

Hawk-Eye and the Crisis of American Masculinity in *The Last of the Mohicans*

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Abstract

James Fenimore Cooper wrote *The Last of the Mohicans* when American masculinity was drastically changing in the wake of the 19th century. Cooper manages to cross all cultural and national boundaries of masculinity through the character of Hawk-eye, who becomes the body onto which he ascribes the experience of the American man. This paper will explore both the social and literal contexts of masculinity through Cooper's model of Hawk-eye, and through the idea of a perceived "crisis" within the male gender as defined by Nina Baym, Bryce Traister, and Judith Butler. Hawk-eye is analyzed as a satirical means of saving American masculinity from the emasculation of the industrial future by transitioning back to performing a primitive, "savage" manliness in the wake of "crisis." The paper analyzes this projected failed image of the American man throughout the literary past and into the social future through its presentation in this canonized text.

Key Words: masculinity, crisis, emasculation, gender, manhood, Hawk-eye

In *The Last of the Mohicans*, Cooper presents a masculine crisis in the context of a feminized natural landscape. He presents multiple models of masculinity in an effort to show the fluidity of masculine identity, as well as how a sense of incoherence and fragmentation rests at the root of its definition. The crisis of manhood centers on control, and it is lack of control that creates a sense of incoherence within his identity. The masculine conflict with that of the feminine also fuels a desire for dominance and control, and as cultural norms progress and change, men find themselves in a deeper sense of crisis due to a decreased ability to control their environments and their reproductive futures. Men are constantly trying to unify the fragments of their manhood, but ultimately fail to do so because of the constant changes in expectations for gender within society, making their crisis the only true indicator of true masculine definition.

The Last of the Mohicans was written at a time when historically, American masculinity became an important element in the formation of America as a nation, yet it has had a conflicted identity throughout history. Images of the ideal American man have been similarly depicted within early American literature, most notably as white. In *National Manhood*, Dana Nelson (1998) discusses how America's reliance on white masculinity was in an effort to create a "national" unity among men. Yet, it is white manhood's "identification with national unity [that] has worked historically to restrict others from achieving full entitlement in the United States" (Nelson, 1998, p.27). Hence, superiority is how this image of American white masculinity began to represent an "impossible identity," unstable within its nationalistic context. If Cooper sought to use masculinity symbolically as a representation of conflicted early America, an analysis of the novel must take into consideration the complexity of America's masculine identity, which includes all models that are alternative to that cultural standard. What defines the American man more than anything else in the 19th century is his "resourcefulness, born out of the challenges of a wrenching New World from virgin wilderness" (Gilbert, 2002, p.5). The American experience of the "man on the frontier" is demonstrated through Cooper's placement of his characters within a "virgin wilderness," highlighting their inabilities as men in the context of survival, and placing them in a state of crisis with not only their environment, but their own identities as men.

1. Eustace Conway: *The Modern Hawk-eye in Crisis*

American masculinity, both in literature and reality, has a conflicted identity—it is incoherent in its own self-understanding and unable to facilitate a successful future due to this internal conflict. Hawk-eye's character becomes the masculine trope, or the body that Cooper uses to cross models of masculinity. The emulation of Native American culture is Hawk-eye's most notable behavior, and it is through this performance that Cooper presents a mythic man, seeking to "save" his masculinity in the wake of industrialized change. Eustace Conway is Elizabeth Gilbert's model of modern American masculinity in her 2002 biography titled *The Last American Man*.

Eustace has chosen to live on the land in the Appalachian Mountains since the age of 19, and has since come to represent a modern day version of Cooper's Hawk-eye in his self-sufficiency, emulation of Native American culture, and destiny to remain in a state of crisis in order to battle the modernity of the future. Gilbert (2002) says that Eustace's story "is the story of American manhood: shrewd, ambitious, energetic, aggressive, expansive—he stands at the end of a long illustrious line of the same" (p.127). He is a "genuine mountain man, frontiersman, pioneer, maverick...our mythical inner self made flesh...strong enough to carry our desires on his back" (p.125-6). Gilbert (2002) portrays both the strength and the vulnerability of the American man through her telling of Eustace's story. Just as Hawk-eye is representative to Cooper, Eustace acts as Gilbert's means for demonstrating a modern example of crisis within American masculinity, which has demonstrated itself over the course of history.

Eustace struggles in his acceptance of himself as a man despite his accomplishments and self-sufficiency because of the changes taking place within his society. He is incoherent and confused as to what he is meant to do and be for a society in which he cannot fully integrate himself. Despite his attempt to embrace a sense of masculinity in his reliance on the land, Eustace is unable to succeed in a modernizing world, therefore truly lacking control of his land, which is his own wilderness. Eustace's determination to survive in the wilderness like a Native American man, is his effort to revitalize his manhood in the wake of continual changes in his society regarding control, most specifically, changes in the power dynamics within gender and sexuality.

