 2006).

Nicholas Vedder: He is the headmaster of the old inn who passes most of his time resting under a tree's shade. He is known with his special way of speaking while smoking his pipe. He dies during Rip van's long sleep (Florman and Kestler 03).

Hendrick Hudson or the Crew of the Half Moon: He is an explorer of the New York City in the seventeenth century. He is a sailor in the Hudson River (which takes his name now). He looses his life at the sea because of insurgents who kill him and his team. In this tale, their spirits still exist in the Catskills. They are the ounces who tempt Rip to the top of the mountain where they are playing ninepins, and give Rip the magical drink that leads him to sleep for twenty years (Florman and Kestler 03).

Peter Vanderdonk: He is considered as one of the ancient inhabitants in the village, he is the only one who could recognize Rip after his long absence. He narrates the story of Rip's disappearance in the mountains to the town's citizens. (Florman and Kestler 03).

Jonathan Doolittle: He is the holder of the Union Hotel who replaces Nicholas Vedder, the previous owner of the old inn (Florman and Kestler 03). **Brom Dutcher**: He is one of Rip's neighbours; He dies during the Revolutionary War (Florman and Kestler 03).

2.2.4. Symbolic Themes

This account cares several symbolic themes in which the researcher tackles some of them as the following:

2.2.4.1. Tyranny Verses Freedom

The character Rip Van Winkle suffers from different types of oppression such as the oppression of marriage, daily household tasks and the tyranny of the king George the third of Britain over America. The tale tackles the issue of the possible ways through which people can obtain their freedom in the presence of all these struggles. This story urges the reader to define the real meaning of freedom and the way it should be achieved to get rid from tyranny and oppression. Rip's long sleep is an effective means to walk away from the three major types of oppression: the injustice of government, tyranny of marriage, and community's tasks (Florman and Kestler 03).

Before Rip's nap, he had to be under the reign of the British king, the obedient husband and the responsible man of his family. The protagonist sleeps during the revolutionary war, but when he wakes up; he finds the United States free nation, so he becomes free from the king's authority and tyranny. His wife dies from breaking a blood vessel in a fit of passion at a New England Peddler, so Rip is finally free from marriage's tyranny. Rip is now an old man, so he is no longer can be asked to do any hard job. Through this story, Irving is trying to tell the reader that he should face the obstacles with firmness and inspiration. In addition, "Rip Van Winkle" is an example of freedom; it shows that inner freedom can exist regardless the outside conditions (Florman and Kestler 03).

2.2.4.2. Active Verses Passive Resistance

Rip gives value to freedom, but he never fights to obtain it. He is a good example of passive resistance. He meets his wife's hard temper with careless i.e. shaking his head and looking at the sky. These signs neither show refuse nor agreement. When Dame Winkle was still alive, Rip used to get rid of her by neglecting her. The reader never notices a verbal clash between Rip and his wife. Rip's passivity in getting freedom from King George the third is clear, thus, he becomes an independent citizen of the United States by sleeping peacefully during the revolution war. Rip's passivity comes in contrast with other types of active resistance as it is performed by other characters; for example, one of Rip's friends dies in the war, another becomes a member in the congress, all these men witnessed the birth of the United States, even the Hendrick Hudson portrays active resistance when he smites Rip on the Catskill. In a way, Irving is seeking to say that passivity is effective, especially when he mentions the protagonist as a passive character. Thus Rip is happy, kind and generous without making efforts (Florman and Kestler 04).

2.2.4.3. Labor Verses Productivity

The tale "Rip Van Winkle" discriminates between profitable work and unprofitable one. Rip is a clear example of someone who works without gaining benefits. Thus, he is satisfied with helping in farms that are not his own while his garden is the worst one among his neighbours. He chases squirrels and fish, even though he is busy but he is not productive. Derrick Bummel, the head of the school is always having serious discussion with news papers about the past in the old inn, and his work in the congress makes him a productive laborer. Mostly, Washington Irving uses the character Rip to show that the work's goals such as productivity and development can be substituted by having fun and enjoyment rather than pressure and anxiety (Florman and Kestler 04-05).

2.2.4.4. Change Verses Stasis

In "Rip Van Winkle", there is a vivid contrast between change and stability as well as between the past and the present. After Rip's awakening, he realizes that everything has changed. The village became large and more populated, his wife died, he became a grandfather, and the colonized colony became free United States; however, he decides to carry on his life as he did before. Rip passed the revolutionary war without participating in it; the huge transformation in the whole nation did not change a single thing in Rip's character or mentality (Cummings 2006).

