

THE RECONCILIATION AND THE CONFRONTATION OF THE  
NATIVE AMERICAN AND THE BRITISH IDENTITIES IN JAMES  
FENIMORE COOPER'S *THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS* AND *THE  
PIONEERS*

745757

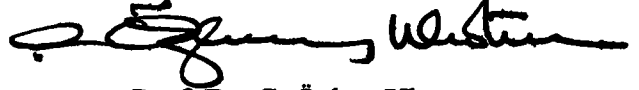
A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
ÇANKAYA UNIVERSITY

BY  
EBRU YILDIRIM

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF  
MASTER OF ARTS  
IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF BRITISH LITERATURE AND CULTURE

DECEMBER 2004

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences



Prof. Dr. Ç. Özhan Uluatam

Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.



Prof. Dr. Nail Bezel

Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.



Prof. Dr. Nail Bezel

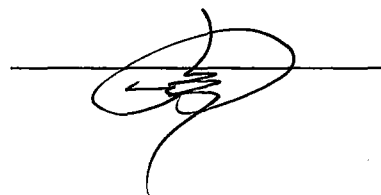
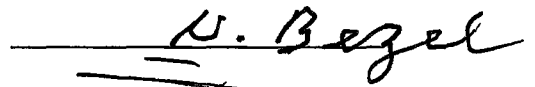
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. Nail Bezel

Yrd. Doç. Dr. İstem Yurdemir

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Nüzhet Akın



## ABSTRACT

Native Americans have been the subject of attention since Columbus discovered America in 1492. Their tragedy has started with the subsequent colonisation of America by the Europeans and the British. The original owners of America, Native Americans were conquered, dispossessed and destroyed by the white men. When the Europeans and the British intruded into the virgin North American wilderness with the objective of placing great quantities of native lands under their possession, they disregarded the Native American identity and existence. To justify their colonisation in North America, they described Native Americans as lazy and vagrant hunters who failed to make the land fruitful and who therefore lost their claim to cultivate God's earth. Thus, through their policies and cunning methods, they started to dispossess Native Americans of their native lands. In this process, Native American identity and culture were corrupted and eventually destroyed.

This thesis has focused on the confrontation and reconciliation of the Native American and the British identities in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers*. In the chosen works, the outcome of this confrontation has been examined in the form of an ultimate failure in reconciliation.

## ÖZ

Amerikan Yerlileri, 1492'de Amerika'nın keşfinden beri odak noktası olmuşlardır. Onların trajedisi, Amerika'nın Avrupalılar ve İngilizler tarafından kolonileştirilmesiyle başlamıştır. Amerika'nın gerçek sahipleri, Kızılderililer beyaz adamlar tarafından fethedilmiş, yurtları terkettirilmiş ve yok edilmişlerdir. Avrupalılar ve İngilizler bakir Kuzey Amerika kırsalına büyük miktarda yerli toprağını hakimiyetleri altına alma amacıyla girdiklerinde Amerikan Yerlisi kimliğini ve varlığını görmezden gelmişlerdir. Kuzey Amerika'daki kolonileşmelerini haklı çıkarmak için Amerikan Yerlilerini, toprağı verimli hale getirmede başarısız olan ve bu nedenle Tanrı'nın toprağını işleme hakkını kaybeden tembel ve başıboş avcılar olarak nitelendirmişlerdir. Böylece, politikaları ve kurnazlıklarıyla, Amerikan Yerlilerini yurtlarından etme sürecini başlatmışlardır. Bu süreçte, Amerikan kimliği ve kültürü yozlaştırılmış ve sonunda da yok edilmiştir.

Bu tez James Fenimore Cooper'ın *The Last of the Mohicans* ve *The Pioneers*'ında Amerikan Yerlisi ve İngiliz kimliklerinin uzlaşması ve çatışması üzerinde durmuştur. Seçilen eserlerde uzlaşmanın nihai başarısızlığı olarak kimlik çatışmasının sonuçları incelenmiştir.



**To my angel mother to whom all that I am or hope to be I owe,**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was made possible with the assistance of several people. First and foremost I would like to thank to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Nail Bezel for his direct assistance in evaluating my work and steering it into the right directions and for the invaluable comments on the text.

I would further like to thank to Prof. Dr. Emel Dođramacı and Assistant Prof. Dr. Nüzhet Akın, for their thought-provoking seminars which inspired me in forming my ideas.

Finally, I would like to thank to my close friends whose love, support and faith in me eased the way and helped me keep my own faith.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Approval Page</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Öz</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Dedication</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I. Chapter One</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Reconciliation of the Native American and     the British Identities</b>	
<b>II. Chapter Two</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>The Confrontation of the Native American and     the British Identities</b>	
<b>III. Chapter Three</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>The Consequences of the Confrontation of the     Native American and the British Identities</b>	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>50</b>

## INTRODUCTION

James Fenimore Cooper, in his *Leatherstocking Tales*, delivers a criticism of American society and history and “of its most deeply held values that is far removed from a celebration of America” (Rans 46). His patriotism is not in question since he loved his country and fully shared the exalted hopes of the American Revolution. However, his patriotism had another dimension, a determination to tell the truth about and to his country. In this respect, both *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers* in *The Leatherstocking* series are worth studying since Cooper portrays the Native American characters as the original owners of the North American lands and depicts the dispossession of Native Americans of their native lands as well as the corruption of their culture at the hands of the Europeans and the British.

While Cooper focuses on the issue of Native Americans’ dispossession of their lands and the destruction of their culture, he also portrays characters of British origin, like Natty Bumpoo and Oliver Edwards Effingham, who can be seen as a combination and compromise of both the Native American and the British habits and gifts. In those two novels, the dispossession and the destruction of the Native American referred above arise from the difference between the Native American set of



values and code of conduct and those of the European and the British. Although Cooper acknowledges the misfortune that Native Americans encountered at the hands of the Europeans and the British through the dispossession and the destruction, it is also evident that he suggests no alternatives in his two novels for Native Americans other than being assimilated into the white men's world and christianised.

As mentioned above, both *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers* are worth analysing in terms of the British and the Native American characters as well as characters of British origin who can be considered as the combination of both the Native American and the British habits and gifts. The main character of the two works, Natty, is of British origin and is proud of this, particularly in *The Last of the Mohicans*, although he practices certain Native American habits and gifts. As Cooper states, Natty is a genuinely white man who adopts and assimilates certain habits and qualities of the Native American (*The Pioneers* 85).<sup>\*</sup> On the other hand, Oliver, in *The Pioneers*, is presented as a supposed half-breed who is "proud of his descent from a Delaware chief" (P 143) and is "regretful of the fate of the Indians"(P 135).

However, the motive that drives Natty and Oliver into practising "savage" habits is different. Natty has lived so long with and been the friend of the Delaware chief Chingachgook in the North American wilderness.

<sup>\*</sup>From here on, for purposes of bibliographical reference, the following abbreviations will be used for the two novels: P for *The Pioneers*, LM for *The Last of the Mohicans*.

D.H. Lawrence describes this immortal friendship of Natty and Chingachgook as deeper than the whole concepts in the real world (59). Moreover, Natty has the role of a mourner of the Native American dispossession and destruction by the European and the British powers.

On the other hand, Oliver is a well-educated “demi-savage” (P 206) whose bitter complaints against Judge Temple’s injustice are believed by the townspeople to be based on his sense of Native Americans’ violated rights. Yet, after he starts working with Temple in Temple’s mansion, he displays a sudden and surprising adjustment to the white men’s community. It is revealed later in the novel that his bitter outbursts are not based on Native Americans’ violated rights literally but on the rights of inheritance since the land on which the Templeton community dwells was his British grandfather Major Effingham’s property before the Revolutionary War and it was later purchased by Judge Temple at a low price.

*The Last of the Mohicans* takes place in the midst of the French-Native American war which was the last and the most important conflict over the French and the British possessions in North America. The title itself is very striking because it suggests the decline and ruin of a Native American people at the hands of the European and British powers who intrude into virgin Native American lands and “create entangling alliances with the natives, pitting whites against Indians and Indians against themselves” (Long 60).

Although Cooper is criticised for his idealisation of Native Americans, particularly, in his portrayal of noble Uncas in *The Last of the Mohicans*, there are also bad Native Americans exemplified in the character

of Magua who is presented as malignant and unsympathetic. Magua starts the Massacre with his “dusky Huron followers” at Fort William Henry and slaughters numerous innocent British people. Yet, he is also presented as a victim of the Native American culture, which was undermined and then destroyed by the British. Thus, he evokes the sympathy, in some respects, of the readers. On the other hand, Uncas is portrayed as the image of Native American nobility and a civilised figure unlike his nation of Native American “savages”. He is the last child and the last hope for the Mohicans whose death foretells the disappearance of a Native American tribe.

