

RED ALBION: GENOCIDE AND ENGLISH COLONIALISM, 1622-1646

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. NEW WORLD VISIONS	13
Visions of Empire	14
Visions of Power	33
Visions of Ruin	41
III. THE VIRGIN COUNTRY OF TSENACOMMACAH	51
The Birth of Virginia	52
Frontier Power and the Logic of Elimination	70
The Death of Tsenacommahah	93
IV. SAINTS AND DESTROYERS	100
Regeneration	102
Crisis	115
Holocaust	134
V. CONCLUSION	147
BIBLIOGRAPHY	153

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Demons and death then I sing,
 Put in all, aye all will I, sword-shaped pennant for war,
 And a pleasure new and ecstatic, and the prattled yearning of
 children,
 Blent with the sounds of the peaceful land and the liquid wash
 of the sea,

 The Continent, devoting the whole identity without reserving an
 atom,
 Pour in! whelm that which asks, which sings, with all and the
 yield of all,
 Fusing and holding, claiming, devouring the whole,
 No more with tender lip, nor musical labial sound,
 But out of the night emerging for good, our voice persuasive no
 more,
 Croaking like crows here in the wind.

—Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

In 1609 Richard Crakanthorpe stood at Paul's Cross in London and delivered a sermon to promote the Jamestown colony in Virginia. He told his listeners that they should embrace the noble enterprise of settling the new continent, a land he believed to be almost as large as England itself. Its fruitful soils and bountiful commodities could supply all the wants of the nation, he promised, but the real mission was not for worldly

gain. He told the gathered crowd that they should support colonization as a quest for renewal through the creation of a new society in America. “[W]hat glory!” he exclaimed, “What honour to our Sovereign! What comfort to those subjects who shall be [the] means of furthering so happy a work... to see a New Britain in another world.”¹ In his breathless enthusiasm, Crakanthorpe encapsulated a vision shared by many of his compatriots. They hoped to see the fledgling settlements in Virginia become the seed of an entirely new nation modeled on England.

Crakanthorpe, like many promoters of colonization before and after him, believed that their new society could be built peacefully. The English, said Richard Hakluyt, had no desire to become blood-drenched conquistadors building an empire with fire and naked steel.² Instead, they planned to exploit the resources of a bountiful land and reap the harvests of its rich soils. In recompense they would offer the native peoples of those lands the blessings of civilization and Christianity. Colonization was a mutually beneficial arrangement, wrote Robert Johnson, that would work to the Indians’ “inestimable gain.”³ Yet the realities of English settlement in America did not fit this hopeful prediction. Instead of wealthy colonists uplifting their Indian neighbors, Anglo-

¹ Richard Crakanthorpe, “A Sermon . . . preached at Paules Cross . . .” March 14, 1608/9, in *The Genesis of the United States*, ed. Alexander Brown, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1890), 1:256.

² Richard Hakluyt, “Discourse of Western Planting,” 1584, in *The Original Writings and Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts*, ed. E.G.R. Taylor, 2 vols., Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, 2nd ser., no. 76-77 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1935), 2:257-65.

³ R[obert] J[ohnson], “Nova Britannia: Offering Most Excellent fruites by Planting in Virginia,” in *Tracts and Other Papers Relating Principally to the Origin, Settlement, and Progress of the Colonies in North America: From the Discovery of the Country to the Year 1776*, ed. Peter Force, 4 vols. (New York: Murray Printing Company, 1947), vol. 1, doc. 6, p. 13.

Indian relations in the early seventeenth century often slid into a spiral of chronic antagonism, frontier skirmishes, and spasmodic outbreaks of internecine warfare.

In fact, combat in the New World possessed an exceptional brutality that shocked Europeans and Indians alike. Armed conflict in the borderlands often escalated to levels of violence that far outstripped the conventions of Algonquian warfare, exceeding even the carnage of European battlefields. It was a way of war characterized by routine atrocity, deliberate massacre, and the intentional targeting of non-combatants, resulting in levels of destruction that more than one scholar has characterized as “total war.”⁴ English militias relied on strategies designed to destroy their enemy’s means of subsistence, depriving them of the resources essential for survival. The unambiguous purpose of these strategies was to starve their enemies into submission or flight. On more than one occasion, colonial authorities explicitly defined Indian populations as enemies who should be killed on sight. By conflating soldier and civilian into a single enemy, they effectively classified non-combatants as legitimate targets and carried out policies in which the whole population became the target of large-scale military action. These policies resulted in the mass killing of Native American non-combatants, the

⁴ See, for example, J. Frederick Fausz, “The Powhatan Uprising of 1622: A Historical Study of Ethnocentrism and Cultural Conflict” (Ph.D. Diss., College of William and Mary, 1977), 369; John E. Ferling, *A Wilderness of Miseries: War and Warriors in Early America* (Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 1980), 42; Adam J. Hirsch, “The Collision of Military Cultures in Seventeenth-Century New England,” *Journal of American History* 74, no. 4 (March 1988): 1204; Alden T. Vaughan, “‘Expulsion of the Salvages’: English Policy and the Virginia Massacre of 1622,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 35, no. 1 (January 1978): 77; Patrick M. Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics Among the New England Indians* (Lanham, Md.: Madison Books, 1991), 75. On the characteristics of early American warfare, see John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-10, 21-43.

expulsion of individual tribes from contested territory, and genocides perpetrated against entire tribes.

This thesis explores the dynamics of extreme violence during two conflicts in the early years of English colonization. The Second and Third Anglo-Powhatan Wars in Virginia, between 1622 and 1646, began with a massive assault on English colonists by the Powhatan chiefdom. More than three hundred settlers died during the Jamestown massacre, and hundreds more perished during the subsequent siege. The survivors rallied and mounted a merciless offensive, aiming to destroy the Powhatans' food supplies and drive them beyond the borders of Virginian territory. During the Pequot War in New England, from 1636 to 1637, the Puritans responded to small provocations with overwhelming force. In the Mystic massacre, Puritan forces killed over four hundred Pequots by barricading the village, burning it to the ground, and slaughtering all those who tried to flee the flames. Though the surviving Pequots fled their territory, the Puritans carried out a sustained campaign that included summary executions, bounties on Pequot body parts, the enslavement of captives, and the legal dissolution of the Pequot tribe.

There is little need to revisit the specific causes and consequences of these conflicts, which historians have examined in great detail.⁵ Rather, this study seeks to

⁵ The historiography on these subjects is substantial; the following are only the most important studies that I have consulted in the preparation of this thesis. On the Pequot War, see Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996); Alfred A. Cave, "Who Killed John Stone?: A Note on the Origins of the Pequot War," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 49, no. 3 (July 1992): 509-521; Laurence M. Hauptman, "The Pequot War and Its Legacies," in *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation*, ed. Laurence M. Hauptman and James D. Wherry (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990); Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 177-227; Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England*,

explain why the benevolent intentions of colonization articulated by English writers consistently deteriorated into armed conflict, and to elucidate the reasons that Anglo-Indian wars repeatedly escalated to levels of staggering intensity. This requires two complementary strands of analysis. First, this study explores the large-scale structural forces that drove the English colonial project and created opportunities for conflict with Native Americans. Second, it describes the role of subtle intellectual and psychological forces in the English worldview that encouraged colonists to resort to violence in response to Indian resistance. These forces converged with the flows of human power along the contested frontier between Native American societies and English colonies. At the intersection, a discourse of conflict emerged that propelled Anglo-Indian violence to extraordinary levels, leading, *in extremis*, to genocide.

In the twenty-first century, genocide is a crime under international law and is therefore as much a juridical standard for criminal prosecution as a tool for academic investigation. The needs of human rights lawyers seeking to prevent and punish genocide, however, do not always agree with the needs of scholars trying to refine useful tools for conceptual analysis. Because of this basic divergence, it can be notoriously difficult for scholars to find common ground on what constitutes genocide and what does not. Unfortunately, this state of affairs often leads to an academic discourse that is mired

1500-1643 (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 203-39; Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1629-1675*, 3rd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 122-54; Vaughan, "Pequots and Puritans: The Causes of the War of 1637," in *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 177-99. On the Anglo-Powhatan Wars, J. Frederick Fausz has conducted the most comprehensive study; see Fausz, "Powhatan Uprising"; but see also William S. Powell, "Aftermath of the Massacre: The First Indian War, 1622-1632," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 66, no. 1 (January 1958): 44-75; William L. Shea, "Virginia at War, 1644-1646," *Military Affairs* 41, no. 3 (October 1977): 142-147; Vaughan, "'Expulsion of the Salvages,'" 57-84.

in definitional dilemmas.⁶ As the genocide scholar Martin Shaw writes, “We need to remember that classification is the beginning, not the end, of analysis.”⁷ The excessive focus on *whether* a particular conflict was genocidal should not obscure the more important question of *why* extreme violence occurred, whether it is classified as genocide or not.⁸

This paper treats genocide as one extreme on a continuum of violence, loosely defined as the perpetration of mass violence against unarmed non-combatants because of their membership in a particular collective. The word “genocide” is used only in circumstances when perpetrators displayed an ideological commitment to the destruction of their target group.⁹ By this standard, the Pequots were the victims of genocide, but the

⁶ For useful overviews of the debate over the definition of genocide, see A. Dirk Moses, “Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the ‘Racial Century’: Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust,” in *Colonialism and Genocide*, ed. A. Dirk Moses and Dan Stone (London and New York: Routledge, 2007): 148-180; Christopher Powell, “What Do Genocides Kill? A Relational Conception of Genocide,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 9, no. 4 (December 2007): 527-547; Scott Straus, “Contested Meanings and Conflicting Imperatives: A Conceptual Analysis of Genocide,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 3, no. 3 (2001): 349-375.

⁷ Martin Shaw, *What is Genocide?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 13.

⁸ I omit several works of relevant scholarship from the historiographical discussion below for just this reason. Paul Bartrop reviews well-known evidence and concludes that the Anglo-Powhatan Wars should not be considered genocide, and Steven Katz performs the same operation for the Pequot War. See Paul R. Bartrop, “The Powhatans of Virginia and the English Invasion of America: Destruction Without Genocide,” in *Genocide Perspectives I: Essays in Comparative Genocide*, ed. Colin Tatz (Sydney: Centre for Comparative Genocide Studies, 1997): 66-108; Steven T. Katz, “The Pequot War Reconsidered,” *New England Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (June 1991): 206-224; see also Michael Freeman’s critique of Katz’s article and Katz’s rebuttal: Freeman, “Puritans and Pequots: The Question of Genocide,” *New England Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (June 1995): 278-293; Katz, “Pequots and the Question of Genocide: A Reply to Michael Freeman,” *New England Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (December 1995): 641-649. Aside from the negative determination on genocide, these studies shed little light on the dynamics of extreme violence during these conflicts.

⁹ This formulation is similar to that of several scholars who emphasize the conflation of soldier and civilian into a single enemy as a defining characteristic of genocide. See A. Dirk Moses, “Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History,” in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), 26; Jacques Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and*

Powhatans were not. Reasonable scholars can and will disagree with this formulation. For the purposes of this study, however, categorizing a particular instance of Anglo-Indian violence is less important than analyzing the connection between colonialism and extreme violence in early America. The fates of both the Powhatans and Pequots were part of a larger pattern.

Though genocide is often assumed to be a modern phenomenon, a wave of revisionist scholarship in recent decades has connected mass killing to the colonization of the Americas. Francis Jennings spurred much of this work with *The Invasion of America*, in which he asserts that English colonization included a premeditated and sustained commitment to conquest and the dispossession of Native Americans.¹⁰ Richard Drinnon builds on Jennings' basic argument by emphasizing racism as the prime cause of exterminatory warfare. In *Facing West*, he explains that English aggression was motivated principally by "Indian-hating," an ideology that included the belief that "Indians were truly animals that could be killed or enslaved at will."¹¹ According to Drinnon, the string of massacres and atrocities that English colonists inflicted on Native Americans was the outgrowth of racial hatred during an unrelenting military incursion.

Genocide, trans. Cynthia Schoch (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 134-46; Shaw, *What is Genocide?*, 111-17. It should be noted that these scholars do not necessarily share my standard for an ideological commitment to the target group's destruction. On the conceptualization of genocide on a continuum of violence, see Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, 325.

¹⁰ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, vii. Jennings's thesis can only be sustained through a selective reading of evidence and ultimately a resort to a form of conspiracy theory. He dismisses any sources suggesting less sinister intentions on the part of the colonists as "cant," and claims that their unwavering commitment to conquest was disguised by "the pervasive calculated deception of the official records" (p. ix).

¹¹ Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 50.

Subsequent scholars have embroidered the conquest thesis, arguing that English colonists came to North America with the calculated intention to exterminate Native Americans. David Stannard makes this argument in *American Holocaust*. “The destruction of the Indians of the Americas was,” he writes, “far and away, the most massive act of genocide in the history of the world.”¹² Ward Churchill similarly writes, in *A Little Matter of Genocide*, that the history of the Americas since European contact has been a single sustained campaign of genocidal destruction, “an experience unparalleled in its scope, magnitude, and duration.”¹³ Unfortunately, the polemical tone of these authors leads them to assert arguments based more on moral outrage than on a serious examination of the evidence. On the causes of the Pequot War, for example, Stannard states flatly, “The colonists simply wanted to kill Indians.”¹⁴ This rather unhelpful conclusion sheds little light on the causes of mass violence. Churchill frankly admits that he is “not prompted by primarily academic concerns (as in ‘The Quest for Truth’)” and that his “goals are unequivocally political.” Preemptively responding to critics, he claims that “denial in any form is anathema,” and implies that one cannot disagree with his basic thesis without sinking to the morally reprehensible level of Holocaust deniers.¹⁵

¹² David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: Columbus and the Conquest of the New World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), x.

¹³ Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492 to the Present* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997), 250.

¹⁴ Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 112.

¹⁵ Churchill, *Little Matter of Genocide*, 11, 53.

Alfred Cave presents a more balanced argument and concludes that the events of the Pequot War constitute genocide. He judiciously limits the application of this term specifically to the Pequots, rejecting the position that European colonization represented a continuous act of genocide against all Native Americans. Fantasies about Indians wielding diabolical power, argues Cave, led the Puritans to dehumanize the Pequots. The colonists' hatred and fear thus led to the imaginary transformation of the Pequots into enemies fit for extermination. There are two shortcomings to this interpretation. First, Cave stresses that the Puritans specifically targeted the Pequots, but paradoxically explains that genocide resulted from an ideology of demonic savagery that they applied to all Indians. Second, he maintains that the causes of extreme violence against Native Americans can only be determined "by a case by case analysis."¹⁶ While clearly an appeal for responsible scholarship to replace inflammatory invective, this approach also prevents him from locating the genocide of the Pequots in a larger structure of Anglo-Indian violence.

Leaving aside the question of genocide, Ronald Dale Karr proposes an explanation for the violence of the Pequot War, which by any standard was exceptionally brutal and destructive. He argues that English conduct was fully consistent with the standards of European warfare in unconventional conflicts against infidels and rebels. By the time that hostilities erupted in 1636, he maintains, the Puritans considered the Pequot tribe to be a political tributary subordinate to English sovereignty. By resisting English power the Pequots marked themselves, in the English point of view, as

¹⁶ Alfred A. Cave, "The 1637 Pequot War and the Question of Native American Genocide," (paper presented at the Genocide Studies Seminar, Yale University, 2005), 10.

illegitimate enemies to whom the rules of war did not apply. Karr's legally based explanation sheds light on a significant aspect of Anglo-Indian conflict previously ignored by scholars. However, he admits the limitations of this model. Although military massacres were not unusual in European combat, Karr acknowledges that the sustained pursuit and summary execution of Pequots during the months that followed was a dramatic departure from normal practice. Moreover, Karr cannot explain why other conflicts in which Indian tribes allegedly rebelled against colonial authority did not reach the same heights of bloodshed.¹⁷

J. Frederick Fausz's subtle and compelling dissertation, "The Powhatan Uprising of 1622," is the only full-length study of the Anglo-Powhatan Wars. Fausz's comprehensive approach places these conflicts within the larger context of English imperialism, emphasizing that the colonial project fundamentally necessitated the destruction of Indian societies. He elucidates the ambivalent nature of this process by exploring the aspects of imperial ideology that encouraged coexistence through assimilation, as well as those that led to violence when the Powhatan Indians defended the integrity of their culture. Fausz's keystone for this dynamic is ethnocentrism, both English and Powhatan. When they came into contact, he argues, these two proud and powerful cultures inevitably clashed. While undoubtedly a relevant factor, ethnocentrism is ultimately too limited a concept to explain Anglo-Powhatan conflict. It creates a false equivalence between English and Powhatan worldviews regarding the nature and

¹⁷ Ronald Dale Karr, "'Why Should You Be So Furious?': The Violence of the Pequot War," *Journal of American History* 85, no. 3 (December 1998): 876-909. Karr's article is offered as a corrective to Adam Hirsch's earlier argument that the violence of the Pequot War was caused by cultural misunderstandings over the rules of military engagement; see Hirsch, "The Collision of Military Cultures," 1187-1212.

exercise of power. Moreover, his explanations for outbreaks of extreme violence rely on dubious psychological mechanisms. Fausz often accounts for the colonists' resort to atrocity and massacre as the result of frustrated desire, "peer pressure," and "mob frenzy." Though Fausz's analysis of war and culture in early Virginia is groundbreaking and important, these problems limit his contribution to an understanding of the deep roots of colonial violence.¹⁸

The problem with all of these explanations is that they are too static to explain the wide range of Anglo-Indian interactions. The radical arguments for Native American genocide appeal to an overly simple formulation of Indian-hating to explain European hostility. This position cannot account for the numerous examples of peaceful intercultural contact, including repeated attempts by English missionaries to find a way to incorporate Native Americans into colonial society. Even the persuasive explanations put forth by Cave and Karr cannot help but treat the Pequot War as an aberration, rather than a single episode in a larger pattern of frontier violence. None of these explanations are able to capture the dynamism of Anglo-Indian relations. Neither can they explain the mechanism by which peaceful interaction shifted to extreme violence and then back to relatively peaceful coexistence, often within just a few years.

This thesis argues that the extreme levels of violence that characterized early Anglo-Indian conflict, up to and including genocide, were inextricably linked to the basic process of colonization. The new English society that colonizers planned to build could not inhabit the same space as the Native American societies that were already

¹⁸ Fausz, "Powhatan Uprising," 276.

there. The success of the colonial project was therefore predicated on the disappearance of indigenous peoples, a basic structural relationship that Patrick Wolfe calls the “logic of elimination.”¹⁹ The need to eliminate Native Americans virtually guaranteed conflict between Indians and colonists. Aspects of the English worldview led them to devalue Native American societies, beliefs, and practices, thereby intensifying violence during the resulting wars. In most cases these conflicts were self-limiting, and colonists ceased hostilities once they had achieved the elimination of Indians through territorial expulsion. However, extraordinary circumstances—when the colonists experienced a sense of overwhelming crisis—resulted in what A. Dirk Moses calls a “genocidal moment.”²⁰ The colonists then focused their sense of collective fear on a single target, unleashing the terrible violence within their worldview through a sustained commitment to the destruction of their enemy.

¹⁹ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 397-98.

²⁰ Moses first introduced the concept of the genocidal moment in “An Antipodean Genocide?: The Origins of the Genocidal Moment in the Colonization of Australia,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 2, no. 1 (March 2000): 89-106. He has subsequently refined and expanded this idea; see Moses, “Genocide and Settler Society in Australian History,” in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004): 3-48.

CHAPTER II

NEW WORLD VISIONS

When Indians and Englishmen met along the shores of the Atlantic, each trying to make sense of the other, the differences between them often took center stage. They acted according to different concepts of power and authority, obeyed different rules of economic exchange, and organized their societies in ways that were different in a thousand particulars. They worshipped different gods, and though they both believed in the wonders of an invisible world, they understood that realm in profoundly different ways. They organized the space around them, reshaping their environment to fit their needs and desires, so differently that they often baffled each other. There were many similarities between them as well, although these basic points of human kinship were often lost in the clash between cultures. On the most fundamental level, Native Americans and English colonists both carried the full weight of their own histories, with centuries of myths and legends and memories about who they were and where they had come from. These narratives about the past helped them to make sense of their environment, ordered their perceptions of the world around them, and allowed them to

find their place within it. Perhaps more importantly, such stories shaped the way that they imagined the future.

The meeting of Indian and English minds was thus a meeting of two different imaginative constructions of self, society, environment, and the larger universe. Both peoples hoped that they could preserve the essence of their identity and pass their legacy to future generations. Each sensed the promise and the perils of engaging with the other. And each possessed starkly different visions of the new world shaped by contact.¹

Visions of Empire

In the latter part of the sixteenth century the people of England began to awaken to the idea of empire. Though latecomers to the imperial stage, the English looked west to the lands of the New World and saw the makings of a rich future. Apostles of imperialism, such as the two Richard Hakluyts, articulated for their countrymen a comprehensive rationale for “planting,” as they referred to colonization projects. They argued that colonies would enlarge the royal domain, enrich the commonwealth through commerce, swell the ranks of the army and navy, help the nation defend its honor against imperial Spain, and bring glory to God through the spread of Protestant Christianity.² Writers often clearly phrased the call to empire in the stark language of finance,

¹ This concept of a broad cultural vision is largely inspired, in form if not in content, by Elliot West. See *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998).

² The most famous statement of the English imperial vision is Richard Hakluyt’s *Discourse of Western Planting* (1584); see *The Original Writings and Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts*, ed. E.G.R. Taylor, 2 vols., Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, 2nd ser., nos. 76-77 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1935), 2:211-326.

diplomacy, and war; but the budding movement across the Atlantic was also animated by more subtle currents that stirred dreams of extraordinary power and emotional resonance. Forging an empire brought material advantages, but it also evoked visions of revitalization and renewal. Samuel Purchas, the Hakluyts' intellectual successor, imagined colonization as a singular act of creation and called upon his compatriots "to plant another England in America."³ The idea of a land reshaped into a new Albion was as complex as it was single-minded and as ambiguous as it was powerful. It was, at heart, a vision of total transformation: a new creation built on the ruins of what came before it, a vision pregnant with the threat of violence.

While a comprehensive analysis of English colonial ideology is beyond the scope of this study, there were four aspects of their vision that increased the likelihood of conflict between colonists and Native Americans: stereotyped perceptions of Indians as an alien "other," exclusionary theories of land use and property rights, rigid concepts of political sovereignty in early modern law, and the continuity of extreme violence in English history and antiquity.⁴ These factors often influenced English colonists to

³ Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or, Purchas His Pilgrimes: Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others*, 20 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905), 19:266.

⁴ The four themes of violent ideologies that I explore here are similar to the themes that Ben Kiernan identifies as common to a variety of historical contexts. Kiernan's four themes are racism, a cult of antiquity, a fetish for cultivation, and an imperative for territorial expansion. See Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 22-33. For more comprehensive treatments of English colonial ideology, see J. Frederick Fausz, "The Powhatan Uprising of 1622: A Historical Study of Ethnocentrism and Cultural Conflict" (Ph.D. Diss., College of William and Mary, 1977), 120-216; Andrew Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America: An Intellectual History of English Colonisation, 1500-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France c. 1500-c.1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).

behave in ways that promoted Anglo-Indian violence, and tended to escalate those conflicts once they had begun.

The first factor was the English perception of Native Americans as profoundly ambiguous figures. In the English mind the Indian was a “savage,” a term that was not necessarily pejorative but denoted instead a bundle of ideas about the state of humanity prior to the development of civilization. The contours of savagism were based on the contraposition of English society with those of apparently less-developed peoples. In that sense, the savage was quintessentially “other.” Like a figure seen in an inverted mirror, the savage was defined by everything that the English were not, and lacked everything that the English possessed. The idea of the savage was an intellectual abstraction that naturally led to cultural misunderstandings when English colonists encountered actual Native American societies. It also led them to interpret those societies through a set of preconceived notions and rigid categories based on stereotypes of “uncivilized” peoples.⁵

One aspect of this archetype was the “innocent savage.” This savage was simple and ignorant but also gentle and good, a characterization consistent with the tendency of many writers to compare America with an earthly paradise. For example, Arthur Barlowe, one of the captains of one of the 1584 Roanoke expedition, called the Carolina coast “the most plentiful, sweete, fruitfull, and wholesome of all the world,” and

⁵ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 12-21, 27-28; Gary Nash, “The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 29, no. 2 (April 1972): 199-202; Bernard W. Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 1-6.

concluded that the “earth bringeth foorth all things in aboundance, as in the first creation.” It did not surprise him, then, to find that the Indians were “people most gentle, louing, and faithfull, void of all guile, and treason, and such as liued after the manner of the golden age.”⁶ Walter Raleigh similarly described Indians as a people who were ignorant of arts, letters, and philosophy, but were also free from evils like greed and the dark instinct to violence. Summarizing his impressions, he wrote that “The Indians for the most parte are a people very faythfull, humble, patient, peceable, simple without subtilty, mallice, quarrels, strife, rancor or desyer of reuengement, as meeke as lambs, as harmeles as children of 10 or 12 yeares.”⁷ At one extreme, then, the savage represented a prelapsarian virtue, like humanity before the expulsion from Eden.

Though this sort of Arcadian rhetoric made a lasting impression on the English mind, it was not as common as the closely connected portrayal of Indians as feral.⁸ In his pamphlet *Nova Britannia*, the chaplain Robert Johnson explained that Virginia was “inhabited with wild and sauage people, that liue and lie vp and downe in troupes like heards of Deare in a Forrest: they haue no law but nature, their apparell skinnes of beasts, but most goe naked.” Despite their rude ways, though, such people were merely ignorant and could be taught a better way. “[T]hey are generally very louing and gentle,”

⁶ David Beers Quinn, ed., “Arthur Barlowe’s Discourse of the First Voyage,” 1584-5, in *The Roanoke Voyages*, 2 vols., Works Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 2nd ser., nos. 104-105 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1952), 1:106, 108.

⁷ Walter Raleigh, *The Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana, with a Relation of the Great and Golden City of Manoa*. . . ed. Robert H. Schomburgk, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, no. 3 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1848), 150.

⁸ Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 4-8; Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility*, 63-71.

Johnson concluded, “and doe entertaine and relieue our people with great kindnesse: they are easy to be brought to good, and would fayne embrace a better condition.”⁹

Tractability was the defining trait of the “innocent savage.” Whether the English perceived American natives as edenic children or uncultured barbarians, they imagined the Indian as a blank slate: unsophisticated, docile, and willing to accept the imprint of the English vision for a new world.¹⁰

The stereotype of the innocent savage coexisted with a darker twin in whom the absence of civilization led, not to virtue, but to depravity. The “ignoble savage” represented sin incarnate, all the basest instincts of mankind shorn of the controls of religion and government.¹¹ Imagined as the antithesis of everything that defined English identity, such peoples flagrantly practiced all of the vices most abhorrent to the English mind. Daniel Waterhouse, secretary for the Virginia Company, catalogued the deficiencies of Native Americans, writing that they were “by nature sloathfull and idle, vitious, melancholy, slouenly, of bad conditions, lyers, of small memory, of no constancy or trust.”¹² The Reverend Alexander Whitaker similarly condemned their shameless immorality, charging that “They liue naked in bodie, as if their shame of their

⁹ R[obert] J[ohnson], “Nova Britannia: Offering Most Excellent fruites by Planting in Virginia,” in *Tracts and Other Papers Relating Principally to the Origin, Settlement, and Progress of the Colonies in North America: From the Discovery of the Country to the Year 1776*, ed. Peter Force, 4 vols. (New York: Murray Printing Company, 1947), vol. 1, doc. 6, p. 11.

¹⁰ Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 104-5.

¹¹ The phrase “ignoble savage” comes from Bernard Sheehan; see Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility*, 1-2.

¹² Edward Waterhouse, “A Declaration of the State of the Colony and . . . a Relation of the Barbarous Massacre,” 1622, in *The Records of the Virginia Company of London* (hereafter cited as *RVCL*), ed. Susan Myra Kingsbury, 4 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906-1935), 3:562.

sinne deserued no couering... they esteeme it a vertue to lie, deceiue and steale as their master the diuell teacheth them.”¹³ This sort of savage represented the peril—and the dark temptation—of a world without law or moral restraint.

Taken to an extreme, the ignoble savage became an archetype of atavistic horror: the bloodthirsty cannibal held in Satan’s thrall.¹⁴ In this guise, savages were natural killers, their hearts ruled by viciousness and brutality. Under the banners of evil gods they marched in unending warfare in the dusky forests, butchering and burning and torturing each other until the land lay in waste.¹⁵ “[T]hey are continually in warres,” reported Jamestown colonist George Percy, “and will eate their enemies when they kill them, or any stranger if they take them... they worship the Deuill for their God, and haue no other believe.”¹⁶ The worst such Indians were the priests, who goaded their people into blood sacrifices to dark powers. William Strachey, secretary of the Jamestown colony, called these priests “monsters” who “doe offer up unto the devill their owne childrene, and being hardened against all compassion, naturall and divine,

¹³ Alexander Whitaker, *Good Newes from Virginia*, reprint ed. (New York: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints), 24.

¹⁴ Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), 99-100; Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility*, 38-48. For the roots of this image in Spanish thought, see Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, 13-88; Pagden, *Fall of Natural Man*, 80-90.

¹⁵ Quinn, “Arthur Barlowe’s Discourse,” in *Roanoke Voyages*, 1:112-13; Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility*, 56-61.

¹⁶ Philip L. Barbour, ed., “George Percy’s Discourse,” 1608(?), in *The Jamestown Voyages Under the First Charter, 1606-1609*, 2 vols., Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, 2nd ser., nos. 136-137 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 1:130.

enforce their owne mothers to deliver them to the executioner with their owne hands.”¹⁷ Against such implacable evil, the English thought, there was no alternative to swift and merciless violence. John Smith related the belief among some Virginian colonists that colonization would be impossible “till their Priests and Ancients have their throats cut.” The irredeemable evil of the satanic savage justified their extermination.¹⁸

Of course, the perception of the savage as other, in both its stereotyped guises, was an imaginary construct that bore little or no resemblance to actual Native American societies. Rather than a realistic paradigm for understanding foreign cultures, the duality of savagism was an English abstraction designed to serve English needs. Viewed through such a lens, actual Native Americans could be seen differently depending on their reception to English actions. The innocent savage cried out for help, seeking the order of benevolent government and salvation from sin, while the ignoble savage was a monster who could be destroyed with impunity. Both of these mental constructions served the colonial project by legitimizing the extension of English power across the Atlantic.¹⁹

¹⁷ William Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia: Expressing the Cosmographie and Comodities of the Country, Together with the Manners and Customes of the People*, ed. Richard Henry Major, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, no. 6 (London, 1849), 88-89.

¹⁸ John Smith, “The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles . . .” 1624, in *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580-1631)*, ed. Philip L. Barbour, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 2:286; Strachey, *Historie of Travaile*, 87-89. See also the Virginia Company’s instructions to Sir Thomas Gates in Samuel M. Bemiss, ed., *The Three Charters of the Virginia Company of London*, Jamestown 350th Anniversary Historical Booklets, no. 4 (Williamsburg: The Virginia 350th Anniversary Celebration Corporation, 1957), 57-58.

¹⁹ Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility*, 3-5, 37; Nash, “Image of the Indian,” 206; Alden T. Vaughan, “Early English Paradigms for New World Natives,” in *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 53-54. For discussions of the “other” in psychology and its connection to mass violence, see Donald G. Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres, and Extreme Violence: Why “Normal” People Come to Commit Atrocities* (Westport, Conn.

English dismissal of Native American patterns of land use as illegitimate, the second factor that precipitated Anglo-Indian violence, expressed the dual image of savagism in concrete terms. Feudal concepts of communal rights and common ownership still governed concepts of land in early modern England. At the same time that the impetus for colonization gained momentum, however, these traditional ideas increasingly conflicted with emerging models of the marketplace that emphasized exclusive ownership of alienable property and the intensive cultivation of that bounded possession.²⁰ Many of the theorists for this proto-capitalistic model were the same men who promoted English imperialism, so it is unsurprising that they applied their theories to new and potential English colonies. Citing the biblical injunction to “bring forth the fruit and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it,” Samuel Purchas stated unequivocally that “The first and last thing therefore in this Virginian argument” over the right of Englishmen to colonize “is God; that is, whether we have Commission from him to plant, and whether the Plantation may bring glory to him.” He concluded that the Native Americans in Virginia, who “I can scarcely call inhabitants,” had failed to fulfill

and London: Praeger Security International, 2007), 108-11; Jacques Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide*, trans. Cynthia Schoch (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 22-51; Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 58-62.

