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Metaphors of Dispossession

American Beginnings and the Translation of Empire, 1492-1637

By Gesa Mackenthun

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*. . . the old instinct had always been to gather the feelings and opinions that were scattered through the village, to gather them like willow twigs and tie them into a single prayer bundle that would bring peace to all of [the people]. But now the feelings were twisted, tangled roots, and all the names for the source of this growth were buried under English words, out of reach. And there would be no peace and the people would have no rest until the entanglement had been unwound to the source.*

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

*Our most elementary and precious symbols are words: violence, democracy, brotherhood, power, peace. Each of these words involves a cruel contradiction; the myth is at war with reality, yet they are interlocked and inseparable.*

*We have imperfect images of reality, which are history; and a conglomeration of symbols, which are historiography. It is imperative to expand our consciousness, to decipher the symbols so that we are masters of our past and present. What is hidden in our history is the essence of the conflict between moral pretensions and the brutal exercise of power.*

John Howard Lawson, *The Hidden Heritage*

*The history which bears and determines us is war-like, not language-like. Relations of power, not relations of sense. History has no "sense," which is not to say that it is absurd or incoherent. On the contrary, it is intelligible and should be able to be analysed down to the slightest detail: but according to the intelligibility of struggles, of strategies and tactics . . . "semiology" is a way of avoiding its violent, bloody and deadly character, by reducing it to the pacified and Platonic form of language and dialogue.*

Michael Foucault, "Truth and Power"

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## Introduction

*The settler makes history; his life is an epoch, an Odyssey. He is the absolute beginning. . . . Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that is skimmed off, all that is violated and starved in its name.*

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

The European conquest of America has considerably shaped the discourses of modernity. Referred to as a "translation of empire" in imperial prose from the sixteenth century onward, the historical event of European westward expansion embraced a series of discursive or ideological processes that served to "translate" a cognitively and morally ambivalent enterprise into acceptable history. That history, as has been emphasized in the scholarship of the past two decades, is available to us only in textual form if "text" is to designate both the printed page and other, such as archaeological, evidence. This book intends to explore the implications and consequences of this extended definition of "text."

But rather than accept dominant versions of Europe's beginnings in America as the only possible account, the following narrative investigates the inconsistencies, gaps, and occlusions of colonial textstexts that desperately but often unsuccessfully attempt to give plausible and convincing representations of colonial reality. Though much sneered at or avoided under the poststructuralist influence in the human sciences, there is a necessity in historical scholarship to

draw a logical distinction between narrative and reality. Thus the idea of pretextual reality is central to the readings undertaken in this book, readings that are informed by a recognition of the selectivity and rhetorical constructedness of colonial documents. This selective representation, often viewed as a consequence of cognitive blockage or coincidence, will here be shown to operate according to specific discursive rules. Predominant among these is a dualist logic, still virulent in recent theoretical texts, that denies the existence of non-European forms of history and narrative.

The moral and theoretical agenda to which the present study is committed is best articulated by Stuart Hall, who demands that any investigation of colonial history include a recognition of the marginalized voices and stories, even the "absences and the silences," of the colonized, which may be found to contest or unsettle established truths (Hall 1991, 48). In responding to Hall's difficult demand, this book examines the rhetorical strategies with which the narratives of the European expansion to the "New World" have displaced the narratives and histories of the indigenous peoples of America. By the same token, it is preoccupied with the strategic function of indigenous voices in the European narratives of colonization.

The narrative of European expansion, like all narratives, needs a beginning. As we will see, the texts under discussion here are busily engaged in the construction of beginnings, as well as in turning the indigenous "prehistory" into a prophetic anticipation of the arrival of the Europeans. The power of this prophetic narrative, which denies the existence of any history beside itself, extends into scholarly texts of our day and therefore calls for painstaking analysis and critique. This book, then, is no history in the traditional sensefew of the events it talks about have not been dealt with in previous studies of the early colonization of America. It rather seeks to elucidate the processes by which colonial history has been textualized and translated from one European nation (Spain) to another (England). This is not to say that the history of American colonization is to be regarded as a fiction, as a purely linguistic event. The dead bodies of the victims of European colonialism, as well as the eloquent voices of their descendants, prohibit such reductionism. The problem to be tackled in the following chapters is that the colonization of America is for us a text, but a text that nevertheless refers to a real event. This insight opens a Pandora's box of methodical difficulties, some of

which I discuss in this introduction. I indeed believe that any historical (and New Historical) analysis of that crucial event in world history ought to expose itself to the tests of careful reading, contextualizing, and cross-examination.

The settler thinks he is the absolute beginning and construes his history accordingly, writes Fanon. The nationalistic historiography of the post-World War II United States has indeed been obsessed with beginnings, as Perry Miller's famous preface to *Errand into the Wilderness* (1956) shows. <sup>1</sup> Miller's text demands our attention, as the issue of colonial beginnings is dealt with at some length in the following pages.

Setting out, at the period of Cold War consensus historiography, to determine what Sacvan Bercovitch would later call the "Puritan origins of the American self," Miller simultaneously fashions himself as a colonial adventurer and as a historian elected to "elucidate," as he writes, the "massive narrative of the movement of European culture into the vacant wilderness of America." He aptly claims to have received his personal vocation at "Matadi on the banks of the Congo" in the early 1920s:

I came there seeking "adventure," jealous of older contemporaries to whom that boon had been offered by the First World War. (Nobody had the prescience to teach me patience, to assure me that I too should have my War.) The adventures that Africa afforded were tawdry enough, but it became the setting for a sudden epiphany (if the word be not too strong) of the pressing necessity for expounding my America to the twentieth century. (Miller 1956, vii)

After a short sideswipe at the "social historians" who "were not getting at the fundamental themes or anywhere near *the* fundamental theme," Miller tells us how he sat "on the edge of a jungle of central Africa" when he suddenly felt "thrust upon" him

the mission of expounding what I took to be the innermost propulsion of the United States, while supervising, in that barbaric tropic, the unloading of drums of case oil flowing out of the inexhaustible wilderness of America. However it came about, the vision demanded of me that I begin at the beginning, not the beginning of a fall [as Gibbon did] . . . , but at the beginning of a beginning . . . it seemed obvious that I had to commence with the Puritan migration. (I recognize, and herein pay my tribute to, the priority of Virginia; but what I wanted was a coherence with which I could coherently begin.) (viii)

The beginning of the American experience, Miller claims, was theological in nature, a decision that was directed by "the inner logic of the research. . . . This was not a fact of my choosing: had the origin been purely economic or imperial, I should have been no less committed to reporting" (ix).

In his Protestant sense of scholarly elatedness, Miller has a famous precursor whose work, however, is excluded by the "inner logic of research" that allegedly prevented Miller's choice of "economic" and "imperial" Virginia as an American beginning. In his collection of travel narratives, *The Principal Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589), the Elizabethan clergyman and geographer Richard Hakluyt relates his own calling as a historian of British expansion. The "Epistle Dedicatorie," addressed to Sir Francis Walsingham, contains his account of the crucial experience of his boyhood: visiting the study of his elder cousin, the merchant and lawyer Richard Hakluyt the Elder, Hakluyt "found lying open upon his boord certeine bookes of Cosmographie, with an vniuersall Mappe." The chart arouses his curiosity and his desire to learn more about the "diuision of the earth" and each country's "special commodities, & particular wants, which by the benefit of traffike, & entercourse of merchants, are plentifully supplied." After having explained to him the mysteries of trade and cosmography, Hakluyt Sr. piously draws Richard's attention "[f]rom the Mappe . . . to the Bible, and turning to the 107 Psalme, directed mee to the 23 & 24 verses, where I read, that they which go downe to the sea in ships, and occupy by the great waters, they see the works of the Lord, and his woonders in the deepe, &c." The ambivalent "words of the Prophet," 2 together with his cousin's instructions, impress the boy so much that he resolves to dedicate his life to the study of geography (Hakluyt 1589, 1: sig. 2).

Like Miller, Hakluyt writes the history of a nation, and like his Harvard colleague, he is keenly aware of the power of (sacred) narrative in doing so.<sup>3</sup> But their common Protestant gesture notwithstanding, the two historians have a different sense of American beginnings: the translation of empire that Hakluyt seeks to construe in his texts (to be analyzed in chapter 1) and whose beginnings he locates in remote antiquity belongs to the prehistory of Miller's "massive narrative." Hakluyt is also quite straightforward about the economic and imperial motivation of colonization, which Miller

denies. What both national narratives tend to ignore, of course, is the existence of an indigenous American population and history: a presence that constantly led to upheavals in the texts of Hakluyt and his contemporaries but that Miller, writing at the end of a century-long denial of Native American historical agency, can translate into his grand vision of America as a "vacant wilderness."

Miller's colonial-national self-fashioning has a secret intertext, Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*. This highly ambivalent aestheticization of the European imperial project provides Miller with a motive (like Charlie Marlow, Miller seeks "adventure"), a plot (the "errand" into the wilderness that leads to a personal revelation), the reference to Rome as an antecedent, and even single words: secretly inscribed in Miller's "my War," "my America" is Marlow's rendering of Kurtz's "My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my" (Conrad 1983, 85). 4

If both Miller and Marlow use a colonial setting to experience a private "epiphany," and if both struggle to translate that experience into a coherent narrative, Marlow is at once more articulate about the violent aspect of such adventures:

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretense but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to. (Conrad 1983, 3132)

Miller's fictional model, like Hakluyt's text, belies his claim that the motive to colonize was exclusively spiritual. With biting sarcasm Marlow refers to the redemptive function of quasi-religious motives, which barely cloak economic desire. Conrad's novel provides a scathing parody of the crusader ideology that Miller's text reproduces with such unease (I'm thinking of his hermetic comments on the bombing of Hiroshima as a grotesque fulfillment of the Puritans' apocalyptic vision [Miller 1956, 23839]).

Both *Heart of Darkness* and Hakluyt's much earlier account may thus be seen to fill in a significant silence in Miller's text and by extension in his whole oeuvre: for Miller, the Puritan experience had no antecedent save in the Bible, and original inhabitants are non-

existent. His American wilderness is "vacant," and the fuel drums on the banks of the Congo are unloaded as if by magic while Miller "supervises" the action. He calls Africa a "barbaric tropic," but the "barbarians" themselves do not figure in his story which seems quite odd if we consider the origin of the word: in Greek, *barbaros* means "babbling" and was applied to people who could not speak Greek; generally, the term refers to people who are deemed inferior because of their unintelligibility (see Pagden 1982, 16, and White 1978, 165). But here the expression is applied to the land itself and not to its inhabitants. Whereas *barbaric* refers to savage speech as well as to its human agents, the term *tropic* also bears a double meaning. Besides designating "the torrid zone and parts immediately adjacent" (*OED*), *tropics* or *tropes* is the umbrella term for rhetorical figures such as metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche. Thus both terms refer to language, which only reinforces our curiosity about the absence of human referents.

The peculiar phrase "barbaric tropic" thus has a symptomatic quality by linking Miller's text to a larger discourse that it otherwise ignores. It reiterates the language of the English letters patent issued in the sixteenth century by Queen Elizabeth to Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and others. These documents officially authorized the "gentleman-colonizers" to "discover, find, search out, and view such remote, heathen, and barbarous lands, countries, and territories, not actually possessed of any Christian prince or people." <sup>5</sup> The phrasing makes quite clear that the "people," who the English Queen knew to be there already, were not thought of as rightful owners of the land and the attitude that I discuss again later in this book. The notion of America as a "vacant wilderness," too, was inaugurated in the writings of early English propagandists of colonization in response to the problematic presence of indigenous people. The promoters of colonialism first declared the Indians to be "vagrants" with no right of possession, only to formulate the idea of America as *vacuum domicilium* shortly after. That idea's survival in Miller's text testifies to its ideological effectiveness.

Thus Miller's text unwittingly calls attention to a critical elision at its core, which it shares with the official documents of colonial empowerment. As Patricia Seed observes, land can be remote but not heathen or barbarous, and the now common application of these terms to the landscape instead of the people who live in it "simply

tells us that the language itself allows for suppressing knowledge of the existence of peoples" (Seed 1992, 186). Even more, the elision allows us to see how our language is itself deeply inscribed with the ideology of European colonialism.

The rhetorical slippage in Miller's preface may remind us of the absence of the bearers of the "enormous voices" that have not been heard in order for the history of Puritan America to be written. It points toward the suppressed "other" history that lies beyond the pale of Miller's text. To be sure, the version of American history as a Puritan "errand" gives both coherence and a true beginning to the national narrative of the United States. That coherence would not have been accomplished if Miller's text considered America's imperial pasta past that turns the "beginning" of America into another chapter of the expansion of Europe. 6 But the text also demonstrates the difficulty of silencing that other history altogether. The metaphorical exuberance of the passage makes us aware of the history that is ignored by the explicit content of the *Errand*; a history, as the intertexts suggest, of colonial violence and dispossession. This history, to speak with Hayden White, is contained in the form of the text; it determines its choice of tropes and genres and can be detected by treating these not as mere poetic embellishments but as agents that tie the text to its ideological context [White 1987]. Miller's "massive narrative" of Puritan North America emerges as the result of a discursive process of selection and exclusion or, more precisely, as the result of the discourse of colonialism.

Miller's pervasive influence on the study of early American cultural history in the United States has for a long time blinded intellectual history to the insight that the exploration and colonization of America was a thoroughly transnational affair. Notably, the crucial role of Spain as both precursor and rival of English action has been neglected by the history of ideas. It is this *translation* of empire and imperial discourses, rather than the postulation of any "beginning," that the present study is interested in. The historiographical blindness to this broken continuity, as well as its ignorance of the other histories excluded by a Cold War logic of research, has become intolerable in a period marked by both decolonization and a heightened awareness of neocolonial dependencies. In the following chapters I therefore attempt to present part of the "hidden heritage" of early American history that is both transcultural and translational.

My investigation into the ideological mechanisms of early modern colonialism takes seriously Foucault's and Lyotard's demands for putting an end to continuous master narratives, as well as the insight, associated with the work of Hayden White but more adequately phrased by Fredric Jameson, that history is inaccessible to us except in textual form. This awareness of the textuality of history, rather than being taken as the last word, will here serve as the starting point of analysis. As Louis Montrose has formulated, the fact that "we can have no access to a full and authentic past, a lived material existence, unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question" should not obscure the important truths that these texts are "traces whose survival we cannot assume to be merely contingent but must rather presume to be at least partially consequent upon complex and subtle social processes of preservation and effacement; and . . . that those textual traces are themselves subject to subsequent textual mediations when they are construed as the 'documents' upon which historians ground their own texts, called 'histories' " (Montrose 1989, 20). In a study of colonial discourse, both documents and histories deserve our attention, as that discourse has its way of encroaching upon scholarly writings as well, whether positivist, structuralist, or New Historicist. The present study does not claim to inhabit a realm beyond history and discourse; it rather wants to encourage critique and further discussion of these important issues.

Tzvetan Todorov's structuralist interpretation of the colonial encounter in Mexico is a particularly problematic example of the colonialist politics of postmodern theory. *The Conquest of America* (1987) deserves attention both as one of the first attempts to apply postmodern theory to the study of colonial history and as a text that demonstrates the aporia resulting from a specific brand of methodological eclecticism. In his combination of a positivist with a semiotic model of interpretation, Todorov does not reflect on the theoretical and methodological inconsistencies arising from an incomplete acceptance of the linguistic turn in the human sciences. The conflict between a model of interpretation that proposes to take a text at face value and another that regards a text as a cultural construct cannot easily be solved and has repeatedly complicated my own readings (see especially chapter 4). The danger consists less in combining a positivist with a textualist approach than in the absence of a meta-



theoretical guideline for how the two might be combined. The texts that are discussed in this book, like those discussed by Todorov, refer to colonial reality even while partaking more or less intensely in mythic or fictional discourses. This split referentiality causes ideological tensions in the textstensions that have been reconciled in an earlier scholarship by grounding them in an authorial psyche or "intention." But I would agree with Foucault that the notion of the author as unifying subject, as guarantor of textual closure, is itself a social construct (originating in the early modern period) that functions to divert attention from discursive and historical conflicts (Foucault 1977, 128).

One problem may be isolated in Todorov's work here because it leads us toward the main problematic of my own text and to a discussion of the theoretical possibilities of dealing with it. In several texts Todorov explains what he terms the "success" of the European conquerors with their "effective use of writing" as compared to the "absence of writing" in Mesoamerican cultures (Todorov 1987, 8081).<sup>7</sup> Stephen Greenblatt justly rejects this ahistorical notion and identifies it as one of the major European myths of cultural superiority toward ostensibly illiterate cultures (Greenblatt 1991, 1012). He correctly states that the Europeans' possession of writing may have increased their *own* sense of cultural superiority but that it can hardly have affected their dealings with the Indians, as the success of those dealings depended not on written texts but on the presence of reliable translators (12).

That this critique comes from the main exponent of the New Historicism is of particular interest because Greenblatt has himself been charged with a tendency not to distinguish between historical documents and more complex literary texts, as well as to value the latter over the former. The result of this has often been an aestheticized and formalized view of Renaissance culture, particularly of the colonialist culture of Elizabethan and Jacobean England.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to note two things here: first, that texts did play an important role in the history of conquest. They were a powerful instrument of colonization owing to the recent invention of print and the possibility of the technological reproduction and promotion of colonial propaganda. Significantly, Francis Bacon would later include the printing press in his list of the most important inventions of his age, compass and gunpowder being the other two. The close link

between the spread of capitalism and print technology is also apparent from the fact that such mercantilist centers as Antwerp, London, and Frankfurt were the places with the most printing presses. They were sites of reproduction for news from overseas, which stood in high demand among merchants and traders. 9 The ideological impact of printed texts, however, was limited to the European (mostly middle-class) reading public. So in varying Todorov's point we could say that the colonization of America would have been impossible without the communicative and ideological infrastructure provided by, and the central control of, print technology.

