

PART ONE

Indians and Europeans

New World Encounters

The contact between two worlds—one of them “new,” the other “old”—permanently changed the way people on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean lived and thought about themselves. For Europeans, Christopher Columbus’s so-called discovery of the New World afforded opportunities to amass fortunes in precious metals, exotic spices, and new intoxicants. More important, the emerging European nations of the North Atlantic would eventually reconfigure the entire world, shifting its center away from the great civilizations of the East toward a new Atlantic basin economy. There, global empires would be built through the discovery of silver and the exploitation of land and labor to produce high-yield New World crops such as maize, manioc, and potatoes. This age of discovery, exploration, and conquest would touch off a scientific and commercial revolution, making Western Europe the world’s cosmopolitan center by attracting new ideas, technologies, and forms of wealth and redistributing them across the globe.

However, Columbus’s discovery did not affect all of Europe in the same way. For the Spanish and Portuguese who arrived in the New World first, the wealth of the great civilizations of Mexico and South America had by the seventeenth century distorted their economies by enriching and empowering an unproductive agrarian nobility at the expense of more productive middle classes in the towns. When the commoners left in search of their own New World opportunities, Spain suffered economic decline.

For the English, French, and Dutch who came later and settled in the poorer and less densely populated North America, there were no quick riches. Their New World colonies were difficult to build; costly to defend; and required large amounts of planning, coordination, and logistical support. Moreover, incentives were needed to convince people to cross the ocean and settle in the new land. The Dutch established New Amsterdam, the capital of their colony of

New Netherland, on the site of present-day New York City and built a scattering of sparsely populated commercial settlements along the Hudson River and the mid-Atlantic coast from Maryland to Rhode Island. They relied for recruitment on the Dutch West India Company and the efforts of private individuals such as New Netherland settler Adriaen van der Donck, who wrote books and pamphlets extolling the new colonies' virtues.

The British, whose commitment to settling North America was greater, used their military to secure a fledgling agricultural settlement in Jamestown, Virginia, where Captain John Smith had his famous encounter with Pocahontas and her father, Powhatan. As the British home market grew, so too did Great Britain's New World colonies. There were no great precious metal discoveries or massive pools of native labor in the British settlements. Instead, the British imported laborers, typically in the form of British prisoners and Irish and African forced labor. The British would eventually cover the entire Atlantic coast with the permanent settlements that made up the thirteen colonies that founded the United States.

The French, whose colonies were owned by the Crown but built on a mix of religious missionary work and mercantile enterprises—especially the fur trade—claimed vast territories throughout the North American interior. However, they established a significant and enduring presence only in Louisiana, the Caribbean, and Eastern Canada where Father Paul Le Jeune described his struggle to understand and work with Native Americans.

For the native peoples of what would come to be called the Americas, European contact and subsequent settlement proved catastrophic. Settlers, soldiers, and missionaries, along with mostly enslaved Africans, introduced new plants, animals, and technologies that disrupted and radically reoriented life in the New World. The brutal tactics of European conquest and the spread of Old World diseases such as smallpox, for which Native Americans lacked immunity, led to the death of some thirty million native people within fifty years of European contact.

Many Europeans struggled with the human dimensions of the catastrophe that had been unleashed. Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas's report of the Spanish conquest of the West Indies captures the horrors of that early colonial encounter between Europeans and Native Americans. This pattern of brutality, violence, and subjugation of indigenous peoples would be repeated many times during the following five centuries. Yet as the Spanish *conquistador* Hernando Cortés shows in his tale of the conquest of Mexico, the campaign was one not merely of violence and enslavement but also of politics and persuasion. The Visual Portfolio "New World Images" (pages 42–47) illustrates some of these conflicting and contradictory views that Europeans held about Native Americans.

Native peoples rarely left a written record of their own perspective on these early encounters. Few were literate, and Europeans were rarely concerned with chronicling the lives of those they were conquering. The Nahua, who ruled Mexico before the conquest, were unique among native peoples in that they had a well-developed ancient written tradition. During the early days after

the conquest, Juan de Zumárraga, the first bishop of New Spain, attempted to destroy the entire body of Nahuatl manuscripts, usually referred to as codices. Despite his efforts, some codices survived and others were reproduced from memory shortly afterward with the help of Spanish priests who shared Las Casas's indignation at what was occurring. The selection from the Florentine Codex included in this chapter is one of these Nahuatl texts that shows the native perspective on conquest. Partly on the basis of these codices, many scholars now argue that the early relationships between indigenous peoples and Europeans may have often been more open and mutual than those occurring later in North America, where segregated and unequal societies on both sides brought much bitterness and many prejudices to the encounter.

POINTS OF VIEW

Contact and Conquest (1502–1521)

I

HERNANDO CORTÉS

Dispatches of the Conquest from the New World

The discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus set off a speculative economic frenzy in Spain and Portugal. Merchants, military men, and adventurers rushed to equip ships and send soldiers in search of the gold, slaves, and spices promised by this vast new world. Twenty-five years after Columbus's discovery, however, the payoff remained elusive. The Spanish colonies in the New World were little more than a few Caribbean islands with sparse populations of settlers, African slaves, and captive Taino natives, who often died of European diseases for which they had no immunity. It was contact with and conquest of the Aztec empire on the mainland and the creation of New Spain (present-day Mexico and Guatemala) in 1521 that finally brought Europeans and natives some understanding of what they could expect from one another and how the future of this new world might look.

Anthony Pagden, ed. and trans., *Hernando Cortés: Letters from Mexico* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 35–36, 84–85, 88, 105, 106, 132.

Hernando Cortés, who led the conquest of New Spain, was not unlike many of the adventurers and businessmen who crossed the Atlantic in the first century after Columbus. In 1504, at the age of nineteen, Cortés traveled to Hispaniola (now the Dominican Republic and Haiti) on a convoy of merchant ships. Using his training as a lawyer and family connections, he became the colony notary and received a repartimiento, a Spanish colonial land grant, which included forced native labor. In 1511, he helped conquer Cuba, becoming clerk of the royal treasury; mayor of Havana; and a wealthy owner of land, Indians, and cattle. In 1517 and 1518, two expeditions to the Yucatán brought back rumors of gold and a great inland empire, and Cortés was asked by colonial authorities to command an exploratory expedition to the mainland.

When Cortés and his army of 508 soldiers arrived, they found an Aztec empire in deep crisis. Rapid expansion from the center of power at Tenochtitlán, the world's largest city at the time and now present-day Mexico City, had stretched the empire's rigid political structure and low technological development to the breaking point. Unable to fully integrate the vast agricultural hinterlands into the empire, the Aztecs had resorted to increasingly brutal ritualized terror, human sacrifice, and militarization to keep control. The first natives that Cortés and his men encountered at the margins of the empire fought initially but often quickly changed sides, preferring to take their chances with the Spanish invaders.

With the help of Malinche, a native woman who became Cortés's lover, adviser, and interpreter, Cortés and his men swept through town after town, defeating local armies, abolishing human sacrifice and tax collection, and carrying out mass conversions to Christianity. By the time the Spanish finally arrived in Tenochtitlán, Cortés and his mistress were feared and admired as mythical liberators. The conquest required two more years of political maneuvering and bloody battles before culminating in the siege of Tenochtitlán in 1521. Cortés's army, bolstered by as many as 200,000 natives, toppled the Aztec empire and declared the creation of a Christian New Spain.

As word of the conquest filtered back to Cuba, the Spanish royal bureaucracy feared that the upstart Cortés would take all the New World wealth for himself, perhaps even establishing himself as a king. Colonial officials used every political weapon they could find to sabotage Cortés, including officially relieving him of command, organizing mutinies, and seizing all his possessions in Cuba—all to no avail. Realizing that he could trust no one in Havana, and now having great status as a conquistador, he wrote directly to King Charles V of Spain about the things he had seen and done in the New World. These passages are from the dispatches that Cortés wrote to his king in the heat of conquest.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Consider Hernando Cortés's possible motivations for writing. In what ways did his audience—the king of Spain—affect Cortés's account of the conquest?
2. Why were Cortés and 508 men able to conquer an empire of millions?
3. Was Cortés a liberator or an oppressor of the natives? Explain.

They [the Aztecs] have a most horrid and abominable custom which truly ought to be punished and which until now we have seen in no other part, and this is

that, whenever they wish to ask something of the idols, in order that their plea may find more acceptance, they take many girls and boys and even adults, and in the presence of the idols they open their chests while they are still alive and take out their hearts and entrails and burn them before the idols, offering the smoke as sacrifice. Some of us have seen this, and they say it is the most terrible and frightful thing they have ever witnessed.

This these Indians do so frequently that, as we have been informed, and, in part, have seen from our own experience during the short while we have been here, not one year passes in which they do not kill and sacrifice some fifty persons in each temple; and this is done and held as customary from the island of Cozumel to this land where we now have settled. Your Majesties [the King and Queen of Spain and the Roman Empire] may be most certain that, as this land seems to us to be very large, and to have many temples in it, not one year has passed, as far as we have been able to discover, in which three or four thousand souls have not been sacrificed in this manner. . . .

After we had crossed [a] bridge, Moctezuma¹ came to greet us and with him some two hundred lords, all barefoot and dressed in a different costume, but also very rich in their way and more so than the others. They came in two columns, pressed very close to the walls of the street, which is very wide and beautiful and so straight that you can see from one end to the other. It is two-thirds of a league long and had on both sides very good and big houses, both dwellings and temples.

Moctezuma came down the middle of this street with two chiefs, one on his right hand and the other on his left. One of these was that great chief who had come on a litter to speak with me, and the other was Moctezuma's brother, chief of the city of Yztapalapa, which I had left that day. And they were all dressed alike except that Moctezuma wore sandals whereas the others went barefoot; and they held his arm on either side. When we met I dismounted and stepped forward to embrace him, but the two lords who were with him stopped me with their hands so that I should not touch him; and they likewise all performed the ceremony of kissing the earth. When this was over Moctezuma requested his brother to remain with me and to take me by the arm while he went a little way ahead with the other; and after he had spoken to me all the others in the two columns came and spoke with me, one after another, and then each returned to his column.

When at last I came to speak to Moctezuma himself I took off a necklace of pearls and cut glass that I was wearing and placed it round his neck; after we had walked a little way up the street a servant of his came with two necklaces, wrapped in a cloth, made from red snails' shells, which they hold in great esteem; and from each necklace hung eight shrimps of refined gold almost a span in length. When they had been brought he turned to me and placed them about my neck, and then continued up the street in the manner already described until we reached a very large and beautiful house which had been very well prepared to accommodate us. . . .