Eustace's struggle embodies what a variety of critics and scholars have defined as a masculine crisis, which is demonstrated in such canonized books as *The Last of the Mohicans*. Eustace's emulation acts as a means of resuscitation of a sense of masculinity that his society has begun to see as obsolete. Eustace links reality to the literary world of Hawk-eye, whose influence over masculine culture deems him a trope for masculine behavior that Eustace clearly demonstrates. Gilbert's documentation of Eustace presents a definition of the American man in a state of "crisis," which she credits to our society's "cultural and gender upheaval." Modern men are always at risk as being in an "outdated" model of masculinity that does not facilitate control over the cultural dynamics of their society. Gilbert (2002) states:

Modern America is a society where college-educated men have seen their incomes drop 20 percent over the last twenty-five years...A society where a third of all wives make more money than their husbands. A society where women are increasingly in control of their biological and economic destinies...A society, in other words, where man is not necessary in the way he was customarily needed—to protect, to provide, to procreate. (p.204)

Modern men find themselves in the same predicament as the men such as Cooper in the 19th century. The Jacksonian "antebellum" model of masculinity was being threatened as it became obsolete in the wake of industrialization. The change in the gender dynamics of social history has had a tremendous impact on the masculine psyche, and has created a fear of emasculation among American men, which stems from their lack of control over women. Changes that were once industrial, racial, and colonial in Cooper's time have transitioned into changes on a deeper social level, impacting family, relationship, and reproductive dynamics of culture.

As American society progresses, it further displaces men into a state of "crisis," causing them to question their role in society as the dominant gender and creating conflict with their feminized environments. Both Hawk-eye and Eustace represent men who have chosen to leave their societies and live independently in order to gain a sense of purpose in their identities. Demonstrations of their masculine identities revolve around their relationships with the wilderness and their abilities to conquer it as men. Cooper presents men, both white and native, as struggling to adapt to the society being constructed around them. Masculinity never actually changes, but rather just adheres to cultural expectations in an effort to prevent itself from being in an ultimate state of powerlessness. Yet, it constantly feels as if it is failing to fulfill a desire for coherence and control.

2. Masculine Crises: Nina Baym and Bryce Traister

Recent cultural changes have equalized gender roles in so many ways, but have also created increased competition to be mobile within society. Men find themselves in a progressive state of "crisis," or in need of feeling necessary within the social structures that created them, and the rise of feminist power threatens his sense that he is necessary. Literature about this crisis often depicts a desire for men to seek "the wilderness" in order to stay alive. As Jane Tompkins (1985) concludes, Cooper uses *The Last of the Mohicans* as "social criticism written in an allegorical mode" and presents Cooper's social opinion of manhood as it began to rise as a means of imagining "unity" for his changing nation (p.103).

In her article, “Melodramas of the Best Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors,” Nina Baym (1981) defines the inherent masculine crisis within American literature by analyzing the canon’s dismissal and omission of female authors. Through the struggle of American female authors, Baym is able to relay what male writers in the literary world contend with in regards to the crisis that defines them.

Baym (1981) believes that throughout literary history, the woman writer has been viewed as “the enemy” in her inability to capture the American experience because it was known to be “inherently male” (p.130). Melodramatic assumptions regarding novels written by female authors laid the foundation for historically male-dominated major American fiction, and perpetuated a fantastically gendered myth of the story of the American hero. She goes on to suggest that the “theoretical model of a story which may become the vehicle of cultural essence is: ‘a melodrama of beset womanhood,’ or a representation of a female author’s literary struggle for ‘integrity and livelihood’ within a male-dominated literary sphere” (p.130). Baym (1981) believes the male author presents his own “melodramatic testimony” to the cultural essence established by female authors, and thereby places himself in a position of crisis within his gender.

The Last of the Mohicans presents men in a perpetual state of crisis in what can be interpreted as a feminized wilderness. A man’s control over both the environment and the female gender is representative of the American individual in his mythic struggle against society. Baym (1981) expands the idea of an American “myth” in literature “that narrates a confrontation of the American individual, the pure American self-divorced from specific social circumstances, with the promise offered by the idea of America...[that] a person will be able to achieve complete self-definition” (p.131). The myth then establishes the idea that individuals exist “apart from societies in which they happen to find themselves” and experience an “unmitigated, destructive pressure on [their] individuality,” making society an “adversary” (p.132). Conquering the unsettled American wilderness dominates American novels and represents an opportunity for social and cultural mobility for the male protagonist. Baym (1981) feels this position is a male prerogative in our society, but not a prospect unattainable for women. However, very few men are able to achieve the mobility of the male heroes of melodramas, therefore making the myth just as vicarious for men as it would be for women. Yet, Baym (1981) believes it is not the male protagonist in the story that is placed in the struggle to progress, but rather the “other participants in his story—the entrapping society and the promising landscape,” which Baym (1981) feels is depicted in “feminine terms” and is “represented with particular urgency in the figure of one or more women” (p.133).