Second, the use of these texts as avenues to historical truth is quite limited precisely because they were so much part and parcel of the colonial project. Most of the texts studied here, from the *Second Letter* of Cortés to the *Generall Historie of Virginia* by Captain John Smith, partake in the rhetorical programs of colonial justification, colonial propaganda, and the occlusion of colonial violence. As my chapter on Richard Hakluyt's work shows, the chief promoter of Elizabethan colonialism knew well how to adapt his texts to a changing climate of colonial interests. But to say that these texts give no authentic picture of historical reality is not the same as to say that they are historically irrelevant. Once we accept that distortion is the common fate of all representation, any simple notion of truth loses its analytical importance. Confusingly, the texts dealt with here are both true and false, and unevenly so. Even their falseness is of course significant in the justification of colonial power relations and in producing a knowledge of the past that became the basis for future action (see Hulme 1986, 8).

To say that colonial texts were involved in a rhetorical program of justification presupposes the existence of a need to justify imperial action. Such a need indeed existed in sixteenth-century Europe. Although America had been "donated" to the Spanish monarchs in 1493 by Pope Alexander VI, King Ferdinand II, partly in order to shake off the authority of Rome, partly to soothe "su real consciencia," felt obliged to commission his jurists with clarifying the legal basis of the colonial enterprise. This move resulted in one of the most interesting European legal texts, the *Requerimiento* of 1513, which was read out to the Indians in Latin or Spanish and informed them of the papal donation before violent action could begin. Sometimes it was read from shipboard and to sleeping Indian villages. Its

main rhetorical strategy consisted in translating the unknowing Indians into vassals of the Spanish crown and their resistance into criminal acts of rebellion. By superficially replacing international law with Spanish civil law, the reading of the *Requerimiento* performed a ritual act of taking possession. It amounts to a legal fiction that was not directed at the natives at all but rather served to foreclose objections from rival European powers (see Kadir 1992, 89; Seed 1992, 2034; and Greenblatt 1991, 60, 9798).<sup>10</sup>

The absurdity of the document was well understood, as is testified by various anecdotes associated with it. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, who writes that he was rather upset that neither the Indians nor the readers of the text understood its contents, mentions the cynical laughter of the jurist Palacios Rubios, author of the *Requerimiento*, when asked whether he thought that the document would assuage the king's conscience. And Martín Fernández de Enciso even invented a native response to the declaration of overlordship that ridicules both pope and king alike, referring to the donation as a drunkard's gift to a madman. Nevertheless, Enciso fully supported the contents of the document.<sup>11</sup>

This highly ironic text, whose function consisted in being read but not understood, in being performed but not necessarily observed, emerged from an intellectual climate marked by the ideological conflict between religious and secular authority. It is the climate that engendered the formation of centralized governments, the Reformation, and the beginning of international law. The latter came to be associated with the name of Francisco de Vitoria, a Dominican scholar of law at Salamanca who had spent his years of apprenticeship at Paris. His lecture series of 1539 on the justification of war against the Indians, which was later printed as *De indis*, was the most influential attempt to delineate the juridical foundations of the Spanish conquest.

The status of Vitoria's text as what we might call, following Foucault, an *instauration discursive* (Foucault 1977, 13133), becomes obvious from its "open" and highly contradictory character. It oscillates between two intellectual positions: an extremely liberal one that denies papal legitimacy to dispossess the original inhabitants of America and that grants full territorial sovereignty to them according to classic natural law, and an orthodox one that more or less explicitly advocates conversion and trade, not just in their own right

but also as a means for obtaining political overlordship over the Indians. *De indis* ends divided against itself: it first argues that all expeditions would have to stop if the Indians acted according to the *jus gentium* by not offending those colonizers who came to trade and missionize, but it then rejects this radical position not on the grounds of native offensiveness (for which Vitoria finds no proof) but with reference to the impracticability of the legally correct action (Vitoria 1975, 105). In other words, Vitoria develops a radically humanist and almost "cultural relativist" position, but then goes on gradually to sacrifice it to the dictates of realpolitik.

The unresolved state of his text, which made it available for diametrically opposed readings, is grounded in the extreme tension between Vitoria's intellectual models: late medieval canon law, itself split between the liberal position of Innocent IV (which restricted the jurisdiction of the pope to Christendom) and the orthodox one of Hostiensis (which claimed universal jurisdiction); the Aristotelian theory of natural slavery; the revived classical theory of natural law, with its definition of *dominium* as an individual and inalienable right common to all men; and on top of it all, the humanist and pacifist school of Erasmus, to which Vitoria had been exposed at Paris. Because of its open and contradictory status, *De indis* may thus be regarded as the product of a cultural and political crisis.<sup>13</sup> The debate about the legitimacy of conquest at the same time articulates the contest between church and state, as well as between Catholics and Protestants, for the right of universal dominion.

An obvious hiatus separates the attempts of Vitoria and his followers in the school of Salamanca to define the limits of Spanish jurisdiction in America and the actual state of affairs so vehemently criticized by Bartolomé de Las Casas. Although the government laws that resulted from Las Casas's demands for a more humanitarian treatment of the Indians were not very effective in the distant colonies, it is important to note that the intellectual world of sixteenth-century Spain was crucially concerned with the legitimacy of conquest and thereby set high standards for other nations.<sup>14</sup> The impossibility of colonial action to meet these standards may be seen as the main impulse for the rhetoric of justification and the myths of rightful ownership that are discussed in this book.

The European overseas expansion was accompanied by its internal parallel movement, the formation of nation-states (Castile-Aragon

shortly before Columbus's first voyage; the British Empire during the first English colonial attempts in the sixteenth century). The two events are often combined by their common legitimizing rhetoric. In noting the mutual dependency of nationalism and colonialism, Timothy Brennan writes: "The 'national idea' . . . flourished in the soil of foreign conquest. Imperial conquest created the conditions for the fall of Europe's universal Christian community, but resupplied Europe with a religious sense of mission and self-identity" (Brennan 1990, 59). Both colonialism and nationalism were underwritten by the development of national languages, nationalist histories, and national myths of universal kingship (see Helgerson 1992). As several scholars have suggested, most recently Bernard Vincent and Eric Cheyfitz, the synchronicity of the first voyage of Columbus and the presentation of the first Castilian grammar to Queen Isabella I, with the comment that language had always been the companion of empire, is no coincidence (see Vincent 1991, chapter 1; Cheyfitz 1991; and Mignolo 1992, 32528). Neither is the effort of Richard Hakluyt and others to construct a legitimate English title to America by way of a Welsh prince while the Tudor queen claimed to be of Welsh descent.

The colonization of America was accompanied by, and in turn accelerated, the process of ideological homogenization in Europe by providing new opportunities for cultural and national self-definition in the face of the "savagery" of the Native Americansan ideology that was added to, and complemented by, the domestic ideologies that Christian Europe had developed in relation to its internal others. At least in England, colonialism and nationalism may be seen as two aspects of the same process by which a male and increasingly metropolitan self came to define its superiority, and its right to rule, over the "uncivilized" majority of humankind. This process was necessarily attended by a massive anxiety about the legitimacy and the practicability of rulershipan anxiety that is perhaps best described as the refusal of colonial power "to acknowledge, even as it asserts, its own powerlessness" (Cheyfitz 1991, 109). The early modern colonial project, certainly more so than the fully rationalized project of high imperialism that Edward Said describes (1978), was accompanied by a latent recognition that, just as there was no single acceptable juridical basis of colonial expansion, the theatrical stagings of military and cultural superiority did not always have the

The poststructuralist dictum that "le fait n'a jamais qu'une existence linguistique" (Barthes) has too often been misconstrued into a claim that all the world's a fiction and taken as a free ticket to produce complex readings of the canonized texts of the West instead of considering non-Western written and performed texts as well. Holding on to a notion of referentiality, no matter how much this might complicate the analysis, the present study therefore rather follows Fredric Jameson's assertion that "history is *not* a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but . . . as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and . . . our approach to it and to the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious" (Jameson 1981, 35).

The tendency within much recent scholarship on the colonial encounter to avoid the problem of the referentiality of historical documents is often accompanied by a homogenizing view of discourse and power. This is largely the result of the work of Foucault, who regards power as a highly heterogeneous but ultimately closed field of force relations (Foucault 1984, 9293). What often goes unmentioned in adapting this model to the study of early modern history is that it empirically relates to modern democratic societies. Moreover, as several "postcolonial" critics have pointed out, Foucault's theory, though to a certain extent applicable to the study of colonialism, has avoided any reference to that "missing moment in the dialectic of modernity" (Bhabha 1992, 461).<sup>16</sup> The early modern colonial situation can only insufficiently be described as a discursive field in Foucault's sense, as we are dealing with the encounter of various discourses, European and non-European, in what Mary Louise Platt has termed colonial contact zones but what may more aptly be seen as conflict zones "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (Pratt 1992, 4).<sup>17</sup> The discourses of both cultures can be reconstructed only incompletely. Still even an incomplete attempt to reconstruct history is preferable to totalizing or aestheticizing silence and otherness.

Several scholarly traditions offer remedies to New Historicism's frequent difficulties with issues of referentiality, verification, and the acknowledgment of texts outside the European canon. Feminism, Marxism, and postcolonial criticism are the most obvious ones. In addition to these, the *nouvelle histoire* and "history from below"

(e.g., the work of historians such as E. P. Thompson, Natalie Zemon Davis, Carlo Ginzburg, and Peter Burke) forcefully remind us that our critical readings of dominant historiography might very well be complemented by the search for additional archival material that has so far escaped the eye of cultural historians or has been deemed irrelevant by the "logic of the research" (see Burke 1992 and Sharpe 1992).

Two important book-length interventions into the textualizing practice of New Historicism deserve mention here: *The Poetics of Imperialism* by Eric Cheyfitz and Peter Hulme's *Colonial Encounters*. *The Poetics of Imperialism* is dedicated to working out the deep structural analogy between the verbal translation of American reality into European texts and the coterminous translation of the commonly used land into European property. Cheyfitz shows the synchronicity of the colonization of America, informed by the ideology of the translation of empire (*translatio imperii*), and the formulation of a "modern" poetics in terms of a national and colonialist self-definition by Elizabethan literary theorists such as George Puttenham in the 1580s (Cheyfitz 1992, 98102, 108).

Cheyfitz's book can be seen as an attempt to rescue the terms of figurative language from the ahistorical connotations they have acquired over time and to remind us that the reality of imperialism is inscribed in the linguistic concepts we use. The theoretical stance of *The Poetics of Imperialism* can thus be seen as a response to that of Hayden White, countering the notion that history is always linguistically constructed with the argument that language itself is always historically constructed. As Cheyfitz shows, the terms *metaphor* and *translation* never referred to linguistic processes alone in the Renaissance but were related to processes of national centralization and colonial expansion. 18 Although the title of the present study, *Metaphors of Dispossession*, had been chosen before Cheyfitz's book came out, his discussion has greatly enriched my awareness of the links between the historical and rhetorical processes I want to describe.

Hulme's *Colonial Encounters* combines the insight that history is available for us only in textual form with the awareness that the text of history is always incomplete, selective, and contradictory. Hulme defines the colonial discourse on the Caribbean as a set of linguistically based strategies that legitimize colonial power relations by

translating the topic of land into the ideology of savagery and treachery (Hulme 1986, 23). Based on both Said's application of Foucault's concept of discourse to the study of colonial relationships (Said 1978) and on Pierre Macherey's theory of the historically symptomatic character of textual conflicts, inconsistencies, and silences, Hulme engages in the difficult task of "measuring" and "aggravating" those textual symptoms. 19 Like Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, Macherey bases his methodology on the insight that the text is not a unified entity but split within itself, that it "bears in its material substance the imprint of a determinate absence which is also the principle of its identity." This formative absence, which Macherey calls, lacking a more fitting metaphor, the "unconscious" of the text, is the history that the text cannot fully articulate but to which it nervously refers in displaced form (Macherey 1978, 80, 94).

My own book owes much to Hulme's analyses, some of which are taken up in the following pages (see especially chapter 4). More generally, the present study has been conceived within a cultural-materialist framework that surpasses most New Historicist work both in taking a more outrightly political stance and in adapting the analytical methods developed by Macherey and Louis Althusser to the study of early modern culture (see Williams 1978; Dollimore 1989, introduction; and Dollimore 1985). Cultural materialism conceives of culture as a synchronous dynamic of residual, dominant, and emergent movements. This concept is at once less totalizing than Foucault's theory of power and applicable to the encounter of different cultures in a colonial situation. Contrary to Foucault, Raymond Williams concedes that emergent cultural movements may originate outside of and independently from the dominant power (Williams 1978, 11314). In allowing for the existence of other spaces untouched by the center, Williams's definition at once transcends the closed circle of the Foucauldian *dispositif* and the concepts of mimicry and ambivalence formulated by Homi Bhabha, both of which define difference and hybridity in relation to a dominant discourse. This is basically how colonial discourse has defined its others. Texts of the colonial conflict zone such as Sahagún's *Historia general*, though certainly impure and fragmentary, bear witness to a history unrelated to that of Europe.

If it is important in a study of early modern colonialism to assume the possibility of approximating the referent of historical discourse,



as well as to assume the existence of other histories beyond the Western text, it is equally important not to confuse the dialogical masquerade of colonial discourse with the authentic voice of the "native other" (Hulme 1986, 9). The documents discussed in the following chapters abound with Indian speeches but more often than not, such textual sites turn out to be the most monological of all. The native voices "quoted" in colonial texts need careful unraveling as textual sites of ideological struggle. So does a positivist scholarly tradition that has been and still is much too ready to take them at face value (see especially chapters 2 and 4).

Not only does colonial discourse translate across national boundaries from one colonial context to another, but it also dialectically relates to other discourses of subjection, notably discourses of witchcraft and the gendering of territory (see chapters 4 and 5). Particularly at these sites of discursive overdetermination, the texts reveal aspects of the "political unconscious" of early modern culture that may remain invisible to a narrow interpretation of textual surface structures. Any attempt to glimpse at this secret discursive network and no more than a glimpse can be offered here depends on an "archaeological" method of reading that links textual silences and inconsistencies to the larger discursive field. This field may include actions as well: the burning of Quilpopoca, for example, which I isolate as the crucial but occluded moment in the encounter between Cortés and Motecuhzoma in 1520, is as "real" as it is based on the "text" of the European inquisition trials a double quality embedded in my use of the term *discourse*.

My own research has thus confirmed Hulme's statement that Freudian psychoanalysis provides us with "the one model of reading we have that can claim to make a text speak more than it knows" (Hulme 1986, 1112). The readings that follow may be speculative and unsatisfactory in their reluctance to provide easy answers. Neither does the archaeology of reading attempted here produce a hitherto buried "vast and unlimited discourse, continuous and silent" (Foucault 1981, 67). Typically, Foucault's denial of the existence of such a unified counternarrative rhetorically excludes the possibility of the survival of *any* alternative voices that may have escaped a century-long discursive masquerade. But as Jonathan Dollimore correctly suspects, in piecing together the fragments of that alternative history we quite often "listen in vain for voices from

the past or search for their traces in a 'history' they never officially entered" (Dollimore 1985, 15).

Perhaps the sixteenth century is the privileged period for testing out new interpretative methods because it enables us to study ideologies in their relatively simple states of emergence and in their multiple intersections. In later centuries, the growth of communications technology and the democratization of the public sphere increasingly complicate the study of discourses. The crucial relatedness between representation and power, however, has remained intact in the present day. Much of the colonial ideology analyzed in this book has survived until our time: the "conflict between moral pretensions and the brutal exercise of power" (Lawson) is still an everyday reality in a neocolonial world. This should remind us of the importance to keep alive a memory of those who have "suffered the sentence of history" (Bhabha 1992, 438), no matter how final that sentence may appear.

## Chapter 1

## Books for Empire

## The Colonial Program of Richard Hakluyt

## First Mappings of English Colonial Discourse

The imperial project of Elizabethan England began with a series of translations. Richard Eden translated Peter Martyr's influential *Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India* (London, 1555), to which he added excerpts from Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's *De la natural historia de las Indias* (first published in Toledo, 1526). Thomas Nichols translated Francisco Lopez de Gómara's *Historia general de las Indias* (1552) as *The pleasant historie of the conquest of Weast India, now called New Spayne* (London, 1578). Other books available in translation included Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographie* (London, 1572), as well as original English editions of Jean Ribault's (1563) and Jacques Cartier's (1580) narratives about French expeditions to Florida and the Saint Lawrence River region. <sup>1</sup>

But the most diligent and systematic translator of colonial expansion was the clergyman Richard Hakluyt, whose collections of travel narratives, the *Divers Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America* of 1582 and the *Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation* of 1589, greatly contributed to inaugurating the Elizabethan colonial project. While the former collection contained exclusively foreign documents, the *Principall Navigations* included the first textual fruit of English reconnaissance trips to North America and the Caribbean, such as the privateering and exploration voyages by Martin Frobisher, Humphrey Gilbert, Richard Grenville, Francis Drake, John Hawkins, and others, as well as the colonizing scheme of Roanoke. Probably the most successful collection of travel narratives

of early modern Europe, the *Principall Navigations* were largely extended and reprinted in 1598/1600.

This magnificent encyclopedia of European travel, because of its promotional function, but also because it was an indispensable item of maritime equipment, may be seen to have propelled England to the vanguard of colonial expansion. <sup>2</sup> As such, the *Principall Navigations* surpasses Hakluyt's earlier collection, in which, owing to the lack of English accounts in the period before 1585, foreign texts are tailored to serve the interests of English expansion by being imaginatively spread out on an English map (Hakluyt 1582, 4). The narratives collected in the *Principall Navigations*, by contrast, follow a chronological order. The collection is divided into three parts, of which the first covers voyages to Asia and Africa, and the second, initiated by tales about King Arthur, travels to territories in the north, including Russia, Persia, and the Arctic region. The third part is entirely dedicated to English ventures to America.

