Colonial Governmentality and the Biopolitics of Erasure: A Foucauldian Postcolonial Reading of *The Last of the Mohicans*

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate the production, operation, and legitimisation of colonial power in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) through a Foucauldian postcolonial discourse analysis. It addresses a significant scholarly gap by examining how narrative form, spatial representation, and character relations act as technologies of governance, a dimension often marginalised in thematic and ideological readings. The research aims to reveal how the novel embeds colonial governmentality within literary structure and to expose the microphysics of imperial control that shape its moral and political vision. Methodologically, it adopts a qualitative textual analysis informed by Foucault's six interconnected concepts—disciplinary power, surveillance, normalisation, power/knowledge, biopolitics, and governmentality—together with postcolonial insights from Mbembe, Stoler, Bhabha, and Said. The findings demonstrate that Cooper's frontier functions as a surveillance grid, its discipline constructs docile and governable subjects, and its biopolitical logic sanctions racial elimination and settler futurity. These mechanisms collectively expose the novel as a script of colonial rationality rather than a neutral adventure romance. The study contributes a replicable Foucauldian-postcolonial model for analysing how nineteenth-century American fiction participated in the historical formation of modern colonial authority.

Keywords: **Foucault, postcolonial studies, governmentality, biopolitics, surveillance, normalisation, *The Last of the Mohicans***.

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الحُكوميّة الاستعمارية والبيوسياسة الإقصائية: قراءة فوكويّة ما بعد كولونيالية في رواية *آخر الموهيكان*

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المستخلص

يَسعى هذا البحثُ إلى استكشافِ آليّاتِ إنتاجِ السُّلطةِ الاستعماريّةِ وممارستِها وتبريرِها في روايةِ جيمس فنيمور كوبر *الآخِر من الموهيكان* (1826)، من خلالِ قراءةٍ تحليليةٍ ما بعدَ كولونياليّةٍ تستندُ إلى فلسفةِ ميشيل فوكو . ويُعالِجُ البحثُ فجوةً علميّةً بارزةً في الدِّراساتِ الكوبرية، وذلك بتركيزه على الكيفيّةِ التي يُسْهِمُ بها الشكلُ السَّرديُّ، وتمثيلُ الفضاء، وعلاقاتُ الشَّخصيّات في أداءِ وظيفةِ تقنياتِ الحُكم؛ وهي زاويةٌ طالما هُمِّشَت في القراءاتِ الموضوعيّةِ والإيديولوجيّةِ السابقة. يهدفُ البحثُ إلى الكشفِ عن تجذُّرِ الحُكوميّةِ الاستعماريّةِ في البنيةِ الأدبيّة، وفضحِ الميكروفزيائيّاتِ التي تُوجِّهُ الرؤيةَ الأخلاقيّةَ والسياسيّةَ للرواية. ويعتمدُ المنهجُ على تحليلٍ نصّيٍّ نوعيٍّ مستنِدٍ إلى مفاهيمِ فوكو الستّة المترابطة: السُّلطةُ التأديبيّة، والمراقبة، والتطبيع، وعلاقةُ القوّة/المعرفة، والبيوسياسة، والحكوميّة، إلى جانبِ مقارباتٍ ما بعدَ كولونياليّةٍ لِمَبمبي، وستولر، وهومي بابا، وسعيد. وتُبيّنُ النّتائجُ أنّ جغرافيا الرّوايةِ تعملُ بوصفِها شبكةَ مراقبةٍ، وأنَّ نظامَها التأديبيَّ يُنتجُ أجساداً مُنقادةً قابلةً للحُكم، وأنَّ منطقَها البيوسياسيَّ يُشرعِنُ الإقصاءَ العِرقيَّ وضمانَ بقاءِ المستوطِن .تكشفُ هذهِ الآليّاتُ مجتمعةً أنّ الرّوايةَ ليست مغامرةً بريئةً، بل نصًّا يُعيدُ إنتاجَ العقلانيّةِ الاستعماريّة .ويُقدِّمُ البحثُ نموذجاً فوكويّاً–ما بعدَ كولونياليٍّ قابلاً للتطبيقِ في تحليلِ كيفيّةِ إسهامِ الأدبِ الأمريكيِّ في القرنِ التّاسعَ عَشَرَ في تشكّلِ سُلطةِ الاستعمارِ الحديث.

كلمات مفتاحية: فوكو، دراسات ما بعد الاستعمار، الحكوميّة، البيوسياسة، المراقبة، التطبيع، *آخر الموهيكان*.

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1.Introduction

Published in (1826), James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* holds a significant place in American literature, which is often deemed as a trailblazer of US frontier romance and the mythologic portrayal of colonisation. Contemporary American and Indigenous literary research, grounded in classical understandings of myth and expansionism, exhibits the naturalisation of Native displacement in nineteenth-century texts through narratives that portray Indigenous peoples as either vanishing or already extinct (O'Brien, 2010; Deloria, 1998; Warrior, 1995; Womack, 1999; Weaver, 1997; Allen, 2012; Brooks, 2008). As illustrated by O'Brien's (2010, pp. xv–xvi) description of the "firsting and lasting" of New England histories and cultural memory, the existence of Native people was erased to reinforce colonial claims, reminiscent of Cooper's time and its literary productions dubbed as "settler common sense" by Rifkin (2014, p. 22), this larger cultural formation takes legal and political frameworks for granted, thus normalising the notion of dispossession in literary texts. Lowe (2015) subsequently depicted the entanglement of liberal modernity with colonialism and slavery, redefining the aesthetics and ethics of the time as being consistent with imperialism

Meanwhile, research has also redefined the meaning of colonial power. The racial history of surveillance as examined by Simone Browne (2015), David Lyon (2001), and Tobias Kelly (2012) reveals the fundamental rather than secondary role of the surveillance of bodies in modern governance, elucidating frontier scenes entailing scouting, tracking, and "visibility" as components of a larger regime of racialised surveillance. Foucauldian biopower is expanded by Achille Mbembe's (2003) necropolitics, which emphasises death management in colonised zones. Meanwhile, the recurrence of erasure as a logic of governance instead of a calamity is clarified by Wolfe's (2006, p. 388) conceptualisation of settler colonialism as "a structure, not an event". Other historical-literary works challenge the narratives of inevitability by highlighting Native perseverance and political economy, such as Michael Witgen (2012), who depicts the tenacity of Indigenous governance and landholding well into the nineteenth century against the teleologies of U.S. power as ratified in literary texts. Similar interventions appear in

Jean O'Brien's (2010) analysis of "firsting and lasting," Lisa Brooks's (2008) recovery of Native spatial sovereignty, and Chadwick Allen's (2012) theorisation of *trans-Indigenous* continuity, all of which reassert the endurance of Indigenous presence within and beyond colonial textual frameworks.