1. **Moctezuma:** Or, Montezuma; ruler of the Aztecs.

Most Invincible Lord, six days having passed since we first entered this great city of Tenochtitlán, during which time I had seen something of it, though little compared with how much there is to see and record, I decided from what I had seen that it would benefit Your Royal service and our safety if Moctezuma were in my power and not in complete liberty, in order that he should not retreat from the willingness he showed to serve Your Majesty; but chiefly because we Spaniards are rather obstinate and persistent, and should we annoy him he might, as he is so powerful, obliterate all memory of us. Furthermore, by having him with me, all those other lands which were subject to him would come more swiftly to the recognition and service of Your Majesty, as later happened. I resolved, therefore, to take him and keep him in the quarters where I was, which were very strong. . . .

There are, in all districts of this great city, many temples or houses for their idols. They are all very beautiful buildings, and in the important ones there are priests of their sect who live there permanently; and, in addition to the houses for the idols, they also have very good lodgings. . . .

The most important of these idols, and the ones in whom they have most faith, I had taken from their places and thrown down the steps; and I had those chapels where they were cleaned, for they were full of the blood of sacrifices; and I had images of Our Lady and of other saints put there, which caused Moctezuma and the other natives some sorrow. . . .

Moctezuma, who together with one of his sons and many other chiefs who had been captured previously [and] was still a prisoner, asked to be taken out onto the roof of the fortress where he might speak to the captains of his people and tell them to end the fighting. I had him taken out, and when he reached a breastwork which ran out beyond the fortress, and was about to speak to them, he received a blow on his head from a stone; and the injury was so serious that he died three days later. I told two of the Indians who were captive to carry him out on their shoulders to the people. What they did with him I do not know; only the war did not stop because of it, but grew more fierce and pitiless each day. . . .

We already knew that the Indians in the city [Tenochtitlán] were very scared, and we now learnt from two wretched creatures who had escaped from the city and come to our camp by night that they were dying of hunger and used to come out at night to fish in the canals between the houses, and wandered through the places we had won in search of firewood, and herbs and roots to eat. And because we had already filled in many of the canals, and leveled out many of the dangerous stretches, I resolved to enter the next morning shortly before dawn and do all the harm we could. The brigantines² departed before daylight, and I with twelve or fifteen horsemen and some foot soldiers and Indians entered suddenly and stationed several spies who, as soon as it was light, called us from where we lay in ambush, and we fell on a huge number of people. As these were some of the most wretched people and had come in search of food, they were nearly all unarmed, and women and children in the main. We did them so much harm through all the streets in the city that we could reach, that the dead and the prisoners numbered more than eight hundred; the brigantines also took many people and canoes

2. **brigantine:** A small ship, typically with two masts.

which were out fishing, and the destruction was very great. When the captains and lords of the city saw us attack at such an unaccustomed hour, they were as frightened as they had been by the recent ambush, and none of them dared come out and fight; so we returned with much booty and food for our allies. . . .

On leaving my camp, I had commanded Gonzalo de Sandoval to sail the brigantines in between the houses in the other quarter in which the Indians were resisting, so that we should have them surrounded, but not to attack until he saw that we were engaged. In this way they would be surrounded and so hard pressed that they would have no place to move save over the bodies of their dead or along the roof tops. They no longer had nor could find any arrows, javelins or stones with which to attack us; and our allies fighting with us were armed with swords and bucklers, and slaughtered so many of them on land and in the water that more than forty thousand were killed or taken that day. So loud was the wailing of the women and children that there was not one man amongst us whose heart did not bleed at the sound; and indeed we had more trouble in preventing our allies from killing with such cruelty than we had in fighting the enemy. For no race, however savage, has ever practiced such fierce and unnatural cruelty as the natives of these parts. Our allies also took many spoils that day, which we were unable to prevent, as they numbered more than 150,000 and we Spaniards were only some nine hundred. Neither our precautions nor our warnings could stop their looting, though we did all we could. One of the reasons why I had avoided entering the city in force during the past days was the fear that if we attempted to storm them they would throw all they possessed into the water, and, even if they did not, our allies would take all they could find. For this reason I was much afraid that Your Majesty would receive only a small part of the great wealth this city once had, in comparison with all that I once held for Your Highness. Because it was now late, we could no longer endure the stench of the dead bodies that had lain in those streets for many days, which was the most loathsome thing in all the world, we returned to our camps.

2

A Nahua Account of the Conquest of Mexico

For centuries it had been a well-known part of the “Black Legend” of the horrors of the Spanish conquest that the first archbishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga, collected thousands of Nahua manuscripts and burned them. (Nahua is the word for the people and the language of the Aztec empire.) However, some Nahua documents survived the archbishop’s fires, and others were re-created through oral histories taken shortly after the conquest by sympathetic Spanish priests and Nahua natives trained in anthropological

James Lockhart, ed. and trans., *We People Here: Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 90–104.

and historical skills. These documents, usually known as *codices* (a *codex* is a simple form of book), lay unread and unappreciated for centuries in libraries and private collections across Mexico, Europe, and the United States. In the 1960s, a new generation of social and ethnohistorians compiled and published native voices from the conquest. These accounts, translated into English and Spanish, contribute to our understanding of how the two sides understood what happened when people from Europe and the New World first made contact.

The following document is drawn from the *Florentine Codex*, named for its home in the Laurentian Library in Florence, Italy. Probably the most famous of the *Nahua* descriptions of the conquest, it was first transcribed from *Nahua* hieroglyphs by native scholars trained and educated in Latin and Spanish by Fra Bernardino de Sahagún. A Franciscan priest known for his rigorous and respectful study of native custom and history, Sahagún supervised the production of the original bilingual Spanish/*Nahua* edition in the mid-sixteenth century. The *Nahua* assistants who translated the hieroglyphs, compiled the oral histories, and searched other sources to write this history remain unknown. Contemporary historians struggle with conflicting accounts, different versions of the same documents, and complex political motivations behind the many views of the conquest.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Some scholars argue that *Nahua* accounts of the conquest are filled with scapegoats and excuses for the defeat. Which of these can you spot in this document?
2. Does this document contradict or confirm the traditional notion that the *Nahua* believed the Spanish were gods? Why should it matter to historians whether the *Nahua* believed this?
3. How might accounts of the conquest written by Tlascalans, a group in the hinterlands who had been conquered by the empire, differ from those of the Tenochca, who were living in the center of the empire in the capital city of Tenochtitlán?

Tenth chapter, where it is said how the Spaniards landed uncontested and came on their way in this direction, and how Moteucōma¹ left the great palace and went to his personal home.

Then Moteucōma abandoned his patrimonial home, the great palace, and came back to his personal home.

When at last [the Spaniards] came, when they were coming along and moving this way, a certain person from Cempoallan,² whose name was Tlacochealcatl, whom they had taken when they first came to see the land and the various

1. **Moteucōma:** Moctezuma or Montezuma, ruler of the Aztecs.

2. **Cempoallan:** Aztec province in what is now Veracruz.

altepetl,³ also came interpreting for them, planning their route, conducting them, showing them the way, leading and guiding them.

And when they reached Tecoac, which is in the land of the Tlaxcalans,⁴ where their Otomis⁵ lived, the Otomis met them with hostilities and war. But they annihilated the Otomis of Tecoac, who were destroyed completely. They lanced and stabbed them, they shot them with guns, iron bolts, crossbows. Not just a few but a huge number of them were destroyed.

After the great defeat at Tecoac, when the Tlaxcalans heard it and found out about it and it was reported to them, they became limp with fear, they were made faint; fear took hold of them. Then they assembled, and all of them, including the lords and rulers, took counsel among themselves, considering the reports.

They said, "How is it to be with us? Should we face them? For the Otomis are great and valiant warriors, yet they thought nothing of them, they regarded them as nothing; in a very short time, in the blink of an eyelid, they destroyed the people. Now let us just submit to them, let us make friends with them, let us be friends, for something must be done about the common people."

Thereupon the Tlaxcalan rulers went to meet them, taking along food: turkey hens, eggs, white tortillas, fine tortillas. They said to them, "Welcome, our lords." [The Spaniards] answered them back, "Where is your homeland? Where have you come from?" They said, "We are Tlaxcalans. Welcome, you have arrived, you have reached the land of Tlaxcala, which is your home."

(But in olden times it was called Texcallan and the people Texcalans.)

Eleventh chapter, where it is said how the Spaniards reached Tlaxcala, [also] called Texcallan.

[The Tlaxcalans] guided, accompanied, and led them until they brought them to their palace[s] and placed them there. They showed them great honors, they gave them what they needed and attended to them, and then they gave them their daughters.

Then [the Spaniards] asked them, "Where is Mexico?⁶ What kind of a place is it? Is it still far?" They answered them, "It's not far now. Perhaps one can get there in three days. It is a very favored place, and [the Mexica] are very strong, great warriors, conquerors, who go about conquering everywhere."

Now before this there had been friction between the Tlaxcalans and the Cholulans.⁷ They viewed each other with anger, fury, hate, and disgust; they could come together on nothing. Because of this they put [the Spaniards] up to killing them treacherously.

They said to them, "The Cholulans are very evil; they are our enemies. They are as strong as the Mexica, and they are the Mexica's friends."

3. **altepetl:** Nahuatl word for city or town.

4. **Tlaxcalans:** Also, Tlascalans—a large native group that allied with Cortés against the Mexica.

5. **Otomis:** A native group that lived near Tlaxcala.

6. **Mexico:** The Aztec empire.

7. **Cholulans:** A native group that the Spaniards defeated in battle as part of their alliance with the Tlaxcalans.

When the Spaniards heard this, they went to Cholula. The Tlaxcalans and Cempoallans went with them, outfitted for war. When they arrived, there was a general summons and cry that all the noblemen, rulers, subordinate leaders, warriors, and commoners should come, and everyone assembled in the temple courtyard. When they had all come together, [the Spaniards and their friends] blocked the entrances, all of the places where one entered. Thereupon people were stabbed, struck, and killed. No such thing was in the minds of the Cholulans; they did not meet the Spaniards with weapons of war. It just seemed that they were stealthily and treacherously killed, because the Tlaxcalans persuaded [the Spaniards] to do it.

And a report of everything that was happening was given and relayed to Moteucōma. Some of the messengers would be arriving as others were leaving; they just turned around and ran back. There was no time when they weren't listening, when reports weren't being given. And all the common people went about in a state of excitement; there were frequent disturbances, as if the earth moved and [quaked], as if everything were spinning before one's eyes. People took fright.

