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**Literature and Civilization**

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**American Exceptionalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature: the Case of  
James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans***

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DECLARATION OF INTEGRITY

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I, "**Achour Meriem**", solemnly declare that the dissertation titled "**American Exceptionalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature: the Case of James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans***" submitted to the Department of the English language and Literature at Biskra University is entirely my own work, free from plagiarism, and has not been submitted to any other educational institution. I have appropriately acknowledged and cited all sources used, and I have conducted myself with academic integrity throughout the process. I understand the severe consequences of academic misconduct and affirm the authenticity of my dissertation.

Signature

~~ACHOUR~~

## **Dedication**

I devote the dedication of this work to my dear parents who have offered to me all the support since I saw the light. I dedicate another line to my big family: sisters and brothers, and my little aunt who is a kind of inspiration for me. My few friends are also concerned in this dedication who have left positive traces in my memory.

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### Abstract

This study aims to investigate the literary elements that represent American Exceptionalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> c literature in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*. The setting, plot, and characters of the novel are coloured by a sense of American Exceptionalism, which motivated this research to rise three main questions: firstly, how does the author's recreation of certain historical events in the novel meet American Exceptionalism? Then, how does the author's portrayal of the setting reflect American Exceptionalism? , and how does characterization in the novel typically represent American exceptional identity? To answer those questions, this study will apply New Historicism theory so that to examine the role of the recreation of past events of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the French and Indian war in demonstrating the idea of American Exceptionalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> c literature. Turner's frontier thesis will be also applied to describe the unique nature of the frontier in America, and how it contributes to the creation of the American character. Those methods play a significant role in accomplishing the three objectives of this research. The first objective is describing and analyzing the effects of the historical events in the plot on the establishment of America's history. Secondly, it aims to describe the setting and to investigate its reflection on American Exceptionalism. The third objective is analyzing the character of the protagonist as the representative of the American identity. The examination of the plot displays that the fictionalized events of Fort William Henry Massacre and Uncas's death meet American Exceptionalism, in which they successively foreshadow for the seeds of the American Revolution, Manifest Destiny, and the necessity of the Americans' independence. The frontier also is depicted as an exceptional setting because it reflects both the harshness and beauty of nature. The latter also symbolizes freedom, heroism, and harmony between religion and nature, which render it a unique place. Likely, Hawkeye represents the typical American individual who is an exception because he is a fusion of the British race and the

Native Indians race. The latter provide Hawkeye with principles of heroism and justice, and teach him how to rely on nature to survive. The frontier also provides Hawkeye with sense of freedom, individuality and heroism.

**Key Words:** American Exceptionalism, Cooper, New Historicism, Frontier Thesis, Historical novel, French and Indian War, The Frontier, and Hawkeye.

## ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إيجاد العناصر الأدبية التي تعبر عن الاستثنائية الأمريكية في الأدب الأمريكي خلال القرن التاسع عشر في رواية آخر الموهيكنز للكاتب جيمس فينمور كوبر. تغطي فكرة الاستثنائية الأمريكية كل من الإطار المكاني، الحبكة والشخصيات في الرواية التي دفعت بهذا البحث لطرح ثلاثة تساؤلات مهمة كآلاتي: كيف تتوافق إعادة كوبر لكتابة تاريخ بعض الأحداث مع الاستثنائية الأمريكية؟ ثم كيف يعكس تصوير الكاتب للإطار المكاني للرواية الاستثنائية الأمريكية؟ وأخيراً، كيف يعبر تركيب الشخصيات في الرواية عن نموذج الهوية الأمريكية الاستثنائية؟ للإجابة عن كل هذه الأسئلة بطريقة تتوافق مع كل المفاهيم النظرية التي درست مسبقاً هذا البحث سيقوم بتطبيق نظرية التاريخانية الجديدة من أجل الاستطلاع على دور إعادة تركيب أحداث السنة الثالثة من الحرب الفرنسية والهندية في إبراز الاستثنائية الأمريكية للقرن التاسع عشر. أطروحة الحدود ل تورنر هي أداة أخرى ستطبق في هذا البحث وبالتحديد في وصف الطبيعة الفريدة من نوعها للحدود في أمريكا وكيفية مساهمتها في تشكيل الفرد الأمريكي. تلعب كل من هذه المناهج المذكورة دوراً في تحقيق الثلاثة أهداف لهذا البحث. يتمثل الهدف الأول في وصف وتحليل تأثير الأحداث التاريخية في الحبكة على تأسيس تاريخ أمريكا. بينما يتمحور الهدف الثاني في وصف الإطار المكاني والبحث عن كيفية عكسه للاستثنائية الأمريكية. أما الهدف الثالث فهو تحليل شخصية بطل الرواية الذي بدوره يحمل مواصفات الهوية الأمريكية. بينت معاناة أحداث مجزرة حصن ويليم هنري وموت أنكس الممتزجة بالخيال أنهم يشيرون بالترتيب إلى بذور تطور الثورة الأمريكية، القدر المتجلي، وأهمية استقلال الأمريكيين. إلى جانب ذلك، الحد هو أيضاً يعتبر إطار مكاني استثنائي لأنه يجمع بين قساوة الطبيعة وجمالها. ترمز هذه الأخيرة إلى كل من الحرية، البطولة والتناغم بين الطبيعة والدين مما أدى به ليكون مكاناً مميزاً. بنفس الطريقة، يمثل هوكاي نموذج الفرد الأمريكي الذي بدوره يعتبر استثناءً لأنه مزيج بين العرق البريطاني و عرق الهنود الأمريكيين. الهنود الأمريكيين ع قاموا بتزويد هوكاي بخصال البطولة والعدل. قاموا أيضاً بتعليمه كيفية الاعتماد على مكونات الطبيعة للبقاء حياً. أيضاً عمل الحد على تزويد هوكاي بشعور الحرية، الفردية والبطولة.

### الكلمات المفتاحية:

الاستثنائية الأمريكية، كوبر، التاريخانية الجديدة، أطروحة الحدود، الرواية التاريخية، الحرب الفرنسية والهندية، الحد، وهاوكاي.

## General Introduction

American Exceptionalism is a common idea among the Americans that becomes a national pride and honour for them. The Americans believe that they are different from others, and they should be a universal model to be followed. They are an exception because they have certain values that could only be found in America such as freedom, individualism, the American Dream, democracy, the belief in the idea of the chosen people, etc. Historically, American Exceptionalism is dated back to centuries ago when puritans speeches were the starting point for the construction of such tendency towards exceptionalism. As a Puritan layman, John Winthrop's "City upon a hill" expression is regarded as the original source of American Exceptionalism that the puritans have developed when they have settled the New World.

American exceptionalism is adopted as a national fact by generation after generation, which influences numerous fields in America. It affects the field of literature in the way the tendency to create a national American literature becomes a necessity to enhance the sense of American nationalism, and cut off the links with the European literature. Therefore, transcendentalists are deemed as the first contributors in establishing the American national literature. They advocate a big space for emotions and nature in their literature, and celebrate the individual, which lead to the emergence of the American national voice. Then with American Romantic writers, American exceptionalism is revived again through using purely American literary elements. Cooper is among those writers, who embodies such exceptionalism in his novel *The Last of the Mohicans*. In his historical novel, Cooper intends to use purely American ingredients such as the setting, characters, and the historical events of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. He fictionalizes the third year of the French and Indian war when Hawkeye, the protagonist, witnesses that war while he is in a journey to protect the two daughters of a

British colonel through the wilderness in nowadays “New York”, after he was asked by Heyward and the two sisters to help them reach their father at Fort William Henry.

Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans* has been discussed by many critics, writers, and students from different angles. Benessedick and Manane in their dissertation “ The Use of History in Cooper’s novel *The Last of the Mohicans*” has studied it as a fictional and historical book using New Historicism theory for the aim to be used by historians as a source of getting information about the American national history. In the same work, they have tackled the issue of Native Americans struggle for their identity through using historical backgrounds that led to the birth and development of the American society. On the other hand, Chery I M.Gioioso has compared Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans* to the work of Maria Sedgwick to discuss notions of American identity in his work entitled as “ visions of the future: Notions of American Identity in James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans* and Catherine Maria Sedgwick’s *Hopen Leslie or, Early Times in the Massachusetts*”. He views both novels as versions of the national myth, to spotlight on certain issues such as Westward expansion and citizenship, and present their views for America’s future. He extracts that Cooper regards democracy as restrictive in America because white man retains complete power unlike women, slaves, and Native Indians who are excluded. However, M.Gioioso’s view is different when she confesses that democracy embraces the disempowered: women, Native Indians, and even slaves. Thus, M.Gioioso sees the notion of nationality from Cooper’s eyes as a myth that is based on the racial interactions in early America. All the above-mentioned works, discuss Cooper’s novel from historical and racial lenses without paying attention to the American exceptional features that characterizes that novel.

During the early of the 19<sup>th</sup> c, the political and social circumstances in America influence Cooper’s writing of his novel, in which he uses merely American elements to reflect

the sense of Americanness, and revive the idea of American Exceptionalism. The setting, events, and characters of the novel are a reflection of American exceptional ideas. Thus, *The Last of the Mohicans* is deemed as the cut off between the American literature and European literature, and much more, it is the foundation of the exceptional American literature that is part of the American national identity. Hence, the main aim of this study is to investigate the literary elements that represent American exceptionalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> c literature in Cooper's *The last of the Mohicans*. To achieve the mentioned aim, this research is devoted to answer three major questions. The first question is how does the author's recreation of certain historical events in the novel meet American Exceptionalism? Secondly, how does the author's portrayal of the setting in the novel reflect American Exceptionalism? Lastly, how does characterization in the novel typically represent American exceptional identity? Each question tackles one element from the novel so that to have a comprehensive study about American exceptionalism in the novel. Those questions formulate the three main objectives of this research. The first objective is describing and analyzing the effects of the historical events in the plot on the establishment of America's exceptional history. The second objective is describing the setting of the novel and investigating its reflection on American exceptionalism. The third and last objective is analyzing the character of the protagonist of the novel as the representative of the American identity.

To answer the first question, the focus of this study will be centered on the main event during the third year of the French and Indian war, particularly fort William Henry Massacre that exhibits the history from the lenses of the British settlers and their allies, the Mohicans. Then, the focus shifts to describe the nature of the frontier from Canada, deep within the borders of New York. Finally, this study will focus on the American hero, Hawkeye, who represents the typical American individual. Identically, this study follows a qualitative research paradigm that will be conducted along with descriptive, analytical, and interpretive

research methods. Samples from the novel will be selected in accordance with the relevance to the concepts being discussed, and data analysis will go through description, analysis, and interpretation. Hence, New Historicism theory will be applied in order to shed light on how the French and Indian war paved the way for the establishment of America's history. Besides, the frontier thesis will be used to describe how the frontier is a unique setting in America, and how it contributes to the creation of the American character. Reading this research will provide the reader with literary knowledge about the first module of the American novel, in which Cooper relies on merely American components that renders it an exceptional American literature. However, this research leads to questioning the issue of the absence of African Americans at that period in Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, although the problem of slavery was at its highest degree during the time of writing the novel. In other words, why Cooper's fictionalization of the history of the French and Indian war does not mention the existence of the African slaves at that time.

## Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

### Introduction

The sense of American Nationalism is evoked through a set of myths, and American Exceptionalism is one of them. This latter was not restricted to its political, economic, or religious connotations; however, it even reached literature. While literature is a reflection of reality, it becomes also a contributor in shaping the reality. This is what happened with the American Romanticism of the 19<sup>th</sup> c when it was a necessary element to rise the sense of nationalism with the Americans who witnessed a difficult time of destruction of their country. Hence, American exceptionalism was adopted by some writers in their use of the setting, characters, and the plot. Cooper as he is known as The Walter Scott displayed American exceptional literary components in his novel *The Last of the Mohicans*, in which he portrays historical events that happened during the 18<sup>th</sup> c. Hence, this chapter aims to display a theoretical overview about American exceptionalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> c American literature along with a historical contextualization of Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*. This chapter begins with the explanation of the concept of American Exceptionalism and the discussion of its religious, political, economic, and literary dimensions even though every sector is related to the other. As American romanticism is concerned, it gains a historical narration of its development as a literary movement that has an important role in the rise of the national literature. This latter led to the emergence of the historical novel, which uses history and fiction as two main elements. New historicism, a literary theory, would be more suitable to analyze such historical novels. However, to analyze the American exceptional character of the protagonist in the novel, it is also important to rely on Turner's The Frontier Thesis so that the analysis would be comprehensive. Before that, one needs to have an idea about the historical context of the novel; political, economic, and cultural contexts. In addition to that, the third

year of the French and Indian war (1757) is heavily narrated in this chapter because it is the whole plot of that novel, which is fictionalized. This theoretical framework ends with a detailed explanation of the emergence of the national American identity, which takes different colours each era. All the information of this chapter would be a guidance for the analysis of the frontier, the character Natty Bumppo, and the French and Indian war event, which are an exceptional American elements used by Cooper in his writings.

### 1.1 American Exceptionalism

The French Alexis de Tocqueville states in his seminal work *Democracy in America* (1835-1840) that the situation of the Americans was exceptional. He points out the uniqueness of the American political system, and refers not to the exceptionality of the American people themselves, or to their culture. Tocqueville views that the democratic system of America as God-willed and it will be sooner transmitted all over the world. The term of American exceptionalism was later freed from the above-mentioned context, and became a much more comprehensive term. According to the scientist Byron E. Shafer who states, "American exceptionalism [...] is the notion that the United States was created differently, developed differently, and thus has to be *understood* differently – essentially on its own terms and within its own context" (qtd in. Paul 14). As a whole, the notion of 'exceptionalism' contains ideas of superiority, uniqueness and predestination of Americans over non-Americans and it has been used to legitimate American hegemony on other countries. Nevertheless, the dogma of American Exceptionalism is confusing because it contains various elements, three types of American exceptionalism can be extracted: religious exceptionalism, political exceptionalism, economic exceptionalism, and literary exceptionalism (14-5).