Both *The Pioneers* and *The Last of the Mohicans* provide sufficient evidence as to the difference between the codes of the Native American and the British “civilisation” although the white men tend to consider Native Americans as “savages”. The British motive, on the surface, was to bring “civilisation” to the wilderness. However, this was the white men’s pretext for colonisation because they did not want to recognise the Native American identity and culture.

Chapter one of this study will examine the reconciliation of the Native American habits and gifts in the characters of British origin, Natty Bumpoo and Oliver Edwards Effingham. It will firstly focus on the comradeship and solidarity among Natty, Chingachgook and his son Uncas in North American wilderness to display how Natty has developed the Native American habits and gifts in his self. It will then examine Natty’s identity in terms of his attire and equipment, the languages he speaks, his practice in a battle, his skill in reading the signs of nature and some of his character traits through the evidence provided both in *The Last of the*

*Mohicans* and *The Pioneers*. Though Natty assimilates certain qualities and skills of the Native American in his character, his obsessive concern in proclaiming his white identity will also be depicted through his own statements in the earlier sections of *The Last of the Mohicans*. It will then point out Natty's sensitivity to recognise the Native American identity. The transformation of Natty's sense of whiteness to his alliance with the Mohican aspirations and to becoming the "prosecuting attorney" and the representative of the Native American peoples will also be presented. This chapter will also depict the other British character, Oliver who can be seen as another case of the reconciliation of the Native American and the British identities. It will then discuss how Oliver goes through a transformation in his "savage" habits to his new "civilised" life after he starts working with Judge Temple in Temple's mansion and examine his eventual discovery that Oliver has not descended from a Delaware chief but from British origins.

Chapter two of this study will discuss the confrontation of the Native American and the British identities. It will firstly focus on how Native Americans were identified by the Europeans and the British and on how the Europeans and the British regard Native Americans as inferior to themselves. It will then examine the issue of racial amalgamation in *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers* and how Cooper reflects his view on the issue. The viewpoints of some Enlightened thinkers like Thomas Hutchinson on Native Americans will be presented. It will then point out the difference between the European and the British set of values including their laws of warfare as well as their attitudes towards nature and those of the Native American through examples provided in the two novels. This chapter

will lastly focus on Native Americans' adherence to revenge that led the European and the British to consider them as "savages".

Chapter three of this study will discuss the consequences of the confrontation of the British and the Native American identities in the form of an ultimate failure in reconciliation. It will focus on the process which ends with the dispossession of Native Americans of their lands and the destruction of their culture. In this process, three forces will be discussed leading to this ultimate failure. These are: The emerging trade between the Europeans and the British on one side and Native Americans on the other side, the introduction of liquor and the superior technology of the Europeans and the British, the European and the British policies and cunning methods to dispossess Native Americans of their native lands and to destroy their culture. These will be observed as the major impact on Native Americans' way of life. This chapter will then present Cooper's views on the dispossession and the destruction of Native Americans.

The conclusion will review Cooper's perspective of the reconciliation and the confrontation of the Native American and the British identities and the eventual dispossession and the destruction of Native Americans.

## CHAPTER ONE

In James Fenimore Cooper's *The Leatherstocking Tales*, the main character who takes different names in different novels in the series, Natty Bumpoo, Hawkeye, Pathfinder, Deerslayer, Leatherstocking and even La Longue Carabine, can be described as the man who is "genuinely white" but has spent most of his life in the company of the Mohicans, the Delaware tribe. In the two novels which are the subject matters of this study, Natty Bumpoo is of great importance in his reconciliation of both the British and the Native American gifts since he is a man of British racial origin, but he also possesses a certain skills and qualities of the Native American. He prefers to live his life among the Native Americans, (or at least with Chingachgook, the Delaware chief), rather than among the white men and thus, he partakes the virtues of both the white men and Native Americans.

In *The Pioneers*, Mrs. Grant, the daughter of the Reverend Mr. Grant, describes Natty as follows: "They say that, in his youth, he was an Indian warrior, or, what is the same thing, a white man leagued with the savages" (P 263). What urges Mrs. Grant and the others to think of Natty as described above might be due to his immortal friendship with the Delaware chief Chingachgook. D.H Lawrence in his book, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, describes this relationship as follows: "A stark, stripped human relationship of two men, deeper than the deeps of sex.

Deeper than property, deeper than fatherhood, deeper than marriage, deeper than love” (59) and Lawrence continues as follows: “...they stand side by side, stark, abstract, beyond emotion, yet eternally together. All the other loves seem frivolous” (64). One might observe that this is the reason why Natty’s habits are considered as “savage”. On Natty’s “savage” habits, Cooper makes a similar comment and suggests: “...the habits of the ‘Leather-stocking’ were so nearly assimilated to those of the savages” (P 85).

Even though there is no information in the two novels, *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers*, regarding when and how Natty started to live with Chingachgook and his son Uncas, as Cooper calls the Mohicans, it is apparent that there are certain motives that drive Natty to prefer to be with them rather than his white associates. On one hand, it is their loneliness in the North American wilderness and their lack of kinship that bring them together. Chingachgook states the following in *The Last of the Mohicans*:

All my family departed, each in his turn to the lands of spirits. I am on the hilltop, and must go down into the valley; and when Uncas follows my footsteps, there will no longer be any of the blood of the Sagamores, for my boy is the last of the Mohicans (LM 38).

Moreover, Natty expresses his sense of solitude in similar terms: “I have no kin and I may also say like you no people” (LM 414).

On the other hand, Natty is portrayed as “a man without a cross” (LM 325). One of the primary motives that relates the British settlers to each other in the North American wilderness is their common ground in Christianity. Christianity and civility are considered to be synonymous by the colonisers. According to their belief, Native Americans are “savage heathens and the colonists are civil Christians” (Carr 28). Natty’s resistance

to the Christian faith, thus, to the civilised way of life and his passion for liberty might also be the motives that lead him to choose to live in the wilderness among “savage” Native Americans. Through the natural skills of Chingachgook and his son Uncas, he has learnt how to survive in the wilderness. They rely on each other’s dignity, bravery and craft in the struggles involving life and death in the wilderness. They have fought side by side with the British against the French and against the Mohicans’ enemy tribes. In *The Last of the Mohicans*, on this comradeship and solidarity among Natty, Chingachgook and Uncas, Natty makes the following comment:

I have fought at his [Uncas] side in many a bloody scrimmage; and so long as I could hear the crack of his piece in one ear, and that of the Sagamore [Chingachgook] in the other, I knew no enemy was on my back. Winters and summers, nights and days, have we roved the wilderness in company, eating of the same dish, one sleeping, while the other watched (LM 315).

In the two novels concerned, survival is a crucial matter in the wilderness and death can be very near to a man. To have a comradeship with the Mohicans who have a natural ability to cope with these difficulties makes Natty feel safe. Yet, he never disregards this companionship and also suggests that he never hesitates to endanger his own life for his comrades.

He affirms in *The Last of the Mohicans*:

Life is an obligation which friends often owe to each other in the wilderness. 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 (LM 85).

It is obvious from the evidence suggested both in *The Pioneers* and *The Last of the Mohicans* that Natty is the epitome of the compromise of the British and the Native American identities. In the above paragraph, we have



observed the solidarity and comradeship between a Native American character and a white man in American natural scene. This identity is also reflected in the outside appearance of Natty. As we will observe, Natty's appearance is in good harmony with the natural environment which he and his comrades find themselves. The following is a statement of this harmony:

He wore a hunting shirt of forest green, fringed with faded yellow, and a summer cap of skins which had been shorn of their fur. He also bore a knife in a girdle of wampum, like that which confined the scanty garments of the Indian, but no tomahawk. His moccasins were ornamented after the gay fashion of the natives, while only part of his underdress which appeared under the hunting frock was a pair of buckskin leggings that laced at the sides, and which were gartered above the knees with the sinews of a deer. A pouch and horn completed his personal accoutrements, though a rifle of great length.....leaned against a neighbouring sapling (LM 33).

It is evident that, in his attire and equipment, Natty combines the fashions of both Native Americans and the corps of riflemen, as it is footnoted in *The Last of the Mohicans*. He has "a knife in a girdle of wampum with the scanty garments of the Indian" and wears moccasins "ornamented in the fashion of the natives", which both suggest the way Native Americans dress and equip. On the other hand, he has no tomahawk and wears a hunting shirt, which are considered as different compared to a Native American's and, thus, he is attired like a rifleman since his companion Chingachgook has both the Native American's traditional weapon, the tomahawk, and a knife, "of English manufacture" in his girdle and his body is nearly naked, but "drawn in intermingled colors of white and black" (LM 32).

The evidence that Natty combines in himself both the skills of the Native American and the British is not only depicted in his attire and

equipment but also in the languages he speaks. When he communicates with his Native American companions, he speaks “in the tongue which was known to all the natives who formerly inhabited the Hudson and the Potomack” (LM 34). Yet, with his British “brothers”, as Chingachgook says, he comes across in the wilderness, Natty speaks English about which “he boasted” (LM 40).