And after the dying in Cholula, [the Spaniards] set off on their way to Mexico, coming gathered and bunched, raising dust. Their iron lances and halberds⁸ seemed to sparkle, and their iron swords were curved like a stream of water. Their cuirasses⁹ and iron helmets seemed to make a clattering sound. Some of them came wearing iron all over, turned into iron beings, gleaming, so that they aroused great fear and were generally seen with fear and dread. Their dogs came in front, coming ahead of them, keeping to the front, panting, with their spittle hanging down.

Twelfth chapter, where it is said how Moteucōma sent a great nobleman along with many other noblemen to go to meet the Spaniards, and what their gifts of greeting were when they greeted the Captain between Iztactepetl and Popocatepetl.¹⁰

Thereupon Moteucōma named and sent the noblemen and a great many other agents of his, with Tzihuacpopocatzin¹¹ as their leader, to go meet [Cortés] between Popocatepetl and Iztactepetl, at Quauhtechcac. They gave [the Spaniards] golden banners, banners of precious feathers, and golden necklaces.

And when they had given the things to them, they seemed to smile, to rejoice and be very happy. Like monkeys they grabbed the gold. It was as though their hearts were put to rest, brightened, freshened. For gold was what they greatly thirsted for; they were gluttonous for it, starved for it, piggishly wanting it. They came lifting up the golden banners, waving them from side to side, showing them

8. **halberd:** A weapon with an axe and a long spike set on a long pole.

9. **cuirass:** Type of armor.

10. **Iztactepetl and Popocatepetl:** Respectively, the third-highest mountain in Mexico and an active volcano, both visible from Mexico City.

11. **Tzihuacpopocatzin:** An envoy from Moctezuma.

to each other. They seemed to babble; what they said to each other was in a babbling tongue.

And when they saw Tzihuacpopocatzin, they said, "Is this one then Moteucçoma?" They said it to the Tlaxcalans and Cempoallans, their lookouts, who came among them, questioning them secretly. They said, "It is not that one, o our lords. This is Tzihuacpopocatzin, who is representing Moteucçoma."

[The Spaniards] said to him, "Are you then Moteucçoma?" He said, "I am your agent Moteucçoma."

Then they told him, "Go on with you! Why do you lie to us? What do you take us for? You can't lie to us, you can't fool us, [turn our heads], flatter us, [make faces at us], trick us, confuse our vision, distort things for us, blind us, dazzle us, throw mud in our eyes, put muddy hands on our faces. It is not you. Moteucçoma exists; he will not be able to hide from us, he will not be able to find refuge. Where will he go? Is he a bird, will he fly? Or will he take an underground route, will he go somewhere into a mountain that is hollow inside? We will see him, we will not fail to gaze on his face and hear his words from his lips."

Therefore they just scorned and disregarded him, and so another of their meetings and greetings came to naught. Then they went straight back the direct way [to Mexico].

Thirteenth chapter, where it is said how Moteucçoma sent other sorcerers to cast spells on the Spaniards, and what happened to them on the way.

Another group of messengers—rainmakers, witches, and priests—had also gone out for an encounter, but nowhere were they able to do anything or to get sight of [the Spaniards]; they did not hit their target, they did not find the people they were looking for, they were not sufficient.

They just came up against a drunk man in the road; they went to meet him and were dumbfounded at him. The way they saw him, he seemed to be dressed as a Chalcan,¹² feigning to be a Chalcan. He seemed to be drunk, feigning drunkenness. On his chest were tied eight grass ropes. He came quarreling with them, coming ahead of the Spaniards.

He ranted at them, saying to them, "What are you still doing here? What more do you want? What more is Moteucçoma trying to do? Did he come to his senses yesterday? Has he just now become a great coward? He has done wrong, he has [abandoned] the people, he has destroyed people, [he has hit himself on the head and wrapped himself up in relation to people], he has mocked people and deceived them."

When they had seen this and heard what he said, they made an effort to address him humbly; they quickly set up for him a place to attend to him, an earthen platform with a straw bed, but he absolutely would not look at it. In vain they had set out for him the earthen platform they had tried to make for him there.

[It was as though they entered his mouth]; he scolded them, greatly scolded them with angry words, saying to them, "What is the use of your coming here? Mexico will never exist again, it [is gone] forever. Go on with you; it is no

12. **Chalcan:** A native group renowned among the Aztecs for their poetry.

longer there. Do turn around and look at what is happening in Mexico, what is going on.”

Then they looked back, they quickly looked back, and saw all the temples, the calpulli [buildings], the calmecacs,¹³ and all the houses in Mexico burning, and it seemed as though there were fighting.

And when the rainmakers had seen that, their hearts seemed to fail them, they were silent, as though someone had forced something down their throats. They said, “What we have seen was needed to be seen not by us but by Moteucçoma, for that was not just anyone, but the youth Tezcatlipoca.”¹⁴

Then he vanished, and they saw him no more. And after that the messengers did not go to encounter [the Spaniards], did not move in their direction, but the rainmakers and priests turned back there and came to tell Moteucçoma. They came together with those who had first gone with Tzihuacpopocatzin.

And when the messengers got there, they told Moteucçoma what had happened and what they had seen. When Moteucçoma heard it, he just hung his head and sat there, not saying a word. He sat like someone on the verge of death; for a long time it was as though he had lost awareness.

He answered them only by saying to them, “What can be done, o men of unique valor? We have come to the end. We are resigned. Should we climb up in the mountains? But should we run away? We are Mexica. Will the Mexica state flourish [in exile]? Look at the sad condition of the poor old men and women, and the little children who know nothing yet. Where would they be taken? What answer is there? What can be done, whatever can be done? Where are we to go? We are resigned to whatever we will see, of whatever nature.”

FOR CRITICAL THINKING

1. In what ways did the Florentine Codex represent the native population differently from the way in which Hernando Cortés did?
2. Many Nahua documents agreed with Spanish accounts claiming that Moctezuma acted timidly and lost his empire because he believed that the Spanish were gods. Why might some native chroniclers have had an interest in perpetuating this theory? Why might Europeans have also wanted to perpetuate this idea?
3. What evidence in these documents suggests that the Nahua believed the Spanish were gods?

13. **calmecacs:** Religious schools for boys run by Aztec priests.

14. **Tezcatlipoca:** Aztec god of the night, beauty, war, and material things. He often tempted men to do wicked things as a means of rewarding those who could resist temptations and punishing those who succumbed.

3

BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS Destruction of the Indies

Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474–1566), a Spanish colonist and later a Dominican friar, saw Christopher Columbus in 1493 when the explorer passed through Seville on his return to Spain after having discovered the Americas the previous year. Las Casas’s father and two uncles sailed that year on Columbus’s second voyage. As news spread throughout Europe about what was believed to be a western route to the East Indies, rumors of an abundance of gold, spices, and other valuables attracted adventurers and others in search of fortune.

The Spanish built small colonies on the island of Hispaniola (now the Dominican Republic and Haiti). In 1502, Las Casas himself traveled to the New World to serve as an officer of the king. In exchange for his services, he was given an encomienda, an estate that included native people forced to labor for him. Several years later, he was moved by a sermon given by a Dominican priest denouncing the treatment of the Indians by the Spanish. Las Casas returned his laborers to the governor and became a priest.

Las Casas spent the rest of his long life attempting to protect the Native Americans against the massacres, tortures, and forced labor imposed on them by their Spanish conquerors. In 1515, Las Casas returned to Spain and pleaded before King Ferdinand for more humane treatment of the native people. His passionate defense of the indigenous Americans influenced Pope Paul III to declare the natives of America rational beings with souls. Las Casas traveled throughout Spain’s new colonies and in the 1540s became bishop of Chiapas (now southern Mexico).

His powerful writings were part of the basis for the “Black Legend” of the Spanish conquest. Most modern scholars accept the accuracy of Las Casas’s shocking portraits of devastation, much of which he personally witnessed, such as the violent and bloody conquest of Cuba. Today, however, many view these horrors not as the outcome of some peculiar Spanish cruelty but as characteristic of the bloody “Columbian encounter” between Europeans and other cultures in the age of exploration and conquest. Las Casas wrote the following treatise in Seville in 1552.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Was Bartolomé de Las Casas’s view of the Native Americans accurate? Why or why not?
2. Was his criticism of the Spanish empire fair and accurate?
3. Throughout his life Las Casas remained fiercely loyal to both the Spanish monarch and the Catholic Church. How would you reconcile these

Francis Augustus MacNutt, *Bartholomew de Las Casas: His Life, His Apostolate, and His Writings* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1909), 314–21.

feelings with his condemnation of the Spanish empire's actions in the New World?

SHORT REPORT OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WEST INDIES

1. The Indies were discovered in the year fourteen hundred and ninety-two. The year following, Spanish Christians went to inhabit them, so that it is since forty-nine years that numbers of Spaniards have gone there: and the first land, that they invaded to inhabit, was the large and most delightful Isle of Hispaniola, which has a circumference of six hundred leagues.

2. There are numberless other islands, and very large ones, all around on every side, that were all—and we have seen it—as inhabited and full of their native Indian peoples as any country in the world.

3. Of the continent, the nearest part of which is more than two hundred and fifty leagues distant from this Island, more than ten thousand leagues of maritime coast have been discovered, and more is discovered every day; all that has been discovered up to the year forty-nine is full of people, like a hive of bees, so that it seems as though God had placed all, or the greater part of the entire human race in these countries.

4. God has created all these numberless people to be quite the simplest, without malice or duplicity, most obedient, most faithful to their natural Lords, and to the Christians, whom they serve; the most humble, most patient, most peaceful, and calm, without strife nor tumults; not wrangling, nor querulous, as free from uproar, hate and desire of revenge, as any in the world.

5. They are likewise the most delicate people, weak and of feeble constitution, and less than any other can they bear fatigue, and they very easily die of whatsoever infirmity; so much so, that not even the sons of our Princes and of nobles, brought up in royal and gentle life, are more delicate than they; although there are among them such as are of the peasant class. They are also a very poor people, who of worldly goods possess little, nor wish to possess: and they are therefore neither proud, nor ambitious, nor avaricious.

6. Their food is so poor, that it would seem that of the Holy Fathers in the desert was not scantier nor less pleasing. Their way of dressing is usually to go naked, covering the private parts; and at most they cover themselves with a cotton cover, which would be about equal to one and a half or two ells square of cloth. Their beds are of matting, and they mostly sleep in certain things like hanging nets, called in the language of Hispaniola *hamacas*.