Surprisingly, *The Last of the Mohicans* continues to be undertheorised from the Foucauldian standpoint even within the evolving critical literary landscape. Despite the prevalence of rigorous postcolonial and settler-colonial accounts of the novel's racial typologies and nationalism, very few studies had examined it in a systematic manner using the full Foucauldian dimensions of disciplinary power, surveillance, normalisation, power/knowledge, biopolitics, and governmentality, encompassing the novel's spaces (forts, rivers, forests), institutions (military hierarchies, parley, treaty), and narrative techniques (omniscient description, ethnographic gloss). Instead of focusing on the micro-technologies of power and their operationalisation in terms of form and perception, current postcolonial studies tend to highlight ideological critiques or the "vanishing-Indian" topos (Derounian-Stodola, 1993; Berkhofer, 1978; Pearce, 1953; Slotkin, 1973; Weaver, 1997; Womack, 1999; Allen, 2012), emphasising representational erasure and cultural mythmaking rather than the infrastructural workings of colonial power. By integrating the Foucauldian analysis with Indigenous- and settler-colonial frameworks, this study intends to answer the question of how exactly does Cooper's text operate as a machine for governing bodies, populations, and space?

To this end, the study conducts a comprehensive Foucauldian analysis of *The Last of the Mohicans* to trace how Cooper's narrative constructs and disseminates colonial power. The novel demonstrates how the coordination between disciplinary institutions and spatial regimens such as blockhouses, sieges, and marches operates in conjunction with surveillance and normalisation, where racialised codes of loyalty, civility, and mobility collectively enable the formation of docile bodies and the governance of conduct. Furthermore, the study identifies the novel's biopolitical choices, particularly the mechanisms through which life and death are regulated to sustain racial hierarchies and imperial authority. It also explores how the narrator's moral and spatial "truths"

about the land and its peoples serve to underwrite colonial order, translating imperial ideology into narrative form. Through this methodological approach, the analysis reveals that Cooper's fiction does not merely depict empire but actively participates in its epistemic and administrative construction.

This study provides two theoretical contributions. Firstly, it enriches existing Indigenous- and settler-colonial studies by elucidating the process of colonialisation starting with observation, classification, enumeration, and moral calibration, all of which justifies the act of colonising (Lowe, 2015; Browne, 2015,). Secondly, it reconceptualises Cooper's notion of modern governance, i.e., where the colonised state's security, population, and territory are put to test in the form of a narrative, consistent with Foucault and Mbembe's notions of biopolitical and necropolitical orders (Mbembe, 2003).

Lastly, the study is consistent with Cooper's debates about the "vanishing American" and contemporary Indigenous counter-narratives. Jordan Abel's (2016) rendition of *Mohicans* keeps the debate alive, highlighting the importance of theoretical precision in depicting the sense of land, belonging, and history. The integration of the Foucauldian analysis with contemporary American literary and Indigenous studies enables the presentation of colonial truths, disciplining subjects and calibrating the lines between life and death.

2. Cooper and Colonial Discourse

Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* is deemed as a significant foundational work in the development of American frontier mythology and the literary encapsulation of settler colonial ideology. The ways in which Cooper's frontier romances turn colonial violence into a national original myth continue to be explained by Richard Slotkin's *Regeneration Through Violence* (1973) which legitimises white colonialism as a mechanism for achieving civilisation. Baym (1981) uses Cooper's historical romances stabilising a national identity established from Anglo-Protestant patriarchy, regulating other racial, cultural, and gendered identities. Such a Marxist-historical standpoint deems Cooper's romances as a global development of historical novels, a mythologisation of the early republic's social formation (Lukács, 1983).

Robert Berkhofer's (1978, pp. 72–75) *The White Man's Indian* and Roy Harvey Pearce's (1953, pp. 98–101) *Savagism and Civilisation* use the notions of "noble savage" and "savage menace" often used by Cooper, which positions Native characters as romanticised foils or threats that require neutralisation. Despite their significance, these interpretations frequently treat the racial logic of the frontier as a rigid ideological dichotomy. A further examination of Native identity in antebellum representations, as discussed by Edward Watts (2015), highlights the volatility and hybridity of Cooper's racial categories (Derounian-Stodola, 1993). By putting Cooper in a transnational Indigenous framework, Hsinya Huang (2014) identified that his portrayals are consistent with global imperial tropes. However, even in these contemporary works, the focus of analysis often shifts from the operational mechanics of colonial power, i.e., the governance of space, bodies, and populations within the narrative's logic, to symbolic politics.

Although these studies define what Cooper's frontier world is, the issue of how this world is governed, monitored, and disciplined is largely ignored. This is where the Foucauldian theory steps in to provide a set of analytic measures to shift the ideological to the infrastructural.

3. Foucauldian Theory in Literature

The Foucauldian analysis of power encompassing disciplinary power, surveillance, normalisation, power/knowledge, biopolitics, and governmentality has had a significant influence on literary criticism, providing ways to analyse the encoding and reproduction of control regimes via texts. The novel *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987) by Nancy Armstrong aligns personal desire with the domestic norms of the bourgeois, demonstrating how literature can lead to the production of self-regulating subjects. This notion was extended by Mary Poovey (1995) to encompass gender and sexuality via 19th century literatures.

While the analyses of British and European novels have broadly involved the Foucauldian treatment, less attention have been given to early American literature, most notably the frontier and colonial narratives. Previous Foucauldian analyses of *The Last of the Mohicans* had concentrated more on singular concepts like panopticism or spatial mapping (Wexler, 1996 and Booth, 2018), frequently dismissing the

interconnection between various Foucauldian modalities. Kaplan's (1998) contribution on imperial domesticity, for instance, failed to elucidate the convergence of surveillance, discipline, biopolitical management, and governmental rationality into a sole colonial literary mechanism.

Although such discussion serve as valuable suggestions in analysing Cooper's work, there is yet any proper integration between Foucauldian criticism and the explicit postcolonial concerns exhibited in the critics of the novel. By combining these two bodies of knowledge, the paper tries to uncover how the notion of colonialism as presented in *The Last of the Mohicans* can be concurrently operationalised as an ideology and a micro-level control system.