People of the village see Rip as a man who belongs to the past times; they approach him to listen to his tales in the Union Hotel. Rip plays the role of the connection and intermediate between the past, the revolutionary war and future. Eventually, Rip Van Jr. has grown up to be a copy of his father mentally and physically. Chiefly, this fictitious plot serves as an allusion showing that Rip's character will live through his son and his grandson Rip Van the third; it also shows that certain issues of the American society will remain the same (Florman and Kestler 05).

2.2.4.5. Change with Continuity and Preservation of Tradition

After Rip's slumber, he comes back to the town; but he could not identify the people he used to know; not only their physical appearances have changed, but also their clothes style and the buildings, everything is unusual. The revolutionary war is over and America has gained its independence from England, it became a free country. However, when Rip looks beyond the village, he sees that the Hudson River and the Catskill Mountains are still exactly the same as they were before the war. At this level in the story, the main theme begins to emerge, thus, despite the pain, fundamental changes are sometimes needed to move society forward; yet, such changes must not eliminate old ways and traditions. New buildings are made on the bases of the old ones; there must be continuity. After that, the protagonist

sees his son Rip II who has grown up and became just like his father. The former also meets his daughter who became an adult woman holding the infant Rip Van III in her hands. Eventually, Rip notices the various changes that occurred to the village, but there are still some natural links with the past. New generations come along and bring many changes, but the old values and traditions such as family bounds are still living and flourishing (Cummings 2006).

2.3. The Analysis of Symbols of "Rip Van Winkle"

The author Washington Irving incorporates many symbols in "Rip Van Winkle" to convey a set of hidden messages.

2.3.1. Rip Van Winkle

Rip van winkle represents both of the story's title and the protagonist name. Simultaneously, it shows the connection between the main character and America. Irving is telling the reader about a modest American man who goes into a long sleep that lasts twenty years, during this period, The American Revolutionary War occurrs. Rip wakes up two years after the war. Superficially, these events seem like an ancient fiction story and a figment of imagination; however, if the reader digs deeper inside the story, he/she might find the truth lying between the lines. Mainly, Irving employs the character Rip to symbolize America's immaturity and struggles (Burton2014).

Rip Van Winkle is described as an unripe, irresponsible and childish person, "He [Rip] assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians." (Irving 09). Rip entertains and he has fun with the children of the village. In addition, he is lazy at the level that he never works nor for himself neither for the benefit of his family "The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor" (Irving 09). Irving exposes through the personality of Rip's aversion to work, a symbol of the United States. Thus, most of the Americans at that time, if not all, were reluctant to work, thinking that they are Americans who should have a happy-go-lucky life without making efforts (Burton2014).

Washington Irving points out to another fact which is Rip's carelessness and irresponsibility in matters of taking care of his house especially the garden that "was the worst-conditioned farm in the neighborhood" (Irving 10). For Irving, this represents the American society's condition as the country devotes its efforts to handle foreign affairs while it neglects her own problems ,in this context, Burton argues that "Rip's and America's case immaturity proved to have serious consequences" (Burton 2014).

Rip devotes all his time to think about all the possible ways to entertain himself. He ignores any other serious activities. Additionally, he is loved by his neighbours' wives, mainly he is "... a great favorite among all the good wives of the village ... the children would shout with joy whenever he approached ... not a dog would bark at him" (Irving 08). After Rip's long sleep, he comes back to his city to discover that everything has changed, but he shows no interest about the changes; Rip does not agree nor oppose the new situation. He finds a president and new government instead of the king George. Through these imaginative events, Irving wants to say that most of the Americans do not care about who is rolling the country as long as they are living comfortable life (Burton2014).