7. They are likewise of a clean, unspoiled, and vivacious intellect, very capable, and receptive to every good doctrine; most prompt to accept our Holy Catholic Faith, to be endowed with virtuous customs; and they have as little difficulty with such things as any people created by God in the world.

8. Once they have begun to learn of matters pertaining to faith, they are so importunate to know them, and in frequenting the sacraments and divine service of the Church, that to tell the truth, the clergy have need to be endowed of God with the gift of pre-eminent patience to bear with them: and finally, I have heard

many lay Spaniards frequently say many years ago, (unable to deny the goodness of those they saw) certainly these people were the most blessed of the earth, had they only knowledge of God.

9. Among these gentle sheep, gifted by their Maker with the above qualities, the Spaniards entered as soon as they knew them, like wolves, tigers, and lions which had been starving for many days, and since forty years they have done nothing else; nor do they otherwise at the present day, than outrage, slay, afflict, torment, and destroy them with strange and new, and divers kinds of cruelty, never before seen, nor heard of, nor read of, of which some few will be told below: to such extremes has this gone that, whereas there were more than three million souls, whom we saw in Hispaniola, there are to-day, not two hundred of the native population left.

10. The island of Cuba is almost as long as the distance from Valladolid¹ to Rome; it is now almost entirely deserted. The islands of San Juan [Puerto Rico], and Jamaica, very large and happy and pleasing islands, are both desolate. The Lucaya Isles lie near Hispaniola and Cuba to the north and number more than sixty, including those that are called the Giants, and other large and small Islands; the poorest of these, which is more fertile, and pleasing than the King's garden in Seville, is the healthiest country in the world, and contained more than five hundred thousand souls, but to-day there remains not even a single creature. All were killed in transporting them, to Hispaniola, because it was seen that the native population there was disappearing.

11. A ship went three years later to look for the people that had been left after the gathering in, because a good Christian was moved by compassion to convert and win those that were found to Christ; only eleven persons, whom I saw, were found.

12. More than thirty other islands, about the Isle of San Juan, are destroyed and depopulated, for the same reason. All these islands cover more than two thousand leagues of land, entirely depopulated and deserted.

13. We are assured that our Spaniards, with their cruelty and execrable works, have depopulated and made desolate the great continent, and that more than ten Kingdoms, larger than all Spain, counting Aragon² and Portugal, and twice as much territory as from Seville to Jerusalem (which is more than two thousand leagues), although formerly full of people, are now deserted.

14. We give as a real and true reckoning, that in the said forty years, more than twelve million persons, men, and women, and children, have perished unjustly and through tyranny, by the infernal deeds and tyranny of the Christians; and I truly believe, nor think I am deceived, that it is more than fifteen.

15. Two ordinary and principal methods have the self-styled Christians, who have gone there, employed in extirpating these miserable nations and removing them from the face of the earth. The one, by unjust, cruel and tyrannous wars. The other, by slaying all those, who might aspire to, or sigh for, or think of liberty, or to escape from the torments that they suffer, such as all the native Lords,

1. **Valladolid:** A city in northwestern Spain.

2. **Aragon:** A kingdom in what is now northeastern Spain.

and adult men; for generally, they leave none alive in the wars, except the young men and the women, whom they oppress with the hardest, most horrible, and roughest servitude, to which either man or beast, can ever be put. To these two ways of infernal tyranny, all the many and divers other ways, which are numberless, of exterminating these people, are reduced, resolved, or sub-ordered according to kind.

16. The reason why the Christians have killed and destroyed such infinite numbers of souls, is solely because they have made gold their ultimate aim, seeking to load themselves with riches in the shortest time and to mount by high steps, disproportioned to their condition: namely by their insatiable avarice and ambition, the greatest, that could be on the earth. These lands, being so happy and so rich, and the people so humble, so patient, and so easily subjugated, they have had no more respect, nor consideration nor have they taken more account of them (I speak with truth of what I have seen during all the aforementioned time) than,—I will not say of animals, for would to God they had considered and treated them as animals,—but as even less than the dung in the streets.

17. In this way have they cared for their lives—and for their souls: and therefore, all the millions above mentioned have died without faith, and without sacraments. And it is a publicly known truth, admitted, and confessed by all, even by the tyrants and homicides themselves, that the Indians throughout the Indies never did any harm to the Christians: they even esteemed them as coming from heaven, until they and their neighbours had suffered the same many evils, thefts, deaths, violence and visitations at their hands.

OF HISPANIOLA

1. In the island of Hispaniola—which was the first, as we have said, to be invaded by the Christians—the immense massacres and destruction of these people began. It was the first to be destroyed and made into a desert. The Christians began by taking the women and children, to use and to abuse them, and to eat of the substance of their toil and labour, instead of contenting themselves with what the Indians gave them spontaneously, according to the means of each. Such stores are always small; because they keep no more than they ordinarily need, which they acquire with little labour; but what is enough for three households, of ten persons each, for a month, a Christian eats and destroys in one day. From their using force, violence and other kinds of vexations, the Indians began to perceive that these men could not have come from heaven.

2. Some hid their provisions, others, their wives and children: others fled to the mountains to escape from people of such harsh and terrible intercourse. The Christians gave them blows in the face, beatings and cudgellings, even laying hands on the lords of the land. They reached such recklessness and effrontery, that a Christian captain violated the lawful wife of the chief king and lord of all the island.

3. After this deed, the Indians consulted to devise means of driving the Christians from their country. They took up their weapons, which are poor enough

and little fitted for attack, being of little force and not even good for defence. For this reason, all their wars are little more than games with sticks, such as children play in our countries.

4. The Christians, with their horses and swords and lances, began to slaughter and practise strange cruelty among them. They penetrated into the country and spared neither children nor the aged, nor pregnant women, nor those in child labour, all of whom they ran through the body and lacerated, as though they were assaulting so many lambs herded in their sheepfold.

5. They made bets as to who would slit a man in two, or cut off his head at one blow: or they opened up his bowels. They tore the babes from their mothers' breast by the feet, and dashed their heads against the rocks. Others they seized by the shoulders and threw into the rivers, laughing and joking, and when they fell into the water they exclaimed: "boil body of so and so!" They spitted the bodies of other babes, together with their mothers and all who were before them, on their swords.

6. They made a gallows just high enough for the feet to nearly touch the ground, and by thirteens, in honour and reverence of our Redeemer and the twelve Apostles, they put wood underneath and, with fire, they burned the Indians alive.

7. They wrapped the bodies of others entirely in dry straw, binding them in it and setting fire to it; and so they burned them. They cut off the hands of all they wished to take alive, made them carry them fastened on to them, and said: "Go and carry letters": that is; take the news to those who have fled to the mountains.

8. They generally killed the lords and nobles in the following way. They made wooden gridirons of stakes, bound them upon them, and made a slow fire beneath: thus the victims gave up the spirit by degrees, emitting cries of despair in their torture.

9. I once saw that they had four or five of the chief lords stretched on the gridirons to burn them, and I think also there were two or three pairs of gridirons, where they were burning others; and because they cried aloud and annoyed the captain or prevented him sleeping, he commanded that they should strangle them: the officer who was burning them was worse than a hangman and did not wish to suffocate them, but with his own hands he gagged them, so that they should not make themselves heard, and he stirred up the fire, until they roasted slowly, according to his pleasure. I know his name, and knew also his relations in Seville. I saw all the above things and numberless others.

4

JOHN SMITH

Description of Virginia

Before he became one of the original settlers of Jamestown in 1607, Captain John Smith (1580–1631) was already experienced as a soldier and diplomat, having fought the Spanish in the Netherlands and the Turks in Hungary. At Jamestown he took part in governing the colony—leading it from 1608 to 1609—and in managing relations with the Native Americans. His story, told years later, of being saved from death by the friendly intervention of Pocahontas, the daughter of Chief Powhatan, has a secure place in American legend. Historians and ethnographers disagree about whether the incident happened and, if it did, whether Smith correctly understood its meaning in the context of the native culture. Many suspect that it was part of a ritual inducting Smith into the tribe rather than a rescue.

Smith returned to England in 1609. His later years were given over to promoting both himself and the settlement of the New World he had helped to colonize. His descriptions in numerous writings both of British America and of its Native American inhabitants set patterns that continued for centuries.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Describe John Smith's account of the New World. What kind of modern writing or communication does it suggest?
2. What adjectives would you apply to Smith's description of the Native Americans? In what ways does his account seem reliable? In what ways does it seem unreliable?

THE COMMODITIES IN VIRGINIA OR THAT MAY BE HAD BY INDUSTRY

The mildness of the air, the fertility of the soil, and the situation of the rivers are so propitious to the nature and use of man as no place is more convenient for pleasure, profit, and man's sustenance. Under that latitude or climate, here will live any beasts, as horses, goats, sheep, asses, hens, etc. The waters, islands, and shoals are full of safe harbors for ships of war or merchandise, for boats of all sorts, for transportation or fishing, etc.

Edward Arber, ed., *Captain John Smith of Willoughby by Alford, Lincolnshire; President of Virginia and Admiral of New England. Works: 1608–1631*. The English Scholar's Library 16 (Birmingham, 1884), 63–67. The text has been modernized by Elizabeth Marcus.

The Bay and rivers have much marketable fish and places fit for salt works, building of ships, making of iron, etc.

Muscovia and Polonia¹ yearly receive many thousands for pitch, tar, soap ashes, rosin, flax, cordage, sturgeon, masts, yards, wainscot, furs, glass, and such-like; also Swethland² for iron and copper. France, in like manner, for wine, canvas, and salt, Spain as much for iron, steel, figs, raisins and sherry. Italy with silks and velvets, consumes our chief commodities. Holland maintains itself by fishing and trading at our own doors. All these temporize with others for necessities, but all as uncertain as to peace or war, and besides the charge, travel and danger in transporting them, by seas, lands, storms and pirates. Then how much has Virginia the prerogative of all those flourishing kingdoms for the benefit of our lands, when as within one hundred miles all those are to be had, either ready provided by nature or else to be prepared, were there but industrious men to labor. Only copper might be lacking, but there is good probability that both copper and better minerals are there to be had if they are worked for. Their countries have it. So then here is a place a nurse for soldiers, a practice for mariners, a trade for merchants, a reward for the good, and that which is most of all, a business (most acceptable to God) to bring such poor infidels to the true knowledge of God and his holy Gospel.

OF THE NATURAL INHABITANTS OF VIRGINIA

The land is not populous, for the men be few, their far greater number is of women and children. Within 60 miles of Jamestown there are about some 5,000 people, but of able men fit for their wars scarce 1,500. To nourish so many together they have yet no means, because they make so small a benefit of their land, be it never so fertile.