In the epistle to the reader, Hakluyt explains his deviance from the editing methods of most of his fellow compilers in the following terms:

I haue referred euery voyage to his Author, which both in person hath performed, and in writing hath left the same: for I am not ignorant of Ptolomies assertion, that *Peregrinationis historia*, and not those wearie volumes bearing the titles of vniuersall Cosmographie which some [men] that I could name haue published as their owne, beyng in deed most vntruly and vnprofitable ramassed and hurred together, is that which must bring vs to the certayne and full discouerie of the world. (Hakluyt 1589, 1: sig. 4)

Hakluyt's rejection of the widespread habit among his colleagues to integrate the original reports into their own interpretation, along with his regard for preserving the authentic shape of the individual narratives, marks a growing awareness of the modern concept of authorship. But at the same time he declares his editorial purity to be a necessary step toward the realization of England's imperial interests: Hakluyt regrets a lack of truth in other collections because it renders them less profitable in attaining the political goal.

Hakluyt's remarks suggest his conviction that a successful colonial action is in need of firm anchorage in European historical and geographical consciousness in other words, that it needs its

own specific narrative. But as we have seen, Hakluyt is suspicious of those narratives "hurled together" by cosmographers and historians; he believes that more narrative power lies in the immediate and authentic accounts of direct experience. Thus the historian D. B. Quinn and others have credited Hakluyt with a restraint from "tampering" with his sources that was quite unusual in a period of liberal borrowing from and rewriting of other texts (Quinn 1965, x). Still, Quinn admits, Hakluyt did exert a quite subtle control over the texts he collected, which becomes manifest in the selection and arrangement of sources (xii, li). It is this almost invisible strategy of tampering that I examine at some length in the following sections. Precisely because of their infrequency and near invisibility, Hakluyt's interventions into some of the texts he collected can be read as symptomatic passages within the emerging English discourse of colonialism, passages where the texture of the narratives forms knots and flaws that may give us insight into some hidden fears and motives of European colonialism.

#### By Right of Narrative

##### The Legend of Prince Madoc

The English narratives collected in the third book of the *Principall Navigations* begin with a rather curious document, "The Voyage of Madoc the Sonne of Owen Guyneth Prince of Northwales to the West Indies, in the Yeere 1170." The Welsh prince who is said to have discovered America in 1170 is mentioned by Hakluyt, as well as another propagandist of English expansion, George Peckham, to bolster the English claim to colonial priority over Spain. Both assert, as Peckham formulates in his contribution to Hakluyt's collection, "her Highnesse aunient right and interest in those Countries" by her lineal descent from Madoc ap Owen Gwyneth (the name also appears as Madog ab Owain Gwynedd).

Peckham reports that Elizabeth's ancestor had departed his homeland to plant a colony in a distant land and then returned while "leauing certaine of his people there, as appeareth in an aunient Welsh Chronicle" (Peckham 1589, 709). Richard Hakluyt confirms the existence of such written proof in his unpublished outline of British empire, the "Discourse of Western Planting" of 1584: "wee of England have to shewe very aunient and auctenticall Chronicles

written in the welshe or brittische tongue." These contain the history of Madoc, who, according to Hakluyt, made two voyages of discovery, not one, as Peckham affirms. Hakluyt directly refers the reader to a history of Madoc that had appeared, or was about to appear, in the same year (Hakluyt 1979, 107). Both Peckham and Hakluyt find evidence for a former Welsh presence in America in the Indians' use of Welsh words: information derived from a sailor named David Ingram, as Peckham admits but Hakluyt wisely suppresses.

The Welsh document to which the two refer, and from which the Madoc story is indeed reprinted in the *Principall Navigations*, is *The Historie of Cambria, Now Called Wales* of Caradoc of Llancarfan, published in 1584. Both texts thus contain the same upsetting written evidence that America was not discovered by Columbus in 1492 but 322 years earlier by a Welsh seafarer and direct ancestor of Queen Elizabeth. Needless to say, both the papal donation of the New World to Spain in 1493 (the bull *Inter caetera*) and the division of America between Spain and Portugal in the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) were deprived of all legal foundation by this short Welsh document.

On closer examination, the "Voyage of Madoc" can be seen to carry the imprint of at least one earlier editor besides "M. David Powel Doctor of Divinitie," to whom it is attributed in the *Principall Navigations*. Previously edited by the Welsh historian Humphrey Llwyd but ultimately traced back to the medieval chronicler Caradoc of Llancarfan, the text relates the story of Prince Madoc, who, witnessing his male relatives fight over the succession of the throne after the death of Owen Gwyneth, prepared "certaine ships with men and munition, and sought aduentures by seas, sailing West, and leauing the coast of Ireland so farre North that he came to a land vnknown, where he saw many strange things." The statement is immediately followed by a comment by Humphrey Llwyd:

This land must needs be some part of that country of which the Spanyards affirms themselues to be the first finders since Hanno's time. For by reason, and order of Cosmographie, this land to the which *Madoc* came, must needs be some part of *Noua Hispania*, or *Florida*. Wherevpon it is manifest that that country was long before by Brittaines discovered, afore either *Columbus* or *Americus Vesputius* led any Spanyards thither. Of the voyage and returne of this Madoc there be many fables fained, as the common people do vse in

distance of place and length of time rather to augment than to diminish, but sure it is that there he was. ("Voyage of Madoc" 1589, 506)

And just as sure it is that he did return and "declared the pleasant and fruitfull countreys that he had seene without inhabitants." While his brothers were still fighting, Madoc then again "prepared a number of shippes" and more people willing to go and took off a second time. "Therefore," Llwyd/Powel continue, Madoc and his company must have inhabited "those countreys," and they aptly quote in support the Spanish historian of the conquest of Mexico, Francisco López de Gómara, who writes of a place, "*Acuzamil* and other places" (probably all in Mexico, but the text cunningly leaves the point unresolved) where "the people honored the crosse." This is taken as plain evidence that "Christians had beene there before the comming of the Spanyards. But because this people were not many, they followed the maners of the land they came vnto, and vsed the language they found there."

We are then again told, this time by Powel himself, that Madoc, according to "Gutyn Owen," returned in 1170, furnished ten ships with Welsh settlers, and left Wales for good. Powel then adds his own opinion that the land Madoc settled was "some part of *Mexico*," in support of which he cites an oral tradition among "the inhabitants of that country" that "theyr rulers descended from a strange nation that came thither from a farm countrey," as "Mutezuma king of that country" affirmed in an "oration" at his "submission to the king of *Castile*, *Hernando Cortes* being then present." All of this, the text affirms, is "laid downe in the Spanish chronicles of the conquest of the West Indies." The final evidence for a medieval Welsh colony is derived from "British wordes" used in "that countrey, euen to this day." Responsible for this upsetting information is David Ingram, as we learn from the marginal gloss (5067).

As a document to establish British title to America, the text would appear to be utterly useless. The chronology and line of argument are so topsy-turvy, the voice constantly shifting between historical statement, personal opinions of different authors, suggestions ("must needs be") and speculations based on "reason," the "order of Cosmographie," and the "fables" of the "common people," that it is impossible to determine just what went on between Wales and

America around 1170. If the text which, contrary to Hakluyt's editorial ideals, seems to be terribly "ramassed and hurled together" were purged of all additions made by the several editors, if we would subtract all "fables," opinions, reasonable conclusions, and information taken from contemporary texts, the legend of Prince Madoc would shrink down considerably. Reduced to the naked historical "facts," the narrative would read somewhat like this:

Owen Gwyneth, Prince of North Wales, died. His relatives fought for succession. Madoc, son of Owen Gwyneth, left the country by ship and sailed west.

In the year 1170 Madoc returned, collected ten more ships and more people, and left again.

Strictly speaking, this story would not fulfill the demands of a narrative at all, as the most important function of narrative is to endow a series of events with integrity, coherence, and closure (White 1980, 27). Cut down to its "historical" skeleton, the Madoc story lacks this closure; it does not give a satisfactory explanation of the events but simply terminates, as a medieval chronicle usually does. In this form, it would be absolutely useless to support the story of national expansion to which Hakluyt's volumes are dedicated. Only by filling the gaps in the historical record with editorial interpretations is the text endowed with the coherence and authority that qualify it as a founding text of British westward expansion.

As recent theoretical scholarship has confirmed, the successful writing of a national history is basically a narrative problem. The "meaningful" representation of history, that is, the finding of a beginning in order to explain and thereby authorize a present or future historical condition, is possible only in the form of historical narrative, whose formal devices include the ranking and selection of data and their arrangement in a specific sequence. All of these factors of course have a shaping function, and the theoretically unlimited pool of choices is much restricted by the discursive logic of the culture for which the history is written. The truth claims of a historical narrative thus depend on the rhetorical power of narrative to adjust past events retrospectively to the ideological requirements of the present. The authority of a historical narrative is the result of the complexity and acceptability of its form, which, as Hayden White reminds us, possesses a content itself (White 1980, 17; cf. Mink 1978,



144). These remarks, I think, apply to the Madoc text, which evidently participates in a cultural logic that is increasingly shaped by the rhetoric of narrative and whose self-legitimation is expressed, as well as perpetuated, by a series of historical master texts. This is another way of saying that the British Empire, like other empires, grounded its legitimacy on its rhetoric.

The manipulation of the Madoc "urtext" hardly needs further demonstration. Insecurities and lacunae in the historical record are filled with authoritative statements and conjunctions ("but sure it is that there he was"; "Wherevpon it is manifest"), and the "improvement" is even so amateurish that Madoc's return is rendered twice.

More important, however, is the extreme vagueness of the text about two matters. First, the text has trouble locating the precise place of Madoc's landfall. We are given three possibilities: "Noua Hispania," "Florida" (which at that time included all of North America), and "Mexico." The topographical insecurity is reinforced by the repeated use of the term "that countrey." Second, the text leaves open the question whether the place where Madoc landed was previously settled or not: the information that the "pleasant and fruitfull countreys" were "without inhabitants" is contradicted by the reference to Gómara's people who allegedly honored the cross and who can hardly all have been full-blooded Welsh without the Spaniards noticing it. The text then swerves back into vagueness when it mentions that Madoc's people adopted the "maners of the land . . . and vsed the language they found there." The presence of manners and language presupposes the presence of people, but the text avoids any reference to them. This indecisiveness is not quite unlike that of Perry Miller a few hundred years later, whose "barbaric tropic" is also simultaneously vacant and filled with the unheard voices of other people. Above all, however, it reiterates the ambivalent language of English letters patent, which, as I have mentioned in the introduction, exhort the colonizers to take possession of "barbarous" and "heathen" lands without tackling the difficult issue of previous human occupancy. Once it were admitted that the "discovered" land was already settled, possession could no longer be claimed under the right of discovery (which applied only to uninhabited lands).

This textual slippage thus occludes the larger story of the legal difficulties arising from the presence of an indigenous population in the land to be settled. It signals the desire to suppress any reference

to native inhabitants. But here, for obvious reasons, the Native Americans could not altogether be defined away, as their own "speeches" were the main evidence to prove Madoc's "discovery." The Welsh words of the Indians and Motecuhzoma's "oration" were welcome evidence for the thesis of the pre-Columbian conquest by Madoc and his crew. But as we shall see later in this chapter, David Ingram's "Relation," which is here given as the source for the presence of Welsh words in North America, is not the most reliable of historical records. Motecuhzoma's speech of welcome and "submission" to Hernán Cortés in 1520 is a much more complicated case and still considered genuine by a large part of scholarship.

Peckham's "True Report," which the Madoc piece indicates as the source of this crucial piece of information, actually copies the speech from Gómara's *Conquest off the West Indies* of 1552. In Peckham's adaptation of Gómara's version, which is in turn based on the *Second Letter* of Cortés himself, Motecuhzoma greets Cortés and says to his people:

My kinsmen, friends, and seruants, you doe well know that eigteene yeeres I haue bene your king, as my Fathers and Graundfathers, were, and alwayes I haue bene unto you a louing Prince, and you vnto me good and obedient subjects, and so I hope you will remaine vnto me all the dayes of my life. You ought to haue in remembrance, that either you haue heard of your Fathers, or else our Diuines haue instructed you that we are not naturally of this Countrey, nor yet our Kingdome is durable, because our forefathers came from a farre Countrey, and their King and Captaine who brought them hither, returned againe to his naturall Countrey, saying, that he would send such as should rule and gouerne vs, if by chaunce hee himselfe returned not, &c. (Peckham 1589, 709)

Obviously, this strange document needs careful unraveling in its own historical contextnot least because Hakluyt erased the reference to Motecuhzoma's speech from the second edition of the *Principall Navigations*, together with the account of Ingram and the fables of Sir John Mandeville (Hakluyt 1905, 7:134). Such an archaeological attempt is made in the following chapter. Motecuhzoma's speech evidently serves a different cause in the English context than it could possibly have served in the texts of Cortés and Gómara. It is here connected to the legend of Madoc, whom Peckham presents as the ancient ruler mentioned by Motecuhzoma. This equation is

accompanied by a slight alteration of the Madoc story: as we have seen, Peckham does not record Madoc's second departure to the distant land but has him stay in England.

According to George Peckham, then, the Spanish chronicles themselves establish a legal title to Mexico for Queen Elizabeth on the grounds of Motecuhzoma's "submission." As a member of the House of Tudor, Elizabeth claimed a Welsh lineage and was widely considered to be of part-Welsh descent (Williams 1979, 33). England's hereditary title to America was thus thought to be confirmed by ancient Welsh and contemporary Spanish chronicles: a common strategy for justifying the invasion of foreign territories but somewhat surprising in this context. 3

But their arbitrary interpretations by advocates of national expansion notwithstanding, myths of ancient rulers such as Prince Madoc cannot be discarded as pure fictions. The presence of the Madoc text in the Welsh chronicle, where it is attributed to Caradoc of Llancarfan and edited by Humphrey Llwyd, cannot be sufficiently explained by claiming that it was a recent fabrication.

To be sure, there is an obvious gap between Llwyd's modern version of the story and the medieval chronicle he used, written by the twelfth-century chronicler Caradoc. Having died around 1156, Caradoc at least cannot have put down the events about Madoc. Another Welsh chronicle mentioned by Llwyd, that of Gutyn Owen, is of no more help for us because it is lost (Williams 1979, 48).<sup>4</sup> As Caradoc's text is now entirely interwoven with that of Llwyd, it is impossible to obtain any "original" version of the chronicle or any idea about when the Madoc fragment entered the document. Such an original version is surely lost, as the text has again been altered and translated, as well as "corrected, augmented, and continued out of Records and best approoued Authors" by David Powel after Llwyd's death (Caradoc of Llancarfan 1584, epistle). In short, we are in the presence of an extremely hybrid text whose origin ultimately lies buried in the medieval Welsh oral tradition of the bards. The destruction of the bards and of the historical memory they had preserved, which began under Edward I in the late thirteenth century (Williams 1979, 33), may be seen to have prepared the ground for inscribing the battered historical record with a nationalist "translation of empire" in the late sixteenth century, after Wales had become British by annexation in 1536. Fixed in print and tailored to fit the imperial

cause, the old legends were apparently thought to provide an ideological foundation for a policy of colonial expansion mainly owing to their printed form and old age.

Evidently, legends about mythical leaders who leave one day and are then expected back, legends to be found in many cultures, offered themselves for furthering colonial causes if coupled with the logic of just title by lineage. But like the classical stories about the golden age (to be explored in the following section), those about ancient rulers such as Madoc were originally innocent of their later inscriptions. As the diligent source criticism of Gwyn Williams has shown, a number of tales and oral traditions concerning a Welsh sailor named Madoc did find entrance into various European romances from the thirteenth century onward (4969). What all of these sources have in common, however, is that none of them mentions a distant land to which Madoc sailed. Taken together, all sources are based on a historical Welsh freeman who sailed away with like-minded people and then disappeared (54). Williams concludes that the original Madoc myth "had evidently been a marginal, perhaps underground, story" (66) but that it "first effectively entered history as an instrument of imperial conflict" (67).<sup>5</sup>

As we know, the 1580s were marked by increasing political dissensions between England and Spain, which culminated in the defeat of the Armada in 1588, one year before the *Principall Navigations* were published. This period witnessed a growing production of nationalistic literature, and the *Principall Navigations* must be read in this political context. Other patriotic texts published at that time include William Camden's *Britannia: A Chorographical Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdomes of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Islands Adioyning, out of the Depth of Antiquitie* (1586). It was Camden who supplied Hakluyt with a Madoc poem from the fifteenth century (which does not contain any reference to America but which Hakluyt nevertheless printed right after our Madoc text [Hakluyt 1589, 2:507]). Other chroniclers did their best, by careful selection and arrangement of historical data, to write a "pedigree of glory" for their nation.<sup>6</sup>

Curiously, however, the main force behind the molding of the Madoc legend to fit English political schemes does not even figure in the text but can surely be said to haunt its margins: John Dee, the Welshman, magician-scientist, and inventor of the term "Brytish

Empire," whose *Perfect Arte of Navigation* of 1576 is one of the earliest documents advocating English maritime expansion (Williams 1979, 35, 38).<sup>7</sup> Being acquainted with both modern editors of the Madoc legend, Humphrey Llwyd and David Powel, Dee was the first to use the myth in a Title Royal in 1580 to conjure a legal claim to America (William 1979, 64). With interpretive license, Dee used Madoc, in combination with evidence derived from Arthurian traditions, to construct a British claim to the area extending from the Arctic to Florida.