4. A Postcolonial Readings of *The Last of the Mohicans*

Cooper's position in the American canon has been profoundly reframed by postcolonial criticism, questioning his portrayals of racial typologies, imperial vision, and participation, described by Wolfe (2006, p. 388) as the settler colonialism's "structure". Although unrelated to Cooper, the theorisation of mimicry and ambivalence serves as a significant standpoint from which to interpret Magua's alternating focus on accommodation and resistance (Bhabha, 1994). In the broader context of American slavery, dispossession, and imperial law, previous works have analysed the novel's racial and legal dynamics (Elmer, 1993; Sundquist, 1987). Insight on the interrelation between literary works on Indigenous people and imperial governance have been deepened by modern studies like Deloria's (1998) placement of frontier performance within the lengthy history of indigenous appropriation by settlers in *Playing Indian*, and Kelly Wisecup's (2016) focus on colonial science.

Even so, such analyses steered more towards the critique of privilege in a symbolic, thematic, or ideological manner. A huge gap remains in the analysis of the novel's *microphysics of power*, i.e., how the narrative structures the elements of movement regulation, racialised body surveillance, acceptable conduct calibration, and life and death's biopolitical calculus.

Without such integrated approach, whereby postcolonial insights are combined with the full Foucauldian framework, a crucial gap demands to

be addressed. Filling this gap enables us to analyse Cooper's work not only from the lens of imperial ideology, but also from the perspective of colonial governmentality.

5. Toward a Foucauldian Conceptual Framework for Colonial Power

Michel Foucault's conceptual framework of modern power clarifies how colonial regimes control mind and body, produce power/knowledge, and shape identity across literary and colonial discourses. Unlike conventional Marxist accounts that accentuate repression, Foucault (1977) conceives power as productive, dispersed, and above all manifested in discourses, institutions, and social practices. His concepts are expedient in explaining colonial narratives such as Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), which is structured by representations of authority and the management of racial difference. Accordingly, this study situates six interrelated Foucauldian concepts, i.e, disciplinary power, surveillance, normalisation, power/knowledge, biopolitics, and governmentality as an analytic lens for reading the novel precisely as a colonial instrument.

Disciplinary Power

As developed in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault's concept of disciplinary power marks a historical shift from sovereign ferocity to subtle regulation that operates upon the mind, body, and behaviour to construct obedient and productive subjects—what he calls "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1977, p. 138). These bodies, he explains, are "subjected, used, transformed and improved" (p. 136) through what he notably terms the microphysics of power, i.e., a dispersed network of minute techniques encompassing bodily training, spatial organisation, routinised conduct, continuous observation, and meticulous record-keeping. Discipline, according to Foucault, "produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies" (p. 138), indicating that power in modern systems is not simply repressive but deeply productive, producing the very subjects it governs.

Disciplinary power, although decentralised, operates ubiquitously through the institutions that structure modern life, i.e., the hospital,

prison, school, and army and, in colonial situations, through the fort, mission, and frontier space that regulate visibility and movement. As Foucault writes, "Discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space… it exercises power through the careful partitioning of bodies" (p. 143). These insights clarify how the colonial frontier in *The Last of the Mohicans* functions as a disciplinary grid, transforming wilderness into a moral and political enclosure. Critics such as Hussein (2021) and Nasser (2023) have further shown that such regimes encode hierarchies "under the guise of rational order" and work "through gendered and racialised bodies as signifiers of empire's reach and limits." In this light, disciplinary power in *Mohicans* is read as the spatial, corporeal, and symbolic ordering of frontier life, the regulation of who may see, move, and speak within the colonial field.

Surveillance

Surveillance, displayed by the Panopticon metaphor, is a system rooted in visibility and constant observation—"visibility is a trap" (Foucault, 1977, p. 200). Rather than merely identifying deviance, surveillance produces individuals who are plainly seen, consistently measured, prudently assessed, and therefore assimilable into a governing order. Foucault stresses that in such systems, "He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication" (Foucault, 1977, p. 200), underscoring the asymmetry at the heart of modern power. At its core is the examination—a routine procedure that "punishes less, but certainly punishes better" by inducing self-regulation (Foucault, 1977, pp. 182, 185). This form of power functions not through spectacular punishment but through continuous inspection that "assures its hold upon the body even in its smallest movements" (*Power/Knowledge*, 1980, p. 155). Surveillance thus "punishes less, but certainly punishes better" by inducing self-regulation (Foucault, 1977, pp. 182, 185).

In colonial settings, surveillance extends to mapping, ethnographic description, and social sorting (Lyon, 2001), forming a wide "surveillant assemblage" (Haggerty & Ericson, 2000/2017) that saturates space with mechanisms of control (Hardt & Negri, 2000). Literary surveillance also includes discursive surveillance—the vivid description and painstaking

classification of bodies, gestures, and speech, or what Foucault calls "dividing practices" (1982). Simone Browne (2015) shows that surveillance cannot be understood apart from racial histories; it is constitutive of colonial visibility regimes, transforming vision itself into an instrument of rule.

Normalisation

Normalisation produces and enforces standards while regulating deviations from those standards. Foucault (1977, p. 183) calls it "the perpetual penalty that… compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it normalizes." As a disciplinary tool, it runs through gender roles, bodily conduct, ranks, racial categorisation, and speech. In a colonial text like *Mohicans*, normalisation enforces cultural, racial, and moral norms that privilege whiteness, rationality, masculinity, Protestant respectability, and self-control; those who fall outside are marginalised, displaced, expelled, or eliminated. Bhabha (1994) explains this through fixity—the construction of rigid stereotypes that "ensure the stability of colonial power." Normalisation fortifies this logic by distributing the living "in a social space through hierarchies and values" (Foucault, 1977, p. 183), and, as Rose (1999) adds, by producing "regulated autonomy": subjects learn to manage themselves in compliance with governmental norms. Following Stoler (2002), colonial discourse also fabricates degeneracy to justify a civilising mission. Importantly, as Foucault (1977, p. 194) insists, power is constitutive: it "produces reality… domains of objects and rituals of truth." Classification, as Hacking (1986) argues, is generative, turning categories into moving targets that shape and are shaped by those they describe.

Biopolitics

Biopolitics marks a turn from disciplining individual bodies to organising and regulating populations. In *The History of Sexuality* (1976) and the *Society Must Be Defended* lectures (2003), Foucault emphasises that modern power "makes live and lets die" (2003, p. 241). Biopolitics administers health, reproduction, population, and race; racism becomes the mechanism that authorises the elimination of some lives for the

flourishing of others. Critics observe that colonial biopolitics constructs a hierarchy of biological citizenship (Lemke, 2011) and governs the "politics of life itself" (Rose, 2006). Stoler (1995) extends this to the management of intimacy—deciding who may reproduce and which bodies threaten social unity—while Mbembe (2003) reframes colonial sovereignty as necropolitics, the systemic right to "let live or make die."