²⁰ Jess Edwards, “Between ‘Plain Wilderness’ and ‘Goodly Corn Fields’: Representing Land Use in Early Virginia,” in *Envisioning an English Empire: Jamestown and the Making of the North Atlantic World*, ed. Robert Applebaum and John Wood Sweet (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 217-235.

God's commandment because there were "wild, and holdeth no settled possession in any parts."²¹

Transatlantic travelers confirmed Purchas's conclusions. The Algonquian tribes of the Atlantic coast exploited the resources of their homelands through a semi-nomadic combination of hunting, gathering, and shifting cultivation. They transformed the natural ecology in ways that any observer would have to acknowledge, with neatly surveyed villages occupied throughout much of the year, networks of fishing weirs along the coast, and planted fields of corn, beans, and squash. Nevertheless, this pattern of subsistence left large swathes of land apparently unused.²² William Strachey called this land "wast[e] and uninhabited growndes of their[s], amongst a world of which not one foote of a thousand doe they either use, or knowe howe to turne to any benefit."²³ English writers seized on this impression of "waste," as they generally referred to land not being maximally exploited, and argued that they had a right to settle on any uninhabited ground. Filtered through English preconceptions about Native American lifeways, this argument led to three conclusions: Indians inhabited the land but did not use it properly, Indian ownership extended only as far as their current occupancy, and

²¹ Genesis 1:28; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:218, 222-23. This and all subsequent biblical quotations are from the 1560 Geneva Bible, available at <http://www.thedcl.org/bible/gb/index.html> (accessed April 2, 2009).

²² William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, revised edition (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 24-53. The orderliness and sophistication of Indian settlements are clearly visible in the engravings accompanying Thomas Hariot's ethnographic description of the Indians of the Carolina coast. See Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (New York: J. Sabin and Sons, 1871), 51-52, 59-62, available at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/hariot/hariot.html> (accessed April 17, 2009).

²³ Strachey, *Historie of Travaile*, 19.

Europeans had the right to claim everything else.²⁴ Codified in a principle known as *terra nullius*, or “empty land,” English and other European thinkers thus developed a legal theory of property rights that in principle recognized native title to their own land, but in practice actually facilitated their dispossession.²⁵

Eager to differentiate themselves from the scandalous violence perpetrated by the Spanish conquistadors, English promoters of colonization generally accepted arguments that non-Christians, such as Indians, possessed legitimate rights of ownership.²⁶ They also argued that all humans had the natural right to “traficke,” which the landholder and colonization booster George Peckham described as the right to “lawfully travaile into those Countries and abide there,” and which “the Savages may not justly impugne and forbidde.” In the broadest sense, traffic included freedom of movement on land and sea, the right to proselytize among non-Christian populations, and unrestricted trade. Any group interfering with these rights, for example by perpetrating violence against missionaries or declining to engage in commerce, flouted basic human rights under natural law. “Then in such a case,” concluded Peckham, “I holde it no breache of equitye for the Christians to defende themselves, to pursue revenge with force, and to doo

²⁴ “True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia,” 1610, in Force, *Tracts*, vol. 3, doc. 1, p. 6; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:219-20, 222-223; Raleigh, *Discovery . . . of Guiana*, 141-42. See also Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land: Law and Power on the Frontier* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 15-16, 29-33.

²⁵ Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 76-80. See also Andrew Fitzmaurice, “Anticolonialism in Western Political Thought: The Colonial Origins of the Concept of Genocide,” in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), 62-64; L.C. Green and Olive P. Dickason, *The Law of Nations and the New World* (Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 1989), 233-36, 246.

²⁶ Andrew Fitzmaurice, “Moral Uncertainty in the Dispossession of Native Americans,” in *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550-1624*, ed. Peter C. Mancall (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 383-409.

whatsoever is necessary for attayning of theyr safety: For it is allowable by all Lawes in such distresses, to resist violence with violence.”²⁷ By impeding English trade or settlement projects, Indians invited retaliatory violence, which even in its most extreme manifestations was backed by the full force of legal and moral validation.

The third factor that increased the likelihood of violence in English colonial practice was a hierarchical concept of sovereignty combined with the legal sanction for extreme violence in early modern law. For the English, as for all European powers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the extent and exercise of sovereignty rested on a set of general propositions collectively known as the law of nations (*jus gentium*). The law of nations was based, in part, on the medieval concept of a just war (*jus ad bellum*), which defined the circumstances in which a Christian nation could rightfully go to war and specified the rightful conduct of such wars. Conquest, however, was never a just cause; the law of nations mandated that righteous warfare could only be waged in self-defense after an aggressive provocation. In theory, the law of nations required that armed forces obey a code of conduct that protected surrendering combatants and unarmed civilians. In practice, though, even when fighting each other European armies often

²⁷ G[eorge] P[eckham], “A true reporte of the late discoveries . . . of the Newfound Landes . . .” 1584, in *The Voyages and Colonising Enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert*, ed. David Beers Quinn, 2 vols., Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, 2nd ser., nos. 83-84 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1940), 2:450, 453; see also Richard Hakluyt, “Pamphlet for the Virginia Enterprise Ascribed to Richard Hakluyt, Lawyer,” 1584, in *Writings of the Hakluyts*, 2:342; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:222. The right to traffic builds on Salamanca theologian Francisco de Vitoria’s conclusion that the right of communication (*consortium hominum*) was a central tenet of natural law. See Pagden, *Fall of Natural Man*, 76-77.

ignored these restrictions, as the widespread atrocities of the Thirty Years' War demonstrated.²⁸

Rebellion was a particularly heinous violation of the law of nations because it threatened the foundations of the organized state. Because their armed resistance against a lawful sovereign was legally illegitimate, internal enemies such as rebels and traitors did not receive the protections extended to soldiers and civilians, even in theory. Moreover, warring armies could easily distinguish soldiers from civilians, but rebellious populations seldom put uniformed troops into the field. Insurrection was the work of an entire population, and European commanders often considered non-combatants legitimate military targets in their own right. When a just authority exercised sovereignty over a given territory and faced internal rebellion, European armies typically fought with unbridled ferocity.²⁹

In the hands of English colonizers, the concept of just war and the law of nations became a potent weapon of war rather than a measure of protection. They might have envisaged a new England in America, but they never doubted that the old England would rule it as an extension of the crown's authority. Thus they made particular efforts to bring Native American polities formally under English dominion and reduce the people to lawful subjects of the English monarch. In 1609, for example, Captain Christopher Newport convinced Wahunsenacawh, the Powhatan paramount chief, to become a vassal

²⁸ Ronald Dale Karr, "“Why Should You Be So Furious?”: The Violence of the Pequot War,” *Journal of American History* 85, no. 3 (December 1998): 876-909, 879-83. Stephen Neff notes that the devastation of the Thirty Years War proved to political philosophers that the existing rules of war were insufficient, and thus spurred the development of modern international law; see Stephen C. Neff, *War and the Law of Nations: A General History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 82.

²⁹ Karr, ““Why Should You Be So Furious?”” 883-88.

of King James I. Newport invested the Indian “king” with a crown and scepter, though the Powhatan leader rendered the ceremony farcical by refusing to kneel down and abase himself in the proper fashion. Though Wahunsenacawh almost certainly did not consider his coronation an act of submission, the English nevertheless considered him to have accepted his place in the hierarchy of feudal power. When Powhatan warriors attacked the Jamestown colonists later that year in reaction to English provocations, the colonists judged that Wahunsenacawh had breached the law of nations, committing treason against the crown by raising the standard of rebellion. In the eyes of the English, this act justified a virtually unlimited military response against the entire offending population.³⁰

Finally, historical precedents of extreme violence made a deep impression on English thinkers and increased the aggressive tendencies of colonial practice. The biblical conquest of Canaan, a familiar story to nearly everyone who lived in an intensely religious age, served as a particularly vivid example. The inhabitants of Canaan became the victims of a genocide that was not merely sanctioned but in fact ordained by God. In the book of Deuteronomy, God directed the Israelites to annihilate the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, with the injunction, “thou shalt saue no persone aliue, But shalt vtterly destroye them.”³¹ The great leader Joshua executed this commandment, starting with the city of Jericho. The Israelites

³⁰ “True Declaration,” in Force, *Tracts*, vol. 3, doc. 1, p. 6-7; Smith, “The Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia since their first beginning from England in the yeare of our Lord 1606, till this present 1612,” 1612, in *Complete Works*, 1:234-37, Smith, “Generall History,” in *Complete Works*, 2:181-84. On Wahunsenacawh’s interpretation of the coronation ceremony, see Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas Powhatan Opechancanough: Three Indian Lives Changed by Jamestown* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 112-14.

³¹ Deuteronomy 20:16-17.

“vtterly destroyed all that was in the citie, bothe man and woman, yong and olde, and oxe, and shepe, and asse, with the edge of the sworde.” Joshua devastated all of Canaan, even exceeding his mandate by massacring the populations of ten cities in addition to the nations divinely marked for destruction. In this manner, “Joshua smote all the hyl cou[n]treis, and the Southcountreis, and the valleis, and the hilsides, & all their Kings, & let none remaine, but vtterly destroyed euery soule, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded.”³² The Israelites had thus claimed their promised land through genocidal slaughter.

English colonizers did not, of course, march off to the New World with the confident intention of exterminating its inhabitants, and anyone claiming to have received a divine commandment to that effect would likely have been accused of heresy. Biblical precedents were significant less as models for colonization than as imaginative templates for mass violence. As a celebrated episode of God’s will in action, the utter destruction of the Canaanites provided a ready justification for genocide to anyone reaching for an evocative parallel. William Strachey, for example, cited Joshua’s war as an example of what came to those who resisted the truth of God’s word: “when strange and great nations would not submitt to the yoake of this knowledge of the everlasting God by faire entreaty, they were, *ferro et flammis* [with sword and flame], compelled

³² Joshua 6:21, 10:40. Joshua’s genocidal campaign “utterly destroyed” the cities Jericho, Ai, Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir; at Hazor his armies destroyed the city but halted their slaughter after killing all of the men. See Joshua 8:24-28, 10:8-40, 11:6-15.

thereunto.”³³ Biblical examples of mass killing thus easily conferred, by rhetorical sleight of hand, a kind of righteousness to brutal warfare in America.

English thinkers drew a more direct connection between colonialism and classical antiquity, characterizing their Atlantic enterprise as a modern version of the Roman imperium’s civilizing mission.³⁴ Though proud of their civilization, the English also believed that they had achieved this state after Rome’s influence uplifted their barbarous ancestors. Thomas Hariot did much to popularize this belief with the publication of his *Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* in 1588. In addition to detailed descriptions of the manners and habits of the Carolina coast natives, Hariot included a series of engravings of ancient Picts by Theodore de Bry. Naked, tattooed, and brandishing severed human heads, these barbarous figures were intended, wrote Hariot, “to shoue how that the Inhabitants of the great Bretannie haue bin in times past as sauuage as those of Virginia.”³⁵ William Strachey made the same connection, asserting that without outside help the English “might yet have lyved overgrowen satyrs, rude and untutred, wandring in the woodes... prostetuting our daughters to straungers, sacrificing our childrene to idolls, nay, eating our owne childrene.”³⁶ Civilization had come to England borne on Roman banners and, when the barbarous Britons obstructed their advance, enforced by Roman swords. Writers such as Robert Johnson were thankful that “Iulius Cæsar with his Romane Legions... laid the ground to make vs tame

³³ Strachey, *Historie of Travaile*, 22. See also P[eckham], “True Reporte,” in *Gilbert’s Voyages*, 2:454-55.

³⁴ Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 11-28.

³⁵ Hariot, *Briefe and True Report*, 67-77 (quotation p. 67).

³⁶ Strachey, *Historie of Travaile*, 18.

and ciuill.”³⁷ Because civility was such an obvious boon to the poor natives of America, the English thought, they should follow the Roman example: offer the blessings of order and good government to the Indians, and force it upon them for their own good if they resisted.

Advocates of colonization clearly understood that following the Roman model of bringing civility with the edge of the sword could entail spectacular carnage. Purchas asked, “Were not wee our selves made and not borne civill in our Progenitors dayes? and were not Cæsars Britaines as brutish as Virginians? The Romane swords were best teachers of civilitie to this & other Countries neere us.”³⁸ In addition to the violence of conquest, such writers assumed that the process of civilizing an indigenous population would entail the comprehensive destruction of their culture and society. William Herbert, a large landholder in Ireland, wrote that the best way to civilize the population was “to do away with and destroy completely the habits and practices of the natives” so that “the natives will put on and embrace the habits and customs of the colonists.”³⁹ For some, the inherent value of the colonial project justified more than mere conquest or even cultural destruction. The lawyer Gabriel Harvey, for example, comfortably lauded Rome’s obliteration of its rival Carthage and the annihilation of its people as a pivotal event in the empire’s rise to greatness. “Had Carthage not been Rome’s bitter enemy,”

³⁷ J[ohnson], “Nova Britannia,” in Force, *Tracts*, 14.

³⁸ Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:62.

³⁹ Quoted in Peter C. Mancall, “English Promotion and Settlement in the Americas,” in *Envisioning America: English Plans for the Colonization of North America, 1580-1640*, ed. Peter C. Mancall (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1995), 9.

he reasoned, “Rome would never have become the powerful mistress of the world.”⁴⁰ In formulating a vision of England’s place on the imperial stage, then, English thinkers raised the specter of genocidal war in the greater service of civilization.

More directly than the half-mythological examples from scripture or classical texts, the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland gave England its first real lessons in overseas colonialism. There had been a limited English presence in Ireland for several centuries, but in the mid-sixteenth century Englishmen attempted to live up to the civilizing mission of ancient Rome by fundamentally reshaping Ireland’s society and people to conform to their own model. They intended to uplift foreign peoples by bringing order and proper government, followed by proper dress, behavior, and agriculture. The whole enterprise was predicated, therefore, on the characterization of the Irish people as culturally inferior, if not outright savage.⁴¹

By the 1560s, English leaders increasingly relied on coercive policies that demanded Irish obedience to their authority. The declaration of martial law in 1558 resulted in a wave of rebellions over the next decade, notably by Shane O’Neill of Ulster in the north and by James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald of Desmond in the south. English

⁴⁰ Quoted in Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 172.

⁴¹ Nicholas P. Canny, “The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 30, no. 4 (October 1973): 84-90, 92. Andrew Hadfield has recently challenged this view, arguing that the equation of Irishness with savagery in the English mind has been overstated. He nonetheless acknowledges that views of the Irish as inferior but tractable animated the English colonial mission, and that these views tipped dramatically towards a belief in Irish barbarism in the wake of indigenous resistance. Andrew Hadfield, “Irish Colonies and the Americas,” in *Envisioning an English Empire*, 172, 177, 188.

tactics became increasingly brutal as Irish resistance intensified.⁴² Beginning in 1569 Humphrey Gilbert ravaged the southern region of Munster, proudly reporting,

I slew all those from time to time that did belong to, feed, accompany, or maintain any outlaws or traitors; and after my first summoning of any castle or fort, if they would not presently yield it, I would not afterwards take it of their gift, but won it perforce, how many lives so ever it cost, putting man, woman and child of them to the sword.⁴³

Thomas Churchyard, who accompanied Gilbert throughout his campaign, justified this carnage by arguing that non-combatants were legitimate military targets. Because non-combatants produced the food supplies vital to sustaining the rebel armies, he reasoned, “the killyng of them by the sworde was the waie to kill the menne of warre by famine.” English commanders tried to defeat their enemies by massacring civilian populations and destroying their food supplies. This devastatingly effective tactic became a central feature of warfare in the New World.⁴⁴

Despite such draconian tactics, Irish resistance to English colonial rule continued throughout the late sixteenth century. During this time English commanders emphasized the incorrigible savagery of their enemies and increasingly maintained that the Irish could only be subdued by overwhelming force. Cultural devaluation justified the policies of slaughter and starvation that became standard practice by the mid-1570s. In 1574 Walter Devereaux, the Earl of Essex, declared the people of Rathlin Island to be in revolt

⁴² Nicholas P. Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern Established, 1565-76* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1976), 36-44, 137-53; Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 188-92.

⁴³ Quoted in Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 192.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Canny, “Ideology of English Colonization,” 582.

and killed the entire population of six hundred during a night attack; later that year his forces massacred several hundred Clandeboye O'Neills during a Christmas feast held under a flag of truce.⁴⁵ English forces decimated the indigenous population, but in 1593 the Irish rose in a fresh round of rebellion. Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, rallied his people and called for aid from his fellow Catholics in Spain, thus beginning the Nine Years War. The vicious fighting escalated until it reached its bloody apotheosis during Lord Mountjoy's campaign of extermination that virtually depopulated entire swathes of the countryside.⁴⁶

In 1601 Irish and Spanish forces suffered a disastrous defeat at Kinsale, and two years later Hugh O'Neill ended the war with his surrender and subsequent execution. Decades of hideous violence among the green hills of Ireland had made its mark, however, and permanently imprinted English thinking about colonialism.⁴⁷ Poet and colonial administrator Edmund Spenser summarized the lessons of Irish colonization when he explained the proper way to reform a society of uncooperative savages:

by the sworde; for all those evilles must first be cutt away with a stronge hande, before any good cann bee planted; like as the corrupt branches and unwholsome lawes are first to bee pruned, and the fowle mosse clenched or scraped away, before the tree cann bringe forth any good fruite.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Canny, *Elizabethan Conquest*, 120-21.

⁴⁶ Fausz, "Powhatan Uprising," 187; Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 208-11.

⁴⁷ Canny, *Elizabethan Conquest*, 159-63.

⁴⁸ Edmund Spenser, *A Veue of the Present State of Ireland, Discoursed by Way of a Dialogue Betwene Eudoxus and Irenius* (1596), available at <http://uoregon.edu/~rbear/veue1.html> (accessed April 5, 2009).

England's civilizing mission through peaceful means remained an important feature of colonial thinking, but experience in Ireland taught them that rejection of these efforts should be met with swift and brutal violence.

These themes of bloodshed and dispossession did not occupy a consistent place in the English imagination, nor did they inform colonial policy in any systematic fashion. They were, rather, aspects of a complex and contradictory vision of a New World that held within them a dark core of violence. Individually they were dangerous, but that danger multiplied exponentially when all four themes combined within the larger context of American colonial projects. English perceptions of Native Americans marked them as alien and dangerous. European theories of property ownership undermined the validity of Indian claims to their own land. The law of nations gave colonists the right to enforce dubious claims of national sovereignty over native peoples. Episodes of mass slaughter from myth and history gave them a model for dealing with defiant enemies. These mental constructions possessed strains of latent violence that could manifest as massacre and genocide. In the crucible of the American borderlands, conflict between the colonizers and the colonized always threatened to unleash the full force of their lethal potential.

Visions of Power

Native Americans possessed their own visions of a changing world. The Algonquian Indians of coastal North America inhabited a dynamic environment that was constantly altered by war and peace, movement and time, belief and imagination. Like

all peoples they formed societies in the ways that they thought would give them the best quality of life, and as circumstances changed they acted to make their lives better.

Unlike the English, these Algonquians did not have any unitary sense of identity.

Spanning hundreds of miles of coastal territory, dozens of separate tribes spoke different languages and dialects, formed various sorts of political organizations, worshipped gods and powers in unique ways, and shaped their environments to maximize the resources particular to the local climate and ecology. Their lifeways were diverse, and their visions manifold, yet all of the peoples encountered by the English seized on the transformative possibilities offered by a new world with these strangers in it.⁴⁹

Long before European contact, the tendrils of an extensive trade network penetrated deep into the interior of the American continent, connecting native societies through the medium of material exchange. Indians traded a number of items, including manufactured goods and staple food crops, but much of this traffic involved prestige goods, such as shards of brilliant copper, deep-hued seashells, and crafted ritual items from distant places. Because of their rarity these items were thought to possess a spiritual potency that conferred special power upon their owners, what northern Algonquians called *manitou*. With that power came prestige, the intangible currency that allowed leaders to end feuds, broker alliances, seal marriages, and cement loyalties. Native leaders who controlled such items also distributed them to followers and allies, creating a “prestige goods economy” in which wealth translated to political power

⁴⁹ Peter C. Mancall, “Native Americans and Europeans in English America, 1500-1700,” in *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Nicholas Canny, Oxford History of the British Empire, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 328-350.

through the acts of gift-giving and reciprocal exchange. Thus when the English and other Europeans came from across the waters bearing exotic treasures, Indians could imagine the benefits of such goods and eagerly included them in their ancient trading networks. Peaceful commerce brought many forms of power—economic, spiritual, and political—to Native Americans.⁵⁰

The coming of Europeans altered the old trade networks, disrupting some, strengthening others, and creating entirely new economies. The Pequot Indians of southern New England, for example, quickly grasped the possibilities presented by the arrival of the Dutch in the 1620s. With the Pequots as their prime partners, the Dutch West India Company laid the foundations for an economic nexus based on the exchange of wampum for furs. Wampum—rare white and purple beads, which had to be laboriously crafted from sea snails and clams and sewn into belts—was initially a prestige item that connected its owner to sources of spiritual potency. Insatiable demand for furs in the European market drove the production and exchange of wampum to the point that it became the standard currency in New England, over time losing its spiritual significance as it gained commodity value. In addition to this social and economic impact, the fur trade dramatically altered the balance of power among the region's Indian tribes. The Pequots extended their political influence through a series of tributaries in Connecticut and eastern Long Island, but their expansion increased tensions between them and the nearby Narragansetts, as well as with English merchants

⁵⁰ James Axtell, "At the Water's Edge: Trading in the Sixteenth Century," in *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 144-181; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 92-98; Daniel K. Richter, "Tsenacommacah and the Atlantic World," in *The Atlantic World and Virginia*, 29-65 (esp. 31-36).

seeking to replace the Dutch as the region's principle buyer of furs. The Pequots' desire for power through trade facilitated their meteoric rise but also set the stage for their downfall.⁵¹

Contact with Europeans also brought the power of technology. At first Native Americans incorporated items that Europeans considered utilitarian into their prestige economy. Sensing the powerful manitou in brass and steel, they would cut up pots and other tools into jewelry or items of symbolic significance. The increasing availability of European goods slowly transformed these items from unique objects into raw materials and specialized tools. Durable brass pots replaced fragile ceramics and finished woolen blankets replaced animal skins. Iron—harder and sharper than flint—produced better hatchets, knives, fishhooks, and a host of other practical items that made everyday tasks faster, easier, and more efficient. Native Americans' increasing reliance on these items would cause dramatic and unforeseen changes in their basic subsistence patterns over the course of generations. In the early stages of colonization, though, Indians understood that European technologies eased their labor and increased the range of their capabilities.⁵²

⁵¹ Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 49-54, 61-63; Lynn Ceci, "Native Wampum as a Peripheral Resource in the Seventeenth-Century World-System," in *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation*, ed. Laurence M. Hauptman and James D. Wherry (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 50-60; Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 147-52.

⁵² James Axtell, "The English Colonial Impact on Indian Culture," in *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 253-56; Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 43-46.

Technology also came in the form of weapons: axes, knives, and swords made from iron and steel, as well as brass arrowheads. These materials were superior to the wood, stone, and bone of traditional Indian armaments, and native warriors keenly understood both their danger and deadly potential. While these weapons presented little mystery to Native Americans, the wholly unfamiliar firearm represented a more dramatic innovation. Though noisier, slower, and less accurate than Indian arrows, European firearms impressed Indian warriors with the psychological power of their thunderous discharge and the horrific wounds produced when musket balls shredded muscle and splintered bone. Military technology represented power in its rawest form: the power to kill.⁵³

Native Americans saw the potential in exploiting the Europeans themselves by drawing the newcomers into existing political structures. In contrast to the rigidly hierarchical conception of a sovereign's authority that formed the backbone of English thinking, Algonquian ideas about political power rested on personal loyalty. *Sachems* and *sagamores* in New England, as well as *weroances* in Virginia, ruled only with the consent of their people. Their authority was based on individual charisma, proven wisdom, military prowess, and the ability to bestow material goods as gifts. Leaders gained power through alliance and pledges of mutual obligation. Such relationships did not necessarily imply equality, though: this system had its own forms of hierarchy as tribes sought protection from stronger neighbors in return for payments of tribute.

⁵³ J. Frederick Fausz, "Fighting 'Fire' with Firearms: The Anglo-Powhatan Arms Race in Early Virginia," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 3, no. 4 (December 1979): 36-39; Richter, *Facing East*, 46-49; Patrick M. Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics Among the New England Indians* (Lanham, Md.: Madison Books, 1991), 29-31, 38-41.

Within this fluid matrix of power relationships, many Indians saw advantages in associating themselves with the English.⁵⁴

Native leaders whose power was threatened or declining saw an opportunity to reverse their peoples' fortunes. Massasoit, the Pokanoket sachem at the time of the Pilgrims' landing at Plymouth, made this calculation when he approached the colonists in 1621. Five years earlier an unknown epidemic had ravaged the peoples of central New England, causing death rates among the Pokanoket as high as 90 percent.⁵⁵ While Massasoit's tribe was devastated, his hostile neighbors, the Narragansetts, remained virtually unaffected by the contagion and rapidly filled the power vacuum. Unable to defend themselves against Narragansett aggression, the once powerful Pokanoket gave up a significant portion of their territory and agreed to become Narragansett tributaries. The coming of the Pilgrims gave Massasoit the opportunity to alter the balance of power in his favor. Compared to the Narragansetts, the English offered access to the products of the Atlantic trade network, military protection with their lethal technologies of guns and steel, and a lighter burden of annual tribute. Massasoit willingly acknowledged the sovereignty of King James I and accepted status as his tributary because he seized on the possibilities offered by the English strangers. He hoped to counterbalance his peoples'

⁵⁴ Kathleen J. Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England, 1500-1650* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 140-155; Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects Unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 11-14; Helen C. Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 114-20; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 42-49.

⁵⁵ Sherburne F. Cook, *The Indian Population of New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 31. On virgin soil epidemics and Native American population decline, see Sherburne F. Cook, "The Significance of Disease in the Extinction of the New England Indian," *Human Biology* 45 (1973): 485-508.

demographic decline, escape his subjection to the Narragansetts, and make himself a regional power once again.⁵⁶

Not all native societies, however, acted out of weakness to control the effects of demographic collapse or military defeat. By the turn of the seventeenth century the Powhatans of the Chesapeake, who called their country *Tsenacommacah*, “the densely inhabited land,” were a powerful and confident people. Encompassing a population as high as 15,000 throughout the Tidewater region, the Powhatans of Tsenacommacah were aggressive and ethnocentric, fiercely proud of their culture and confident in their superiority to other peoples.⁵⁷ Forged by Wahunsenacawh—more commonly known as Powhatan, though this was an honorific rather than a name—the Powhatan chiefdom had expanded from six to thirty-one individual tribes between 1570 and 1607.⁵⁸ Despite their military strength and history of victorious conquests, the Powhatans were not without rivals. Enemy chiefdoms and tribal coalitions surrounded them on three sides, including

⁵⁶ William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 76-97; Dwight Heath, ed., *A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, or, Mourt's Relation* (New York: Corinth Books, 1963), 51-57; Nathaniel Morton, *New Englands Memoriall* (Cambridge, 1669), 24. See also Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 104-5, 114-16.

⁵⁷ Fausz, “Powhatan Uprising.” 117-18.

⁵⁸ E. Randolph Turner, III, “Native American Protohistoric Interactions in the Powhatan Core Area,” in *Powhatan Foreign Relations, 1500-1722*, ed. Helen C. Rountree (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 76. The Powhatan paramount chieftaincy was less cohesive than European political structures, so there is some degree of ambiguity as to which tribes “belonged” to the Powhatan domain and which did not; see Rountree, “Who Were the Powhatans and Did They Have a Unified ‘Foreign Policy’?” in *Powhatan Foreign Relations*, 1-7. By the time of the Jamestown Massacre in 1622, Opechancanough commanded the loyalty of thirty-two tidewater tribes; see John Martin, “How Virginia may be made a Royal Plantation,” December 15, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:708. On Wahunsenacawh’s names and titles, see Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 32-33.

the increasingly powerful Monacans to the west.⁵⁹ These challengers on the Powhatan fringe remained a constant threat, but also a potential for future growth if Wahunsenacawh could marshal the forces to conquer them. When the English came to Tsenacommacah, Wahunsenacawh saw the possibility that these *tassantassas*, “strangers” as the Powhatans called them, might add to the strength of his chiefdom—not as partners but as subjects.

Powhatans watched the first wave of *tassantassas* come to the shores of Tsenacommacah in May of 1607. Unsure at first how to gauge these newcomers, Wahunsenacawh allowed his subordinate weroances to determine their own responses to the arrival of the English. In their first months on the shores of Tsenacommacah, therefore, the *tassantassas* were often baffled by the apparently inconsistent behavior of the people they visited, which ranged from cautious friendliness to outright hostility.⁶⁰ After testing the mettle of the new arrivals, Wahunsenacawh determined that they would make useful allies and attempted to absorb them into the power structure of his chiefdom. In December 1607 he formally made the swarthy Englishman his weroance, giving him the territory of Capahowasick to rule as a Powhatan tributary.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Strachey, *Historie of Travaile*, 102-5; Jeffrey L. Hantman, “Powhatan’s Relations with the Piedmont Monacans,” in *Powhatan Foreign Relations*, 94-111; Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 42-46; Turner, III, “Protohistoric Interactions,” 76-93.

⁶⁰ Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 53-66.

⁶¹ Smith initially accepted this offer, but clearly did not behave in a way that Wahunsenacawh expected of a subordinate. The tense meeting between Smith and the paramount chief in January of 1609 indicates that Wahunsenacawh understood him to be his weroance, but Smith rejected this assertion, answering, “I have but one God, I honour but one king; and I live here not as your subject, but as your friend.” See Smith, “A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Noate as Hath Hapned in Virginia . . .” 1608, in *Complete Works*, 1:53-57; Smith, “Proceedings of the English Colonie,” in *Complete Works*, 1:249.

Wahunsenacawh thus attempted to assimilate the newly arrived English into the political and economic structure of Tsenacommacah.⁶²

What these diverse groups of Native Americans had in common—Pequots, Pokanokets, and Powhatans—was their recognition that the coming of the English and other Europeans offered tremendous opportunities. The futures that they envisioned were different in each case. For the Pequots, it was command of the western hub of the burgeoning transatlantic fur trade; for the Pokanokets, a recovery from the ravages of a virgin soil epidemic; and for the Powhatans, an opportunity to make their nation an even greater Tidewater power. Each of them, though cautious of the threat that the English presented, nevertheless sought to fold the newcomers into existing structures. In so doing, they sought the many forms of power—political, economic, technological, and spiritual—that would help them to create a better future in a rapidly changing world.

Visions of Ruin

When Indians met Englishmen along the shores of America, their different visions came into contact. Their meeting was not merely between cultures or civilizations, but between fundamentally different understandings of the world and different ways of imagining the future. To some extent both English and Indian visions held the promise of peaceful coexistence, of creative dialogue, and of the possibility that together they might create something genuinely new. Native Americans in Virginia and New England reached for this outcome, pursuing their many paths to power in ways that

⁶² Frederic W. Gleach, *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 115-22; Richter, *Facing East*, 69-78.

would be advantageous to both themselves and the English newcomers. English ideologies of colonization, however, were too rigid to reach any sort of middle ground with native peoples. The latent violence embedded in their dreams of transformation led inexorably to warfare and destruction.