The male protagonist’s ability to conquer the wilderness without the social constraints of women is part of the essence of what defined the mythic man. Women are linked to societal oppression in that they are given the role of birthing and rearing children, thereby placing them in roles of “entrappers and domesticators.” Social and sexual instincts attract men to women, so in order to reject social pressure on his autonomy, Baym (1981) says the male author must cast the woman in the “melodramatic role of the temptress, antagonist, obstacle---a character whose mission in life seems to be to ensnare him and deflect him from life’s important purposes of self-discovery and self-assertion” (p.132). The myth then requires celibacy and sterility, causing the male protagonist to struggle against his conventional and sexual urges and defining the woman as a social and domestic threat to his masculinity. The crisis of masculinity is built around a myth of control that is not borne out by men’s actual lives. Therefore, a “melodrama of beset manhood” describes a state of crisis as men, or male characters, strive for a standard of control they can never achieve.

In Baym’s argument, as in *The Last of the Mohicans*, the object of control is often displaced onto a feminized landscape. The wilderness acts as a beckoning landscape, representing freedom from the domestication of women, but also given what Baym believes to be a feminine attractiveness. The paradoxical qualities of women or land to the male protagonist in the myth, both menacing and destructive socially, but compliant, supportive, and liberating naturally, furthers the depth of the masculine crisis in his relationship with his environment. Baym (1981) also speculates that the crisis of the mythic man is a “projection” of the author’s experience as an individual in his own social wilderness. Baym(1981) believes that female authors have equal opportunity to “play Adam” and invent a literary world, which puts the masculinity of male authors in “crisis.” What is most interesting in the crisis Baym describes is the fact that the masculine crisis is defined not by the autonomous aspirations of men, but by the conflict between men and things defined as feminine.

In his article “Academic Viagara: The Rise of American Masculinity Studies, Bryce Traister (2000) discusses how masculine literary theory has developed itself around an idea very similar to Baym’s concept of beset manhood. Traister (2000) calls this set of tensionary and unfulfilled aspirations the “masculine crisis.”

He determines that this crisis coincides within the concept of *heteromascularity*, which addresses masculine studies within the realm of both heterosexual and homosexual men (p.275-276). Traister (2000) believes that heteromascularity is founded on the idea of American masculinity being historically constructed, contingent and continually at crisis, and it “purports to separate actual and fictional men from their entanglements with masculinist ideological structures to show how such individuals deviate from the normative codes of manhood that they...are expected to inhabit” (p.284). Traister (2000) then discusses how heteromascularity studies facilitates a two-pronged “crisis theory” of American masculinity: one is rooted in a new historiography of American masculinity that locates the instability at the base of all masculine identities constructed within American cultural matrices; the second is...gender as always being performative and contingent. (p.276)

The masculine crisis is founded on the performance and contingency of masculinity within society. Masculine performance equates to the quest for authenticity as a man, which ultimately does not exist. A male’s performance of his gender within society averts the truth to himself about his failure to meet the social expectations for his gender, which are always changing, therefore leaving him lack in a sense of personal authenticity. The crisis of heteromascularity is founded historically in cultural fears regarding domesticity. The idea of the “domesticated male” in opposition to his society was facilitated by modernization and what Traister (2000) calls a “gender role reversal” making masculinity insecure (p.279). The male insecurity is reminiscent of “a nineteenth-century mix of psychosexual development, political struggle, and territoriality,” based upon a colonist viewpoint of the virgin (or feminine) land being his conquest (p.282). Through the land, women are presented as the territory to be dominated, yet also impose an oppressiveness that limits the American man from succeeding, which correlates to Baym’s ideas of an oppressing feminized landscape.

Historically, the crisis of the American man involves the “changing ‘ideal’ version of masculinity and the parallel competing versions that coexist with it” due to the changing cultural environment (Traister, 2000, p.283). The changing cultural environment skews a man’s understanding of his authenticity as an individual. Traister (2000) references Michael Kimmel who addresses the American historical, social, and literary conflicts between the straight, white, middle-class, native-born men, against the marginalized “others”—gay men, working class, immigrants, men of color, as well as women, who are “used as a screens against which those ‘complete’ men projected their fears and, in the process, constructed its prevailing definition of manhood” (p.283). Traister (2007) quotes Andrew Kimbrell’s *The Masculine Mystic*, saying that men “feel bewildered, out of control, numbed, angered and under attack... [and] are jolted by...rising demands for a change in gender roles. As a result, men have been left confused, without a coherent or sustainable concept of their own masculinity” (p.285).