### 1.1.1 The Religious Dimension of American Exceptionalism

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, puritans of New England believed in their exceptionality and uniqueness, which led them to think of building their new own country where they will have a new ritual of worship. The puritans were divided into three groups. The first and the largest group were those who wanted to have a commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell's authority, and the second group are called Separatists who sought pure and high religious beliefs and life. Thus, they rejected any kind of authority even that of the Anglican Church. Some members of the latter group decided to remain in England; however, others preferred to immigrate to America who become known as Pilgrims. The latter are the third group of puritans who have endeavoured to combine the ideals of the two groups so that to end up with a perfect society. Additionally, the puritans wanted to be a universal model of the Christian charity. John Winthrop was their leader who has articulated his famous expression as Beardsley mentions, "we shall be a city on a hill and the eyes of all the world be upon us" (qtd in. Messaoudi 9). The puritans have believed that they have a special mission to the world. Winthrop had a vision for the creation of a new society that would be a model to be followed by other protestant countries. They have justified their ideas by saying that God have provided mercy, temperance, and love for great people as his grace on them, and those poor were provided with patience, faith and obedience. Thence, a kind of exceptionalism and uniqueness are marked in Winthrop's ideals. Eventually, the puritans have considered themselves as the opponents for the Old Testament Israel, and Winthrop was like Moses who would lead them as the chosen people by God to the right place. This latter is the New World where God asked his chosen people to settle there, and build their new nation (8-11).

### 1.1.2 The Political Dimension of American Exceptionalism

The exceptionality of American politics is related to Tocqueville's reference to the distinctiveness of the founding and development of the U.S nation. The documents written by for instance, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Paine display the exceptionalist establishment of the political American republicanism. Paine claims: "[we] have it in our power to begin the world over again" (qtd in. Paul 15). This quote reflects Paine's intention to create a mythology for the American nation. Moreover, the founding documents and fathers ensure the vision of a secularized doctrine of America's predestination (15). To believe in American political exceptionalism, one needs also to believe that Americans have the best constitution in the world, which embodies the most essential American values. It is important to point out that the sense of moral superiority evokes a moral duty in an implicit way to make American values universal (Amoah 2).

The founding father ,Benjamin Franklin, has adopted the term exceptionalism to secularize America's main purpose. This latter is not limited to the religious believers' mission into larger areas rather than, it is concerned with the journey of the individuals in establishing a new society based on reason and common sense, which would be purified, from the degenerations of the European political systems. Franklin has modified the criteria of success in America which became related to thrift, culture of work, and fair-mindedness,etc. Likely, Thomas Jefferson has depicted America as exceptional in his 1781 *Notes on the States of Virginia* through a long description of its huge natural resources and agrarian life. He viewed that the wondrous landscapes would be the source of the growth of an exceptional individual. Besides, Jefferson did not only praise the success of the process of his founding generation, but he also predicted that it would spread all over the world. The unbounded exercise of reason and freedom that was written just before Jefferson's death manifests the

idea that men were born not to be governed by others; however, they are here to ensure the advantages of security and self-government (Rotenberg 192-3).

Indeed, the Americans have established a distinctive political system, which is based on the self-government of its states. It was a result of the demand of the distribution of power among the states. In contrast, other political systems give much more authority to the central government, which result in less freedom and democracy there.

### **1.1.3 The Economic Dimension of American Exceptionalism**

The economic aspects of American exceptionalism might be seen in its relation to the beliefs of new kinds of individualism that is beyond its political references. It celebrates self-interest as a necessary and legitimate tool for the success of the body politic. American individualism is usually regarded as a condition for people's success that has economic connotations. Typically, the economic success in the United States is the outcome of freedom and equality of opportunities. Additionally, the myths of individualism and self-made man are deemed as utopian narratives that guarantee a better life for those immigrants who entered the U.S. This latter myth is classified as the secularized version of the religious and political mythic narratives of American narratives. Along with other myths, it is a version of the civil religious aspect of the American dream under which all other myths exist. Civil religion can be defined as "...an institutionalized collection of sacred or quasi-sacred beliefs about the American nation that is distinct from denominational religions, yet shares with them a belief in the existence of a transcendent being (god) ..." (Paul 15-6). Hence, it can be said that the American dream-, which includes all other myths of individualism, freedom, and self-made man-, is what distinguishes America from other nations, and contributes to the foundations of its Capital system that is purely an American economic system.

### 1.1.4 The Literary Dimension of American Exceptionalism

American exceptionalism was not just limited to religious, political or economic dimensions, but it spread to other fields like literature. Thomas B. Byers writes in his article that the productive sources of exceptionalism as quasi-religious vision are placed in John Winthrop's descriptive writings of the puritan's covenant and America as a city upon a hill. These texts or genres are deemed canonical as literature for the reason that those literary canons were made up from the onset out of exceptional ideologies. Another reason is the encounter/ opposition against the Europeans that was clearly manifested in the puritans' biographies of "great man" or Amerindian text. Hence, the ideology of exceptionalism became a constitutive theme that characterized American literature. Furthermore, exceptionalism is considered as a major feature of American literature due to its reliance on thematic and ideological canons while it did not focus on formal or aesthetical aspects. These latter have been seen as insignificant in American literature that might be worth studying only if it include some higher seriousness. Baym states that American literature should be exceptional like its nation. She admits that the standard of Americanness was the early critic's search at the expense of the standard of excellence. Baym strengthened her stance by saying that the aspects of Americanness is what contributes to the distinctness of American authors' literary productions (Byers 92-4).

American literature mirrors some traditions and beliefs that are inspired from the frontier time. It deals with the early notions of self-reliance and independence as the pioneer's ideals. The individual also gains a great importance by American authors. In their literature, they insisted on democracy and equality of people while they refused to accept any kind of authority. Lastly, American writers are characterized by their celebration of nature and their sense of a free space ("The Features of American Literature".par.2).

## 1.2 American Romanticism

The Romantic Movement started in America around the 1820s after it spread in France, England and beyond from its original country, Germany. American romanticism is different in the sense that it meets with the period of finding a distinctive American voice and the national expansion. The masterpieces of “The American Renaissance” were created over the surging idealism, a solid national identity, and the passion of romanticism. This latter is based upon the metaphorical view of the spiritual and aesthetic aspects of nature, and the inspiration of art. For romantics, the universal truth could be expressed through art rather than science. Hence, they stressed the value of expressive art for the individual himself and the society as a whole. Ralph Waldo Emerson, as one of the most contributors to the romantic era argues in his essay *The poet* (1824) that, “For all men live by truth, and stand in need of expression. In love, in art, in avarice, in politics, in labor, in games, we study to utter our painful secret. The man is only half himself, the other half is his expression” (Vanspanckeren 26).

In addition to that, one of the major themes in American romanticism is the Self, especially self-awareness. In accordance with Romantic theory, nature and self were represented as one entity; therefore, self-awareness was not an egoistic dead end, but it was an opening source of knowledge for the universe. Thus, the existence of one’s self with all humanity made the individual gain a moral duty to heal human’s sufferings and to reform social inequalities. Thence, the view of selfishness of the ‘self’ by earlier generations was redefined with more positive contents (Vanspanckeren 26).

Moreover, American romantics strongly believe in Unitarianism. They observed Christianity from a liberal and rational angles. For them, God is represented in a single personality, and Trinity is an irrational concept, and should be rejected along with the

unethical dogmas of inherited guilt, vicarious atonement, and eternal punishment. The immanentism of the American romantics could be understood through their vision of God as he exists all over the world, and his divine purpose could be recognized through natural processes. As a spiritual monist, Emerson thought that the spiritual reality is unified in an over-soul, all the material universe contains a divine mind. Again, American romanticism typically relied on coextensiveness of both nature and God (Bevir 2-3).

European and North American writers have historically referred to the Native Indians as the Noble Savages. Although it is almost unknown who created the term, or during which time exactly it was used, Robert Berkhofer, author of *The White Man's Indian*, claims that most of the scholars agree that the concept is originated in France during the late 16<sup>th</sup> c and late 17<sup>th</sup> c. It denotes a kind of primitivism- the notion of a new rural paradise – which affected European Settlers in a way they saw Indians of the New World as pure and their land as a modern form of Eden. Jean Jacques Rousseau was one of the remarkable writers who adopted the concept of the Noble Savage to promote for the idea of valueless of modern civilization. He argues that the reason behind man's corruption was civilization, but the one who he calls savage was not concerned with that corruption because he lived far away from any opinions or judgments (McNaughton 10-13).

On the other hand, the concept of the Noble Savage became used as a mode to identify a new Anglo-American identity in the New World. Previously, the concept was used to review the established institutions, and to help white writers to view critically their own culture, which lengthened the white cultural crisis designation. To separate themselves from their European ancestors, early Americans attempted to promote for the Northern American landscape. Because the American wilderness existed along with the American Indians who were a central part of it, and historically had been used to shape society, Native Indians became an essential element for the establishment of the American identity (McNaughton14).

As romantic literature is basically built over imagination, emotion, heroic and tragic individuals, focus on nature and the sublime, the treatment of the past, authors such as Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron were a source of inspiration for American writers to find adaptable materials for their national identity. An interest in the Indian as a central component for the national literature was heightened in time of the popularity of romanticism with the American readers. Indian's way of life reflected images of the mysterious customs, superstitions, savage warfare, and heroic acts of self-sacrifice and endurance. Additionally, metaphors and picturesque allusions characterized native language. The Indians were also distinguished by their heroic figures of their warrior chiefs, the superstitions of their primitive race, and the mysterious sublimity of the American wilderness, which all provided authors with myths to establish their romantic national literature. However, the extreme in romanticism was the idea of the passing Indian who would disappear before the advance of civilization. Hence, the latter scene stimulated the nostalgia and sentiments to American romantics (Somers 65-6).

Another important point is clearly mentioned in the poem of Bryant for the American painter Thomas Cole who was about to leave for Europe; the nature in Europe is full of traces of men whereas the American nature is a wilder image. In this wild landscapes, spiritual nourishment and values were felt, unlike Europe, which was empty of them. Cole claims that the American wildness was an attractive characteristic for the American scenery while the European scenery of wildness was destroyed by civilization. The wilderness in America was an inspiration for visionary exaltation. Unlike America, the European land was a stained space for the crimes of history. While the European romantics focused on the traces of men to look forward to an imaginary millennium human society, the American was mindful of the increasing destruction of the wildness. Thus, he might keep his touch with the idealized pastoral domesticity or the pieties of the manifest Destiny or the melting pot so that he would

find that solitude in those unpeopled landscapes. Therefore, the European romanticism distinguishably looks to the past and the future while American romanticism tends to move out of time; however, move into some sort of space. Time refers to history, and history is bond with traces of men and society, which has a role in the destruction of that wilder image, and the space it provided and the limitless freedom there. Consequently, the American romantic writers lacks that sense of the past, which was an important feature for the Europeans. The Americans first met with an empty landscape of traces of men, which made it to be potentially alien in a way. In contrast, the European landscapes were full of legends, history, and myth (Hurley 101-3).

In addition to that, romantics thought that nature was the source of abstract traits such as beauty, truth, democracy, and independence. The garden picture of America could be applicable to the romantics' observation of nature, if its landscapes are cleaned of the signs of civilization. The first state of the American wilderness made America to be an attractive possession in the European mind. Thus, the wild image of nature became as a national pride for the Americans where their unique character traits are rooted as a national identity. In other words, the reflections of the Sublime nature became a sign for the roots of the national American character (Hurley 81-3). The sublime is understood as the influence of beauty in its grandeur. For instance, the feelings of reverence, vastness, power and awe that are evoked by a view from a mountaintop. The sublime was embodied in America's vast deserts, mountains, and rivers (Vanspanckeren 26). The portrayal of America as Eden evoked the belief of it as a Promised Land, and it turned it a place of true equality at least among European settlers and a pure form of freedom. Peggy Wayburn states: "the wilderness of the continent made obsolete and alien the old ideas of rank, caste, and inherited aristocracy ...common man could become uncommon man"( qtd in. Hurley 83). As Turner would claim in his thesis, the hindrances of the wilderness contributed to the emergence of American qualities of

independence, ingenuity, and pragmatism. The national faith in equality and democracy also was reaffirmed during westward expansion at each stage the frontier line was redrawn and redefined geographically and politically (83).

### **1.2.1 The Rise of American National Literature**

The American Revolution (1775-1783) was the first modern liberal war against colonialism. The victory of the war led many Americans to think that it was a divine sign for the greatness of the American people and their land. Thus, nationalistic feelings were evoked to create a new literature. However, there was as a shortage of writings after the revolution with the exception of political documents. Because the American writers were conscious of their dependence on English writings, they became more obsessed with the search for a national literature (Vanspanckern 14). As Noah Webster views, “America must be as independent in literature as she is in politics” (qtd.in Gross 315). The writers of the revolutionary generation were almost English at the other side because they had been born English, and have adopted English mentality and life styles (Vanspanckern 14).

During the time the talented and educated people were urged to involve in politics and diplomacy in order to build a new nation, which gain financial security and honor to them, writing did not guarantee economic support for the writers. Briefly, early American writers encountered some obstacles such as lack of audience, publishers, and adequate legal protection for them. Up to 1825, printers were paid by most of American authors so that they could publish their works. In Addition to that, the well-known European authors, especially English ones were demanded by the small-cultivated audience in America, which was a result of considering American outputs as inferior. Hence, the situation was worst when the American authors were deprived of audiences. Another problem of literary stagnation was the unavailability of adequate copyright laws. English best-sellers were pirated by American

printers who did not want to pay their countryman authors for unknown books (Vanspanckeren 14-6).

The American Enlightenment era of the 18<sup>th</sup> c was characterized by rationality instead of tradition, scientific experimentation rather than unquestioned religious beliefs, and a representative government in place of monarchy. Meanwhile, Enlightenment writers and thinkers were dealing with the natural rights of man: liberty, justice, and equality. Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) represented the ideal of rationality of the Enlightenment time. He was regarded as the first self-made man in America who was as a poor democrat in an aristocratic age. Yet, he was a good reader for the Enlightenment writers such as John Locke and Joseph Addison whose writings taught him how to use reason in his personal life, and to marginalize traditions, particularly old-fashioned puritan tradition. Through his experiences, he endeavoured to aid American people in reaching success through his book, *The Self-Help Book*. Besides, the revolutionary literature was presented in pamphlets, a form of political literature. Thomas Paine wrote in his famous pamphlet *Common Sense*: “The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind” (qtd in. Vanspanckeren 19). He tried to allude the idea of American Exceptionalism in the sense that America is an experiment of democracy, open to all immigrants, and the foreshadower for others’ destiny. Thomas Jefferson’s “The Declaration of Independence” original document and “The Federalist Papers” are also other appropriate, clear and reasonable documents for discussion in America (19).