Other than the two languages he speaks, he also shares other aspects of the Native American way of life. Then there comes circumstances such as the battle where he practises the habits of the Native American and where he can also show brutality. At the end of a fierce battle with a band of Hurons, the enemy tribe of the Delawares, Chingachgook and Magua, the Huron chief, roll on the ground in furious combat until Chingachgook thrusts with his knife and Magua falls back as if dead. As Chingachgook leaps to his feet with a shout of triumph, Natty raises his rifle in the air to strike “a finishing blow” that will not rob Chingachgook “of his right to the scalp!” (LM 134). Magua’s athletic escape makes Natty angry and urges him to make sure the other enemy bodies are in fact dead. To be sure the enemies are not feigning death, Natty moves over the scene of battle stabbing the dead Hurons “with as much coolness as though they had been so many brute carcasses” (LM 134) although Chingachgook, with an instinct for honour, “has already torn the emblems of victory from the unresisting heads of the slain” (LM 134).

It is also striking to notice how Natty has imbibed certain qualities regarding the character traits which are peculiar to Native Americans in his self. The Native American characteristics of “pride and unmoved firmness” (LM 91) and silence can also be seen in Natty. The following is a comment

on Natty by Cooper himself: “The white man [Natty] seemed to take counsel from their [Native Americans’] customs and relinquishing his grasp of the rifle, he also remained silent and reserved” (LM 38).

Similarly, Natty shows his competence at reading the signs of nature which is supposed to be a gift of the natives although he can be so humble at times that he asks Chingachgook: “What do you hear Chingachgook? For to my ears the woods are dumb” (LM 40). However, in another part of *The Last of the Mohicans*, he is himself boastful of his skill in reading the signs of nature and contends:

I have listened to all the sounds of the woods for thirty years, as a man will listen whose life and death depend on the quickness of his ears. There is no whine of the panther; no whistle of the catbird; nor any invention of the devilish Mingo can cheat me! (LM 73).

No matter how sensitively Natty is attuned to certain qualities and skills of the Native American, he has not lost sight of his whiteness. Natty several times declares that he is “genuine white” (LM 35). He is so proud of having no mixture of Native American in his lineage and claims:

I am not a prejudiced man, nor one who vaunts himself on his natural privileges, though the worst enemy I have on earth and he is an Iroquois, daren’t deny that I am genuine white (LM 35).

Moreover, he at times discriminates himself against the Native American regarding their attitudes towards an enemy. On Native Americans’ revengeful and degrading conduct towards their enemies, he asserts the following: “As for me, who am of the whole blood of the whites, it is befitting that I should die as becomes my color with no words of scoffing in my mouth and without bitterness at the heart” (LM 91).

While Natty seems to be obsessively concerned with proclaiming his white identity, he is never inclined to disregard the Native American

identity unlike most of the white men. As Martin states, “What is right for an Indian, Natty Bumpoo believes, may be wrong for a white man” (57). On Chingachgook’s scalping a French sentry, though Natty is quite capable of committing this “unhuman” act, as mentioned above, he claims: “It would have been a cruel and unhuman act for a white skin; but ‘tis the gift and natur’ of and Indian and I suppose it should not be denied” (LM 138). Moreover, he can be quite sensible and sensitive on the destruction and dispossession of Native Americans by the European and the British even though he has the same racial origin as them. On the white policy to set Native Americans against Native Americans by allying with the natives, he suggests:

Tis a long and melancholy tradition and one I little like to think of; for it is not to be denied that the evil has been mainly done by men with white skins. But it has ended in turning the tomahawk of brother against brother (LM 268).

Whatever Natty says about the conduct appropriate to himself, a white man, Cooper makes the following comment about Natty: “...the Leather-stocking, who had imbibed, unconsciously, many of the Indian qualities...” (P 453). With their dignity, brevity and wisdom the Mohicans gain Natty’s trust and this is reciprocal when Natty is concerned. The Mohicans even call him “Hawk-eye” because “his sight never fails” (LM 369) and Chingachgook expresses the following about him: “Hawk-eye smoked at that council- for we loved him” (P 291). Natty feels the same way as the Mohicans in that he can risk his life for the Mohicans: “...if the young Sagamore [Uncas] is to be led to the stake, the Indians shall see how a man without a cross can die” (LM 314). After Uncas’ death, Natty feels a deeper fellowship and connection with Chingachgook and allies himself with him

and with the Mohican aspirations and ideals. In the end of *The Last of the Mohicans*, he claims:

The gifts of our colors may be different, but God has so placed us as to journey in the same path. I have no kin and I may also say, like you, no people. He was your son and a redskin by nature; and it may be that your blood was nearer- but if ever I forget the lad who has so often fought at my side in war, and slept at my side in peace, may He who made us all, whatever may be our color or our gifts, forget me! The boy has left us for a time; but Sagamore, you are not alone (LM 414).

Natty, in *The Leather-stocking Tales*, is the character who develops in Cooper's imagination over a period of years. Natty is born into fiction at the age of 71-2 in *The Pioneers* and *The Last of the Mohicans* makes him much younger, at the age of 35-6. This is important to observe the transformation of Natty's sight of whiteness to his alliance with the Mohican aspirations and to becoming the "prosecuting attorney" for Native Americans (Dekker 50), particularly the Mohicans. In *The Pioneers* he speaks not on his own behalf but on behalf of Native Americans. Natty accuses the white men because of their mission to christianise the Delawares, thereby destroying them and he asserts:

He [Chingachgook] was christianized by the Moravians, who were always over intimate with the Delawares. It's my opinion, that had they been left to themselves, there would be no such doings now, about the head-waters of the two rivers, and that these hills mought have been kept as good hunting-ground, by their right owner (P 156).

Natty "resided in the same cabin" with Chingachgook, "ate of the same food and were chiefly occupied in the same pursuits" (P 85) and he even states: "We have been brothers and more so than it means in the Indian tongue" (P 421). His hut stands apart from the village on which the Templeton community dwells, preferring to live according to "savage" values with his

tribeless companion rather than to live according to the “civilised” values of the society from which he descends.

In *The Pioneers* Natty has the role of the representative mourner for the past tribal days. When Chingachgook and Natty are in the pursuit of hunting a buck in Lake Oswego, he is so happy to practice a habit of the nearly extinct peoples, Native Americans, and speaks in the Delaware language as if they were in their tribal days (P 297). Moreover, Natty is more prudent and careful than Chingachgook in trusting a white man and asserts as follows: “I have known the whites talk fair, when they wanted the Indian lands most. This I will say, though I’m white myself, and was born nigh York” (P 85).

Not only Natty Bumpoo but also Oliver Edwards, in *The Pioneers*, offers sufficient evidence to consider him as the combination of the Native American and the British identities. Oliver contends that he is “the descendent of a Delaware chief” and speaks proudly of his Native American lineage: “I am proud of my descent from a Delaware chief” (P 143). He lives in a hut far from the Templeton village which is inhabited by Natty and Chingachgook. Natty and Chingachgook both call him “Young Eagle”, son of an Indian chief. On his first appearance in the novel as a young hunter he is wearing “an overcoat which was belted close to his form by a worsted sash, much like the one worn by the old hunter [Natty]” (P 38). Oliver is fully aware of the natives’ destruction and condemns “the cupidity that has destroyed such a race” (P 186). He acts by the “hereditary violence of a native’s passion-revenge” (P 143) and the townspeople believe that his bitter complaints and vengeance are based on his sense of Native

Americans' violated rights. Oliver does not even decline his thirst for revenge which he also attributes to the Native American blood. When Mr. Grant, the minister of the church in Templeton village, cautions him about his "revengeful principles", he says to Mr. Grant:

I have been carried away by passions, that I should struggle to repress. I must attribute it, with your father, to the blood in my veins, although I would not impeach my lineage willingly, for it is all that is left to me to boast (P 143).

However, Oliver, who is regarded as a "demi-savage" (P 206), goes through a transformation after he has been offered to become the assistant of Judge Temple in Temple's mansion; Oliver had been injured by Temple accidentally while Temple was trying to hunt a buck and as the compensation for his fault he offers Oliver the chance to be his assistant and Oliver reluctantly accepts Judge Temple's offer. On his first appearance in the mansion after he has got the job, he surprisingly attracts the attention of the household and even "a second look was necessary" before Elizabeth, the daughter of Judge Temple, "was able to recognise the person of the young hunter, in a plain, but assuredly, the ordinary garb of a gentleman" (P 214). Regarding his immediate adaptation to his new situation Miss Grant asserts the following: "I really thought that you wished me to notice the alteration in Mr. Edwards. Is it not more wonderful, when we recollect his origin?". To this Elizabeth replies: "He is a genteel savage" (P 214). Moreover, he is also able to notice the alteration in his personality and confesses as follows: "I have been driven to the woods in despair, but your society has tamed the lion within me" (P 412). No matter how surprising it is to observe Oliver's elevation from his former savage life to his new civilised life, it is harsh to assume that he has been born into a new personality. Although he seems to

adjust to his new situation in the mansion, while engaged in the service of Temple, Oliver does not give up his relationship with Natty and Chingachgook at all. His nights are often spent in Natty's hut and he seeks every leisure moment to visit his former dwelling. On a visit to Natty and Chingachgook in their hut to mention his commitment to them, Oliver contends: "If I am not all that your partiality would make me, I am yours through life- in prosperity as in poverty" (P 290). He shows his cordiality in his words when he cries to Judge Temple on Natty and Chingachgook's hardships to adapt to the new life in Templeton society :

Ask your own conscience, Judge Temple. Walk to that door sir, and look out upon the valley, that placid lake, and those dusky mountains, and say to your own heart, if you have, whence came these riches, this vale, and those hills, and why am I their owner? I should think sir, that the appearance of Mohegan and the Leatherstocking, stalking through the country, impoverished and forlorn, would wither your sight (P 345).