Native Americans imagined a future in which both Indians and English had a place. The basic nature of their visions was regional, limited, and flexible. The Pequots, for example, did not have an overarching design to gain complete control of the Atlantic fur trade. Rather, they saw an opportunity to increase their power over neighboring tribes by dominating the local sites of exchange.⁶³ Massasoit's goals in allying with the Plymouth colonists were relatively short-term. In order to achieve reconstitution and recovery he was willing to submit his people to the Pilgrims' authority, but without intending to remain English subjects forever.⁶⁴ Even when Native Americans were vastly more powerful than the English, as were the Powhatans, their political structure was sufficiently adaptable that they could assimilate the newcomers into their chiefdom without demanding drastic cultural change by the colonists. The people of Tsenacommacah did not abandon their conviction that their lifeways were superior to those of the tassantassas, but neither did they require the English to change their habits of dress or speech, convert to the worship of their god Okee, or prove their masculinity by enduring the rigors of the *huskanaw* initiation ceremony.⁶⁵ Wahunsenacawh allowed

⁶³ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 257-59; Cave, *Pequot War*, 61-63.

⁶⁴ Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 115-17, 122-23.

⁶⁵ The *huskanaw* marked a male's transition from adolescence to manhood, and involved an arduous regimen of ritual beatings, hallucinogenic drugs, and long periods of isolation and hunger. See Rountree, *Powhatan Indians*, 80-83.

the “tribe” of tassantassas to have their own territory, their own culture, and some measure of autonomy in exchange for political loyalty and the tribute due to a sovereign. In the bargain he hoped to add another tribe to his growing nation, cement access to their trade networks, and augment his military forces with the newcomers’ lethal weaponry. It was precisely the differences between English and Powhatans that made them desirable allies.⁶⁶

The ideology of English colonialism, in contrast, was totalizing and inflexible. The English vision assumed a complete transformation of the American environment into something resembling their homeland. The landscape onto which they projected this outcome, though, was already occupied. Native Americans possessed well-developed cultures, economies, political structures, belief systems, and physical ecologies, all of which were incompatible with the patterns that the English wanted to impose. Rather than contemplate interacting creatively with these peoples by adapting to the exigencies of intercultural contact, the English sought to replace them entirely.

The success of the English colonial project was therefore predicated on the erasure of the existing Indian societies; Powhatans and Pequots had no more place in their imagined Albion than the ancient Picts had in metropolitan London.⁶⁷ In the zero-sum game of settler colonialism, the “logic of elimination” mandated that in order for

⁶⁶ Martin H. Quitt, “Trade and Acculturation at Jamestown, 1607-1609: The Limits of Understanding,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 52, no. 2 (April 1995): 227-258; Richter, “Tsenacommacah,” 64-65; Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 82-85.

⁶⁷ Fausz, “Powhatan Uprising,” 176-77; James Horn, “The Conquest of Eden: Possession and Dominion in Early Virginia,” in *Envisioning an English Empire*, 47-48. Daniel Richter notes the dramatic incompatibility of Native American and English uses of the environment: “European and Indian ways of using the land could no more share the same ecosystem than could matter and antimatter share the same space.” Richter, *Facing East*, 59.

colonists to succeed they must necessarily remove the native inhabitants of the land they intended to claim. The process of removal need not be genocidal, however, for the indigenous people in a colonized area could be “eliminated” in more than one way.⁶⁸ Several methods of elimination were possible, including social and cultural assimilation, limited legal and political inclusion, slavery or servitude, and territorial expulsion. The variety of possible strategies for elimination fell into two general categories: incorporation and exclusion. The dynamic between these two strategies shaped the course of Anglo-Indian conflict during the process of colonization.

English imperial theorists originally intended to follow a broad policy of incorporating Native Americans into their vision for a new England. Guided by their perception of the innocent savage as harmless and malleable, they crafted a civilizing mission inspired by the example of the ancient Romans. By bringing Christianity and civility to the Indians, the colonists expected to transform them into loyal subjects to the English crown, faithful members of the Church of England, and industrious farmers on English-patterned fields. William Strachey articulated this belief when he wrote proudly, “we shall by degrees chaunge their barbarous natures, make them ashamed the sooner of their savadge nakednesse, informe them of the true God and of the way to their salvation, and, finally, teach them obedience to the king’s majestic and to his

⁶⁸ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387-88, 402.

gouverneurs.”⁶⁹ Indians had a clear place in this new order, the colonized living, worshipping, and working alongside the colonizer.⁷⁰

Many advocates of colonization believed that the Indians would eagerly embrace the English gifts of salvation and civilization. Richard Hakluyt assured his countrymen that “the people of America crye oute unto us their nexte neighbours to come and helpe them, and bringe unto them the gladd tidinges of the gospell.” He was optimistic that the dedication of missionaries would quickly bring Indians to the light of Christ because “they are very easie to be perswaded... and were very desirous to become christians.”⁷¹ Similarly, in *A Description of New England* John Smith confidently asserted that the Indians encountered there would adopt English methods of agricultural production that were clearly superior to their own. “[C]ould they but once taste the sweet frutes of their owne labours,” he wrote, “doubtlesse many thousands would be advised by good discipline, to take more pleasure in honest industrie, then in their humours of dissolute idlenesse.” He imagined that with native help the English could build a glorious new country. What could be more magnificent, he asked,

or more agreeable to God, then to seeke to convert those poore Salvages to know Christ, and humanitie, whose labors with discretion will triple requite thy charge and paines? What so truly sutes with honour and honestie, as the discovering things unknowne? Erecting Townes, peopling Countries, informing the ignorant,

⁶⁹ Strachey, *Historie of Travaile*, 85. See also J[ohnson], “Nova Britannia.” in Force, *Tracts*, 13-14.

⁷⁰ Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1975), 44.

⁷¹ Hakluyt, “Discourse of Western Planting,” in *Writings of the Hakluyts*, 2:214-16. Hakluyt alludes to Acts 16:9, which reads: “a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stode a man of Macedonia, & prayed him, saying, Come into Macedonia, and helpe vs.”

reforming things unjust, teaching virtue; and gaine to our Native mother-countrie a kingdom to attend her.⁷²

Both armchair theorists like Hakluyt and pragmatic adventurers like Smith assumed that the transformation of natives from their traditional patterns of living to English ways would be an integral component of any colonial project. In principle, the English welcomed Native Americans to participate in their vision for a reshaped country, an outcome that would accomplish the logic of elimination through the relatively benign means of assimilation.⁷³

The inflexibility of the English vision, however, meant that they would accept nothing less than total assimilation, which essentially demanded that Indians commit cultural suicide and comprehensively replace their lifeways with English patterns.⁷⁴ The English demanded no less, and refused to accommodate Indian attempts to selectively adopt elements of English civilization while retaining their coherence as independent societies. In fact, they often interpreted such attempts as evidence of the Indians'

⁷² Smith, "A Description of New England," 1616, in *Complete Works*, 1:338, 343.

⁷³ Mark Levene, *The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide*, Genocide in the Age of the Nation-State, vol. 2 (London: I.B. Taurus, 2005), 21-22.

⁷⁴ There is a large body of scholarship on the phenomenon of cultural genocide, generally defined as the attempted destruction of a group's cultural identity without necessarily committing physical violence. The concept of cultural genocide has often been deployed in order to describe episodes of cultural erasure that would otherwise fall short of a rigid definition of genocide, though recently scholars have stressed the close connection between cultural destruction and physical destruction. See Elazar Barkan, "Genocides of Indigenous Peoples: Rhetoric of Human Rights," in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 126-38; Martin Shaw, *What is Genocide?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 66-67; Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 402. The resolution of this theoretical debate is beyond the scope of this study. I acknowledge that cultural dissolution and reconstruction are symbolically violent acts that have wrenching, often devastating, effects on indigenous societies. However, my purpose here is not to classify Anglo-Indian violence in Early America within a typology of genocide, but rather to outline a discourse of violence in which English intentions shift from a relatively peaceful set of goals to a more violent alternative, and to explain the mechanism by which this shift occurs.

inveterate savagery, which demonstrated the impossibility of including them in English colonial society by any means. When policies of incorporation failed in the face of Indian resistance to their culture's eradication, however benevolently conceived, English colonizers resorted to more aggressive policies. The "savage" whom they could not fold into their vision was then pushed out of it through violence.⁷⁵

Even as they offered to incorporate Indians, English theorists articulated an alternative of murderous exclusion. The same writers who surmised the ease of incorporating Indians allowed for the possibility that their desired goals could be accomplished with the application of force. Hakluyt, for example, explained that if natives resisted the English right to "lawfull Traffique," including proselytizing by missionaries, then settlers could rightfully "be revenged of any wronge offered by them." Colonization could then proceed through cultural conquest and assimilation at swordpoint. The English, he concluded, "maye yf we will conquere fortelye and plante in soyles moste sweete, most pleasaunte, moste fertill and strounge. And in the ende to bringe them all [Indians] in subjection or scywillitie."⁷⁶ George Peckham went further, asserting that if Native American resistance proved intractable then the English were justified in abandoning the civilizing mission altogether. In such a case, he argued,

there is no barre (as I judge) but that in stoute assemblies, the Christians may issue out, and by strong hande pursue theyr enemies, subdue them, take possession of theyr Townes, Cities, or Villages... to use the Lawe of Armes, as

⁷⁵ Canny, "Ideology of English Colonization," 596; Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility*, 3-5.

⁷⁶ Hakluyt, "Pamphlet . . . Ascribed to Richard Hakluyt," in *Writings of the Hakluyts*, 2:342.

in like case among all nations at thys day is used: and most especially to the ende they may with securitye holde theyr lawfull possession.”⁷⁷

According to Peckham, Native American resistance to efforts at incorporation should precipitate a drastic shift to a strategy of extreme exclusion that culminated in territorial expulsion.⁷⁸

The basic structure of English colonialism formulated their approach to Native Americans as a two-step process: the velvet glove of cultural assimilation followed by the mailed fist of military conquest.⁷⁹ Both outcomes fulfilled the fundamental need for the “elimination” of the native from colonial territory, one through peace and the other through war. Strategies of exclusion, however, could never be normal processes of subjugation because they were tangled in the latent violence of English colonial ideology. Filtered through the idea of the savage, Indian political resistance acquired a bestial and diabolical character. Shifting agriculture reinforced stereotypes of the savage and provided a justification for those looking to appropriate Indian land. Armed reprisals to English provocations violated the law of nations, marking Native Americans as rebels and traitors. As tensions broke into open fighting, the English looked to murderous precedents in myth and history to model the scale of their response. The violent

⁷⁷ P[eckham], “True Reporte,” in *Gilbert’s Voyages*, 2:453.

⁷⁸ For other examples of this commonly articulated strategy of exclusion in the face of native resistance, see Richard Hakluyt, “Virginia Richly Valued,” 1609, in *Writings of the Hakluyts*, 2:503; J[ohnson], “Nova Britannia,” in Force, *Tracts*, 13-14; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:231.

⁷⁹ Nicholas Canny, “England’s New World and the Old, 1480s-1630s,” in *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Nicholas Canny, Oxford History of the British Empire, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 165-67; Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980), 266.

potentials in these paradigms invested the logic of elimination with a diffuse brutality, and tended to escalate the violence of frontier clashes to appalling extremes.⁸⁰

The logic of elimination was an integral feature of colonial expansion. Although it allowed for a wide array of Anglo-Indian relationships, certain aspects of the English worldview pushed its people toward the violent end of the spectrum. Nevertheless, the progression from idealistic evangelism to mass slaughter was neither linear nor persistent. Rather, the relations of violence between English colonists and Native Americans followed a sinusoid pattern of escalation and de-escalation. English strategies for incorporating Native Americans would founder on the rocks of Indian resistance, followed by strategies of violent exclusion, and a diminution of violence once the immediate goal of territorial elimination had been accomplished.

Complex interactions between the many agencies of power on the frontier drove this ebb and tide. Among the English the imperial metropole, the colonial administration, and individual settlers on the margins had separate interests that often clashed with each other. The same was true of Native Americans, since the interests of the commoner did not always coincide with the interests of the sachem or weroance. The shifting balance between these many human forces in the chaotic conditions of the borderlands often tipped the colonial process toward violence. The clash of interests could also act to restrain it, however, and over time to renew hopes that the imperatives of colonization

⁸⁰ On the inherent potential for extreme violence in colonial warfare, see A. Dirk Moses, "Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History," in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), 26-29.

could be satisfied peacefully.⁸¹ Despite the potential for genocide inherent in the process of colonialism and the English worldview, the friction of competing interests inevitably sapped the momentum from the process of violent exclusion and prevented a sustained ideological commitment to genocide among the colonists.

The normal sine curve of settler colonialism was as self-regulating as it was relentless, but extraordinary circumstances sometimes caused it to spike into a “genocidal moment.”⁸² A society that perceived itself to be in a period of acute crisis could overwhelm or suppress the basic conflicts of interest between agencies of frontier power, briefly uniting the community in collective fear. In such circumstances, the psychological pressures of crisis unleashed the latent potential for violence in the English worldview. The “logic” of elimination passed into the dark realms of destructive fantasy, and the ultimate policy of exclusion became manifest as genocide.

⁸¹ For an example of recent scholarship treating the interactions of frontier power centers, see Rob Harper, “State Intervention and Extreme Violence in the Revolutionary Ohio Valley,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 10, no. 2 (June 2008): 233-248.

⁸² A. Dirk Moses, “Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the ‘Racial Century’: Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 36, no. 4 (2002): 7-36; A. Dirk Moses, “Genocide and Settler Society in Australian History,” in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004), 3-48.

CHAPTER III

THE VIRGIN COUNTRY OF TSENACOMMACAH

In 1610, William Strachey visited the Powhatan peoples of Virginia, who called their home Tsenacommachah. As he learned about their culture and listened to their stories, they told him about the way their country would die. Their priests foretold that a great nation would rise from the east, out of the waters of the Chesapeake, and would challenge them for the mastery of Tsenacommachah. Three times these strangers would attempt to throw down the Powhatans. The first two times the Powhatans would emerge victorious and hurl the invaders back into the sea. During the third war, though, they would go down in defeat and their nation fall to ruin, the once proud rulers of Tsenacommachah becoming the subjects of their conquerors. They told this story to Strachey even as the ships of a foreign people came from far away to land on the shores of the Chesapeake, so that “straunge whispers (indeed) and secrett at this hower run among these people and possesse them with amazement.” Even as the English planted the first seeds of Virginia in the soil of Tsenacommachah, the Powhatan people heard dark rumors of defeat and saw shadows of the end of days.¹

¹ William Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia: Expressing the Cosmographie and Comodities of the Country, Together with the Manners and Customes of the People*, ed. Richard Henry

The people who told this story to Strachey were at the zenith of their power when his countrymen first arrived, but they had good reason to fear. The English *tassantassas* came not just to trade valuable goods like copper and iron, nor just to settle for as much land as the Powhatans might be willing to sell.² They came as the vanguard of a burgeoning empire just beginning to extend its fingers across the Atlantic, and they came with a vision of the New World that filled their eyes and guided their footsteps toward the future. What the Powhatans called Tsenacommacah the *tassantassas* called Virginia; where the natives settled and hunted and cultivated plots of corn, the newcomers saw a virgin land full of limitless opportunity. They saw in the Powhatans' country a new Albion waiting to be born. From the moment they landed the English colonists began to transform one country into the other, breaking apart Tsenacommacah even as they built Virginia. The two countries could never coexist because they both inhabited the same place: the same geographical area, the same political territory, and the same imagined space. For Virginia to be born, Tsenacommacah would have to die.

The Birth of Virginia

The Virginia Company of London, as a joint stock company, was naturally interested in profit and conceived its colonial projects as commercial ventures. At the

Major, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, no. 6 (London, 1849), 101. Strachey noted that Wahunsenacawh had already gone to war with a Chesapeake tribe in the hopes of averting this catastrophe, meaning that the prophecy antedated the arrival of the English.

² Known Powhatan words come from Strachey's glossary and a short phrasebook provided by John Smith. See Strachey, *Historie of Travaile*, 183-96; John Smith, "A Map of Virginia, With a Description of the Country, the Commodities, People, Government and Religion," 1612, in *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580-1631)*, ed. Philip L. Barbour, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 1:136-39.

turn of the seventeenth century, though, England was an intensely religious country. Its people saw America as the center stage of a divine drama that pitted Catholic against Protestant, the outcome hinging on the fate of the native Indians. Spain had already carved out a papist empire in Mexico and Peru, wrote Richard Hakluyt, through “outrageous and infinite massacres” and the forced conversion of Indians. In order to defeat their rivals, the English not only had to match Spanish success in building an overseas empire, but also to do it humanely, to “be good agaynst ye Naturall people” in accordance with God’s unfolding plans.³ From its inception the Jamestown colony was supposed to be a missionary enterprise to convert Native Americans to Protestant Christianity as much as a business venture. For financial success, the Company’s agents needed to discover veins of precious metals, harvest the rich resources of the land, and discover new routes to markets in the Orient. In order to be an undertaking worthy of England’s full faith and support, though, the Company also had to bring freedom, civility, and the word of God to the inhabitants of the New World.⁴

In the Virginia Company’s 1606 charter, King James I underlined the importance of the missionary enterprise. Even before delineating the precise economic prerogatives

³ Richard Hakluyt, “Discourse of Western Planting,” 1584, in *The Original Writings and Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts*, ed. E.G.R. Taylor, 2 vols., Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, 2nd ser., nos. 76-77 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1935), 2:257-65 (quotation p. 258); “A Justification for Planting Virginia,” before 1609, in Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London* (hereafter cited as *RVCL*), 4 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1933), 3:2-3.

⁴ J. Frederick Fausz, “The Powhatan Uprising of 1622: A Historical Study of Ethnocentrism and Cultural Conflict” (Ph.D. Diss., College of William and Mary, 1977), 134-37; Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2007), 14-15; Perry Miller, “Religion and Society in the Early Literature of Virginia,” in *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1964), 109-26; John Parker, “Religion and the Virginia Colony, 1609-10,” in *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic, and America 1480-1650*, ed. K.R. Andrews, N.P. Canny, and P.E.H. Hair (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), 245-270.

of the Company's members, the charter commended "so noble a work" as the propagation of Christianity to the native inhabitants, who "as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God."⁵ In 1609 the Company reorganized itself under a second charter, reaffirming that "the principall effect which wee cann desier or expect of this action is the conversion and reduccion of the people in those partes unto the true worshipp of God and Christian religion."⁶ The Company simultaneously launched an aggressive program of publicity in order to gain support for the Virginia colony among the English populace, consistently highlighting the spiritual dividends of this benevolent endeavor. The preacher Robert Gray, for example, proclaimed in his sermon *Good Speed to Virginia* that spreading Christianity was the colony's primary purpose: "Farre be it from the hearts of the English, they should give any cause to the world, to say that they sought the wealth of that Countrie above or before the glorie of God, and the propagation of his Kingdome." The Virginia Company received a great deal of its financial support by cultivating the idea that English national pride and power were best served by the holy mission of evangelical colonialism.⁷

Rhetoric of this sort was not merely an apologia for imperial commerce or a rationalization for the expense of establishing a colony, but an articulation of the English

⁵ Samuel M. Bemiss, *The Three Charters of the Virginia Company of London*, Jamestown 350th Anniversary Historical Booklets, no. 4 (Williamsburg: The Virginia 350th Anniversary Celebration Corporation, 1957), 2. See also the King's "Instructions for the Government of the Colonies," November 20, 1606, in Alexander Brown, ed., *The Genesis of the United States*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1890), 1:67-68.

⁶ Bemiss, *Three Charters*, 54.

⁷ R[obert] G[ray], "A Good Speed to Virginia," April 28, 1609, in Brown, *Genesis*, 1:299. On the importance of this publicity campaign to the Virginia Company's fortunes, see Fausz, "Powhatan Uprising," 255-59, 262-66; Kupperman, *Jamestown Project*, 242-43.

belief that colonialism would benefit both themselves and the native inhabitants of Virginia. In the pamphlet *Nova Britannia*, Robert Johnson explained that the reasons for “our coming thither is to plant ourselves in their country, yet not to supplant and root them out, but to bring them from their base condition to a far better.” England would bring the native inhabitants two great blessings: the spiritual light of Christianity and the material benefits of civilization. He assured his readers that “Our intrusion into their possessions shall tend to their great good, and no way to their hurt, unless as unbridled beasts, they procure it to themselves.” Johnson’s ominous closing concisely expressed the fist-in-glove mindset that drove the Virginia Company’s agents. They came on a holy mission to offer Indians Christian civilization, but if they rejected this offer the Indians would demonstrate themselves to be “unbridled beasts” and call the righteous wrath of the English down upon them.⁸ Johnson’s attitude exemplified the inflexibility of the English vision for America. They could imagine only two possibilities: the Indians’ capitulation to God’s word and England’s banners, or the destruction of those who resisted the English advance.

In 1607, an advance party of colonists sailed up the James River to establish a beachhead for future settlements, but even this limited project foundered in the face of early difficulties. After landing on a defensible but otherwise worthless outcrop of marshland, the expedition quickly met with a number of problems, including a series of power struggles among their leaders, feckless and undisciplined men, dwindling

⁸ R[obert] J[ohnson], “Nova Britannia: Offering Most Excellent fruites by Planting in Virginia,” 1609, in *Tracts and Other Papers Relating Principally to the Origin, Settlement, and Progress of the Colonies in North America: From the Discovery of the Country to the Year 1776*, ed. Peter Force, 4 vols. (New York: Murray Printing Company, 1947), vol. 1, doc. 6, p. 13.

supplies, and the ghastly mortality caused by brackish water and malarial swamps.⁹ As the death toll rose from starvation and disease, the colonists faced too many problems even to consider proselytizing Indians. Their need for food led them to depend on the goodwill and assistance of the surrounding Powhatan tribes, straining their fragile relationship as English demands increased. Throughout 1608, the English antagonized their neighbors by their desperate attempts to get enough food to feed themselves. They began by trading, then resorted to begging, stealing, and finally naked force to intimidate the Powhatans into delivering corn. Despite English convictions that the Indians were lying when they claimed not to have enough corn to share, the severe drought conditions that prevailed from 1606-1612—the worst in seven hundred years—meant that the Powhatans were telling the truth when they claimed that they only had enough crops for themselves.¹⁰ English pressure on finite resources increased tensions, but their reliance on the threat of violence in order to terrorize deliveries of corn pushed those tensions to the breaking point. In the eyes of Wahunsenacawh, the Powhatan *mamanatowick* or paramount chief, the tassantassas' extraction of tribute from his subordinates amounted

⁹ On the colony's initial difficulties, see Carville V. Earle, "Environment, Disease, and Mortality," *Journal of Historical Geography* 5, no. 4 (October 1979): 96-125; Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Apathy and Death in Early Jamestown," *Journal of American History* 66, no. 1 (June 1979): 24-40; Kupperman, *Jamestown Project*, 217-240; Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1975), 71-79.

¹⁰ Dennis B. Blanton, "Drought as a Factor in the Jamestown Colony, 1607-1612," *Historical Archaeology* 34 (2000): 74-81; David W. Stahle et al., "The Lost Colony and Jamestown Droughts," *Science*, new ser., 280, no. 5363 (April 24, 1998): 564-567.

to a concerted attempt to peel away the fringes of his chiefdom. He could not leave this direct challenge to his authority unanswered.¹¹

In August of 1609, the increasingly strained Anglo-Powhatan alliance splintered entirely. Fearing an attack by the Nansemond tribe after establishing a new settlement in their territory, Captain George Percy reacted by burning their village and desecrating sacred ground. The English soldiers committed sacrilege when, as Percy wrote, they “ransaked their Temples, Tooke downe the Corpses of their deade kings from their Toambes,” and looted the treasures buried with the honored dead.¹² This incident sparked the First Anglo-Powhatan War. Wahunsenacawh marshaled his warriors to besiege Jamestown from November 1609 to May 1610, causing the “Starving Time” that claimed the lives of 120 of the 200 colonists and left the survivors in such desperate straits that they resorted to cannibalism. Lord De La Warr arrived in June 1610 with heavily armed reinforcements and the draconian martial law of the *Lawes Divine, Morall, and Martiall* that brutalized the Virginia colonists into an effective fighting force.¹³ From 1610 to 1613, the English relied on tactics honed during the colonial wars in Ireland, treating non-combatants as legitimate targets and consistently using terror to demoralize their enemies. English commanders also adapted to the exigencies of combat in the New World, however, directing their attention to the logistical problems posed by

¹¹ J. Frederick Fausz, “An ‘Abundance of Blood Shed on Both Sides’: England’s First Indian War, 1609-1614,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 98, no. 1 (January 1990): 19-22.

¹² Mark Nicholls, ed., “George Percy’s ‘Trew Relacyon’: A Primary Source for the Jamestown Settlement,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 113, no. 3 (2005): 244-47 (quotation p. 245).

¹³ Thomas West, “Thomas West, Lord De La Warr, to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury,” July 10, 1610, in Brown, *Genesis*, 1:413-15; [William Strachey, comp.], “For the Colony in Virginea Britannia, Lawes Diuine, Morall and Martiall, etc.,” 1612, in Force, *Tracts*, vol. 3, doc. 2, p. 9-19.

their perennial food shortage.¹⁴ As noted in *A Breife Declaration of the Antient Planters*, Governor Thomas Dale directed his men to the “cuttinge downe and takinge away their corne, burninge their houses, spoiling their weares, etc.” English soldiers ravaged Indian villages to take their stockpiles of corn by force, destroying their settlements, and massacring any inhabitants who did not flee.¹⁵

The ideological dimension of the First Anglo-Powhatan War propelled both Powhatan and English forces to employ an unprecedented level of brutality. As far as English writers on both sides of the Atlantic were concerned, Wahunsenacawh had consented to be King James’s lawful subject. By their treasonous resistance, the Powhatans became rebels who stood outside the normal constraints on military force. The principle of just retaliation combined with the crusading spirit of English colonialism to bring Robert Johnson’s ferocious logic to fruition. Indians acting as the Powhatans did “obstinately refuse to vnite themselues vnto vs... shall be held and reputed recusant, withstanding their owne good: and shall be dealt with as enemies of the Common-wealth of their countrie.”¹⁶ For their part, the Powhatans matched English brutality tit for tat. The tassantassas’ defiance of Wahunsenacawh’s authority, coupled

¹⁴ On American adaptations of military tactics from Ireland, see John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 21-22; William L. Shea, *The Virginia Militia in the Seventeenth Century* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 13-14.

¹⁵ H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1619-1658/59*, 13 vols. (Richmond, 1905), 1:32 (hereafter cited as *JHBV*). On the course of events in the First Anglo-Powhatan War, see Fausz, “Abundance of Blood,” 18-42; Daret Bruce Rutman, *A Militant New World, 1607-1640* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 114-69, 204-15.

¹⁶ J[ohnson], “Nova Britannia,” in Force, *Tracts*, 14. See also “True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia,” 1610, in Force, *Tracts*, vol. 3, doc. 1, p. 6-7; Ralph Hamor, *True Discourse of the Present State of Virginia* (1615; reprint, Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1957), 14.

with Percy's unforgivable desecration of the Nansemonds' temple, inspired them to retaliate with unprecedented fury. The Nansemonds, for example, revenged Percy's sacrilege by slaughtering a nearby English garrison to the last man, mocking the colonists' inability to feed themselves by stuffing the corpses' mouths full of bread.¹⁷

The special hatred that the English invaders seemed to have for *quiyoughcosoughs*, Powhatan priests, challenged the spiritual powers of the Powhatan pantheon and helped to transform the conflict into a war over religion. To some extent, the First Anglo-Powhatan War became a holy war on both sides, justified in theory and unrestrained in execution.¹⁸

Driven by ideology, fear, and the specter of cosmic defeat, the two armies hacked away at each other in a merciless war of attrition. Either decisive victory or final defeat was impossible while the Powhatans' overwhelming numerical superiority balanced against the colonists' flow of men and materiel from London. Because of the Virginians' continuing dependence on external support, however, the officers of the Virginia Company exerted pressure from the imperial core that forced a policy shift on its agents in the colonial periphery. Hemorrhaging capital to fund the war and facing national scandal over the harsh treatment of English subjects under martial law, the Company pressed hard for an end to hostilities. The Powhatans, still struggling with the effects of

¹⁷ Nicholls, "Percy's 'Trew Relacyon,'" 246-47; Fausz, "'Abundance of Blood,'" 36-9, 53-54. On non-combatants and atrocities in traditional Powhatan warfare, see Helen C. Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 123.

¹⁸ Fausz, "'Abundance of Blood,'" 30-32, 35-36. The Virginia Company's instructions to Thomas Gates and the Lord De La Warr called the *quiyoughcosoughs* "murtherers of soules" who kept their people "chained under the bond of deathe unto the divell," and directed the colony's leaders to exterminate the Powhatan priests. See Bemiss, *Three Charters*, 57-58 (quotation), 62-63, 73; "True Declaration," in Force, *Tracts*, 26.

the multi-year drought that taxed their resources to the limit, were equally weary of fighting. Both sides agreed to step back for a temporary truce in 1613. During that time Samuel Argall abducted Pocahontas, and her marriage to John Rolfe the following year helped establish a political detente that allowed both sides to end the war without conceding defeat. External forces, both political and environmental, denied both sides the power to maintain a sustained commitment to their enemy's destruction.¹⁹

Pocahontas's conversion and rechristening as Rebecca Rolfe not only sealed a diplomatic peace in Virginia, but also caused a stir in England. She represented a victory for those who still desired to bring religion and civility to America. Her visit to England in 1616 renewed hopes that more concerted missionary efforts could salvage the Virginian colony and ensure that it became a godly commonwealth rather than a permanent theater of war.²⁰ Even before the fighting stopped, the reverend Alexander Whitaker exhorted his countrymen to "be not discouraged with those many lamentable assaults that the diuell hath made against vs," but to "Goe forward boldly, and remember that you fight vnder the banner of Iesus Christ, that you plant his Kingdome, who hath already broken the Serpents head."²¹ Working largely alone and without funding in Virginia, Whitaker's missionary efforts accomplished little before his untimely death by drowning in 1617. That same year, however, King James I set in motion plans for an Indian College to be built at the new settlement of Henrico. Ten thousand acres were set

¹⁹ Fausz, "Abundance of Blood," 42-47.

²⁰ Fausz, "Abundance of Blood," 48-50. For an example of the shift from war to a renewed desired for conversion, see "True Declaration," in Force, *Tracts*, 26-27.

²¹ Alexander Whitaker, *Good Newes from Virginia* (1613; reprint, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, n.d.), 44.

aside for a university, with one thousand of them devoted to a college known as the East India School. Benefactors hoped that the school would train Indian children to become missionaries who would spearhead a movement to convert their people. Between 1619 and 1622 the Virginia Company raised over a thousand pounds sterling from private donors, indicating that there was considerable interest in this enterprise among the English public.²²

Just as clashing interests between Company officers in London and colonial administrators in Virginia had limited the violence of the First Anglo-Powhatan War, the disconnect between center and periphery limited the effectiveness of these initiatives. Those dreaming of colonization from London proved to be far more enthusiastic about evangelizing than the men and women of Virginia who lived on the frontiers of cultural contact. Progress on the college stalled because few of the colonists were willing to divert laborers from their own plantations to finish its construction.²³ George Thorpe, who arrived in 1621 to take up a position as the college's deputy, proved himself a sincere and energetic advocate for peaceful coexistence between colonists and converted Indians. Despite his strenuous attempts to win the hearts and minds of the Powhatans, however, Thorpe complained that the rest of the settlers often treated Indians with an air

²² *JHBV*, 10; Patrick Copland, "A Declaration how the monies . . . were disposed . . . towards the building of a free Schoole in Virginia . . ." 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:537-40; Smith, "The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles . . ." 1624," in *Complete Works*, 2:288; Virginia Company, "Instructions to George Yeardley," November 18, 1618, in *RVCL*, 3:102; Edward Waterhouse, "A Declaration of the State of the Colony and . . . a Relation of the Barbarous Massacre," 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:575-77. On the Henrico College and the East India School, see Robert Hunt Land, "Henrico and Its College," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd ser., 18, no. 4 (October 1938): 453-498.

²³ *JHBV*, 7; Smith, "Generall Historie," in *Complete Works*, 2:292.

of condescension that made social integration difficult.²⁴ On the other side of the cultural divide, Powhatans were less interested in Christianity than Thorpe and his backers had hoped. Missionaries believed that Indian children could acquire English civility only if they were separated from their families and raised in English households.