On the other hand, writing literary papers was a complex and indirect process unlike political writing which was direct and simple. The elegance of neoclassicism was a pitfall for many authors who tried to write poetry. With their patriotism, American writers thought that the expression of the epic poem would fit the great American Revolution. However, many writers failed to have such a good poem. Timothy Dwight’s epic poem *The Conquest of*

*Canaan* (1785) was not interesting as many English critics criticized its wrong ideas.

Alternatively, satirical poetry was more workable than the serious verse. This mock epic genre motivated American poets to depend on their natural voices, and did not urge them to use the predictable patriotic feelings. For instance, the mock epic of John Trumbull's *M'Fingal* (1776-1782), satirized the Revolution bombastic oratory. Indeed, revolutionary audiences preferred satire poems due to its embrace of social criticism and political topics (Vanspanckeren 19-20).

The first American fiction was initiated by these recognizable figures: Charles Brockden, Washington Irving, and James Fenimore Cooper. They tended to use American subjects and themes, historical perspectives, and nostalgic tones. They also wrote in numerous prose genres, and developed new ways and forms to find life in literature (Vanspanckeren 21). The American novel played an important role in the early years of independence. They contained realistic details of the American life, which in turn aided the Americans in looking at themselves as one nation. After William Hill Brown's *Power of Sympathy* (1789), the first American novel, was banned as morally dangerous, novelists attempted to make their novels acceptable by adding moral values. In 1798, Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland* was published as an important "Gothic Novel". It contains murders and people talking with other's voices or abruptly exploding into flames. In general, most of his works included emotional powers. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c, the center of American literature was New York City. Knickerbockers is the name of its writers, which is derived from Washington Irving's *A History of New York, by Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1809). In his book preface, he admits his intention to make a special "local image" for New York City. Next, he wrote the *Sketch Book* (1819), which contains the known stories of *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. The plots of both stories are related to old German folk tales, yet the local colour of New York is reflected with Hudson River Valley (High 28-32).

Yet, Irving and the other Knickerbockers failed to speak for the whole country. For them, the borders of New York City was the entire American world. On the other side, Cooper (1789-1851) tended to speak for all the Americans. Thus, the Europeans called him “The American Walter Scott”; he wrote adventures and historical novels. Cooper’s *the Leatherstocking* series took place during America’s westward expansion. His first novel was *The Pioneers* (1823), in which Natty Bumppo appears not just in this novel, but also as a main character in all the series. The novels displayed his love for nature and skills to live in the forests. It portrayed race conflict between the Whites and the Indians. In addition, Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) was another exciting story. Characters get into quarrels and became prisoned to escape then to a safe place. The Mohican, Uncas, became the hero in the second half of the novel instead of Natty. At the end, Uncas was killed by Magwa, the evil Indian. Eventually, Cooper is one of the first writers of sea in America whose novels contain both romantic and realistic elements; Romantic aspects are included in the beauty of the ocean, the changes of the weather, and the mystery of the seamen and ships. However, realism is centered on Cooper’s experience of the sea (High 33-5, 7).

Cooper focused on the American aspects while Irving did not. Irving viewed the American setting as an imported European history, culture, and legends. Unlikely, Cooper initiated a new purely American setting, characters, and themes. Hence, he is regarded as the first author who foregrounds the tragic elements in the American fiction (Vanspanckeren 24).

### **1.2.2 The Historical Novel**

To consider a novel as a historical novel, it must reconstruct the time when the event takes place. Amado Alonso demonstrates: “In this respect, the historical novel is not simply one that narrates or describes events and things that occurred or were existent, nor even-as is usually accepted. One which relates things about the public life of a people, but specifically

that which aims to reconstruct a past way of life and to offer it as past, in its far off times, with the special feelings that monumentality arouses in us”( qtd in. Indurain 1). Hence, the historical novel is viewed as a hybrid genre, a combination of reality and invention simultaneously. In this genre of novels, the author is required to reinvent a historical past through attaching a series of non-fictional materials. The addition of a historical framework to the novel will display the way of life and all the necessary elements to understand the past (1-2).

In the thesis entitled “The Historical Novel” (1955), George Lukács explained that the evolution of the historical novels of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a result of social forces. Lukács claimed that the first who transformed the historical aspects into a novel format was Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), and he was deemed as the establisher of the historical novel. Moreover, Lukács believed that the past was portrayed in a chaotic way in the historical novels before Scott. He explains that the social and economic problems contributed in shaping history. In this sense, Groot manifests that those social and economic forces are “a dynamic sense of progress and, most of all, of history as process” (qtd in . Phillpott 2). Scott’s novel emerged because of a new historical consciousness in the 19<sup>th</sup> c, which is regarded as a connection with the past as it is an account of it. Thus, Scott’s Waverley novels rendered the historical novel into more interesting and respectable genre (1-2, 7).

Carlos Mata Indurain attempted to demonstrate some features of the historical novel in accordance with the relationship between fiction and history. He has emphasized that the historical reality relies on history itself as a scientific approach while the historical novel is more an artistic/ literary product. Thence, the role of the novelist is to restrict himself with the novelistic aspects; on the other hand, the historians’ role is to search for historical truth. Finally, both roles complement each other as two approaches for the historical novel. Besides, the issue of objectivity or truth does not have a great importance in the novel. Since novelists

are concerned with providing a well-told story, they are permitted to a degree for falsifications in their dealing with the historical facts and characters; however, they are under certain limits in the sense that they must not reach the extreme in making the facts false or unrecognizable. In addition to that, the historical novelist could use emotions and vivacity in narrating the events without the seriousness of the historical past. He could revive the past with new life, and reach the internal side of the characters of a certain society or period. Eventually, the historical novel evokes the notions of the past and present. The knowledge of the present makes understanding the past clearer, in turn, knowing the past enriches the present world, and creates new visions to see the future (Indurain 3-5).

### **1.3 New Historicism**

New Historicism can be defined as a literary theory that was established in 1980s by Stephen Greenblatt, an American literary historian. Greenblatt views New historicism as parallel to “cultural poetics”. Cultural studies are the center of attention of New historicism, which adopts the concepts of numerous historians and theorists like Michel Foucault, Stephen Greenblatt, Michel de Certeau and Adrian Montrose (Ramadan 31). Rajani Sharma adumbrated in her work that:

[... ]New historicism coins “cultural poetics” as a guideline for literary study because literature is an organic part of culture and manifests each and every aspect of it. It subsumes that literature portrays ‘ world view’ but world view should not be mistaken with the harmonious representation of socio-cultural scenario, rather, the projection of both harmony and heterogeneity should reflect in literary text as subversive voices against the dominant power politics are continuously raised and superseded. (8)

New historicists interpret the text with reference to its historical context. They also focus on the author's background, the critic's ideology, and the reader's reception. In analyzing the context of the text, they bring the cultural and political aspects together so that to historicize the text itself. In other words, the literary text is understood according to the social and cultural forces of its time of production. Therefore, the texts of literature encounter multiple interpretations, which display the dialectical relationship between literature, history, and culture. In this sense, Terry Eagleton claims that the literary text is subjected to new interpretations when it is contextualized with different historical or cultural spheres, which means that the literary work is not only limited to the author's background (Ramadan 31) .

Similar to new historicism, old historicism focused on the cultural context of the time of writing. However, one main difference is that old historicism deals with history as the background of literature while new historicism regards history as primary ("New Historicism: Overview and examples"). Hence, Greenblatt's theoretical assertions opposed the doctrines of New criticism. He criticized the new critics for dismantling the text from its sociohistorical context. Thus, Greenblatt's phrase of "poetics of culture" was coined as an inspiration from T.S Eliot's famous dictum, which states that a poem should not be considered as anything, but it should be regarded as a poem. Undoubtedly, the poem should be observed from its most important aspects, the sociohistorical context, in which its meaning is shaped. Greenblatt's claim on the nature of textuality is perhaps the core of his 'poetics of culture', the practice of hermeneutics that he called "New Historicism" (Veenstra 176-7).

In dealing with history, new historicism displays some characteristics of post-modernism. Both new historicism and postmodernism attempt to represent past events, especially that the dialogue between the past and the present has no end. New historicism represents historical facts depending on the discursive nature of history, which emphasizes power relations. Thus, Louis Montrose's "the textuality of history and the historicity of text"

is affirmed by such discursive nature. Foucault's concept of power has influenced Greenblatt and other new historicists to consider a literary text as a space where power relations are manifested to dismantle the textuality of history and the historicity of the text. In this sense, new historicism exhibits the dialogic interaction between the past and the present. Since new historicism links the literary text to its historical context, the latter becomes a manifestation of power relations. Veenstra believes: "[...] a sociohistorical context conditions its textual representations and likewise a text informs and sometimes even conditions the historical process" (Vennstra 180).

In reading the literary texts, history and literature exist together, which in turn reveals the power structure that forms the society. The literary text turns to be a discourse of the opposed powers. Greenblatt admits that the social discourse is reflected by power relations, which he refers as "self-fashioning". Likewise Mambrole admits: "the process of constructing one's identity and public persona according to a set of socially acceptable standards, and the conscious effort to strive to imitate a praised model in society" (qtd.in Ramadan 33). To accommodate with power structure, the individual attempts to re-fashion his/ her persona. However, this self-fashioning is not self-creation rather it is a form of submission. According to new historicists, in self-fashioning, the literary texts, "are complicit in mediating historical, political, social and cultural anxieties whether these anxieties are explicitly discussed or not". These anxieties, which are evoked by literary texts, are related to Greenblatt's two main concepts: 'Resonance' and 'Wonder' (33).

Resonance and wonder are two main concepts in the new historicist approach. Resonance is the strength of the literary to reveal the cultural and historical forces beyond its literary boundaries. The concept of resonance is manifested in Montrose's concept of "the historicity of the text and the textuality of history". He means by historicity the cultural specificities, social implications as well as all other modes of representation; however,

textuality refers to the subjectivity of all historical texts and the unachievable access to the past. Wonder, on the other hand, is the exceptional and original representation by the text, and it is the text's ability to rise a sense of eagerness. The literary text causes a feeling of defamiliarization of what was believed to be true. Meanwhile, the feeling of defamilairization evokes anxiety and wonder. Consequently, both wonder and resonance state the interactional relationship between history and literature, and depicts the complex structure of power authority (Ramadan 33-4).

Additionally, new historicism emphasizes historical narratives. As forms of representation, both history and literature are linked to selected human experiences. It is confirmed by Hayden White's concept of "history as narrative" when he views literature as narratives. White's idea is similar to the belief of history as an essential historiographic narrative. It suggested that history is an anecdote in a certain setting with featured characters who contribute to the rise of themes formed by power relations, cultural and historical circumstances. Thus, "history as narrative" is the basis of historiographic narrative. Historiography is the writing of historical events depending on its cyclical features (Ramadan 34-5).

#### **1.4 Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis**

In American socio-political discourse, the frontier is regarded as a comprehensive term. Firstly, it denotes a line, precisely the line that separates the occupied lands of the country by the European settlers from the non-occupied lands during the process of Westward expansion. The second meaning of the word frontier lies in its reference to the region of the American west that is formed as a result of settling and civilizing a wilderness. Finally, the frontier

depicts a certain society or culture that established exceptional social patterns under wilderness rules (Waechter 3).

After Frederick Jackson Turner presented his thesis entitled *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* in 1893, the frontier became a key point for American social sciences. Turner questioned the impact of the frontier on the evolution of the United States. In simple terms, he answered that question by stating that the frontier was the main element to explain the history of America. It was the main contributor in making the United States unique and different from the European countries. According to Turner, the frontier worked on destroying the European heritage of the settlers whose customs and forms of social organization were demolished (Waechter 4). According to him, the wilderness masters the colonist. He wrote:

It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought [...]. It strips off the Garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick; he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in Orthodox Indian fashion. (Turner par.8)

The destruction of the settlers' cultural heritage was followed by a new creation on the frontier that is the act of producing a new man, the American. The frontier, for Turner, was the real melting pot where the American character was shaped as a result of the interaction of different immigrants with their various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Turner claims: "In the crucible of the frontier the immigrants were Americanized, liberated, and fused into a mixed race [...]" (qtd.inWaechter 4). The result was the American character, who was ideally represented as pioneer with these characteristics: strength, coarseness, inquisitiveness,

individualism, and acuteness. Moreover, Turner believes that the big influence of the frontier was political. It was the factor behind the establishment of America's democracy. The confrontation with American wilderness and the settlers' social differences obliged them to cope with the same tasks and face the same difficulties. Because of the opposition between the American wilderness and the European settlers, equality was the outcome of such environmental interaction. The settlers did not use the old European models of societies when they commenced organizing their communities instead they created their own egalitarian society (4).

In addition to the creation of the American democracy, the frontier also contributed to America's stability. Each time, the settlement touched upon a new frontier, the process of reconstructing the society was created again. Thus, the years of the expansion into the west were distinguished by the constant regeneration of democracy. Turner observed the U.S history in deterministic and materialistic terms that are reflected in the continuous adaptation of society to the environment. At the same time, Turner's thesis held a highly nationalistic view of American history with emphasis on its exceptional and unique character of U.S democracy (Waechter 5).

## **1.5 The Historical Context of the Novel**

### **1.5.1 The Political and Economic Context**

In American history, the periods of the presidency of James Monroe in 1816 and John Quincy Adams in 1824 were known as "the Era of Good Feelings". The United States strategy towards the war of 1812 was questioned by later scholars who also studied its material consequences and the wisdom behind it. Contemporary Americans, on the other hand, regarded Jackson's victory over the British at New Orleans as a stimulus for creating "good feeling". After the war, the foreign policy of the U.S worked on evoking the sense of

nationalism. The Monroe Doctrine (1823), a long presidential document, states the non-interference of the United States in the European affairs, in return, the Europeans should not also interfere in the matters of the Americans. The warning tone of the Monroe doctrine for the Old World contributed in spreading the mood of nationalism all over the country.

However, the victory of the republic party was probably the obvious sign of a new sense of national unity. The Republican Party remained alone on the national political horizon after the defeat of the federalists by Monroe, the republican leader, who was reelected in 1820 (“The United States from 1816 to 1850”sec.1).

Despite all signs of national unity and the good feelings, opposite signs were present to prove the contrary. The national division was evident in the political struggle over slavery, mainly over its expansion into the new territories. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 offered a temporary solution for the threat of disunity. However, the persistence of the Northern and Southern states on acquiring more states increased the conflict between people over their interests in the different geographic areas. Hence, it was manifested that the years after the Battle of New Orleans were not only a period of good feelings; however, it was a period of mixed feelings (“The United States from 1816-1850” sec.2).