Traister (2000) traces the historiography of American masculinity and explains how it “writes itself *as* crisis” (p.287). This crisis stems from an inability to portray a “singular vision of masculinity,” that all men must measure themselves to; an “anxious masculinity” arises from American men in a state of turmoil as they oppose this authoritative standard set for their identities (p.290). There exists an “anxiety of ego incoherence” within men, and therefore masculinity remains “incomplete, incoherent, stunted and inconsistent” throughout American cultural history because it lacks authenticity (p.291). When masculinity is viewed as the social construct that Traister (2000) feels it is, heteromascularity studies will “render visible” the “misunderstood” elements of patriarchal American masculinity; it is “the incoherent or paradoxical male whose fractured self is a function of identity formation,” thereby changing and inconsistent in its presentation (p.295). The performance of the failed gender model within a society ultimately “destabilizes the continuity of a single identity,” calling into question “whether masculinity can ever be assumed to be coherent and singular” (p.295). The oppression and conflict within the relationship between men and women is what Traister (2000) believes is at the core of the American male crisis, concurring with Baym’s ideas on the myth of “beset manhood.” The ability or inability of men to dominate women in both society and literature drives the male crisis because it involves a struggle for control.

The American man is a literary metaphor for the individual against the cultural pressure of society, and it is through this societal conflict that man has come to define his individualized identity. Cooper presents masculinity in various models to demonstrate not only the different individuals that comprise a nation, but also the complex and socially-constructed nature of American manhood, which is always “beset,” or subjected to pressures from an ever-changing nation. American men become their own adversary in their identity development due to a juxtaposition between conflicted relationships with women and a yearning for cohesiveness and authenticity as individuals.

This tension defines the quest of the American male protagonist to make his fragmented self a coherent one, and Cooper's 19th century presentation of manhood set the tone and created a trope for men in a state of crisis to gain this coherence.

3. *The Historicized Crisis*

The Last of the Mohicans was published in 1826 when the ideal of the American man was modeled after Andrew Jackson: an able-bodied soldier, defining himself and protecting his values and his country on the battlefield. Male valor was demonstrated by feats of bravery and violence, and defined by land ownership and self-possession (Traister, 2000, p.287). Cooper was precluded by national instability and discontent among social groups in the 1780's, which was a direct result of the development of capitalism and a "brutally rapid socioeconomic shift toward increased market dependence, nonlocal exchange, and profit 'ethics'" (Nelson, 1998, p.30). Novels presented male characters as dominant heroes, pioneers, frontiersman, and soldiers, in control of their destinies and seeking to claim more as their own. These male characters came to represent a masculine identity ideal, but not all "real" American men at the time fit into the "heroic" mold as the roles of men changed with the onset of industrialization. The "volatile marketplace" of both political and masculine culture was causing men to reconsider their role in society (Traister, 2000, p.287). The progressive changes of the nation's goals clashed with the idealized representation of men, which places men in "an always agonistic position," unable to "fit into a full sense of compatibility with its ideal construction" (Nelson, 1998, p.28). Men were unable to gain a sense of coherence in their identities due to the constant changes being made to the standard of "authentic manliness" in society.

Masculinity's construction as "self-made" meant that what a man chose to do directly influenced perceptions about his gender role. Men who served as soldiers and mirrored the Jacksonian male in patriotic service to their country were awarded a stigmatic valor that defined a man's ideal level of masculinity at the time. Other self-made men, who pursued vocations different than that of the warfront, became forced to "define themselves in a tension-filled milieu in which contrary forces of expansiveness and constriction, or amoral development of self and moral responsibility to others, tugged at them" (Traister, 2000, p.287). Literary men, like Cooper, who sought a creative vocation of writing rather than the violent and aggressive war front, may have felt a sense of anxiety and insecurity about their masculinity due to the social pressure to be the ideal man at that time. Cooper's insecurity could have been demonstrated through his conception of the "mythic hero," which he is unable to pin down to through one specific depiction, but rather in multiple fragments of manhood. Cooper presents this fragmented idea of manliness throughout the novel in an effort to reflect his own heteromale position in society. He presents the Jacksonian ideal of American masculinity, the savagery of native masculinity, and also differing heteromale models of masculinity arising from the nation's capitalistic progression.

Cooper presents the varying models of the American masculinity through his many male characters, but Hawk-eye becomes the primary parody of the masculine myth—failing, but desperately trying, to remain whole as a man amidst the cultural changes of the wilderness. The presence of both European and native masculinity both in Hawk-eye, and in the novel as a whole, contributes to Cooper's depiction of duality in the nature of the American man, by culture and race. The multiple sides of national masculinity further the instability of masculine identity in the wake of national changes. Cooper's demonstration of masculinity through these characters, Hawk-eye in particular, offers a prediction of what the future for the American man held—a quest to rekindle and reestablish a cohesive masculine ideal that will end the perpetual state of crisis brought on by social pressure. It is through Hawk-eye that an image of masculinity in the 19th century projects itself into the future, and offers a model for understanding the instability and crisis of the American man.

4. *Mocking Hawk-Eye: Nature's Dead End*

Cooper wrote Hawk-eye as a European man living in and emulating the Native American culture. He chose this lifestyle due to his discontent with European modernization, primarily in their reliance on education and literature rather than physical survival skills. Clearly, Hawk-eye's identity as a man is dependent on Native American masculinity in order to feel a sense of coherence. His first description in the novel is extremely focused on his integration into the Native American culture, most specifically, in his attire: The frame of the white man...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.