This returns us to the other uncertainty of the text noted above: its vagueness regarding the exact place "discovered" by Madoc. Gwyn Williams has compared the relevant sentences in Llwyd's manuscript, Dee's interpretation of them in 1580, and Powel's version reprinted in the *Principall Navigations*. In all cases, the geographical reference point for the direction Madoc took, and which consequently points toward the region where he must have landed, is the coast of Ireland. Llwyd's manuscript says that Madoc left the coast of Ireland "northwards," which suggests that he then sailed south, eventually reaching Mexico or Florida or both. Dee writes that he "sayled to the land north of Ireland" but finally arrived in the land that was "first by the Spaniards . . . discovered" (63). This would comprise the whole region of North America, from the Arctic to the West Indies. Dee's point seems to be that Madoc first sailed north and then southward along the coast to Mexico. Powel, then, as quoted above, expands Llwyd by having Madoc leave the coast of Ireland "so farre North" that he presumably landed in Mexico, aptly enough for being turned into the Aztec ancestor in Motecuhzoma's speech.

As becomes apparent, the Madoc tradition perfectly offered itself as a colonial myth of origin. Its vagueness in important points, as well as the primordial blankness at the heart of it, made it useful for several interpretations, dependent on political necessity and historiographic and geographical preference. Significantly, in the second edition of the *Principall Navigations* the contradictions about Madoc's American landfall were smoothed out by Hakluyt, who crossed out the sentence that was at odds with the Ireland-related direction: "For by reason, and order of Cosmosraphie, this land to the which *Madoc* came, must needs be some part of *Noua Hispania*, or Florida" (Hakluyt 1905, 7:134). Obviously, leaving the Irish coast "so farre North," Madoc, "by order of Cosmographie," could hardly have

landed in Florida. By 1600, after the debacle of the first Virginia colony at Roanoke, the geographical area of English interest was once more open to debate. As Raleigh's expedition to Guiana in 1596 suggests, the Caribbean was once again a more serious object of English attention than the goldless north.

Madoc's direction was changed in Captain John Smith's later variant of the myth, displayed in the opening pages of his *Generall Historie of Virginia* (1624), which would tie in with Llwyd's information and close the circle: while repeating the text printed by Hakluyt almost verbatim, Smith lets Madoc leave Ireland "North" so that he could conveniently reach Virginia in order to be incorporated into the *Generall Historie's* cast of characters. 8

Concealed between the geographical inconsistency of the Madoc piece and the larger context of Hakluyt's colonizing program lies another fact worth noting. As we have seen, the "coast of Ireland" is an important reference point in the propagandists' scheme. The Ireland-related direction of Madoc's fleet determined the part of America to be claimed by Elizabeth. But Ireland's obtrusive and equivocal presence in the Madoc text cannot be taken as an indicator of its presence in the *Principall Navigations* as a whole: despite its emphasis on English voyages and conquests from the Dark Ages onward, the collection does not contain a single document describing the attempts to conquer Ireland, which had of course a long history by 1589 but in fact reached a new climax at the time of the early colonization of America. Likewise, the volumes do not include a narrative about any of the many voyages undertaken by Irish sailors.<sup>9</sup> Ireland is hardly mentioned anywhere in Hakluyt's collection, except in the document referring to King Arthur's expedition to Iceland in A.D. 517, during which Arthur is said to have subdued Ireland practically *en passant* (Hakluyt 1589, 1:243). In 1598 a short document concerning the expedition of Bertus to Ireland in 684 and one mentioning King John's "conquest" of Ireland in 1210 were added (Hakluyt 1905, 1:10, 34).

Apparently, Ireland was on the one hand too much considered a conquered appendix of England to deserve mention in Hakluyt's list of overseas action but on the other hand not safely enough so to provide a similar claim to overseas empires with its ancient chronicles, as Wales did. Though the Tudors claimed a similar right of possession to Ireland as to Wales, based on "the long extinct line of

the earls of Ulster" (Canny 1973, 579), that claim was obviously too shaky and too powerfully denied by the Irish themselves to be a fit instrument for imperial rhetoric. Though absent from the *Principall Navigations* owing to its debated relationship to England, Ireland functioned as a blueprint for the colonization of America, a function that was apparently so important that it could not be mentioned.

Because of its historical and logical inconclusiveness, which led Hakluyt to censure it in the 1598 edition of the *Principall Navigations*, the "Voyage of Madoc" can today be regarded only as an amateurish attempt at historical mythmaking. It was soon replaced by more powerful myths of colonial justification, some of which I explore in the following chapters. As a weak example of "source tampering," however, the Madoc legend remains significant. Its appearance in both the *Principall Navigations* and in the *Historie of Cambria* testifies to the intellectuals' preoccupation with reshaping the ancient past to make it prefigure the colonial future. At the beginning of the age of the "British Empire" the national history of Wales appears to have been rewritten in the light of recent plans of colonial expansion, just as that expansion was legitimized by reference to the Welsh past. The imperial Elizabethan nation-state, then, grounded its legitimacy on the organized production of a "massive narrative" a narrative that, like Perry Miller's, owes its coherence not least to the strategic manipulation of other texts and other voices.

### Not Precisely Paradise

#### The "Golden Age" Trope in Motion

The story of Prince Madoc may be regarded as the result of a concerted effort by leading English intellectuals to put England on the colonial map. However, while the English were busily employed in narrative constructions, accompanied by a few reconnaissance trips to North America, its continental neighbor France could already report about a colonizing venture in Florida. Hakluyt exploited the French experience in translating the reports of Jean Ribault and René Laudonnière into English. Ribault's "Discoverie of Florida" in particular, originally published in English translation in London, became a best-seller of colonization. It saw two English publications, one individually in 1563 and then again in the *Divers Voyages* (1582). One

aspect of Ribault's text its perception of America as a golden land connects the "Discoverie of Florida" with other texts in Hakluyt's collections and some of the master texts of antiquity. Not quite as innocently idealistic as some scholars would claim, the language of the golden age in fact functions as one of the main justifying discourses of European colonialism.

Jean Ribault was the leader of a small French Huguenot colony in Florida that had been commissioned by Gaspard de Coligny in 1562. Upon his return he wrote his famous report about that enterprise, published it in his English exile in 1563, and then went back to Florida, only to be massacred, together with his colony, by the Spaniards in 1565. It was the French Huguenots, especially Ribault, who carried the idea of American settlement across the Channel and who envisioned America as a stronghold for French and English Protestants. 10

Ribault's account, which inaugurated the Protestant propaganda of colonization in England and was to become a major model of later narratives about the colonial encounter in North America, is loaded with descriptions of the country's unlimited natural bounty and vividly renders the encounters with Native Americans. The author notes the pleasant smell of the country; rivers "boiling and roaring through the multitude of all kind of fish"; deer, which are apparently kept like cattle in Europe, as he deduces from an Indian's footsteps following those of the deer; and the good disposition of the Indians, who "bee all naked, and of a goodly stature, mightie, & as well shapen & proportioned of body, as any people in the world" (Ribault 1582, sig. F, F3, G2, G3). To cover the Indians' nakedness, Ribault's people distribute "gownes of blewe cloth garnished with yellowe Flouredeluces" (sig. F2). Thus Europeanized, the natives "willingly will obey: yea be content to serve those that shall with gentlenes and humanitie go about to allure them . . . to the ende they may aske and learne of them where they take their gold, copper, and turquesses, and other thinges yet vnknown vnto vs" (sig. G). As we can see, the Huguenots' benevolence had its functionalist aspect. The context leaves little doubt that the "humanitie" of the Europeans could unfold only within the frame set by the Aristotelian theory of natural slavery.

Ribault's description of the land culminates in rapturous praise of its natural beauty and abundance. He regards the country as the



fairest, fruitfullest, & pleasantest of al the world, abounding in hony, venison, wilde foule, forests, woods of all sortes, Palme trees, Cypresse and Cedars, Bayes the highest and greatest, with also the fayrest vines in all the world, with grapes according, which without natural art and without mans helpe or trimming will grow to toppes of Okes. . . . To bee short, it is a thing vnspeakable to consider the thinges that bee seene there, and shalbe founde more and more, in this incomperable lande, which neuer yet broken with plough yrons, bringeth forth al things according to his first nature, wherewith the eternall God indued it. About their houses they labour and till the grounde, sowing their fieldes with a graine called Mahis, whereof they make their meals: and in their Gardens they plant beanes, gourdes, cucumbers, Citrons, peason, and many other fruits and motes vnknownen vnto vs. Their spades and mattocks be made of Wood, so well and fitly as is possible: which they make with certaine stones, oyster shelles & muscles. (sig. F2F3)

The ambivalence of the passage calls for analysis. Ribault's description of Florida contains two somewhat opposing statements, which is indeed typical of early European reports about America. The passage illustrates the difficulty early explorers had in reconciling preconceived ideas with the reality they observed. Clearly, their European "archive" (to borrow a term from Foucault) was not entirely compatible with American reality. Ribault's praise initially taps one of the most prominent accounts of that archive: it imitates accounts of the golden age as described in the books of Hesiod, Ovid, and Virgil. But far from being a simple reproduction of classic texts, Ribault's account is interspersed with images of the prelapsarian paradise ("according to his first nature"). The ideal image of Florida as a land of plenty is then somewhat disturbed when the Indians enter the scene, though with some syntactical reluctance (there are no referents to the pronouns "their" and "they"), to plant their gardens and till the ground. Such an activity is of course incompatible with the classical ideal.

We may assume that Ribault's cultural archive was filled with accounts of the golden age, the terrestrial paradise, and the land of Cockaigne. The Ovidian strand in the passage becomes most obvious in his mention of the grapes that grow to the tops of trees and of the lack of plow irons, but also in his reference to the land bringing forth all fruit "without natural art and without mans helpe or trimming."

At this point, an intertextual correlation with other texts using the topos of the golden age may elucidate the dynamics of the passage from Ribault's text. In the golden age, Ovid writes, the "earth herself, without compulsion, untouched by hoe or plowshare, of herself gave all things needful" (Ovid 1965, 9). Arthur Golding, a contemporary translator of Ovid, put even stronger emphasis on the lack of human labor ("trauell"):

The fertile earth as yet was free, vntoucht of spade or ploughe,  
And yet it yelded of it selfe of euery things ynough.  
And men them selues contented well with plains and symple foode,  
That on the earth of natures gyft without their trauell stooode.

(Ovid 1565, sig. A2)

But Ribault did not have to read Ovid to know how the golden age was composed. Like many other commentators on the newly "discovered" lands, he merely articulated a widely disseminated notion of the good life. <sup>11</sup> A famous description of America as a golden land, for example, is given by the Italian humanist and Spanish court historian Peter Martyr in his *Decades of the Newe Worlde*, readily available to English readers through Richard Eden's translation of 1555. Always given to embellishing his account of Columbus's voyages with digressions into classical themes, Martyr writes of the Caribbean:

The inhabitantes of these Islandes haue byn euer soo vsed to liue at libertie, in playe and pastyme, that they can hardly away with the yoke of seruitude which they attempts to shake of by all meanes they maye. . . . A fewe thinges contente them, hauinge no delite in suche superfluites, for the which in other places men take infinite paynes and commit manie vnlawfull actes, and yet are neuer satisfied, whereas many haue to muche, and none inowgh. But emonge these simple sowles, a fewe clothes serue the naked: weightes and measures are not needefull to such as can not skylle of crafts and deceyte and haue not the vse of pestiferous monye, the seede of innumerable myscheuas. So that if we shall not be ashamed to confesse the truthe, they seeme to lyue in that goulden worlde of . . . which [the] owlde wryters speake so much: wherin men lyued simplye and innocentlye without inforcement of lawes, without quarellinge Judges and libelles, contente onely to satisfie nature, without further vexation for knowlege of thinges to come. (Martyr 1555, 8)

But even the New World was not free of strife and wars, a fact that forces Martyr to revise his image of the golden age: "For euen then also, *Cede, non cedam*, that is, giue place, & I wyll not glue place, had entred emonge men."

The topic of native warfare had already been treated with some ambivalence by Columbus, who recognized the absence of weapons but the presence of wounds among the Arawaks (Columbus 1989, 67). The larger story behind this misperception is the splitting of the Caribbean population into good Arawaks and bad Caribs, against whom the former had to be defended (Hulme 1994). Arthur Barlowe, chronicler of the first English reconnaissance trip to Virginia in 1584, likewise notes the absence of all "guile" and "treason" among the native inhabitants but then refers to their cruel wars, apparently without recognizing the contradiction (Barlowe 1589, 731).

Like Ribault's reference to the absence of plow irons in Indian gardening, the contradictions with regard to native weapons can partly be explained as a symptom of the Europeans' cognitive incapacity to recognize the structural similarity between their own culture and a culture that did not know the use of iron. Of course Columbus did see weapons among the Arawaks, but he did not recognize them as such because they were not made of iron. And Ribault, unlike Ovid and Golding, explicitly speaks of the absence of plow *irons*. The presence of wooden mattocks did not seem to disturb his idealist perception. This cognitive blockage may have resulted from the Europeans' desire to find the place of eternal bliss and pastime promised by the classical authors. With their vision thus impeded, the colonizers were apparently incapable of recognizing deviating evidence.

Hakluyt, the Protestant preacher, seems to have been troubled by his contemporaries' dangerous love for a life spent in "playe and pastyme" (Martyr). He himself preferred an existence based on hard work in the sweat of man's brow. This, at least, may explain one of his rare editorial interventions into Barlowe's text, printed in both editions of the *Principall Navigations* an intervention that is remarkable precisely because of its rarity. In the 1589 edition of "The First Voyage" Barlowe echoes Ribault and Martyr when he writes: "Wee found the people most gentle, louing, and faithfull, void of all guile, and treason, and such as liued after the manner of the golden age. The earth bringeth foorth all things in aboundance, as in the first

creation, without toile and labour" (Barlowe 1589, 731). The last sentence is missing from the 1598 edition of the *Principall Navigations* (Barlowe 1905, 305).

Barlowe's claim was obviously at variance with Hakluyt's notions of a Protestant colony, a notion that is at least emergent in Ribault's text, where the Indians (if not yet the settlers) "labour and till the grounde." Barlowe, by contrast, describes native agriculture as a sort of entertainment: "In Maye they sowe, in July they reape: in June they sowe, in August they reape: in July they sowe, in September they reape: onely they cast the come into the ground, breaking a litle of the soft turfe with a wooden mattocke, or pickeaxe: our selues prooued the soile, and put some of our Pease into the ground, and in tenne daies they were of foureteene ynches high" (Barlowe 1589, 731). As we shall see, the failure of early colonial settlements must largely be accounted to the settlers' confusion of American reality with popular fictions of a life without labor. To many, America seemed to be the fulfillment of Virgil's prophecy in the *Fourth Eclogue*:

The soil will need no harrowing, the vine no pruning-knife  
And the tough ploughman may at last unyoke his oxen.

(Virgil 1983, 19)

Virgil, by projecting the golden age into the future, promised the fulfillment of the greatest dream of mankind, the reconciliation of nature and culture. 12

The *Fourth Eclogue* is probably the key classical text of early modern imperialism because of its translation of a nostalgic dream of a past state of bliss into the prophetic future. Frances Yates has located Virgil's text as the origin of the millennial ideology of universal kingship (Yates 1985, 3339). The first monarch to explicitly establish his imperial claim with reference to the *Fourth Eclogue* was the Roman emperor Constantine, who turned the text into a Messianic prophecy (3435). Owing to Lucius Lactantius's "assimilation of the description of the golden age to the language of Christian mysticism," the Christianized Rome of Constantine was to become the common historical referent for all later claims to universal kingship (35; cf. Cheyfitz 1991, 119). The theme further disseminated into the writings of Dante, Ariosto, and Spenser.

By eliminating the crucial reference to the absence of labor from Barlowe's text, Hakluyt may be seen to implicitly deny the validity

of the Virgilian millennial notion of which that sentence is a trace. Read in conjunction with his account of his initial calling quoted in my introduction, however, Hakluyt's intervention forms part of his translation of the millennial theme, encapsulated in that suppressed sentence, into the ideological context of Protestantism and English nationalism. Hakluyt's whole work is dominated by evocations of a Protestant work ethic, and he deeply resented the "sluggishness" of his English contemporaries, which in his view impeded the translation of empire from Catholic Spain to Protestant England. Part of this translation consisted in introducing the topic of human labor to the millennial ideal.

At a certain point in history, then, the humanist ideal of a golden age had merged with Christian theories of divine kingship. In keeping with this mixed heritage, classical and Christian motives cannot be clearly separated in Ribault's and Barlowe's evocations of the golden age, which, in Ribault more than in Barlowe, resembles a Protestant paradise as well. This fluidity is actually spelled out by Arthur Golding, the English translator of Ovid, when he writes:

Moreover by the golden [age] what other thing is ment,  
Than Adam's tyme in Paradyse. (Ovid 1565, sig. A2)

Ribault's inclusion of the Indians' gardening activities into his description of America's "untrimmed" nature seems to tie in with this view. But on closer scrutiny their "labour" is incompatible even with the most radical Protestant versions of Adam and Eve's preoccupation in the Garden of Eden, which they "dress" and "keep" but do not "till" (*Geneva Bible*, Genesis 2.15). The laboring Indians, it seems, are reconcilable with Ribault's preconceived image of America only on the condition that they do not use "plough yrons." Lacking plowshare and oxen, their form of agricultural labor is unfamiliar to a European and may thus find, however uneasily, a place within Ribault's Virgilian Florida.