Some historians suggest that Britain provoked the Americans to declare the war of 1812; however, it was the wars over Ocean commerce between France and Britain during the Napoleonic wars that led to the American non-Intercourse Act of 1809 and later on to the war of 1812. During the economic warfare between Britain and France, American ships and sailors were forcibly enlisted, embargoes were put in front of the American trades, and insurance costs were increased. The end of the war of 1812 was succeeded by the United States ‘decrease of its restrictive tariffs and filling of the American market with British goods. Consequently, the cheap price of the coming British products in comparison to the

manufactured American goods, led to instability of the value of the American currency (Rosenthal par.3-4).

Most of the assets of Cooper's family consisted of estate holdings during the war of 1812. In the meanwhile, the value of land decreased, especially those near the borders of Canada. Thus, the Panic of 1819 was heightened after the deflations of the currency, the land, and the value of products. In this time, Cooper realized the necessity of work, and joined the International trade and whaling. He also worked for Republican New York State Governor Dewitt Clinton before he engaged in his new Career as a writer (Rosenthal par. 3-4).

### **1.5.2 The Cultural Context**

After the war of 1812 ended, the United States encountered series of transformations that changed the American people, their culture, and their society. The most obvious change was perhaps the emergence of nationalistic feelings. It was a pride for the people to refer to themselves as Americans while they stopped to call themselves as Virginians, New Yorkers or Pennsylvanians as they used to do. Hence, their new distinct identity was shaped. In details, Remini describes: "over time they gave up wearing wigs, silk stockings, ruffled shirts, and knee breeches; instead they donned trousers and shirts with neckties and jackets" (74-5). During the period between 1815 and 1860 a number of traditional literary works were produced – the poetry of Henry Wodsworth Longfellow and Edgar Allan Poe, the novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne and James Fenimore Cooper- all use merely distinctive American themes, and portray American characters like Hester Prynne and Natty Bumppo ("The United States from 1816 to 1850"). The latter character is the protagonist in Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, which has contributed to the rise of American nationalism; nevertheless, the events of its plot took place in the 18<sup>th</sup> c, particularly during the third year of the French and Indian war.

## 1.6 The French and Indian War (1754 -1761)

The destruction of fort William Henry in 1757 was one of the main events that happened during the conflict between the French and British forces in North America. Britain and France engaged in an armed conflict to extend their control and influence of North America. The sporadic conflict between the French and English is referred to the French and Indian war, or the Seven Years war that started in 1754 and ended in 1761. The Seven Years war between France and England was an international struggle; however, its beginning in the American colonies was a struggle over territory and trade in Western Virginia. The young George Washington was obliged to surrender on 3 July 1754 to the French colonists came from fort Duquesne after a war at fort Necessity, a temporary citadel built by Washington's militia in Virginia. With Edward Braddock's defeat on July 9, 1755, series of British military defeats were marked along the Western borders of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. However, along the Eastern side of New York State, the British achieved much more success. When the British started to spread north from Albany and build forts along the Hudson River, the French termed all of Lake George and Lake Champlain as Lac du St.Sacrement, which had already been claimed for New France. As a result of this confrontation, a savage war took place in Lake George on September 8, 1755 between a British military forces led by major General William Johson and a French military forces led by Baron Dieskau. At the end of the day, the British won the battle, and two hundred French and Indians were killed and thrown into a nearby small lake ( Starbuck 4-5).

During the battle, Dieskau was captured, and his troops were forced back to Fort St.Frederic. After the battle finished, an authorization to build fort William Henry and fort Edward was given by Johnson. Meanwhile, the French commenced building fort Carrilon at the outlet of Lake George where two opposing powers became at the face of each other at its

two ends. By the mid -1757, the Scotsman, Lieutenant Colonel George Munro was appointed as the commander of Fort William Henry. Munro was a career officer, and had three children in Ireland, who were all minors. As the news reached the British that a French attack is near to them, aids were sent to Munro in the form of New York Provincials, Massachusetts Provincials, and the 60<sup>th</sup> regiment. In July 1757, a vast army of about 8000 French and Indians left Fort Carillon, and advanced toward fort William Henry in August 1757. Marquis de Montcalm was the leader of the French who had 1,600 Indian allies belonged to some thirty-three tribes from the Great Lakes all across Eastern Canada. Although Munro waited for further reinforcements from fort Edward, Major General Daniel Webb did not want to put the remainder of his army at risk against a hug army (Starbuck 5-6; 8).

The French were well provided with cannons, which were set on rafts down the lake, and cannon batteries were positioned on points of high ground on the Western side of the lake. On the third of August, the fort was besieged, and the bombardment started. Each night, siege trenches became closer to the fort, and the French artillery advanced toward their targets each day. After a period of six days of shelling, Munro finally relinquished the fort when many of British cannons and mortars exploded due to its metal fatigue. On 9 August, Frye portrayed that there was not enough of artillery so that to possess a strong defense at a time the fort was attacked by shells and shots. On 9 August, the British officers gathered at a meeting during which they agreed on the incoming of assistance from fort Edward. As the French siege trenches became closer, the British had only one choice, which was to surrender to Montcalm. The articles of capitulation allowed the soldiers to leave the fort on 9 August, and they were permitted to take their personal belongings and weapons, although they were empty of any ammunition. Additionally, Montcalm allowed the British to take one cannon with them as an act of respect for their gallant defense. The British were also required to promise that they would not engage in wars against the French at least for the upcoming

eighteenth months. In their march to fort Edward, the British were followed by about 450 French Regulars, while the wounded and sick remained inside fort William Henry (Starbuck8-11).

As the garrison moved away from the fort just after the surrender, some of the French's Indian allies rushed into the fort, and started killing and scalping violently seventeen sick and injured British soldiers in addition to some children and women. Moreover, other group of Indians stole redcoats and blankets from the dead bodies after they dug up the cemetery. On 10 August, the column of soldiers and families were attacked by the Abenakis, as they were marching down the military road toward fort Edward. The attack of the Indians was not just a matter of stealing clothes, but it turned to be unrestrained process of killing, scalping, and seizing hundreds of prisoners to be taken to Canada, and remain there for ransom. There is no clear evidence where this took place, and it is uncertain if the French armies did their service to protect their prisoners during their journey. Evidently, the French did not do their best to protect them. Luckily, Colonel Munro and his senior officers were not with the unarmed column. However, they were taken to the French camp waiting until the fort to be leveled, and then Munro was taken on a horseback to march toward fort Edward with companions about five hundreds of soldiers, wives and others on 15 August. They held with them the six-pound cannon as an honorable symbol for their surrender (Starbuck 10-2).

Ian Steel, a historian, in his book entitled *Betrayals* estimates 185 people were killed during the massacre. The latter, Steel argues, turned to be an act of taking prisoners by the Indians as a property. Steel's estimation is based on the number British troops who surrendered on 9 August. Nevertheless, many English soldiers had lost their belongings; it is evident that the majority of them escaped. On the other hand, Montcalm played a personal role in releasing about 400 prisoners from the Indian hands. A detailed listing was prepared by the French after the surrender, which contained the number of weapons and stores that

were seized inside the fort. After removing what they wanted, they burned the fort between 11 and 15 August, and then Montcalm with his forces returned to fort Carillon instead of taking the way toward fort Edward to attack it. The Indians went back to their villages where they caused the death of thousands of their own people because of the smallpox that they took with them (Starbuck 13- 4).

The surrender of Fort William Henry was a victory to the French; nevertheless, it was also a turning point. The French maltreatment of the Indians pushed them to take the decision not to fight in the French side. Thus, the French were no longer able to ask again for the Indian help, as they were able before. In 1758, the policies of the British .William Pitt, Secretary of state in Britain, helped to recall Lord Loudoun, and sent a new Commander-in-chief. Pitt also adopted new policies that were more beneficial to the colonies, and he sent an extra number of troops to the colonies in America. In July, St. Lawrence River and a water route to Canada were opened to the British after Jeffery Amherst captured Louisbourg. Additionally, Lieutenant Colonel Bradstreet put his hand successfully on Fort Frontenac, which was an important location for the provisions of goods and ships to the Western French army and for the French trade with the Native Indians (“French and Indian War” 23).

In 1759, the British success in battle was continuous. During the summer, they overthrew Fort Ticonderoga, Fort Niagara, and Crown Point. The British were able then to sail to Quebec after St. Lawrence River was opened. Although British Major General James Wolfe’s tries were not successful at the beginning in attacking the city located on the top of a cliff, he eventually in September was able to step his troops up the cliff, and reach a flat space outside the city. Then, Wolfe’s army struggled against General Montcalm’s French army, and they won the battle. The British took control of Quebec, and the French took the way toward Montreal (“French and Indian War” 24).

It was the destruction of the French troops in November 1759 that made it to be the last blow for the French. They could not retake Quebec because of the severe shortage of provisions. The year of 1760 witnessed the British control of Montreal and the end of the war between France and Britain in North America. However, in other parts of the world, some countries were still at the war. When the British captured Havana, Cuba, then Spain entered the war. Eventually, the Treaty of Paris that was held in 1763 marked the formal end of the war, which resulted in French loss of all of their territories in North America East of the Mississippi River to be taken by the British, except for New Orleans (“French and Indian War” 24-5).

### **1.7 The Emergence of American National Identity**

The concept of Identity is difficult to define and measure because it holds varied aspects. Identity is the sense of the self of a particular group or an individual. It is the outcome of self-consciousness about one’s distinct qualities that differentiate him from the others. One group of scholars defined identity as something: “refers to the images of individuality and distinctiveness (‘selfhood’) held and projected by an actor, and formed (and modified over time) through relations with significant ‘others’” (qtd in. Huntington21). When people interact with others, they have to prove themselves via their relations with them, and determine what make them different and similar from them (21).

The stimuli of the emergence of an American national identity are complicated. According to Richard Merritt’s analysis, American symbols in colonial newspapers heightened at the beginning of the war of Jenkins’s Ear (1739-1742) and the French and Indian or the Seven Years war (1756-1763). During these wars, the American sense was declined; however, it emerged again at the end of the wars. Nonetheless, the colonists shared those wars as an experience. The American colonists lived under a continuous reality of war

and the threat of war. Those wars enabled the colonists to learn successfully the ways of combat and the organization of militia forces. They also became self-confident combatants in comparison to the performance of their enemies and their English allies. Hence, nations are established through wars, which is affirmed with S.M. Grant who states that warfare takes a central place in the American national experience (Huntington 109-110).

The American Identity is built over two propositions that are partially true; however, they are referred as the complete truth. The first proposition is that America is a country of immigrants, and the second one is that the American identity is displayed through a set of political principles, or the American creed. These two claims contain much credibility. The creed and immigrants are regarded as two main elements of the national American identity. However, they are partial identities because neither one nor both represent the whole reality about America. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the settlers, who most of them belong to the British Isles, created the American society. The culture, values, and institutions they brought with them were what laid the foundation for the development of America in the later centuries. They viewed America with regard to ethnicity, race, culture, and the most initial aspect religion. To justify their independence from the European countries in the Eighteenth century, they were obliged to define America in terms of ideologies. These four elements were part of the American identity throughout the nineteenth century; however, in the later years of that century, the ethnic element had been expanded by the inclusion of the Irish, Germans, and Scandinavians. By World War II, ethnicity was no longer used as a defining component of the American identity due to the assimilation of large numbers of Southern and Eastern European immigrants into the American society. As an outcome of the immigration act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Movement, the American identity turned to be defined in terms of culture and creed in the 1970s. However, the Anglo-protestant culture was

eliminated as the commitment to the creed became the central definer of the American identity (Huntington 37-8).

Hence, the American people are distinguished and united by their belief in the political principles of liberty, democracy, equality, individualism, the rule of law, human rights, and private property, which are embodied in the American creed. This latter began to emerge in time of the instability of relations between the settlers and Britain over issues of taxes, trade, military security, and the parliament's authority over the colonies. Therefore, the idea of independence seemed to be the only solution for those problems of the settlements. In spite of that, independence could be explained by the claim of the illegitimacy of the rule of one people over other people because Americans and British were almost one in reference to their race, ethnicity, language, and culture. Hence, the political principles were the alternative rationale for the American Independence (Huntington 46-7).

Their rationale was based on two forms. Firstly, Americans claimed that the English concepts of law, liberty, and government by consent were not strictly respected by the British government. Secondly, the Americans were working on protecting those values from the British government attempts to destroy them. As long as their relations with Britain grew worse, Americans began to adopt liberty, equality, and individual rights as more universalistic and Enlightenment self-evident truths. Hence, the creedal definition of the American identity came to existence, which was displayed in the Declaration of Independence and other documents in the 1770s and 1780s. Based on that creedal definition, Americans argue that America is an exceptional country because it is built over principles, and it is a 'universal' nation for the reason that its principles are workable to all other human nations (Huntington 47-8).

Moreover, the frontier also is regarded as a central component of the American identity for more than 250 years. Because of the moving action of the frontier, the American identity

was not linked to any particular place. The American communities shaped during the phase of the frontier. The “virgin land” of the west was the most desirable land for the Americans, which is part of the myth of the frontier by which their national consciousness pushed for continual migration (Huntington 52).

## 1.8 Conclusion

Although the notion of American Exceptionalism begins as a religious belief, it spreads to other fields: politics, economy, and literature. American literature is unique and different from the European literature, which starts taking its American national colours during the 19<sup>th</sup> c, particularly during the era of American Romanticism. In this era, American literature is characterized by its celebration of nature and the individual. Hence, American romantics use the concept of ‘sublime’, which refers to its great nature, and the concept of ‘Noble Savage’, which refers to the American Indians. The latter two concepts are part of the American national literature that emerges out of the spread feelings of American nationalism after the American Revolution proved the power of America as a nation. Some American writers use historical novels to highlight the idea of American exceptionalism and for other purposes. It is a combination of reality and fiction, which tends to reconstruct past events so that to affect the present via history. The latter is the focus of New Historicism theory that focuses on analyzing the text through its sociohistorical context during which the novel was written.