After these bitter outbursts to Temple, he has to quit his job in the mansion and goes directly to Natty's hut.

From the moment Oliver is introduced as the unknown young hunter at Natty's side, *The Pioneers* generates a sense of mystery about his origins. There are hints throughout that Oliver is "mixed with the blood of the Indians" (P 143), having descended from a Delaware chief. The suggestion of a mixture gives rise to speculation among the townspeople. The judge and the owner of the land "Templeton", Judge Marmaduke Temple, speaks about him as follows:

I gather from his discourse, as is apparent from his manner, that he has seen better days; and I am inclining to the opinion of Richard, as to his origin; for it was no unusual thing for the Indian Agents to rear their children in a very laudable manner... (P 214).



Different characters construe the suggestion of this mixture differently. On Oliver's having descended from a Delaware chief, Miss Grant "with reluctance with which she admitted his alliance to the old warrior" (P 278) claims that "... perhaps, he is only very, very distantly related to John Mohegan (the Christian name of Chingachgook which he has been called after his conversion to Christianity)" (P 278). It is evident that all these speculations end when the secret of his descent is revealed at the end of the novel, that he is the grandson of British Major Effingham and thus, the son of Edward Oliver Effingham who was Judge Temple's sometime friend and original owner of Temple's land. The Delaware first granted the land to Oliver's grandfather Major Effingham and later it was occupied by Judge Temple. The Delawares called Major Effingham "Fire-eater" and made him an honorary member of their tribe because he once saved the life of Mohegan and they loved him.

In conclusion, although Natty Bumpoo and Oliver Edwards Effingham are both considered to be the reconciliation of the British and the Native American identities, there is a significant difference between the two characters. After the revelation of Oliver's true identity, it is understood that his bitter outbursts are based not on the violated rights of Native Americans but on the rights of inheritance. He, thereby marrying Elizabeth with whom he has fallen in love and having the half share of the Templeton village, is granted the title of the land. The resolution of the novel does this by recognising the "white British" Oliver and denying the "Indian" Oliver. On the other hand, Natty maintains proclaiming his ideas on the predations by the European and the British upon the Native American lands and the

confusion wrought among Native Americans by the “white cunning of the “invader”, thereby insisting on being the representative of the nearly extinct Native American peoples.



## CHAPTER TWO

The term “Indian” has its origins in Columbus’ misidentification of the land he discovered and of the people living on it. Based on this misidentification, the word “Indian” did not originally signify so much the native populations of America as the people the Europeans and the British expected and wished to find there. The word itself is a reminder that the Europeans went to find gold, jewels and spices, the transportable riches of the Indies (Carr 24). In this respect, the word “Indian”, which Native Americans were called by the first European and British colonisers, can be considered as the misinformation on the part of the Europeans. However, they also tended to describe the Native American in different terms, which can be attributed to their prejudice against Native Americans. Concerning the terms in which Native Americans were identified, Helen Carr makes the following suggestions:

The word “Indian”, which according to Roger Williams in 1643 was for the Puritan Europeans synonymous with “Natives, Salvages\*... Wild-men... Pagans, Barbarians, Heathen”. Indians defined in such terms, were without the same rights as Christian men especially when they opposed the implementation of God’s Providential will (24).

\*Such is the spelling of the word in the text.

The British tended to regard the people who were different as inferior and their own practices as superior (Dinnerstein 5). In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries the Europeans and the British conceived the “otherness” of the Native American essentially as a cultural rather than a racial difference. As Carr mentions, Sir Philip Sidney, in his *Defence of Poesie*, lists the Native American as an example of people who lacked learning (26). For the argument that education is an essential factor that marks the difference between Native Americans and the Europeans, Robert Gary states:

... it is not the nature of men, but the education of men which makes them [Native Americans] barbarous and uncivill,... therefore... it is everie mans dutie to travell both by the sea and land, and to venture either with his person or with his purse, to bring the barbarous and savage people to a civill and Christian kinde of government...(quoted in Carr 26).

It is striking to observe that the Europeans and the British were inclined to contemplate this cultural difference, or rather, the inferiority of the Native American to themselves from the Christian perspective because Christianity and civility were considered to them to be synonymous, and as Carr asserts: “Indians were barbarous heathen; the colonists were civil Christians” (28). On the belief that “civil” Christians are superior to “savage” Native Americans, Heyward, who is a British major and stands as the upholder of the British culture, in *The Last of the Mohicans*, contends: “As bright examples of great qualities are but too uncommon among Christians, so are they singular and solitary with the Indians” (61-2). That’s to say, such virtues are not widespread among Christians but they are even rarer among Native Americans.

The superiority of the “civil” Christians over the “barbarous” Native Americans clashes with Christian faith, that all mankind descended from Adam, and evidence for this view may be quoted in Reverend Mr. Grant’s words in *The Pioneers*, for he suggests: “The Redeemer died for all, for the poor Indian as well as for the white man. Heaven knows no difference in colour” (94). However, the Europeans and the British tended to attribute civilised virtues to Christianity. Yet, this judgement can be considered as a justification for colonisation in the American wilderness because as Carr states, “In 1583, colonisation could be described as ‘a most excellent work, in respect of reducing the savage people to Christianity and civilitie’” (28).

There is sufficient evidence in both *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers* that the British assume that Native Americans are inferior to themselves, thereby they discriminate themselves against Native Americans. In *The Last of the Mohicans* Major Heyward, who regards his own culture and race as superior, fails to distinguish between a beaver dam and a Native American camp. Where a Native American village is anticipated he sees a beaver dam. In this case, it is evident that he considers the method and neatness of the execution of Native Americans’ homes inferior to a beaver’s. Although his expectation is supported by the fact that Native Americans make use of the same materials as do the beavers to build their homes (Samuels 95), it illustrates the denigration of Native Americans as “savages” by the British by reducing a Native American home to that of an animal’s.

A similar argument on the discriminating views of the British and the European against the Native American can be observed in the depiction

of love between Uncas, the last of the Mohicans and Cora, the half Negro daughter of the British Colonel Munro. Cora and Uncas love each other, but the author of the novel, James Fenimore Cooper, reflecting the white man's taboo against a white-Indian amalgamation, does not allow the chain of events in the novel to consummate their love. Cooper, rather, kills them off in *The Last of the Mohicans* and leaves, as D.H Lawrence states, "the white lily [Alice, the other daughter of Munro whose mother is a Scottish woman] on the race. She will breed plenty of white children to Major Heyward" (64). On Cooper's rejection of a racial amalgamation Terence Martin claims: "He [Cooper] cannot conceive of a marriage between the daughter of Major Munro, no matter her background and an Indian, no matter how noble" (63). Eric Cheyfitz makes a similar comment and suggests:

One of the strong messages of *The Leatherstocking Tales* is quite clearly that a white particularly a white female is "better dead than red" or, more accurately put, better dead than married to a red, which seems to amount to the same thing (76).

Cooper can be criticised in respect to the conclusion of this white-Indian love affair through which he presents the viewpoint of the white man on racial amalgamation. On this matter, Daniel Peck states the following: "Certainly, it is true that no white American writer of the early and middle nineteenth century was free of racial prejudice toward Indians, and in the end, an exception cannot be made of Cooper" (9). However, it is also true that Cooper acknowledges the dispossession and the destruction of Native Americans by the European and the British. To illustrate Cooper's view on the Native American dispossession by the European and the British, Peck expresses:

Cooper never undercuts the claims of his “bad” Indian Magua, who argues that his deep malevolence proceeds from degradation at the hands of European military forces and from white “gluttony”. Furthermore, it is given over to Magua, through his “artful eloquence” to express the novel’s [*The Last of the Mohicans*] most compelling elegiac vision of Indian dispossession (9).

Even though Cooper projects and supports, in *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers*, the “Indian view of white European imperium: the conqueror, English or French, is as greedy a destroyer as any conquistador” (Rans 115), he denies “the Native Americans any claim to the continent on account of the immigrants’ superior civilisation” (Lubbers 265).