Unsurprisingly, few Powhatan families were willing to surrender their children to the care of strangers. Protestant missionaries persisted in their attempts to procure Powhatan children for fosterage, including Governor George Yeardley's clumsy attempts to purchase them from their parents. Despite the limited commitment and lack of success, the aggressive nature of these missions represented a form of cultural imperialism that continued to strain Anglo-Powhatan relations.²⁵

The environmental changes wrought by Virginia's transition to commercial agriculture increased tensions even further. The introduction of tobacco gave the colony its first marketable export, fueling an influx of new immigrants hungry for land. Because tobacco cultivation quickly exhausted the soil, the settlers' demands for land were insatiable. The exorbitant price of tobacco after 1619 turned a trickle into a flood, resulting in an explosion of English settlement up the banks of the James River. By 1622

²⁴ George Thorpe and John Pory, "A Letter to Sir Edwin Sandys," May 15-16, 1621, in *RVCL*, 3:446. See also Helen C. Rountree, "The Powhatans and the English: A Case of Multiple Conflicting Agendas," in Rountree, ed., *Powhatan Foreign Relations, 1500-1722* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 189-90.

²⁵ *JHBV*, 1:10; *RVCL*, 1:588; Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or, Purchas His Pilgrimes: Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others*, 20 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905), 19:159-60; Smith, "Generall Historie," in *Complete Works*, 2:294-95; Waterhouse, "Declaration of the State," in *RVCL*, 3:552. See also Alden T. Vaughan, "'Expulsion of the Salvages': English Policy and the Virginia Massacre of 1622," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 35, no. 1 (January 1978): 57-84.

Virginia consisted of more than eighty separate plantations.²⁶ Virginian livestock, particularly pigs, spread the ecological imprint of colonization far beyond actual English territory. Because the colonists lacked the time to tend to them, colonists allowed their livestock to roam through the hinterland in search of forage. In the process they effectively promoted a kind of animal incursion into Powhatan lands.²⁷

As far as the Company was concerned, this explosive growth and the greater proximity to surrounding Powhatan settlements dovetailed nicely with the work of religious and cultural conversion. After some initial concern about the vulnerability of far-flung settlements, the London Council directed English settlers to open their doors to their Indian neighbors. Some colonists invited entire Powhatan families to live and work with them.²⁸ Despite their willingness to employ Indian laborers, though, English planters demanded exclusive use of the best agricultural land for tobacco. Every new plantation that sprouted along the banks of the James meant less land for Powhatan hunting grounds, and foraging livestock often ravaged Powhatan cornfields. Virginia's prosperity in the Atlantic marketplace made increasing demands on the physical environment of Tsenacommacah, and its native people saw the resources of their

²⁶ Council in Virginia, "Letter to Virginia Company of London," January 20, 1622/3, in *RVCL*, 4:13; *JHBV*, 1:36; Smith, "Generall Historie," *Complete Works*, 2:293. On the colony's tobacco-fueled success, see Edmund S. Morgan, "The First American Boom: Virginia 1618-1630," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 28, no. 2 (April 1971): 170-198.

²⁷ Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 107-140.

²⁸ *JHBV*, 10; "Two Tragical Events," *William and Mary Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (April 1901): 208; Smith, "Generall Historie," *Complete Works*, 2:292-94; Waterhouse, "Declaration of the State," in *RVCL*, 3:550; Sir George Yeardley, "A Letter to [Sir Edwin Sandys]," 1619, in *RVCL*, 3:128-29.

homeland swallowed by the English invaders.²⁹ Virginia's boom years necessarily meant a time of contraction for the people of Tsenacommacah.

Wahunsenacawh did not challenge the English even as they began to dismantle the nation that he spent his whole life building. "I am now olde," he told Ralph Hamor while negotiating the peace that ended the First Anglo-Powhatan War, "and would gladly end my daies in peace."³⁰ Upon Wahunsenacawh's death in 1618, his younger (though still quite old) brother Opitchapam inherited the title of mamatanowick. However, Opitchapam's brother Opechancanough was the real power in the Powhatan chiefdom. Hamor wrote that even during Wahunsenacawh's reign Opechancanough was a force to be reckoned with, a prominent Pamunkey weroance who "hath already the commaund of all the people." He respected the authority of his mamatanowick but favored a more militant position and consistently advocated resistance to the invaders.³¹

²⁹ Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:164.

³⁰ Hamor, *True Discourse*, 42.

³¹ Hamor, *True Discourse*, 10. Carl Bridenbaugh has suggested that Opechancanough was the same person as Paquinquino (rechristened Don Luis) that appears in the records of Spanish Jesuits in 1561, and that his hard-line stance towards European incursions stemmed from his kidnapping and forced conversion. There is an attractive symmetry to this thesis, since it was Don Luis who led the attack that wiped out the Spanish mission at Bahía de Santa María de Ajacán in 1571, and Opechancanough who orchestrated the genocidal massacre of English colonists in 1622; see Carl Bridenbaugh, *Early Americans* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 7-17; "Letter of Juan Rogel to Francis Borgia," "Relation of Juan de la Carrera," "Relation of Bartolomé Martínez," and "Relation of Luis Gerónimo de Oré," in Clifford M. Lewis and Loomie, ed., *The Spanish Jesuit Mission in Virginia, 1570-1572* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 103-14, 123-42, 148-65, 170-92. Unfortunately, there is little evidence to substantiate this assertion. Paquinquino possessed the rights as weroance among the Paspaheghs, who were not part of the Powhatan chiefdom in 1571. Algonquian people inherited such status matrilineally, indicating that he could not be from the same family as Wahunsenacawh (and therefore Opechancanough) or else he would have inherited the mantle of paramount chief before either of them. See Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 26-28. It is more likely that Opechancanough's hostility was a manifestation of indigenous resistance to English colonization, an explanation that requires no supposed Spanish influence for support. In a more speculative vein, Opechancanough's humiliation at John Smith's hands may have influenced his hatred of the English. In 1609 Smith, fearing ambush while among hundreds of Opechancanough's Pamunkey followers, seized the weroance by the arm and held a pistol to his chest, parading him in front

Opechancanough realized that Powhatan attempts to assimilate the English would come to nothing, and that the tassantassas' vision for the country of Virginia would include his people only if they sacrificed their identity, their culture, and their souls.³² This cultural contest was all the more dangerous because it included many of the preconditions for mass violence, principally in the growing recognition that Powhatan and English patterns of living on the land, and their exercise of authority on that territory, were mutually exclusive. The seeds for the massacre were thus planted when Opechancanough first grasped the logic of elimination inherent in English colonization and took steps to defend his people against it.³³

By the summer of 1621 Opechancanough was ready to launch his campaign against the tassantassas, planning to execute an assault during Wahunsenacawh's burial. Like all weroances, the former mamanatowick had been disemboweled after his death

of his people as a hostage. To a Powhatan weroance, whose authority derived from personal prestige, this performance was both degrading and politically damaging. According to Helen Rountree, "it is very likely that Opechancanough never forgave Chawnzmit [John Smith]—or the Tassantassas—for doing such a thing." See Smith, "The Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia since their first beginning from England in the yeare of our Lord 1606, till this present 1612," 1612, in *Complete Works*, 1:252-53; Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 124-26.

³² James Horn, "The Conquest of Eden: Possession and Dominion in Early Virginia," in *Envisioning an English Empire: Jamestown and the Making of the North Atlantic World*, ed. Robert Applebaum and John Wood Sweet (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 43; Vaughan, "'Expulsion of the Salvages,'" 74-75.

³³ Fausz, "Powhatan Uprising," 307-14; Horn, "Conquest of Eden," 47-48; Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 187; Rountree, "Powhatans and the English," 174. For a biography of Opechancanough and analysis of his motivations, see J. Frederick Fausz, "Opechancanough: Indian Resistance Leader," in *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America*, ed. David G. Sweet and Gary B. Nash (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 21-37. Whether Opechancanough himself understood the process of English colonization in this way is necessarily speculative, but even the most vitriolic English writers generally attributed this understanding to the Powhatans. Edward Waterhouse, for example, wrote that the 1622 massacre was caused by the Powhatan's fear that "we by our growing continually vpon them, would dispossesse them of this Country." Waterhouse, "Declaration of the State," in *RVCL*, 3:556; see also "Two Tragical Events," 213.

and allowed to decompose on a scaffold. Opechancanough invited most of Jamestown's leaders and prominent men to the ceremony in which Wahunsenacawh's bleached bones would be reverently laid to rest. He planned to poison the English dignitaries, assassinating the colony's leadership while his warriors fanned out in a massive assault on English settlements. To procure a sufficient supply of poison potent enough to do the job, Opechancanough sent emissaries to the Accomacs of the Eastern shore where the venomous plant, spotted cowbane, grew in great quantities. Though enticed by Opechancanough's gifts, the Accomac weroance Esmey Shichans saw no advantage in allying with the Powhatans and promptly warned the English of Opechancanough's plans. Governor Yeardley put the colony on alert and prepared for an attack, forcing Opechancanough to abort his plans and assure the nervous English of his continued desire for peace. The assault failed to materialize, and the colonists lapsed back into a state of complacency. By the time the new governor, Francis Wyatt, arrived in November, he found "the Countrey at his arrivall in very greate amytye and confidence with the natives," and firmly believed that the peace would continue.³⁴

Opechancanough probably planned his assault for late summer, after the corn harvest, so once his plans for 1621 failed he would have bided his time until the

³⁴ "Two Tragical Events," 213; Council in Virginia, "Letter to Virginia Company of London," January 1621/22, in *RVCL*, 3:583-84 (quotation); Council in Virginia, "Letter to Virginia Company of London," in *RVCL*, 4:10; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:164; Smith, "Map of Virginia," in *Complete Works*, 1:169; Smith, "Generall Historie," in *Complete Works*, 2:284, 298; Strachey, *Historie of Travaile*, 89; Waterhouse, "Declaration of the State," in *RVCL*, 3:550, 556. On the relations between the Powhatans and the chiefdoms of the Eastern Shore, see Thomas E. Davidson, "Relations Between the Powhatans and the Eastern Shore," in *Powhatan Foreign Relations*, 136-53; James D. Rice, "Escape from Tsenacommacah: Chesapeake Algonquians and the Powhatan Menace," in *Envisioning an English Empire*, 127-30.

following year.³⁵ The death of Nemattanew in early March, however, forced his hand. A colorful figure known to the English as “Jack-of-Feathers” for his elaborately plumed armor, Nemattanew was the Pamunkey war captain and a dynamic leader held in awe by his fellow Powhatans. During the First Anglo-Powhatan War a decade earlier, Nemattanew had inspired his men with his courage, defiantly facing English guns and boasting that he was impervious to bullets.³⁶ Two English servant boys dramatically disproved this claim: after Nemattanew murdered an Englishman named Morgan for reasons that remain obscure, they retaliated by shooting and killing the Indian hero.³⁷ His death was a personal blow to Opechancanough, but it was also a blow to the pride and prestige of the Pamunkey tribe, whose central position in the paramount chiefdom rested on the reputation of its leaders. Nemattanew’s inglorious death must have enraged younger warriors and sparked calls for immediate vengeance, while at the same time weakening Opechancanough’s power to command them. Instead of waiting for the first leaves of autumn, he had to make his move before he lost control of his own people.³⁸

³⁵ Fausz, “Powhatan Uprising,” 359-61; Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 12-13, 239-40.

³⁶ J. Frederick Fausz and Jon Kukla, ed., “A Letter of Advice to the Governor of Virginia, 1624,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 34, no. 1 (January 1977): 117; Smith, “Generall Historie,” in *Complete Works*, 2:293.

³⁷ “Two Tragical Events,” 213; Fausz and Kukla, “Letter of Advice,” 117; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:168.

³⁸ Fausz, “Powhatan Uprising,” 356-59. On the connection between reputation and authority in the Powhatan chiefdom, see Rountree, *Powhatan Indians*, 114-16; Rountree, “Who Were the Powhatans,” 7-13, 18-19. Nemattanew may have preemptively tried to mitigate the political ramifications of his humiliating death, for his last thoughts were to protect the image of his own invincibility. As he lay dying, the Pamunkey hero asked his killers to bury him in an English grave and not to tell anyone that he was killed by a bullet. See Fausz and Kukla, “Letter of Advice,” 117; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:168; Smith, “Generall Historie,” *Complete Works*, 2:293.

English leaders, who had faced Nemattanew in the First Anglo-Powhatan War and understood his importance to the Powhatans, braced for retaliation—but none came. Instead, Opechancanough sent word to Jamestown that “for his parte he could be contented his throte were Cutt” if Nemattanew’s death caused a breach with the English, “and that the Skye should sooner falle then [the] Peace be broken.” Opechancanough’s skillful diplomacy convinced the colonists that he intended to abide by the peace, and within weeks they were again welcoming Indians into their houses.³⁹ Meanwhile, Opechancanough marshaled his forces for a blow that would tear out the hearts of the people who had invaded his country.

On the morning of March 22, 1622, Powhatan Indians came to every major plantation up and down the James River, unarmed and smiling, happily greeting their English friends.⁴⁰ They brought a variety of goods to trade, including game, fish, and fowl, and in many cases sat down with their neighbors for breakfast. Then, at 8 o’clock, they suddenly rose up, grabbing anything at hand—tools, knives, unattended English weapons—and slaughtered their hosts. The Powhatans struck with such suddenness and ferocity that many colonists did not even realize they were being attacked before they

³⁹ Council in Virginia, “Letter to Virginia Company,” in *RVCL*, 4:10-11. See also Waterhouse, “Declaration of the State,” in *RVCL*, 3:550; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:158.

⁴⁰ The reason why Opechancanough chose this particular day for the massacre is uncertain. Helen Rountree suggests that it may have been connected with the date of the quarter moon (March 23), or was chosen by Powhatan priests based on their divinations; see Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 212. However, Opechancanough had spent a great deal of time deceptively courting George Thorpe in order to encourage his missionary efforts, and no doubt knew that Christians would observe March 22 as Good Friday. This choice made strategic sense because attacking on a holiday would have accentuated the element of surprise. In a war of cultures, moreover, it was also a way for Opechancanough to show his contempt for the religion of those who had come to Tsenacommacah trying to convert his people. On Opechancanough’s insincere embrace of Christianity, see “Two Tragical Events,” 209-11; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 161; Smith, “Generall Historie,” in *Complete Works*, 2:287, 295; Waterhouse, “Declaration of the State,” in *RVCL*, 3:552.

died. The Powhatans planned well, assigning appropriately sized parties to each settlement and portioning out their targets beforehand. They quickly tracked down any colonists not at home, a task made easier by their intimate knowledge of the tassantassas' schedules and habits. The warriors showed contempt for their enemies by mutilating their remains, slaughtering their livestock, and burning the houses they had built on the soil of Tsenacommacah. In just a few hours, the forces of the Powhatan tribes killed 349 men, women, and children, leaving behind nothing but butchered bodies and smoking ruins. Thanks to the warning of an Indian boy who had converted to Christianity, Jamestown and some of the larger settlements were able to mount a defense and drive off their attackers. Even so, one quarter of the colony's population fell that day and the remainder cowered in isolated pockets of terror and despair. "I thinke the last massacre killed all our Countrie," wrote one colonist miserably; "besides them they killed, they burst the heart of all the rest."⁴¹

⁴¹ "Two Tragical Events," 209, 213; William Capps, "Letter to Doctor Thomas Wynston," March or April (?), 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:38 (quotation); Council in Virginia, "A Letter to the Virginia Company of London," April (after 20th), 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:612; Robert C. Johnson, "The Indian Massacre of 1622: Some Correspondence of the Reverend Joseph Mead," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 71, no. 4 (October 1963): 408-9; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:158-59, 162-63; Smith, "Generall Historie," in *Complete Works*, 2:294-98; William Noel Sainsbury, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), 1:31 (hereafter cited as *CSP*, Col.); Waterhouse, "Declaration of the State," in *RVCL*, 3:550-55. Both Smith and Waterhouse report a total of 347 casualties, though their lists of names both add up to 349; see Smith, "Generall Historie," in *Complete Works*, 2:301-2; Waterhouse, "Declaration of the State," in *RVCL*, 565-571.

Frontier Power and the Logic of Elimination

The English reacted very differently to the Jamestown Massacre depending on whether they viewed it from the eastern or western shore of the Atlantic.⁴² Those who wrote from England were shocked by the colony's devastating setback and expressed their vehement outrage. Daniel Waterhouse, secretary for the Virginia Company, wrote the first published account as *A Declaration of the State of the Colony and... A Relation of the Barbarous Massacre*. Breaking the news to the public, he informed his readers of "a barbarous Massacre in the time of peace and League, treacherously executed vpon *the English by the natiue Infidels*." He assured his compatriots that "it was not the strength of the professed enemy that brought this slaughter" on the Virginian colonists, but "the perfidious treachery of a false-hearted people."⁴³ Samuel Purchas echoed his sentiments and condemned the "immaine, inhumane, devillish treachery" committed by the Powhatans with language calculated to inflame the passions of his readers. "Virginia was violently ravished by her owne ruder Natives," he wrote, "yea her Virgin cheekes dyed"

⁴² Many scholars prefer to avoid the stigma of the word "massacre," and use different terminology when discussing the massive Powhatan attack. Fausz, reasoning that the Powhatans were rebelling against English authority, calls it the "Powhatan Uprising." Rountree, imagining what the Powhatans might have called their attack, uses "Great Assault." Frederic Gleach suggests that the 1622 attack was not a massacre according to the Oxford English dictionary because Powhatan violence was neither "unnecessary" nor "indiscriminate," so he prefers the more neutral term "coup." See Fausz, "Powhatan Uprising," 6; Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas Powhatan Opechancanough: Three Indian Lives Changed by Jamestown* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 6; Frederic W. Gleach, *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 4-5. All three scholars, whatever term they use, nevertheless agree that Opechancanough launched his attack to accomplish specific ends. The Powhatans, therefore, systematically used mass violence, including the slaughter of unarmed non-combatants, in order to accomplish political goals. This fits any reasonable definition of massacre; in fact the political scientist Leo Kuper coined the term "genocidal massacre" to describe the instrumental use of mass killing in this manner. See Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), 10.

⁴³ Waterhouse, "Declaration of the State," in *RVCL*, 3:542 (emphasis in the original).

with blood.⁴⁴ A torrent of such condemnations flooded the streets of London, accusing Indians of treachery and murder, demanding vengeance for the rape of a virgin country.⁴⁵

Much of the fury expressed by the homeland-English revolved around their interpretation of the massacre as the Powhatans' extreme rejection of the English civilizing mission. In their eyes, the Indians had repaid kindness and generosity with betrayal and blood. Waterhouse, for example, was incensed by the murder of George Thorpe on the day of the massacre. Thorpe's death and the "foule scornes" committed on his body, so extreme "as are vnbefitting to be heard by any ciuill eare," made him into a "glorious Martyr."⁴⁶ The poet Christopher Brooke valorized Thorpe as well, and concluded that his murder represented the end of English hopes for Christian Indians. The English had come to America "to make those *Indians* know / The'Eternal God," he wrote,

To make them apt to what thou didst propound
For our Commence with them; their good, our peace,
And both to helpe with mutuall increase.

⁴⁴ Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:229. On the significance of Purchas's sexualized discourse, see Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), 158-61.

⁴⁵ On the "revenge literature" coming from England, see Fausz, "Powhatan Uprising," 404-43.

⁴⁶ Waterhouse, "Declaration of the State," in *RVCL*, 3:551-53. Thorpe received advance warning that the Indians whose souls he sought to save were attacking English settlements, but refused to believe that they would harm him. He was killed as he stood calmly outside his house. See "Two Tragicall Events," 212; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:161; Smith, "Generall Historie," in *Complete Works*, 2:295.

But their efforts were useless, because even if the English colonists had been as numerous as grains of sand on a beach “They could not loose the hold the Diuell hath, / Or bring them to the knowledge of our Faith.”⁴⁷ As far as Brooke was concerned, by rising up against their supposed benefactors, the Indians had demonstrated their unwillingness to accept the English vision for the transformation of their culture and country. The Jamestown Massacre proved that Powhatans were implacable enemies of the colonial enterprise. More horribly, they had acted as “tools of the devil” and “despised Gods great mercies so freely offered to them,” making them into implacable enemies of God.⁴⁸

As voices in England cried for vengeance, their rhetoric took on an ideological cast that emphasized the radical otherness of the Powhatan perpetrators. English writers painted lurid pictures of bestial savagery and demonic malevolence. Waterhouse wrote, “these miscreants... put not off onely all humanity, but put on a worse and more then vnnaturall brutishnesse”; they were scarcely human and “more fell then Lyons and Dragons.”⁴⁹ Brooke’s accusations of inhumanity were more florid and more explicit, calling the Indians “that Host of Hells black brood, / Wolues, Tygars, Tyrants, that haue suckt the blood / of Christian Soules.” But this was to be expected:

For, but consider what those Creatures are,
(I cannot call them men) no Character

⁴⁷ Christopher Brooke, “A Poem on the Late Massacre in Virginia,” ed. Robert C. Johnson, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 72, no. 3 (July 1964): 283-84 (emphasis in the original).

⁴⁸ “Two Tragickall Events,” 213; Waterhouse, “Declaration of the State,” in *RVCL*, 3:553.

⁴⁹ Waterhouse, “Declaration of the State,” in *RVCL*, 3:551. See also Smith, “Generall Historie,” in *Complete Works*, 2:294.

Of God in them: Soules drown'd in flesh and blood;
 Rooted in Euill, and oppos'd in Good;
 Errors of Nature, of inhumane Birth,
 The very dregs, garbage, and spawne of Earth.

By dehumanizing their enemies, the homeland-English thus crafted a rationale for genocide rooted in their imaginary construction of the Powhatan Indians. Overcome with the savage pathos of grief and rage, Brooke called for the outright extermination of the Indians. “What feare or pittie were it, or what sin,” he asked, “To quite their Slaughter, leauing not a Creature / That may restore such shame of Men, and Nature?”⁵⁰ Going beyond visceral wrath, Purchas combined evocations of the Powhatans’ otherness with a legal rationale for mass violence. First, he argued, the Powhatans’ unprovoked attack violated the law of nations. “England may both by Law of Nature and Nations challenge Virginia for her owne peculiar propriety,” he wrote, because “disloyall treason hath now confiscated whatsoever remainders of the right the unnaturall Naturalls had, and made both them and their Countrey wholly English.” The Powhatans’ unilateral breach of the law of nations justified an unlimited response in order to achieve the “just vengeance of rooting out the authors and actors of so prodigious injustice.” Purchas buttressed this political claim with a second argument, in which he cited biblical wars of conquest as a worthy precedent for the English response. “The Holy Patriarks had a promise of Canaan,” he wrote, and their descendants had fulfilled that promise—just as the English should claim their just rights over Virginian land. Purchas thus invoked one of the bloodiest episodes of the Hebrew Scriptures, explaining that the English possessed the

⁵⁰ Brooke, “Poem on the Late Massacre,” 276, 285. Maudlin expressions of sorrow and grief can be found throughout, but see for example p. 274-75.

legal sanction to do the same to the Indians of Virginia as the Israelites had done to the inhabitants of Canaan.⁵¹

Waterhouse made it clear that the calls for genocide among the homeland-English were not simply an ephemeral thirst for retribution. Rather, these new attitudes represented a fundamental shift in their conception of the colonial project. While he mourned the loss of so many colonists, Waterhouse also rejoiced,

Because our hands which before were tied with gentlenesse and faire vsage, are now set at liberty by the treacherous violence of the Sa[v]ages not vntying the Knot, but cutting it: So that we, who hitherto haue had possession of no more ground than their waste, and our purchase at a valueable consideration to their owne contentment, gained; may now by right of Warre, and law of Nations, inuade the Country, and destroy them who sought to destroy vs: whereby wee shall enioy their cultiuated places, turning the laborious Mattacke into the victorious Sword (wherein there is more both ease, benefit, and glory) and possessing the fruits of others labours. Now their cleared grounds in all their villages (which are situate in the fruitfulest places of the land) shall be inhabited by vs.⁵²

For Waterhouse, as for many others in England, the dream of a Christian commonwealth in America, populated by English colonists and Anglicized Indians, had died along with hundreds of his countrymen on March 22 of 1622. The Powhatan Massacre unequivocally demonstrated the incompatibility of English and Indian visions for the country of Virginia. As far as the English were concerned, they had tried to extend the hands of holy fellowship, to bring the light of Christ and the glory of English civilization, but the Indians' hearts were filled with savage hate and their eyes were

⁵¹ Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:224-25, 229-30 (quotation). Purchas also mentions David's conquest of Ammon to bolster his argument for the justice of retaliatory conquest (p. 224, 229).

⁵² Waterhouse, "Declaration of the State," in *RVCL*, 3:556-57.

blinded by the devil's darkness. The colonists' only recourse was to utterly destroy their enemy.⁵³

Once Purchas, Waterhouse, and others articulated these rationales, the Virginia Company used them to formulate a colonial policy of mass murder and territorial expulsion. The London Council ordered its agents in Virginia to take "sharp revenge vppon the bloody miscreants, even to the measure that they intended against vs, the rooting them out for being longer a people vppon the face of the Earth."⁵⁴ The Company's prescription was "a perpetuall warre without peace or truce," a total war in which the Virginian forces were to pursue the Indians,

surprisinge them in their habitations, intercepting them in their hunting, burninge their Townes, demolishing their Temples, destroyinge their Canoes, plucking vpp their weares, carying away their Corne, and depriving them of whatsoever may yeeld them succor or relief: by which meanes in a very short while, both your iust revenge, and your perpetuall security might be certainly effected.

To maximize the deadliness of the war, the Company suggested that the colonists offer bounties in copper and beads to any friendly Indians bringing in Powhatan heads. The instructions allowed for something less than the extinction of the Powhatans, but put the

⁵³ Those few voices in England that opposed the prevailing tide of opinion advocated policies scarcely less brutal. Captain John Martin, for example, opposed the extirpation of the Powhatan Indians on the mercenary grounds that they would bring more profit to the colony if subjugated and made into slaves; see John Martin, "The Manner Howe to Bringe the Indians into Subiection," December 15, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:706. George Wyatt recommended the same course of action to his son, Francis Wyatt, writing that some Indians "are to be taken in Nets and Toiles alive, reserved to be made tame and searve to good purpose." See Fausz and Kukla, "Letter of Advice," 127.

⁵⁴ Virginia Company, "A Letter to the Governor and the Council in Virginia," October 7, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:683.

minimum acceptable result as “at least the remoueuall of them so farr from you, as you may not only be out of danger, but out of feare of them” forever.⁵⁵

While those who eyed the conflict from across the Atlantic indulged in ideological fantasies of ultimate revenge, the Virginian-English balked at grandiose plans calling for them to raze the Indian empire to ashes. In the immediate aftermath of the massacre, the Powhatan tribes claimed undisputed mastery of the countryside. Forced to abandon their far-flung settlements, settlers left more than seventy plantations empty in order to huddle as refugees in half a dozen defensive bastions. The Virginians were effectively under siege by an enemy who had mastered the art of forest warfare, who stalked the shadowed woods and “like violent lightening are gone as soone as perceived.”⁵⁶ The Powhatans had no need to face the English guns in a direct assault. Since the colonists were unable to farm or forage for fear of ambush, the Powhatans simply watched them huddle behind their walls and waited for them to starve to death.⁵⁷ The hungry refugees packed into the remaining settlements proved easy prey to

⁵⁵ Treasurer and Council for Virginia, “Letter to Governor and Council in Virginia,” August 1, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:671-72.

⁵⁶ *JHBV*, 1:37; Council in Virginia, “Letter to Virginia Company,” in *RVCL*, 4:11-13; Governor in Virginia, “Commission to Captain Roger Smith,” April 13, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:609-11, George Sandys, “Letter to Sir Samuel Sandys,” March 30, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:73 (quotation); Smith, “Generall Historie,” in *Complete Works*, 2:302. Most of the refugees congregated in Jamestown, Elizabeth City, Southampton Hundred, Shirley Hundred, Flowerdew Hundred, Newport News, and Samuel Jordan’s plantation; see Council in Virginia, “Letter to the Virginia Company,” in *RVCL*, 3:612. On the vulnerability of the English outside of their strongholds, see *JHBV*, 1:38; “Notes Taken from Letters which came from Virginia in the ‘Abigail,’” June 19, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:229; Council in Virginia, “Letter to the Virginia Company,” in *RVCL* 3:613-14; Richard Frethorne, “Letter to his Father and Mother,” March 20 and April 2-3, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:58-59; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:210-11.

⁵⁷ Alternately, Opechancanough may have decided not to follow up his initially successful attack because he assumed that the English would react in the way that Native Americans would: by withdrawing or surrendering. See Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas’s People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia Through Four Centuries* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 75.

“pestilent feuer” that arrived from a supply of tainted beer aboard the resupply ship *Abigail*, and the new arrivals themselves succumbed to “scurvie & bloodie fluxe.” In the first year after the Powhatan massacre more than five hundred of the surviving colonists died from famine and disease, and many of the rest were too debilitated to work, farm, or fight.⁵⁸ Virginia became a charnel house and its people sank into the paralysis of despair. “I haue nothing to Comfort me,” the young indentured servant Richard Frethorne wrote mournfully to his parents in England, “ther is nothing to be gotten here but sicknes, and death.”⁵⁹

While the colonists no doubt identified with the outrage that their brethren expressed in England, the emotional cast of the colony was not zealous rage so much as hopelessness and dread. The massacre had taken everyone by surprise, and the “sodayne alteracon of the State of all thinges, so dismaide the whole Colony, as they allmost gaue themselues for gone.”⁶⁰ The massive dislocations left many Virginians vulnerable to Indian ambushes, and every colonist lived in fear because they could be picked off at

⁵⁸ “Notes Taken from . . . the ‘Abigail,’” in *RVCL*, 4:234, 239; Johnson, “Indian Massacre,” 410; Richard Frethorne, “Letter to Mr. Bateman,” March 5, 1622/3, in *RVCL*, 4:41-42 (quotation); Frethorne, “Letter to his Father and Mother,” in *RVCL*, 58-62; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:237; George Sandys, “Letter to Mr. Farrer by the Hopewel,” March 1622/3, in *RVCL* 4:25 (quotation); George Sandys, “Letter to Samuel Wrote,” March 28, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:65; George Sandys, “Letter to Sir Miles Sandys,” March 30, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:71; George Sandys, “Letter to Sir Samuel Sandys,” in *RVCL*, 4:74, Virginia Company, “Discourse of the Old Company,” April (?) 1625, in *RVCL*, 4:525.

⁵⁹ Frethorne, “Letter to his Father and Mother,” in *RVCL*, 4:59. On the impact of Richard Frethorne’s letters in England, see Emily Rose, “The Politics of Pathos: Richard Frethorne’s Letters Home,” in *Envisioning an English Empire*, 92-108.

⁶⁰ Virginia Company, “Discourse of the Old Company,” in *RVCL*, 4:524. As William Powell notes, “So stunned were the people by the blow and so great was their loss that between twenty and thirty days passed before any concerted plan of action could be determined.” See William S. Powell, “Aftermath of the Massacre: The First Indian War, 1622-1632,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 66, no. 1 (January 1958): 44-75.

any moment. One settler reported that “if wee goe out in the morning, wee know not whether wee shall ever returne.”⁶¹ While it can be imagined that the Virginians hated the Powhatans as much as sympathetic writers thousands of miles away, the combination of physical misery and a permanent state of terror left them numb. Begging his parents to help him escape from his suffering, Frethorne noted that “people crie out day, and night... Oh that they were in England without their lymbes and would not care to loose anie lymbe” if it meant that they could “bee in England againe... for wee live in feare of the Enimy.”⁶² These traumatized settlers were unlikely to prosecute a grueling campaign of genocidal war. Colonial administrators found it difficult enough to mobilize them for defense.⁶³

Governor Wyatt complained to his father in England that the Company’s shareholders did not understand how desperate their situation really was. “Such an Antipathy is there betweene theyr vast Commands and our grumbling Obedience,” he

⁶¹ Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:210-11.

⁶² Frethorne, “Letter to his Father and Mother,” in *RVCL*, 4:58.