Six or seven hundred have been the most that have been seen together, when they gathered themselves to have surprised Captain Smyth at Pamaunke, having but 15 to withstand the worst of their fury. As small as the proportion of ground that has yet been discovered, is in comparison of that yet unknown. The people differ very much in stature, especially in language, as before is expressed.

Some being very great as the Sesquaesahamocks, others very little as the Wighcocomoques:³ but generally tall and straight, of a comely proportion, and of a color brown, when they are of any age, but they are born white. Their hair is generally black, but few have any beards. The men wear half their heads shaven, the other half long. For barbers they use their women, who with 2 shells will grate away the hair in any fashion they please. The women are cut in many fashions agreeable to their years, but ever some part remain long.

They are very strong, of an able body and full of agility, able to endure, to lie in the woods under a tree by the fire, in the worst of winter, or in the weeds

1. **Muscovia and Polonia:** Latin for Moscow and Poland.

2. **Swethland:** Sweden.

3. **Sesquaesahamocks . . . Wighcocomoques:** Indigenous groups of the region.

and grass, in ambush in the summer. They are inconstant in everything, but what fear constrains them to keep. Crafty, timorous, quick of apprehension and very ingenious. Some are of disposition fearful, some bold, most cautious, all savage. Generally covetous of copper, beads and such like trash. They are soon moved to anger, and so malicious, that they seldom forget an injury: they seldom steal from one another, lest their conjurors⁴ should reveal it, and so they be pursued and punished. That they are thus feared is certain, but that any can reveal their offenses by conjuration I am doubtful. Their women are careful not to be suspected of dishonesty without leave of their husbands.

Each household knows their own lands and gardens, and most live off their own labors.

For their apparel, they are some time covered with the skins of wild beasts, which in winter are dressed with the hair but in summer without. The better sort use large mantles of deerskin not much different in fashion from the Irish mantles. Some embroidered them with beads, some with copper, others painted after their manner. But the common sort have scarce to cover their nakedness but with grass, the leaves of trees or suchlike. We have seen some use mantles that nothing could be discerned but the feathers, that was exceedingly warm and handsome. But the women are always covered about their middles with a skin and are ashamed to be seen bare.

They adorn themselves most with copper beads and paintings. Their women have their legs, hands, breasts and face cunningly embroidered with diverse works, as beasts, serpents, artificially wrought into their flesh with black spots. In each ear commonly they have three great holes, from which they hang chains, bracelets or copper. Some of their men wear in those holes a small green and yellow colored snake, near half a yard in length, which crawling and lapping herself around his neck oftentimes familiarly would kiss his lips. Others wear a dead rat tied by the tail. Some on their heads wear the wing of a bird or some large feather, with a rattle; those rattles are somewhat like the chape of a rapier, but less, which they take from the tails of a snake. Many have the whole skin of a hawk or some strange fowl, stuffed with the wings abroad. Others a broad piece of copper, and some the hand of their enemy dried. Their heads and shoulders are painted red with the root Pocone⁵ pounded to a powder mixed with oil; this they hold in summer to preserve them from the heat and in winter from the cold. Many other forms of paintings they use, but he is the most gallant that is the most monstrous to behold.

Their buildings and habitations are for the most part by the rivers or not far distant from some fresh spring. Their houses are built like our arbors of small young springs bowed and tied, and so close covered with mats or the barks of trees very handsomely, that notwithstanding either wind, rain or weather, they are as warm as stoves, but very smokey; yet at the top of the house there is a hole made for the smoke to go into right over the fire.

4. **conjuror:** A ritual specialist who can discern what people are thinking.

5. **Pocone:** Bloodroot.

Against the fire they lie on little mounds of reeds covered with a mat, borne from the ground a foot and more by a mound of wood. On these round about the house, they lie heads and points one by the other against the fire, some covered with mats, some with skins, and some stark naked lie on the ground, from 6 to 20 in a house.

Their houses are in the midst of their fields or gardens; which are small plots of ground, some 20, some 40, some 100, some 200, some more, some less. Sometimes from 2 to 100 of these houses are together, or but a little separated by groves of trees. Near their habitations is a little small wood, or old trees on the ground, by reason of their burning of them for fire. So that a man may gallop a horse among these woods anyway, but where the creeks or rivers shall hinder.

Men, women and children have their several names according to the particular whim of their parents. Their women (they say) are easily delivered of child, yet do they love children dearly. To make them hardy, in the coldest mornings they wash them in the rivers, and by painting and ointments so tan their skins that after a year or two no weather will hurt them.

The men bestow their times in fishing, hunting, wars, and such manlike exercises, scorning to be seen in any woman like exercise, which is the cause that the women be very painful and the men often idle. The women and children do the rest of the work. They make mats, baskets, pots, mortars, pound their corn, make their bread, prepare their victuals, plant their corn, gather their corn, bear all kinds of burdens and suchlike.

5

FATHER PAUL LE JEUNE **Encounter with the Indians**

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, France's Society of Jesus of the Roman Catholic Church, more commonly known as the Jesuits, energetically proselytized in virtually every Portuguese, Spanish, and French colony. The first Jesuit missionaries arrived in French Canada in 1632. They were determined to bring Christianity to the Indians by living with them, learning their languages, educating their children, and demonstrating (sometimes at the cost of their lives) that they were as brave as the Native Americans, some of whom regarded themselves as warriors. The French, although haughty and arrogant at times, were less authoritarian than the Spanish were in dealing with natives—and often more successful. The Jesuits played a major role in cementing French alliances with many Native American groups across Canada and into the Ohio Valley. These relationships

Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France* (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1987).

gave France a strategic position in the New World, hemming the colonies of British North America against the eastern seaboard until French power was destroyed in the mid-eighteenth century. The Jesuits in Canada sent regular reports back to their superiors in France. These reports form an important account of American Indian life and greatly influenced the European perception of the New World. (Regrettably, no Indian accounts of the French Jesuits survive.)

Paul Le Jeune (1591–1664), born in France, became a Jesuit in 1613. He had been a professor of rhetoric as well as superior of the Jesuit House at Dieppe before he radically changed his activities by going to French North America in 1632. Father Le Jeune found much to admire in the Native Americans, as well as much that he could neither understand nor accept. The report included here was written in Quebec in August 1634. Le Jeune worked among the Indians until 1649. He died in Paris in 1664.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What were Father Le Jeune's impressions and assessment of Native American religion?
2. What did he consider the Indians' virtues?
3. What did he consider their main vices?

CHAPTER IV. ON THE BELIEF, SUPERSTITIONS, AND ERRORS OF THE MONTAGNAIS' SAVAGES

I have already reported that the Savages believe that a certain one named Atahocam had created the world, and that one named Messou had restored it. I have questioned upon this subject the famous Sorcerer and the old man with whom I passed the Winter; they answered that they did not know who was the first Author of the world,—that it was perhaps Atahocam, but that was not certain; that they only spoke of Atahocam as one speaks of a thing so far distant that nothing sure can be known about it. . . .

As to the Messou, they hold that he restored the world, which was destroyed in the flood; whence it appears that they have some tradition of that great universal deluge which happened in the time of Noë.² . . .

They also say that all animals, of every species, have an elder brother, who is, as it were, the source and origin of all individuals, and this elder brother is wonderfully great and powerful. . . . Now these elders of all the animals are the juniors of the Messou. Behold him well related, this worthy restorer of the Universe, he is elder brother to all beasts. If any one, when asleep, sees the elder or progenitor of some animals, he will have a fortunate chase; if he sees the elder

1. **Montagnais:** French name for three groups of indigenous peoples who inhabit a region stretching from northern Quebec to Labrador.
2. **Noë:** Alternate spelling of Noah, from the Old Testament story of the destruction of the world by flood.

of the Beavers, he will take Beavers; if he sees the elder of the Elks, he will take Elks, possessing the juniors through the favor of their senior whom he has seen in the dream. . . .

Their Religion, or rather their superstition, consists of little besides praying; but O, my God, what prayers they make! In the morning, when the little children come out from their Cabins, they shout, *Cacouakhi, Pakhais Amiscouakhi, Pakhais Mousouakhi, Pakhais*, “Come, Porcupines; come, Beavers; come, Elk;” and this is all of their prayers.

When the Savages sneeze, and sometimes even at other times, during the Winter, they cry out in a loud voice, *Etouctaian miraounam an Mirouscamikhi*, “I shall be very glad to see the Spring.” At other times, I have heard them pray for the Spring, or for deliverance from evils and other similar things; and they express all these things in the form of desires, crying out as loudly as they can, “I would be very glad if this day would continue, if the wind would change,” etc. I could not say to whom these wishes are addressed, for they themselves do not know, at least those whom I have asked have not been able to enlighten me. . . .

CHAPTER V. ON THE GOOD THINGS WHICH ARE FOUND AMONG THE SAVAGES

If we begin with physical advantages, I will say that they possess these in abundance. They are tall, erect, strong, well proportioned, agile; and there is nothing effeminate in their appearance. Those little Fops that are seen elsewhere are only caricatures of men, compared with our Savages. I almost believed, heretofore, that the Pictures of the Roman Emperors represented the ideal of the painters rather than men who had ever existed, so strong and powerful are their heads; but I see here upon the shoulders of these people the heads of Julius Caesar, of Pompey, of Augustus, of Otho, and of others, that I have seen in France, drawn upon paper, or in relief on medallions.

As to the mind of the Savage, it is of good quality. I believe that souls are all made from the same stock, and that they do not materially differ; hence, these barbarians having well formed bodies, and organs well regulated and well arranged, their minds ought to work with ease. Education and instruction alone are lacking. Their soul is a soil which is naturally good, but loaded down with all the evils that a land abandoned since the birth of the world can produce. I naturally compare our Savages with certain villagers, because both are usually without education, though our Peasants are superior in this regard; and yet I have not seen any one thus far, of those who have come to this country, who does not confess and frankly admit that the Savages are more intelligent than our ordinary peasants.

Moreover, if it is a great blessing to be free from a great evil, our Savages are happy; for the two tyrants who provide hell and torture for many of our Europeans, do not reign in their great forests,—I mean ambition and avarice. As they

have neither political organization, nor offices, nor dignities, nor any authority, for they only obey their Chief through good will toward him, therefore they never kill each other to acquire these honors. Also, as they are contented with a mere living, not one of them gives himself to the Devil to acquire wealth.