Power/Knowledge

Foucault's power/knowledge (1980) insists that knowledge and power are indissoluble: what counts as knowledge arises within power hierarchies, just as power depends on recognised knowledge to operate. As Foucault explains, "power and knowledge directly imply one another; there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge" (*Discipline and Punish*, 1977, p. 27). In this sense, knowledge is never neutral but functions as "a form of power itself and the object of struggle" (*Power/Knowledge*, 1980, p. 85). In colonial contexts, racial, medical, cartographic, and literary knowledges classify landscapes and subjects, rendering them recognisable and controllable. Said (1993) argues that "narrative is the method colonized space becomes known and therefore governed" (p. 115); Mitchell (1991) details how visual and spatial apparatuses produce occupied societies as legible and reformable; Pratt (1992) theorises the contact zone and the "monarch-of-all-I-survey" view as scenes where governance and knowledge combine. Power/knowledge is therefore essential for noticing how the novel's narrator claims authority to translate Indigenous speech, fix character types, and moralise geography.

Governmentality

Finally, governmentality (Foucault, 1991; 2007) denotes the "conduct of conduct"—how ideals, institutions, discourses, and norms control behaviour not only through coercion but through identity, morality, and life-course management. As Foucault explains, "to govern is to structure the possible field of action of others" (Foucault, 1982, p. 221), implying that rule functions by defining freedom rather than suppressing it outright. Governmentality, he further notes, is "the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations and tactics

that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit complex, form of power" (Foucault, 2007, p. 108). It therefore integrates discipline, biopolitics, and truth-making into a rationality of rule. Stoler (2002) shows that colonial authority governs through sentimental and intimate norms; Chatterjee (1993) maps outer (political/military) and inner (cultural) domains of rule; Spivak (1988) cautions that power/knowledge regimes enact epistemic violence, scripting subaltern voices through European categories. These insights guide my reading of *Mohicans* as an epistemological tool of governance that stabilises imperial norms through narrative form and ideological authority.

In sum, discipline, surveillance, and normalisation regulate conduct; biopolitics allocates life and futurity; power/knowledge fabricates colonial truths; and governmentality integrates these into a civilising rationality.

Having established the Foucauldian framework of power, encompassing discipline, surveillance, normalisation, biopolitics, and governmentality, the discussion now turns to its literary enactment within *The Last of the Mohicans*. The following analysis demonstrates how Cooper's narrative translates these abstract mechanisms of control into spatial, visual, and behavioural practices that sustain colonial authority on the American frontier.

6. Colonial Space and the Logic of Surveillance in *The Last of the Mohicans*

James Fenimore Cooper rendered the frontier in *The Last of the Mohicans* as a disciplinary map whereby seeing, being seen, and arranging space serve as the terms of rule. Rather than merely carrying the plot, depictions of forest paths, watercourses, and military roads actually constitute the "spaces of enclosure", as Foucault puts it, encompassing the arrangement of subjects, the direction of movements, and the normalisation of conduct. The mobile and militarised geography of the novel depicts a mechanism for governance, whereby power circulates via cartographic knowledge, tactical visibility, and vigilance routinisation (Foucault, 1977). This apparatus of spatial control finds its most intricate expression in the wilderness itself, where movement,

perception, and environment converge into a living system of surveillance and discipline.

Cooper transforms nature into a comprehensible and controllable archive by consistently depicting the forest as readable to those who understand it. Hawkeye's assertion that "It is easy to know the pathways, and to find the licks and water-courses of the wilderness" (Cooper, 2006, p. 155) suggests the readability of the land to a skilled person. He instantly uses his deictic gesture to map history onto the landscape "here is the 'bloody pond'" (p. 156) incorporating local hydrography into imperial memory and logistics. This is a unification of observation, memory, and movement into a single knowledge-practice: properly seeing denotes the actual commanding and commemorating of the field.

Heyward's vulnerability reinforces Hawkeye's epistemic power. Upon confronting a stranger near the pond, the scout said, "Stand to your arms, my friends; for we know not whom we encounter" (Cooper, 2006, p. 157) portraying doubt in the frontier and the discipline required to confront it. Alertness should be chronic, not episodic; visibility and readiness should be a behavioural norm. The panoptic effect is made even more dramatic by the staging of the scene dimmed moonlight, an advancing silhouette, a crisp command: a self-regulated posture prompted by possible hostility coming from the shadows (Foucault, 1977).

Cooper simultaneously demonstrates that "knowing the wilderness" entails both choreography and cognition. Hawkeye commands his troop to be extra cautious, moving

> "*without exerting so much strength as to break the twigs*," while Cora "*stretched forth her arm to bend aside the twigs that met her hands. But the vigilance of the Indians rendered this act of precaution both difficult and dangerous… Once, and once only, was she completely successful; when she broke down the bough of a large sumach, and by a sudden thought let her glove fall at the same instant*" (Cooper, 2006, pp. 112–113).

Here, mobility itself becomes a disciplinary art: movement must be calculated, bodies must self-regulate, and gestures must conceal intention. The colonial wilderness functions as a panoptic arena where

control is exercised through silence, precision, and invisibility, "power not in the hands of the seen but of the unseen." The forest's geography, marked by "paths," "licks," and "water-courses," transforms into a moral-political cartography of empire, turning motion, perception, and even hesitation into instruments of governance.

Hawkeye's deep understanding of the forest sutures local features a basin that "reflected the stars", a "bloody pond", a ridge-line with militarist notions. Him recalling "Hundreds of Frenchmen [who] saw the sun that day for the last time" (Cooper, 2006, p. 156) transforms topography into a body count. The forest hence represents a reminder that power comes from the combination of knowledge, violence, and movement. The Foucauldian concept identifies this as power/knowledge at work: the path and pond represent a military-like setting where control is made feasible (Foucault, 1977).

The gender and racial capacity to perform such surveillance is also portrayed in the novel. At the pond, the male officers were briefly distracted by Cora who nonchalantly albeit eloquently replied to them in French: "C'est le caractère des gens de guerre, … je vous souhaiterais un devoir plus agréable à remplir" (Cooper, 2006, p. 158), indicating that power can also be exerted through voice, posture, and affect. The scene's mise-en-scène—moonlight, watchword, challenge—portrays a calibrated visibility, whereby the "correct" response (language, stance, deference) determines one's survival and sense of belonging.