In addition to that, aspects of American exceptionalism are discussed in Turner’s frontier thesis. It regards the frontier as an exceptional element that contributed to the creation of the American individual where the settlers were fused together with the Native Indians. Cooper’s adaptation of American national aspects in *The Last of the Mohicans* is the result of the period during which the novel is written. It is the era of good feelings when the victory of

the war of 1812 over the British , contributed in the rise of good feelings to the settlers who then asked for more independence from the Old World, which is displayed in the Monroe Doctrine. On contrary, America was under the threat of disunity due to the issue of slavery between the South and North. Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* is a historical novel, which depicts the third year of the French and Indian war in a fictional way. He adopts one of the main events in that war, which is the Massacre of fort William Henry. It took place in Lake George where the French's allies attacked the British who were in their way to Fort Edward after they surrendered Fort Henry. The American creed and the frontier are two main components of the American identity. However, what remains today, as a definer of America is its principles of liberty, individualism, and the belief in American Exceptionalism that insists on making those principles universal. Making American values universal because they are exceptional will lead to the vanishing of American exceptionalism itself because nothing will distinguish Americans from others.

## **Chapter Two: Local History, the Frontier, and Native Culture in Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans***

### **Introduction**

American exceptionalism is a major aspect in Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, which characterizes its plot, setting, and characters. The political, economic, and cultural contexts of the 19th c influenced Cooper's historical novel that was written at that time. The U.S. victory of the war of 1812 in New Orleans contributed to the rising the emotions of American nationalism and power. However, its economic impacts on Cooper's family and financial loss during the panic of 1819 led him to reflect the negative consequences of foreign intervention in America in his novel through using fiction in the history of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the French and Indian war. The latter reflects the same idea of the necessity of American Nationalism and the prohibition of the foreign interference. Hence, this chapter will extract aspects of American exceptionalism in Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* through examining America's history, the frontier, and the Native Indians.

### **2.1 The French and Indian War (1757)**

#### **2.1.1 Fact and Fiction in *The Last of the Mohicans***

Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* is a historical novel in which both elements of history and fiction are adopted. The events of the novel occur in the summer of August 1757 in the state of nowadays New York. The start is at the English Fort of Edward near Lake George where the English officer named Heyward is appointed to take the two sisters, Alice and Cora, into Fort William Henry to meet their father there. They are led by a Huron Indian named Magua who tends to lead them to another way. After they marched a few miles in the

woods, they meet Hawkeye and his Mohican friends, Uncas and his father Chingachgook, who discover the identity of Magua and his evil intention. However, Magua has fled before they could capture him, then Hawkeye and the Mohicans decide to lead the party to their destination. After they found a cavern to spend the night there, they are attacked by group of Indian Hurons who are defeated by the skillful Scout and his Mohican friends. This battle leads to the compliment of the Mohicans's powder, thus they are obliged to leave the sisters and Heyward alone in the Cavern, and take the rivers towards Fort William Henry, and ask for aids. Subsequently, Magua discovers the cavern, and kidnaps Alice, Cora, and Heyward. After examining the traces of their footsteps in the woods, the Mohicans and the scout find the Hurons' encampment where they hide their captives. They succeed in attacking the Hurons, and release Heyward and the sisters. Finally, their journey ended when they reach Fort William Henry, and enable the sisters to meet their father.

Meanwhile, the French soldiers besiege fort William Henry and violent attacks are directed towards it. At the end, Colonel Munro decides to surrender the Fort, after he negotiated with Colonel Montcalm, and knew that aids are not coming from Fort Edward. In the day of the surrender, the British settlers are massacred by the French allies, the Indian Hurons, when they were in their path in the forest. The Hurons kill most of the settlers, and scalp them, while Magua kidnaps again Alice and Cora to take revenge from Munro. Alice is taken to a Huron village along the borders of Canada, while Cora is taken to another village where its Delaware inhabitants will hide her. Thanks to the help of David Gamut, a British preacher, who followed them, Hawkeye and the Mohicans are enabled to free Alice from the hands of the Hurons. Unfortunately, the negotiation with the Delawares fails to free Cora, and Magua happily is able to retake his captive and leave. The Vengeance of the Mohicans is high, and hug number of warriors are gathered to search for Magua and free Cora. In a battle between Magua's group of warriors and the Scout's group, Cora is killed by a Huron Indian

after she tried to flee through a mountain, and Uncas is killed by Magua by a knife in his chest. Although the Mohicans kill most of the Hurons, they were unhappy by their triumph after the death of Uncas and Cora.

The characters that Cooper uses in his novel are a mixture of fictional and real characters. Hawkeye or the Scout is the protagonist of this novel and the other Leatherstocking tales, who is a fictional character and the American representative. He is born in Scotland, but he is raised by the Mohicans, an Indian tribe in North America where he lives with two main Mohicans, Uncas and Chingachgook. The two latter are imaginary characters, who go with Hawkeye to lead Major Heyward, Alice, and Cora into Fort William Henry. Major Duncan Heyward is not a real character; however, he is an imaginary British officer, who plays the role of the leader of the party to Fort Henry. Additionally, Alice and Cora are fictional characters, who represent the two daughters of Colonel Munro. In their journey, they are followed by David Gamut, a master of singing and a Christian preacher, and he is a passive imaginary character although he contributes to the release of the two sisters from their enemy, Magua. The latter is the antagonist of the novel, who is interested in taking revenge from Colonel Munro by kidnapping his daughters. Cooper created this character as the leader of the Indian Hurons, French's allies, who later on commit the Massacre of Fort William Henry. On the other hand, Cooper uses some names of historical figures during the colonial period of America. Although the name is not exactly the same, the name of Colonel Edmund Munro in the novel is inspired from the real British officer of Fort William Henry, Lieutenant Colonel George Monro during the Seven Years War. During that period, Fort Edward at Lake George is headed by General Daniel Webb. Likewise, he is adopted as a character in the novel, who also is the officer of fort Edward. Besides, General Marquis de Montcalm is a non-fictional character, who takes the same role in reality and in the novel. He is a French Colonel, who leads his troops towards Fort William Henry to besiege it, and defeat Colonel

Monro. Eventually, Cooper illustrates one real Indian character, Tamenund. The latter is an old man and the chief of the Delaware tribe, who is known for his wisdom and faith. In the novel, he plays the same role as the leader of the Delawares, who kept Cora with them as the captive of Magua.

The events of the novel take place in North America, particularly in a real setting known as the frontier. It spreads from the borders of Canada to the state of New York along the Hudson River. The journey of the two sisters and Heyward from Fort Edward towards Fort William Henry is a fictional event. The attack of the Hurons on the party of Heyward, the Scout, and the two Mohicans in the cavern is a non-real event that is succeeded by the kidnapping of the two sisters, Alice and Cora, by Magua. Consequently, the success of the scout and his Indian friends in realizing the two sisters and reaching Fort Henry is also a fictional narration. Furthermore, none of the conversations between the characters in the novel is real; however, they are from Cooper's flight of imagination.

On the other hand, Cooper uses a main event in American history that is the Massacre of Fort William Henry on 9 August 1757. However, Cooper slightly changed some details of the real event. In the novel, Colonel Munro negotiates with Colonel Montcalm before the surrender; he convinces him about the absence of aids from Fort Edward. In the day of the surrender, Munro departs with his two daughters and the other group of settlers. Magua and his Huron warriors rush through them when they were in their way into Fort Edward, and start killing and scalping the British settlers. In the midst of the scene, Munro runs towards the French camps to ask for help and protection from the Indian Hurons. This massacre results in the killing of a huge number of people. In a footnote in chapter 18, Cooper estimates the number of the killed people: "The accounts of the number who fell in this unhappy affair vary between five and fifteen hundred" (166). Before the day of the surrender, the French are happy and celebrate their triumph over the English, dancing and drinking alcohol, while the

French allies, the Hurons, are marginalized although they fought in their side. They are even alerted by the French officers from taking their revenge from Munro when they discovered their intentions.

In historical agendas, Colonel Munro does not accompany his daughters and the party at the day of the surrender; however, he remains in a French camp waiting until the Fort is empty. Before the agreement of the surrender, Colonel Munro signed on a set of articles of capitulations in which the British will not engage in any wars against them for the upcoming 18 months. Then, they are followed by about 450 French Regulars in their march to Fort Edward (Starbuck 10). The group is attacked by the Abenakis, Native Indians, and not by the Hurons as mentioned in the novel. They do not just kill, scalp, and steal the British settlers, but they kidnap some of them to be taken to their villages along the borders of Canada whether to be ransomed or enslaved. Differently from Cooper's estimation of those who were killed in the massacre, some historians estimate that about 185 were killed while the rest escaped or were kidnapped (13). Thus, there is an exaggeration in the number given by Cooper. In the novel, the act of kidnapping is embodied with Alice and Cora, who are taken by Magua as captives towards their villages along the borders of Canada. Again, the latter scene is a fictional event, which leads to a battle between the Mohicans, the Delawares, and the Hurons in order to free the two sisters. During this scene, Cora and Uncas are killed, and the Indian Mohicans are the victors. Cooper ends the novel by the funeral of Cora and Uncas. As a remark, names of the Indian tribes used by Cooper are real which all exist in the regions of North America.

## 2.1.2 The Role of Fiction in the French and Indian War and its Relation to U.S.

### Independence

The political circumstances during the 19th c in America contributed to the formation of Cooper's *The last of the Mohicans*. During the time of writing the novel, Americans witnessed a mixture of feelings: sense of nationalism and disunity. The victory of Andrew Jackson over the British in the Battle of 1812 evoked a sense of nationalism and strength among the Americans who believed in their destiny to be united and separated from the Old World. Hence, the Monroe Doctrine (1823) was declared to prohibit the interference of the European countries in the United States, which in turn, it would not also interfere in the European affairs. This political document asserted the sovereignty and total independence of America over its internal and external policies. On contrary, the United States was threatened by the danger of disunity and a civil war. The problem of slavery between the North and the South increased each time the U.S acquired new territory beyond the frontier. Thus, the interests of both the North and the South might lead to the division of the country and series of wars. Hence, Cooper is one of the first writers who used his romantic literature as a means to evoke a feeling of American nationalism through using the history of the third year of the French and Indian war.

Cooper's narration of the French and Indian war reflects the way the Native Indians are manipulated by the European settlers. Before the white men had entered the New World, the Mohicans are the owners of their land from the big river until the shores of the Salt Lake after the Alligewi and the Maquas are driven by the Mohicans to live in the forests. However, the Dutch as the first comers, who meet the Mohicans, abuses the Native Indians in the way they give them alcohol until they lose consciousness, and start pushing them back from their lands. The white settlers care only for their interests, which are acquiring lands and practicing

trade without paying any attention to the situation of the American Indians and their families. In a conversation between Chingachgook, the oldest chief of the Mohicans, and Hawkeye, who is a white man, Cooper displays how the Native Indians are deprived from their land:

‘The first palefaces who came among us spoke no English. They came in a large canoe, when my fathers had buried the tomahawk with the red men around them. [...]’ then, Haw-eye, we were one people, and we were happy. The salt lake gave us it’s fish, the wood it’s deer, and the air its birds. We took wives who bore us children; we worshipped the Great Spirit; and we kept the Maquas beyond the sound of our songs of triumph [...]

‘My tribe is the grandfather of nations, but I am an unmixed man. The blood of chiefs is in my veins, where it must stay for ever. The Dutch landed, and gave my people the fire-water; they drank until the heavens and the earth seemed to meet, and they foolishly thought they had found the Great Spirit. Then they parted with their land. Foot by foot they were driven back from the shores, until I, that am a chief and a Sagamore, have never seen the sun shine but through the trees, and have never visited the graves of my fathers.’ (Cooper 23)

This dialogue reflects the Native Indians’ hospitality and faith. Instead of preventing the European settlers from entering their lands, the American Indians show a kind of hospitality, and live with them on the same ground. They even teach them how to survive in the American wilderness, and live in harmony with nature. In contrast, the Dutch start applying their evil plans by providing alcohol to the people of the same race of Chingachgook and taking their lands by force. The white men never cares about those who helped them when they came firstly to the New World, and they did not accept to live with them on the same land as if they were superior than them. Chingachgook says that he is even unable to

visit the graves of his ancestors, which displays how the palefaces are deprived of human senses, and how they badly treated the Indians.

Similarly, the English settlers use the same means, i.e. alcohol, to damage the Hurons, a Native Indian tribe. Magua is punished twice because of alcohol: by the people of his tribe, the Hurons, as well as by Munro. The white settlers in Canada teach Magua to drink alcohol, which leads him to behave badly, and be expelled by the Hurons. Still, he reaches the forest, and joins the enemy of his own tribe, the Mohawks. Colonel Munro is the leader of the latter tribe, who makes a law to prohibit any Native Indian to drink alcohol; otherwise, he will be punished. Again, Magua becomes addicted to alcohol, which leads Munro to punish him violently by whipping his back in front of the white men and Native Indians.

The law made by Munro is not just. While the white men are free to drink fire-water that they brought it with them, the red Indians are prohibited from drinking it. The insult and injuries that Magua receives from Munro, lead him to think of taking revenge by kidnapping his two daughters and marrying one of them. During the time Cora and Alice are kidnapped by Magua, he explains to Cora the injuries her father causes to him:

‘was it the fault of Le Renard that his head was not made of rock? Who gave him the fire-water? Who made him a villain? ’T was the palefaces\_ the people of your own colour.’

[...]. ‘listen!’ repeated the Indian, resuming his earnest attitude.

‘when his English and French father’s dug up the hatchet, Le Renard struck the war-posy of the Mohawks, and went out against his own nation. The palefaces have driven the redskins from their hunting-grounds, and now, when they fight, a white man leads the way. The Old Chief at Horican, your father, was the great captain of our war party. He said to the Mohawks, Do this, and

Do that, and he was minded. He made a law, that if an Indian swallowed the fire-water, and came into the cloth wigwams of his warriors, it should not be forgotten. Magua foolishly opened mouth, and the hot liquor led him into the cabin of Munro. What did the grey-head? Let his daughter say?

‘He forget not his words, and did justice, by punishing the offender,’ said the undaunted daughter.

[...] ‘is it justice to make evil, and then punish for it? Magua was not himself. It was the fire water that spoke and acted for him, but Munro did not believe it. The Huron chief was tied up before all the palefaced warriors, and whipped like a dog.’ (Cooper 91-2)

This imaginary dialogue between Magua and Cora exhibits the problems of disunity among the Native Indians that the European colonizers cause to them. Magua is expelled from his own tribe, the Hurons, due to the fire-water brought by the Europeans, who then finds himself at the side of the English settlers, and fights against his own people. The English and French colonizers form allies from different Indian tribes. For example, the Hurons are French allies, while the Mohicans are English allies. At the end, the American Indians become enemies and fighters against each other. Their disunity leads to the loss of their lands and pushing them westward until they disappear in the woods. Cooper’s point of disunity is raised to point out the dangers that could be done by the division of the people of the same country like what happens during his own time when both the North and the South of America is at the door of a civil war due to the issue of slavery and Westward expansion. The story of the division of the Native Indians might be repeated with the Americans if they do not look at each other as one nation, and share their interests. In addition, the Europeans’ mal-treatment to the Native Indians reminds the reader of the necessity of independence from the European colonization and building their own nation.