They make a pretence of never getting angry, not because of the beauty of this virtue, for which they have not even a name, but for their own contentment and happiness, I mean, to avoid the bitterness caused by anger. The Sorcerer said to me one day, speaking of one of our Frenchmen, "He has no sense, he gets angry; as for me, nothing can disturb me; let hunger oppress me, let my nearest relation pass to the other life, let the Hiroquois, our enemies, massacre our people, I never get angry." What he says is not an article of faith; for, as he is more haughty than any other Savage, so I have seen him oftener out of humor than any of them; it is true also that he often restrains and governs himself by force, especially when I expose his foolishness. I have only heard one Savage pronounce this word, *Ninichcatihin*, "I am angry," and he only said it once. But I noticed that they kept their eyes on him, for when these Barbarians are angry, they are dangerous and unrestrained.

Whoever professes not to get angry, ought also to make a profession of patience; the Savages surpass us to such an extent, in this respect, that we ought to be ashamed. I saw them, in their hardships and in their labors, suffer with cheerfulness. My host, wondering at the great number of people who I told him were in France, asked me if the men were good, if they did not become angry, if they were patient. I have never seen such patience as is shown by a sick Savage.

You may yell, storm, jump, dance, and he will scarcely ever complain. I found myself, with them, threatened with great suffering; they said to me, "We shall be sometimes two days, sometimes three, without eating, for lack of food; take courage, *Chihiné*, let thy soul be strong to endure suffering and hardship; keep thyself from being sad, otherwise thou wilt be sick; see how we do not cease to laugh, although we have little to eat." One thing alone casts them down,—it is when they see death, for they fear this beyond measure; take away this apprehension from the Savages, and they will endure all kinds of degradation and discomfort, and all kinds of trials and suffering very patiently. . . .

They are very much attached to each other, and agree admirably. You do not see any disputes, quarrels, enmities, or reproaches among them. Men leave the arrangement of the household to the women, without interfering with them; they cut, and decide, and give away as they please, without making the husband angry. . . .

CHAPTER VI. ON THEIR VICIES AND THEIR IMPERFECTIONS

The Savages, being filled with errors, are also haughty and proud. Humility is born of truth, vanity of error and falsehood. They are void of the knowledge of truth, and are in consequence, mainly occupied with thought of themselves. They imagine that they ought by right of birth, to enjoy the liberty of Wild ass

colts, rendering no homage to any one whomsoever, except when they like. They have reproached me a hundred times because we fear our Captains, while they laugh at and make sport of theirs. All the authority of their chief is in his tongue's end; for he is powerful in so far as he is eloquent; and, even if he kills himself talking and haranguing, he will not be obeyed unless he pleases the Savages. . . .

I have shown in my former letters how vindictive the Savages are toward their enemies, with what fury and cruelty they treat them, eating them after they have made them suffer all that an incarnate fiend could invent. This fury is common to the women as well as to the men, and they even surpass the latter in this respect. I have said that they eat the lice they find upon themselves, not that they like the taste of them, but because they want to bite those that bite them.

These people are very little moved by compassion. When any one is sick in their Cabins, they ordinarily do not cease to cry and storm, and make as much noise as if everybody were in good health. They do not know what it is to take care of a poor invalid, and to give him the food which is good for him; if he asks for something to drink, it is given to him, if he asks for something to eat, it is given to him, but otherwise he is neglected; to coax him with love and gentleness, is a language which they do not understand. As long as a patient can eat, they will carry or drag him with them; if he stops eating, they believe that it is all over with him and kill him, as much to free him from the sufferings that he is enduring, as to relieve themselves of the trouble of taking him with them when they go to some other place. I have both admired and pitied the patience of the invalids whom I have seen among them.

The Savages are slanderous beyond all belief; I say, also among themselves, for they do not even spare their nearest relations, and with it all they are deceitful. For, if one speaks ill of another, they all jeer with loud laughter; if the other appears upon the scene, the first one will show him as much affection and treat him with as much love, as if he had elevated him to the third heaven by his praise. The reason of this is, it seems to me, that their slanders and derision do not come from malicious hearts or from infected mouths, but from a mind which says what it thinks in order to give itself free scope, and which seeks gratification from everything, even from slander and mockery. Hence they are not troubled even if they are told that others are making sport of them, or have injured their reputation. All they usually answer to such talk is, *mama irinisiou*, "He has no sense, he does not know what he is talking about"; and at the first opportunity they will pay their slanderer in the same coin, returning him the like.

Lying is as natural to Savages as talking, not among themselves, but to strangers. Hence it can be said that fear and hope, in one word, interest, is the measure of their fidelity. I would not be willing to trust them, except as they would fear to be punished if they had failed in their duty, or hoped to be rewarded if they were faithful to it. They do not know what it is to keep a secret, to keep their word, and to love with constancy, — especially those who are not of their nation, for they are harmonious among themselves, and their slanders and raillery do not disturb their peace and friendly intercourse. . . .

CHAPTER XII. WHAT ONE MUST SUFFER IN WINTERING WITH THE SAVAGES

In order to have some conception of the beauty of this edifice, its construction must be described. I shall speak from knowledge, for I have often helped to build it. Now, when we arrived at the place where we were to camp, the women, armed with axes, went here and there in the great forests, cutting the framework of the hostelry where we were to lodge; meantime the men, having drawn the plan thereof, cleared away the snow with their snowshoes, or with shovels which they make and carry expressly for this purpose. Imagine now a great ring or square in the snow, two, three or four feet deep, according to the weather or the place where they encamp. This depth of snow makes a white wall for us, which surrounds us on all sides, except the end where it is broken through to form the door. The framework having been brought, which consists of twenty or thirty poles, more or less, according to the size of the cabin, it is planted, not upon the ground but upon the snow; then they throw upon these poles, which converge a little at the top, two or three rolls of bark sewed together, beginning at the bottom, and behold, the house is made. The ground inside, as well as the wall of snow which extends all around the cabin, is covered with little branches of fir; and, as a finishing touch, a wretched skin is fastened to two poles to serve as a door, the doorposts being the snow itself. . . .

You cannot stand upright in this house, as much on account of its low roof as the suffocating smoke; and consequently you must always lie down, or sit flat upon the ground, the usual posture of the Savages. When you go out, the cold, the snow, and the danger of getting lost in these great woods drive you in again more quickly than the wind, and keep you a prisoner in a dungeon which has neither lock nor key.

This prison, in addition to the uncomfortable position that one must occupy upon a bed of earth, has four other great discomforts, — cold, heat, smoke, and dogs. As to the cold, you have the snow at your head with only a pine branch between, often nothing but your hat, and the winds are free to enter in a thousand places. . . . When I lay down at night I could study through this opening both the Stars and the Moon as easily as if I had been in the open fields.

Nevertheless, the cold did not annoy me as much as the heat from the fire. A little place like their cabins is easily heated by a good fire, which sometimes roasted and broiled me on all sides, for the cabin was so narrow that I could not protect myself against the heat. You cannot move to right or left, for the Savages, your neighbors, are at your elbows; you cannot withdraw to the rear, for you encounter the wall of snow, or the bark of the cabin which shuts you in. I did not know what position to take. Had I stretched myself out, the place was so narrow that my legs would have been halfway in the fire; to roll myself up in a ball, and crouch down in their way, was a position I could not retain as long as they could; my clothes were all scorched and burned. You will ask me perhaps if the snow at our backs did not melt under so much heat. I answer, “no”; that if sometimes the heat softened it in the least, the cold immediately turned it into ice. I will say,

however, that both the cold and the heat are endurable, and that some remedy may be found for these two evils.

But, as to the smoke, I confess to you that it is martyrdom. It almost killed me, and made me weep continually, although I had neither grief nor sadness in my heart. It sometimes grounded all of us who were in the cabin; that is, it caused us to place our mouths against the earth in order to breathe. For, although the Savages were accustomed to this torment, yet occasionally it became so dense that they, as well as I, were compelled to prostrate themselves, and as it were to eat the earth, so as not to drink the smoke. I have sometimes remained several hours in this position, especially during the most severe cold and when it snowed; for it was then the smoke assailed us with the greatest fury, seizing us by the throat, nose, and eyes. . . .

As to the dogs, which I have mentioned as one of the discomforts of the Savages' houses, I do not know that I ought to blame them, for they have sometimes rendered me good service. . . . These poor beasts, not being able to live outdoors, came and lay down sometimes upon my shoulders, sometimes upon my feet, and as I only had one blanket to serve both as covering and mattress, I was not sorry for this protection, willingly restoring to them a part of the heat which I drew from them. It is true that, as they were large and numerous, they occasionally crowded and annoyed me so much, that in giving me a little heat they robbed me of my sleep, so that I very often drove them away. . . .

6

ADRIAEN VAN DER DONCK

Debating the Value of the American Colonies

For the Netherlands, colonial settlement in the New World was somewhat different from the experiences of the other European powers. Because Dutch colonies were chartered as privately owned companies, the presence of the Dutch in the New World depended on private investors rather than on the political interests of the British Crown or the Catholic Church. Consequently, Dutch entrepreneurs enjoyed less government support for settlement, had less recourse to use of the military, and faced more pressure to produce immediate results for stockholders. More problematically, Dutch colonial settlers, as the dependents of a private company, sometimes had fewer rights than did citizens in the emerging Dutch democracy. However, the business basis of Dutch colonization also meant that the Dutch were less concerned with who settled in their colonies. Tied to the most rapidly

Adriaen van der Donck, *Description of the New Netherlands*. Translated from the Original Dutch by Hon. Jeremiah Johnson (New York: New York Historical Society, 1841), 228–38.

growing economy in Europe, the Dutch colony of New Netherland attracted people from across Europe and became the eastern seaboard's most multiethnic, multilingual colony.

The Dutch claimed much of the mid-Atlantic coast of North America, stretching from the southern border of the British Cape Cod settlement to Maryland, where their claims conflicted with those of the New Sweden colony. This dominance, combined with colonial holdings in Brazil, the Caribbean, and as far south as Chile, gave the Dutch an unprecedented hemispheric reach in the New World and brought settlers such as Adriaen van der Donck (ca. 1620–ca. 1655) to America.

In 1641, van der Donck, who had recently graduated with a degree in law from the University of Leiden, chose to ignore the economic boom in the Netherlands in favor of crossing the ocean to the New World. The colony's only lawyer, he rapidly made a name for himself, learning Native American languages and negotiating a peace treaty after a disastrous war with native peoples. In exchange for his work bringing peace to the colony, he was given the land that now makes up the city of Yonkers, New York.