Collectively, these scenes denote the forest as an "observatory" with bodies, habits, and stories as its tools. Mobility is rendered as a controlled practice as demonstrated by the scout's technical lexicon ("paths," "licks," "water-courses"), mnemonic cartography ("bloody pond"), and drill-sergeant imperatives ("Stand to your arms"), marked by a choreography of steps, glances, and silences. As Hawkeye boasts that "*Ay! … there are not many echoes among these hills that haven't rung with the crack of my rifle, nor is there the space of a square mile atwixt Horican and the river, that Killdeer hasn't dropped a living body on, be it an enemy or be it a brute beast. As for the grave there being as quiet as you mention, it is another matter. There are them in the camp who say and think, man, to lie still, should not be buried while the breath is in the body*" (Cooper, 2006, p. 156),

The narrative fuses bodily precision, spatial knowledge, and moral authority into one field of surveillance. Hawkeye's declaration converts landscape into ledger—each echo a mark of discipline, each shot a record of control—revealing how the frontier itself functions as a chronicle of colonial vigilance.

Foucault's (1977) argument that panopticism prompts the action of subjects as if they were being monitored is depicted in Cooper's wilderness scenes where the ethical (who speaks, how one carries oneself), the tactical (how one places a foot, bends a twig), and the archival (what detail is named, remembered, and mapped) all combine to portray the settler's way of knowing and governing.

Following the analysis on the "open" forest as a disciplined field of surveillance and movement, the analysis shift to the visible fixed architectures such as forts, blockhouses, and siegeworks used as places for surveillance.

7. Disciplinary Power and the Normalisation of Colonial Order

Colonial power is not only a function of war or diplomacy, but also a robust integration of disciplinary techniques. From this standpoint, Cooper's version of the empire is sustained not merely via spectacular coercion, but also through gradual and internalised discipline and normalisation. Colonial power is not simply a function of war or diplomacy, but also a robust integration of disciplinary techniques. From this standpoint, Cooper's version of the empire is sustained not merely via spectacular coercion, but also through gradual and internalised discipline and normalisation. As Cooper writes, "He passed the groups of dead with a steadiness of purpose, and an eye so calm, that nothing but long and inveterate practice could enable him to maintain" (Cooper, 2006, p. 152), illuminating how the colonial subject's value rests entirely on the ability to embody restraint, order, and obedience — the quiet triumph of surveillance over violence. This moment of bodily discipline inaugurates a wider racial discipline in which virtue and civility are measured through conformity to colonial gaze of conduct.

Honour is bestowed upon Uncas for his Euro-martial conduct. Following the combat, Cooper (2006, p. 152) describe him as: "He passed the groups of dead with a steadiness of purpose, and an eye so

calm, that nothing but long and inveterate practice could enable him to maintain". The lines denote his show of restraint as a prime disciplinary virtue instead of grief or rage, thus comparing Indigenous bravery to colonial ideals of soldierly conduct. Uncas's worth is thus discernible insofar as his behaviour reflects a standard; his distinction is reinterpreted as superior self-control and discipline.

On the contrary, Magua is depicted in a pathological manner: "When he felt the blows of Munro, his spirit lay under the birch… the spirit of a Huron is never drunk; it remembers forever!" (Cooper, 2006, p. 248). The inability to forgive and forget is deemed as irrational and having a lack of normative affect. The norm in this instance serves as a "law of conduct" in the Foucauldian sense (Foucault, 1977, p. 183), whereby Uncas is honoured for behaving like the coloniser whilst Magua is chastised for rejecting the norm. This dynamic of racial discipline actually extends beyond physical comportment to comprise speech, sentiment, and loyalty, where civility itself becomes the measure of governability and moral worth.

Speech, self-command, and modulated emotion as are coded as indices of civilisation in the novel. In moralising the lack of play among Indigenous children, David Gamut said: "The wholesome restraint of discipline is but little known among this self-abandoned people" (Cooper, 2006, p. 264). The words "wholesome", "restraint", and "self-abandoned" denote the need to correct and train "improper" bodies (Foucault, 1977, pp. 170–176, on hierarchical observation and the corrective function of discipline).

Cooper also refers to spatial knowledge through the words of Major Heyward when he says:

> "*You may see, Magua,*" he said, endeavoring to assume an air of freedom and confidence, "*that the night is closing around us, and yet we are no nearer to William Henry than when we left the encampment of Webb with the rising sun… You have missed the way, nor have I been more fortunate. But, happily, we have fallen in with a hunter… acquainted with the deer-paths and by-ways of the woods, and who promises to lead us to a place where we may rest securely till the morning*" (Cooper, 2006, p. 40)

Hawkeye's knowledge of the environment guiding the group. Exemplified in this scene is Foucault's hierarchical observation, i.e., the distribution of authority according to the capacity to perceive, navigate, and classify. The ethical capability to visualise and navigate gives one the right to command. This logic of surveillance and control, first implemented through spatial mastery, extends inward to the dominion of feeling and conduct, where women's speech, decorum, and emotions become new-fangled frontiers of regulation.

Women are expected to be fragile and obedient. Alice is more of a symbol than an agent, symbolizing idealized feminine fragility and moral purity that uphold patriarchal and colonial authority: "Her whole person seemed suspended against the tree, looking like some beautiful emblem of the wounded delicacy of her sex" (Cooper, 2006, p. 126). She is used to signify vulnerability, typically needing the protection of the paternal/military power.

On her part, Cora denotes a contradiction, negotiating with Magua and asserting judgment but at the same time reinscribing her submissiveness: "Guide me; control me between you; for I am wholly yours!" (Cooper, 2006, p. 125). Her willing obedience curbs her defiance, making her an ideal of feminine virtue. Cora's self-regulation and emotional compliance mirror the broader structures of colonial authority, where private virtue becomes an extension of public command. This convergence of sovereignty and sentiment finds its strongest expression in Colonel Munro, whose paternal discipline unites the hierarchies of the army and the household.

Barracks and household come under a single paternal control as depicted by Colonel Munro. By constantly referring to soldiers and daughters in the novel as "my children" (Cooper, 2006, p. 199), he domesticates command as care and treats his dependents as his subjects. In this instance, discipline is both affective and spatial. Upon witnessing a traumatic event, "[Heyward] shuddered, but seemed to suppress his feelings in tenderness to his companion" (Cooper, 2006, p. 153). The act of self-suppression is denoted as moral strength, a showcase of internalised rule. Such an idea is Foucauldian in the sense that: "the soul is the prison of the body" Foucault (1977, p. 30). When constraint is internalised, then there is no need for explicit coercion.