Moreover, the English settlers in America are not well protected by their original country, Britain. In their Journey from Fort Edward to Fort William Henry, the British settlers: Heyward, Alice, and Cora are sent without soldiers to protect them in their way in the woods. General Webb do not send any military aids to Colonel Munro and his companions when the Fort is besieged by the French forces. Subsequently, Munro with his party are massacred in the day of the departure from the Fort by their enemies, the Mingoes. Webb do not even rescue the massacred people, or sent troops to free the two sisters from the hands of Magua. When Munro and Heyward are negotiating with Montcalm before they surrender the Fort, he shows them a paper from Webb to tell them that he will not send any military reinforcement. Cooper depicts the disappointment of Munro:

The veteran seized the offered paper, without waiting for Duncan to translate the speech, and with an eagerness that betrayed how important he deemed it's contents.<sup>101</sup> As his eye passed hastily over the words, his countenance changed from its look of military pride to one of deep chagrin; his lip began to quiver; and suffering the paper to fall from his hand, his head dropped upon his chest, like that of a man whose hopes were withered at a single blow. (Cooper 151- 2)

Colonel Munro and his officers realize that they should be self-dependent, and forget their English pride. They join the Scout and his two Mohican friends in searching for the two sisters after they have been kidnapped by Magua instead of going to Fort Edward and asking for help.

Furthermore, Magua and his Huron warriors realize once again that they have been manipulated by the French. Before the day of the surrender, the French are celebrating their triumph over the English by playing music, drinking alcohol, and dancing, while the Mingoes are left aside without joining them. When Montcalm knows Magua's intention of taking revenge from Munro, he does not care about his will and injuries; however, he tries to

convince him to abandon the idea. Hence, the French maltreatment of their Indian allies leads them to lose their support. The French colonizers afterwards witness series of defeats by the British soldiers due to their loss of one of their big allies, the Hurons. After that, the British settlers controlled most of the areas in the New World. After the French and Indian war ended, the British were proud of their victory and exceptional strength, which led them to think of independence from Great Britain, and create their own country. Absolutely, the American Revolution started and brought national pride to the Americans. Cooper sheds light particularly on the third year of the French and Indian war in order to confirm the necessity of independence from the Europeans who use the Native Indians and the settlers only as a means to achieve their interests even at the expense of their life.

Cooper's family financial losses after the war of 1812 led him to think of the dangers of the foreign intervention on the American economy. To convey this idea to the people of his own time, he used fiction in the historical event of the French and Indian war. The intervention of the British in the American economic politics during the wars over Ocean commerce with France is similar to the past events when the British and the French raise wars against each other in the New World in order to acquire more lands and practice trade. The intervention of the French and British forces in the affairs of the Native Americans caused them the loss of their land and rivers during the process of westward expansion, after it was a source of economy to them. In a discussion between Chingachgook and the Scout, Cooper depicts how nature provides the American Indians with food: "[...]-'then, Hawk-eye, we were one people, and we were happy. The salt lake gave us its fish, the wood its deer, and the air its birds.'" (Cooper 22). However, it is before the white men enter the New World, and take everything as a property to them. After the white men settled in the New World, they are cautious to take the lands from the American Indians through pushing them back. During the time Cora is a captive of the Delaware tribe, she tries to convince their chief, Tamenund, to

free her, but he keeps reminding her how they were living before the palefaces come and take their lands:

[...] ‘It was but yesterday’, rejoined the aged man, with touching pathos, ‘that the children of the Lenape were masters of the world. The fishes of the Salt Lake, the birds, the beasts, and the Mengwe<sup>149</sup> of the woods owned them for Sagamores.’

[...] ‘I know that the palefaces are a proud and hungry race. I know that they claim not only to have the earth but that the meanest of their colour is better than the sachems of the red man. [...]’ (Cooper 287-8)

In this fictional conversation, Cooper depicts the White settlers as a hungry race, who come for economic advantages at the expense of the indigenous people of the land.

Besides, Cooper draws how the fate of the United States’ intervention in the international wars between France and Britain could be parallel to the American Indians’ intervention in the wars between the British and the French settlers. The United States’ intervention in the war of 1812 during the Napoleonic wars affects its economy in the way that the value of the American currency decreased, which leads to the panic of 1819. Similarly, the interference of the American Indians in the wars of the British and the French colonists leads to their disappearance. Like Uncas, who stands on the British side during the French and the Indian war, dies, after he tries to free Cora from Magua. In the same way, a huge number of Hurons die in the wars between the two European forces. Worse than that, the American Indians find themselves fighting against each other instead of uniting each other, and protect their lands from the foreigners. Hence, Cooper entitles his novel as *The Last of the Mohicans* as if it is the main idea during the French and Indian war. The latter is the cause behind the end of one of the oldest and honorable races, the Mohicans, in the American world

after Uncas's death who leaves his father, Chingachgook, as the last of that race during the wars between Britain and France. Thus, The United States might face the same fate of the Indians if the problem of slavery is still continuous between the North and the South of America.

Cooper's reflection of the point of nationalism is a result of the spread culture at the time of writing his novel in the 19th c. During his lifetime, people began to refer to themselves as Americans, and feel nationalism towards their country, especially after the victory of the war of 1812. People started to feel the strength of their country and pride of their nationality. Hence, some writers incorporated national patriotism in their literary works. Cooper is one of those writers who present the whole country in his literature through bringing some historical events to the present. Cooper uses the word "Americans" in some of his imaginary conversations between the characters even though the American individual did not exist during the French and Indian war. He refers to the American individual during this war, which foreshadows for the American Revolution in order to link the pride of this war that contributed in bringing American independence with the American himself, and evoke a sense of American nationalism. After Heyward has shown much courage and skills in tracing the footsteps of the Indians to free Cora, the Scout admired him:

[...], 'and it may be your gift to lead armies, at some future day, ag'in these imps the Mingoes. You may here see the philosophy of an Indian fight. It consists mainly in a ready hand, a quick eye, and a good cover. Now if you had a company of the Royal Americans here, in what manner would you set them to work in this business?' (Cooper 312)

Nationalism is also embodied in the deeds of the American Indians and European settlers. The English allies, the Mohicans, are faithful to their English leaders, and they even put their life at risk in order to save the two English daughters of Munro from their enemies,

the Hurons. The Scout and his two Mohican friends keep defending the two daughters and Heyward from the wilderness as if they were one entity. Major Heyward also tries to take the two daughters to their father, and he even engages in quarrels against the Mingoes to rescue them. In a similar way, the Hurons fight in the French side as if they were fighting for their interests, and they even sacrifice their life in trying to defeat the English, although they later on rebel against the will of the French to stop their plans to massacre the English.

## **2.2 The Frontier as an American Exceptional Setting**

The frontier is regarded as a purely American setting used by numerous American writers, especially romantic authors. America is characterized by its moveable frontier that does not exist in any other country because it is merely an American experience when the European settlers started acquiring each time new areas towards the west. More than that, the frontier is not a normal place; however, it is an exceptional area due to its unique natural landscapes and the hidden symbols it holds. The whole plot of *The Last of the Mohicans* takes place in the frontier that was intentionally used by Cooper in order to share American national historical experience of the third year of the French and Indian war.

### **2.2.1 Nature in the Frontier**

In the novel, the American frontier is portrayed by its hard nature. The events of the novel are surrounded by the area between the head-waters of the Hudson and the adjacent lakes, more specifically from the borders of Canada, deep within the borders of the neighboring province of New York. In this area, the French and British settlers find it difficult to move smoothly with their military equipment, which in return makes it harder to conquer the lands and establish their forts. From the severe nature of the mountains to the hard roads

between the two edges of Lake George, the English settlers: Major Heyward, Cora, Alice, and David Gamut, find themselves ignorant of how to treat with such wildness that is covered by thick forests and rivers in their journey from Fort Edward to Fort William Henry. Because they did not deal with such rugged nature in Europe, they are obliged to ask for the help of the Native Indians. Hence, Heyward and the two sisters are guided by a Native Indian named Magua. Even though they discover that their Indian companion is a French ally, they could not travel without a Native Indian. Therefore, they continue their way with another Native Indian who belongs to the Mohicans tribe: Hawkeye, Chingachgook, and his son Uncas. Cooper uses his hook in his first lines of chapter one to attract the reader's attention about the peculiarities and hardship of the place:

IT WAS A FEATURE peculiar to the colonial wars of North America that the toils and dangers of the wilderness were to be encountered before the adverse hosts could meet. A wide and apparently an impervious boundary of forests severed the possessions of the hostile provinces of France and England. The hardy colonist, and the trained European who fought at his side, frequently expended months in struggling against the rapids of the streams or in effecting the rugged passes of the mountains, in quest of an opportunity to exhibit their courage in a more martial conflict. But emulating the patience and self-denial of the practised native warriors, they learned to overcome every difficulty [...] (1)

Cooper himself admits the exceptionalism of American wilderness that faces the European settlers as the first enemy in front of them. Thus, the French and British provinces are hardly possessed by those colonists who spend a long time in struggling with the hardships of nature.

The beauty of the American nature is another impressive characteristic. Cooper succeeds in portraying the harmony between the different elements of the frontier where the

water of the rivers or lakes reflect the dark colours of the tall trees, which throw its leaves on the surface of the waters. Silence spreads all over the forests, and could only be broken by the sounds of birds or the low voices of men. The atmosphere is full of vapours that arise from the fountains. The scene during Heyward is waiting with the two sisters for their Indian guide at the encampment of Webb, Cooper draw an expressive picture of the nature with his words:

The vast canopy of woods spread itself to the margin of the river, overhanging the water, and shadowing its dark current with a deeper hue. The rays of the sun were beginning to grow less fierce, and the intense heat of the day was lessened, as the cooler vapours of the springs and fountains rose above their leafy beds and rested in the atmosphere. Still that breathing silence, which marks the drowsy sultriness of an American landscape in July, pervaded the secluded spot, interrupted only by the low voices of the men , the occasional and lazy tap of a woodpecker, [...] (18)

It is the sublime of this picturesque place where hug feelings of admiration and horror might grow with the one who watches it. Despite the hard nature of the frontier and its dangers for the life of its visitors, its beautiful landscapes cannot be neglected. While Heyward, Hawkeye, and the two Mohicans stop beside a river after they have been on their way on the canoe, and saw black objects collected at a spot, Alice and Cora gaze in an astonishing way on the stream and the trees; nevertheless, they are in a dangerous situation. Cooper describes: “It seemed, in truth, to be a spot devoted to seclusion, and the sisters imbibed a soothing impression of security as they gazed upon its romantic though not unappalling beauties” (Cooper 38). He reflects the deep effect of nature on the two sisters while they feel insecurity because of their fear from the attack of the Native Indians who spread all over the woods.

Moreover, the real inhabitants of the frontier are the American Indians who have different physical and moral features. As Native Indians, Chingachgook and Uncas’ physical

appearances astonish Major Heyward and the two sisters as they are together hidden in a cavern. The effect of nature is remarkable in the way they dress themselves and on their facial features. Their fierce looking and form of the forehead resemble the qualities of a Noble man. Those features can be only found with the American Indians who are part of the frontier. Furthermore, the Indian customs and behaviours are not undifferentiated from those of the European colonists. The sense of masculinity is high with the Indian warriors who regard the act of descending to a woman by an Indian warrior as an insult. They also regard hospitality as a sacred trait, although they do not have much to possess in the wilderness. Uncas tries to help the sisters in holding their objects when they reach a cavern to hide inside it; however, with a little power and sense of highness that reflects his unwillingness to serve women. Through monitoring Uncas' actions, Heyward knows the reasons behind his actions, which Cooper demonstrates:

Uncas' acted as attendant to the females, performing all the little offices within his power with a mixture of dignity and anxious grace that served to amuse Heyward, who well knew that it was an utter innovation on the Indian customs which forbid their warriors to descend to any menial employment, especially in favour of their women. As the rites of hospitality were, however, considered sacred among them, this little departure from the dignity of manhood excited no audible comment. (Cooper 46)

Besides, the American Indians are not corrupted by civilization. They are Noble Savages because they remain faithful to their values and dignity and free from the degenerations of civilization. Chingachgook and Uncas disappear even before the industrial and technical developments who were the last two of their Mohican tribe to remain only Chingachgook after Uncas' death. The situation of Chingachgook is transformed through Cooper's lenses when he is with his companions at the cavern: "In the meanwhile the gravity of Chingachgook remained immovable. He had seated himself more within the circle of light,

where the frequent uneasy glances of his guests were better enabled to separate the natural expression of his face from the artificial terrors of the war-paint” (Cooper 47). Hence, nature is rooted inside and outside of the Indians who remain in their usual status after the developed materials are brought to them by the Europeans, which reflects the deep relationship between nature and the American Indians.

### **2.2.2 Symbols of the Frontier**

For the Americans, the frontier is a symbol for heroism. The frontier is the stage where the third year of the French and Indian war occurs, which displays actions of courage and sacrifice. When Hawkeye and his Indian companions meet the party of Heyward in the woods with an Indian enemy, they do not hesitate in alarming them from him and offering their help to guide them to Fort William Henry although they knew that the task is dangerous, and they might be attacked by the party of Magua. When they are beside a cavern to spend the night there, Hawkeye and his followers are attacked by the Hurons, who then are defeated by the courageous manners of Hawkeye and his Indian friends in order to save the women’s life. Although the Indian Hurons outnumber the Indian Mohicans, the battle is won by the latter group, who keep fighting until the end of their powder, and kill most of the Hurons. To be a hero means to sacrifice your life to save others’ life. Uncas and Hawkeye save the life of each other several times against the dangers of the wilderness. In a dialogue between Hawkeye and Heyward, the former admits his willingness and of his companions to protect the life of each other: ““life is an obligation which friends often owe to each other in the wilderness. I dare say I may have served Uncas some such turn myself before now; and I very well remember that he has stood between me and death five different times- three times from the Mingoes, once in crossing the Horican , and –” ( Cooper 63). It is a common trait among the Native

Indians to sacrifice their life for those they love or they are faithful to them. They acquire that trait from the nature of the frontier, which produces a man who does not know fear.