The following document is excerpted from the last chapter of van der Donck's Description of the New Netherlands, written explicitly to convince people back home that North America was worth settling. After dozens of pages of description of the wonders of the land and the vitality of its people, he ends the book by staging a debate between a New Netherland settler and a skeptical Dutch patriot who is not convinced that North America is of value.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why did van der Donck use the debate format to present his views?
2. Judging from the perspectives of the two men in this dialogue, what were the chief fears the Dutch had about investing in North American colonies? What were the chief opportunities that they anticipated?
3. In what ways did van der Donck make a convincing case, and in what ways did he fail to convince?

My worthy friend:—I have heretofore embraced several opportunities and read with attention the particular description of the natural formation of the New-Netherlands, and of the appearance and customs of the country, and have arrived at the conclusion that a burgher,¹ farmer, or mechanic, and all other persons, can gain a comfortable subsistence in that country. I have, however, long desired to know your opinion in relation to other subjects connected with the settlement of that country, and therefore request your answers to the following propositions:—

First.—Whether it would be of any service to this city, if the said country arrived at a flourishing condition, and wherein those advantages would consist and be continued.

1. **burgher:** A town dweller.

Secondly.—If there should be a great increase of population and riches in the country, whether the land presents situations for defence against an enemy, or robbers, by the construction of fortifications?

Thirdly.—Whether the country presents proper situations for commerce and at what places, and in what articles we could trade to advantage; and, in short, please to state the subjects in connection and solve the same according to your own reflections?

New-Netherlander. Although I am not as well informed on the subjects of inquiry as I would wish to be, still I will endeavour to answer your propositions. And first:—whether it would be of service to this city, if New-Netherlands were flourishing? I answer, yes—for the following reasons—or to come closer to your question, the advantages which this city may derive from that country are as follow:—

First.—If difficulties should arise with Spain, (which God forbid!) there then is no place in the world better situated, from which to strike at the heart and vitals of that nation, than from the New-Netherlands, where we have all things together, such as provisions, ship-timber, plank, knees, masts, &c, that are necessary to equip our ships, in abundance. Whenever we desire to improve those advantages, we can do so without molestation.

Secondly.—If it should happen that iron, timber, ashes, grain, and other articles which we now receive from the east, should fall short, the deficiencies can be supplied from the New-Netherlands in abundance, if we encourage and advance the settlement of the country, without which it is worth nothing.

Thirdly.—By so doing we shall always have a free and unobstructed commerce to and fro, and enjoy a free and profitable trade with the Lords' colony,² from and to their own country, which in time will increase so much as now is deemed incredible. We see how much the trade has advanced in two or three years since we have encouraged the settlement of the country, and by going on from year to year, the gain will advance proportionally. But more of this upon the third question.

Fourthly.—By pursuing this course and encouraging the population of the country, we could derive formidable assistance from the same in men and means in times of need, which causes all republics to be respected by those who envy their prosperity.

Fifthly.—And as we well know that this country is visited by many people who seek employment, and who always found business; but since the peace,³ there is not much employment, and there are many persons injuriously idle—hence it certainly appears, that it would be of service to the country to settle another Netherland with the excess of our population, which can be easily done, as a sheet-anchor and support to the state. By this I consider your first question answered.

2. **Lords' colony:** Spain.

3. **the peace:** The Peace of Westphalia, a series of peace treaties signed in 1648 by the major powers of continental Europe.

Patriot. In common I observe some reasons advanced by you; but I have frequently heard persons of understanding say that Spain need not thank herself for her outlandish colonies, because they attract so many persons from home as frequently to create internal troubles and injury, and leave dwellings vacant and neglected. Now we know well, that the most important subjects require most attention—the shirt before the coat. Please to solve me this difficulty.

New-Netherlander. As for Spain, it is certain that without her outlandish colonies, she would not be as powerful as she is. This is a round O. Still, that her colonies withdraw her population, by which it may follow that many of the poor places in Spain are left uncultivated, all this may be true. But between the advantages of Spain and the United Netherlands this difference is so great that all the reasons which are *contra* there are *pro* here. It would be tedious to enter into detailed reasoning on the subject. To be brief, we consider the countries which lay contiguous to Spain, as Italy, France, and Portugal, as good as Spain itself, where there is abundant employment for vigilant native citizens, who are more frequently consumed and destroyed by wars than with us; but here, around the Netherlands, in Eastland, Germany, Westphalia, Bergland, Walland, &c, from which the people came in numbers to seek employment, and gain a living, as they should do, otherwise this emigration would cease, and the reputation of our country be injured—we could spare from the Netherlands thousands from year to year, and send them abroad without injury; and if ever there should happen to be any defect in our population, this would be supplied from the neighbouring countries. At a word, we could use those people and make them Netherlanders. Our neighbours must put up with it, and the people who now go to the New-Netherlands are not lost or destroyed, but are as if they were placed at interest, for we know how fast the population increases.

Patriot. Do you then conclude that the Netherlands are better than the eastern countries of Germany, &c. are?

New-Netherlander. We evidently have not intended to advance this, but when that question occurs, it will solve itself. But that, in the provinces of this city, there are at present (by the goodness of God) more prosperous merchants, manufacturers, mechanics and traders, than in the countries mentioned, is certain; the Hanse towns not excepted—where the bait is, there the eagles gather. The habits of the Netherlanders are as favourable to strangers as to native citizens. Thus they are induced to come to us, particularly craftsmen of every profession, who can always find advantageous employment, and in time, by conforming to our customs, become as citizens. Hence I conclude that out of this country we can send as many colonial settlers as Spain can, and one-half more, without missing any man out from the Netherlands. We could increase our strength by so doing; for they who are colonists in the New-Netherlands become Netherlanders as well as they do who become burghers here, and remain devoted to us. . . .

Patriot. Not so certain and satisfactory as you suppose. For I consider that to be a country which we have found, which is easy of access by sea and by land, open and unsupplied, or unfurnished with any considerable fortifications. The English and the Indians are strong and numerous around it. The Portuguese and

other pirates can easily invade the place on the seaboard, in a short time; for it is easy of access, and near the ocean, and what is more, you well know that our nation is particularly attached to commerce. This I understand to be their principal object. They are industrious as merchants; but to the security of the country they pay but little attention; they trust to the militia, who are few in numbers. In fact I see great danger there, for if we took property to that country, or gained property therein, we are still insecure in our possessions. . . .

New-Netherlander. As for the native Indians they need not be feared. They may terrify a stranger or a new comer. Read the History of the New-Netherlands, under the title of their Wars, you will find no organized regiments, companies, or regular military force, they are impatient under restraint, and cannot effect much. The last war we had with them, when we were not half as strong as we now are, they remember so well that they will not readily begin again. When we speak of the beginning of the troubles with them, there was little fault on their side; still it is done and past. But respecting the English, that subject deserves deep reflection, and presents difficulties and dangers, and I assure you that we of the New-Netherlands are not so proud as to be easily enticed, nor do we desire to get into difficulties or war with those of Virginia or of New-England.

Patriot. Get into quarrels, man! we would anxiously desire to avoid the same. But you can no longer have rest or peace, unless your neighbours agree with you in the same opinion.

New-Netherlander. . . . The Virginians can do nothing unless they come by sea. Their account is answered already. A land march presents insurmountable difficulties. The people of New-England are much stronger than we are; but that it will suit them better than it will us to enter into unnecessary disputes, is a matter I do not profess to know, seeing they possess a country wherein commerce must prosper, which they cannot pursue to advantage southward of Cape Cod without passing our channel within Long Island. Again, they lie open along the coast above one hundred miles, without forts, soldiers, or armaments for their security. Their planters and inhabitants are trained for defence against the Indians, for which they are sufficient; and if we suffer any affront from them, they must know that we, with few men, and less than we can spare in New-Netherlands for the purpose, in small parties, can ransack their whole country, seeing they lie widely dispersed in small defenceless villages contiguous to the woods, which may be surprised and destroyed by night, and the parties again retire in safety through the woods; so that I do not fear them much. Nor would they trouble us without an express command of Parliament, which will not be readily given, as in so doing open war with England would follow, which they desire as little here as we do there. You may not incline to believe that the people of New-England are not madmen. Can you discern that it is not their interest to give offence, or to war against us? Not that I ascribe all this to their good will; but their interest and advantage bind them to peace. Danger and difficulties lie in a contrary course.

As for the Portuguese and pirates spoken of, there is little to be feared from them. The difficulties already stated are a protection against such invaders. But admit that a pirate entered with a sloop in disguise—what would it amount to?

The place would be his grave before he could do any injury. Without an army no danger need be apprehended.

Our national character is well known. They delight in commerce. It is apparent in their habits. But mark, sir, the difference between national governments. Where is the government on earth which is inclined to do more by art and money, to fortify and secure their country than the Netherlanders are? There are no people under the sun as liberal for such purposes as our nation. Still it must be well financiered. . . .

Patriot. Since now, though not willingly, I admit that the dangers are not so great as was supposed by me, we will therefore drop that subject, and speak of the commerce; and tell me, at once, how that is to be supported in time by the population? . . .

New-Netherlander. . . . The settlers who now come to the country raise their own provisions in the second year, and in the third year they have a surplus, which, they exchange for wares and tobacco. They who can import articles, find many kinds of peltries, such as beaver skins, otters, bears, elk and deer skins, &c., as may be seen in the History of the country. The planting of vineyards is progressing, and in time will be of importance. So also are the outland fisheries. If a hundred ship loads are required, the fish are there during the whole winter. Train oil⁴ can be made at the South bays, where whales are plenty. . . .

The country is well calculated and possesses the necessaries for a profitable trade. First, it is a fine fruitful country. Secondly, it has fine navigable rivers extending far inland, by which the productions of the country can be brought to places of traffic. The Indians, without our labour or trouble, bring to us their fur trade, worth tons of gold, which may be increased, and is like goods found. To which may be added its grain and provision trade, which we proudly enjoy. . . .

The country is so convenient to the sea, that its value is enhanced by its situation. On the northeast, within four or five days sail, lay the valuable fishing banks. . . .

Canada and New-England will bring a profitable inland trade. On the southwest we have Virginia, which affords us a profitable tobacco trade with the Floridas, the Bahamas, and the other continent and West India islands, upon which reliance may be made.

Patriot. But by the treaty of peace those ports and harbours are shut against us on every side. You cannot expect business in such places. . . .

New-Netherlander. In New-Netherlands we have good courage, that when we have a more powerful population, we will be able to drive on a profitable trade by commissions or otherwise to those places. We have the means, and they cannot easily hinder us. The island of Guraloa [Curacoa] belongs to New-Netherlands and lies within eight miles of Carthagena, on the main land, and in sight of the same. In addition to this, we have the advantageous trade of the Carribee Islands, which will increase as our power increases. Hence we have nothing to fear, although timid persons may have heavy minds about us, and say, after we have produced many articles, where will you shift and vend the same? Lastly, what

4. **train oil:** Oil made from whale blubber.

will hinder the New-Netherlanders? Can they not visit France, Spain, Portugal, and the whole Mediterranean, as well from thence as from this country, when they have men and means? which two things then unfailing population will produce, if no more emigrate to the country. In such a case their own increase would in time be sufficient. The land, in process of time, will cover those advantages.