Cooper’s prejudice against miscegenation is duplicated in the love between Oliver Edwards and Elizabeth in *The Pioneers*. Judge Temple’s daughter Elizabeth falls in love with Edwards. However, due to Oliver’s supposed Native American descent, Elizabeth does not allow herself to develop a romantic interest in him. After the revelation of Edward’s true identity, that he is a white man, they are able to unite and marry. The revelation that Edwards is not a Native American eliminates the barrier that blocks the union of a supposed Native American man with a white woman.

Even though the European and the British were inclined to see themselves as superior to Native Americans and to regard them as “savage” and “uncivilised”, there were some noticeable differences of judgement between the Puritans and those under the influence of Enlightenment era, in respect to Native Americans. Regarding the alteration of some views on the Native American with the impact of the Enlightenment era, Carr asserts:

... as “natural” man the Indians distanced from the civilised world was not necessarily any longer a mark of his fallen, bestial and brutish nature. His way of life could now be seen as commendably closer to the truths of the laws of Nature than were the corrupt regimes of Europe (31).

The Enlightened Thomas Hutchinson, by the 1760s, makes a similar comment and confesses regretfully, “We are too apt too consider them [Native Americans] as a race of beings inferior to us and born to servitude” (quoted in Carr 37).

Although these are the views of some of the Enlightened thinkers and we cannot generalise these ideas and believe that all the European and the British think in the same way, it is true that, in many respects, Native Americans cannot be considered as “savage” and “uncivilised” in the way the British tended to believe. It would be significant and wise to take account of the “otherness” of Native Americans in terms of their own set of rules and way of life. Thus, Native Americans’ having their own code of behaviour cannot be disregarded and judged. As Robert Lawson claims, “The Indians have their own set of rules and they observe them more punctiliously than the whites observe theirs” (128). This is illustrated in *The Last of the Mohicans*: The Delaware tribe cannot detain Magua, the Huron chief, as he leaves their camp with the captive Cora Munro because of their “inviolable laws of Indian hospitality” (LM 371). A similar example can be given from *The Pioneers*: Regarding the land granted to the British Major Effingham by the Delawares because he once saved Chingachgook and they loved him, Chingachgook suggests: “We gave it to my brother, in council- to the Fire-Eater [Major Effingham]; and what the Delaware give, lasts as long as the waters run” (P 291). Considering the conduct of the British towards the Native American regarding the British claim on the Native American lands which ends with the destruction and the dispossession of the



natives, it is worth appreciating the Native American virtue in terms of their faithfulness and generosity.

No matter how Native Americans are judged by the European and the British in terms of their “savagery”, Cooper offers several examples of Native American civility in *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers*. In his portrayal of Uncas, Cooper attributes the qualities of nobility and civility to this young Mohican. Cooper depicts him “with eyes that had already lost their fierce-ness and were beaming with a sympathy that elevated him far above the intelligence and advanced him probably centuries before the practices of his nation” (LM 135). Uncas, at his first appearance before the British party (Cora, Alice, Major Heyward), who are later helped by him and his companions on the way to Fort William Henry where the daughters’ father is the commander, is the subject of fear in the eyes of the party due to the prejudice of the British against “savage” and “barbarous” Native Americans. However, he is in time able to gain their trust because of his courage, nobility and gentility. When the daughters of Major Munro are present, Uncas never takes a scalp of an enemy which is considered a Native American habit, but rather, as Cooper suggests that Uncas “denying his habits, we had almost said his nature, flew with instinctive delicacy, accompanied by Heyward to the assistance of the females” (LM 135). Not by the romance values of the British but by the gifts and virtues of Uncas and his companions, Chingachgook and Natty, the British party is able to survive in the wilderness on the way to Fort William Henry (Rans 62).

However, Cooper is criticised for his ideal view of Uncas’ noble and gentle character. Cooper himself read and drew his conception of the

Mohicans from the account of missionary John Heckewelder on the Mohicans. As Long suggests, this missionary John Heckewelder “insists on the nobility of character in the tribes with whom he lived” and remarks that the “worst can be said of them is that the passion of revenge is so strong in their minds that it carries them beyond all bounds. But set this aside, and their character is noble and great” (53).

It is apparent from the examples provided in both *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers* that Native Americans have their own set of rules and these cannot be regarded as inferior or “uncivilised” when they are compared to that of the “civilised” European or British. In *The Last of the Mohicans*, in their discussion, Uncas, his father Chingachgook and Natty, regarding the next steps to be taken in their plan, provide a clear example of a Native American amicable contest and civility. On the same point, Cooper comments: “...the most Christian assembly might have learned a wholesome lesson of moderation from the forbearance and courtesy of the disputants” (LM 235). It is also evident from the accounts of the travellers during the period when the British first met Native Americans as well as from the historians that the natives possess and achieve a democratic structure within their own set of rules although they are not governed by civil laws but the laws of nature. James Adair wrote in 1775 that “They [Native Americans] are all equal – the only precedence any gain is by virtue, oratory or prowess... Governed by the plain and honest law of nature, their whole constitution breathes nothing but liberty” (quoted in Carr 35). In this respect, the British assumptions of Native American savagery, inferiority

and deficiencies, though these are their pretext for colonisation, lose their validity.

It is significant to focus on the British and the Native American attitudes towards nature to make a distinction between the notions of the “civilised” and the “savage”. On different perspectives of the civilised and the native in relation to nature, Terence Martin quotes from Willa Carter’s *Death Comes for the Arch-bishop*:

Travelling with his Indian friend Eusabio is for Bishop Latour “like travelling with the landscape made human”. The white man’s way, Latour realises, is “to assert himself in any environment, “to change it, make it over a little (at least to leave some remark or memorial of his sojourn)”. The native way, on the contrary is to pass through a country “and leave no trace, like fish through the water, or birds through the air”. Such an impressive harmony with nature has nourished life, both physical and spiritual, “from immemorial times” (48).

Considering the quotation above, in his attitude to nature, the civilised man changes, or rather, destroys nature in the name of bringing civilisation to the wilderness; however, as their set of values dictates them, the Native American prefers to live in harmony with nature which nourishes them.

Native Americans even get accustomed to describing their traits and skills using the features of nature. Chingachgook, in *The Pioneers*, defines his present situation using the characteristics of nature and says: “Six times ten hot summers have passed, since John was young; tall like a pine; strong as the buffalo; spry as the cat of the mountain” (400). Natty, who is nearly assimilated to the habits of the natives (P 85) and the speaker of Native Americans in *The Pioneers*, points out the wasteful manners of the European and the British settlers towards nature when they slaughter the

flock of passenger pigeons in “delightness and exultation”. He condemns this carnage and states:

...it’s wicked to be shooting into flocks in this wastey manner; and none do it, who know how to knock over a single bird. If a body has a craving for pigeon’s flesh, why! It is made the same as all other creater’s, for man’s eating, but not to kill twenty and eat one. When I want such a thing, I go into the woods till I find one to my liking, and then I shoot him off the branches without touching a feather of another, though there might be a hundred on the same tree (P 247).

It is apparent that, in his practices he mentions above, Natty displays the Native American attitude towards nature since nature is of fundamental importance to them and they never disregard the pristine qualities of nature which would thereby violate the laws of nature. On the European and the British colonisers’ exploitation and despoilment of nature, Natty makes a similar remark in *The Last of the Mohicans* and contends that “Natur’ is sadly abused by man, when he once gets the mastery” (143). Regarding Natty’s claim on the destruction of nature by the white man, Martin comments as follows:

...he [Natty] formulates the principle that “natur is sadly abused” by civilised men, once they get “the mastery”. With mastery (the persistent goal of the whites) comes abuse- portentous, threatening, unpredictably at odds with the environment that nourishes the native inhabitants (48).

Even though it is significant to recognise the Native American “otherness” since they have their own set of rules and it is important to be sensitive to the Native American “civilisation”, the British assumption regarding the Native American as a culture of “savagery and brutality” can, in some respects, be acknowledged. When the native’s habit and practice of taking the scalp of their enemies is considered, even Uncas, no matter how gentle and noble he is, does not avoid practising this “savage” habit. “When

Uncas had brained his first antagonist”, Cooper writes, “he turned like a hungry lion, to seek another” (LM 132). The motive that drives Native Americans to be brutal can be the passion of revenge in their nature. As Heckewelder asserts, “The worst can be said of them is, that the passion of revenge is so strong in their minds that it carries them beyond all bounds” (quoted in Long 53). Oliver, in *The Pioneers*, makes a similar comment and says:

Revenge is a virtue with an Indian. They are taught, from infancy upward, to believe it a duty, never to allow an injury to pass unrevenged; and nothing but the stronger claims of hospitality can guard one against their resentments, where they have power (P 140).

It is obvious that Native Americans have grown up with this strong feeling of revenge and until they take their revenge, which is considered an honorary action from their standpoint, they cannot avoid being cruel to their enemies. Cooper depicts, in *The Last of the Mohicans*, that “... for all agreed that their honor, their interests and the peace and happiness of their dead countrymen, imperiously required them speedily to immolate some victims to their revenge” (333).