The hardships of nature and the threat of the Indian Natives leave only two choices for those who live there whether to face them like a hero, or die. When Major Heyward, Alice, and Cora are left alone in the cavern without the scout and his Indian friends who have left into Fort William Henry to ask for help, Heyward realizes the necessity to be a hero like Hawkeye and the two Mohicans who show much courage. In this sense, Heyward says: ““with two such examples of courage before him, a man would be ashamed to prove other than a hero”” (Cooper 72). The Native Indians’ courage become a source of admiration and pride for Heyward, who regards them a model to be followed.

The frontier is also associated with freedom. In the settlers’ mind, the American frontier is a secure place to free themselves, and escape the oppression in the Old World. The frontier is also a place of freedom for the Native Indians where they could escape the encounter with the European troops, and free themselves from the civilization that the settlers have brought with them. The English settlers are represented by Heyward, Alice, David, Cora, and Colonel Munro, who come to America to feel freedom and acquire land. David feels free in singing his religious songs without fear to be punished from any higher power. Because life in the wilderness is not restricted by any rules, Munro and his English troops are free to establish their Forts, and fight anyone who threatens their interests. In their journey to Fort William Henry, Heyward and the two sisters see the wilderness as a place to be free from the hands of the French and their Indian allies. They hide themselves in a cavern to escape being captured by their enemies. With the help of Hawkeye and the two Mohicans, they escape the danger of the night, and find a cavern to hide there. As part of the frontier, the rivers are another source used by the Indians to escape being captives by their enemies. After losing their powder in the quarrels against the Hurons, Hawkeye, Uncas, and Chingachgook plunge

in the river beside the cavern in order to go, and ask for aid from Munro. After this act of escape, Cooper comments: “As there was nothing improbable to an Indian in the manner of the escape, Magua admitted the truth of what he had heard with a readiness that afforded additional evidence how little he would prize such worthless captives” (Cooper 81). Hence, Cooper alludes that the manner of escape is part of the native Indians’ nature.

Furthermore, the frontier represents the interaction between religion and nature. The European settlers look at the frontier as the chosen land for them to practice freely their Christianity far away from the oppression of the Anglican Church. The exceptional harmony between the elements of nature and the silence that spreads all over its parts amazes the settlers who view it as the right place to connect with God. David Gamut is the most religious character among the members of his party. All along the journey, he is interested in reading his religious books, and he has never been engaged in wars, except when he struggles with an Indian warrior to save Heyward’s life who is prisoned with the two sisters in an encampment of the Hurons. When Gamut is in the cavern with Heyward, the two sisters, Hawkeye, and the Mohicans, he starts singing his religious songs, which shows a natural interaction which Cooper displays:

The book was opened at a hymn not ill-adapted to their situation, and in which the poet, no longer goaded by his desire to excel the inspired king of Israel, had discovered some chastened and respectable powers. [...], and the sacred song proceeded, after the indispensable preliminaries of the pitch-pipe and the tune had been duly attended to by the methodical David. The air was solemn and slow. At times, it rose to the fullest compass of the rich voices of the females, who hung over their little book in holy excitement, and again it sank so low that the rushing of the waters ran through their melody like a hollow accompaniment. The natural taste and true ear of David governed and modified the sounds to suit their confined cavern,

every crevice and cranny of which was filled with the thrilling notes of their flexible voices. (49)

It seems that the religious volumes that David sang affects the cavern and the lakes beside it, and turns it from inanimate object to an animate place where the spirits could rest. Besides, the relationship between nature and religion is a friendship relationship. Nature offers help for those who hold religious belief whenever they need it. People could depend on nature to feed and hide themselves from the enemies. When Heyward and his companions are left alone in the wilderness after the battle between the Mohicans and the Hurons, they returned to the cavern to hide and wait for help as if the cavern is a place provided by providence to rescue them. To calm down the sisters, Heyward says: “let us conceal ourselves in the cavern, and trust the rest to providence” (Cooper 71). This manifestation from Heyward reflects his belief in the bond between the cavern as a natural place and religion. Moreover, he expresses much belief in the religious signs; Heyward appeases the anxious Cora that it will not be a danger because the cavern will be a friend. Heyward says: “besides the cavern will prove his friend. Let him indulge his passion, since it may be done without hazard” (73). This quote demonstrates the religious symbols the frontier holds in the minds of its inhabitants, which makes it an exceptional place.

### **2.3 Natty Bumppo: the Typical American Hero**

Natty Bumppo, or Hawkeye is the protagonist of the novel, and he is the one who represents the American National Identity. The American individual is unique and different in the sense that he is shaped out of a set of elements. The wilderness of the frontier provides the European settlers with American creeds so that a new identity emerged. The Native Indians also provide the settlers with set of skills and principles to survive in the wilderness, which

influence their character. Hence, the character of the American hero, Hawkeye, is a combination of the influence of the frontier and the Native Indians.

### **2.3.1 The Impact of the Frontier on the Character of Hawkeye**

Turner believes that the frontier is the place where the American individual is created. As a frontiersman, Hawkeye is a mixture of two races. He is born in Scotland; however, he is raised by the Mohicans: Chingachgook and Uncas in the American wilderness. Although Hawkeye is from English parents (Christians), he is stripped off from his European heritage. He becomes fused with the two Mohicans, “a white man without a cross.” The latter means that he is neither a pure English nor a pure Native Indian. Hawkeye admits his Identity in a dialogue with Cora: “But neither the Mohicans nor I, who am a white man without a cross, can explain the cry just heard” (Cooper 53). Because he lives in the frontier with the two Indian Mohicans, he does not believe in the religion of his parents and ancestors. However, he still does not forget that he is a white man, who is different from the Native Indians. Life in the frontier provides Hawkeye with new modes of life instead of adopting the same European styles that the settlers bring with them to the New World.

In addition, the difficulties of life in the frontier lead Hawkeye to perform heroic acts and a national military experience. The harsh nature of the frontier, where various beasts and Indian Natives live, lead Hawkeye to learn Indian fashions to defeat the enemies in the wars and survive. He shows much courage and well knowledge of the secrets of nature to use them for his benefits. Spending his time with Uncas and Chingachgook affects him in the way he imitates their manners in using the elements of nature to hide and rescue themselves in case of danger, and to examine the traces of the footsteps of their enemies.

When Heyward and the two sisters loose their way in the forest, Hawkeye does not hesitate to lead them toward the Fort, and acts as a hero in the face of the dangers he knows

that he would face in the journey. Hawkeye, or the scout, with his Mohican friends use the traces of the footsteps of Heyward and the sisters to know their place after they were kidnapped by Magua. They also rely on nature in examining the leaves of the trees, which could indicate if anyone passes by it. After they find their place, the Scout and the two Mohicans get into a quarrel against the Hurons during which Hawkeye acts as a true warrior. In this scene, Cooper narrates: “ Hawkeye-eye soon got another enemy within reach of his arm, and with one sweep of his formidable weapon he beat down the slight and I artificial defences of his antagonist, crushing him to the earth with the blow” ( Cooper 100). After they succeeded in releasing the sisters, Gamut feels proud of Hawkeye: ““ Valiant and skillful hast thou proved thyself in the conflict , and I hereby thank thee, before proceeding to discharge other and more important duties, because thou hast proved thyself well worthy of a Christian’s praise””(104). Hawkeye becomes as a national warrior who holds Christian blood, and acts in Indian fashions, which makes him an exceptional American hero for his British companions.

The frontier shapes the American principles of freedom and patriotism, which are essential parts of the American identity. In the frontier along the state of New York, Hawkeye enjoys freedom, which in return renders him self-reliant. There are no restrictive rules in the American wilderness that could restrict the freedom of Hawkeye and his Indian friends, who move in the woods freely, and get their food from the lakes and from hunting animals without being afraid from any higher power that could punish them. Besides, the frontier is like a shelter for Hawkeye and the other Indians to escape the oppression of the French and English settlers. During Westward expansion of the English and French settlers, Hawkeye escapes to the frontier where he gets separated from them, and becomes self-reliant to use his own skills that nature gives him to live freely.

Moreover, the frontier is a sign for the American national Independence. The third year of the French and Indian war is a turning point in the American history. It is a beginning for the upcoming defeats to the French, who won this war, but they lost one of their strong allies, the Hurons. It is also a beginning to the British realization of the necessity to separate from the British crown, and built their own unique nation. Lately, the American Revolution is broken, and the Americans gain their independence and build the American nation. Hence, the frontier is the scene where Hawkeye, Uncas, Chingachgook, and their English allies witness the wars that lead to the American Revolution, and bring a national pride for Hawkeye as an American frontiersman. Cooper depicts Hawkeye with sense of patriotism. Hawkeye does not forget the people of his own origin: Heyward, Alice, Cora, and Munro when he keeps defending them from their enemies in the wilderness even if the cost is his life. At the same time, he keeps his faith and loyalty to the Indian group. During the time Uncas is a captive of the Hurons, who decide to execute him tomorrow, Hawkeye does not leave the encampment after releasing Alice; however, he remains and disguises himself in a bear cloth, and enters the encampment to free him. Thus, Hawkeye's patriotic feelings lead him to sacrifice his life for those he feels that he belongs to them.

### **2. 3. 2 The Impact of the Native Indians on the Character of Hawkeye**

American romantics use the Native Indians as a peculiar feature of the American identity. According to Turner, the frontier is the melting pot where the Native Indians are fused with the European immigrants. Cooper uses Hawkeye as an example of a Scottish immigrant, who is influenced by his Indian friends: Uncas and Chingachgook. While spending a long time with the two Mohicans, Hawkeye becomes affected by them in the way he dresses himself and shaping his moral principles. The reflection of nature is clear in the colours of their shirts and moccasins. The harshness of nature shapes the strong appearance of

the Mohicans and their fierce look. Cooper describes in details the appearance of Uncas while he is with the whole party hiding in the cavern:

[...], seen by the sober light of day, would have exhibited the peculiarities of a man remarkable for the strangeness of his dress, the iron-like inflexibility of his frame, and the singular compound of quick, vigilant sagacity and of exquisite simplicity that by turns usurped the possession of his muscular features. At a little distance in advance stood Uncas, his whole person thrown powerfully into view. The travelers anxiously regarded the upright, flexible figure of the young Mohican, graceful and unrestrained in the attitudes and movements of nature. Though his person was more than usually screened by a green and fringed hunting-shirt, like that of the white man, there was no concealment to his dark, glancing, fearless eye, alike terrible and calm; the bold outline of his high, haughty features, pure in their native red; or to the dignified elevation of his receding forehead, together with all the finest proportions of a noble head, bared to the generous scalping-tuft. (42-3)

Cooper compares the dress of Uncas to that of the Scout, who is a British individual in an Indian dress. From Cooper's words, Uncas is like a Noble Savage who acquires his peculiar features from nature without the corruption of civilization. These features attract the attention of the two sisters and Heyward, who admit that these traits are exceptional and could not be found in the Old World. Heyward in reply to Alice's fear from the deception of the Mohicans says: "As bright examples of great qualities are but too uncommon among Christians, so are they singular and solitary with the Indians; though, for the honour of our common nature, neither are incapable of producing them.[...]" (Cooper 43). Heyward manifests the exceptional qualities of the Native Indians that could not be found in the Europeans. The great traits of sagacity and at the same time simplicity and masculinity that are mingled with nature are unique characteristics to the American Indians. Cooper uses

Uncas and Chingachgook as two examples of the Noble Savages, who affect Hawkeye as a European descendant who imitates their way of dressing themselves, and adopts their principles.

Self-sacrifice and heroisms are two common principles among the Native Indians. Chingachgook and Uncas teach Hawkeye the latter two principles that shape his identity. The two Mohicans and Hawkeye sacrifice their life in order to take Heyward and the two sisters to their father safely. In this journey, the Scout puts his life at risk several times in order to save the sisters, and acts as a hero who is full of courage and fierceness. Additionally, the American Indians have a sense of sagacity and justice. In the novel, these peculiar principles are embodied in the character of Tamenund, the old chief of the Delaware tribe. He is known for his wise and just decisions in the matters of judgment among the people of his tribe. He is even regarded as a prophet of the Great Spirit to the Delawares. During the meeting of Magua, Hawkeye, Heyward, and Cora with the Delawares in their encampment to determine the matter of Cora, Cooper reflects the moment Tamenund enters the place:

So soon as the first hum of emotion and pleasure, which the sudden appearance of this Venerated individual created, had a little subsided, the name of ‘ Tamenund’<sup>144</sup>was whispered from mouth to mouth. Magua had often heard the fame of this wise and just Delaware- a reputation that even proceeded so far as to bestow on him the rare gift of holding secret communion with the Great Spirit, and which has since transmitted his name, with some slight alteration, to the white usurpers of his ancient territory, as the imaginary tutelary saint\* of a vast empire. (276-7)

Cooper embodies the sagacity and justice of this Indian chief in the way he manages the discussion with the audience, and indicates his decision after he listened to all the opinions. He allows Magua to take Cora with him because she is his captive who is brought to the Delaware tribe to remain there. The character of Tamenund becomes a national pride for

the Americans. In a footnote, Cooper explains how his name becomes used as an example for justice among the Americans: “the Americans sometimes call their tutelor Saint Tamenay, a corruption of the name of the renowned chief here introduced. There are many traditions which speak of the character and power of Tamenund” (Cooper 277). In a similar way, Hawkeye and the two Mohicans do the same discussions before taking any decision. Hawkeye tries to communicate with the two Indians in taking their paths, or in case of danger, and try to use their skills and natural senses before taking any action.