Another tool of command is kinship:

> "*It has been already stated that, in obedience to a policy rarely departed from, the sisters were separated so soon as they reached the Huron village. Magua had early discovered that in retaining the person of Alice, he possessed the most effectual check on Cora. When they parted, therefore, he kept the former within reach of his hand, consigning the one he most valued to the keeping of their allies. The arrangement was understood to be merely temporary, and was made as much with a view to flatter his neighbors as in obedience to the invariable rule of Indian policy*" (Cooper, 2006, p. 250)

In retaining Alice, affection and attachment were used as leverage. Her captivity ensures Cora's compliance and transforms family bonds into political instruments of submission. The defenceless household therefore becomes a spot of colonial discipline, where emotional kinship and dependence are especially weaponised to secure a sense of obedience without any kind of overt coercion, an instance of what Foucault would call power's intimate machinery, functioning through love as effectively as through law. This transformation of affection into a disciplinary tool extends beyond the familial level and into the cultural sphere, where religious and aesthetic practices perform comparable functions of control through harmony, moral persuasion, and pleasure.

Additionally, Cooper used soft methods of discipline as exemplified by David Gamut's hymn "gradually wrought its sweet influence… Alice unconsciously dried her tears" (Cooper, 2006, p. 96). More than a method for consoling, music is used as a pleasant way to control the person into composure and consent (Foucault, 1977, p. 181, on "the perpetual penalty" that compares, differentiates, and normalises). This scene depicts the voluntary recalibration of emotions via elements of beauty and devotion, or the intimate labours of rule.

This novel shows that apart from violence or accord, colonial order is also imposed via disciplinary networks supervising bodies, directing feelings, and normalising conduct. The characters are being observed, compared, corrected, and assessed; their value is determined not by their identity but rather by their level of obedience, restraint, loyalty, and composure (Foucault, 1977). As such, *The Last of the Mohicans* uses

race, gender, family, and feelings to chart power. With the assertion that discipline "*makes* individuals" (Foucault, 1977, p. 170), Cooper's frontier demonstrates how the characters are moulded into subjects of empire.

8. Biopolitics and the Management of Life and Death

From the Foucauldian perspective, *The Last of the Mohicans* goes beyond the romanticism of war and wilderness; it is a story that categorises, appreciates, and diminishes lives based on imperialism. Biopolitics as the modern "power to make live and let die" (Foucault, 1976, p. 138) places Cooper's frontier into a structure whereby certain bodies are valued while others are deemed disposable. The settler regime is portrayed in the novel's climactic deaths, reproductive anxieties, and funeral choreography, depicting it as a racially-driven government which decides who lives and who dies (Foucault, 2003 and Mbembe, 2003). This framework of sanctioned extinction and selective vitality sets the stage for the novel's racial calculus, where life and death become instruments of colonial order and moral differentiation.

Beginning with depictions of mobilisations right to the last rites, while pathos and rescue are elicited by white vulnerability (the Munro household; British officers), the death of the Indigenous is historically depicted as an inevitable collateral. The Delaware oration in the end gives ritual clarity to this hierarchy: Uncas is acknowledged as "the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans" (Cooper, 2006, p. 411). The lament "Why hast thou left us, pride of the Wapanachki? … a hundred Wyandots are clearing the briers from thy path to the world of the spirits"—renders death does not imply as tragedy but also as transcendence. Mourning becomes a mechanism of purification, a biopolitical ritual that reconciles racial elimination with moral order, enacting what Foucault (1976) defines as the antipolitical transformation of death into social utility, where the elegiac frame converts extinction into heroic continuity. This hierarchy of remembrance and grief not merely defines whose deaths are sanctified but also predicts the racial logic of elimination and survival that actually governs Uncas and Magua, where resistance, restraint, and legibility govern who is erased, who is mourned, and who is allowed to signify futurity.

Under settler sovereignty, Cooper challenges two Indigenous masculine narratives. Uncas being legible (stoic, restrained, self-sacrificing) makes him grievable; whilst Magua being illegible (vindicatory, strategic, resistant) renders him disposable. In the trial before Tamenund, Magua's wish for the remembrance of history "Why remind them of their injuries; their ancient greatness… their misery?" is not a pathology but rather a political claim (Cooper, 2006, p. 355; cf. Agamben, 1998, pp. 83–85). Alas, the claim is rejected, resulting in a necropolitical cleansing. The mountain ledge murder is a staged show following Cora's stabbing, with Magua jumping and—at the brink "made a desperate leap, and fell short of his mark," holding on to a shrub at the edge (Cooper, 2006, p. 396). Resistance is transformed into a moral geometry of height and fall in this scene, with Magua's rejection of colonisation made biopolitically incomprehensible before being resolved with his elimination (Mbembe, 2003, pp. 21–23). The extinction of Magua and Uncas completes the biopolitical cycle: resistance ends in death, and reproduction emerges as the next site of control, where life is governed through lineage and futurity.

Reproductive governance, or the selection and purification of lineages that may survive, is an element of biopolitics (Foucault, 1976, pp. 145–150; Stoler, 1995, pp. 51–78). This is emphasised via Magua's claim on Cora and the novel's fixation with miscegenation. When Tamenund ultimately ratifies for Cora to be transferred "Girl, what wouldst thou? A great warrior takes thee to wife. Go! thy race will not end" Cora refuses in horror: "Better, a thousand times, it should … than meet with such a degradation!" (Cooper, 2006, p. 368). This is a kin to Stoler's (1995) conceptualisation of the "imperial hygiene" of intimacy: the enforcement of sexual union in order to strengthen racial boundaries. There is a brutal consistency in the narrative's outcome. With Cora kneeling and her arms lifted at the mountain ledge "I am thine; do with me as thou seest best!" she is instantly killed by a Huron whilst Magua contemplates (Cooper, 2006, p. 395). And hence, the mixed-race woman's future is sealed. Meanwhile, the white-skinned, passive, and domestic Alice survives and is paired with Heyward. Reproduction is hence portrayed as a racial policy (Doyle, 2008). The regulation of lineage and intimacy therefore culminates in the organisation of death

itself, where reproductive exclusion provides way to ritual purification, transforming biological control into ceremonial and moral sovereignty. Death is rendered as a technology of rule as portrayed in the closing rites. The massacres are sanctified by the Delaware authority: "the sage … knelt and prostrated himself … and appealed, in a long and silent invocation" to the Great Spirit (Cooper, 2006, p. 403). Enemies and allies are gathered into one aesthetic of closure where grief is formally recognised together. Speaking over Uncas's bier, Hawkeye's gesture folds the Indigenous nobility into settler futurity: a respected figure has to die so that the nation could continue living (Foucault, 2003). This is Mbembe's (2003, p. 11) conceptualisation of necropolitics: the state's right "to dictate who may live and who must die" as the basis of sovereignty. The logic of necropolitical order therefore extends beyond racial hierarchy to the sphere of gender, where purity and sacrifice become tools for maintaining the symbolic and moral confines of the colonial state.