2.3.2. Dame Van Winkle

The clash between Rip and his wife Dame winkle symbolizes the struggle between England and America. Dame winkle is constantly nagging at her husband to the point of pushing him to flee to the mountains. For these reasons, Rip does all what he can to be away from his wife's tongue because:

> Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the

kind . . . he shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. (Irving 10)

Noteworthy, the relation between Rip and his wife can be seen a symbol of Britain's taxes on its colonies which led to people's tiredness. When Rip wakes up, he realizes that his wife died, and so, now he can enjoy a life of liberty without his wife's irritating. Similarly, America gained its independence from England after a long war that was symbolized by Rip's long sleep. Rip and his wife are an accurate symbol that represents exactly the American-British relationship. Moreover, each event in Irving's story is a serious attempt to reflect the real situation of America and its journey of change from a colony into an independent nation throughout a set of literary symbols as it is mentioned by Burton Loren that:

> Rip van Winkle symbolizes the early times after the American Revolution. Rip van Winkle reflects America's struggles in immaturity, selfishness, and her relationship with England. Although at first glance Washington seems to have just written another tale about a sleepy, irresponsible man, it goes much deeper than that. Rip - meet America. America, meet Rip. (Burton 2014).

By diving deeply into "Rip Van Winkle", one may find many aspects of symbolism related to the American Revolution. Dame Van Winkle symbolizes England since she is always trying to manage and to survey Rip's deeds, she constantly complains about her husband's laziness and non-useful habits. Dame Rip Van and Rip's children are in bad situation, they are mostly dirty and wild. These latter represent the poor and the unhealthy conditions of the Americans before independence. Rip's character shows how other countries see the Americans, as they are exposed as unaware and ignorant people (Cain 2012).

One day, Rip could no more resist his wife's sharp tongue, thus, he takes his dog and his gun and escapes to the forest. Symbolically, this event represents the beginning of the American Revolution. When Rip arrives to the woods, he meets a group of pigmies who offer him an unknown drink that causes him to sleep for twenty years. Then, the protagonist wakes up surprised after discovering that the short nap actually lasted for twenty years through noticing his white long beard and the changes that happened in the village, including his wife's death, consequently, Rip is comfortable and glade because now he could live peacefully symbolizing the independent America (Cain 2012).

2.3.3. The Inn

It is place where people of the town pass their joyful times. It represents the center of the "unproductive activity" (Florman and Kestler 05) and symbolizes peace and relax of the past times. The master of the inn Nicholas Vedder passes most of his time sitting under a tree's shade; he seeks calmness and natural beauty rather than productivity and benefits. In addition, the head master of the school Derrick Van spends his time in discussing historical events with other people in the inn where the picture of King George III decorated the wall. The inn also represents Rip's refuge from his wife's demands. In this case, the inn symbolizes the inactive resistance; furthermore, the inn "becomes symbolic and significant especially in its oppositional relationship to the establishment that replaces it, the union hotel. (Florman and Kestler 05).

2.3.4. The Union Hotel

The Union Hotel comes as a contrary to the ancient inn that has been transformed to be a place for political and industrial activities. It symbolizes the energy and patriotism of the new nation while the tree in the hotel has changed from a place of resting to the one of a flag pole with flying stars that represents the union. All these changes portray the American interest that has shifted from love of nature to industrialization and nationalism. More than that, General Washington takes the place of George the III in the picture of the wall standing for the independence of America from Britain (Florman and Kestler 05).

2.3.5. The Flagon of Drink

The drink symbolizes a tool through which Rip and other people like him escape their daily problems especially their nagging wives. The drink also offers an opportunity for those people to escape from responsibilities, tasks, hard works and the past itself (Florman and Kestler 05). "By degrees Rip's awe ...to taste the beverage...He was naturally a thirsty soul... he reiterated his visits to the flagon ...his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep" (Irving 16). This passage shows that Rip starts to gulp the drink gradually with successive doses because of his thirst; thus, in another symbolic way Irving hires those lines to stand for the American eagerness and thirst for freedom.

2.4. Symbolic American Identity in "Rip Van Winkle"

"Rip Van Winkle" contains many symbolic features of the European attitude toward the new American community; furthermore, the story symbolizes the American-British relationship before and after the revolutionary war. The character Rip portrays the American society as it was seen by the mother land England at that time. In the other hand, Dame Van Winkle portrays England. People of the village represent the American society as a whole and how it changed after the realization of freedom. Rip is a kind neighbor, hen-pecked husband but all the village's women love him because he is always ready to help anyone except serving the needs of his house. Rip's family was relapsing while other people were obtaining benefits from his revolt against the authority. The needs of his family express the Crown's missing respect while America was gaining the loyalty of its own citizens. Rip's laziness can symbolize the British view that America was not doing her role as a servant of the Crown. Representing the Crown, Dame Winkle was always complaining Rip's escape from her tirades by going to the inn and staying there with his friends. However, this method was not a successful one because his wife always finds him. This is an exact parallel to the American political situation under the control of the mother England which was very tyrannical in its policies and not willing to grant America its freedom. The Americans were always attempting to get rid of the Crown's oppression, just as Rip would do his best to escape from his bossy wife (Freeman 2008).