This simultaneous perception and denial of native agriculture is largely the result of the dualist concept of (agri)culture that dominated the mentality of most Europeans. William Cronon addresses this dualism when he characterizes the difference between the agriculture of Europe and that of the New England tribes in the early seventeenth century. Native American agriculture, he notes, did not look "very orderly to a European eye accustomed to monocultural

fields. Cornstalks served as beanpoles, squashes sent their tendrils everywhere, and the entire surface of the field became a dense tangle of food plants" (Cronon 1983, 4344). The same kind of "mixed planting" was practiced by the natives of Virginia and Florida, who planted "corn, beans, squash, and melons all together in little hills." <sup>13</sup> Moreover, as Edmund S. Morgan points out, this form of agriculture "is common among pre-industrial populations all over the world" and, while generally regarded as "wasteful" and "primitive," has proved to prolong the fertility of the fields (Morgan 1975, 53). Morgan lapses into Ovidian rhetoric himself when he praises the advantages of mixed planting, which "requires no manure and no animals to furnish manure. It requires no plows and no draft animals to feed and care for. It requires virtually no work on the land other than clearing, planting, and harvesting" (54).

But this, it should be considered, can be pretty hard work without iron tools. While Morgan's passage seems to reiterate, however unwittingly, a Lockean notion of America as representing the state of nature marked by the complete absence of labor, Cronon's reference to Europe's "monocultural fields" raises the question of how homogeneous we can assume European agriculture to have been.

Cronon's claim is complicated by an engraving of Theodor de Bry, based on a sketch by John White, that shows the Virginia town Pomeioc and one of its elders, surrounded by a very orderly and monocultural cornfield (fig. 1.1). Other engravings of de Bry's Virginia, however, agree with Cronon's description and raise the suspicion that in the case of Pomeioc a European standard was projected onto the American landscape. Such a procedure was not uncommon among early European engravers. The question that remains is how representative the European standard really was of Europe as a whole.

Edmund Morgan has located a split between the English ideal of a farmer's existence and the actuality of many English farmers' methods for securing their subsistence. The ideal, spelled out in the Statute of Artificers of 1563 (the year in which Ribault's account first appeared), demanded of every farmer and laborer to keep fixed working hours. But the natural precondition of agricultural life, the seasonal cycle, paid little attention to English laws, and in effect the majority of the English farmers did not subsist on sowing and reaping alone but supplemented their diet by gathering roots, nuts,



Fig. 1.1.

"An aged man in his winter garment." From Theodor de Bry, *Americae*, I (1590), courtesy John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

and berries. It was only in the more fertile southern and eastern parts of England that people could live exclusively by farming. The poorer peasants of the fens, pastures, and woodlands lived much like the Indians of Florida and Virginia, as the barrenness of the ground afforded them little opportunity for surplus production (Morgan 1975, 6267). For the grain-growing farmers in the fertile areas, these woodland and pasture people were "no farmers at all" (65). This opposition between rich and poor, or "orderly" and "unruly," farmers can be found in other European countries as well.

The discursive inconsistency that we can see in Ribault's text thus not only points toward a cultural difference between Europeans and Native Americans but also evokes a problem already intrinsic to European society itself. What we tend to regard as a pan-European agricultural practice is a form of agriculture that was systematically practiced only by the more privileged farmers.

The Floridians who "labour and till the ground" about their houses, apart from their lack of iron, thus did not differ much at all from contemporary European poor farmers unable or unwilling to

adjust to prescribed working standards. The actuality of European agricultural practice, which seems to have been a hybrid affair much like Ribault's compound version of America as golden land qua terrestrial paradise, betrays the idealism of de Bry's Virginian cornfield. Clearly the engraving is less a mimetic representation of native land use than an ideological projection that makes a section of European reality stand for the whole in America.<sup>14</sup> Like Ribault's emphasis on the lack of plow irons, the engraving's representation of Pomeioc in terms of a European ideal demonstrates the incapacity of many early European colonizers to register a system of labor and agriculture that did not precisely agree with the prescribed European standard. Both Ribault's text and de Bry's image are inscriptions of a homogenizing perception of reality.<sup>15</sup> The contradictory passage in Ribault's text may thus be seen to reveal a failure of perception. But that failure cannot be accounted to a personal lack on Ribault's part. It rather refers to a *cultural* problem.

The tendency among early colonizers to confuse reality with ideological construct had at times disastrous effects, as we can learn from a quite vivid description of the further destiny of the French colony at Florida. In 1564, two years after the foundation of the colony by Ribault, the French settlers and their leader, René Laudonnière, were visited by John Hawkins and the crew of the *Jesus of Lubek*, who were on their way home from one of their successful privateering trips to the Spanish Caribbean. John Sparke, the author of the report about that voyage, gives an amusing account of the pitiful condition of the French colony. Above all, he writes, the settlers were in need of food: "they had not aboue ten dayes victuall left before we came" ([Sparke] 1589, 540). The good relationship with the Floridians also belonged to the past, since the French, having "in short space eaten al the mayis they could buy of the inhabitants about them . . . were driuen . . . to serue a king of the *Floridians* against other his enemies for mill, and other victualls" (539) and subsequently became involved in the Indians' tribal feuds. Because the two hundred settlers could not feed for long on their legionaries' pay, "they were faine to gather acorns" and eat roots.

The subsistence on acorns, the "staple of Arcadian diet" (Levin 1969, 20), led to a quite un-Arcadian behavior: "But this hardnesse not contenting some of them, who would not take the paynes so much as to fish in the riuer before theyr doores, but woulde haue all



things put in theyr mouthes, did rebell agaynst the captaine," René Laudonnière, Ribault having returned to Europe for more supplies (Sparke 1589, 540). Instead of serving themselves from the rivers "boyling and roaring through the multitude of all kinde of fish" (Ribault 1582, sig. F), these eighty rebels abandoned Protestant ideals, which obviously were not their personal ideals at all, by acting according to an older but more efficient mode of survival. They snatched one of the colony's ships and took off toward the Caribbean, "where they spoiled, and pilled the Spanyardes, and hauing taken two caruels laden with wine and *Casaua*, which is a breade made of roots, and much other victualles and treasure, had not the grace to depart there with, but were of such hautie stomacks, that they . . . kept harborough in *Iamaica*" ([Sparke] 1589, 540). After a number of successful raids they were caught and killed or imprisoned by the Spaniards; the few who could escape imprisonment returned to Florida, where they were severely punished.

The situation of the colony worsened when the settlers began to plunder the Indians' food reserves and war ensued. Not without snobbish sarcasm, the English voyager, having just returned from a pillaging tour himself, summarizes the reasons for the Huguenots' dilemma: "Notwithstanding the great want that the French men had, the ground doth yeeld victuals sufficient, if they would haue taken paines to get the same, but they being souldiors, desired to liue by the sweat of other mens browes" (540). He remarks, however, that the soldiers were quite industrious in processing the grapes: although half-starved, they had managed to produce "twenty hogsheads of wine" (542).

Sparke's observations, made with scientific accuracy regarding the condition of the land, and not without ethnological curiosity regarding the behavior of its new European inhabitants, leads him to conclude that "to them that should inhabit the land it were requisit to haue laborers to till and sowe the ground" (540). As we have seen, Ribault had registered the same necessity of engaging servants, which he thought could be done with the Indians. But apparently this was easier imagined than accomplished. As Sparke's malicious comments show, the failure to distinguish between classical ideal and contemporary reality tended to produce an unwholesome travesty of golden-age lifestyle rather than a prospering Protestant colony.



Fig. 1.2.

"The Indians cultivate the earth with diligence." From Theodor de Bry, *Americae*, II (1591), courtesy of John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

The dilemma of the Huguenot colonists is connected with what Raymond Williams has called the "idealisation of feudal and immediately post-feudal values" in an age that produced the rise of a philosophy of capitalist agriculture based on the "utilitarian reduction" of human relationships to the hierarchy between, master and servant, a hierarchy that was justified with reference to Aristotle's *Politics* (Williams 1973, 35). What such a utilitarian relationship could look like is signified by two of de Bry's engravings, based on drawings by Jacques Le Moyne, who had accompanied the Huguenot settlers. The first one (fig. 1.2) provides an interesting gloss on the above-quoted passage from Ribault's text passage, moreover, whose ideological importance is reinforced by its reappearance in Richard Hakluyt's secret plan for empire, the "Discourse of Western Planting" of 1584 (Hakluyt 1979, 76). Though still without plow irons, the Indians' planting tools and methods are now recognizably "ordered" and European including the fundamentally gendered representation of agricultural work. Viewed in the context of the



Fig. 1.3.

Athore greets Laudonnière. From Theodor de Bry, *Americae*, II (1591), courtesy of John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

second engraving (fig. 1.3), the laboring Indians receive their place within the colonial master-and-servant structure: they give offerings to and adore the royal column that Ribault's men had erected as a symbol of taking possession not just of the land, it now appears, but ideally of the natives' work force as well.

Ribault himself gives an interesting account of that ritual act of territorial appropriation:

cariying with vs a Pillour or colonne of harde stone, our kings armes graued therein, to plant and set the same in the enterie of the Porte in some high place, where it might bee easily seene, and being come thither before the Indians were assembled, we espied on the south syde of the Riuer a place very fitte for that purpose, vpon a litle hill, compassed with Cypres, Bayes, Paulmes and other trees, with sweete smelling and pleasant shrubbes. In the middle whereof we planted the first bound or limit of his Maiestie. This done perceiuing our first Indians assembled, not without some misliking of those on the South parte, where we had set the limite, . . . when they perceyued our long tarying on this side, they ran to see what we had done in that

place where we landed first, and had set our limite: which they vewed a great while without touching it any way, or abassing, or euer speaking to vs thereof at any time after. (Ribault 1582, sig. F3)

The Indians' discreetness and their failure to "abass" themselves before a European symbol of phallic colonial power may indicate their incapacity to understand the ideological import of this act. They probably would not have been delighted to find that the erection of the "columnne of harde stone" had deprived them of their territorial rights and turned them into "*our* Indians" by sleight of hand. The sexual connotations of the language here point toward a practice of colonial discourse that is investigated in a later chapter (see chapter 5). What is remarkable about the Frenchmen's symbolic "lay of the land" among the "sweete smelling . . . shrubbes" on a "litle hill" is that the Indians are excluded from the romance. Peter Hulme has explained this recurring trope of the feminization of the land with what he calls the "colonial triangle": the problem that there were two potential spouses or claimants for the land when in fact there could be only one (Hulme 1985, 18). 16

To conclude, the golden-age discourse of Ribault and his contemporaries, owing to its complex negotiation of biblical, classical, and sexual metaphors, makes the land ideologically available for European possession by reducing the original inhabitants to the role of servants or children who provide economic subsistence and the reverential audience necessary for the "civilized" male fantasies of a soldier's life to unfold. The two passages from Ribault's text contain the clue to the major ideological problem faced by European colonizers, the problem of having to reconcile the Indians' autonomous and self-sufficient existence with their own inherited notions of cultural chosenness and with their political and economic interests, which made it necessary to fit the American natives into a hierarchical concept of labor division. The conditions of this act of familiarization were dictated by the colonizers' belief in the natural superiority of European culture, here represented by its "masculine" agriculture. A critical reading of Ribault's depiction of American land and peoples reveals the power of ideal constructs such as the myth of the golden age not only to occlude contradictory evidence but also to articulate the ideological difficulties that had to be mastered by the early colonizers. These difficulties become manifest in Hakluyt's

editorial intervention. His textual project obviously marks a point of ideological transition.

A similar transition can be found in Hakluyt's adaptation of the central ideological narrative of early European colonialism: the myth of native cannibalism. Originating with the Spanish discourse about the Caribbean, the topic of cannibalism also haunts the texts collected by Richard Hakluyt. In the following section I try to place the manifestations of that trope in the *Principall Navigations* within the larger field of the European discourse of cannibalism. Again, as we shall see, Richard Hakluyt effected a significant translation of the trope in his careful adaptation of Spanish colonial ideology to an English plan for empire.

### Of Cannibals and Knights

My analysis of the Madoc story has shown the function of narrative in the historical legitimation of a national-colonial project, while my reading of the golden-age trope has traced its connections with the larger context of the colonial labor problematic. The present section examines the various mutations of the most prominent trope of colonial discourse in America—the trope of cannibalism—by connecting its appearance in the *Principall Navigations* to the larger discursive field of early European colonialism.<sup>17</sup> Its various adaptations to different colonial contexts, I argue, are always significant in the justification of colonial power relations even while carrying the traces of noncolonial European discourses.

Colonial discourse, as it is understood here, is not a static or homogeneous phenomenon: its power derives from its capacity to adopt different disguises and to enter strategic alliances with other discourses. We have seen such a process of discursive adaptation at work in the case of the golden-age myth, which at certain points in time merged with Christian millennialism and was later evoked in this hybrid form in a Protestant colonial context in the writings of Ribault and others. As Hakluyt's reluctance to preserve Barlowe's golden-age euphoria indicates, this specific ideological unit, or ideologeme, was on the decline in the English colonial context around 1600—a context that was decisively shaped by Hakluyt himself owing to his tireless work as editor and translator. His editorial decision ties in with another, that of eliminating from the

second edition of the *Principall Navigations* the apocryphal *Travels* of Sir John Mandeville, as well as the "Relation" of an English sailor, David Ingram. Both texts, though once best-sellers of travel writing (especially Mandeville), were now apparently seen to disagree with contemporary policy and with Hakluyt's philosophy of textual faithfulness serving that policy.

Ingram's text introduces us to the topic of cannibalism and the ways in which that colonial trope relates to the justification of conquest. The "Relation" is the outcome of an interrogation of Ingram by several organizers of English colonialism, including Humphrey Gilbert, George Peckham, Francis Walsingham, and possibly Richard Hakluyt. It actually conveys more about the expectations of Ingram's interviewers than it does about his authentic travel experience. Obviously, Gilbert and the others were primarily interested in translating Ingram's story into a concrete plan for colonization. The questions are not recorded but can be inferred from the sequence and the contents of Ingram's replies. The evidence suggests that the sailor told the gentlemen what he thought they wanted to hear, and so it is not surprising that his text was apparently a public success. Of its first edition in 1583 no copy survives, and scholars assume that the "Relation of David Ingram of Barking" was literally read to pieces. 18

David Ingram had been marooned by John Hawkins with one hundred other sailors after the ruinous battle with the Spaniards at San Juan de Ulloa (Mexico) in 1568. He claims to have wandered, together with two other men, along the coast of North America all the way to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, in just one year. Naturally, the London promoters of colonialism regarded Ingram (his two companions had died) as an invaluable source of geographical knowledge on the as yet uncharted northern part of America. Ingram's "Relation," the first account of an Englishman's experience on the North American mainland, is part sailor's tall tale, with clear debts to the popular fictions derived from Mandeville, and part ideological repertoire for possible strategies of conquest. These two aspects constantly interact in the text.

"This exanimate," as Ingram is occasionally called, claims to have found some of the wildest miracles of India. The "Kings" of "those Countries," he says, wear rubies and other precious stones, a kind of crown jewels whose loss also entails the loss of their territories (Ingram 1589, 557). The Indians are so brutish that they use

their women "in open presence" but so rich that they throw out their dust in buckets of "massie siluer" (558, 559). They use Welsh words such as *penguin* for a white-headed bird, and they honor the Devil, called Colluchio, who appears to them "in the likenesse of a blacke Dogge, and sometimes in the likenesse of a blacke Calfe" (560, 561). Ingram likewise claims to have seen elephants, and he describes several monsters that appear to be mixtures of bison and some of the monstrous races of Pliny. 19 Most significant in our context, however, is Ingram's reference to the "*Canibals* or man eaters" who haunt the iron-using and crown jewel-bearing peaceful Indians: "The *Canibals* doe most inhabite betweene *Norumbega*, & *Bariniah*, they haue teeth like dogs teeth, and thereby you may know them" (Ingram 1589, 558). The text continues with a description of the peaceful Indians' buildings, which "are weake and of small force, their houses are made round like Doue houses." Dogs against doves: the imbalance of power between native groups is metonymically inscribed in such attributes borrowed from the animal kingdom. The huts of the jewel-bearing Indians hardly seem able to resist the attacks of the fierce cannibals.

The signifiers of this passage connect Ingram's text with the earliest text about America, the *Journal* of Columbus, where we can find a similar strategy of distinguishing between peaceful and warlike inhabitants. The ideological function of such distinctions is in turn expressed in Sir George Peckham's "True Report of the Late Discoveries . . . by Sir Humphrey Gilbert," which appeared in the same year as Ingram's "Relation" (1583) and was later also included in the *Principall Navigations*. Directly referring to the above passage, Peckham, whose text is the most important English propaganda tract of the period,<sup>20</sup> suggests entering into a "league of friendship" with the tame Indian with the aim

that then the Christians from thence forth will alwayes bee ready with force of Armes to assist & defende them in their iust quarrels, from all inuasions, spoyles and oppressions, offered them by any Tyraunts, Aduersaries, or their next borderers. . . . For it appeareth by the relation of a countreman of ours, namely Dauid Ingram, . . . [that] the Sauages generally for the most part, are at continuall warres with their next adioyning neighbours, and especially the Cannibals, being a cruel kinde of people, whose foods is mans flesh, and haue teeth like dogges, and do pursue them with rauinous mindes to eate their

flesh, and deuoure them. And it is not to be doubted, but that the Christians may in this case iustly and lawfully ayde the Sauages against the Cannibals. (Peckham 1589, 706)

Peckham's strategy, based on the cultural text of the Christian knight defending the effeminate peaceful inhabitants against monsters who threaten the integrity of body and civility from abroad, is to bring the Christians into the possession of the land whose inhabitants they defend. They shall, says Peckham, "by [the Indians'] franke consents . . . easily enioy such competent quantity of Lande, as euery way shall be correspondent to the Christians expectation, & contentation, considering the great aboundance that they haue of lande, and howe small account they make thereof, taking no other fruit thereby then such as the ground of it selfe dooth naturally yeelde" (706). The denial of native agriculture at the end of the passage demonstrates the ease with which the Virgilian ideal could be translated into a good reason for conquest under the ideological banner of the Protestant work ethicere, revealingly, put forth by a Catholic. The passage also shows Peckham's habit of piling different legitimizing tropes onto each other, with the rhetorical effect that the quantity of just causes may replace their juridical insufficiency and lack of empirical verification.