Patriot. I will readily tell you what will obstruct and place hinderances in the way—the distance from those places; for if you have not the articles necessary for negotiation, then you cannot send them and exchange for consumption, as we can from this country.

New-Netherlander. It is true, sir, we provide now too far ahead, but the distance cannot support your positions; for we can from thence sail with one wind and come through a free and open sea, without the danger of shoals or enemies, and navigate the whole outer coast of Europe from Ireland to the Straits, without uncommon hinderances, in four weeks or less. Hence then is little difference—what you gain in the one, you lose in the other.

In conclusion, a country like the New-Netherlands, possessing such advantages for commerce, and that of and within itself, and abounding with articles for commerce beyond its own wants, which it can spare—when attention is paid to the subject and the same be properly directed, will it not prosper? Judge for yourself . . .

Patriot. Well, sir, I wish that the Lord our God may grant you a prosperous voyage, and bless you with his special favour, and those who dwell in the New-Netherlands, in time and forever, to the furthering and magnifying of his Holy Name and Glory. Amen.

VISUAL PORTFOLIO

New World Images

Native Americans did not consider themselves collectively as one group of people or as a single nation before their encounter with Europeans and had no common term for themselves. Upon discovering the need to adopt a common name to differentiate themselves from the new strangers in their midst, Native Americans may have had little choice but to choose one that the whites had applied to them. In the end both sides adopted the word *Indian*, based on Christopher Columbus's geographical error in supposing he had arrived in Asia rather than in a new world.

The next most common name used by Europeans was much less attractive. Medieval legend had depicted wild club-swinging men of the forest as hairy, naked links between humans and animals. Named in Latin *silvaticus*, "men of the woods," they became *sauvage* in French and *salvage* in English, a word that finally turned into *savage*.

These and other names bestowed on Native Americans by whites, such as *wild-men* and *barbarian*, reflected a belief among Europeans that Indians were essentially their opposites. Defined as "the other," Indians were viewed as heathens who performed human sacrifices and were cannibals. They were seen as dirty, warlike, superstitious, sexually promiscuous, and brutal to their captives and to their women. Evils observed anywhere among Indians, as well as evils not observed but known to be practiced, such as Aztec human sacrifice, were generalized to all Indians.

At the same time, Europeans, troubled by what they regarded as the decadence of their own society, recognized positive traits in the Indians that Europeans lacked. To many Europeans, especially those who never migrated to the New World, Indians seemed direct, innocent, hospitable, courteous, handsome, and courageous. Their independence, proud bearing, and stamina suggested a nobility that Europeans seemed to be losing. From this image came the composite ideal of the "noble savage."

The first attempt by a European to depict the domestic lives of Native Americans can be seen in Figure 1, an anonymous German woodcut published around 1505 and based on explorer and geographer Amerigo Vespucci's account of his voyages between 1497 and 1504 to the New World. The inscription describes natives as "naked, handsome, brown, well shaped in body; . . . No one has anything, but all things are in common. And the men have as wives those who please them, be they mothers, sisters or friends. . . . They also fight with each other; and they eat each other. . . . They become a hundred and fifty years old and have no government."



Figure 1. Unknown German artist, “First European Attempt to Depict the Domestic Life of Native Americans,” ca. 1505.



Figure 2. Unknown Native American artist, drawing of Cortés and Malinche, ca. 1540.



Figure 3. English engraving of John White's drawing "The Manner of Their Fishing," 1585.

Not all images of the time presented the Europeans and Native Americans as such opposites. Figure 2 shows a drawing of Cortés and his longtime lover and adviser, Malinche (Doña Marina). Malinche was born and raised an Aztec but was sold to the Maya as a slave and then passed on to another ethnic group in Tabasco, south of the Aztec empire. By the time Cortés arrived on the continent, Malinche spoke many local languages and found that she fit in with the Spanish as well as with any native group. This picture by an indigenous artist from around 1540 suggests a degree of understanding between Europeans and natives that is lacking in many of the more stereotypical portraits of "barbarians" and "noble savages" by European artists, both earlier and later.

Figure 3 shows an engraving made from a drawing by John White, who from 1585 to 1586 lived on Roanoke Island (off the coast of present-day North Carolina), part of the first English colony in North America. White was commissioned to illustrate the first written account of that colony. Thomas Hariot's pamphlet, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, published together with engravings of White's images in 1588, was "directed to the investors, farmers, and well-wishers of the project of colonizing and planting there" and emphasized the region's economic possibilities. The caption to the engraving reads in part:

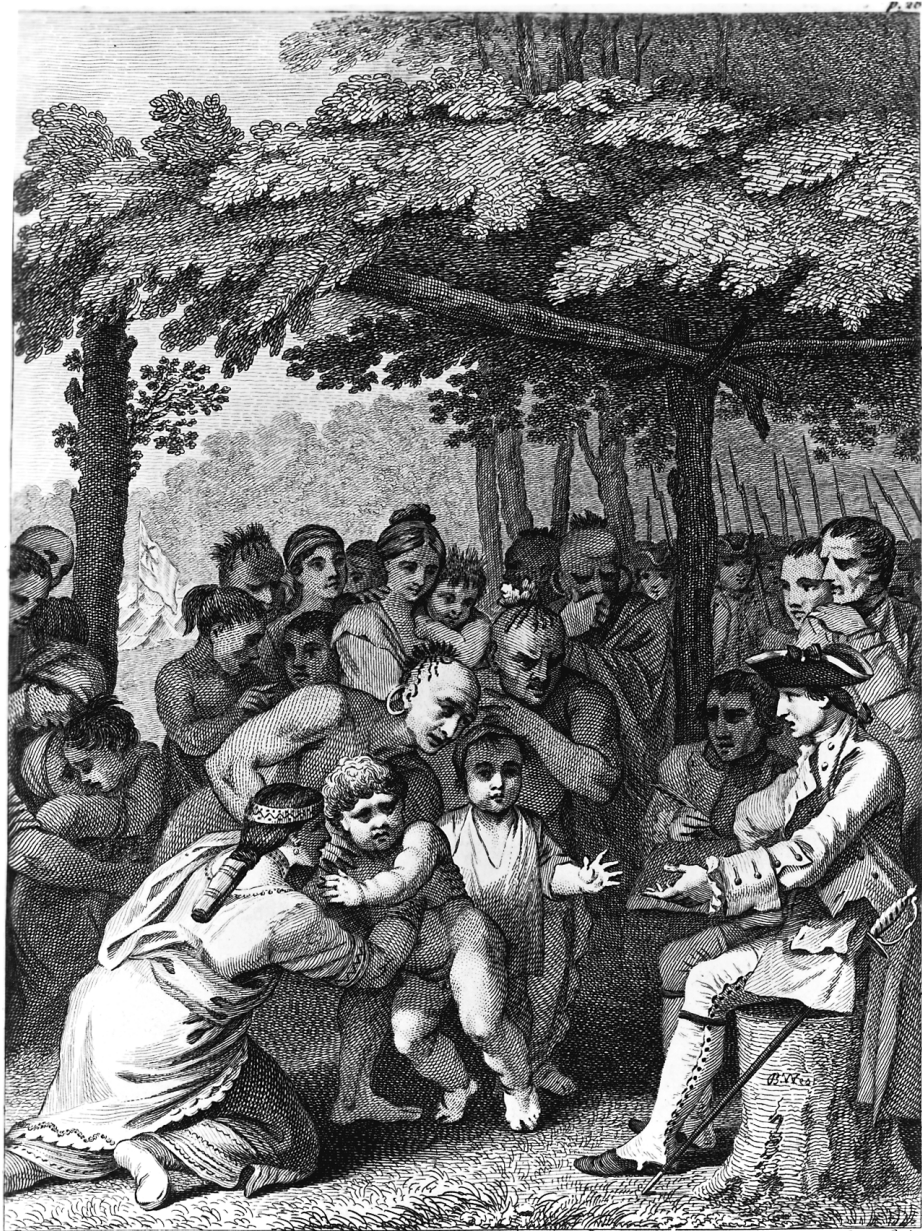


Figure 4. Unknown French artist, "Huron Woman," 1664.

It is a pleasing picture to see these people wading and sailing in their shallow rivers. They are untroubled by the desire to pile up riches for their children, and live in perfect contentment with their present state, in friendship with each other, sharing all those things with which God has so bountifully provided them. Yet they do not render Him the thanks which His providence deserves, for they are savage and have no knowledge [of Christianity].

In which readings can you find images of Indians most like that of the German woodcut? In which readings can you find images of Indians similar to White's drawing?

Figure 4 is another domestic scene of Indian life, this time from a French source, François de Creux's *Historia Canadensis*, published in 1664. How does it differ from the way in which Figure 1 depicts the Indians? Note that both figures in this image are Indian women. Are Indian men described in different terms from Indian women in the various readings?



B. West inv. Carot sculp.
The Indians delivering up the English Captives to Colonel Bouquet; near his Camp at the Forks of Muskingum in North America in Nov. 1764.

Figure 5. Unknown European artist, "Return of English Captives during a Conference between Colonel Henry Bouquet and Indians on the Muskingum River," 1764.

Figure 5 depicts a conference between Colonel Henry Bouquet and some of the Indians he defeated at the Battle of Bushy Run in 1763. Many tribes in the Ohio Valley, led by Pontiac, a chief of the Ottawas, rose up against the British in 1763, laying waste to white settlements in the valley. The engraving's central focus is the return of white captives taken during these raids. The theme of whites, and especially white women, captured by Indians greatly fascinated the colonists and their European counterparts, and captivity narratives were best sellers on both sides of the Atlantic.

FOR CRITICAL THINKING

1. What perceptions of the New World inhabitants do these images present? How accurate are they? How might Europeans have reacted to these images?
2. Why do you think White's depiction of the Indians in Figure 3 is so different from that shown in Figure 1?
3. Figure 2 was drawn by an unknown indigenous artist around 1540. What does this portrayal of Malinche and Cortés say about the artist's view of the couple's relationship?
4. How might the absence of men in Figure 4 have affected the European view of the character of Indians?
5. What attitude toward the Indians and what view of Indian–white relations are suggested by Figure 5?

