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### Reflection Essay on the Perceptions of Florida

The mythic status of Florida makes it a viable subject as far as the tales of cities in the Federal Republic of America are concerned. Unequaled mystique is associated to its history that only very few cities in the country have been able to display. Due to the claims of it being a hologram of paradise, it might as well be considered a rarity. It is a place where current fantasies are used as the medium for the re-invention of very old memories of Eden. Therefore, as much as it is a state of being in reality, it can be perceived as a state of mind. John Muir wrote in one of his journal on the time when he arrived in Fernandina shortly after the civil war that he was in the hot gardens of the sun, at the meeting point of the pine and the palm. He speaks of unusual plants, unusual birds, strange gentle winds, and all the physical and spiritual things having influences that he had never experienced before. Florida is truly a kind of a paradise and a haven not just because of the imagery that has been drawn by many a writer about it but because that is reality.

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Even with the coming of industrialization and the continuous commercial developments, Florida still maintains the beauty of the natural resources it was endowed with by nature. Florida is endowed with a paradise coast that incorporates the Marcos Island, Naples, and the Gulf Coast section of the Everglades, which have been a great attraction for both the locals and the many visitors that come for a variety of vacation options throughout the year. Naples is an alluring resort city located on the coast that offers the best of luxury, shopping malls, fresh local dishes,

flourishing arts and cultural scenery, just to mention a few. The Marco Island offers a higher relaxation than the Naples. Encompassed by the pristine mangrove estuaries on one side and the Gulf of Mexico on the other it is the largest of the several thousands of islands. It offers white sandy beaches, a diversity of water sports with paddling, boating, and offshore and hinterland fishing. The world has go no other Everglades. As they have always been, they still have the uniqueness and remoteness that has not been known anywhere else on earth. They cannot be equaled to anything else, from the wideness of their radiant openness, their wideness, their mighty racing winds'sweetness and saltiness, coverd by the fascinating blue expanse of space. Their simplicity, diversity and harmonious relationship of the forms of life therein is unique too.

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The Everglades National Park is situated to the south of the Marco Island and the Naples. It is North America's remaining sub-tropical conservancy, and it is a part of the biggest wetland and also is among US's 21 World Heritage Sites. One of the park's main entry points called the Gulf Coast Vision Center is placed in one of Florida's old and freaky little towns that is at the edge of the wilderness, Everglades City. The splendorous Ten Thousand Islands and the park's Wilderness Waterway points are accessed from this town. "Oh, it's pretty and blue but not at all to be trusted." (Williams). The Everglades' Gulf Coast has a huge variety of fauna that ranges from the crocodiles and alligators, sea turtles, Bottlenose dolphins, manatees and a wide range of wading birds and birds of prey. This region is also endowed with the massive Big Cypress National Preserve that lies just outside the Everglade city, which is a sporting and recreational arena. All these places are blended together to offer the most amazing recreational and relaxation purpose that can only be found in a haven.

One thing is for sure, no one is able to go out of Florida without being affected in one way or another by the profound emotional context of the Everglade and the Keys' extreme beauty. Key West is yet another destination in South Florida. . Despite the fact that it neighbors the Everglades, it is a complete contrast if it in all ways. It is a totally new world formed by a series of emerald green isles with a series of fairly slender and somehow unnerving bridges linking them. "Toward the town, tell why the glassy lights, The lights in the fishing boats at anchor there, As the night descended, tilting in the air, Mastered the night and portioned out the sea" (Stevens). It is also richly endowed with natural coral reefs that make that place wild, and it offers expansive waters for diving expeditions. Because of the very distinctive variation between the Everglades and Keys' landscapes, it is wise for one to approach them with quite varied attitudes. Keys needs an open, radiant spirit, in search for merry in the sun. It is an urban village that offers numerous urban facilities for relaxation and fun.

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The Everglades, needs a bit of more composure, with expectations of having a one on one experience with nature. It is a place that can be equated to a classroom due to the much learning that can be done there from observing life at its basic level. There is plenty wildlife and the landscape is also attractive and conducive for outside activities like hiking and climbing. Over time the growing of the population due to the influx of more people into Florida has negatively affected these two regions. Keys has been bombarded with commercial developments out of the ever-growing tourism industry while the Everglades has been troubled by the numerous political struggles over the use of land and water. However, these challenges have not affected the fascination and chances for expeditions and recreation that Keys and Everglades have always

offered. With their natural endowment combined with the well-blended development, they still stand out as feature of a kind of paradise.

The Sunny Isles Beach, which was formerly the Miami Beach, stands out as one of the most spectacular and sophisticated beaches in America. “Havana vanities come to dust in Miami. On the August night in 1933 when General Gerardo Machado, then president of Cuba, flew out of Havana into exile, he took with him five revolvers, seven bags of gold, and five friends, still in their pajamas.” The early inhabitants of Florida came from diverse origins but they were all optimistic about this feature that was at first smaller than a sandbar. It is situated transversely to the Biscayne Bay and the Intracoastal Waterway. After an immigrant, Harvey Graves had enjoyed several boat rides at the sea and seen the beauty of this region in 1918, he decided to buy 1900 acres of bays, river face, canals, and town sites in that region. Development began on this area with the building of bridges and several islands. “*A man’s abandoned overcoat brings to mind to train stations, suitcases, footsteps vanishing down the hall* (Curbelo).” With its development, it continued to attract more investors who developed it progressively into the spectacular beach that it is now. Its beauty is made more spectacular by the history it bears of transforming from a tinny sandbar to a magnificent beach which greatly contributes to making South Florida a paradise.

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