After the war, Rip has to learn about the revolution's stories that he has missed during his slumber. Even though Rip's home is America, but he cannot be identified as an American citizen because he has not experienced the war and the most important events that made those people free American citizens. The former cannot be considered as a true American citizen until he learns all the events and the hard path that the Americans had passed through to obtain their independence. (Klein 2012).

Many people start telling Rip a verity of tales about all the events that occurred during his absence. This shows how much the history of the United States is important for other people as well as for Rip who himself takes the role of telling the villagers the country's past history. This creates a thread that links the American past and future, permitting even the people who were not there to know their country's past identity (Klein 2012).

Irving wants to show that in order to be a real American citizen one must know the whole history of the nation. Interchangeably, Rip provides the villagers with a historical account about his experience as a citizen of the dependent America while the villagers pay him back through narrating what happened while he was sleeping. In fact, both of them help each other to build their purely American identity (Klein 2012).

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter is devoted to deeply examine the events that built the plot of the story "Rip Van Winkle". It undertakes the time when and the place where the scenes occurred, it also grants an analysis of the major characters who contributed to the construction of the story's events. Furthermore it extracts the major symbolic themes that Irving tries to transmit through a fictitious tale. The main focus of this chapter is to dive into the target story in order to study and extract Irving's various applications of symbolism as a literary technique for the purpose of reflecting the American society before and after the war of revolution.

General conclusion

The British Empire had many colonies in different corners around the world. In the 17th century, America's earth gathered important Britain's colonies. The American society as its analogues colonized places suffered uncountable troubles because Britain was passing a series of laws raising taxes and restricting trade which made the American people's life difficult. Some Americans could no more accept this situation and began to fight for their independence which gave birth to the American revolutionary war (1775-1783). These events attracted several Romantic writers who were interested in criticizing that period's social problems throughout using imagination and symbolism. Amongst those writers, Washington Irving is considered as one of the most famous American literary figures, who exposed the conditions before and after the revolutionary war.

In "Rip Van Winkle", Irving attempts to portray the struggle between America and Britain, the bad situation, the tyranny that the Americans suffered from before independence and the changes occurred after the war through narrating sequent fiction events happened to fictitious characters and resembling between the real history and the tale by making common feelings, actions, and results.

In this work, the researcher tried to dive deeper inside this fictitious tale to examine it from different perspectives, thus, the Romantic period to which the story belongs has been explained. The writers during that period focused on imagination, the use of symbols and the high value to nature and intuition. All these elements have been seen throughout "Rip Van Winkle". Symbolism in a way or in another may convey the message strongly and effectively more than any direct expression; its impact on the reader's mind makes him more aware of the idea and the message that the writer wants to convey. In addition, symbolism gives an aesthetic scene to the literary work.

"Rip Van Winkle" is full of symbols; noteworthy, each concrete object in the story signifies something related to the American history. The contention between the protagonist 'Rip' and the antagonist 'Dame Rip' symbolizes the relation between America and Britain at that period. The circumstances that the protagonist witnessed before his long sleep represent the Americans' situation before the revolutionary war, furthermore, the changes that Rip notices after his awakening represent the Americans' state after the revolution and gaining independence.

The aim of the research in this work is to answer the problematic question: to what extent did Washington Irving succeed in conveying his hidden message to the reader in "Rip Van Winkle" using symbols? To answer this question, the different components of the story were analyzed and each one of them is linked with the similar action or function in the American history before and after the American Revolutionary War.

Noticeably, the interpretation of the symbols in the short story makes a new sense of the story and enhances comprehension. Irving as an American citizen survived in his real life many troubles in his society. He could transform his background experience into fiction. He succeeded to share what really happened to him with the reader. "Rip Van Winkle" is a wonderful masterpiece which gathered between an aesthetic literary work and an important American history.

Finally, because not every single detail has been treated, the door is opened for more work on this topic. Future research will be extremely useful to discover other symbols that have not been tackled in this work.

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