Cora's refusal to be captured and assimilated portrays her undomesticated self. She declares "I will go no further! … Kill me if thou wilt, detestable Huron; I will go no further," prior to kneeling and surrendering to her fate (Cooper, 2006, p. 395). Her and Uncas's deaths confirm the role of race and gender in the border-work: both Indigenous life and hybridity are elevated as sublime before being eradicated. As asserted by Doyle (2008, pp. 120–122)., the novel "organises space and sentiment to naturalise racial hierarchy," accentuating some aspects of femininity while suppressing others

Cooper's romance transforms the frontier into a biopolitical tool and, eventually, necropolitical selection. The death of Magua is due to his resistance; Uncas' death is attributed to the narrative's need to highlight the futurity of the settlers; Cora's death is due to her threatening the racial-driven logic of transmission. The republic's emotive self-image is made possible by these characters' deaths, which are ceremoniously lamented albeit politically inevitable. Cooper's imperial imaginary portrays perception as administration and grief as governance: certain characters remain alive (Heyward/Alice; Hawkeye's itinerant virtue) whilst others are killed off (Uncas, Cora, Magua) to allow for national purification.

9. Power/Knowledge and the Construction of Colonial Truth

Cooper uses geographic, ethnographic, military, and moral knowledge as tools of governance in *The Last of the Mohicans*. The said knowledge is constitutive rather than descriptive. Foucault (1977; 1980) himself asserts that when he claims that discourse produces objects to be described, deciding who can speak, what is considered the truth, and how conduct is regulated from this perspective, Cooper's account serves as a colonial tool of power/knowledge for naturalising imperial order via the fabrication of truths about the land, the people's identity, and other virtues. This entanglement of domination and discourse appears most obviously in the novel's martial and spatial imaginaries, where military vision and mapping render perception into command and knowledge into authority.

Spatial literacy and surveillance are presented as statecraft from the very beginning. Vision is turned into tactics as portrayed in the night scene at the water's edge: the mere silhouette under "the light of an obscure moon" becomes legible enough to be governed (Cooper, 2006, p. 195). This chiaroscuro is combined with a French observer's skilled gaze whose "looks wandered from point to point, denoting his knowledge of military usages" explicitly converting the act of looking into authority (Cooper, 2006, p. 195). Meanwhile, the troop is disciplined by the likelihood of hostility "Stand to your arms, my friends; for we know not whom we encounter" literalising the claim made by Foucault (1977) that hierarchical observation prompts self-regulation (Cooper, 2006, p. 156) These scenes collectively form Foucault's "political anatomy" of space which underlines that even partial visibility is enough to warrant an order. This sense of spatial mastery spreads from the terrain to the body and voice, where the power to map physical space evolves into the power to interpret, classify, and speak for Indigenous subjects within the colonial epistemic order.

By turning Native expressions into a spectacle that needs to be deciphered, Cooper's narrator restricts access to Indigenous discourse. Magua's expression of "the prisoners… could only conjecture the substance of his harangue" is reduced by the narrator to mere gestural excess "with which an Indian always illustrates his eloquence" (Cooper,

2006, p. 121). Magua's voice is later described as aesthetic instead of political "deliberative… then plaintive and even musical, in its low guttural sounds" designating him as an object to be appreciated rather than a logical ruler (Cooper, 2006, p. 293). This relates to Foucault's "ritual of truth" whereby the authoritative voice determines the meaning of something, demoting the colonised to mere symbols and sentiments to be deciphered (Foucault, 1977, p. 194; Said, 1978). This epistemic hierarchy of voice and interpretation culminates in the production of colonial taxonomies, where identity itself becomes a function of legibility—defined, ordered, and validated through the moral grammar of empire.

Indigenous characters are also frequently categorised into readable taxonomies based on power and wisdom. Uncas is constantly depicted as stoic and orderly: the line "the countenance of the young warrior expressed no other emotion… than amazement at finding men willing to encounter so useless an exposure" elevates restraint to the highest level of civic value (Cooper, 2006, pp. 242–243). He is rendered powerless in death as an epitaph and pedigree the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans" a concept that elevates eviction to a state of dignity (Cooper, 2006, p. 411). On the contrary, affective diagnostics is used to pathologise Magua's interiority: "There was at first a fierce and manifest display of joy… and then it was instantly subdued in a look of cunning coldness" (Cooper, 2006, p. 372). Magua's perceived political calculation undergoes recodification as deviance an excellent example of how knowledge creates the very "crime" that it then controls (Foucault, 1980). This mechanism of epistemic control extends from the classification of bodies to the mapping of space, where geography itself becomes moralised as the frontier is inscribed with hierarchies of danger, authority, and virtue.

The spatial metaphors presented by Cooper link geography to ethics. Indigenous-governed terrains are deemed as deceitful, with Hawkeye giving out a warning that Magua will "Lead you to an ambushment, and your death" (Cooper, 2006, p. 372). After being charted by colonial knowledge, the same areas become clear, accessible, and ethically sound as suggested by the fort's inspection under the moonlight (Cooper, 2006, p. 195). In such moral mapping, knowing the

land "correctly" gives one the right to rule it: by balancing between Indigenous agency and wilderness opacity as well as settler sovereignty and legible order, the book encourages readers to interpret space as a code of proper authority (Foucault, 1977).

Rather than merely mirroring imperial discourse, Cooper's romance also manufactures it. By combining ethnographic ventriloquy, moralised mapping, and surveillance optics, the novel creates a colonial truth-regime where Indigenous people can only be understood as types noble when demonstrating silence, but deviant when showing defiance. As described by Foucault, power/knowledge in this instance is deeply productive, fabricating a world and later governing it. In the following sections, this claim is expanded by tracing how these truth-effects are reinforced to form biopolitical selection and governmental rationality, whereby one who can read the land automatically has the right to rule it, and where narrative omniscience gradually transforms into administrative control.

10. Governmentality and the Civilising Mission

The Last of the Mohicans dabbles in the concept of governmentality, i.e., Foucault's (1991) theory of a collection of institutions, knowledges, norms, and moral discourses that "conducts the conduct" of subjects by modern rule. Governmentality differs from blatant sovereign force in that it creates self-regulating individuals and sets up environments, customs, and laws that make this self-regulation seem normal and required (Foucault, 1977; 2007). This logic is materialised in the novel via the distinctions between the characters who embody Enlightenment rationality and modesty and those who are casted as overstepping the confines of colonial legitimacy. Essentially, the text does not revolve exclusively around those with authority; it is also about one's capacity to be governed which is determined by how one feels, speaks, moves, and makes decisions. This shift from external authority to internalised self-regulation marks the novel's alignment with Enlightenment ideals, where discipline is redefined as reason and governance becomes a matter of character.