He moccasins were ornamented after the gay fashion of the natives, while the only part of his under dress which appeared below 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.(Cooper, 1986,p.29)

Hawk-eye's demonstration of Native American culture is forcibly masculine. He is strategically planned appearance to look like a native is clear through Cooper's specific description of his fringed hunting frock, cap of animal pelts, weapons, moccasins, and laced hunting pants, yet he is also described in clear contrast to the natives in his lack of tomahawk and initial reference to being white. Hawk-eye's prowess in the wilderness throughout the novel suggests that he finessed these skills from his associations with the Native Americans. Hawk-eye seeks immerse himself in the native culture to gain self-understanding, but he is adamant about maintaining his white identity, which he repeatedly asserts throughout the novel in being "a man without a cross."

Cooper's focus on Hawk-eye's appearance, specifically in his emulation of the Native American culture through his attire, makes a statement about masculinity when analyzed through the lens of Judith Butler (1990). In her book, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Butler (1990) discusses how the body "is not a 'being,' but a variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated..." (p.193). She goes to attribute this body with what she calls a "corporeal style," "An 'act,' as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where 'performative' suggests a dramatic contingent construction of meaning" (p.194). Cooper's descriptive language used in describing Hawk-eye's observable attire can be viewed as an exaggerated emulation, or performance, of Native American culture, which he uses as a means of performing his masculinity, which is defined within Cooper's wilderness with violence, domination, and self-sufficiency among the male characters. Hawk-eye presents himself as in a crisis or conflict with his national identity as a man; he lives as a Native American but he is European. Hawk-eye's national identity is also clearly gendered in its performance, suggesting that Cooper is making a statement about the vulnerability and impressionability of the masculine identity when it comes to its performance within any culture.

Hawk-eye repeatedly refers to himself as "a man without a cross" throughout the novel, referring to his lack of biological or blood connection to the Native American race. Although he dresses and acts like the Native American men, he prides himself, and wants to be recognized as a white European man: "'the worse enemy I have on earth...daren't deny that I am genuine white,' the scout replied, surveying with secret satisfaction, the faded colour of his bony and sinewy hand..."(Cooper, 1986, p.31). Hawk-eye possesses a sense of pride in his whiteness, but he also states that "[his] people have many ways in which, as an honest man, I cannot approve," which he then goes on to describe the example of men who "write in books what they have done and seen, instead of telling them in their villages...to witness the truth in his words" (Cooper, 1986, p.31). This initial comment of displeasure in his culture's association with the written word is one of Hawk-eye's many clear statements of distaste on the subject of literature, which offers analysis of Cooper's voice as the author. Hawk-eye seems to associate acts of reading and writing with a model of masculinity that differs from what he considers to be the masculine ideal. Hawk-eye believes the native man to be idyllically masculine, but only in performance, not in culture. It is Hawk-eye's confusion and insecurity about his cultural practices, white vs. native that contribute to his crisis as an American man at this time.

Cooper's depiction of Hawk-eye demonstrates a "sensational" account of the conflicted interests of American society that Baym speaks of in her article. Hawk-eye is a symbolic representation of these conflicted interests, and furthers her idea of "Cooper's interest in the phenomena of cultural difference, the bifurcations that mark men and things off from one another" (Tompkins, 1985, p.105). Hawk-eye seems to be Cooper's attempt at a "common character" by crossing cultural differences and mixing white and native masculinity in his character's identity. Hawk-eye presents himself as "at the greatest risk of losing his identity" because he wears a medley of white and Indian garments, carries both the knife and gun, wanders restlessly over border after border, frequents the company of Indians, and has at least seven different names. Only by clinging to the notion that he has remained to his "gifts" as a white man...can [he] preserve that sense of cultural belonging without which he would have become another Magua—for a villain in Cooper's calculations is someone who is not true to his kind. (Tompkins, 1985, p.118-9)

Hawk-eye's identity crisis comes to represent the crisis within American masculinity, which is reflected in his desperation to maintain his whiteness.

Whiteness acts as the means of balancing the social system that race contributes to; white masculinity is what Hawk-eye must cling to in order to maintain a sense of strength in his masculine identity, but he struggles to do so because he feels as though the native man is a more appropriate masculine model, thereby putting him in “crisis” with himself as a man.

American masculinity is presented in constant conflict with itself over the course of history. America as a nation was on the verge of great changes in the 1820's, and *The Last of the Mohicans* served as Cooper's means of expressing the social impact of those changes on the American man. Cooper observes industrialization's threat to the antebellum man through both the emasculation of such characters as David Gamut, as well as the emulation performed by Hawk-eye, which facilitates the masculine ideal of strength and control through physical power. Cooper sees the impact that industrialization poses on the need for the masculine ideal within society, therefore he uses Hawk-eye as a representation of white masculinity transitioning back to natural, or “native” masculinity in an effort to save itself from emasculation. Charles Alexander Eastman explains how modernization emasculates the American male; he felt that many white men progressively lost what they perceived as “key traits for true manhood” because “the modern world no longer allowed individual men to forge their identities...predictable daily life undermined robust male virility” (Bayers, 2008,p.57). Cooper integrated this fear of emasculation in the routines of industrialized life into his story through Hawk-eye's performance as a “native white man,” which satirizes the fragile cultural construction of the American manhood.

