2) This project is a preliminary step toward a monograph-length critical study of land attachment in America’s early-national period that will treat six writers: Charles Brockden Brown, Hugh Henry Brackenridge, Catherine Maria Sedgwick, Susan Fenimore Cooper, Headley, and Thoreau.

Objectives:

1) Scholarly article on Headley (Fall 2012)
   a. Using the combined fields of attachment theory and embodied cognitive science as my theoretical foundation, I propose to ascertain the importance Headley placed on the development of secure affectional attachment bonds with the powerful, nurturing, and protective forces of the natural environment.
   b. Given Headley’s importance during the nineteenth century, I propose to establish the conditions for a revival of interest in his nature writings and provide an explanation for why he, unlike New England nature writers of the same period, has been largely erased from the American literary canon.

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Overview:
After an “attack on the brain” and a stern reproach from his “able physician” in 1844, Joel Tyler Headley felt compelled to escape “the din and struggle of [New York City’s] Broadway and Wall Street” and “seek mental repose and physical strength in the woods” of the Adirondacks. The two years he spent traversing through the northern mountains of New York State are recounted in letters that Headley eventually published in Adirondack; or, Life in the Woods (1849).

His observations explore “those wild mountains and surpassingly beautiful lakes” of the still “pathless and unknown wilderness of central New York” in order to make the Adirondacks better known to Americans.

Written in the tradition of literary naturalism inaugurated by Ralph Waldo Emerson in Nature (1836), Headley’s Adirondack anticipates the writings of other nineteenth-century American naturalists, especially of Henry David Thoreau’s Walden; or Life in the Woods (1854) and Susan Fenimore Cooper’s Rural Hours (1850).

Headley thus represents one of the earliest nineteenth-century American writers who endeavored to explain the American deification of green retreat from urban complexities that was itself an elevated form of a fundamental model manifested in many global cultures.

Theoretical Foundation
My theoretical foundation for this project will employ John Bowlby’s Attachment Theory, which developed from the combined fields of ethology, neurophysiology, psychoanalysis, developmental biology, and cognitive psychology. Bowlby’s theory conceptualizes the proclivity humans have to create deep-rooted affectional bonds with primary attachment figures and since its inception has expanded its scope to include the variety of attachments humans have to people, substances, ideas, and places.

Most recently, Attachment Theory has been employed in the field of embodied cognitive science, aiding researchers in understanding those attachment issues concerned with the human body and how the body’s physical properties influence its ability to think, reason, and remember.

Research Agenda
• Paul Schaefer House / Adirondack Research Library
• University of Virginia’s Clifton Waller Barrett Library
• Connecticut Historical Society
• Library of Congress
• Adirondack Museum
• Summer 2012, hiking throughout the Adirondacks, retracing Headley’s steps

Quotes from Adirondack…
According to Headley, the very air of the Adirondack’s wilderness is “composed of different ingredients than that of the outer world, filling the cells of the lungs with a new substance, and sending a different arterial blood coursing through the system.”

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Wilderness in solitude, says Headley in a poem he included in Adirondack, allows “a still small voice… to come through the wild / (Like a father consoling a fretful child), / . . . Saying MAN IS DISTANT BUT GOD IS NEAR.”

Upcoming Conference
Papers on Headley
• C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Biennial Conference, 12-15 April 2012, University of California, Berkeley
• Society for Philosophy and Psychology Conference, 20-24 June 2012, University of Colorado, Boulder

William James Stillman (Union 1848). The Philosophers’ Camp in the Adirondacks, 1858. Oil on canvas.