Peckham's intertextual reference to Ingram's "Relation" is limited to the account of cannibals. The ideological reason for this interest in the existence of Native American man-eating is quite simply that anthropophagy, together with sodomy and occasionally idolatry, was generally regarded as a sin against nature in the legal discourse of the sixteenth century. As such it provided a just reason for conquestor rather, for "intervention" in defense of the victims of the inhuman aggressors (see Fisch 1984, 188). Interestingly, Peckham seems to have felt more secure by combining the argument of native cannibalism with others. This mixed argumentation is indeed a common trait of colonial propaganda tracts, which betray a general insecurity about the exclusive validity of any of the arguments they use.

Peckham's presentation of the North American natives as defenseless victims of external aggressors, victims who would gratefully trade in their territorial rights for the mercenary service of the English knights, can be traced back to the *Journal* of Christopher Columbus, which likewise inaugurated the justification of conquest



with reference to native cannibalism. The remainder of this chapter follows the itinerant signifier *cannibal* through a number of colonialist texts on its constant quest for a signified. The existence of a referent, it may be said at the outset, must remain a matter of guesswork. All the evidence we have, no matter how "hard" it may seem at first, acquires a second-degree status after some critical scrutiny. The purpose here is thus to provide a sense of the ways in which a specific ideogeme of colonial discourse operates by adapting to a changing set of political needs and interests and not to speculate about any real practice of man-eating among Native Americans.

Just as in Ingram's text, Columbus's meeting with peaceful Indians is associated with his search for gold and riches. Showing a few jewels to some of the older inhabitants of Cuba on 4 November 1492, Columbus receives the information that

in a place that they called Bohio there was a vast amount and that they wore it on neck and in ears and on arms and legs; and also pearls. Moreover, he understood that they said that there were big ships and much trade and that all of this was to the southeast. He understood also that, far from there, there were one-eyed men, and others, with snouts of dogs, who are men, and that as soon as one was taken they cut his throat and drank his blood and cut off his genitals. (Columbus 1989, 133)

The elders, according to Columbus, provide him with three separate pieces of information: they tell of an island where much gold is to be found, where great merchant ships are cruising, and they mention the one-eyed monsters and dog-mouthed man-eaters who live a little further off. <sup>21</sup> On 23 November, when Columbus decides to sail to Bohio (later called Hispaniola), the distance between the gold island and the gruesome monsters has shrunk considerably, and now they are accompanied by the species that was to become so famous throughout the texts of discovery: the Indians "said [that Bohio] was very large and that there were people on it who had one eye in their foreheads, and others whom they called cannibals, of whom they showed great fear. And when they saw that he was taking this route, he says that they could not talk, because the cannibals eat them, and that they are people very well armed" (Columbus 1989, 167).

It is important to realize that Columbus at this point does not believe the natives' tales, as he is convinced that the great ships

mentioned earlier are those of Cipangu (Japan). Armed people, according to his logic, could only be the soldiers of the Grand Khan. That these "cannibals," unlike the innocent natives of Cuba, are armed, leads Columbus to the conclusion that they must be "people of intelligence" (167) who had probably enslaved a few of the natives. This was an activity quite common to civilized nations, as Columbus himself repeatedly demonstrated by kidnapping Indians, either to use as interpreters or to take back to the Spanish court as living evidence. In addition, these peaceful Indians had initially taken the Spaniards for man-eaters as well (167). That the armed and civilized people of Bohio should be in possession of the treasures would be only reasonable. Together with the mentioned trade ships, this information very much tied in with Columbus' expectations.

Thus, at the very moment of its inception, the myth of the man-eating cannibals is heavily doubted by its perpetrator himself, who apparently regards the stories of the natives as fantastic outgrowths of their simple minds. The name *Caniba* (according to Columbus's informants; the territory of the *canibales*) could to him only mean "the people of the Grand Khan [Gran Can]." The term *cannibal* has at this point no reference to the custom of eating human flesh at all; it is fully occupied by what Peter Hulme calls the semantics of oriental discourse, connoting "Eastern civilization" instead of "Western savagery" (cf. Hulme 1986, 22).

But, as Hulme has shown, the discursive politics of the *Journal* are more complicated. From 30 October onward, Columbus runs into increasing interpretive difficulties because the geography of the islands he discovers cannot be made to correspond with his mental map of India. Accompanied by a spectacular series of wrong assessments of his position, which has caused intense debate among historians, the semantics of orientalism begin to dwindle. Even while the oriental discourse does not abruptly vanish from the *Journal*, Columbus on 6 November actually gives up his search for "Quinsay," "Cipangu," and the Grand Khan and changes his course to southeast, the opposite direction, with the explanation that he wants to search for gold and discover new lands (Columbus 1989, 141). Thus, while Columbus's language is still associating the Caribbean islands with the imaginative map of India, his actions stand in virtual opposition to his rhetorical assertions. Psychologically, this is a difficult moment, which can perhaps best be expressed in terms of

paradox; the wrong assessments of the position served to support the change of direction, which resulted from what Hulme calls "unconscious deliberation." 22

To add to the confusion, from the beginning Columbus was looking not exclusively for India but also for undiscovered islands in the Atlantic Ocean. In the official document authorizing his first voyage, the *Capitulaciones*, there is no mention of India but only of islands and mainlands to be discovered and acquired (Sale 1991, 25). The possibility of looking for "savage" lands should the search for India prove fruitless existed from the very beginning.

The shift of Columbus's direction is thus accompanied by an imaginative shift as well. With the disappearance of civilized India (Cathay) as destination, the Plinian monsters who were thought to inhabit the wild hinterland of India and whose existence Columbus had so far rather doubted, become "real" New World creatures. The signifier *cannibal*, which had so far stood for "people of the Grand Khan," gradually adopts a new signified, "ferocious man-eaters." Its migration is accompanied by a gradual displacement of the signifier *gold* as well. At about the same time that *cannibal* arrives at its final destination, the connotations of *gold* have changed from "oriental" to "savage," that is, from the state of artful refinement in the Indians' jewelry to its raw condition in rivers and mines (Hulme 1986, 33).

With both the inhabitants and the gold having turned from a civilized to a savage state, Columbus introduces his new policy. After a dinner with one of the "kings" of Hispaniola on 26 December, he declares that something should be done about the people of Caniba, "whom they call Caribs," and that the king and queen of Spain have ordered their destruction (Columbus 1989, 28687). From now on, the notion of the *man-eating Caribs* takes full possession of Columbus's discourse and actions, and it becomes inseparable from his desire to find gold. His first encounter with Caribs (who are actually Ciguayos) on 13 January is belligerent, and although the natives disappoint the Spaniards' expectations by running away and not eating human flesh, their ferocious appearance alone leaves no doubt about their identity. One of them is described as extremely ugly, painted, longhaired, and naked: "The Admiral judged that he must be from the Caribs who eat men" (329). Even their cowardliness is now used as evidence for their cannibalism (330).

But by now the claim that the Caribs were men-eaters has become a "fact" itself and is no longer in need of empirical evidence. The Caribs soon turn out to be the reason for Columbus's difficulties in obtaining gold and copper: "on the island of Carib and in Matinino there was much copper although it will be difficult in Carib because those people, he says, eat human flesh" (15 January: 339). Finally intending to visit the island of the Caribs the next day, the Spaniards somehow cannot manage to reach it and suddenly take a northeasterly route back to Spain, which leaves the problem of the cannibals conveniently unresolved (34143). Columbus's first visit to the Caribbean thus terminates with the "irony that desire and fear, gold and cannibal, are left in monstrous conjunction on an *unvisited* island" (Hulme 1986, 41).

The textual process I have described is the emergence of the Caribs as the New World equivalent of Herodotus's Anthropophagi with the important difference that the cannibals of early modern colonial discourse are much more aggressive and thereby practically force the Christian soldiers to rush to the defense of the gentle and peaceful Arawaks. <sup>23</sup> Columbus's "tale of distinction" between Arawaks and Caribs (Hulme) soon became a "scientific" fact, leading to the myth that Arawaks and Caribs belonged to separate ethnic groups. As Peter Hulme has shown, this theory does not stand critical evaluation. The name Carib probably had several meanings among the indigenous inhabitants, all of which tie in with one another but none of which encourages the view that there were two different ethnic groups. Linguistically, Carib seems to have been an Arawakan sociolect, a male jargon, while Kari'na was at the same time used as a lingua franca for trading in the whole Caribbean (Hulme 1986, 63, 76). The term *cariba* might also have been used as a general term for strangers or alien groups which were, however, not ethnically or linguistically different, but rather socially (63). More specifically, it probably referred to the inhabitants of autonomous smaller islands who resisted incorporation into one of the chiefdoms (or protostates) emerging in the area at the time of Columbus's arrival (77). The latter explanation suggests that the Spaniards unwittingly reproduced the matrix of an existing ideology from the chiefdoms while enriching it with European notions of savagism and aligning it with the categories of European aesthetic perception ("ugliness" becoming an indicator of cannibalism).

An important shift in the *Journal* is the substitution of the missing "cannibalistic" evidence with aesthetic judgments. Cannibalism here merges with the more familiar concept of savagery, which is connected with unfamiliar food and sexual practices as well as unfamiliar dress, hairstyle, and makeup. As Hulme has shown, the further development of the discourse on the Caribbean hinges on this dependency of ideological distinctions on differences of cultural behavior. The opposition between good and defenseless Arawaks and aggressive and man-eating Caribs, an ideological move that allowed the Europeans to first imaginatively and then physically settle themselves in the Native American geography, still dominates much of the vocabulary and scientific discourse of contemporary anthropology (see Hulme 1986, chapter 2).

As can be seen in Columbus's *Journal*, the Caribs protectors of the desired gold provided a legitimate impulse for colonial aggression (now "defense") as well as a justification for the failure to obtain the desired object (due to the danger of being eaten). The Columbian distinction between ferocious Caribs and peaceful Arawaks proved to be quite helpful to official colonial policy: in 1503 Queen Isabella issued a decree that restricted the right to enslave the inhabitants of the New World to "a certain people called Canniballs" for the practical reason that the "good" Indians were dying too fast. And since the term *cannibal* was by now no longer limited to any specific group (although still mostly associated with the Caribs), the edict "was interpreted as a license to enslave any Indian from any of the islands suspected of cannibalism," that is, any Indian who showed signs of resistance (Honour 1975, 56). Through a complex discursive maneuver, an uncertain myth of dog-faced man-eaters had come to provide the rationale for a legal document justifying enslavement. 24

In keeping with the discursive rather than empirical existence of cannibalism, we look in vain for reliable evidence of it in the texts about the Caribbean. We find abundant indirect evidence, however, consisting in hearsay and the presumed leftovers of cannibal feasts. Diego Alvarez Chanca's report about Columbus's second voyage encapsulates this process: having landed on Guadaloupe, Columbus "made his way to the houses, in which he found their inhabitants. Directly they saw our men, they took to flight." The admiral, however, entering their houses, "found their possessions, for they had taken nothing away, and there he took two parrots, very large and

very different from any that had been seen. He found much cotton, spun and ready for spinning, and articles of food, of all of which he brought away a little. Especially he brought away four or five bones of the arms and legs of men. As soon as we saw this, we suspected that those islands were the Carib islands which are inhabited by people who eat human flesh" (Chanca 1988, 26). The suspicion expressed in the last sentence indicates the mental process by which the encountered facts were interpreted in the light of previously acquired "knowledge." Chanca's knowledge of the Caribs' cannibalism is of course derived from the reports on the first voyage of Columbus (Hulme 1994). The certainty with which Dr. Chanca assumes the presence of cannibals without having seen any himself was to become a central feature of the European discourse of cannibalism, and human bones were the most common index of cannibalism in both Spanish and English colonial accounts far beyond the Caribbean itself.

The trope readily entered some of the accounts collected in the *Principall Navigations* as well. The English merchant Henry Hawkes, for example, writes that he found the leftovers of cannibals in Mexico, the native population of which he describes as extremely cowardly, partly because they were kept in great subjection by the Spaniards. But there "remaine some among the wild people, that vnto this day eate one another. I haue seene the bones of a *Spaniard*, that haue bene as cleane burnished, as though it had bene done by men that had no other occupation. And many times people are carried away by them, but they neuer come againe, whether they be man or women" (Hawkes 1589, 552). The skepticism expressed earlier by Columbus about similar stories is now replaced with undivided belief, and contradictory evidence counts little. One could easily surmise that the missing Indians had simply run away to escape bondage, that the "cleane burnished" bones were the leftovers of the vultures, of which "there is such abundance . . . that they eate all the corrupt and dead flesh which is in the Countrey" (551). But even for the pragmatic English merchant with his strong sense of efficiency, the ideological power of the symbolic representation prevents any attempt to draw logical conclusions.

The ideologeme of cannibalism gains a new quality in the report of George Best on Martin Frobisher's second voyage to Newfoundland in 1577. The English find a tomb with the bones of a dead man and

by using signs ask their Inuit captive "whether his countrey men had not slain this man and eat his flesh so from the bones," but he makes "signes to the contrarie, and that he was slain with wolves and wilde beastes" (Best 1867, 136). The same dumb show is repeated at another occasion (139). Eventually the English, trying to catch a few Inuit to show them at the English court and learn their language, pursue a group of them. The natives take to flight with their canoes, are forced to land, and try to prevent the English from landing by shooting all their arrows at them, even those shot at them before by the Englishmen,

yea, and plucking our arrowes out of their bodies, encountered afresh againe, and maintained their cause, until both weapons and life utterly failed them. And when they founde they were mortally wounded, being ignorant what mercy meaneth, with deadly furie they cast themselves headlong from off the rocks into the sea, least perhaps their enemies shoulde receive glory or praye of their dead carcasses; for they supposed us be like to be canibales, or eaters of mans flesh. (142)

What else could they have expected from the strangers' actions and unequivocal sign language? The behavior of the Europeans would hardly seem fit to have inspired any sense of their code of honor or of their concept of "mercy." Adding the final twist to his display of colonialist logic, Best explains the sudden flight of the Inuits and their "desperate manner of fighting" with their feeling of guilt at having captured five English sailors the previous year: "And considering, also, their ravenesse and bloody disposition in eating anye kinde of rawe flesh or carrion, however stinking, it is to be thoughte that they had slaine and devoured oure men" (143). Thus the similarity between the Europeans' own deeds and those of which they accuse the Inuits (kidnapping) is explained away with the affirmation that the English are utterly unlike these savages when it comes to table manners. The "savagery" of the Inuits, now completely unlike the "civil" and "honorable" behavior of the Englishmen, justifies colonial violence; the responsibility for aggression is displaced onto its victims. Such acts of projection may be regarded as one of the central strategies of colonial discourse (Hulme 1986, 85). For the English, to admit any responsibility for the mass suicide of the Inuits would have produced a conflict with the overriding

interest to settle in their lands. Following this interlude, the English take what they find in the deserted tents.

Cannibalism, far from relating to any distinct ethnic group, is here allied with the ideology of savagism, the medieval set of ideas and images for defining cultural otherness along the lines of strange clothing, eating habits, and so on (see White 1978, chapter 7; and Pagden 1982). And again, as in Chanca, the assumed cannibalism of the natives provides a free ticket for stealing their possessions.

The passages from both Dr. Chanca and Best exhibit another trait of the mixing of different ideologemes within the same discursive strategy: not only is the idea of cannibalism now attached to those people who presumably eat their enemies, as it was in Columbus, but it also refers to the practice of eating one's own dead. At the same time, Best echoes Columbus in emphasizing the ferocity (the "ravenesse . . . disposition") of the Inuits' food practice. His account seems to be inspired by both the Caribbean ideologeme of cannibalism and the semantic tradition of the older trope of anthropophagy, which was still current in Europe as a just reason for conquest even as cannibalism began to absorb and replace it.<sup>25</sup> The change of ideological practice becomes apparent from comparing Best's account with Edmund Spenser's tract in support of English colonial policy in Ireland, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596). As has often been noted, the colonization of Ireland was in many respects the precursor of that of North America. Spenser writes about the Irish rebels who after a famine came "[out] of euerie Corner of the woods and glinnes. . . . Crepinge for the vppon their handes for their leggs Coulede not beare them, they loked like Anotomies of deathe, they spake like ghostes Cryinge out of their graues, they did eate the dead Carrions, happie wheare they Coulede finde them, Yea and one another sone after, in so muche as the verye carkasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves" (Spenser 1949, 158).<sup>26</sup>

Eating the cadavers of one's own dead countrymen counted as the worst offense against Christianity and civility. And the savagery of civility's enemies traditionally provided the primary justification for appropriating their lands. As the examples have shown so far, distinct qualities of Irish anthropophagy (especially eating of the dead) that cannot be found in Columbus were later added to its Caribbean variant.<sup>27</sup>



That variant has left its imprint in further English texts about America again exclusively in the form of "common" or secondhand knowledge. Thus John Sparke, reporting on Hawkins's 1564 slave-trading trip to the Caribbean, writes that the fleet "came to an Island of the *Cannybals*, called *Sancta Dominica*" (Sparke 1589, 529). Apparently well read in Spanish texts, he comments: "The *Cannybals* of that Island, and also others adiacent, are the moste desperate warriors that are in the Indias, by the *Spaniards* report, who are neuer able to conquer them, and they are molested by them not a little, when they are driven to water there in any of those Islands." In the margin we find Hakluyt's advice: "Cannybals exceeding cruell, and to be avoided" (529). Sparke knows gruesome stories of a Spanish caravel that landed in Dominica, was set upon by the "Inhabitants, who cutte their cable in the halser, whereby they were driuen a shoare, and so taken by them, and eaten." A French ship had to fight against cannibals for two days on "Granado." And if Hawkin's crew had not landed "vpon the desertest place in all the Island, we could not haue missed, but should haue bene greatly troubled by them, by all the *Spaniards* reportes, who make them Deuils in respect of men."