The vulnerability of socially-constructed masculinity is exemplified through Hawk-eye's gendered body, which Judith Butler (1990) defines as “the inscribed surface of events” (p.185). Hawk-eye's body can be interpreted as “a model that can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious” (Butler, 1990, p.202). When these boundaries are threatened, inscription occurs. Just as the crisis supports, Butler (1990) believes that “the body is always under siege, suffering destruction by the very terms of history” (p.185). Cooper writes Hawk-eye to be the bounded system of European masculinity, which is being threatened by the both the Native Americans and industrialization.

Internally, Hawk-eye feels as though he is white, though externally he presents himself as a Native American. Butler (1990) says, “The boundary of the body as well as the distinction between internal and external is established through the ejection and transvaluation of something originally part of an identity into a defining otherness” (p. 189). Native Americans are viewed as “the Other,” which is defined in opposition to what is “original,” yet it is the Native Americans who possess the original ownership of the colonized nation, which is what Butler would say defines them as “Other” by the Europeans. Hawk-eye embraces the “Otherness” in Native American culture externally because it gives him a sense of autonomy that his white culture lacks. Hawk-eye's external autonomy carries a “connotation...that establishes the individual as alone, free of social conditions, without dependency on social instruments of various kinds” (Butler, 1990, p.77). Hawk-eye enhances what he rejects in Native Americans in order to establish his own boundaries as a man. This autonomy also correlates with Baym's idea of the mythic hero, “free from systems, to forces which are ultimately the undoing of American heroes and quite often of their creators” (Baym, 1981, p.137). Cooper uses Hawk-eye's body as a means of inscribing the paradoxical and complex social construction of the masculine myth, and to unite the cultural forces that ultimately lead to the undoing of the mythic hero, and masculine identity. In Michael Kimmel's *Manhood in America*, he discusses the complexity of the formation of American masculinity in relation to the changes in history. He states,“A history of manhood must, therefore, recount two histories: the history of the changing "ideal" version of masculinity and the parallel and competing versions that coexist with it. It is this tension between the multiplicity of masculinities that collectively define American men's actual experiences and this singular "hegemonic" masculinity that is prescribed as the norm....” (qt. in Traister, 2007,p.280)

Hawk-eye rejects the European norm through his native emulation, yet clings to European origin, representing this “competitive coexistence” that Kimmel speaks of. He also is impersonating his racial “Other,” therefore suggesting what could be analyzed through Butler's ideas of drag, which “fully subverts the distinction between inner and out physic space and effectively mocks with the expressive model of gender and the notion of true gender identity” (p.198). Hawk-eye is both native on the “inside” in his identification with the culture and white on the “outside” through social racial codes; at the same time, he is white on the “inside” in his true sense of racial identity, and native on the “outside” through his emulative attire. Cooper is presenting a new, multi-dimensional model of masculinity in Hawk-eye, one that possesses many other models within it and cannot be defined by the previous standards of masculinity represented in history.

Hawk-eye is a queer body because he consists of multiple bodies of men bound in the abjection of cultural crisis. Hawk-eye represents the lack of authenticity in manhood, and therefore a constant crisis presents itself to gain a sense of unity and coherence in one's masculine identity. Warring and hunting are emblems of manhood, and Hawk-eye's imitation of the Native Americans is representation of what future generations of men would eventually aspire to in save American society from emasculation, much like Eustace Conway does with his lifestyle in the 21st century. Hawk-eye is an early depiction of the American man seeking to rejuvenate and strengthen his masculine identity through an emulation of Native American culture, which Cooper, and eventually American society, came to consider as authentic American "manliness."

Violence and personal defense are what Butler would consider to be the performance indicators of social masculinity, which decreased in value due to the progression of education, industrialization, and modernization. G. Stanley Hall presented effeminacy as a "threat to the progress of American civilization at the turn of the century," and believed that all men "must recapitulate savagery on the road to civilization" (qt. in Grant, 2004, p.830, 834). Though it was originally savagery that separated the civilized man from the native man, it was now savagery that the American man must regenerate in order to maintain control over a successful civilization. Cooper is satirically presenting Hawk-eye as the future of the American man, who will seek to play "cowboys and Indians" in order to protect and enhance the masculine identity that he lost in the development of the new and changing nation. Cooper presents Hawk-eye as the prototype of national American manliness. Hawk-eye became the American trope for masculinity, and Cooper's means of "saving" the male population from becoming a powerless gender in the wake of feminism and industrialization.