⁶³ In order to raise a force sufficient to defend the colony, Wyatt was forced to levy able-bodied men and granted his officers the power to enforce a level of military discipline not seen since the abolition of the *Lawes Martiall*; see Governor in Virginia, “Commission to Captain Roger Smith,” April 13, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:609; Governor in Virginia, “Commission to Capt. Ralph Hamor,” April 15, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:610; Governor in Virginia, “Commission to Order to Ralph Hamor,” April 19, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:610; Governor in Virginia, “Commission to Captain Smith,” April 20, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:611; Governor in Virginia, “Proclamation,” April 29, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:129-30; Governor in Virginia, “Commission to Captain Roger Smith,” May 18, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:623; Governor in Virginia, “A Commission to William Tucker,” July 16, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:664-65; Smith, “Generall Historie,” in *Complete Works*, 2:305; Sir Francis Wyatt, “A Commission to Sir George Yeardley,” June 20, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:657. See also Louis Morton, “The Origins of American Military Policy,” *Military Affairs* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1958), 77. On mass violence and the psychology of trauma, see Ervin Staub, “Reconciliation after Genocide, Mass Killing, or Intractable Conflict: Understanding the Roots of Violence, Psychological Recovery, and Steps Toward a General Theory,” *Political Psychology* 27, no. 6 (2006): 871; Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 162-65.

wrote in exasperation. “They talke of an Army of 500 to issue out vpon th’ Indians in all parts and after a running Army of 150 to vex them in all places.”⁶⁴ Treasurer and Council member George Sandys considered this plan an absurdity at a time “*when out of the whole Collonie wee Could but raise 180 (whereof 80 were fit onelie to Carrie burthens).*” He reacted with incredulity when the Company ordered the Virginians to make a direct assault on thousands of Powhatan warriors while their food stores stood empty and their streets still ran with the excrement of dying men.⁶⁵ The Virginia Company attempted to resolve these problems by pouring men into the colony but neglected to equip them with adequate food, clothing, and other vital supplies. Supply ships thus did “not bring either comfort or supply to the Colonie: but only add to their Calamitie, to their greife,” because instead of bringing reinforcements they brought only more hungry and desperate men who proved to be “an insupportable charge to the Colony.”⁶⁶ The agencies of power in London ordered their colonial representatives to carry out a policy of genocide, but alienated the leaders who were supposed to execute that policy and exacerbated the conditions that prevented them from doing so.

Despite their frustration with directives from London, the settlers needed the support of the Company for its survival. In addition to military and logistical problems,

⁶⁴ “Notes Taken from the . . . ‘Abigail,’” in *RVCL*, 4:237.

⁶⁵ Sandys, “Letter to Samuel Wrote,” in *RVCL*, 4:67 (emphasis in the original). See also Council in Virginia, “Letter to Virginia Company,” in *RVCL*, 4:12-13; Sandys, “Letter to Sir Samuel Sandys,” in *RVCL*, 4:74.

⁶⁶ Virginia Company, “Discourse of the Old Company,” in *RVCL*, 4:527. See also Council in Virginia, “Letter to Virginia Company,” in *RVCL*, 4:13-16; Sandys, “Letter to Samuel Wrote,” in *RVCL*, 4:65. On the Company’s mismanagement in the aftermath of the massacre, see Wesley Frank Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company: The Failure of a Colonial Experiment* (1932; reprint, Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964), 205-19.

the colony faced the additional imperative of demonstrating its viability to nervous investors overseas. Virginia was a mercantile enterprise, after all, and for a decade and a half it had swallowed money and men without having much to show for it. The colony's only financial success was tobacco, a noxious weed widely considered to be morally unfit as the economic basis for an English empire. Moreover, the mania for growing tobacco during the boom years after 1619 meant that the colonists had not bothered to grow enough corn to feed themselves. They survived only by depending on food supplies from surrounding Indians and shipments from England.⁶⁷ Once Opechancanough declared war on the Virginians and his people stopped trading corn, the settlers knew that they needed to convince the homeland that the devastated and failing colony deserved further infusions of capital and manpower. That meant producing a profit—or at least making a case that the colonists could produce a profit given sufficient assistance. This became all the more difficult when the Company's gross mismanagement resulted in continual shortages of supplies even as its demands grew increasingly fantastic. In August of 1622, for example, just one month after receiving news of the massacre, the Council in London wrote to Wyatt that “yor want of Corne doth much perplex vs,” since the colony should have known that the Company could not afford to send supplies and should have grown their own food instead. Since “it is as fitt and necessarie to yeeld the return of Adventures [shareholders] as to receiue them,” the

⁶⁷ *JHBV*, 1:39; Council in Virginia, “Letter to Virginia Company,” in *RVCL*, 3:586; Council in Virginia, “A Letter to the Virginia Company of London,” January 30, 1623/4, in *RVCL*, 4:452-54; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 150-53; Smith, “Generall Historie,” in *Complete Works*, 2:284; Waterhouse, “Declaration of the State,” in *RVCL*, 3:546-47. On moral and practical opposition to tobacco culture, see King James I, *A Counter-blaste to Tobacco* (London, 1604); The King, “Letter to the Virginia Company,” July 9, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:662; Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company*, 93-94, 176-78.

Council demanded that the colonists ship back a larger freight of tobacco, build a fort to guard against the possibility of Spanish invasion, and redouble their efforts to grow mulberry orchards for sericulture and vineyards for the production of fine wines.⁶⁸

Despite Wyatt's frustration with these commands, he and his councilors understood that they could not continue to drain the Company's coffers and expect unlimited support. They also had to weigh the Company's schizophrenic instructions, which demanded that the Virginians fulfill Hakluytian dreams of New World riches and at the same time defend the national honor by sending out vast armies to exact genocidal vengeance. "Mingling matters of honor and proffitt often ouerthrow both," Wyatt wrote to his father in exasperation, complaining that it was impossible to defend the colony from thousands of hostile Indians with a handful of sick and famished men, pay the Company's debts, and embark upon grandiose new projects, all at the same time.⁶⁹ Failing to do so, however, might cause the investors to withdraw their support, leaving the Virginians, as Company secretary Nicholas Ferrar threatened, "cleane leafte & abandoned from any supplies hereafter... as you iustly deserue." The Virginians had to balance the commands emanating from the metropole with the realities of life on the colonial periphery.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Treasurer, "Letter to Governor and Council in Virginia," in *RVCL*, 3:668; Virginia Company, "A Letter to the Governor and Council in Virginia," October 7, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:685. The King and Company both commanded the shift towards sericulture and wine production two days before hearing news of the massacre, but later orders from the Company reiterated the same instructions. See *CSP*, Col. 1:31; "An Answer to a Declaracon of the Present State of Virginia," May 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:142-43; Virginia Company, "A Letter to the Governor and Council in Virginia," August 6, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:266-68.

⁶⁹ "Notes Taken from . . . the 'Abigail,'" in *RVCL*, 4:237.

⁷⁰ Virginia Company, "Letter to the Governor," in *RVCL*, 3:688; see also Council of the Virginia Company, "A Letter to Governor and Council in Virginia," June 10, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:648; Treasurer,

In this state of emergency, Governor Wyatt and his Council could not afford to listen to the strident voices in England howling for genocide, but neither could they afford to alienate their patrons. They decided to chart a middle course that would satisfy London's calls for revenge while still focusing on the pragmatic goals of survival and security. Rather than the extermination of the Powhatans, they made their first war aim the acquisition of enough food to feed the colony. In the months following the massacre, Wyatt issued a stream of commissions to his commanders authorizing them to procure corn from the surrounding natives by any means necessary. The instructions suggested peaceful trade if possible, though the commanders were granted broad latitude to initiate hostilities if the Indians refused or resisted. The commission granted to Ralph Hamor in April was fairly typical: Wyatt commanded him to sail the pinnace *Tyger* up the Chesapeake's rivers "to trade wth the Indians for corne; and in case he cann get no trade wth them, or not such as he expecteth, then it shalbe lawfull to take it from them (if he be able) by force."⁷¹ The tentative language of these orders belied a keen awareness of the limits of English power.

"Letter to Governor," in *RVCL*, 3:666-68; Virginia Company, "Letter to the Governor," in *RVCL*, 3:685; Virginia Company, "Letter to the Governor," in *RVCL*, 4:270. The pressure that the Virginia Company exerted on its colonial agents, struggling though they were, stemmed largely from its mounting financial debts and the crippling infighting between two rival factions of shareholders over control of the Company. Though infuriating from the Virginian point of view, the Company's contradictory instructions at least partly originated from a real crisis over the Company's solvency and a desperate need for a return on its investments. See Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company*, 176-220. For examples of the colonists' earnest efforts to meet these impossible demands, see *JHBV*, 1:26-27; Council in Virginia, "Letter to the Virginia Company," in *RVCL*, 3:614; Council in Virginia, "Letter to Virginia Company," in *RVCL*, 4:14-15; Council in Virginia, "Letter to Virginia Company of London," April 4, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:99; Virginia Company, "Letter to the Governor," in *RVCL*, 4:266-69; Council in Virginia, "Letter to the Virginia Company," in *RVCL*, 4:452-54.

⁷¹ Governor in Virginia, "Commission to Captain Raph Hamor," May 7, 1622, in *RVCL* 3:622. For similar commissions see Sir Francis Wyatt, "A Commission to Sir George Yeardley," in *RVCL* 3:657; Governor in Virginia, "A Commission to Sir George Yeardley," September 10, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:678-79; Governor

In their reports to London the Virginians voiced a harder line more in keeping with the Company's murderous instructions, promising that "by the way of starvinge and all other meanes that we can possiblye devise" they would engage the Indians and "Constantlie pursue their extirpatione."⁷² At the same time, they tried to convey the reality that extirpating the Powhatans was a practical impossibility, explaining that "the charge of driveinge them away, which woulde reduce us to a better estate then wee weare in before the massacre, [is] so great as it is to[o] wayghtie for us to support."⁷³ Even at their most vitriolic, the Virginians' denunciations of their Indian enemies did not possess the ideological edge so common among writers in London. While accusations of treachery abounded, the surviving records from Virginia lack the dehumanizing language so beloved by Brooke and Waterhouse, and the colonists did not bother to rationalize their retaliation by appealing to historical precedents or esoteric legal theories.⁷⁴

Military strategy during the Second Anglo-Powhatan War revolved around the tactics that George Wyatt called the "feedfight," in which small raiding parties lanced

of Virginia, "A Commission to Captain Raph Hamor," October 23, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:697; Governor of Virginia, "A Commission to Captain William Eden, alias Sampson," October 24, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:698-99; Governor of Virginia, "A Commission to Captain Isack Maddison and Robert Bennet," November 12, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:700-701.

⁷² Council in Virginia, "Letter to Virginia Company," in *RVCL*, 4:10.

⁷³ *JHBV*, 1:38.

⁷⁴ As Karen Ordahl Kupperman points out, English charges of treachery were less a symptom of cultural devaluation than a recognition of the sort of social and political tensions between peoples during wartime; see Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "English Perceptions of Treachery, 1583-1640: The Case of the American 'Savages,'" *Historical Journal* 20, no. 2 (June 1977): 263-287.

through Indian territory in search of corn.⁷⁵ The Virginian militia relied on their thick-hulled pinnaces for protection as they sailed up and down the Chesapeake's rivers, preventing Powhatan warriors from using their mastery of stealth and ambush to gain the upper hand. Moreover, the mobility granted by their vessels allowed the raiders to approach Native American communities with little enough warning that the widely dispersed Powhatan fighters could not respond in time, leaving the villages virtually undefended. When the Indians that they encountered refused to trade, the Virginians threatened, cajoled, and then attacked. After driving off the villagers, the soldiers seized as much corn as they could carry, destroyed the rest, and burned anything else the Indians left behind. During these "harshe visitts," as Francis Wyatt euphemistically called them, the raiders thus procured food supplies that they desperately needed and at the same time denied their enemies the same resource.⁷⁶

The feedfight exemplified what modern military strategists call "unlimited warfare," or warfare against non-combatants.⁷⁷ The goal was not to challenge Powhatan war parties for command of the countryside, but to target the agricultural resources that the Powhatans depended on for subsistence.⁷⁸ Wyatt told his officers as much, prefacing

⁷⁵ Fausz and Kukla, "Letter of Advice," 126-27.

⁷⁶ "Good Newes from Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 5, no. 3 (July 1948): 353-58; Council in Virginia, "Letter to Virginia Company," in *RVCL*, 4:99; Council in Virginia, "Letter to the Earl of Southampton and the Council and Company of Virginia," December 2, 1624, in *RVCL*, 4:508 (quotation); Johnson, "Indian Massacre," 409; Martin, "Manner Howe," in *RVCL*, 3:704-707; Sandys, "Letter to Sir Miles Sandys," in *RVCL*, 4:71; Smith, "Generall Historie," in *Complete Works*, 2:308-16; Waterhouse, "Declaration of the State," in *RVCL*, 3:557-58. On the feedfight, see Fausz, "Powhatan Uprising," 453-58; Shea, *Virginia Militia*, 32-34.

⁷⁷ Grenier, *First Way of War*, 21.

⁷⁸ Contrary to the often unexamined assumption that English firearms gave them a decisive offensive advantage, the success of the Virginian forces was largely due to premodern technologies of defense. The

several commissions by writing, “there is no meanes so probable to worke the ruine, the destruction of our Salvage & treacherous enemies, as cutting downe their Corne.”⁷⁹

Despite the Virginians’ willingness to target the civilian infrastructure of Powhatan society, though, they seldom killed non-combatants. One reason for this was that Powhatan villagers learned to detect the raiders’ approach early enough to abandon their communities in advance of their enemy’s arrival. Even when taken by surprise, the lightly clad Powhatans were nearly always able to elude their heavily armored opponents. Equally important, the Virginians were often not interested in pursuing them: feeding themselves, not killing Indians, was the colonists’ primary goal in the first hard year of the Second Anglo-Powhatan war. The ruthlessly efficient tactics of the feedfight guaranteed a great deal of destruction but little direct combat and few casualties on either side.⁸⁰

King had donated to the war effort an arsenal of obsolete armor, including forty suits of plate, four hundred coats of mail, five hundred shields, and two thousand helmets, all of which had been rusting in the Tower of London because they were considered “vnfitt for any moderne service” (“Note of Arms in the Tower for which the Virginia Company are Suitors,” July 17, 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:665; “A Warrant to the Lord Treasurer,” September 1622, in *RVCL*, 3:676). Soldiers sheathed in medieval steel proved to be virtually invincible to the flint-tipped arrows and wooden clubs of Powhatan warriors; see Nicholls, “Percy’s ‘Trewe Relacyon,’” 258-59; George Percy, “Observations,” in *Narratives of Early Virginia, 1606-1625*, ed. Lyon Gardiner Tyler (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1907), 17. Nearly all of the Virginian casualties during the Second Anglo-Powhatan War were the victims of ambushes, where Indian warriors could swiftly overwhelm the heavily encumbered Virginians. The defensive advantage of English armor therefore helps to explain not only the degree of Virginian military success during their raids, but also their initial reticence to engage the Powhatans on their own ground in the countryside. See Harold L. Peterson, *Arms and Armor in Colonial America* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Telegraph Press, 1956), 147-49; Shea, *Virginia Militia*, 57-58. Though he focuses on Indian tribes to the north of the Powhatans, Patrick Malone’s examination of Native American military technologies is also helpful; see Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics Among the New England Indians* (Lanham, Md.: Madison Books, 1991), 7-23.

⁷⁹ Governor Wyatt, “Commissions to Captain Pierce, to Captain Samuel Mathews, and to Others,” July 17-23, 1623), in *RVCL*, 4:250.

⁸⁰ Wyatt reported to London, somewhat defensively, that the English had not been able to kill many Indians in battle, but were assured by friendly Indians that through starvation “we have slayne more of

By the spring of 1623 the war settled into a vicious stalemate.⁸¹ The Powhatans were unable to penetrate English armor or withstand the concentrated power of English guns in the open field, making it difficult for them to resist Virginian marauders. Moreover, they were not willing to suffer the sort of casualties it would take to breach defensive fortifications, leaving the towns as islands of security from which the colonists could continue to launch their raids. For their part, the Virginians relied on cumbersome muskets and heavy armor, making it difficult for them to catch Powhatan fighters unaware or to force them to stand and fight.⁸² After a hard winter for both sides, Opechancanough sent a message to the English leaders that “blud inough had already been shedd one both sides,” and proposed an exchange of prisoners and a truce that would allow both peoples to plant corn. Wyatt and the Council were delighted, fully intending to let the mamatanowick believe they were at peace and then attack when the Powhatans were most vulnerable.⁸³ The more perceptive Virginians realized that the wily Indian leader was too cunning to fall for such a transparent ploy, and probably had

them this yeere, then hath been slayne before since the beginnige of the Colonie.” See Council in Virginia, “Letter to Virginia Company,” in *RVCL*, 4:10; “Notes Taken from . . . the ‘Abigail,’” in *RVCL*, 4:229. The Powhatan subsistence economy, which relied as much on winter hunting and gathering wild tuckahoe roots as on corn, makes this assessment unlikely. The English depredations certainly caused hardship for the Powhatans, but destroying their corn crops would not have caused the kind of mass starvation that Wyatt describes; see Rountree, *Powhatan Indians*, 32-57; Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 216-17.

⁸¹ For the most detailed account of events during the Second Anglo-Powhatan War, see Fausz, “Powhatan Uprising,” 447-517; see also Powell, “Aftermath of the Massacre.”

⁸² *JHBV*, 1:38; Council in Virginia, “Letter to Virginia Company,” in *RVCL*, 4:10; Smith, “Generall Historie,” in *Complete Works*, 2:310-11. See also Shea, *Virginia Militia*, 22.

⁸³ Council in Virginia, “Letter to Virginia Company,” in *RVCL*, 4:98-99; Sandys, “Letter to Sir Miles Sandys,” in *RVCL*, 4:71; Sandys, “Letter to Sir Samuel Sandys,” in *RVCL*, 4:74-75. The Powhatans took twenty captives during the Jamestown Massacre, five men and fifteen women. They executed the men sometime before March of 1623. See Frethorne, “Letter to Mr. Bateman,” in *RVCL*, 4:41; Council in Virginia, “Letter to Virginia Company,” in *RVCL*, 4:98-99; Smith, “Generall Historie,” in *Complete Works*, 2:309-10.

the same thing in mind. “[W]hen their Corne is readie,” wrote William Capps sardonically, “haue at yor bucklers you braue... Englishmen.”⁸⁴

The Virginians were determined to strike before Opechancanough could ready his forces, so they hatched a plan to assassinate him during the peace negotiations in May of 1623. When William Tucker and twelve soldiers sailed up the Potomac River, ostensibly to retrieve several captive English women and to seal the peace with a gathering of two hundred Powhatan dignitaries, he carried with him a stock of poisoned wine. After listening to “many fayned speches” and assuring his hosts of the wine’s safety by surreptitiously drinking from a different source, he proposed a toast in Opechancanough’s honor. The Powhatans became “drunk,” allowing the Virginians to escape back to their ship with the captives in tow. Just before leaving, Tucker and his men fired on the debilitated Powhatans, killing fifty and bringing their scalps back to Jamestown. Opechancanough survived this massacre, despite reports to the contrary, but he was either gravely injured or so politically damaged by this disaster that he disappeared from the record for several years. His brother Opitchapam, already the *mamanatowick* in name, emerged as the leader of the Powhatan war effort.⁸⁵

Opechancanough’s disappearance heralded the decline of Powhatan power. Bolstered by fresh troops and supplies from London, Virginian forces followed up Tucker’s massacre along the Potomac with a series of overland offenses that challenged

⁸⁴ Capps, “Letter to Doctor Thomas Wynston,” in *RVCL*, 4:37.

⁸⁵ *RVCL*, 2:482-83; Robert Bennett, “A Letter to Edward Bennett,” June 9, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:221-22; Governor, “Commission to Captain William Tucker,” May 12, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:190; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 19:170. Opitchapam also appears in the sources under his throne name, Otiotan (sometimes recorded as Itoyatin).

Powhatan control of the countryside for the first time. They hoped that by penetrating the center of Powhatan territory, capturing Pamunkey country and the seat of Opitchapam's rule, they could force an end to the war.⁸⁶ The Powhatan tribes slowly but steadily lost ground, and Pamunkey power eroded as the English invaders burned villages and put their warriors to flight again and again. Because the Virginians also began to court potentially friendly tribes, eroding the margins of the Powhatan chiefdom, Opitchapam needed to demonstrate his fitness to lead by displaying his power. When Governor Wyatt led a large party of English men into the Pamunkeys' heavily-populated and well-defended heartland, Opitchapam decided to gamble: he gathered his men to stand toe to toe against the English, hoping for a decisive victory that would demonstrate who the true ruler of Tsenacommacah was.⁸⁷ Eight hundred Pamunkey fighters, flanked by an unspecified number of warriors from other Powhatan tribes, stood in the open field against sixty of Wyatt's men. For two days red-painted warriors in the bloom of Powhatan glory launched wave after wave of assaults, but they could not break through the English line. Finally the men of Tsenacommacah looked on dismay from a distance

⁸⁶ Governor in Virginia, "Warrant," October 20, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:292; Council, "Letter to the Virginia Company," in *RVCL*, 4:450-51.

⁸⁷ The Virginians seem to have perceived the Pamunkeys' political weakness, reporting to the Earl of Southampton that Opitchapam gathered his forces to fight "nott only for safegarde of their howses and such a huge quantetie of Corne, but for their reputatione with the rest of the Salvages." Council, "Letter to Southampton," in *RVCL*, 4:508. On Virginian attempts to establish more friendly relations with neighboring tribes, see Governor in Virginia, "A Commission to Captain Raph Hamor," January 19, 1623/4, in *RVCL*, 4:448; Governor in Virginia, "A Commission to Rawleigh Croshaw," March 16, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:470.

while the tassantassas slashed and burned their ripened fields, destroying enough corn to feed four thousand people for a year.⁸⁸

Opitchapam's defeat broke the back of the chiefdom's war-making power; the battle for Pamunkey was a fight that he could not afford to lose. Hoping to draw previously uninvolved tribes from the north into an anti-English alliance, he had invited emissaries to witness his men crush the tassantassas. Instead, the ambassadors watched a tiny contingent of foreigners withstand the full force of the Powhatans' best fighters. The battle blunted the offensive capability of the Virginians as well: the two-day fight had virtually exhausted the colony's entire supply of gunpowder and ammunition. Unaware that the Powhatans were too politically weak to launch any large attacks, the colonists did not follow up on their victory for fear of being left without sufficient munitions to defend themselves. Without any formal peace treaty, the war ground to a halt.⁸⁹

Many in Virginia welcomed this state of affairs. War was expensive, and military service prevented young men on the make from pursuing their fortunes in the tobacco

⁸⁸ Council, "Letter to Southampton," in *RVCL*, 4:507-508. The lone source for this battle is vague on the tactical details, leaving the question of how so few Virginian militiamen could withstand a force of this size something of a mystery. Gleach suggests that Wyatt exaggerated the number of enemies to enhance the prestige of his victory. He bases this conjecture on the assumption that the Powhatans were as familiar with mass-formation warfare as contemporary European armies; see Gleach, *Powhatan's World*, 43-47, 164-65. However, he bases this assertion on a single incident in which John Smith witnessed a mock-battle, staged for the benefit of English visitors, in which Powhatan warriors "fought" other Powhatans dressed as enemy Monacans; see Smith, "Map of Virginia," in *Complete Works*, 1:166-67. This one instance is outweighed by the many observations that Powhatans favored ambush tactics and guerrilla raids. See, for example, *JHBV*, 1:38; Sandys, "Letter to Sir Samuel Sandys," in *RVCL*, 4:73; John Harvey, "A Letter to Sir Nathaniel Rich," April 24, 1624, in *RVCL*, 4:476; Fausz and Kukla, "Letter of Advice," 117; Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (New York: J. Sabin and Sons, 1871), 25; Strachey, *Historie of Travaile*, 107. It is more likely that the Powhatans, used to picking specific targets in their lightning assaults, were unfamiliar with massed-fire maneuvers necessary to penetrate the Virginians' heavy armor.

⁸⁹ Council, "Letter to Southampton," in *RVCL*, 4:508; Council in Virginia, "A Letter to the Commissioners for the Affairs of Virginia," June 15, 1625, in *RVCL*, 4:566-68.

fields. Wyatt's military orders in 1624 gave his commanders increasingly harsh powers to discipline their men, indicating that once the Virginians had achieved a measure of territorial security they became increasingly reticent to risk their lives and sacrifice their valuable time. Even if the colonial administrators had wanted to press their advantage for further territorial conquests, their inadequate coercive power over their people on the frontier limited their ability to do so.⁹⁰ Putting a positive face on the military situation in the colony, Wyatt reported to London that the colonists would be "most willing to performe with our Vttmost abilities" their raids on Indian territory, provided that they received the necessary supplies and munitions. But they preferred some alternative to war, hoping "that some course wilbe taken to ease the Countrey of that grete Charge" of continually harassing the Indians.⁹¹ The Virginians fought for practical military goals: securing their settlements, gaining control of the surrounding territory, and stabilizing the colony enough to prevent endemic disease and the specter of starvation. Once they achieved those goals they showed little further interest in prosecuting ideologically motivated vengeance against the perpetrators of the 1622 massacre.

The Virginians thus developed a pragmatic response to the Powhatans that reflected the basic process of settler colonialism. Despite London's bloodthirsty calls for vengeance in 1622, Wyatt's commanders engaged in limited raids in order to feed his people. As the military strength of the colony increased, they followed the Company's

⁹⁰ Wyatt, "Commissions," in *RVCL*, 4:250-51; Governor, "Warrant," in *RVCL*, 4:292; Council, "Letter to the Virginia Company," in *RVCL*, 4:451. On the increasing unpopularity of coercive military service among the colonists, see Shea, *Virginia Militia*, 39-41.

⁹¹ Governor and Council in Virginia, "A Letter to the Commissioners for Virginia," January 4, 1625/6, in *RVCL*, 4:568-69.

orders for offensive action so long as it satisfied their own territorial ambitions. In fact, at one point they continued to do so even when orders from London ordered them to cease hostilities. When in late 1623 the Virginia Company began to reverse its earlier calls for extirpation, urging instead a renewed commitment to promote religion “as much as they may among the savage people,” the Virginian leadership diplomatically acknowledged the importance of God’s work and then discreetly ignored the London Council.⁹² Instead, they continued to pursue territorial expansion at the Powhatans’ expense. “[I]n time,” they allowed, “we shall clean drive them from these partes, and therby have the free libertie and range for our cattle, the increase of whom may bringe us to plentie.”⁹³ They would accomplish the Indians’ expulsion for their own reasons, though: not as part of a fanatical vision of a land purified by genocidal war, but to accomplish the elimination of Native Americans from the territory they desired—not for hatred or vengeance, but for farmland and pasture. They could only execute this expansionist policy for so long, however, before taxing the will of the colonists who had to bear the brunt of the fighting. Having spent their blood to gain territory and established the means to defend it, the common colonists wanted peace and the opportunity to make their fortunes. These countervailing forces had propelled the

⁹² Virginia Company, “Letter to the Governor,” in *RVCL*, 4:269-70; Captain John Bargrave, “A Form of Policy for Virginia,” before December 7, 1623, in *RVCL*, 4:412-13 (quotation p. 413). The Company’s inconsistency can be partially traced to the bitter infighting between rival factions of shareholders, each of whom blamed the other for the colony’s failures. The Sandys faction that controlled the company during the Second Anglo-Powhatan War tried to rally support from the English public in whatever way it could, first by appealing to their countrymen’s lust for revenge and then by resurrecting the idea of colonization as a holy mission. See Fausz, “Powhatan Uprising,” 523-47.

⁹³ *JHBV*, 1:37. See also Harvey, “Letter to Sir Nathaniel Rich,” in *RVCL*, 4:476.

violence of the Second Anglo-Powhatan War, but they were also responsible for a gradual de-escalation of hostilities.

Aside from occasional border skirmishes, by 1624 the fighting had ended. Though the Virginians were still officially at war with the Powhatans, they had not yet crystallized this pattern into general Indian exclusion. For two decades afterward, spaces of contact between Indians and English continued to exist, with many interactions occurring among commoners on both sides who acted against their leaders' wishes.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, official Virginian policy gradually moved toward a steady border defense that effectively segregated Indians and colonists. In 1629, the General Assembly issued a standing order for periodic raids against the Powhatans to "cleare the woods and the parts neere adioyning" their settlements, expelling encroaching Indians when they "have any certaine knowledge of the Indian's aboad in those places." In 1631 the Assembly forbade colonists from even speaking to Indians, and the following year ordered "the Indians kept from our plantations" entirely. The Virginians finally achieved some measure of separation in 1633, when they finished construction on a defensive palisade stretching across the central peninsula from the James River to the Charles (now the York). Their fortress wall was dotted with defensive blockhouses and manned at all times. Indians attempting to breach the line would be shot on sight unless they carried special badges marking them as diplomatic messengers. The palisade established a

⁹⁴ Though the significance of this illicit contact has yet to be fully explored, the Assembly's repeated declarations outlawing Anglo-Indian trade indicate both its prevalence and the inability of the colonial administration to control it. See H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia, 1622-1632, 1670-1676, with Notes and Excerpts from Original Council and General Court Records, into 1683, Now Lost* (Richmond, 1924), 111, 147, 184, 189, 478; William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619*, 13 vols. (New York: R. & W. & G. Bartow, 1923), 1:143, 219, 227.

country of uncontested English control, a land without Indians, whether Powhatan enemies or the friendly tribes who had been allies during the war. East of the palisade, Tsenacommacah had been transformed permanently into Virginia, its native inhabitants pushed beyond the frontier.⁹⁵

The Death of Tsenacommacah

The Powhatans gradually recovered from their defeats to fight for their vision of the country they had lost. Sometime in the 1630s, Opitchapam died and Opechancanough succeeded him as mamanatowick. Now paramount chief in his own right, the aging Opechancanough spent the better part of a decade rebuilding the Pamunkeys' shattered power. Years of the Virginians' unrestrained expansion, and the colonists' hardening line towards even their friendly neighbors, helped him build a coalition that virtually united the Tidewater tribes against the Virginians. By 1644 Opechancanough once again prepared to cripple the invaders.⁹⁶ On April 18, 1644, warriors of Tsenacommacah attacked along the Virginian border, killing four hundred colonists. Whereas in 1622 a Christianized Indian boy who loved his master as a father warned the English of an impending assault, in 1644 the breach between cultures had grown so wide that the colonists received no warning whatsoever.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Hening, *Statutes*, 1:139-41, 153, 167, 199, 208-209 (quotation p. 140). See also McIlwaine, *Minutes*, 184-85. On earlier plans to create a Pale, see *RVCL*, 2:483.

⁹⁶ Fausz, "Opechancanough," 33-34. There were some notable exceptions to this unity of Indian opinion on the need to confront the Virginians, notably the Rappahannocks and Accomacs of the Eastern shore. See Hening, *Statutes*, 1:293.

⁹⁷ "Acts, Orders and Resolutions of the General Assembly of Virginia: At Sessions of March 1643-1646," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 22, no. 3 (July 1915): 229; Robert Beverley, *History of*

Opechancanough's motives for launching the 1644 assault are difficult to determine. In 1622 he might reasonably have thought that the full might of his empire could annihilate the nascent English colony, but in 1644 he would have known that this was impossible. There is some indication that he timed the attack to take advantage of the destabilizing effects of the English Civil War. He may have believed, as Governor William Berkeley related, that

now was his time or never, to roote out all the *English*; For those that they could not surprize and kill under the feigned masque of Friendship and feasting, and the rest would be by wants; and having no supplyes from their own Countrey which could not helpe them, be suddenly Consumed and Famished.⁹⁸

The eighteenth century historian Robert Beverley, generations removed from the events and more sympathetic to Indians than his ancestors, concurred that the Powhatans “saw the English uneasy and disunited among themselves, and by the direction of Opechancanough, their king, laid the ground work of another massacre.”⁹⁹ On the other hand, one tantalizing piece of evidence suggests that Opechancanough's grandiose plan simply fell apart after the initial burst of organized massacre: instead of following up their success with further attacks, as they had in 1622, many Powhatan warriors melted

Virginia (1722; reprint, Richmond: J.W. Randolph, 1855), 48; Hening, *Statutes*, 1:285-86, 290. The casualty numbers are rough estimates only; Beverley recorded five hundred, but more contemporary sources list numbers closer to four hundred.