It is this thirst for revenge that leads Magua with his “dusky Huron followers”, in *The Last of the Mohicans*, to kill the British soldiers accompanied by their wives and children in multitudes during the British retreat from Fort William Henry. As the psalmist David Gamut describes him, Magua “is possessed of an evil spirit that no power short of omnipotence can tame” (LM 264). On Magua’s malignant and revengeful character, Robert Emmet Long expresses that “He speaks in tones of ‘deepest malignancy’, gnashes his teeth with ‘a rage that could no longer be

bridled', and cannot laugh, except terribly and 'exultingly'" (55). Yet, there lies a story beneath that which has driven Magua to commit this bloody crime. Magua reports this misfortunate story in "his earnest attitude" as follows:

When his English and French fathers dug up the hatchet, Le Renard [his Indian name] struck the warpost of the Mohawks and went out against his own nation.... The old chief [Colonel Munro] 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 firewater and came into the cloth wigwams of his warriors, it should not be forgotten. Magua foolishly opened his mouth, and the hot liquor led him into the cabin of Munro... Magua was not himself; it was the firewater that spoke and acted for him! But Munro did not believe it. The Huron chief was tied up before all the pale-faced warriors and whipped like a dog... Here are scars given by knives and bullets- of these a warrior may boast before his nation; but the gray-head has left marks on the back of the Huron chief that he must hide like a squaw, under this painted cloth of the whites (LM 120-1).

Munro has beaten Magua so severely for drunkenness that his back still bears the scars and thus he seeks redress for this insult. As Oliver very well figures out, he does not "allow" his "injury to pass unrevenged" and starts the Massacre and slaughters a number of British at Fort William Henry where Munro is the commander. According to Martin, Magua "commits this crime, however, because a crime had been committed against him" (127). In this sense, although Magua is a malevolent and immoral character, we as readers cannot keep ourselves from sympathising with him because as Long contends: "Magua makes a forceful case for the corruption he himself has suffered at the hands of the English...The English have taken first his land and then his self-respect, leaving him only with his rage" (61).

When the Massacre at Fort William Henry is considered, it is important to acknowledge the contrast between the European and the British

laws of warfare and those of the Native American. The British Fort is besieged by a mixed force of French and Native American. Outnumbered by some five to one and with rapidly depleting ammunition and with the refusal of Major Webb at Fort Edward for reinforcements, Major Munro is urged to surrender by the French commander Montcalm. Having no hope and hearing the fair surrender terms, Munro agrees and signs a treaty. As the British forces are marching out of the Fort with the French troops standing by, things begin to go wrong. Montcalm's Native American allies, the Hurons commanded by Magua, enter the Fort and attack and kill numerous British people. Montcalm grants an honourable surrender and Munro accepts it. As a result, respecting the surrender terms, they become friends. However, the natives' code of battle is different from that of the white men. While the white men value the diplomacy of war, the natives place no value on a tactical victory. As Magua suggests, "Not a warrior has a scalp, and the palefaces make friends" (LM 199). Whether the motive which drives Magua to start the Massacre can be justified or not is equivocal, and, according to Martin, "A flame with a desire for battle, an Indian precipitates an incident that leads to the general massacre" (53).

A similar incident which magnifies the difference between the Native American and the British rules of warfare happens in *The Last of the Mohicans*. When Natty and his Native American and British party are making their way to Fort William Henry, they are challenged in the darkness by a young French sentry. Major Heyward succeeds in fooling the sentry thinking he is the French officer who has captured the daughters of Colonel Munro and is taking them to Montcalm. The sentry assures the

young women of Montcalm's hospitality and wishes them well. A moment later, when they leave the sentry, Natty and Heyward hear "a long and heavy groan" and notice that Chingachgook is missing. Then Chingachgook rejoins them with one hand he attached the reeking scalp of the unfortunate young Frenchman to his girdle, and with the other he replaced the knife and tomahawk that had drunk his blood. He then took his wonted station, with the air of a man who believed he had done a deed of merit (LM 162).

No matter how cruel and shocking Chingachgook's "deed" is, it is in line with the Native American method of warfare. On Chingachgook's act, Natty asserts: "It would be a cruel and unhuman act for a white skin, but 'tis the gift and natur' of an Indian and I suppose it should not be denied" (LM 162). Regarding Chingachgook's act and Natty's claim, Robert Lawson-Peebles comments that "Chingachgook has added a French sentry to the corpses in the pond, but -and this is the Indian laws of war- as Natty remarks, the murder is allowable under Indian laws of war" (129). A similar comment that marks the difference between the white and the native cunning is made by Natty when Chingachgook disguises Heyward in the appearance of the "masquerade of a buffoon" to search for captive Alice in the Huron camp: "To outwit the knaves it is lawful to practice things that may not be naturally the gift of a white skin" (LM 272).

As a conclusion, it would be wise to acknowledge the distinction between the "gifts" of a white man and the "gifts" of a Native American. D.H Lawrence claims that "The red life flows in a different direction from the white life" (57). However, the European and the British have failed to recognise the difference between their code of conduct and that of the



Native American. Insensitive to the Native American “otherness”, and moreover, to their civilisation, and motivated by greed, the European and the British have led to the dispossession and the destruction of Native American peoples.



### CHAPTER THREE

It is significant to acknowledge that the distinction between the European and the British set of values and code of conduct and those of the Native American has led to the dispossession of Native Americans of their lands and the destruction of their culture. In this respect, to focus on the process which has caused Native Americans to be doomed to such an end is of great importance. It is also true that the end the Native American encountered was rooted in the European and the British colonial era in the North American wilderness. It was the desire of the European and the British to colonise North America that started the process which ended with the dispossession and the destruction of the original owners of the land, Native Americans. On the European and the British colonisation in North America, *Concise Dictionary of American History* has the following:

The English, like the other European nations colonising North America, based their territorial claims upon discovery, exploration or settlement. Fundamentally, they ignore the rights of the Indians. That the newly discovered lands were inhabited by native peoples was no barrier to the making of grants to individuals and companies or planting of colonies (Andrews 453).

Considering the quotation above, it is apparent that, in the course of their colonisation, the British, like the other Europeans, disregarded the Native American identity and existence in North America which is originally the

Native American land. There were other European nations, like the French and the Spanish, that had also claims on the Native American lands. But Leonard Dinnerstein makes the following comment on the unique position of the British in this respect: “Among the major powers, Britain proved most successful in North America and eventually gained control over most of the continent” (4).

In the colonisation of the American wilderness, the Native American was, first of all, an economic factor. When explorers and settlers arrived in America, they found vast potential wealth in furs and skins awaiting exploitation (Andrews 459). The European and the British entered into trade relations with Native Americans. On the same point, Wilcomb E. Washburn comments:

The relationship was not to be merely that of conquerer and conquered. The Indian was condemned by a pre-existing theory to a status by which he served as a material resource to be exploited (quoted in Cheyfitz 73).

The goods offered by the colonisers in exchange of peltry were almost of infinite variety, articles of real utility to Native Americans. What the Europeans and the British offered in such exchange was hardware including axes, knives, traps, kettles, needles, etc. Then there were woollen blankets and fire-arms and ammunition needed by Native Americans for hunting and lastly, liquor, the English rum. On the emerging trade between the European and the British on one side and Native Americans on the other side, the following is again from *Concise Dictionary of American History*:

As the Indian was drawn into the orbit of European commerce, his domestic economy underwent a profound change and he rapidly made a transition from the stone to the iron age. His manner of living and hunting altered and he became increasingly dependent upon the white man’s goods, to so great a degree in fact that an

interruption of trade might threaten want or actual starvation (Andrews 459).

On the same point, Dinnerstein makes a similar comment:

Continuing relations with the English brought the erosion of tribal autonomy and economic collapse, which left the tribes heavily dependent on the invading whites. At the same time, the English and the Indians developed ideas about each other that led to continuing trouble. The whites considered the tribal people to be hostile, untrustworthy and dangerous. Meanwhile, the tribesmen came to view the Europeans as dangerous and insatiable invaders who killed their people and stole their land. True, the whites' trade goods made their lives easier but the expanding English settlements brought frequent land surrenders and increasing cultural breakdown among the Indians (9).

It is obvious that through their trade relations with the European and the British, Native Americans were introduced to the superior technology of the white men and began to emerge from the earlier stage of mankind, the stone age, to the iron age. Native Americans were offered not only various useful items for their lives by the Europeans and the British but also liquor which can be considered as the most important factor that led to their corruption and eventual destruction. On the introduction of rum to the Native American, *Concise Dictionary of American History* has the following:

Whatever may have been the relationship between settlers and natives, contacts between the traders and Indians were normally friendly, as each group depended upon each other. The liquor traffic, however, constituted one great obstacle to the maintenance of peace and order (Andrews 459).