At the root of the masculine crisis is a socially founded fear of emasculation, which resonates with man's ability to reproduce. If a man is unable to reproduce, he emasculates himself by not fulfilling his cultural role of reproductive validity, and therefore makes himself queer. In his essay titled "The Future is Kid Stuff," Lee Edelman (1998) discusses how queerness acts as a signifier or recognition of what we should (or should not) be in order to maintain our social identities and social roles within the Symbolic reality, or our socially conditioned view of the world (Edelman, 1998, p.19). If one is queer, one is "Other" than what is socially accepted. Reproductive invalidity equates to queerness by rejecting futurity and being the converse of heteronormativity. The idea of the future is facilitated by a social order, or a Symbolic reality, to distinguish what is queer and what is not, primarily focusing on homosexuality as the means to a dead end. Edelman (1998) says: "Queerness...is understood as bringing children and childhood to an end...imaginary children whose futures...could only be endangered by the social disease as which queer sexualities register" (p.25). He believes that queerness becomes a manifestation of society's inherent fear of a failed future in that it does not facilitate reproduction; he uses the metaphor of the Child to represent their society's social investment of the Symbolic future, or an idealized unrealistic fantasy determined by past cultural patterns (p.20). Edelman (1998) believes that queerness dismantles Symbolic-crafted identities like gender and "destroys" or "endangers" the Child because it hinders heteronormative reproduction and facilitates other sexual realities (p.25). It is these Symbolic identities that the collective idea of the future is founded on, therefore registering a new thought pattern regarding futurity and alternate sexual identities.

Edelman (1998) defines the death drive as a compulsion toward self-destruction, or a return to the inorganic; it opposes survival and life instincts. Edelman (1998) believes that queerness is has a figural place in the social order as the death drive because it denies reproduction and life, thereby denying futurity (p.26). Yet, this is all based on the Symbolic reality, or the "myth" of society, and he is merely critiquing the conservative drive of heteronormative reproductive futurity, which is used as a signifier for masculine identity. Mythic masculinity, like that of Hawk-eye, facilitates queerness and the death drive, yet heteronormative sexuality is what fuels masculine identity. Though destined to be a masculine savior, Hawk-eye is ultimately unable to perpetuate a future through reproductive validity. Hawk-eye ultimately fails in his ability as a marginalized man because he chooses to pursue a future with Chingachgook, remaining in the wilderness, rather than facilitating a heteronormative relationship with a female character. Instead, the purpose of Hawk-eye's character is to facilitate the means of reproduction for Heyward and Alice, allowing them to move forward into the future. Hawk-eye removes himself from the Symbolic reality and places himself in a queer space. Hawk-eye, the mythic hero, the embodiment of the male individual, fails at the perpetuation of his own future, lacking the reproductive validity culturally required of the male gender role in society, and facilitating a Symbolic fear of failed future. Hawk-eye's queer independence becomes a trope for the mythic hero of the 19th century, and contributes to the failure of masculine identity in the wake of political and economic crisis.

Cooper created an image of man through Hawk-eye that projected itself through the history of American literature, and imprinting itself culturally on the formation of the American man of the 21st century. Cooper presents how masculinity cannot maintain its innate noble savagery within a changing social, cultural, and national sphere. He kills off his native male characters, and writes Hawk-eye to be an individual who cannot survive outside of the context of the wilderness. Hawk-eye ultimately fails to reproduce or have an identity outside of the wilderness, whereas the newly constructed American man, Heyward, succeeds at the prospect of the progressing and industrializing social world. Hawk-eye is Cooper's hero, but he could not be allowed to succeed. He fails in what the collective, or what Edelman calls the Symbolic reality, associates with male virility, which is reproduction.

Reproduction and futurity are part of the fragily constructed male identity that society facilitates, and Cooper shows how it can be demonstrated in times of trauma and change, or in crisis, through his multiple models. It seem as if the idea of American masculinity is unable to be concretely defined because it is constantly transforming to support the definitions of authenticity that society deems fit, yet it never fully meets the standards that are set for it. In turn, due to oppressive social standards, culture is ultimately killing masculinity by making it unable to reproduce in the same form. Culture opposes survival and life instincts by its insistence on an unrealistic ideal of male authenticity. If Hawk-eye is interpreted as a queer body, he is put in a figural place in the social order as part of the death drive because he denies reproduction and life, thereby denying futurity. Yet, Hawk-eye's character has a future—culture has projected him as a trope for American manhood throughout history. Therefore, the ability of a modern day Hawk-eye like Eustace is called into question. Can he survive without being in a state of crisis? Men like Hawk-eye and Eustace survive, but are mocked for their choices in the wake of modernization, thereby normalizing the queer body of the American man in his crisis.

5. Cooper's Fragments and Ideals: The Fragility of the Future

The Last of the Mohicans presents a depiction of a future founded on white manhood, which is what was sought after through the same means as Hawk-eye's emulation of Native American culture. Cooper's effort to construct a cohesive model of manhood is based on a quest for authenticity; it is unsuccessful and instead, always finds fragments. This project has remained central in social efforts to define masculinity from Cooper's time to the present. Historically, men have found themselves at crisis due to the political and economic changes of the nation. Men like Hawk-eye and Eustace emulate a different model of masculinity in order to feel a sense of internal coherence that is projected as expired within their social contexts.