⁹⁸ [William Berkeley], “A Perfect Description of Virginia: Being, a full and true Relation of the present State of the Plantation . . .” 1649, in Force, *Tracts*, vol. 2, doc. 8, p. 11 (emphasis in the original).

⁹⁹ Beverley, *History of Virginia*, 48. John Winthrop noted that a ship from Virginia reported the Civil War as the cause of the massacre, suggesting that it was widely believed among the colonists; see John Winthrop, *Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649*, ed. Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996), 508.

into the southern forests. After decades of holding his people together during their slow decline, the 1644 massacre may have taxed Opechancanough's political capital beyond the breaking point. Issuing orders from the center, the mamatanowick could not exert sufficient force to control his people on the fringe. Rather than follow him into another war, they followed their leader's final thrust into Virginia's heart and then abandoned Tsenacommacah forever.¹⁰⁰

The English quickly retaliated with an order to extirpate their enemies. The General Assembly declared, "wee will for ever abandon all formes of peace and familiarity wth the whole Nation. And will to the uttmost of our power pursue and root out those wch have any way had theire hands in the shedding of our blood and Massacring of our People." It is telling, however, that the Assembly's orders lack the emotionally charged language that characterized the response to the 1622 massacre. They focused instead on strategic need to starve the Powhatans into submission, ordering the commanders to cut "downe the Indians Corne generally this Summer in all places subiect to Opochanckanough."¹⁰¹ The Assembly divided Virginia into four military districts, each with its own command structure responsible for sending sorties into Powhatan territory in order to keep hostile Indians at bay. The colonists worked to defend the boundary that they had established the previous decade, militarizing the frontier by building a series of larger fortifications along the line between Virginia and Tsenacommacah. To the familiar tactics of the feedfight, they added small bands of

¹⁰⁰ [Berkeley], "Perfect Description," in Force, *Tracts*, 11.

¹⁰¹ "Acts, Orders and Resolutions," 229-30.

lightly equipped rangers capable of standing toe to toe with Powhatan warriors in the subtle art of forest combat.¹⁰²

In 1646 a Virginian army marched west into the heart of Pamunkey territory, intent on achieving a decisive victory by capturing Opechancanough. It was not difficult: nearly one hundred years old, Opechancanough had “grown so decrepid, that he was not able to walk alone,” and was so debilitated by age that “his eyelids became so heavy, that he could not see, but as they were lifted up by his servants.” The militia captured him and brought him back to Jamestown in chains. Opechancanough was proud even in defeat: when a crowd gathered to gawk at him, he lifted up his eyelids, composed himself like the dignified sovereign that he was, and called “in high indignation for the governor,” berating Berkeley for his poor treatment of an enemy leader. Within two weeks one of Opechancanough’s guards shot him in the back, bringing his long career of resistance to an end. The Powhatan chiefdom that he had defended all his life virtually collapsed.¹⁰³

Defeated by the Virginians, Opechancanough’s successor Necotowance signed a treaty that ratified the legal separation of Virginia from Tsenacommacah. Necotowance acknowledged himself to be the subject of the English crown, with his people as legal wards of the colonial authorities. Despite promises that the colonists would “protect him

¹⁰² Frank, Joseph, ed., “News from Virginny, 1644,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 65, no. 1 (January 1957): 85; Hening, *Statutes*, 1:292-93. The frontier defense was so successful that the Virginians bolstered their line by adding a fourth fort in 1646; see Hening, *Statutes*, 1:315. For an overview of the Third Anglo-Powhatan War, see William L. Shea, “Virginia at War, 1644-1646,” *Military Affairs* 41, no. 3 (October 1977): 142-147. On ranging tactics in American warfare, see Grenier, *First Way of War*, 29-39.

¹⁰³ Beverley, *History of Virginia*, 50-51.

or them against any rebels or other enemies whatsoever,” in fact no Indians of any tribe were allowed between the York and James Rivers, and “neither he the said Necotowance nor any Indians do repare to or make any abode vpon the said tract of land, vpon paine of death, and it shall be lawfull for any person to kill any such Indian.” The treaty reserved land north of the York for Indian habitation; though the Assembly retained the right to expand English territory at will, pushing the frontier outward as they desired more land.¹⁰⁴ This treaty transformed the formerly proud Powhatans into a liminal people, subject to an authority that possessed the power of life and death but refused to grant them meaningful protections under the law. It also set the stage for unlimited territorial expansion while denying displaced Indians a place within Virginia. East of the expanding and unbreachable border lay a country purged of Indians.

The two Powhatan assaults that sparked the Second and Third Anglo-Powhatan Wars established a pattern in Anglo-Indian relations that became welded to the process of English colonialism. The English came to an old land occupied by a people with a dynamic vision of their environment, the possibilities that it offered, and their proper relation to it. The Powhatans of the Tidewater region looked around them and saw the land of Tsenacommacah, an empire forged by the ambition of the paramount chief Wahunsenacawh. They made war on their neighbors for territory and for captives, and made alliances with others to draw them into the chiefdom’s political orbit. They moved with the seasons, tending their fields in the summer, gathering roots and pursuing game in the winter. They worshipped their own gods and inhabited a world suffused with

¹⁰⁴ Hening, *Statutes*, 1:323-25.

intangible power. The English looked at the same land and saw something very different: a virgin land teeming with possibilities, endless pastures for cattle and hogs, soil that could grow tobacco and vines and mulberry trees. They saw wild neighbors who might welcome the light of the gospel and grow to till the earth the way that all civilized people did. They offered these Indians passage into the Virginia of their vision, expecting that any reasonable people would accept with delight. The colonists were baffled and hurt when the Powhatans refused, annoyed when they stubbornly resisted, and furious when they fought back.

Yet the English unwittingly encouraged this outcome, because their vision was as inflexible as it was ambitious. The colonists consistently demanded nothing less than the Powhatans' cultural suicide and the total replacement of their lifeways with English patterns. When the Powhatans proved that they possessed a proud and independent vision of themselves, the English abandoned plans to incorporate them and sought to eliminate them through violent exclusion instead. Tensions between the Virginian colonists on the fringe of empire and their English countrymen in the imperial metropole, however, impinged on this process in contradictory ways, sometimes escalating violence and other times limiting it. Emerging from the chaotic conditions of the borderlands between two countries, the actions of the Virginian colonists relentlessly followed the logic of elimination that pushed their Indian neighbors beyond the expanding frontier.

Powhatan priests had foretold the coming of a strange people from the Chesapeake who would challenge them. They prophesied three wars that would

devastate the Powhatan people, and an apocalypse that would wipe away the country of Tsenacommacah forever. Writing just a few years after the first landing at Jamestown, William Strachey wrote of Wahunsenacawh's people,

Judge all men whether these maye not be the forerunners of an alteration of the devill's empire here? I hope they be, nay, I dare prognosticate that they usher gret accydents, and that we shall effect them; the Divine power assist us in this worke, which, begun for heavenly ends, may have as heavenly period.¹⁰⁵

Had he lived to see the end of the Third Anglo-Powhatan War in 1646, Strachey might have been astonished at the power of prophecy, both those of the priests of the "devill's empire" and of his own.

¹⁰⁵ Strachey, *Historie of Travaile*, 102.

CHAPTER IV

SAINTS AND DESTROYERS

In 1643, with the publication of his Algonquian primer *A Key into the Language of America*, Roger Williams laid the groundwork for an enduring myth of Pequot ferocity. In his section on phrases pertaining to war, he wrote the simple sentence *Pequittôog pauquanan*, “The Pequots are slaine,” which could also be translated as “the Destroyers are destroyed.” The linguistic identity of “Pequot” with “Destroyer” quickly became part of a historical discourse that portrayed the Pequots as merciless conquerors. In 1654 the Puritan historian Edward Johnson wrote that the Pequots were “more warlike then their Neighboring Nations,” a people “swollen with pride.” A generation later, William Hubbard embroidered this characterization with the claim that the Pequots were interlopers who had invaded the Connecticut Valley and crushed all opposition from the region’s original native tribes. By the turn of the eighteenth century, chroniclers portrayed the Pequots as a juggernaut of Indian power. Of Native American nations, Cotton Mather wrote, “there was none more Fierce, more Warlike, more Potent, or of a greater *Terror* unto their Neighbours, than that of the PEQUOTS,” who “committed many Barbarous Outrages” and ruled southern New England as lords of “*the Kingdom of*

Satan.”¹ Historians have since shown that the Pequots were neither foreign conquerors nor the titans of war that the Puritan chroniclers claimed, but modern scholars continue to repeat the dubious translation of “Pequot” as “destroyer.”²

In this myth it fell to the Puritans, who called themselves Saints and considered themselves to be God’s chosen people, to face down the might of these ruthless destroyers. In May of 1637 they proved themselves up to the challenge, trapping hundreds of Pequots at Mystic and burning it down with the villagers still inside. “It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire and the streams of blood quenching the same,” William Bradford observed grimly, “and horrible was the stink and scent thereof.” Despite the carnage, though, the sanctified soldiers felt no remorse: “the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the praise thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them, thus to enclose their enemies in their hands and give

¹ Roger Williams, “A Key into the Language of America,” in *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, ed. James Hammond Trumbull, 7 vols. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), 1:263; Edward Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence of Sions Saviour in New-England, 1628-1651*, 1654, reprinted as *Johnson’s Wonder-Working Providence*, ed. J. Franklin Jameson (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910), 148; William Hubbard, *The Present State of New-England, Being a Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians in New-England, 1677*, reprinted as *The History of the Indian Wars in New England: From the First Settlement to the Termination of the War with King Philip, in 1677*, ed. Samuel G. Drake, 2 vols. (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1990), 2:6-7; Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana: or, the Ecclesiastical History of New-England, from Its First Planting in the Year 1620 unto the Year of our Lord 1698*, 7 vols. (London, 1702), 7:41 (emphasis in the original).

² See, for example, Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 106. Frank Speck notes that the etymology of all other New England Indian tribes come from geographical markers rather than behavioral descriptions, casting suspicion on the translation of Pequot as “destroyer.” See Speck, “Native Tribes and Dialects of Connecticut: A Mohegan-Pequot Diary,” *Annual Report of the U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology* 43 (1926): 218. Alfred Cave has conclusively disproven Hubbard’s spurious assertion that the Pequots invaded Connecticut; see Alfred A. Cave, “The Pequot Invasion of Southern New England: A Reassessment of the Evidence,” *New England Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (March 1989): 27-44.

them so speedy a victory over so proud and insulting an enemy.”³ The surviving Pequots scattered, abandoning their homeland to the dominion of the Saints.

After the fall of Mystic in a rain of fire, the Puritans had effectively accomplished their war aims. They had conquered Connecticut and expelled the Pequots, fulfilling the logic of elimination that propelled their colonial project. Yet the Saints were not satisfied, for their fear of the Pequots had passed into the realms of delusion and paranoia. Simply defeating their enemies, or even pushing them beyond the frontier, was not enough. Driven by their own imaginary construction of the Pequots as an intolerable threat to their survival, the Saints united to scour the land clean with their incandescent rage, killing until their enemies could never threaten them again.

Regeneration

The Puritan settlers who came to Massachusetts Bay during the Great Migration possessed a vision distinct from that of their Virginian counterparts. At its core, the Saints were guided by a millenarian quest for social regeneration through their exodus to the New World. They saw themselves as latter-day Israelites who, guided by divine providence, would venture into the American wilderness. There they would build a new Zion in New England, what John Winthrop famously called a “Citty vpon a Hill” governed according to the undiluted lessons from holy Scripture.⁴ The belief that they

³ William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 296.

⁴ John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity,” 1630, *Winthrop Papers*, 5 vols. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929-1947), 2:282-95. On the Puritan mission and social regeneration, see Delbanco, *Puritan Ordeal*, 41-117; Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1964), 1-

were a people chosen by God and guided by providence shaped the Puritans' formulation of the colonial project. Nevertheless, the Puritan worldview was rooted in English history and English culture. As they planned their transformation of the American wilderness, they naturally imagined something patterned on the England they had left behind. In *Good Newes from New England*, Edward Winslow wrote, "I cannot but think that God hath a purpose to give that land as an inheritance to our nation," and that the land was so ripe and fertile that "one can scarce distinguish New England from Old."⁵ Just as strains of latent violence lay within the ideology of imperialism guiding colonists in Virginia, similar factors operated within the Puritan mind to intensify Anglo-Indian conflict.

The Puritans generally subscribed to the paradigm of Indians as "savages," and therefore their perceptions of Native Americans were filtered through an intellectual abstraction that encouraged distortion and misunderstanding. Years of English colonial experience in America, however, had altered the contours of the savage archetypes. By the 1620s, descriptions of American natives no longer possessed the edenic glow that had led Arthur Barlowe to describe them as figures out of a golden age. Nevertheless, the ethnographic writings of Roger Williams, William Wood, and Edward Winslow

15; Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: the Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 37-42.

⁵ Edward Winslow, "Good Newes from New England: or a true Relation of things very remarkable at the Plantation of Plimoth in New-England," 1624, in *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth, from 1602 to 1625*, ed. Alexander Young (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1841), 355.

conveyed a sense of respect and even admiration for Algonquian societies.⁶ Still, the essential humanity of the savage could not obscure his primitive nature. Robert Cushman wrote that Indians “do but run over the grass, as do also the foxes and wild beasts.” Moreover, they lived beneath a shroud of ignorance, and they were “not industrious, neither have art, science, skill or faculty.”⁷ For the Puritans, then, one stereotype for Native Americans emphasized their humanity while still recognizing their wild and degraded condition.⁸

The Puritans had their own version of the “ignoble savage.” Bradford, for example, noted with horror that Indians “delight to torment men in the most bloody manner that may be,” even to the point of eating their victims alive.⁹ The intense religiosity of the Puritan worldview, and their belief in their colonial project as the fulfillment of God’s divine plan, invested this aspect of the savage archetype with a particularly diabolical power. Through these demons in human form, the Devil himself ruled over the wilderness like a dark king. That Satanic realm, hiding in the hollow of every wood and in the shadows cast by council fires, was implacably opposed to the mission of the Saints. On the founding of New Plymouth, for example, the chronicler

⁶ Williams, “A Key into the Language of America,” in *Complete Writings*, 1:96-264; Winslow, “Good Newes,” in *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*, 354-67; William Wood, *New England’s Prospect*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), 80-116.

⁷ Robert Cushman, “Reasons and Considerations Touching the Lawfulness of Removing Out of England Into the Parts of America,” in *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*, ed. Alexander Young, 243.

⁸ Roy Harvey Pearce, “The ‘Ruines of Mankind’: The Indian and the Puritan Mind,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13, no. 2 (April 1952): 207-8; Williams, “A Key into the Language of America,” in *Complete Writings*, 1:83-85; Wood, *New England’s Prospect*, 96-97.

⁹ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 27.

Cotton Mather wrote that the Devil inevitably caused the natives to engage in some “bloody Action, for the Extinction of a Plantation so contrary to his Interests, as that of *New-England* was.”¹⁰ In this sinister guise, the ignoble savage was a demon weaving magics to destroy the English root and branch.¹¹

The dual image of the savage possessed particular power for the Puritans, with the dominance of one view over the other in their collective imagination contingent on native behavior. So long as the Indians were peaceful, submissive, and willing to place themselves under the aegis of English power, the Puritans could see them as primitive but capable of acquiring the benefits of civilization.¹² When they resisted English hegemony, however, benevolent perceptions evaporated and the view of Indians as an implacable enemy became dominant with astonishing speed. They became “other,” a sinister inversion of everything that defined Puritan identity. While the English were hardworking and industrious, the Indians were idle and lazy; the Saints were pious and pure, but the heathens were wicked and idolatrous; civilized men were honest, but treachery was in the savage’s nature; the settlers were merciful but the barbarians were

¹⁰ Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 7:41 (emphasis in the original). This interpretation of the Indian in the unfolding history of God’s will in America became a standard trope by the end of the seventeenth century, but for early expressions of this belief see Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 84; Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 148; John Underhill, *Newes from America; Or, A New and Experimentall Discoverie of New England; Containing, a True Relation of Their War-like Proceedings These Two Yeares Past, with a Figure of the Indian Fort, or Palizado* (London, 1638), 19.

¹¹ Alfred A. Cave, “The 1637 Pequot War and the Question of Native American Genocide,” (paper presented at the Genocide Studies Seminar, Yale University, 2005), 7-10; Pearce, ““Ruines of Mankind,”” 203-7; William S. Simmons, “Cultural Bias in the New England Puritans’ Perception of Indians,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 38, no. 1 (January 1981): 56-72.

¹² Williams, “A Key into the Language of America,” in *Complete Writings*, 1:83-85; Wood, *New England’s Prospect*, 96-97.

cruel.¹³ The Puritans, in short, were the righteous, and Indians were fundamentally, irredeemably evil.¹⁴

Like earlier colonists, the Saints believed that Native American patterns of land use were inferior to their own. “This savage people ruleth over many lands without title or property,” wrote John Winthrop, “for they enclose no ground, neither have they cattle to maintain it, but remove their dwellings as they have occasion.” Winthrop offered a legal theory of property derived from the principle of *terra nullius*. Known as *vacuum domicilium*, or “empty dwelling,” this theory posited two different types of land ownership: natural and civil. A natural right to land existed “when men held the earth in common every man sowing and feeding where he pleased.” But by enclosing land, claiming it as private property, and improving it through agriculture and animal husbandry, man gained a civil right to the soil that superceded natural rights. Since Indians did none of these things, according to Winthrop, they had “noe other but a Naturall Right to those Countries,” and such land was “free to any that possesse and improue it.”¹⁵ As they surveyed the land of New England, the Puritans saw an empty

¹³ For a sampling of these recurring sentiments, see Wood, *New England's Prospect*, 96-97; Underhill, *Newes from America*, 19; Hubbard, *Present State*, 1:47; Philip Vincent, *A True Relation of the Late Battell fought in New England, between the English, and the Salvages: With the present state of things there* (London, 1637), 8; Roger Williams to Sir Henry Vane and John Winthrop, May 15, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:412; Roger Williams to John Winthrop, June 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:436-37; Lion Gardener, *Relation of the Pequot Warres* (Hartford, Conn.: Hartford Press, 1660), 24.

¹⁴ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 81-84; Timothy L. Wood, “Worlds Apart: Puritan Perceptions of the Native American During the Pequot War,” *Rhode Island History* 56, no. 3 (August 1998): 63. On Puritan perceptions of Native Americans as “other,” see Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 55-69.

¹⁵ [John Winthrop], “General Considerations for Planting New-England,” 1629, in *Chronicles of the First Planters of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, from 1623 to 1636*, ed. Alexander Young (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1846), 272, 276; John Winthrop, “Reasons to Be Considered, and Objections

wilderness that only English skill and industry could bring to bloom, relegating Native Americans to the status of interlopers who would inevitably have to give way before the superior pattern of English civilization.¹⁶

Like all Europeans, the Puritan colonists accepted the law of nations as the basis for all legitimate sovereignty. Their understanding of hierarchical authority and the limits of state power, though, were informed by theology as much as international convention. In his systematic disquisition *The Marrow of Theology*, the Puritan divine William Ames strictly limited the circumstances in which a Christian nation could go to war. Only a legitimate sovereign acting in self-defense against enemy provocations, he stipulated, could wage a just war. While fighting, moreover, the sovereign's armed forces were required to obey a code of conduct specifying that surrendering foes be given quarter. Ames also declared it unlawful "to intend the killing of those who are not in some way participants in an unjust cause," thus prohibiting violence against non-combatants.¹⁷ As with other formulations of the law of nations, however, insurrection threatened the fundamental basis of orderly society and was therefore treated as an

with Answers," 1629, *Winthrop Papers*, 2:140-41. See also Cushman, "Reasons and Considerations." in *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*, 243-44.

¹⁶ William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, revised edition (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 51-57. Stuart Banner notes that the English developed theories that justified dispossession but tended to recognize Indian property claims as a matter of practicality. See Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land: Law and Power on the Frontier* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 29-35. Policies aside, the ideological power of these theories reflects the ways that Puritan settlers interpreted, as an imaginative space, the environment of New England.

¹⁷ William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, ed. John Dykstra Eusden (Durham, N.C.: Labyrinth Press, 1983), 316-17. To support his theological position on just war, Ames cited the following Scriptural passages: Numbers 31:3, I Samuel 18:17, 25:28, I Chronicles 5:18, 22, Luke 3:14, Romans 13:14, I Peter 2:14, Psalms 143:1, and I Corinthians 9:7.

intolerable threat. For the Saints as much as other Englishmen, a rebellious population, as “participants in an unjust cause,” was collectively guilty of treason. In effect, this version of just war theory rendered even women and children as legitimate military targets.¹⁸

For historical precedents validating mass violence, however, the Puritans looked to different examples than their countrymen. Rather than looking back to the lessons of Roman antiquity or Irish colonization, the Saints placed special emphasis on genocidal episodes that they found in Scripture. The conquest of Canaan was a salient example of divinely ordained genocide, but the Puritans also found a chilling lesson within the stories of Saul and David. In the books of Samuel, God commanded Saul to “smite Amalek, & destroye ye all that pertaineth vnto them, and haue no co[m]passion on them, but slay bothe man and woman, bothe infant and suckeling.”¹⁹ When Saul mercifully spared the life of King Agag, the prophet Samuel accused him of rebellion against the will of God and stripped him of his legitimacy as God’s chosen monarch. The moral of this was clear to the Puritans: obedience to God fulfilled the covenant that he had made with them and disobedience broke it. In his famous sermon *A Modell of Christian Charity*, John Winthrop made precisely this point:

When God giues a speciall Commission he lookes to haue it stricktly obserued in every Article, when hee gaue Saule a Commission to destroy Amaleck hee indented with him vpon certaine Articles and because hee failed in one of the least, and that

¹⁸ Ronald Dale Karr, “‘Why Should You Be So Furious?’: The Violence of the Pequot War,” *The Journal of American History* 85, no. 3 (December 1998): 883-88.

¹⁹ 1 Samuel 15:3. This and all subsequent biblical quotations are from the 1560 Geneva Bible, available at <http://www.thedcl.org/bible/gb/index.html> (accessed April 22, 2009).

vpon a faire pretence, it lost him the kingdome, which should haue been his reward, if hee had obserued his Commission: This stands the cause betweene God and vs, wee are entered into Covenant with him for this worke.²⁰

Winthrop, no doubt, meant this to be a lesson on the need for steadfast devotion and spiritual strength to meet the many challenges he and his brethren would face in the New World. But it also meant strict compliance to God's will, even to the point of annihilating an entire nation.

Saul's successor, David, later went to war against the kingdom of Ammon. After conquering the Ammonites, he mercilessly "put them under sawes, and vnder yron harowes, and vnder axes of yron, and cast them into the tyle kylne."²¹ Despite the relevance of this episode as a dramatic example of extreme violence, it is somewhat difficult to determine the extent to which David's war against the Ammonites influenced the Saints' conduct during the Pequot War. David possessed no specific mandate from God, so the Puritans would have viewed this episode differently from the wars of Joshua and Saul; certainly, none of the English soldiers ever claimed to have received a divine commandment to annihilate the Pequots. However, the pastor John Wilson gave a speech to the Connecticut militia on the eve of the Mystic assault, in which he cheered on "every faithfull Souldier of Christ Jesus" and assured them that they would be due the

²⁰ Winthrop, "Modell of Christian Charity," *Winthrop Papers*, 2:294.

²¹ II Samuel 12:31. Modern translations of this passage suggest that David enslaved the Ammonites and used their labor in various capacities, rather than slaughtering them outright. In the Geneva Bible that most of the Saints read, however, the marginal note for this passage makes the genocidal outcome quite clear. "Signifying," it explains, "[tha]t as thei were malicious enemies of God, so he put them to cruel death." See also I Chronicles 20:3, which leaves no doubt about David's resort to mass violence even in modern translations.

same honor that David earned for “that true valour the Lord hath bestowed on him.”²²

Puritan chroniclers also clearly connected the two events in their histories of New England. Hubbard characterized the Pequots as “Children of Ammon,” who, like their biblical forebears, “began to stink in the Nostrils of their Neighbors,” and Mather used the terms “Pequot” and “Ammonite” interchangeably.²³ It is unlikely that the Puritans interpreted this as a divine sanction for the genocide of the Pequots, at least in a direct sense. But genocide was not unfamiliar to them and was, in fact, celebrated in the stories of their spiritual ancestors in Israel. All that can be said for certain is that the Puritans’ worldview was rooted in a Scripture that contained spectacular episodes of mass violence, and that these precedents provided a ready justification for those who sought to retroactively account for their ferocity.

The Puritans did, however, make a direct link between their clash with the Pequots and the English struggle against the Powhatans in Virginia. The hideous carnage of the 1622 massacre had shocked the still struggling Plymouth colonists, who hurriedly completed their crude fort and began to see hints of Indian conspiracy everywhere.²⁴ In 1629, Matthew Cradock warned the first wave of Massachusetts colonists “not to be too confident of the fidelity of the savages,” and to guard against the possibility that they might meet the same fate as their compatriots. Planners like Cradock were careful to preserve the model of benevolent colonialism that the Massachusetts Bay Company had

²² Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 165-66.

²³ Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 7:42; Hubbard, *Present State*, 2:8.

²⁴ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 110-11, 116-19; Winslow, “Good Newes,” in *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*, 295.

tirelessly promoted, and counseled moderation in the settlers' actions. "Let us by their harms learn to beware," he wrote of the massacred Virginians, and even though "we are commanded to be innocent as doves, so withal we are enjoined to be wise as serpents."²⁵ Other New Englanders learned a sharper lesson from the Jamestown Massacre. Philip Vincent, for example, saw the Virginians' scorched-earth tactics as an archetype for successful Indian policy and warfare in the New World. "Virginia our mother plantation, and for her precedent a rule, hath taught us what to do in these difficulties," he wrote, "forewarned, forearmed." Swift and brutal force was the only way to deal with Indian threats. Vincent quoted Edward Waterhouse, who had enthusiastically cheered on his countrymen toward genocide, writing that "From these experiments" in Virginia "shall the now inhabitants of those two Sister Lands, beat out unto themselves an Armour of prooffe, and lay a sure foundation to their future happinesse."²⁶ The New England colonists were determined to avoid another Jamestown massacre, and by their suffering the Virginians had shown them how to do it.

²⁵ Matthew Cradock to Captain Endicott, February 6, 1629, in *Chronicles of the First Planters*, ed. Alexander Young, 136.

²⁶ Vincent, *True Relation of the Late Battell*, 19. On the 1622 massacre, Waterhouse wrote "This will for euer hereafter make vs more cautelous and circumspect, as neuer to bee deceiued more by any other treacheries, but will serue for a great instruction to all posteritie there, to teach them that Trust is the mother of Decept... and make them know that kindnesses are misspent vpon rude natures, so long as they continue rude; as also, that Sauages and Pagans are aboue all other for matter of Iustice euer to be suspected." With these lessons firmly in mind, he concluded, "Thus vpon this Anville shall wee now beate out to our selues an armour of prooffe, which shall euer after defend vs from barbarous Incursions, and from greater dangers that otherwise might happen." Edward Waterhouse, "A Declaration of the State of the Colony and . . . a Relation of the Barbarous Massacre," 1622, in *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, ed. Susan Myra Kingsbury, 4 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1933), 3:542, 559. See also Samuel Purchas, *Hakhytus Posthumus, or, Purchas His Pilgrimes: Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others*, 20 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905), 19:211.

Despite these seeds of violence in the Puritan worldview, the Saints themselves initially intended to follow a policy of incorporating Native Americans into the Bible commonwealth that they planned to build. According to John White, the conversion of Indians was essential to the Puritans' apocalyptic role in the New World. In *The Planters Plea*, White laid out the grand sweep of history as the progress of God's word spreading across the world from east to west. His chief purpose in revealing the New World, White argued, was to allow the culmination of this movement through the actions of the Puritans. "God especially directs this worke of erecting Colonies unto the planting and propatating of Religion," he wrote, and this holy burden "falls in this last age" upon His chosen people.²⁷ As agents in the historic fulfillment of God's will in America, the Saints considered the transformation of Indians into good Christians to be integral to the colonial enterprise.²⁸

In accordance with this understanding, the agents of the Massachusetts Bay Company promoted the colony as a vehicle for the conversion of Indians to the knowledge of Christ. The Company's charter asserted that "the principall ende of this plantacon" was to "incite the natives of the country to the knowledg and obedience of

²⁷ [John White], "The Planters Plea: Or the Grounds of Plantations Examined, and usual Objections Answered," 1630, in *Tracts and Other Papers Relating Principally to the Origin, Settlement, and Progress of the Colonies in North America: From the Discovery of the Country to the Year 1776*, ed. Peter Force, 4 vols. (New York: Murray Printing Company, 1947), vol. 2, doc. 3, p. 6-7.

²⁸ Pearce, "Ruines of Mankind," 209-10; Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 177-80. As Kristina Bross notes, the importance of Indians' spiritual status was underscored by the common belief that they were descended from Jews, who were expected to convert to Christianity shortly before the advent of the millennium. Based on this interpretation, the conversion of Indians was quite literally a concern of apocalyptic proportions. See Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), 12-13, 29-34.

the onlie true God and Savior of mankind.”²⁹ Echoing both the book of Acts and Richard Hakluyt’s writings, the colony’s official seal depicted a naked Indian mouthing the words “Come over and help us.”³⁰ While such statements might reasonably be dismissed as propaganda for public consumption, Puritans expressed the importance of missionary work in their private correspondence as well. In a personal note accompanying the Company’s letter to John Endecott, for example, Cradock wrote that he trusted him to “not be unmindful of the main end of our Plantation, by endeavouring to bring the Indians to the knowledge of the Gospel.”³¹

Despite the importance of missionary activity in theory, in practice the colonists lacked the resources to conduct large-scale efforts. Energetic individuals such as Edward Howes and Roger Williams converted some individual Indians, such as Wonohaquaham (John Sagamore) and the Pequot Wequash, but their hopes for widespread acceptance of Christianity amounted to little.³² For many New Englanders, though, evangelizing was premature in the early stages of settlement. White wrote that “no man can imagine how

²⁹ Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 5 vols. (Boston, 1853), 1:17. On the primacy of missionary work, see also Massachusetts Bay Company, “The Company’s First General Letter of Instructions to Endicott and His Council,” in *Chronicles of the First Planters* ed. Alexander Young, 142; Cushman, “Reasons and Considerations,” in *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*, 242.

³⁰ Acts 16:9; Richard Hakluyt, “Discourse of Western Planting,” 1584, in *The Original Writings and Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts*, ed. E.G.R. Taylor, 2 vols., Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, 2nd ser., nos. 76-77 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1935), 2:216.

³¹ Cradock to Captain Endicott,” in *Chronicles of the First Planters*, 133.

³² Williams, “A Key into the Language of America,” in *Complete Writings*, 1:80-87; Edward Howes to John Winthrop, Jr., March 26, 1632, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:74-77. John Eliot, who later translated the Bible into the Massachusetts language and founded a series of “Praying Towns” for Christianized Indians, did not begin preaching his conversion efforts until 1646; see Neal Salisbury, “Red Puritans: The ‘Praying Indians’ of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 31, no. 1 (January 1974): 27-54.

Religion should prevaile upon those who are not subdued to the rule of Nature and Reason,” reflecting the widespread belief that the Indians would have to be civilized before they could be Christianized.³³ The first step in missionary work, therefore, was to bring neighboring Indian tribes under the umbrella of benevolent English government.