On the impact of the introduction of liquor to the Native American, Magua, who stands as the evidence of Native Americans' corruption by the Europeans and the British as well as being a victim at their hands in *The Last of the Mohicans*, makes the following comment: "Was it the fault of Le Renard [Magua himself] that his head was not made of rock? Who gave him

the firewater? Who made him a villain? It was the palefaces” (120). It is also illustrated in *The Pioneers* with the Native American character, Chingachgook who is portrayed as a victim at the hands of the European and the British and is debased by alcohol. Chingachgook drinks so much that he even cannot go back to his hut (165-6). In *The Pioneers*, the British character, Mrs. Hollister points out the Native American’s keenness on rum and makes the following observation: “An Indian will drink cider, though he never be athirst” (158).

Introducing the Native American to their superior technology of that time and to liquor was a British policy to make the Native American dependent on the white men and was their cunning way of convincing the Native American to hand over their land, thereby dispossessing and destroying them. Chingachgook, in *The Pioneers*, laments over the dispossession and the destruction of his tribe by the white men and makes a similar comment:

The smokes were once few in these hills. The deer would lick the hand of a white man and the birds rest on his head. They were strangers to him. My fathers came from the shores of the salt lake. They fled before rum. They came to their grandfather, and they lived in peace; or when they did raise the hatchet, it was to strike it into the brain of a Mingo. They gathered around the council-fire, and what they said was done. But warriors and traders with light eyes followed them. One brought the long rifle, and one brought rum. They were more than the pines on the mountains; and they broke up the councils, and took the lands (P 185).

On the other hand, Major Heyward, who is portrayed as a typical coloniser and dispossessor in *The Last of the Mohicans*, displays the cunning ways of the British when he offers liquor and other items of utility to the Native American characters to convince them to help him. On the deceitful attitude of Heyward towards the Native American, the critic Geoffrey Rans asserts:

Heyward in fact offers prime evidence of what Magua complains of. He offers money, trinkets, firearms, and powder and promises rum that will make the Indian's heart "lighter than the feathers of the humming-bird and his breath sweeter than the wild honeysuckle" (LM 112) (111).

The introduction of the technology of fire-arms and ammunition to the Native American by the European and the British also accelerated the dispossession of Native Americans. The reason why the Native American was offered firearms and powder by the white men was initially for their need to hunt. However, the Native American tribes also made use of them to gain power over their enemy tribes because the tribes were also engaged in warfare among each other. Although friction with the European and the British settlers formed a few temporary group alliances with little solidarity, for the most part the tribes were hostile to each other and more or less engaged in fighting with each other. Yet, the European and the British also contributed to the hostility among the native tribes and "when sufficiently irritated, hired other Indians to assist in the extermination of the offending tribes" (Andrews 451). In this respect, setting Native Americans against Native Americans by allying with them can be considered as another policy of the European and the British to dispossess Native Americans of their lands. Natty, in *The Last of the Mohicans*, makes a similar remark: "It is true that white cunning has managed to throw the tribes into great confusion as respects friends and enemies" (233).

When the European and the British technology of firearms and ammunition is considered, it is also true that while they were first assumed beneficial for both hunting and gaining power over other tribes by Native American tribes, they turned out to be the great enemy of the Native

American peoples. Compared to the primitive Native American weapons, the tomahawk and the arrow, the weapons of the European and the British are superior. Thus, a battle between the natives and the white settlers is not fair since the two powers are not equal. Moreover, considering the claim of the white men on the Native American lands, it is evident that the superior weapons of the European and the British contributed to Native Americans' dispossession and destruction. On the same point, Chingachgook states the following:

This [the canister of powder] is the great enemy of my nation. Without this, when could the white men drive the Delawares! Daughter, the Great Spirit gave your fathers to know how to make guns and powders, that they might sweep the Indians from their lands (P 403).

James Fenimore Cooper, also acknowledges the dispossession and the destruction of Native Americans by the European and the British and several times directly addresses the issue in his two novels. For *The Last of the Mohicans*, Rans asserts that "The book consistently projects- and endorses- the Indian view of white European imperium: the conqueror, English or French, is as greedy a destroyer as any conquistador" (114). Rans maintains that "The 1826 preface to *Mohicans* makes the point instantly: Dutch, English and French are offered not as explorers, settlers and colonists but as 'conquerors', dispossessors and robbers (2-3)" (110). On the same point, the critic Daniel Peck makes a similar comment:

Some critics of our time have recognized in *The Last of the Mohicans* and in others of Cooper's Indian novels, a genuinely felt sense of loss, and even a deep personal identification with Indian dispossession. It is noteworthy that in the years before Cooper wrote *The Last of the Mohicans*, he was dispossessed of vast lands in central New York left to him and his brothers by their land-baron father, William Cooper (9).

In *The Last of the Mohicans*, there are Native American characters like Chingachgook and Magua and one character of British origin, Natty who is nearly assimilated to Native American habits. These three characters are all portrayed as the victims in the process of the European and the British dispossession and destruction of Native Americans. On the same point, regarding Natty and Chingachgook, Rans claims:

In their present circumstances in the work [*The Pioneers*], they are presented as the superannuated victims of historical process, of changing technologies, of alien cultural assumptions, and of the imperialistic movements that had dominated European action in American history for more than two centuries (51).

The Delaware chief, Chingachgook, in *The Last of the Mohicans* becomes a Christian whose habits “were a mixture of the civilised and savage states” (P 85) in *The Pioneers* which was written before *The Last of the Mohicans* but in which Chingachgook is depicted much older. He is called John Mohegan after his conversion to Christianity and is degraded by alcohol and reduced to basket weaving in *The Pioneers*. On the appearance of Chingachgook, Cooper asserts:

His head was uncovered but a profusion of long, black, coarse hair, concealed his forehead, his crown and even hung about his cheeks, so as to convey the idea, to one who knew his present and former situations, that he encouraged its abundance, as a willing veil, to hide the shame of a noble soul, mourning for glory once known (P 86).

It is evident from the description of Chingachgook that he carries the burden of the Native American’s fate. He is ashamed because his nation was dispossessed of their original lands. Moreover, he is degenerated into a drunkard and is aware that he is a victim at the hands of the European and the British. On the same point, stretching forth both hands, he makes the following statement: “They shake like a deer at the wolf’s how. Is John old?”



When was a Mohican a squaw, with seventy winters! No! The white man brings old age with him- rum is his tomahawk!" (P 185). However, he dies a pagan and does "not die as an Indian debased by alcohol and reduced to basket weaving but as a chief, enduring the heat of the flames without flinching" (Long 43). While Chingachgook dies, Natty leaves the native lands and goes into exile in the West. The original owners of the land were dispossessed, conquered and destroyed by the white men. Moreover, it is clear that no compensation or reconciliation is offered to them. Natty, as the speaker of the Native American peoples in *The Pioneers*, sighs at the impossibility of the compensation and states:

Can ye raise the dead child! Can ye go into the place where you've laid your fathers, and mothers, and children, and gather together their ashes, and make the same men and women of them as afore (P 386).

Not only Natty and Chingachgook but also Cooper's malignant character, in *The Last of the Mohicans*, Magua, is the evidence of the white man's attitude towards the Native American. Magua has a story of "one of lost glory, dispossession, relentless pursuit and harassment, liquor, decadence and eventually, the humiliation of the flogging for which he will exact vengeance" (Rans 111). Magua's accusation of the European and the British for the unfortunate fate of the Native American runs together with Chingachgook's. In his artful speech in *The Last of the Mohicans*, he blames the white man for his greed and expresses the mournful vision of the Native American dispossession:

The Spirit that made men colored them differently... Some he made with faces paler than the ermine of the forests: and these he ordered to be traders. He gave this people the nature of the pigeon; wings that never tire: young, more plentiful than the leaves on the trees, and appetites to devour the earth. He gave them tongues like the

false call of the wildcat; hearts like rabbits; the cunning of the hog and arms longer than the legs of the moose. With his tongue, he stops the ears of the Indians; his heart teaches him to pay warriors to fight his battles; his cunning tells him how to get together the goods of the earth; and his arms inclose the land from the shores of the salt water to the islands of the great lake. His gluttony makes him sick. God gave him enough, and yet he wants all. Such are the palefaces (LM 356-357).

Figuratively, with the death of Chingachgook and his son Uncas who is considered as the last of the Mohican chiefs, not only the compensation for the Native American but also the Native American, particularly the Mohican, dream of reclaiming lands in North America becomes futile and forlorn. As Peck asserts: "The Mohicans see their claim on the future collapse forever. Their vision is backward in time, to an original glory they believe will return" (63). Tamenund, the Sagamore in *The Last of the Mohicans*, makes a similar comment on the death of Uncas: "The palefaces are masters of the earth, and the time of the Red men has not yet come again" (415). Although it is figuratively depicted in *The Last of the Mohicans*, it is true that the original owners of North America, Native Americans are not only dispossessed but are also destroyed and erased by the policies of the European and the British.