Characters that exhibit the Enlightenment characteristics of reason, temperance, and measure, which also serve as standards of governability,

are consistently given preference by Cooper. Despite frequently being outwitted, Heyward and Munro communicate in the manner of caution and authority. "A wise general always puts his troops in motion as the sun falls" (Cooper, 2006, p. 132) is more of a scaled-down version of the novel's philosophy than military guidance: good governance is based on forecasting, rhythm, and computation. On the other hand, Magua's genius is frequently portrayed through emotional instability and the word "cunning" which transforms political astuteness into immorality (Cooper, 2006, p. 372). Foucault's (1991) argument that liberal power legitimises itself by creating rational subjects and consigning others to the realm of unreason is supported by this dichotomy.

The self-governing settler in the novel is portrayed by Hawkeye: despite rejecting rank "I wouldn't be a soldier, no, not if you made me a general" (Cooper, 2006, p. 103) he embodies justice, discipline, and calibrated force. Being governed from within means that he is capable of ruling without. From the Foucauldian perspective, Hawkeye is a prime example of the shift from discipline to governmentality: the qualities instilled in people (vigilance, emotional restraint, and habitual caution) become a standard of behaviour that the government can rely on and assign (Foucault, 1977; 1991; Rose, 1999). Hawkeye's internalised discipline extends into collective life, making the rational self the model for institutional order and moral law.

In addition to people, governmentality is enacted in legal theatres such as councils, parley grounds, and forts, where the rule of law is enacted as morally sound. The warning given to Magua by Uncas "Huron, the justice of the Delawares comes from the Manitou… When [the sun] is seen above the trees, there will be men on your trail" (Cooper, 2006, p. 372) reconciles Indigenous law with the laws of the universe. But this very chapter also raises "the inviolable laws of Indian hospitality" to elucidate why Magua cannot be apprehended (Cooper, 2006, p. 372), thus recoding Native legislation as outdated and ineffective in a subtle way. In contrast, even when claimed to be an exception, British military legitimacy is presented as a universal standard: "These Delawares have their laws, which forbid them to detain you; but I have no such obligation" (Cooper, 2006, p. 366). Colonial legal exceptionalism is a governmental tactic that can suspend or exceed

local law in the interest of higher order, and these instances are prime examples.

Thus, the council-fire and the fort serve as pedagogical areas of authority. Even when such procedures ensure asymmetry, their oath, parley, and sentence ceremonies teach the characters and the readers to relate institutional procedure to civilisation. This institutional pedagogy extends beyond law into everyday conduct, where civility and gendered decorum become instruments for reproducing the moral order of empire. Cooper also uses gendered standards as a form of control, using women as the screens that regulate and project moral order. Alice being "so fair… and yet her soul is pure and spotless as her skin" (Cooper, 2006, p. 366) characterises the perfect white feminine: passive, emotionally stable, and requiring paternal/military protection. The paternal state is justified by her survival. Cora, on the other hand, speaks and makes decisions outside of the prescribed script. She is deemed ungovernable in the colonial moral economy due to her rebellious negotiations with Magua and reluctance to be traded or domesticated. Cora's claim is transformed into a dilemma that requires masculine authority to resolve based on Duncan's rage "Go, malignant monster—why do you delay?" (Cooper, 2006, p. 366). According to Stoler (1995), the novel ties political reason with imperial intimacy, whereby domesticity and sexuality serve as the cornerstone of governmental order. The boundary-work of this civilising mission is sealed with Cora's eventual death: the novel's imagined future cannot accommodate the non-conforming female who is politically outspoken and racially ambiguous. Here, gender serves as a technique of control rather than a mere decoration. This regulation of gendered difference forestalls the logic of settler governmentality, where moral restraint swaps domination as the favoured language of power.

Governmentality functions as internalised regulation instead of command, as elucidated by Hawkeye's ethics. He promises limited, moral violence in response to the massacre: "Here, in the face of heaven… should these Frenchers ever trust themselves again… there is one rifle which shall play its part so long as flint will fire or powder burn!" (Cooper, 2006, p. 213). Vengeance is measured by a moral rule instead of being let loose as passion; the oath establishes restraint and

purpose. Foucault refers to this as the conduct of behaviour, i.e., a law that functions because people adhere to its standards out of habit and conscience (Foucault, 1991; Rose, 1999). Hawkeye is given de facto control throughout the text; he determines when to parley, to retreat, and to punish as he exemplifies the self-command that liberal-colonial power asserts as its foundation.

In addition to being a story of campaigns and rescues, *The Last of the Mohicans* is a didactic work that teaches us which bodies are suitable for control, and which should be ruled; which emotions are good and which should be eliminated; and which laws are prevailing and which are remnants that should be replaced. The novel naturalises Enlightenment principles, reason, legality, and measured affect as the fundamental grammar of lawful power via the portrayals of Hawkeye and Munro. It maps exclusion via Magua and Cora, turning non-conforming intimacy and political resistance into instances for containment or eradication. Governmentality in this context is structural, according to the Foucauldian theory, organising character, space, law, and emotion in such a way that internalised norms take precedence over external forces. Therefore, the story serves as a guide for colonial citizenship: being civilised means being governable, and being governable means the ability to inherit the land.

11. Conclusion

The Last of the Mohicans is clearly a narrative tool of colonial rule as well as a historical romance. Cooper's novel creates, disciplines, and eradicates its subjects in line with imperial rationalities by drawing upon Michel Foucault's ideas of disciplinary power, surveillance, biopolitics, power/knowledge, and governmentality. The novel's omniscient narrative gaze reinforces the idea that space and visibility are technologies of control, with forts, forests, and paths serving as areas of panoptic authority. Behavioural rules, emotional control, and family responsibilities represent disciplinary techniques that normalise colonial hierarchies by rewarding obedience and suppressing discord. Who should live and who should die is decided by biopolitical logics; Magua's resistance is pathologised into exclusion, while Uncas and Cora's deaths validate settler futurity. The narrator, a third-person

omniscient colonial focaliser, mirrors the operations of empire itself—observing, translating, classifying, and thereby governing the world it describes. Through this gaze, Indigenous speech is mediated, morality is inscribed onto landscape, and Native identity becomes intelligible only within Eurocentric frameworks of power and knowledge. This matrix is completed by governmentality, which narratively expels those who oppose self-regulation while portraying characters like Hawkeye as ideal self-governing colonial subjects.

These perspectives surely show how this novel describes and actively develops colonial order, forming space, bodies, and truths as a way for legitimising empire.

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