The inhabitants of the adjoining island are of the very opposite character ("gentle and tractable"), whereas the next island, Tortuga, is haunted by the worst of all, a group of "Caribes [who] were very importunate to haue [the English] come a shore." But fortunately Hawkins did not have any more trifles to trade with, "for these were no such kinde people as wee tooke them to bee, but more diuelish a thousand partes, and are eaters and deuourers of any man they catche, as it was afterwarde declared vnto vs at Burboroata" by the Spaniards. These also tell of a caravel whose crew was called ashore by the Caribs. Baited by the "cannibals," who lured them ashore with gold "with the which the Spaniardes [were] moued, suspecting no deceite at all," a few of the Spaniards were taken "and were presently eaten" (53031). The Caribs, Sparke concludes, are "bloudsuckers both of Spaniards, Indians, and all that light in their laps, not sparing their owne countrymen if they can conueniently come by them." The greatest trouble is that they "haue more abundaunce of gold then all the Spaniards haue." But once in two years the Spaniards "get a piece [of gold] from them, which afterwards they keepe sure inough" (531).

Throughout these passages Sparke combines diligence in copying Spanish cannibalistic lore with an unflinching capacity for exposing

its ideological dimension. His text embodies more than any of Columbus's the intricate relationship between the discoverers' material greed and their paranoia of being eaten. Like the account of Best, Sparke's reference to the Spaniards' lack of "deceit" contains a reversal of the colonial relationship: after all, it was the Europeans who deceived the Indians with bells and toys in order to kidnap or enslave them and to acquire their gold.

When he wants to relate their trip to Florida (to witness the arcadian lifestyle of Laudonnière's people), Sparke is fully carried away by Spanish tales and now also reveals one of his sources: The "people of the cape of *Florida*," he writes,

are of more sauage and fierce nature, and more valiant then any of the rest . . . and of theyr cruelty mention is made in the booke of the Decades, of a fryer [*sic*], who taking vpon him to persuade the people to subiection, was by them taken with his skinne cruelly pulled ouer his eares, and his flesh eaten.

In these Islandes they being a shoare, founde a dead man dried in a maner whole, with other heads and bodyes of men, so that those sorts of men are eaters of the flesh of men, as well as the Canibals. (538) 28

The trait that combines Sparks's different groups of cannibals, besides their common love for human flesh, is their fierce resistance to the conquerors' efforts to subject them. The signifier *cannibal* appears to have assembled various signifieds in the English colonial discourse of the late sixteenth century; it could at once refer to ethnic group, valiant warriors, and people whose dress and diet ranged on the negative side of the European aesthetic imagination. The eating of human flesh, we could say, was metonymically evoked by those other traits.

A fine example of this sort of displacement has been provided by Miles Phillips, a sailor who had been marooned together with Ingram by Hawkins in 1568. Writing about his adventurous trip through Mexico, Phillips relates how he and his comrades were "suddenly . . . assaulted by the Indians, a warlike kinds of people, which are in a maner as Canibals, although they do not feed vpon mans flesh as Canibals do. These people are called *Chichemici*, and they vse to weare theyr haire long, euen downs to their knees, they doe also colour their faces greene, yellow, red and blew, which

maketh them to seeme very ougly and terrible to beholde" (Phillips 1589, 567). For Columbus, the "ugliness" of the Ciguayos, their long hair and painted faces, had still been an indicator that they were man-eaters. What makes the Chichimecs *like* cannibals are precisely the same qualities, their ferocity and fear-inspiring appearance. By 1589 the trope of cannibalism seems to have been so obtrusive that its application could not be resisted, even if it was negated at the same time. What the Chichimecs share with the Caribs is their warlike disposition and savage appearance.

Phillips obviously is confused, however, by other aspects of their behavior that makes them unfit for the category "cannibal." Above all, they show great interest in the sailors' clothes, then important codes of a civilized cultural identity. They take away all the Englishmen's colored clothes, leaving only the black ones (Phillips 1589, 567). This small incident shows how an ideogeme makes its automatic appearance, as demanded by discursive dictate, only to be questioned at the same time and to be completely undermined by the report of the Indians' actual behavior. 29 With the quasi-cannibals clad in fanciful sailors' clothes and the Europeans continuing their march through Mexico naked or uniformly dressed in (ugly) black, the signifiers of civilization and savagery are reversed: a very troubling incident. Most significantly, however, the passage discloses the complicated semantics that were connected with the term *cannibal* from the very beginning: the comparison is evoked, if negatively, by the outward signs of the warlike disposition of the natives, not their food practice. Phillips's "stuttering" in fact pays tribute to the politics underlying the initial inscription of the term: the Spaniards' actual fear of native resistance and their unconscious fear of cultural disintegration translated into the ideology of native bestiality.

The ideological instability of the artificial distinction between cannibals and innocent Indians becomes most apparent where the natives are allowed to express their own version of this dichotomy. Dr. Chanca relates the words of some of Columbus's Carib prisoners who tell the Spaniards that the "peaceful" Indians, who do not know how to navigate by sea as the Caribs do, still "use bows as they do, and if by chance they are able to take those who come to raid them, they also eat them as do the Caribs" (Chanca 1988, 40). According to Spanish reports of the testimony of the cannibals themselves, then,

cannibalism appears less to have been a culinary custom associated with any distinct ethnic group than perhaps a general native Caribbean ideological practice for defining cultural otherness a practice not altogether dissimilar from that of the Europeans.

Nevertheless, the simplicity of the ideological distinction, based as it is on a logic of opposition, succeeded over any insight into the complexity of social reality. Its appeal can be traced throughout the European literature of travel and discovery, not even excluding twentieth-century scholarly texts. Samuel Eliot Morison, setting out in 1971 to relate the death of Giovanni Verazzano, describes in the manner of an eyewitness how the Italian discoverer approaches a Caribbean island: "Unfortunately, the island where he chose to call probably Guadaloupe was inhabited by no gentle tribe of Indians, but by ferocious man-eating Caribs." Verazzano and his brother (on whose testimony the story is based) row to the shore: "A crowd of natives waited at the water's edge, licking their chops at the prospect of a human lunch. . . . Giovanni innocently waded ashore. . . . The Caribs, expert at murder, overpowered and killed the great navigator, then cut up and ate his still quivering body whilst his brother looked on helplessly, seeing the 'sand ruddy with fraternal blood' " (Morison 1971, 315).

The quote is Ramusio's, based on a poem by Giulio Giovio, *Storia poetica*, which is in turn based on the report of Verazzano's brother (315). The licking chops and the quivering body, however, are Morison's additions. Morison does not hesitate to further romanticize the report on a colonial encounter, which is already based on dubious evidence. To speak of an "innocent" colonizer and natives "expert at murder," moreover, is possible only by translating the story from the context of sixteenth-century colonialism into that of modern civil law. Morison subsequently somewhat doubts the veracity of the tale, but this does not prevent him in the end from trying to locate the exact place of the "tragedy" and pointing out several "shoal areas" where the "murder" may have been committed (325).

By way of summary we can say that the trope of native cannibalism was automatically deployed whenever natives resisted being "discovered," and it was usually associated with other cultural traits such as "nakedness," strange eating habits, painted faces, and unfamiliar burial customs. Rhetorically, it often appears in the vicinity of accounts of the Europeans' desire for gold and of European acts of

aggression. In this regard David Ingram's garbled report, which forms the basis, or perhaps even the outcome, of Peckham's envisioned colonial strategy, is ideologically close to Columbus's *Journal*. But we have also seen that even the colonial texts themselves tend to betray, at least to a critical reader, the ideological instability of the trope once its direct use as legitimating practice was forgotten. It seems that Richard Hakluyt sensed the trope's built-in capacity for disintegration. In any case he omitted any reference to it in his own texts unlike his compatriots George Peckham and Richard Hakluyt the Elder, who did not mind harping on the Spanish theme.

It is the latter who gives an acute delineation of colonialist logic in his promotional tract "Inducements to the Lykinge of the Voyage" of 1584, and it should be hardly surprising for us that the manuscript of this text was found bound together with a manuscript copy of Ingram's "Relation" (Quinn 1979, 3:61). Hakluyt Sr. admonishes his readers:

Yf we fynde any kinges readye to defends their Tirratoryes by warre and the Countrey populous desieringe to expell us that seeks but juste and lawfull Traffique, then by reason the Ryvers be lardge and deepe and we lordes of navigacion, and they without shippinge, we armed and they naked, and at continuall warres one with another, we maye by the ayde of those Ryvars joyne with this kinge here or with that kinge there at our pleasure and soe with a fewe men be revenged of any wrongs offered by them and consequentlie maye yf we will conquers fortifye and plante in soyles moste sweets, moste pleasaunte, moste fertill and strounge. And in the ends to bringe them all in subjection or scyvellitie for yt is well knowen they have bynne contented to submytte them selves and all that which they possesse to suche as hathe defended them againste there Enemyes speciallie againste the canibales. (Hakluyt the Elder 1979a, 63)

With unparalleled ease Hakluyt moves from "lawfull Traffique" to unlawful conquest and plantation in sweet soils. The legal difficulty embedded in this rhetorical move can be solved only by drawing the cannibals out of the magic box of colonial myths in order to justify English presence by evoking the indispensable function of the avenging English knights (Hulme 1986, 16566). English colonial logic, like that of the Spaniards, was a logic of "just defense" against native aggression. But the defense in turn rested on the previous "content submission" of another native party that was apparently

incapable of defending itself. One of the main functions of colonial discourse was to produce two native groups Caribs and Arawaks, "dogs" and "doves" that would fit the ideological script of "just defense."

A slightly altered version of Hakluyt's passage is found in his second set of "Inducements" (1585), but significantly the "canibales" are now dropped from the argument (Hakluyt the Elder 1979b, 65). But it should be remembered that Hakluyt's imperial plans were not drafted for public consumption. The general readership was served by the tracts of Peckham and Ingram, which, as we have seen, knew how to exploit the popular fascination with the topic of cannibalism.

George Peckham, who apparently did not want to run the risk of exclusively relying on the trope of cannibalism, also tried to imagine a colonial setting without cannibals. He considered the possibility that the "good" Indians might themselves try to repel the colonists from their shores. "Then," he writes, "in such a case I holde it no breach of equitie for the Christians to defende themselves, to pursue reuenge with force, and to do whatsoeuer is necessarie for the attayning of their safety" (Peckham 1589, 706). If the English colonists' right to stay (which must have been acquired either by the Indians' acceptance of their chivalric gesture or by their rejection of it) should be questioned by the natives, the settlers may "by strong hand pursue [them], subdue them, take possession of theyr Townes, Cities, or Villages," especially if the savages should choose to "returne to their horrible idolatrie . . . and continue their wicked custome of most vnnaturall sacrificing of humane creatures" (706). Peckham's disregard for geographical and ethnic difference pays handsome dividends here. While the possibilities of the Caribbean discourse of cannibalism have been exhausted at an earlier stage, those provided by the mainland Aztecs' religious customs are awkwardly drawn out of the sleeve to show that aggression is never the practice of the colonists but always that of the natives themselves.

Peckham's reference to human sacrifice introduces us to another intertextual field, which will be further examined in chapter 4. So far it can be said that the discourse of English colonialism was strongly indebted to its Spanish predecessor but also bore traces of the English discourse of the conquest of Ireland, and that the negotiation of the Spanish discursive model in English texts was complex and often contradictory, reflecting the complex political relationship

between the two rivaling colonial nation-states. Thus, although by 1583 the continent, especially France and the Netherlands, was flooded with anti-Spanish propaganda, the English propagandists' attitude toward Spain was ambivalent partly because Spain was not only regarded as a rival in colonial matters but also as an important precursor and a model of English colonial action and ideology.

Consequently, although Bartolomé de Las Casas's *Brevíssima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552) was published in an English translation in 1583 as *The Spanish Colonie*, and although the *leyenda negra* that it initiated had made its course in Europe well before that date, their reception by English propagandists was quite divided (see Maltby 1971). Peckham's tract pays much attention to the history of the Spanish conquest but omits any reference to Spanish cruelties. Again and again, the deeds of Cortés, Pizarro, and Balboa are evoked with unconcealed admiration, and Peckham significantly establishes a direct link between the Spanish *conquista* and the conquest of Ireland in 1171 by the Welshman Richard Strongbow, "which history our owne chronicles do witnesse: And why should we be dismayed more then were the Spanyards in the maine firme land of *America*" (Peckham 1589, 715). But Peckham's own tortuous collection of just reasons for conquest shows best that reference to a medieval precedent no longer sufficed in the age of the emergence of international law. Thus the glimpse toward Spain as a model appealed to the Catholic Peckham, who refrained from anti-Spanish rhetoric not least because of his confessional ties.

Probably for diplomatic reasons, the *leyenda negra* was publicly exploited in England hardly at all in the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, it made an appearance in such unofficial documents as the younger Richard Hakluyt's private outline of English colonization to the queen, the "Discourse of Western Planting" of 1584. Contrary to the geographical vagueness of Peckham's text, on which it draws, the mapping of the "Discourse" is quite explicit: it concentrates on the area under Spanish control, Mexico and the Caribbean, which was also the main goal of English privateering voyages by Drake and Hawkins. Hakluyt's main argument is that the American gold could much more easily be acquired by replacing the Spaniards in the areas to be exploited than by more or less successfully pillaging their treasure fleets. He does not take any pains to resort to the rhetoric of

cannibalism but makes extensive use of the trope of chivalry sketched above.

Hakluyt's tract is guided by considerations of realpolitik: by joining the Chichimecs and the Cimarrons (fugitive slaves from Africa who had formerly worked in the gold mines) against the Spaniards, England could easily obtain the rule over Mexico and the Caribbean islands. Since the Indians and the slaves were revolting already without English help, the English had better hurry up and "put a foote in that enterprise." 31 Once the Spaniards were overthrown, he argues, it would be a child's game to keep the former allies in check. Though operating with the ideologeme of chivalry, the "Discourse of Western Planting" does not draw any significant distinction between good and bad Indians. Hakluyt also studiously avoids the topic of cannibalism: quoting Ramusio, for example, he does mention Verazzano's unhappy end, but he omits the cannibalistic details that later inspired Morison's imagination (Hakluyt 1979, 104). Instead, the aggressor-victim dichotomy now applies to the relationship between Indians and Spaniards.

What can be witnessed in Hakluyt's document is a tactical adaptation or translation of an earlier discourse: the Columbian dualism is now aligned with the new political landscape, and here the rhetoric of the *leyenda negra* comes in handy. Ironically, the passages Hakluyt quotes from the *Brevissima relación* to shed negative light on the Spanish aggressors nicely tie in with the Spanish discourse tradition, which Hakluyt tries to escape. Quoting Las Casas, he writes:

Upon these lambes (meanings the Indians) so meke, so qualified and endewed of their maker . . . entred the spanishe, incontinent as they knew them, as wolves, as lyons, and as Tigres moste cruell of longe tyme famished: . . . they team them in peces, kill them, martir them, afflicts them, torments them and destroys them by straunge sortes of cruelties. . . . They entred into Townes, Burroughes, and villages sparing neither children, nor olde men, noyther women with childe, neither them that laye in, but they ripped their bellies and cut them in peces as if they had bene openings of lambes shutt up in their folde. . . . They mured commonly the Lordes and nobilitie in this fasshion, they made certen grates of perches laid on pitchforkes, and made a little fire underneathe to the intents that by little and little . . . they might give up the ghoste.



One time I sawe foure or five of the principall Lordes roasted and broyled upon these gredyrons: also I thincke that there were twoo or three of the said gredyrons, garnished with the like furniture. . . . The serjeant would not have them strangled, but . . . put to the fire until they were softly roasted after his desire. . . . they taughte their houndes, fierce dogss, to tear them in peces at the first viewe, and in the space that one might say a *Credo* assailed and devoured an Indian as if it had bene a swine. (Hakluyt 1979, 9394)

The slaughterhouse imagery of Las Casas is so strong that Hakluyt thinks it wise to add in brackets who is meant by "these lambes so make." Figuratively speaking, the vehicle of the metaphor, stemming from the language of pastoralism, is in danger of devouring the tenor, the account of the torture of the Indians. The *Brevissima relación* in fact abounds in such a "passionate but reductive shepherding," as Mary Campbell calls it (Campbell 1987, 251). For us today, Las Casas's metaphorical practice may appear ironic in the face of his reputation as the defender of the Indians' *human* rights. Rhetorically, the similes and metaphors in this passage appear counterproductive to Las Casas's apparent intention to evoke compassion in his readers. His price for doing so is to dehumanize the victims himself. 32

Most interesting, however, is the way in which the description of the Spanish tortures ties in with the imagery of cannibalism. Whereas the Spaniards prepare the "food" until "softly roasted after [their] desire," it is the privilege of the dogs (who had before occasionally lent their teeth and faces to the cannibals) to devour the sheepish natives. Hakluyt, by relying on the metaphorical suggestiveness of his Spanish source (whether consciously or unconsciously is impossible to determine), could dispense with any further comment of his own that would demonize the Spaniards and inferiorize the Indians. Clearly, the passages from the *Brevissima relación* have an ideological function in Hakluyt's text different from that in Las Casas's original. By being transported to a rhetorical context of colonial expansion, the original rhetoric of compassion for the victims of Spanish colonization has now mutated into an instrument of England's colonial policy.