When the issue of dispossession of Native Americans is considered, we should be fair while claiming that the European and the British have dispossessed Native Americans of their lands since the European and the British made use of the treaty process. As Elizabeth, the daughter of Judge Temple suggests, in *The Pioneers*, regarding the policy of the white men on the Native American lands: "Do not the Delawares fight, and exchange their lands for powder and blankets and merchandise?" (401). It would be wise to focus on the treaty process and on both the natives and the white men's

conception of the ownership of land whether or not Elizabeth is right in her observation. According to *Concise Dictionary of American History*,

During the colonial period the Indian tribes were regarded practically as independent nations with the right of occupancy of the lands on which they lived. The relations of the mother country and of the colonies with tribes were regulated by means of treaties, involving extinguishment of title to Indian lands (Andrews 460).

However, the Native American conception of ownership of land differs from that of the European and the British. According to Native Americans, land was like air or water, something that was necessary to life, but not capable of being brought or sold. In another quotation from *Concise Dictionary of American History*, the Shawnee chief Tecumseh, says that “Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the clouds, the great sea as well as the lands?” (452). As it is stated in *Concise Dictionary of American History*,

Land was an integral, inseparable part of nature that sustained the beings that lived upon it. These beings lived by hunting and fishing in the unity of nature which must never be disturbed by vicious exploitation (452).

Thus, it was difficult for Native Americans to understand the full meaning of treaties in which they left their rights. It is evident that the difference between the white men’s conception of the ownership of land and that of Native Americans as well as the white men’s cunning methods and policy which involved offering articles of utility to the Native American, ammunition and rum in exchange for Native American lands had effects on Native Americans’ leaving their rights to the Europeans and the British. Under these circumstances, it cannot be acknowledged that Native Americans were really willing to leave their ownership of land to the white men.

In conclusion, as it is stated in *Dictionary of American History*, “The ultimate English objective in their North American activities was to place ever-greater quantities of native lands under English possession and dominion” (283). The British achieved this, and dispossessed Native Americans of their lands and corrupted their culture. The British disregarded the Native American’s difference in their set of values to justify their colonisation and both dispossessed and destroyed them. However, considering the Native American as inferior to themselves, the British discriminated against Native Americans because they are a different race. Yet, it is a fact that both the British and the Native American are all parts of mankind even if their colours are different. On the same point, Chingachgook has a more humane perspective and says to Elizabeth, in *The Pioneers*:

... the Great Spirit made your father with a white skin, and mine with a red, but he coloured both their hearts with blood. When young it is swift and warm; but when old, it is still and cold. Is there difference below the skin? No. (P 402).

On the grounds that the European and the British have failed to understand this fact, as it is stated in the introduction of *The Pioneers*, the European and the British missed “the possibility that European immigrants might have joined with Native Americans rather than dispossessing and killing them, and that from the merging of the two cultures might have come something new in the earth, a people free, proud and self-reliant without the pettifoggery, greed and corruption that have infected the history of American culture” (xii).

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has focused on the reconciliation of the Native American and the British identities as well as the confrontation of these identities and the consequences of this confrontation in the form of an ultimate failure in reconciliation in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers*. The Europeans and the British have failed to recognise the Native American identity and otherness, which led to the dispossession of Native Americans of their native lands and the destruction of their culture. Based on the evidence *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers* provide, it is not difficult to conclude that the Native American's standards in law, polity and human conduct are as sound and justifiable as those of the white man. Yet, this state of affairs has not offered any protection against Native Americans' elimination.

As was indicated in the introduction, chapter one of this thesis has focused on the reconciliation of the Native American and the British identities through characters of British origin, Natty Bumpoo and Oliver Edwards Effingham. The motives which lead Natty Bumpoo to adopt and to assimilate certain habits and gifts of the Native American in his self have been examined. Natty has spent a long period of his life with the Delaware chief, Chingachgook in the North American wilderness. Thus, the

comradeship and solidarity of Natty and Chingachgook that have developed throughout this period is of great importance. Natty's identity has been analysed from various aspects to display that he is the compromise of the British and the Native American identities. However, while he assimilates certain qualities and skills of the Native American in his character, his sense of own white identity has also been discussed. No matter how obsessive Natty can be to proclaim his white identity at times, he is never inclined to disregard the Native American identity. This chapter has also focused on the other British character, Oliver, who can be regarded as another case of the reconciliation of the Native American and the British identities. On one hand, Oliver's identity has been examined in respect to his emphasis on having descended from a Delaware chief and to his commitment to Natty and Chingachgook. On the other hand, it has been observed that he has bitter complaints against Judge Temple and the townspeople believe that such complaints come from his sense of Native Americans' violated rights. This chapter has concluded with the discussion on the transformation of Oliver's "savage" life to his new "civilised" life after he starts working in Temple's mansion. The last point indicated in the chapter has been Oliver's discovery of his true identity that he has not descended from a Delaware chief but from British origins.

Chapter two of this thesis has focused on the confrontation of the Native American and the British identities. The ideas of the Europeans and the British as well as their identification of Native Americans have been presented. How the Europeans and the British consider Native Americans as inferior to themselves has been discussed to make the issue clear. One way

to do this has been to focus on the issue of racial amalgamation in *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pioneers*. The views of James Fenimore Cooper, as the author of the two novels, on the racial amalgamation has been presented. To give another dimension regarding the European and the British ideas on Native Americans, the viewpoints of some Enlightened thinkers have also been introduced. This chapter has examined the difference between set of values of the Europeans and the British including their rules of warfare as well as their attitudes towards nature and those of Native Americans. The Europeans and the British consider Native Americans as “savages” and this chapter has concluded observing that it is the Native American adherence to revenge that led the Europeans and the British to regard them as “savages”.

Chapter three of this thesis has discussed the consequences of the confrontation of the British and the Native American identities in the form of an ultimate failure in reconciliation. To focus on the process which results in the dispossession of Native Americans of their native lands and the destruction of their culture is of great importance. Thus, in this process, the emerging trade between the Europeans and the British on one side and Native Americans on the other side, the introduction of liquor and the superior technology of the Europeans and the British as well as the British policies and cunning methods to dispossess Native Americans of their lands all have a major impact on the Native American way of life. Cooper’s views on the dispossession and destruction of Native Americans have also been presented.

The overall conclusion is that, motivated by greed and insensitive to Native American identity and civilisation, the European and the British have led to the dispossession of Native Americans of their native lands and to the destruction of their culture. The Europeans and the British, through their policies and cunning methods, have succeeded in claiming lands in North America. However, they have not cared to integrate the white man's culture and civilisation with the Native American's. They have missed the possibility that they might have avoided carrying the burden of the violation of Native American peoples' way of life and of their eventual ruin. From the integration of the two cultures, that of the Native American and the British and the European, a new world might have emerged where peoples would be proud, free, hopeful and self-confident.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrews, Wayne. ed. *Concise Dictionary of American History*, Vol.1, New York: Scribner, 1962.

Carr, Helen. *Inventing the American Primitive: Politics, Gender and the Representations of Native American Literary Traditions, 1789-1936*, Cork, Ireland: Cork UP, 1996.

Cheyfitz, Eric. "Literally White, Figuratively Red: The Frontier of Translation in *The Pioneers*" in *James Fenimore Cooper: New Critical Essays*, Ed. Robert Clark, London: Vision, 1985.

Clark, Robert. ed. *James Fenimore Cooper: New Critical Essays*, London: Vision, 1985.

Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Last of the Mohicans*, London: Penguin, 1994.

Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Pioneers*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991.

Dekker, George. *James Fenimore Cooper: the Novelist*, London: Routledge and Kagan Paul, 1967.

Dinnerstein, Leonard. *Natives and Strangers: Blacks, Indians, and Immigrants in America*, New York: Oxford UP, 1990.

Kutler, Stanley I. ed. *Dictionary of American History*, Vol. 4, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2003.

Lawrence, D. H. *Studies in Classic American Literature*, [Harmondsworth]: Penguin, [1983-1961].

Lawson-Peebles, Robert. "The Lesson of the Massacre at Fort William Henry", in *New Essays on The Last of The Mohicans*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Long, Robert Emmet. *James Fenimore Cooper*, New York: Continuum, 1990.

Lubbers, Klaus. *Born For the Shade: Stereotypes of the Native American in United States Literature and the Visual Arts, 1776-1894*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994.

Martin, Terence. "From Atrocity to Requiem: History in *The Last of the Mohicans*", in *New Essays on The Last of The Mohicans*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Peck, Daniel H. "Introduction", in *New Essays on The Last of the Mohicans*, Ed. H. Daniel Peck, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Peck, Daniel H. ed., *New Essays on The Last of The Mohicans*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Rans, Geoffrey. *Cooper's Leather-stocking Novels: a Secular Reading*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, c1991.

Samuels, Shirley. "Generation through Violence: Cooper and the Making of Americans", in *New Essays on The Last of The Mohicans*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP, 1992