Furthermore, Cooper characterizes the American Indians with mysterious customs and superstitions. They believe in evil spirits and the Great Spirit. The latter is like a God to them, whom they worship, and pray for. They also believe in the life after death, and that they will be provided with hunting grounds in Heaven. More mysterious than that, the Mohicans and the Indians in general have a tradition to take the scalps of their enemies after they defeat them, then they drink their blood. Hawkeye is influenced by his Mohican friends’ ideas of happiness after death, and shows some truth in their beliefs in a discussion with Heyward:

‘For my own part,’ continued Hawkeye, [...], ‘I believe that Paradise is ordained for happiness, and that men will be indulged in it according to their dispositions and gifts. I therefore judge that a redskin is not far from the truth when he believes he is to find them glorious hunting-grounds of which his traditions tell; nor, for that matter, do I think it would be any disparagement to a man without a cross to pass his time-’ (Cooper 177-8)

Hawkeye supports the ideal of his Mohican friends in gaining a glorious and exceptional hunting-grounds. These superstitions are part of the Native Indians’ identity although they lack rationality, and they are based on emotions and the idea of exceptionalism. Besides, the American Indians use animal tattoos as a symbol of their identity. They know each other through the tattoos that are drawn on the skin of their bodies. The Mohicans and

the Delawares are identified by tortoise tattoos, while the Hurons are known by their moose tattoos. The American Indians link their strength and identity to nature and animals, which are part of their life in the American frontier.

Eventually, Cooper refers to the idea of the passing Indian. At the end of the novel, Uncas dies, and his father becomes the last of the Mohicans. Uncas's death symbolizes the fate of the Native Indians 'disappearance during Westward expansion. Cooper closes the novel by the funeral of Uncas and Cora during which Tamenund expresses his deep grave by saying:

‘It is enough’, he said. ‘Go, children of the Lenape; the anger of the Manitto is not done. Why should Tamenund stay? The palefaces are masters of the earth, and the time of the red men has not yet come again. My day has been too long. In the morning I saw the sons of Unamis happy and strong; and yet, before the night has come, have I lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans.’ (330)

Tamenund admits that the New World will be controlled by the white men, while the Native Indians will disappear. In this scene, Cooper evokes senses of nostalgia to the readers for the American Indians who are part of the American history and the American identity.

#### **2. 4 American Exceptionalism in *The Last of the Mohicans*: Fact and Fiction**

Cooper's use of fiction in the third year of the French and Indian war makes the idea of American Exceptionalism of the 19th c as a truth that exists already in history.

Reconstructing past events through the interference of fiction in history in *The Last of the Mohicans* reveals that the notion of American Exceptionalism during the time of writing the novel was an old thought and not novel. Hawkeye is a fictional character in the novel who

acknowledges his exceptionalism and difference from both the Native Indians and the European settlers. In different occasions, he says that he is “a white man without a cross,” i.e. he is neither a Native Indian nor a European man. He regards himself exceptional from the two races as if he belongs to a new race who is in fact a fusion of the two races: the British and the Native Indians. Cooper depicts him as a unique character because he holds a mixed blood; he is from Scottish parents; however, he is raised by the two Mohicans in the American wilderness. Spending his time with the Mohicans provides him with noble principles of heroism, self-sacrifice, freedom and individuality, which evolve into features for the American identity. Hawkeye sees the latter principles as essential Indian fashions that anyone should acquire to survive in the American wilderness. Although Hawkeye does not exist during the French and Indian war in history, Cooper creates him to represent the American individual during the 18th c, who also believes in American Exceptionalism as the American of the 19th c.

In addition, using imaginary Native Indian characters who represent different tribes corroborates the idea of Manifest Destiny of the 19th c in America. In the era surrounding the time of writing this novel, Americans believed in the providence’s predestination for them to settle in the New World, and move westward. Cooper tries to prove the latter idea through inventing unreal dialogues between the Native Indians themselves or with the white Europeans about the dispossession of the American Indians of their land by the white settlers. Cooper alludes to the fate of the Americans to expand westward, and take the lands in North America. Before they meet Heyward and the two sisters lost in the woods, Hewkeye and Chingachgook start a discussion in which the latter explains how the people of his own tribe have been forcibly driven back from their land by the Dutch:

‘My tribe is the grandfather of nations, but I am an unmixed man. The blood of chiefs is in my veins, where it must stay for ever. The Dutch landed,

and gave my people the fire-water; they drank until the heavens and the earth seemed to meet, and they foolishly thought they had found the Great Spirit.

Then they parted with their land. Foot by foot they were driven back from the shores, until I, that am a chief and a Sagamore, <sup>29</sup>have never seen the sun shine but through the trees, and have never visited the graves of my fathers!’

(Cooper 23)

What happens to Chingachgook’s tribe might be in parallel with what will happen in the 19th c with the American Indians in the frontier, which is still moving into the west. The idea of Manifest Destiny includes implicitly the feeling of superiority of Americans over non-Americans. It denotes that the Americans are the chosen people by God to settle in the New World, and build their nation. Hence, Cooper embodies the latter idea in displaying how the Native Indians are moving westward by the Americans, which in return, reveal their success and exceptionalism. Besides, the fiction in Uncas’s death symbolizes the fate of other Indian tribes who eventually will disappear due to the process of westward expansion. At the same time, it foreshadows the Americans’ success in settling the land and defeating the Native Indians. Cooper also portrays the frontier, which is a real setting, as the Promised Land for the Americans. He combines both descriptions of beauty and harshness in the frontier along the Hudson River, which marks the uniqueness of this place that it could only be found in America and not in Europe or any other place. It seems like the Garden of Eden for the Americans. There, they enjoy the diversity of nature: rivers, hills, lacks, mountains, banks, and thick forests, which renders it a place for seclusion. Through Cooper’s detailed description of the frontier, he reanimates the thought of the Promised Land in the Americans’ mind so that their eagerness to settle the lands will be heightened.

The historical fact of the Massacre of Fort William Henry in the novel is like the engine for the American Revolution. This event in the novel demonstrates the non-interest of

the British monarchy over the British settlers in the New World. Colonel Munro feels disappointed after he is informed that military aids are not coming from General Edward to rescue them from the French soldiers. Finally, Munro surrenders the Fort, and in their way after the surrender, the British settlers are massacred by the Hurons in the woods where they kill, scalp, and kidnap a huge number of British troops. Alice and Cora are kidnapped by Magua, who takes them to the Huron villages besides the borders of Canada. Even after the massacre and the kidnapping of Munro's two daughters, no aids are sent to them. Hence, Colonel Munro and Major Heyward do not go to Fort Edward to ask for their support after the massacre; however, they decide to rely on themselves, and gather with their Mohican allies to search for the two sisters, and rescue them. This act points out the necessity of the separation of the British settlers from their British masters, and to be self-reliant. The separation from Great Britain is inevitable for the Americans, who start looking at themselves different from the British. Using both the fact of the Massacre of Fort William Henry and fiction in kidnaping Munro's daughters reflects the difference between the British and the Americans, which implicitly foreshadows for the American Revolution. Cooper's adaptation of that event shows the beginning of the rise of the sense of American nationalism, which rests on the idea that Americans have become distinct from their European ancestors.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Through the lenses of New Historicism and the Frontier thesis, aspects of American Exceptionalism are evident in *The Last of the Mohicans*. Adaptation of the fact of the Massacre of Fort William Henry and the fictional dialogues between the Native Indians and the white Europeans puts the idea of American Independence into the foreground. In these dialogues, the American Indians speak of the dispossession of their lands by the European settlers. On the other hand, the British settlers are left alone during the siege of their Fort by

the French, and no military aids are sent to them even after they are massacred by the Hurons. The two latter points evoke the necessity of preventing the Europeans from interfering in the New World, so that to have a national Independence. Cooper intentionally uses these events in order to provide American history with honour and pride for its exceptionalism because it led to the American Revolution, which made America an independent nation. Cooper's novel is the product of the political, economic, and cultural circumstances of his own time when the fears of a civil war because of the issue of slavery threatened the unity of the country. The Panic of 1819 is also another economic problem that is the outcome of America's interference in the war of 1812.

Furthermore, the fictional personage of Hawkeye demonstrates his difference from the Native Indians and the British settlers. Hawkeye's confession that he does not belong to any group mirrors the way he sees himself as exceptional from the others because his personality and character draw their features from both the Native Americans and European ancestors. He represents the typical American identity, which emerges out of the frontier where the Scout acquires Indian fashions and values to live in the wilderness as person who originally belongs to the white race. Cooper uses Hawkeye as the frontier hero who acquires noble principles of individualism, heroism, freedom, and self-sacrifice from the interaction with the frontier and the two Mohicans. Additionally, Cooper uses a real setting, the frontier, and refers to its unique nature. The beauty, diversity, and harshness of nature in the frontier, make the British settlers admired of such a place, and look at it as their promised land. The peculiarities Cooper shows in this place reminds the American of the 19th c of the exceptionalism of their country that is provided to them by God. Hence, Cooper implicitly hints to the myth of American exceptionalism through writing fiction that draws on the history of the French and Indian war, and reconstruct an American history, which could go hand in hand with the time during writing his novel.

## General Conclusion

After applying New Historicism theory and Turner's Frontier thesis in analyzing the novel of *The last of the Mohicans*, three elements can be extracted from the novel that denote for American Exceptionalism. Cooper embodies the events of his historical novel in the frontier along the borders of New York State where the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the French and Indian war occurs. The latter war is fictionalized by Cooper in the way he creates fictional dialogues and some characters to refer to American Exceptionalism and the necessity to be independent from Europe. Hawkeye is a fictional character and the frontier hero who represents the typical American individual. With this character, Cooper sheds light on the way Hawkeye is different from both the Native Indians and the European settlers, and how he is distinct by his traits. To clarify the idea of American exceptionalism in the novel, it is important to refer to the theories and concepts that are discussed in chapter one. The early of the 19<sup>th</sup> c is the period of American Romantic literature when simultaneously attempts were made to establish a national American literature. Nationalistic feelings were prompted among the Americans after the American Revolution, which finally brought independence to them. Thus, numerous writers were enthusiastic to show a kind of independence in their literature through using purely American components different from the European literature.

In general, American romantics celebrate nature and the individual as part of the American wilderness so that to evoke patriotic feelings with the Americans. They refer to the sublime as a key term for the power that nature reflects in its view when people see its exceptional features. They also regards the inhabitants of the New World as Noble savages, which refers to the peculiar features of the Native Americans that are untouched by the corruption of civilization. Cooper is regarded among the first romantic authors who have contributed in providing the American novel with senses of Americaness. In *The Last of the*

*Mohicans*, he reconstructs real past events so that to fit the internal and external circumstances during the time of writing his novel. In reality, it was the period when the Americans felt pride of their country after the war of 1812 ended with victory to them. In contrary, Americans were unsecure due to the problem of slavery and westward expansion, which knocked the door of a civil war in America. Thus, Cooper implicitly attempts to unite the Americans through reminding them of their exceptionalism and the trueness of the idea of Manifest Destiny. The intervention of America in the war of 1812 causes the Panic of 1819 when the value of the American currency decreased, which indirectly led to Cooper's family financial losses.

With reference to New Historicism theory, which deals with the literary work as a product of the time during which it was written, Cooper's choices of the setting, plot, and characters in his novel reflect the issues he witnesses during the early of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. The novel depicts the necessity of unity of the Americans and the dangers of foreign intervention in the New World. Identically, the issue of nationalism in America was threatened by the problem of slavery between the North and the South during westward expansion, which in turn, made the separation of the country and a civil war an expected likelihood. Thus, Cooper attempts to enhance the sense of American nationalism and exceptionalism through reconstructing America's history. He uses fiction in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the French and Indian war that is a real historical event. Cooper invents fictional dialogues between the native Indians and the British settlers. In these dialogues, the Mohicans and the Hurons demonstrate how the Europeans' intervention in the New World led to the separation of the different Indian tribes. The British settlers make the Mohicans their allies while the French male the Hurons as their allies to fight at their side in wars. At the same time, the necessity of independence from Europe is reflected in showing the non-interest of the British monarchy over its settlers in America. No military aids are sent to Fort William Henry from Fort Edward when Colonel Munro with his

family and warriors were besieged in the Fort by the French soldiers. Even after the massacre happened, the British settlers are left alone without help. On the other hand, the French's maltreatment with the Hurons after Munro's declaration of the surrender from the Fort, results in the French losses of their allies, the Hurons. It marks the beginning of the French defeats since they have lost the support of the Indians. These events in this war foreshadows for the American Revolution that was declared after the British settlers' realization of the non-interest of Great Britain over them.

Additionally, the financial losses from the intervention in others wars are mirrored in the Native Indians' intervention in the Seven Years war between the European settlers. Historically, America's participation in the Napoleonic wars between the French and the British in the war of 1812 in New Orleans have resulted in economic crisis to the Americans when the value of their currency decreased ,which led to the Panic of 1819. Likely, the Mohicans and the Hurons intervention in the wars between the French and British settlers leads gradually to the loss of their lands , after they were a source of economy to them. More than that, Uncas' death symbolizes the fate of the Native Indians' disappearance during Westward Expansion, which proves the myth of Manifest Destiny that the Americans believe in during the 19thc when the frontier was still moving back. Thus, the disappearance of Uncas foreshadows for the Americans' success in defeating the Indians and controlling the territories.

The frontier is an exceptional place to the Americans, which Cooper uses as the setting of his novel. Throughout the journey from Fort Edward to Fort William Henry, he keeps portraying the hardships of nature in this frontier, which at the same time is characterized by its beauty and diversity. It holds unique symbols in the Americans' mind. It reminds them of freedom, heroism, individuality, and harmony between nature and religion. Freedom is embodied in the way Hawkeye and his friends act freely without being afraid from any higher

power or rules in the wilderness where they depend on nature to hide themselves from any danger. Heroism is represented by the deeds of Hawkeye and Uncas who act as heroes in the face of their enemies. The harsh nature of the frontier shapes their character that is full of courage and self-sacrifice so that they could survive.

Concerning the character of Hawkeye as the representative of the typical American identity. In his frontier thesis, Turner manifests that the frontier is the melting pot where different races are fused together, which results in shaping the American individual. Cooper adopts the fictional character of Hawkeye who is a mixture of the British race and the Native Indians race. He is born from Scottish parents; however, he is raised by the two Mohicans in America where he gets affected by their manners and principles of life. Hawkeye is exceptional because he is different from both the British settlers and the Mohicans, yet he is a fusion of the two races. He acquires from his Mohican friends' acts of heroism and military experience that allows him to use his skills and elements of nature to know their targets, and defend themselves. He is self-reliant in his deeds and wise in his decisions like his Mohican friends who are Noble Savages. The reflection of nature is evident in their fierce looking and strong appearance that makes them noble who are not corrupted by civilization.

Using New Historicism theory and the Frontier thesis enables this research to investigate the literary elements that represent American Exceptionalism. The latter renders Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* to be the first module of the American novel that consists only American elements. Nevertheless, it puts a blind eye on the matter of slaves as part of the American wilderness during the colonial years.

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