The emulative behavior of Hawk-eye and Eustace highly resonates within Teddy Roosevelt's historic concerns regarding American manhood, which began to permeate into the upper-and middle-class U.S. consciousness at the beginning of the 1900's, and began the evidence of Hawk-eye's projection of manhood into the future. White males began donning primitive costumes and "plunging into the wilderness to enact their manhood...emulating the Indians during their adventures" (Bayers, 2008, p.57). Likewise, the Boy Scouts emerged, "offering white boys the opportunity to mimic white frontier heroes such as Boone and Crocket in order to rejuvenate their primitive instincts and ensure their virility" (Bayers, 2008, p.58). As the United States progressed into the 1900's, so did ideas on masculinity, extending itself onto concerns for the future of American manhood and a focus on bringing up "real boys." Psychiatrist Edward Srecker characterized a mentally healthy boy in 1926 as possessing "a strong leaven of curiosity, an appreciable love of power, a dash of savagery, and emotional virility"(qt. in Grant, 2004, p.829). Roosevelt also promoted that a boy "must not be a coward," and it seemed that in the early 1900's, the "quintessential characteristic by which parents measured the masculinity of their sons was in terms of physical strength...and the ability to defend themselves from attack" (Grant, 2004, p.842-3). Violence and personal defense were critical to the later masculine ideal, and those who were unable to adhere to this male image were ostracized as "sissies," much like Hawk-eye's opinions regarding Gamut. Hawk-eye's emulation of Native American manliness laid the foundation for the future of American men who emulated the same savagery in order to maintain a masculine standard, which we can link to Eustace's contemporary performance.

In literature, the trope of the "savage man" continued to carry a connotation of hope for the American man. Cooper influenced the idea of the individual man pursuing the frontier in a strong, solitary role, but also neglecting to reproduce himself into the future. The "lone man" can be observed in dime novels and their presentation of American masculinity through the image of the cowboy. Daniel Worden (2007) explains how traditional depictions of masculinity tend to be "stabilized by association with male dominance, patriarchy, masculinism, machismo, heterosexism and/or heteronormativity" (p.26).

Dime novels present the cowboy as a queer representation much like Hawk-eye, "undomesticated, alive, and without children...unhinged from the demands of heterosexual coupling and reproduction" (Worden, 2007, p.38). Though the cowboy is masculine in his actions of valor, he is sterile in that he does not remain in a domesticated environment to reproduce, thereby queering him. Butler (1998) says, "The fate of masculinity absorbs this study because masculinity, a fragile and fallible construct needs the social support of marriage and stable family life in order to find its right path. Indeed, masculinity itself tends to falter...and need to be housed and propped up by various social supports, suggesting that masculinity is itself a function of these social organizations, and has no intrinsic meaning outside of them" (p.90).

Both the cowboy and Hawk-eye are representative of the mythic hero, resisting domestication and thereby institution. Both are unable to be domesticated by family life, which is neglecting to contribute to a crucial part of the political stability required for modernization. Hawk-eye chooses to remain in the wilderness, where he believes he can live as a better man than in the domesticated and industrialized new world. If Eustace Conway can be considered an example of a the "modern Hawk-eye," the crisis literally and realistically never ends and the American man still finds himself in a state of frustration and confusion regarding his role and identity in society. The crisis then becomes an innate part of what the American man was, is, and will be in the future.

Cooper wrote *The Last of the Mohicans* as a story that defied the cultural biases and expectations of the time. Hawk-eye, the idolized epitome of masculinity, fails as a male character in his lack of futurity in the new world. He instead, joins the company of another man, a native man, for the remainder of his years, defying the reproductive validity necessary for masculine power, and denying the domestication necessary for institutionalized life and industrialization. Through this, Cooper sought to defy the traditional standards of American masculinity, either to motivate his readers to accept the cultural differences and changes occurring in the new nation, or to promote a sense of fear and anxiety about an emasculated, industrialized future. Ultimately, a solitary idea of the American man cannot be defined by a distinct set of traits, particular to one race, social class, or gender, and his presence in the future is unstable and insecure. The instability and constant changes associated with masculinity means changes in the cultural dynamics of reproduction, and therefore causes the American man to consistently fail as the sole facilitator of futurity and deny him a sense of control and coherence. The masculine crisis continues because the American man continues to fail. Nonetheless, he still always finds a way to survive and be a presence in the society, though possibly viewed as unrealistic, much like Eustace is viewed as pathetically unrealistic in the 21st century, and Hawk-eye was viewed as satirical in the 19th century. What will happen to Eustace and other modern Hawk-eyes who seek to save their masculine identities by embracing and emulating "natural" manhood? Ultimately, the American man must progress, and his crisis will evolve with him, but it is only this crisis that we have as a true means of defining his identity because an "authentic" standard of masculinity is an American myth that has remained a constant throughout history.

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