Characters Of Frontier Essay, Research Paper

In The Last of the Mohicans, many themes are introduced through the exploration of the frontier. As Cora, Alice and Heyward travel through the dark and dangerous forest they are surrounded by the raging war between England and France. Their unfortunate experience with Magua early in their travels ultimately leads to the introduction of Hawkeye and the Mohicans, which enlightens their minds to the differences between good and evil, civil and savage.

There were many types of people in and around the colonies during this time, including the English, French, and Natives. When western expansion began, it led to the stratification of society, which separated each individual by sex, class, and race. Who set guidelines for the division of types of people? Furthermore, who was distinguished as civilized or savage? As Cora, Alice, and Heyward encounter unfamiliar races, they experience many new beliefs, and ways of life. To them anything different was considered strange and barbarous.

The Mohicans think of the Hurons, or Iroquois as savage beings, incapable of normal human emotions or actions. We see this portrayed later in the novel, when the Indians attack the English troops as they leave Fort William Henry in peace. But how can Hawkeye, Chingachgook , and Uncas be thought of as civilized, if they too scalp, kill, and yell in their anger? It is shown however, that the Mohicans, demonstrate restraint, while the Iroquois were unable to control their rage. Another question is Hawkeye’s position between the two classifications. He is said to be “the perfect frontier hero”, and he feels at home in the forest rather than the settlements. What is confusing is that he continuously boasts his true race and background: “the worst enemy I have in this world, and he is an Iroquois, daren’t deny that I am genuine white” -pg.31, yet was angered by his white society, ultimately obtaining refuge within the wilderness. Why is Hawkeye constantly assuring others of his race? Is he the true heroic figure for the frontier?