The eschatological dimensions of the Puritan worldview invested their efforts to incorporate Native Americans with cosmic importance. If God’s design mandated the spread of Christianity across America, and with it the civilizing influence of English government, then any force obstructing that design logically served the purposes of the Devil. The Puritans frequently interpreted any resistance to the exercise of their power as the hand of Satan operating through his willing Indian minions.³⁴ They cited this connection most frequently in the midst of open war, when the clash of supernatural powers invested the stereotype of the ignoble savage with an extreme brand of malevolence. Massachusetts Commander John Underhill, for example, explained Pequot hostility as the result of “the old Serpent according to his first malice” stirring “them up against the Church of Christ.”³⁵ The belief in Satanic direction also manifested in reaction to more innocuous Indian behavior, such as objecting to unfair diplomatic negotiations, resisting attempts to coerce food supplies, and even petty theft.³⁶

³³ [White], “Planters Plea,” in Force, *Tracts*, 6. See also Pearce, ““Ruines of Mankind,”” 203.

³⁴ Winslow, “Good Newes,” in *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*, 356. See also Simmons, “Cultural Bias,” 60-65; Wood, “Worlds Apart,” 62-64, 70-71.

³⁵ Underhill, *Newes from America*, 19.

³⁶ For early expressions of Indian resistance as Satanically inspired, see Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 84; Roger Williams to John Winthrop, September 1636, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:298; Winslow, “Good Newes,” in *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*, 357.

For the Puritans, the shift from strategies of incorporation to strategies of exclusion was often swift and terrible. Though they dreamed of regeneration, their vision was totalizing and inflexible on a cosmic scale, making accommodation virtually impossible. Even the smallest acts of resistance could not go unanswered because compromise was tantamount to capitulation to Satan's dark designs and a failure of their divinely ordained mission. Moreover, the latent violence inherent in their worldview facilitated the slide from incorporation to exclusion. The Puritans' perceptions of Native Americans marked them as alien and dangerous. English theories of property ownership invalidated Indian lifeways. The law of nations gave them the legal sanction for a virtually unlimited response to defiance of their authority. Biblical episodes of sacred slaughter and the Virginians' unrestrained retaliation against the Powhatan chiefdom provided a ready precedent. The potential for genocide was there all along, nestled in the combination of factors that encouraged radical exclusion. Pequot resistance brought the Saints to the brink of the abyss. Then, faced with overwhelming crisis, they plunged over the edge.

Crisis

Within just a few years after landing in 1630, the Massachusetts Bay colonists faced challenges on a number of fronts, leaving them in a state of crisis by the eve of the Pequot War in 1636. One of these challenges came from the imperial center, where religious discord fueled a movement to revoke the Company's charter. The Saints had enjoyed a certain level of royal neglect after King Charles I granted their charter in 1628,

allowing them to remain nominally loyal to the crown but effectively in control of their own affairs. In 1633, however, the virulently anti-Puritan William Laud became Archbishop of Canterbury and launched a program to bring what he considered to be subversive dissidents under the royal heel. He assembled the Commission for Regulating Plantations, which successfully sued to have the Company's charter declared invalid. News of this decision arrived in June of 1637, at the height of the Pequot War, when messengers informed the Boston magistrates that they were no longer legitimate authorities. The commission allowed their government to stand for the time being because there were no royal officials to take over, but this state of affairs left the colony uncertainly poised on the edge of disaster.³⁷

At the same time that Laud threatened Massachusetts from London, centrifugal forces threatened to drain its power on the frontier. Flush with a continuous wave of immigrants, the colony looked to the west and south for territories that they could use to settle the newcomers. The Governor and General Court attempted to control this movement to the best of their ability. They brokered treaties with the most powerful Indian tribes to gain legal control over the land, peacefully extending Boston's authority over a gradually expanding area of English settlement. Disaffected colonists chafed under the Court's attempts to limit the pace of growth, however, and threatened to derail Boston's plans for orderly expansion. In 1636 Thomas Hooker led a number of colonists

³⁷ John Winthrop, *Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649*, ed. Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996), 221, 223-25. The rising tensions between King Charles and Parliament, which led to the English Civil War in 1640, soon overshadowed Laud's attempt to take over the Massachusetts By colony; see Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects Unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 29.

outside the area of Massachusetts' control, buying land directly from small bands of Indians and thereby rupturing the tributary networks of the sachems to whom those bands owed allegiance. Massachusetts tried to establish control over these settlers through legal action. Through two English lords friendly to the Puritans, they incorporated the Saybrook Company and built a fort at the mouth of the Connecticut River, claiming the right to govern the Connecticut settlers. Though the Saybrook patent made them the legitimate authority on paper, the settlers spilling into the Connecticut Valley north of the fort generally ignored them. The government of Massachusetts thus began to compete with its own people for control of future territory and access to Indian trade. Unruly settlers aggravated tensions with local Indians, and the borderlands dissolved into a morass of competing territorial claims.³⁸

In addition to challenges from the royal government and from its own people, Massachusetts faced the encroachment of England's imperial rivals and its sister-colony of Plymouth. The French to the north and Dutch to the south capitalized on the unstable political climate in New England and endeavored, said Edward Winslow, "to divide the land between them."³⁹ In 1633 the Dutch built a trading post called the House of Good Hope, with which they intended to cement their control over the fur trade in southern New England. This disputed territory was within the boundaries of English territorial

³⁸ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 280-84; Winthrop, *Journal*, 126-28, 157-8, 161-62; Edward Winslow to John Winthrop, Jr., June 22, 1636, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:274; Robert Stansby to John Wilson, April 17, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:390-91; Thomas Hooker to John Winthrop, Jr., July 1636, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:280-81. On Massachusetts' expansion and the Connecticut settlers, see Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 76-98; Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 186-201; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 215-17.

³⁹ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 272.

claims, and the incessant saber rattling of Dutch military contingents made English traders nervous. Plymouth tried to weaken the Dutch hold over Connecticut by building their own trading post at Windsor, one mile upriver of Good Hope. For all their bravado, the Dutch troops left English traders in peace, but Plymouth's economic gains in Connecticut threatened to strangle Massachusetts' future opportunities.⁴⁰ French forces, meanwhile, continually harried English holdings in Maine. In 1635 French soldiers seized Plymouth's trading post at Penobscot and expelled its garrison. Plymouth was willing to go to war in order to regain the post, but Massachusetts, concerned with its own trading interests and dismissing worries about future French expansion, balked at the suggestion of a joint expedition. Plymouth leaders believed that Massachusetts' reticence was motivated by a desire to profit from their decline, leading to an atmosphere of rancor and distrust between the two Puritan colonies that hampered their collective ability to meet the French challenge. Even if they lacked imperial ambitions, warned Bradford, French control of the north hampered the growth of the English colonies, and the traders themselves provided the Indians with a steady stream of guns, bullets, and intelligence on English vulnerabilities.⁴¹

The balance of power between Native American tribes was as chaotic as the contest between European powers. Because of their proximity to New Amsterdam, the Pequots had been the Dutch West India Company's principal trading partners since the 1620s. The fur-wampum trade nexus made them wealthy and powerful, fueling the

⁴⁰ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 257-60; Cave, *Pequot War*, 57-8, 80-83.

⁴¹ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 245-46, 275-79; Winthrop, *Journal*, 153, 155-59, 200; Edward Winslow to John Winthrop, April 17, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:392.

expansion of their political influence over surrounding tribes. The Dutch threatened their hegemony with the construction of Good Hope in 1633. Dutch merchants, hoping to expand the fur trade beyond the scale that the Pequots alone could provide, declared the area to be a free trade zone open to all Native American tribes, including the Pequots' main rivals, the Narragansetts. Spurred by economic competition, tensions between Pequots and Narragansetts erupted into open war after a Pequot war party killed a group of Narragansett traders in the neutral zone of Dutch control. Enraged at this blatant provocation, the Dutch captured and murdered the Pequot sachem Tatobem. By the end of the year the Pequots were embroiled in a two front war against Indian and European powers.⁴²

By 1634 the fortunes of the Pequots, now led by Tatobem's son Sassacus, were in a precipitous decline. War against the Dutch cut them off from their source of wealth and prestige. With diminished resources and less personal charisma than his father, Sassacus proved unable to maintain the extensive tributary network that had followed Pequot success in the previous decade. Formerly allied tribes, including the Mohegans and their ambitious and politically astute sachem Uncas, defected to the Narragansetts, lessening Pequot power at the same time that it added to their enemy's military capacity. Already hard-pressed by these developments, the Pequots were devastated by a smallpox epidemic that washed over southern New England, causing mortality rates as high as 95 percent. Finally, the Pequots miscalculated when taking their vengeance for Tatobem's

⁴² Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 257-60, 269-70; see also Cave, *Pequot War*, 49-59.

murder. Believing the disreputable English pirate John Stone to be a Dutch merchant, they killed him and sank his boat.⁴³

Desperate for reprieve, in 1634 Sassacus attempted to repair the breach with the Puritans by sending a delegation to Bay Colony. The ambassadors offered a trade monopoly in exchange for a military alliance against the Dutch and Narragansetts. Instead, the Puritans demanded that the tribe relinquish the Stone's killers to face English justice, pay an enormous tribute of wampum and furs, and surrender the land rights to Connecticut. The Pequot emissaries, with few options, agreed to the terms. As far as Boston was concerned, by signing this agreement the Pequots acknowledged English sovereignty and subjected themselves to English law. It is doubtful that the Pequots shared this understanding, and in any case the Pequot sachems under Sassacus were dissatisfied with the treaty that the envoys had secured and chose not to ratify it, a fact that Puritan leaders refused to recognize.⁴⁴

Despite Boston's diplomatic victory over the Pequots, the 1634 treaty only added fuel to the chaotic struggle for control of the Connecticut frontier. Bolstered by the Pequot land cession, Massachusetts continued to assert its claims over the territory that Connecticut settlers claimed for their own. Moreover, the treaty set the stage for conflict

⁴³ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 260, 268-71; Winthrop, *Journal*, 108; John Winthrop to Sir Simonds D'Ewes, July 21, 1634, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:171-72. See also Cave, *Pequot War*, 63-68; Alfred A. Cave, "Who Killed John Stone?: A Note on the Origins of the Pequot War," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 49, no. 3 (July 1992): 509-521. The estimated death toll from the smallpox epidemic comes from Bradford (p. 270), and is so high that even if grossly exaggerated would have dealt a serious blow to Pequot power.

⁴⁴ On the 1634 treaty, see Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 290-91; Winthrop, *Journal*, 133-35; John Winthrop to John Winthrop, Jr., December 12, 1634, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:177; see also Cave, *Pequot War*, 69-72.

between Massachusetts and the Pequots two years later. Prior to 1634 Puritans and Pequots had little contact with each other, but by 1635 both sides believed themselves to be the rightful owners and legitimate rulers of Connecticut. Thus Massachusetts considered the Pequots to be political subjects under the jurisdiction of English authority, and treated them as such; Pequots considered themselves to be independent, and fiercely resisted the exercise of English power. The clash of these rival claims to sovereignty further destabilized a region already gripped by war.⁴⁵

In addition to the fracturing of power in the borderlands, by 1636 the Massachusetts colonists faced two situations that reached the level of full-fledged crisis. The first crisis was internal, a religious insurgency that challenged the power of the Puritan oligarchy and threatened to rip apart the fraying social fabric of the colonies. The second crisis was external, as their tense alliance with the Pequots disintegrated and they became convinced that the Indians threatened the survival of the colony. Edward Johnson captured the magnitude of these twin dangers when he wrote,

With eyes full of anguish, they face to the right, upon the damnable Doctrines, as so many dreadfull Engines set by Satan to intrap their poore soules; Then casting forth a left hand looke, the labour and wants accompanying a Desert, and terrible Wilderness affright them... behold a Messenger with sorrowfull tidings from their fellow brethren, that inhabited the bankes of the River Canectico, who having audience, informes them of the great insolency, and cruell murthers committed by a barbarous and bloody people called Peaquods.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Cave, *Pequot War*, 76; Karr, “‘Why Should You Be So Furious?’,” 881-83, 895-98, 907, 909; Pulsipher, *Subjects Unto the Same King*, 21-22.

⁴⁶ Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 147.

Paradoxically, the sense of catastrophic weakness felt by the colonists pushed them toward genocide. Societies that feel no need to demonstrate their power seldom commit mass murder; rather, perpetrators are usually beleaguered and crisis-ridden societies, which feel that their enemies are closing in on all sides.⁴⁷ Such were the circumstances the Puritans faced in 1636: threatened from within by insurrection and from without by war. The intense anxiety and fear that resulted from these simultaneous crises unleashed the lethal potential of their ideologies of violence and dispossession. The end result was a “genocidal moment,” when the Puritans used mass killing as a spectacular method of overcoming crisis and exerting their contested, eroding power.

The strength of the New England colonies, the Puritans believed, came from their unshakeable unity. The Saints, said Winthrop in *Christian Charity*, were “the body of Christ,” each of them a portion of muscle, ligament, and bone. They would stand or fall together, and so for their mission to be a success they “must be knitt together in this worke as one man... allwayes haueing before our eyes our Commission and Community in the worke, our Community as members of the same body, soe shall wee keepe the vnitie of the spirit in the bond of peace.”⁴⁸ In 1636, the Antinomian Controversy

threatened the roots of that unity: the faith of the Saints. John Cotton, a charismatic and

⁴⁷ Mark Levene, *The Meaning of Genocide*, Genocide in the Age of the Nation-State, vol. 1 (London: I.B. Taurus, 2005), 76, 91-92; Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6-7; A. Dirk Moses, “Genocide and Settler Society in Australian History,” in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004), 33-34; Jacques Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide*, trans. Cynthia Schoch (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 15, 61-62, 225. There are notable exceptions to this generalization, such as the virtual extermination of the Yuki Indians during the relatively confident and prosperous period of the California Gold Rush. Further research is required into genocide in the United States to determine the dynamics of violence in this context.

⁴⁸ John Winthrop, “Modell of Christian Charity,” *Winthrop Papers*, 2:289, 294.

popular preacher, delivered a number of sermons that seemed alarmingly heterodox, implying that some ministers in Massachusetts were preaching a “covenant of works.”⁴⁹ While Cotton himself considered his theology to be acceptably mainstream and attempted to reconcile his views with those of other ministers, his followers John Wheelwright and Anne Hutchinson adopted a radically antagonistic stance that attracted an increasing following.⁵⁰

The General Court attempted to calm the brewing conflict by declaring a day of fasting and prayer for January 19, 1637.⁵¹ Instead, Wheelwright brought the conflict to a fever pitch with an incendiary sermon. He called the ministerial establishment “enimyes to the Lord, not onely Pagonish, but Antichristian,” who sought to “take away the Christ, the sonne of the living God, and put in false Christs, and to deceave the electe.”⁵²

Winthrop sardonically summarized Wheelwright’s accusations: “*That the Magistrates were Ahabs, Amaziahs, Scribes and Pharisees, enemies to Christ, led by Satan, that old enemy of Free Grace, and that it were better that a Milstone were hung about their*

⁴⁹ The phrase “covenant of works” referred to a theological position asserting that human agency is an important part of achieving salvation. In the language of the Puritans, a Christian could demonstrate his “justification” (the state of salvation) through “sanctification” (living a righteous life). This contrasted with the orthodox view of the “covenant of grace,” which held that human actions were irrelevant in the eyes of God, and so the faithful needed to put themselves at God’s mercy to decide who was saved and who was damned. During the Antinomian Controversy, neither the legalist oligarchy nor their Antinomian challengers advocated a belief in the “covenant of works”; each accused the other of that heresy. On the theological issues of the Antinomian Controversy, see William Stoeber, “*A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven*”: *Covenant Theology and Antinomianism in Early Massachusetts* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1978).

⁵⁰ John Cotton, “Sixteene Questions of Serious and Necessary Consequence,” in *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History*, 2nd edition, ed. David D. Hall (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1990), 4-59; “The Elders Reply,” in *Antinomian Controversy*, 61-77; John Cotton, “Mr. Cottons Rejoinder,” in *Antinomian Controversy*, 79-151.

⁵¹ Shurtleff, *Records of Massachusetts Bay*, 1:187, 207.

⁵² John Wheelwright, “A Fast-Day Sermon,” in *Antinomian Controversy*, 163, 159.

necks, and they were drowned in the Sea.”⁵³ Wheelwright’s Fast-Day Sermon drew a line in the sand that effectively split the community of Saints into warring camps.

The Antinomian crisis was more serious than any internal disagreement that the Massachusetts Puritans had ever faced before. Shrill accusations of heresy on either side shattered the religious harmony of the colony. “Thus every occasion increased the contention,” Winthrop observed, “and caused great alienation of minds” until “it began to be as common here to distinguish between men, by being under a covenant of grace or a covenant of works, as in other countries between Protestants and Papists.”⁵⁴ Religious schism seemed not just possible, or even imminent—the Puritans were witnessing its horror before their very eyes, “so that surely had this Sect gone on awhile,” claimed Johnson, the Antinomians “would have made a new Bible.”⁵⁵ These divisions were not simply theological. Because the congregation was the heart of the commonwealth, religious disagreements affected the full range of social relationships. The conflicts were so pervasive, “both in Church and State,” said Winthrop, that it even disrupted families, “setting division between husband and wife!” Beset by enemies from within, many Puritans began to doubt that they could weather the storms of their own dissension.⁵⁶

By threatening the foundations of Puritan social identity, the Antinomian Controversy created a profound sense of existential anxiety. Colonists once guided by

⁵³ John Winthrop, “A Short Story on the Rise, Reign, and Ruin of the Antinomians, Familists and Libertines,” in *Antinomian Controversy*, 211 (emphasis in the original).

⁵⁴ Winthrop, *Journal*, 209.

⁵⁵ Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 129.

⁵⁶ Winthrop, “Short Story,” in *Antinomian Controversy*, 201-2, 209 (quotation), 213, 283.

unshakeable conviction began to lose their sense of purpose; the crisis sapped the strength of their faith and their will to conquer the challenges of the New World.⁵⁷ Some of the most dramatic cases of Calvinist angst in the history of American Puritanism occurred during these tense months. In February of 1637 a man from Weymouth, not yet admitted into the company of the elect, was gripped by such distress that he leapt out of his bed in the middle of the night, crying, “Art thou come, Lord Jesus?” He ran into the frigid wilderness, stopping every so often to pray for guidance, until he froze to death in the dark. In a similarly gruesome spectacle, that August a Boston woman grew to despair about the uncertain state of her soul. Torn between the hope of salvation and the looming tortures of hell, she could not bear to live without knowing her ultimate fate. One day “she took her little infant and threw it into a well, and then came into the house and said, now she was sure she should be damned, for she had drowned her child.” Even Governor Henry Vane, the vigorous and capable leader of the colony, was driven to such anguish over “these differences and dissensions” that he broke down and wept in front of the General court.⁵⁸

Whatever the objective intensity of the Antinomian Controversy, the near-hysterical tone of contemporary writings testifies to its perceived gravity.⁵⁹ Thomas

⁵⁷ Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 133.

⁵⁸ Winthrop, *Journal*, 201, 209, 229-30.

⁵⁹ Some historians contend that the seriousness of the Antinomian Crisis has been overstated. James Cooper, for example, argues that the Controversy was not a revolt of the laity against the elite, and that most New Englanders followed the lead of their ministers. See James F. Cooper, Jr., *Tenacious of their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 46-67. Far from minimizing the danger of the Controversy, as Cooper implies, the fact that champions of unorthodox beliefs had support among the elites would seem to reinforce the argument that the crisis represented a serious threat to colonial unity. Janice Knight interprets the Controversy as a much

Shepard feared that the religious quarrels would “flame out unless they be quenched in time,” and the church elders perceived “hot contentions and paroxysmes that have begun to swell and burn in these poor churches.”⁶⁰ Wheelwright’s Fast-Day Sermon rhetoric gave them reason to fear. Reacting to the objection that “This will cause a combustion in the Church and common wealth,” he thundered in reply: “did not Christ come to send fire upon the earth... and what is it, that it were already kindled, he desireth it were kindled, and it is the desire of the Spirit and of the saynts that this fire were kindled... therefore never feare combustions and burnings.”⁶¹ Winthrop marveled, “*It was a wonder of mercy that they had not set our Common-wealth and Churches a fire, and consumed us all therein.*”⁶² Wheelwright, Hutchinson, and several of their prominent followers were banished in November 1637, effectively shutting down the Antinomian revolt.⁶³ In the shadow of a major Indian war, however, it seemed entirely possible to the embattled Saints that the flames of their contention would consume them from within.

Coinciding almost precisely with the turbulence of the Antinomian crisis, colonists along the frontier began to believe that they faced a second crisis in the form of a Pequot assault. In June of 1636 Jonathan Brewster, Plymouth’s agent at the Windsor trading post, wrote alarmed reports warning of imminent attack. “Out of desperate

more significant danger that verged on open rebellion. Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 14-31.

⁶⁰ “Letters Between Thomas Shepard and John Cotton,” in *Antinomian Controversy*, 29; “Elders Reply,” in *Antinomian Controversy*, 61.

⁶¹ Wheelwright, “Fast-Day Sermon,” in *Antinomian Controversy*, 165-66.

⁶² Winthrop, “Short Story,” in *Antinomian Controversy*, 211 (emphasis in the original).

⁶³ Shurtleff, *Records of Massachusetts Bay*, 1:207-8.

madnesse,” he wrote, the Pequots “doe threaten shortly to sett both vpon Indians, and English, [j]oyntely.” That same day, in a second letter that frantically repeated the same information, he reiterated that the Pequots continued “still in theyr bloody myndes towards the English,” and warned emphatically that “shortly they intend an e[n]vasion both of English and natives in this Riuer.” To drive home his point, he relayed the story that one Pequot raiding party had attempted to attack a Plymouth merchant ship, and another had killed two English traders near Long Island. He recommended that no Englishman should leave his house without girding himself for war.⁶⁴

Brewster’s assessment of Pequot intentions was almost certainly incorrect. His main—perhaps only—informant was the Mohegan sachem Uncas, who had repeatedly challenged the power of the Pequots and had a vested interest in undermining their position. Given the Pequots’ weakness, and their attempts since 1634 to forge peaceful connections with the English colonies, they would have had no reason to provoke hostilities. Moreover, calmer English observers, such as the trader William Pynchon, believed that Uncas’s reports were entirely fictitious. Nevertheless, news traveled quickly in the tense climate, and colonists like Brewster began to imagine Pequots hiding in the shadows and thirsting for English blood.⁶⁵

The news of John Oldham’s murder in July of 1636 struck like a spark in this tinderbox of tension and fear. A party of Indians from Block Island had boarded Oldham’s ship as he sailed to Block Island on a trading mission, killing Oldham and his

⁶⁴ Jonathan Brewster to John Winthrop, Jr., June 18, 1636, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:270-71.

⁶⁵ William Pynchon to John Winthrop, Jr., April 22, 1636, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:254; William Pynchon to John Winthrop, Jr., June 2, 1636, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:267. See also Cave, *Pequot War*, 98-101.

crew, ransacking the ship, and capturing two young boys.⁶⁶ In itself, this incident had nothing to do with the Pequots. The Block Island Indians were allies of the Eastern Niantics and tributaries to the Narragansetts. Canonicus and Miantonomo, the two most powerful Narragansett sachems, hurriedly sent word to Boston that they condemned the actions of their subordinates and sent a war party of two hundred men to punish the Islanders. Wanting to underscore its own authority, Massachusetts nonetheless sent a punitive expedition of its own. The ruling council dispatched ninety men under the command of John Endecott to Block Island, with orders to punish the Islanders. In addition, the council ordered Endecott to stop by Pequot territory on their way back to demand the murderers of John Stone, one thousand fathoms of wampum, and some of their children as hostages. The murder of John Oldham thus served as a pretext for the Puritans to address their heightened fears of Pequot aggression. By sending Endecott and his men to demand that Sassacus fulfill the terms of the 1634 treaty, Massachusetts could assert its dominance and put the colonists' fears to rest.⁶⁷

The raid on Block Island accomplished little. The Indians refused to engage the English, so the militia borrowed the punitive tactics that Virginians had honed during the Anglo-Powhatan Wars, setting wigwams on fire and burning the Islanders' cornfields. Though tensions remained high between Massachusetts and the Narragansetts,

⁶⁶ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 292; Underhill, *Newes from America*, 2-3; Winthrop, *Journal*, 179-80.

⁶⁷ John Mason, *Brief History of the Pequot War, Especially of the Memorable Taking of their Fort at Mistick in Connecticut in 1637* (Boston, 1736), ix; Winthrop, *Journal*, 180-83; Underhill, *Newes from America*, 2-3. Puritan historians later attempted to link these two unrelated missions by claiming that Oldham's murderers fled Block Island and sought sanctuary with the Pequots, thus making the Pequots guilty by association; see Hubbard, *Present State*, 2:12. None of the contemporary accounts support this assertion.

Canonicus and Miantonomo calmed matters by immediately setting free the two captive boys and returning John Oldham's belongings. More importantly, they delivered Oldham's murderers to face the Court's judgment, reaffirming their allegiance by submitting to the rule of English law.⁶⁸ The Pequots, in contrast, remained intransigent. When Endecott presented his demands, Pequot messengers sought out Sassacus, their sachem, but they could not seem to find him. A succession of runners had trouble locating any sachems, in fact, forcing the English militia to wait for more than four hours. As the soldiers stood arrayed in battle ranks, baking in full armor under the hot summer sun, a crowd of Pequots gathered to stare and snicker. Bristling with fury and fearing an ambush, Endecott finally ordered his men to attack, but the Pequots faded into the forest after shooting a volley of arrows. As at Block Island, the English fired the houses, despoiled the cornfields, and sailed away. They managed to kill only a handful of Pequots.⁶⁹

Despite this disappointing outcome, Massachusetts was satisfied that it had taught the Pequots a lesson by destroying homes and crops, and thereafter made no further military preparations. At that point the Pequot threat was still more rumored than real, and the Antinomian Controversy was just beginning to simmer. Sassacus, however, interpreted Endecott's raid as an act of war and immediately sought vengeance. From

⁶⁸ Winthrop, *Journal*, 183-84.

⁶⁹ Gardiner, *Relation of the Pequot Warres*, 10-11; Underhill, *Newes from America*, 4-13; Winthrop, *Journal*, 184-86. The sources are inconsistent on the number of Pequot casualties. Underhill reported fourteen dead (p. 7) and Winthrop repeated information gleaned from Narragansett allies that thirteen dead and forty wounded. Gardiner, however, was contemptuous of the English performance, writing that only one Pequot had been killed, and at the hands of their Indian interpreter Cutshamekin (p. 10-11). Since Underhill was a participant and Gardiner a disgruntled garrison commander who continually complained of Massachusetts' aggressive policies, Underhill is more likely to be correct.

autumn of 1636 to the spring of 1637, Pequot warriors raided English territory up and down the Connecticut and Thames Rivers. A large party laid siege to the isolated garrison at Saybrook, killing several soldiers when they left the safety of the fort to gather provisions. On several occasions the Pequots took captives and then tortured them to death. When Pequot warriors captured John Tilley in April of 1637, they tied him to a stake, flayed his skin, scorched the wounds with hot embers, and then cut off his fingers and toes one by one. The English carried out atrocities of their own. One month after Tilley's gruesome death, twenty English troops at Saybrook tied one leg of a Pequot captive to a stake, the other leg to a long rope, and heaved. Not until the English had "pulled him in pieces" did John Underhill kill him with a pistol shot. Though both sides committed atrocities, such grisly episodes outraged the English and reinforced the stereotype of the cruel and bloodthirsty Indian.⁷⁰

In the nine months following Endecott's expedition, Pequots killed about twenty colonial soldiers in a series of small-scale engagements, but a flood of alarming reports indicated that this was merely the tip of the sword in what would become a much wider war. According to William Bradford, Pequot envoys attempted to make peace with their old enemies, the Narragansetts, and form an anti-English league. They argued "that the

⁷⁰ Gardiner, *Relation of the Pequot Warres*, 12-18; Underhill, *Newes from America*, 20; Vincent, *True Relation of the Late Battell*, 4-7 (quotation p. 7); Lion Gardiner to John Winthrop, Jr., November 6, 1636, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:319-21; Lion Gardiner to John Winthrop, Jr., March 23, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:381-82; Winthrop, *Journal*, 189-90, 207. Algonquian warriors often carried captured enemies back to their villages, where their slow executions by torture acted as a form of communal catharsis that released the intense emotions evoked by the violence of war. See Williams, "A Key into the Language of America," in *Complete Writings*, 1:264; Wood, *New England's Prospect*, 102-105. As Adam Hirsch notes, "Indians wove torture *into* their code of honor: the victims earned posthumous esteem by bearing themselves stoically under the ordeal" (emphasis in the original). See Adam J. Hirsch, "The Collision of Military Cultures in Seventeenth-Century New England," *Journal of American History* 74, no. 4 (March 1988): 1192 n. 14.

English were strangers and began to overspread their country, and would deprive them thereof in time, if they were suffered to grow and increase.” The envoys proposed a campaign that would minimize English firepower and maximize the Indians’ skills in forest warfare. Reasoning that “they should not need to fear the strength of the English, for they would not come to open battle with them,” the Pequots favored using guerrilla tactics to “fire their houses, kill their cattle, and lie in ambush for them as they went abroad upon their occasions.” The English could not withstand such an assault, and so “they would either be starved with hunger or be forced to forsake the country.” The Pequots had come to understand the logic of elimination inherent in English settlement, and appealed to the Narragansetts to join them in opposing the invaders while they still had the chance.⁷¹

Fearing the possibility of an Indian alliance, Edward Winslow urged Massachusetts to mobilize for war, “otherwise the natiues we feare will grow into a stronger confederacy to the further prejudice of the whole English.”⁷² War seemed “to be an vniversall deluge creeping and encroaching on all the English in the land,” wrote the reverend John Higginson from Saybrook Fort; “The multitudes of our enimies daily encrease.”⁷³ The Saybrook garrison commander Lion Gardiner gave voice to a more pervasive English fear: that a failure to deal decisively with the Pequots would undermine English authority and thus embolden other Native American tribes to attack,

⁷¹ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 294; see also Winthrop, *Journal*, 187.

⁷² Edward Winslow to John Winthrop, April 17, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:391-92.

⁷³ John Higginson to John Winthrop, May 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:405.

“for all the Indian haue ther eyes fixed vppon vs,” and while “this yeare the[y] will all joyne with vs agaynst the Pequitt,” he feared that “the next year the will be agaynst vs.”⁷⁴ It was not an idle fear: had the Pequots successfully formed an Algonquian coalition, as Gardiner predicted, they might have had the power to sweep the fledgling colonies into the sea.

On April 23, 1637, the Pequots crossed an invisible threshold when they attacked the town of Wethersfield in Connecticut. They launched the raid in conjunction with the Wongunk tribe, whom the Wethersfield settlers had expelled from the area, and probably did not signal any significant escalation of hostilities. Rather, the Pequots were compelled to attack in order to keep the loyalty of the Wongunks, one of their few remaining allies.⁷⁵ During their raid on the small settlement, the Indian raiders killed nine settlers, including a woman and a child, slaughtered twenty cattle, and seized two young women as captives. Up to this point the Pequot War had been confined to the edge of the frontier, and no colonists had been killed except for members of the Saybrook garrison and those supplying them. Suddenly the war came to English homes and English farms; the dead were not soldiers or adventurers but English families. According to the Puritans’ informants, the Pequots had proposed exactly this sort of attack to the Narragansetts. It now appeared that they would carry out their war, with or without allies, until they had starved the Saints into extinction or driven them from the shores of America. The Pequots, wrote the Connecticut captain John Mason, “*resolved* _____

⁷⁴ Lion Gardiner to John Winthrop, Jr., March 23, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:382. For a similar warning in his own narrative, see Gardiner, *Relation of the Pequot Warres*, 23.

⁷⁵ Winthrop, *Journal*, 252.

to Destroy all the ENGLISH and to Root their very Name out of this Country.”⁷⁶ Since the Pequots had violated the law of nations by raising their hatchets in rebellion, Massachusetts declared war “vpon iust ground,” and Connecticut soon followed, wrote Mason, with the decision to “engage in an offensive and defensive *War*.”⁷⁷ In the eyes of the Puritans, the Pequots had fired the first salvo of a total war, and they determined that they would finish it.

It is a paradox of the genocidal mentality that perpetrators usually see themselves as the true victims. They believe that their victims want to kill *them*, to destroy *them*, to annihilate *them*. With the perverse logic of genocide they ask: how can we fight such an enemy? How to defeat them, except to annihilate them first?⁷⁸ By demonstrating their supposed inhumanity through acts of cruelty, conspiring to forge an intertribal alliance capable of challenging the colonies, and expressing genocidal desires of their own, the Pequots became just such an enemy. Philip Vincent compared the Puritans’ precarious situation to the one faced by Virginians fifteen years earlier, writing that “The long forbearance, and too much lenientie of the English toward the Virginian Salvages, had like to have beene the destruction of the whole Plantation.” Security required more than military victory: “It is not good to give breathing to a beaten enemy, lest he returne

⁷⁶ Mason, *Mason, Brief History*, 13-14 (emphasis in the original). John Winthrop made a similar warning, writing that the Pequots “who though he may take occasion, of the beginning of his rage, from some one parte of the English, yet if he peruaile, will surly pursue his aduantage, to the rooting out of the whole nation.” John Winthrop to William Bradford, May 20, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:417.

⁷⁷ Shurtleff, *Records of Massachusetts Bay*, 1:192; J. Hammond Trumbull, ed., *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*, 15 vols. (Hartford: Brown and Parsons, 1850-1885), 1:9; Mason, *Mason, Brief History*, x (emphasis in the original); see also Hubbard, *Present State*, 2:32.

⁷⁸ Levene, *Meaning of Genocide*, 6, 127, 204-5; Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*, 6, 24, 95, 503; Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, 47-48.

armed if not with greater puissance, yet with greater despiht and revenge.” And so the English, “were now sent forth to chase the Barbarians and utterly roote them out.”⁷⁹ Later Puritan historians scornfully wrote of the Pequots as if they were weeds that needed to be extirpated from New England’s plantation. The English “knew right-well,” wrote Johnson, “till this cursed crew were utterly rooted out, they should never be at peace.”⁸⁰ And the Puritans were not alone, Hubbard confidently asserted, for while “they unanimously agreed to joyn their Forces together to root them out of the Earth,” they had faith that they would have “Gods Assistance” as they did it.⁸¹ Of all the later chroniclers, Cotton Mather expressed the Puritans’ genocidal shift with the most elegant brutality. “The Infant Colonies of New-England,” he wrote, “finding themselves necessitated unto the Crushing of Serpents, while they were but yet in the Cradle, Unanimously resolved, that with the Assistance of Heaven they would root this Nest of Serpents out of the world.”⁸²

Holocaust

Just before dawn on May 26, 1637, John Mason’s band of seventy-seven Englishmen, along with three hundred Narragansett and Mohegan allies, crept up to the palisades surrounding the Pequot village along the Mystic River. In the soft liminal light they split into three groups: two English assault teams, one commanded by Underhill

⁷⁹ Vincent, *True Relation of the Late Battell*, 8, 13.

⁸⁰ Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 168.

⁸¹ Hubbard, *Present State*, 2:14.

⁸² Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 7:42.

and the other by Mason himself, with the Indians deployed in a ring to prevent any Pequots from escaping. Pushing their way through the bramble-choked entrances, the English fought through the tightly packed wigwams and fired upon any Pequots they encountered. The defenders responded with ferocious resistance, killing two and wounding twenty more, until Mason grabbed a firebrand from within a wigwam and shouted, “WE MUST BURN THEM!” While Mason torched the western end of the village, Underhill lit a second fire to the south and the blaze quickly became an inferno. Many of the Pequots fought desperately, firing arrows at the English even as their bowstrings snapped from the heat. Others fled the devouring flames only to be slaughtered by English guns and English steel and the merciless arrows of their tribal enemies. Four hundred Pequots died in the massacre. Fewer than ten escaped.⁸³

The two commanders explained their actions at Mystic by linking the massacre to biblical wars. Mason wrote, “Thus we may see, *How the Face of GOD is set against them that do Evil, to cut off the Remembrance of them from the Earth... the LORD was pleased to smite our Enemies in the hinder Parts, and to give us their Land for an*

⁸³ Mason, *Mason, Brief History*; Underhill, *Newes from America*; Vincent, *True Relation of the Late Battell*, 8-10. As is often the case in war, the number of enemy casualties is not entirely clear. Sherburne Cook estimates the dead at six hundred, though I believe this figure may be too high; see Sherburne F. Cook, “Interracial Warfare and Population Decline among the New England Indians,” *Ethnohistory* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1973): 8. Mason reported six or seven hundred, Underhill reported four hundred, and Vincent between three and four hundred. Winthrop recorded in his journal that Mason’s party slew “one hundred and fifty fighting men, and about one hundred and fifty old men, women, and children,” and Lion Gardiner gives similar numbers; see Winthrop, *Journal*, 220-21; Gardiner, *Relation of the Pequot Warres*, 20. The numbers given by Mason and Underhill should carry more weight, since they were the principal actors in the massacre. Mason’s figure of seven hundred is significantly higher than the casualties reported by any other writer, however, and he wrote his account of the battle several decades afterwards, so John Underhill’s median figure of four hundred is probably the most accurate.

Inheritance.”⁸⁴ Mason’s apologia was a remarkable distillation of the genocidal mentality: in just two sentences he invoked the mythical power of biblical antiquity, reduced the Pequots to those “that do evil,” and connected mass death to the appropriation of land through acquisition of the fallen enemy’s territory. Underhill seemed more defensive, but nonetheless took refuge beneath the wings of sacred violence:

I would referre you to *Davids warre*, when a people is growne to such a height of bloud, and sinne against God and man, and all confederates in the action, there hee hath no respect to persons, but harrowes them, and sawes them, and puts them to the sword, and the most terriblest death that may bee: sometimes the Scripture declareth women and children must perish with their parents; sometime the case alters: but we will not dispute it now. We had sufficient light from the word of God for our proceedings.⁸⁵

For Underhill, David’s massacre of the Ammonites set a precedent for the slaughter at Mystic, and he had followed it to victory.

The Saints’ Narragansett and Mohegan allies saw the massacre in a different light. Witnessing the lethal resolve of the English soldiers, the Narragansetts, reported Underhill, cried “*mach it, mach it*; that is, it is naught, it is naught, because it is too

⁸⁴ Mason, *Mason, Brief History*, 20 (emphasis in the original). Mason’s phrasing (“to give us their land for an inheritance”) parallels a number of texts from Deuteronomy: 4:21, 4:38, 15:4, 19:10, 21:23, 24:4, 25:19, and 26:1. Of these, only one refers to divinely sanctioned dispossession (4:38, “To thrust out nacions greater and mightier the[n] thou, before thee, to bring thee in, *and* to giue thee their land for inheritance”) and only one contains a direct commandment for violence (25:19, “when the Lord thy God hath giuen thee rest from all thine enemies round about in the land, which the Lord thy God giueth thee for an inheritance to possesse it, *then* thou shalt put out the remembrance of Amalek from vnder heauen”). It is not clear which of these passages Mason is quoting, but the context suggests one of these two.

⁸⁵ Underhill, *Newes from America*, 35-36 (emphasis in the original).

furious, and slaies too many men.”⁸⁶ The conflagration at Mystic was unlike the way of war that Algonquian Indians were used to; the unceremonious butchery of women and children violated their code of warrior ethics. Moreover, inter-tribal warfare generally focused on limited objectives like individual revenge, obtaining captives, or demonstrating bravery rather than the total destruction of the enemy force. The Indians’ way of fighting, Underhill noted contemptuously, was a dance of feint and counterfeints, “more for pastime, then to conquer and subdue,” and was ultimately so ineffective compared to the devastating impact of English musket volleys that “they might fight seven years and not kill seven men.”⁸⁷ The sheer number of casualties resulting from the direct assault would have been unprecedented in the Indians’ experience. Nevertheless, hundreds of warriors from both tribes had participated in the assault on Mystic, blocking the exits from the village and preventing any Pequots from escaping. Furthermore, both Narragansett sachems, Miantonomo and Canonicus, as well as the Mohegan sachem Uncas, remained English allies and participated in the summer campaign that followed the massacre. Despite their evident horror, the Native Americans allied with the Puritans seem to have participated in the genocide of their Pequot rivals.

The Mystic massacre shattered Pequot resistance. Sassacus, realizing that his people could not survive such a war, dispersed the tribe to seek safe haven where they

⁸⁶ Underhill, *Newes from America*, 36, 38 (emphasis in the original). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in seventeenth century usage “naught” was synonymous with “evil” or “wicked thing.”

⁸⁷ Underhill, *Newes from America*, 36. Other observers made similar observations that Indian wars were far less deadly than wars fought by Europeans; see Williams, “A Key into the Language of America,” in *Complete Writings*, 1:264; Wood, *New England’s Prospect*, 102-3. On Algonquian warfare, see Hirsch, “Collision of Military Cultures,” 1190-94; Patrick M. Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics Among the New England Indians* (Lanham, Md.: Madison Books, 1991), 7-24, 75-78.

could.⁸⁸ Some fled to Long Island, others north to find shelter with the powerful Mohawks. Rather than reassure the colonists, however, this diaspora brought a new wave of concerns; Roger Williams took the news of the Pequots' movement seriously. Thanks in part to William Wood's lurid accounts, the Mohawks were infamous for their cannibalism and other savage behaviors. Williams feared that the Pequots would form an alliance with the Mohawks, become cannibals themselves, and then bring an even more savage assault on the English colonies. Though it is difficult to tell how many colonists shared this view, Williams was hardly a credulous source. He had used his familiarity with the Narragansetts to act as Massachusetts' diplomat, spy, and informant during the war, and he was a critical source of intelligence for John Winthrop and the Boston magistrates. For Williams, at least, the Pequots' devastating defeat perversely intensified fears rather than allaying them.⁸⁹

Puritan stereotypes of the terrifying "other" reacted with rising fears to create a discourse in which the Pequots became more animal than human. Dehumanizing the enemy in this fashion is a central process in the transition from "ordinary" hostility to genocide.⁹⁰ According to psychologist Philip Zimbardo, dehumanization "fosters the perception that other people are less than human" until they lose their human status

⁸⁸ Mason, *Mason, Brief History*, 14; Underhill, *Newes from America*, 40.

⁸⁹ Williams, "A Key into the Language of America," in *Complete Writings*, 1:102; Roger Williams to John Winthrop, June 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:436-37; Roger Williams to John Winthrop, July 3, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:438; Roger Williams to John Winthrop, July 15, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:451; Wood, *New England's Prospect*, 75-78.

⁹⁰ Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 27-28; Donald G. Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres, and Extreme Violence: Why "Normal" People Come to Commit Atrocities* (Westport, Conn. and London: Praeger Security International, 2007), 108-12; Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* (New York: Random House, 2007), xii.

altogether.⁹¹ Instead of people, the animalized enemies become vermin and beasts, disgusting parasites or savage predators. Once the target group has been stripped of its humanity, killing loses its moral opprobrium. In a process that psychologists term “moral disengagement,” the ethical principles that prohibit violence and protect people become subverted by the supposedly higher value of protecting the community through the destruction of its enemies. Killing then becomes a moral imperative.⁹²

The Pequots did not begin as animals in the Puritan imagination. As late as 1634, Wood characterized them as “a stately, warlike people, of whom I never heard any misdemeanor, but that they were just and equal in their dealings, not treacherous either to their countrymen or English, requiters of courtesies, affable towards the English.” But by 1637, when large numbers of Pequots effectively besieged the garrison at Saybrook, Underhill described them as “wicked imps,” who “runne up and downe as roaring Lyons, compassing all corners of the Countrey for a prey, seeking whom they might devoure.”⁹³ The language of animalization moved the Pequots outside what sociologist Helen Fein calls the “universe of obligation,” so that the injunctions against murder common to every ethical system no longer applied. With this rhetorical shift, the

⁹¹ Zimbardo, *Lucifer Effect*, 307.

⁹² Dutton, *Psychology of Genocide*, 108-9; Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 126-27; Zimbardo, *Lucifer Effect*, 310-11. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn ask the question, “How is it possible for people to kill other people on such a massive scale? The answer seems to be that it is not possible, at least not as long as the potential victims are perceived as people. We have no evidence that a genocide was ever performed on a group of equals. The victims must not only not be equals, but also clearly defined as something less than fully human.” Chalk and Jonassohn, *History and Sociology of Genocide*, 27-28.

⁹³ Wood, *New England's Prospect*, 80; Underhill, *Newes from America*, 20.

Puritans crossed a critical threshold into ideological territory that valued killing and censured mercy.⁹⁴

The tendency to liken Pequots to wild animals soon became commonplace. Previously “stately,” “just,” and “affable,” they became “wicked imps,” “roaring Lyons,” “sullen Dogs,” “a Kennell of devouring Wolves,” “a Nest of Serpents,” and “Bears bereaved of their Whelps.”⁹⁵ Hubbard, perhaps thinking that comparing Pequots to beasts might be overly generous, called them a “Company of treacherous Villains, the Dregs and Lees of the Earth, and the Dross of Mankind.”⁹⁶ Thus when Puritan soldiers relentlessly stalked the scattered Pequots through the forests and swamps of New England, it was not difficult for them to think of themselves as hunters putting down rabid wolves rather than slaughtering people. The Pequots, wrote Mason bluntly, “now became a Prey.”⁹⁷ To expand their grasp, the colonies enlisted the aid of surrounding Indian tribes by offering bounties on Pequots, giving gifts in return for scalps, heads, and hands. In this sense, the Puritans treated the fleeing Pequots, the wolves of their imaginations, in a similar manner to the way they treated the actual wolves that preyed on their cattle.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Helen Fein, *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective* (London: Sage Publications, 1993), 26-27.

⁹⁵ Wood, *New England's Prospect*, 80; Underhill, *Newes from America*, 19; Hubbard, *Present State*, 2:29; Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 132; Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 7:43.

⁹⁶ Hubbard, *Present State*, 2:10.

⁹⁷ Mason, *Mason, Brief History*, 17.

⁹⁸ Gardiner, *Relation of the Pequot Warres*, 21-22; Winthrop, *Journal*, 186. On wolf bounties, see Shurtleff, *Records of Massachusetts Bay*, 1:81, 156, 218; Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth, in New England* (Boston, 1855), 1:22-23, 31; see also Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 132-33. Andrew Lipman argues that the exchange of a body part in this fashion was not a “bounty” but a symbolic act of special significance for both Indians and English; see Andrew Lipman, “‘A Meanes

The Pequot threat helped to seal the divisions within Massachusetts Bay and bring its neighboring colonies together. Fear of the Pequots compelled the Puritans to rally behind a common purpose, guided by the conviction that the Pequots were in fact instruments of God, who wished to unite his chosen people against a common foe and heal the rifts between them. John Higginson wrote that the Lord had sent

the Indians vpon his servants, to make them cleave more close together, and prize each other, to prevent contentions of Brethren which may proue as hard to break as Castle barres, and stop their now beginning breaches before they be as the letting out of many waters that cannot be gathered in againe.⁹⁹

The Connecticut colonists who had left Boston joined with their Massachusetts brethren to storm Mystic and cooperated in the campaign that followed. Even Plymouth, which had initially refused to participate in a war that its leaders felt had been started by Massachusetts' aggression, raised a force of fifty men to aid in the war.¹⁰⁰ The multipolar contest for control of territory and trade, which had fractured the exercise of English power along the New England frontier, collapsed into a single front. Despite all

to Knitt Them Together': The Exchange of Body Parts in the Pequot War," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 65, no. 1 (January 2008): 3-28. While the symbolic meanings of the body and its portions were no doubt a factor, the sheer volume of parts involved somewhat undermines this argument. The indiscriminate giving of "gifts" resulted in a flood of Pequot body parts—so many that Mason noted them arriving daily to Windsor and Hartford and Winthrop seemed to lose count, noting simply that "The Indians about sent in still many Pequods' heads and hands from Long Island and other places." See Mason, *Mason, Brief History*, 17; Winthrop, *Journal*, 231.

⁹⁹ John Higginson to John Winthrop, May 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 404.

¹⁰⁰ Shurtleff, *Plymouth Records*, 1:60-61. On Plymouth's reticence and eventual decision to enter the war, see Winthrop, *Journal*, 192, 212-14, 450; Edward Winslow to John Winthrop, June 5, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:428. Pequot resistance collapsed so quickly that Plymouth's forces never made it into the field.

the divisions within the English colonies, they united to hunt the Pequots until they could never again become a threat.¹⁰¹

Throughout the summer the English militia hunted small bands of Pequots, summarily executed men of fighting age, and took women and children captive.¹⁰² The last major engagement occurred on July 13, 1637, when a Massachusetts regiment commanded by Israel Stoughton surrounded two hundred fifty Pequots in a swamp near Fairfield. The Puritan commanders—who were, Mason wrote without evident irony, “loth to destroy Women and Children”—offered the besieged Pequots the chance to surrender.¹⁰³ One hundred eighty old men, women, and children filed out of the swamp and yielded, giving themselves over to Puritan mercy. The remaining warriors readied themselves for a last stand. The next morning between twenty and thirty Pequots broke through the militia’s lines and escaped, while the rest faced down the English guns. The Saints captured thirty alive and killed the rest, allowing their bodies to sink into the swamp. With this loss, reflected Johnson, the Pequots had “no such considerable number as ever to raise warre any more.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 220-21.

¹⁰² Hubbard, *Present State*, 2:30; Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 170; Winthrop, *Journal*, 225-27; Daniel Patrick to the Governor and Council of War in Massachusetts, June 19, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:430-31; Israel Stoughton to John Winthrop, June 28, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:435-36.

¹⁰³ Mason, *Mason, Brief History*, 16.

¹⁰⁴ Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 169. Because of the swampy conditions, it is unknown how many Pequots died during this engagement. On the battle at Fairfield (then known as Quinnipiac), see also Hubbard, *Present State*, 2:33-36; Winthrop, *Journal*, 226-27; Richard Davenport to Hugh Peter, *Winthrop Papers*, 452-54.

Captain Stoughton found the captured men to be collectively guilty of the crime of starting the war and sentenced them to death. The English tied the warriors' hands together, loaded them onto a boat, and then dumped them into the bay to drown.¹⁰⁵ They spared the women and children, selling seventeen into slavery in the Bermudas and sending some to become colonists' servants. Several leading figures—including Stoughton, John Endecott, and Roger Williams—requested custody of Pequot children to serve in their households, though Mason reported that “they could not endure that Yoke,” and most escaped before long.¹⁰⁶ The Puritans allotted the remaining Pequots to their Indian allies, the Mohegans and Narragansetts. These tribes absorbed the captives, allowing them to survive war so long as they abandoned their identity as Pequots.¹⁰⁷

The fate of these captive Pequots may help to explain why the Narragansetts and Mohegans collaborated in genocide. In traditional Algonquian warfare warriors generally spared women and children, who could be incorporated into the tribe.¹⁰⁸ Both of the tribes allied with the English had been devastated by the 1633 smallpox epidemic; the Narragansetts suffered seven hundred deaths and the Mohegan tribe was reduced to only a few dozen grim survivors. Canonicus and Miantonomo made it clear that they

¹⁰⁵ Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 170; Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 7:44.

¹⁰⁶ Mason, *Mason, Brief History*, 17. For a detailed examination of these servants and their experience of captivity among the English, see Michael L. Fickes, “‘They Could Not Endure That Yoke’: The Captivity of Pequot Women and Children after the War of 1637,” *New England Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (March 2000): 58-81.

¹⁰⁷ Winthrop, *Journal*, 226-27; Hugh Peter to John Winthrop, July 15, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:450; Israel Stoughton to John Winthrop, June 28, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:435; Roger Williams to John Winthrop, June 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:436-37.

¹⁰⁸ Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 62-63; Howard S. Russell, *Indian New England Before the Mayflower* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1980), 193.

wished to minimize the number of Pequot casualties, possibly so that they could rebuild their populations.¹⁰⁹ Reports by Massachusetts field commanders support this hypothesis, and there is also some evidence that the Narragansetts, Mohegans, and smaller tribes merely pretended to execute English orders by hunting down Pequots while actually sparing their enemies in order to adopt them. Though these conclusions must remain speculative, it is possible that English-allied Indians were only “complicit” in the genocide of the Pequots in an attempt to spare Pequot lives and assimilate the survivors.¹¹⁰

In July of 1637, Sassacus, twenty of his best warriors, and most of the remaining Pequot sachems sought refuge with the Mohawks. After an initial offer of sanctuary, the Mohawks killed the Pequots in early August and sent their heads to Boston. Whether Sassacus was killed at the Narragansetts’ behest or in an attempt by the Mohawks to curry favor with Massachusetts, his death marked the collapse of Pequot resistance.¹¹¹ More than a year later, on September 21, 1638, the English signed a treaty with the Narragansett and Mohegan leaders that determined the shape of post-war New England. The Treaty of Hartford claimed all Pequot land for the English, nullifying any claims

¹⁰⁹ Winthrop, *Journal*, 109; Michael Leroy Oberg, *Uncas: First of the Mohegans* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 45.

¹¹⁰ Roger Williams to Sir Henry Vane and John Winthrop, May 15, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:412-14; Roger Williams to John Winthrop, June 21, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:434; Israel Stoughton to John Winthrop, July 6, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:441-43; Roger Williams to John Winthrop, August 12, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:480; Israel Stoughton to the Governor and Council of Massachusetts, August 14, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:481-83; Roger Williams to John Winthrop, September 9, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:494-95; Roger Wiliams to John Winthrop, October 26, 1637, *Winthrop Papers*, 3:500-502.

¹¹¹ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 297; Gardiner, *Relation of the Pequot Warres*, 21; Vincent, *True Relation of the Late Battell*, 14; Winthrop, *Journal*, 229. Different sources attribute both of these motives to the Mohawks for their betrayal.

from other Indian tribes. The treaty also declared that all inter-tribal disputes should be submitted to English mediation, cementing the extension of English sovereignty. As for the Pequots, by war's end their dead numbered over seven hundred, about one-quarter of the entire tribe. Most of the rest were captives, slaves, or newly minted Narragansetts and Mohegans.¹¹²

The treaty legally dissolved the tribe as a political entity and forbade the future use of their name by Pequot survivors or any other group of Native Americans. This was the clearest possible expression of the intent to destroy the Pequot group, as such, but the English went beyond even that. "As also for those murderers," the treaty read, the allied Indians "shall soon as they can possibly take off their heads, if they may be in their custody... or any where if they can by any means come by them." Just as Stoughton had declared that all adult men were guilty of the crimes that started the war, the Treaty of Hartford ruled all remaining Pequots collectively guilty and subject to immediate execution upon capture. While ending the war, the treaty also acted as a death warrant that was not rescinded until 1640.¹¹³

The genocidal wrath of the Saints followed a terrible logic, carrying the eliminatory process inherent in settler colonialism to its appalling climax. Chaotic forces

¹¹² Cook, "Interracial Warfare," 8-9.

¹¹³ "Treaty of Hartford," September 21, 1638, *Rhode Island Historical Collections*, 3:177-78; quoted in Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1629-1675*, 3rd edition (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 340-41. The death sentence for all "guilty" Pequots remained in force until October 1640, when the magistrates of Connecticut and New Haven sent a letter to the Massachusetts General Court in which they "declared their dislike of such as would have the Indians rooted out," and furthermore expressed "their desire of our mutual accord in seeking to gain them by justice and kindness, and withal to watch over them to prevent any danger by them." Winthrop, *Journal*, 341. Massachusetts agreed to abide by these terms; Shurtleff, *Records of Massachusetts Bay*, 1:305.

on the frontier pushed both sides towards conflict, and the seeds of violence in the Puritan worldview escalated that conflict to increasingly violent extremes that led to the brutal massacre at Mystic. Unlike the events in Virginia, when frontier forces caused the conflict to wind down again, the Pequot War continued to escalate as the Puritans became engulfed by crisis. Threatened from within by theological rebellion and from without by the specter of a renewed Pequot invasion, they began to believe that their social identity and physical survival were at stake. The noble goal of protecting the community mutated into the ruthless determination to destroy the enemy by any means necessary. The psychological processes of dehumanization and moral disengagement facilitated this transformation of the colonists' mentality, turning the Pequots into beasts and monsters, creatures that could—and in fact should—be killed with impunity. The Puritans first erased the humanity of the Pequots, and then destroyed their bodies.

The “Destroyers,” the conquering Pequots of myth that appeared in later chronicles, never really existed. They were a historical fiction invented by Puritan historians to erase the memory of the Pequots as surely as they had erased the tribe itself with guns and flames and the force of law. The real destroyers were the Saints themselves.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Narragansetts profited from the destruction of the Pequots, but their victory was ultimately pyrrhic. With the Pequot threat ended, English settlements continued to expand and Puritan leaders exercised their legal authority over surrounding tribes with increasing confidence. Looking on with increasing alarm, the Narragansett sachem Miantonomo soon realized that the Pequots had been right: it was only a matter of time before all Native Americans became dispossessed. By 1642 he had begun a campaign of resistance by forging a pan-Indian alliance. He courted one sachem after another with appeals to cultural solidarity, calling them brothers, “for so are we all Indians as the English are, and say brother to one another; so must we be one as they are, otherwise we shall be all gone shortly.” He gave lavish gifts and grand speeches, trying to convince his listeners that they could never coexist with the invading English. He declared that the colonists’ survival meant their own destruction, reminding his brethren that

our fathers had plenty of deer and skins, our plains were full of deer, as also our woods, and of turkies, and our coves full of fish and fowl. But these English having gotten our land, they with scythes cut down the grass, and with axes felled the trees; their cows and horses eat the grass, and their hogs spoil our clam banks, and we shall all be starved.

In the face of this deadly transformation, Miantonomo said, they had no choice but to band together, “all the Sachems from east to west,” and finish the fight once and for all. “[W]e are all resolved to fall upon them all, at one appointed day... and kill men women, and children.”¹ Having helped the Puritans destroy their enemies, Miantonomo realized that they would not stop with the destruction of just one tribe. So he plotted the downfall of the Saints.

Miantonomo was not the first to grasp the zero-sum logic of elimination, nor the first to comprehend the danger of the colonists’ relentless advance. Opechancanough came to understand it as he watched the tassantassas’ settlements metastasize like a cancer through the riparian veins of the landscape, patch by patch transforming the forests and maize farms of Tsenacommacah into the vast tobacco fields of Virginia. Sassacus understood it as he watched the stream of squatters that flooded the Connecticut Valley and began to feel the vise of English power. Both leaders had mobilized their people to meet the English threat, fought to the best of their ability, and fell into ruin. Miantonomo was the first, though, to realize that one tribe alone could not withstand the might of the English colonists. He knew that violent resistance was the only force capable of halting colonial growth, and that only by standing together did the Algonquians stand a chance of winning.

¹ Lion Gardener, “Relation of the Pequot War,” in *History of the Pequot War: The Contemporary Accounts of Mason, Underhill, Vincent, and Gardener*, ed. Charles Orr (Cleveland: Helman-Taylor Company, 1897), 142-3.

Miantonomo's dream of Indian uprising came to nothing. Unable to convince the firmly pro-English Uncas to join him, Miantonomo went to war against the Mohegans and lost. Uncas submitted the Narragansett sachem to the magistrates of the newly formed United Colonies of New England, who sentenced him to death and ordered Uncas to carry out the sentence. Miantonomo met his end somewhere on a lonely forest path, executed by a sharp blow to the head with a tomahawk. While his intertribal alliance died with him, Miantonomo's pioneering call for pan-Indian unity became a hallmark of Native American anti-colonial movements in the centuries to come.²

The Pequot War and the Anglo-Powhatan Wars demonstrated the lethality and destructiveness of American warfare. What is most surprising about these episodes, though, may not be the viciousness of inter-cultural conflict but the rapidity with which the colonists shifted from strategies of radical exclusion to renewed attempts at incorporation. In the aftermath of each conflict, settlers and Indians tried to reconstruct spaces in which they could coexist.

The Powhatans, though dramatically weakened by the Third Anglo-Powhatan War, remained on the Virginian fringe. Unable to stem the tide of the colony's growth, they soon found themselves swallowed by the expanding borders of Virginia. Though confined to reservations and forced into a state of permanent dependence on the colonial government, the Powhatans nevertheless found that the Virginians' attitudes toward

² David Pulsipher, ed., *Acts of the Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1859), 1:10-12; John Winthrop, *Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649*, ed. Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996), 471-73, 478; Michael Leroy Oberg, "'We Are All the Sachems from East to West': A New Look at Miantonomi's Campaign of Resistance," *New England Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (September 2004): 478-499; Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 231-32.

them quickly softened. As early as 1649 the Assembly passed laws recognizing basic Powhatan rights. By 1656 the House of Burgesses passed a measure that allowed Powhatan hunters to exchange wolf heads for cattle, asserting that this would encourage Indians to adopt English methods of livestock husbandry and would therefore “be a step to civilizing them and making them Christians.”³ Despite this shift back toward policies of incorporation, the survivors of the Anglo-Powhatan Wars became at best a marginal people, who often suffered from the colonists’ arrogance and aggression. Nevertheless, Virginians accepted their limited presence until pressures along the frontier erupted into Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676.⁴

Hundreds of Pequots survived the war, despite the colonists’ concerted efforts to hunt down and either execute, enslave, or expunge their identities. Over the following decades these groups gradually reconstituted themselves. Once the climate of hysterical fear evaporated, the colonists no longer perceived these Indians as a threat. By 1650 at least three Pequot communities existed, mostly on reservations set aside by colonial governments. In 1651 the Connecticut Court made the landmark decision to allow the Nameag Pequots to settle on five hundred acres at Noank. In doing so they effectively nullified the Treaty of Hartford, allowing the Pequots limited political autonomy and the right to settle on their original territory. By the outbreak of King Philip’s War in 1675,

³ William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619*, 13 vols. (New York: R. & W. & G. Bartow, 1923), 1:393-96 (quotation p. 395).

⁴ Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas’s People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia Through Four Centuries* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 90-127.

the Pequots had carved out enough of a place among the colonists of Connecticut that they were willing to fight on the English side against Metacom's Algonquian coalition.⁵

Despite these stories of resilience and survival, the long-term processes of settler colonialism prevented Native Americans from finding any meaningful compromise with English settlers. As colonial territory expanded, the surrounding Indian tribes experienced a gradual decline punctuated by outbreaks of native resistance and settler retaliation. Native Americans tried many different ways to secure their integrity and independence, but every attempt crashed against the intransigence of English demands for their total submission. The Powhatans and Pequots paid a heavy price for their resistance, and they were ultimately able to endure only through capitulation. They ceded the vast territories of their homelands and withdrew to reservation islands in the colonial sea, sequestered where the colonists could safely ignore them in the hopes that they would eventually fade away.⁶ In the meantime, the expanding frontier brought the colonists into contact with new groups of Indians on newly coveted ground. Then the cycle of bloodshed, dispossession, and genocide began again.

⁵ Kevin A. McBride, "The Historical Archaeology of the Mashantucket Pequots, 1637-1900: A Preliminary Analysis," in *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation*, ed. Laurence M. Hauptman and James D. Wherry (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 104-6; Neal Salisbury, "Indians and Colonists after the Pequot War: An Uneasy Balance," in *Pequots in Southern New England*, 81-95. Changing colonial attitudes toward the Pequots can be located within a broader discourse, identified by Kristina Bross, about the proper place of Native Americans in the colonial order. Bross describes a shift from a view of Native Americans as an impediment to colonization, prominent during the early years of the Great Migration, to a reconceptualized New England mission based on converting Indians to Christianity. See Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), 4-10, 18-21.

⁶ Rountree, *Pocahontas's People*, 89.

The agents of English colonialism in the seventeenth century, both those who imagined America from thousands of miles away and those who dealt with unforgiving realities on American soil, did not set out to commit these acts of extravagant violence. They were chasing after a vision of a new England in the New World. They dreamed of a path to regeneration and sought to build something truly magnificent: a country better than the one that they had left behind and a society that matched their most cherished ideals. Their dreams inevitably butted against the exigencies of survival in a foreign land, especially the unwelcome presence of ancient peoples with dreams of their own. When those two different visions clashed in the crucible of the frontier, what emerged from the chaos was something that no one had foreseen. Whether the English imagined it as Crakanthorpe's New Britain or Winthrop's City upon a Hill, they all sought an England that existed only in their minds. What they found instead was an Albion undreamed of, dearly bought, and stained red.

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