Already in Las Casas's text, though, the Columbian dualism of good Indians and bad cannibals is replaced with the dualism of good and universally lamblike Indians and cannibalistic Spaniards.<sup>33</sup> Hakluyt, always reluctant to tamper with his texts and preferring to

let them speak for themselves, only had to remove the passage to its new ideological frame of reference. Thus one of the most important documents of early modern humanism came to serve the interests of early modern nationalism and colonialism. Hakluyt's borrowing from the *Brevissima relación*, as well as his own exposition of a possible English colonial policy, reinforces the conclusion to be drawn from earlier texts: the Indians would be "lambs" to the English, as they had been to the Spaniards before.

It is one of the main interests of this book to show that the English, while condemning Spanish action (often in private), simultaneously regarded it as a model to be imitated. The difference between English colonial schemes and Spanish colonial practice was at this stage not significant at all least of all from the natives' point of view. Regardless of their later techniques of colonization, which differed from those of Spain, the English ideologists were anxious to learn from their enemy's experience; this becomes evident in their intense use of Spanish written sources (see my discussion of Raleigh in chapter 3).

While rival European nations were thus engaged in rhetorically recasting the drama of dispossession to the other's disadvantage, the European play of identity and difference gave little room to the Indians for expressing their view of the matter. If native voices appear in European texts at all, they usually may at best be regarded as moments of instability within the monologue of the European masters of discourse. More often, as we will see in the following chapters, the "recording" of native voices was used as a rhetorical tool by colonial power to dissemble just conquest by native consent.

A fine example of ideological slippage may be found in the apocryphal *Letter to Soderini* attributed to Amerigo Vespucci (1504). As in other cases, the falseness of the document does not weaken but rather reinforces its function as an expression, but also a parody, of a European sense of identity:

Many people came to see us, and were astonished at our appearance and the whiteness of our skins. They asked whence we came, and we gave them to understand that we came from heaven, and that we were travelling to see the world, and they believed it. In this land we put up a font of baptism, and an infinite number of people were baptised, and they called us, in their language, *Carabi*, which is as much as to say, "men of great wisdom." (Vespucci 1894, 17)

After several weeks on the Atlantic Ocean, the travelers' skin was probably about as "white" as their origin was divine. Together with the importance given to the Christian ritual of baptism, these markers belong to a whole set of cultural codes by which Europeans distinguished themselves from non-Europeans and which here culminate in the highest expression of cultural superiority: the assertion of the Europeans' superior knowledge ("great wisdom"). The Indians' affirmation of the elevated intellectual status of the travelers is only disturbed by the native word they use for expressing it, *Carabi*, an anagram of *Cariba*. The greater the distance from the scene of action, it seems, the greater is the probability of discursive disintegration. Vespucci's "slip of the pen" evokes Montaigne's famous claim that the Europeans were by far the worse cannibals; it evokes as well the fact that the "people of great wisdom" symbolically devoured the body of their god each Sunday. 34

In their aspiration to become godlike themselves and to be received as such by the people to be subdued, as the following chapter shows, Europeans were haunted by the fear of their own bestiality, a fear that could be banned only by the constant production of barbarous others.

## Chapter 2

### Moteczuhzoma and the White God

#### The Genealogy of a Colonialist Myth

It is a central thesis of this book that the early colonial history of England in North America cannot be understood in its historical complexity without consideration of its discursive indebtedness to the colonial history of Spain in the Caribbean and Mexico. The separation of these events is the result of nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalistic historiography and its attending disciplinary logic. It is not affirmed by the documents of the sixteenth century itself. Rather, the collections of colonial narratives by Hakluyt and later Purchas represent the emergence of precisely that nationalist and colonialist recasting of history, which reached one of its peaks during the Cold War and still widely determines the scholarly discourse about the early modern period of colonial expansion.

At its emergence in the sixteenth century, however, the discourse of English colonialism is solidly intertwined with its Spanish predecessor and rival. The texts of Hakluyt and others are an attempt to keep the Spanish presence in them at bay, but with little success. The nationalist historiography to which both Hakluyt and Miller profess largely depends on excluding any reference to the shaping influence of foreign countries and their national myths. By contrast, the present book seeks to elucidate precisely the "impurity" of colonial history, as well as some of its ideological continuities.

The ideology of nationhood is usually tied to an ideology of pure origins without foreign admixture. The construction of such an originating act was comparatively easy for the Puritans in North America, where the conquering nation was faced with oral indigenous cultures that were additionally decimated by disease. Without

the danger of native discursive intervention, North America could be declared vacant and its population nonexistent.

But such a move was unthinkable with regard to Mexico. The Spaniards there encountered populous cultures, which they considered as civilized. Evidently, the encounter with a civilized antagonist required a different tale of origins from the one later used by the Puritans (and examined in chapter 5) of America as *vacuum domicilium*. The Cortesian counterpart of the Madoc story is such a tale, and for reasons to be explored in this chapter it was much more successful in scholarship than Hakluyt's and Peckham's adaptation of the Welsh chronicle. One of the reasons for the persistence in modern scholarship of the legend of the return of Quetzalcoatl lies in the belief that this legend comes from the mouth of the Aztec ruler himself. In other words, the myth owes its survival to a scholarly tradition of taking colonial accounts of native speeches at face value of assuming that the history of a subject people was preserved in reliable form in the documents of the colonizers. Faced with such a situation, a critique of the colonial discourse deployed in the Spanish documents obviously has to include a discussion of the process of scholarly reception.

But the topos of the Native American speech, on which so much of the authority of the ancient ruler story seems to depend, already appears in the *Journal* of Columbus. My discussion of the *Second Letter* of Cortés is therefore preceded by a short detour to this important document of discursive transition.

### Cannibals or Gods?

In the *Journal* Columbus writes of an event that occurred while he was exploring the coast of Cuba. On 3 December 1492 he visits a native village whose inhabitants instantly take to flight. He accordingly assures his own people that ten Spaniards could easily match ten thousand Indians in battle, confiscates the Indians' weapons, and returns to his boats, whereupon the natives gather along the sloops and their leader delivers a speech. In his *Journal* Columbus, not understanding a word, bases his interpretation of the event on nonverbal evidence: "the other Indians from time to time raised their hands to the sky and gave a great shout. The Admiral thought that they were reassuring him and that they were pleased by his coming" (Columbus 1989, 195). But the gestures are misleading: "but he saw

the face of the Indian he had with him change and turn yellow as wax, and he trembled greatly, saying by signs that the Admiral must go away, out of the river, because the Indians wanted to kill them" (195). Danger is averted only when the Indian interpreter convinces the hostile natives of the Spaniards' military superiority. Thus, although the contents of the first Native American speech have not come down to us, the context shows that it hardly resembled the one attributed to Motecuhzoma.

Columbus's misleading interpretation of the Indians' gestures is based on his former experience with more "peaceful" natives. On 14 October Columbus wrote down his famous account of how the inhabitants of San Salvador reacted to his visit:

And . . . I soon saw . . . people, who all came to the beach calling to us and giving thanks to God. Some of them brought us water; others, other things to eat; others, when they saw that I did not care to go ashore, threw themselves into the sea swimming and came to us, and we understood that they were asking us if we had come from the heavens. And one old man got into the ship's boat, and others in loud voices called to all the men and women: Come see the men who came from the heavens. Bring them something to eat and drink. Many men came, and many women, each one with something, giving thanks to God, throwing themselves on the ground; and they raised their hands to heaven, and afterward they called to us in loud voices to come ashore. (7375)

The description of the scene is immediately followed by the remark that the harbor at San Salvador might well contain all the ships of Christendom and was a fit site for a fortress, as well as by the first account of a kidnapping in the service of linguistic communication. Columbus then boasts that if Ferdinand and Isabella should wish to have all the Arawaks brought to Castile or to have them enslaved right where they were now, he would only need five hundred men to subjugate them (7576).

Columbus's rendering of the two events have one common feature: in both cases the Indians raise their hands to heaven and shout. But the similarity of the Indians' behavior apparently does not point toward a similarity in their disposition toward the newcomers. Columbus assumes them to be "pleased by his coming" on 3 December but they are not, whereas on 14 October his identical assumption seems to be borne out by the hospitable treatment he receives.

Understandably, someone who does not understand a word of what is spoken and who is unfamiliar with the body language of a foreign culture may easily assign wrong interpretations to the signs he encounters. So what should strike us about the two accounts from the *Journal* is not that Columbus on 3 December misinterprets native gestures whose meaning he believes to know from an earlier encounter but rather that he could have known on 14 October what the gestures and shouts of the Indians meant. If on 3 December he misunderstood words and gestures whose meaning he believed he knew, then perhaps his assertions to have understood the Indians' words on 14 October, after only two days in the Caribbean, were a little rash.

It is evident, I think, that Columbus's assertion that the Indians regarded the Spaniards as people from heaven partly resulted from the superimposition of his expectations on what the Indians "actually" said. (We do not know what they said: perhaps they regarded the Spaniards as *cariba*.) Even if the Arawaks believed the Europeans to have come from heaven, which is possible after all, they of course had a very different concept of heaven than the Christian one with which Columbus was familiar.

Columbus's claim that the natives believed him to be of divine origin assumes a new quality if it is seen in connection with his imperial remarks that immediately follow upon his report of the encounter on 14 October. To be sure, someone who is greeted and treated as a god by the indigenous population does not have to ask permission to build a military fortress and harbor. Regardless of what the Indians really said, then, Columbus must have been greatly interested in being welcomed as a godlike creature. By 3 December, of course, such a dream of the natives' submissive acceptance of European superiority had begun to dwindle and to make room for the more complex Columbian anthropology of chivalric defense that I have sketched in chapter 1.

Columbus gives a similar version of the incident of 14 October in his *Letter to Santangel*, which he wrote on his return to Spain and which circulated in print in all major European languages shortly thereafter. Contrary to the *Journal*, which he kept almost daily, the *Letter* represents a retrospective summary of events. Its tone is largely promotional: the beauty of the land matches the weakness of the "naked" Indians, who are described as "marvellously timorous," "incurably timid," "guileless" and "generous" (Columbus 1988,

69). 1 Having no creed, they are free for conversion, since the only thing they believe in is "that power and good are in the heavens, and they are very firmly convinced that I, with these ships and men, came from the heavens, and in this belief they everywhere received me after they had overcome their fear" (10). In other words, Columbus conveniently fills a religious void; within the Indians' unspecified frame of belief he claims a position that in Christian thought is reserved for God. Of course, if the Indians chose to believe that "power and good" now came from Columbus, it would have been unwise of him to contradict. But on the other hand, as we have seen, the statement that he met with this attitude in all places is a slight smoothing over of the insecurities recorded in the (unpublished) *Journal*.

Columbus quickly assures his readers that the Arawaks' confusion of the Spaniards with supernatural beings does not indicate a lack of intelligence, "but it is because they have never seen people clothed or ships of such a kind." This clarification is then followed by the account of the event also mentioned in the *Journal* on 14 October:

And as soon as I arrived in the Indies, in the first island which I found, I took by force some of them, in order that they might learn and give me information of that which there is in those parts, and so it was that they soon understood us, and we them, either by speech or signs, and they have been very serviceable. I still take them with me, and they are always assured [están de propósito] that I come from Heaven, for all the intercourse which they have had with me [por mucha conversación que ayan avido conmigo]; and they were the first to announce this wherever I went, and the others went running from house to house and to the neighbouring towns, with loud cries of "Come! Come to see the people from Heaven!" (Columbus 1988, 10)

Most remarkably, perhaps, there is a difference in chronology between the *Journal* and the *Letter*: the sequence between the interpretation of Indian voices and the capture of interpreters is reversed in the *Letter*, which quite frankly presents the words of the Indians as a result of the interpreters' intervention. (Generally, the language problem that controls much of the *Journal's* account is suppressed in the *Letter*.)

In essence, Columbus here describes a process similar to that which we have already witnessed in his epigone Amerigo Vespucci:



"They asked whence we came, and we gave them to understand that we came from heaven, and that we were travelling to see the world, *and they believed it*" (Vespucci 1894, 17; emphasis added). While the argument to be derived from Vespucci's text would clearly locate the origin of the "men from heaven" stories within European discourse itself, the analysis of the two texts by Columbus suggests that the belief is at least the product of intercultural communication "intercourse" (*conversación*), in the terms used in the *Letter*. But there is no possible way of finding out whether Columbus had picked up pieces of native Arawak mythology. It seems more reasonable to assume that there may have been a common ideological ground, however small, on which his expectations and the interpretation of his presence by the Indians could meet. Although we can be sure that the Arawaks did not say what Columbus makes them say, it is important to acknowledge that they surely did say *something*. Only by problematizing, or aggravating, the textual appearances of native speeches can we arrive at some understanding of a dialogic dimension within the seemingly monological European discourse; only thus can we gain insight into processes of ideological *mestizaje*.

Just as we cannot know for sure to what degree Columbus was involved in the production of the men-from-heaven story, we likewise cannot reconstruct the original native version of the colonial encounter. Arawak historical memory was completely oral and thus subject to permanent alterations and quick appropriation of new events into an existing mythical structure. This process is preserved at a certain stage in the earliest European text about Arawak mythology, Fray Ramón Pané's *Relación acerca de las antigüedades de los Indios*. First printed in 1571, the manuscript of this protoethnographic work on Arawak life and beliefs was probably completed as early as 1498, only six years after the first voyage of Columbus. Pané had actually learned Arawak, and his text is the result of his conversations with the Indian. He of course regarded the natives' tales as pure fables of minor quality and not as a form of historical memory at all, and he complains about their lack of writing, the seeming incoherence of their stories, and the contradictory versions they gave him (Pané 1984, 24, 26).<sup>2</sup> But then his lack of insight into the Arawak memory system may give us cause to trust his assertion that, because of the chronological chaos he thought he encountered, he could not do otherwise than write down everything exactly as he was told (26).

In chapter 25, which deals "of the things which they affirm having been told by two caciques," we learn of a prophecy that had allegedly predicted the arrival of the Spaniards. One of the caciques, after a dream conversation with a local deity, or *cemi*, is said to have told his people

that those who will still be alive after his death will enjoy their dominions for only a short time because clothed people will come to their land who will rule over them and kill them, and many will die from hunger. But at first they believed that those [people] must be the cannibals; later, however, considering that those [cannibals] never do anything but rob them and run, they believed that the people whom the *cemi* has been talking about must be someone else. Thus today they believe that he meant the Admiral [Columbus] and the people who came with him. [48, my translation)

The "cannibals" clearly emerge as the rather harmless local "others" from this text (in a footnote the modern editor states that Pané in fact meant the "Caribs" [79]). They are not depicted as man-eaters at all but even erroneously occupy that site within the prophecy which would turn out to belong to the Spaniards. The passage illustrates how the meaning of the *cemi*'s prophecy is constituted retrospectively, how the prophetic frame is adapted to new events: "must be the cannibals . . . must be someone else . . . he meant the Admiral." It may remind us of Columbus's comment that the Arawaks at first thought the Spaniards to be cannibals as well (Columbus 1989, 167) and even of the "false" assertion of the Vespucci letter that "they called us . . . *Carabi*" [Vespucci 1894, 17).

All of this points to the possibility that the Arawak term *cariba*, besides its probable meanings indicated in the previous chapter, may have been a relatively open ideological category that was flexible enough to comprise any form of cultural difference and to furnish any foreigner with a preliminary identity until the question could be settled.<sup>3</sup> Hermeneutically speaking, such an ad hoc identification would seem to respond to a universal cognitive need for familiarizing unfamiliar phenomena. The ensuing difference between cannibals and Spaniards that Pané's informants emphasize (Spaniards kill, cannibals steal) must be regarded as the immediate effect of cultural contact rather than giving us a sense of the Indians' initial perception of the Spaniards or of their prophetic expectation before their arrival.<sup>4</sup> The representation of that perception is itself shaped in the

light of subsequent events not altogether unlike the way in which Prince Madoc's alleged trip to America was shaped in the light of British colonial reality in 1589. Thus the Arawaks' insight that the strangers "must be someone else" is already the result of their colonial experience and of their inclusion of past events into a mythical framework that constantly adapts to the needs of the present. In agreement with this, the strangers announced by the Arawak *cemi* do not come from heaven, nor do they represent "power and good," nor are they "people of great wisdom" innocently traveling to see the world. On the contrary, they are so brutal and death-bringing that the local cannibals appear harmless in comparison.

In short, the passage from Pané can be said to represent the Arawak equivalent of the discursive conflict within Columbus's *Journal* between the semantics of orientalism and those of savagism explored by Peter Hulme (see the previous chapter). But above all, the *cemi*'s prophecy is the response of the colonized people to the *Journal*'s complacent tale of heavenly origin.

I have so far tried to show that statements that the inhabitants of the Caribbean islands believed in the divine origin of the Spaniards rest on rather shaky foundations. Below the smooth surface of such widely accepted historical "facts" we can glimpse the ideological conditions of their emergence: the textual struggles and ambivalences arising from the incompatibility of preconceived ideas and encountered reality.

The theoretical conclusion to be drawn from my previous discussion is that since every account of the cultural clash is already a product of that clash, it is impossible to rely, as Mary Helms and other historians of the structuralist school tend to do, on the "initial interpretations of and to Europeans by native observers," which "can provide excellent ethnographic data relevant to traditional indigenous perceptions of people and things from afar" (Helms 1988, 172). The problem we face is precisely how to separate these "data," which colonial texts obviously contain, from the ideological context in which they are embedded; how to distill any "genuine" (173) information from textual sources as uneven as colonial records. Evidently these texts, blurred as they are by cognitive limits and ideological bias, cannot offer us any simple or direct access to the native reality of sixteenth-century America. The native mythologies they claim to

describe, though certainly not consciously invented, are still to a large degree the product of European myths of the golden age, of savagery, of ancient rulership. But this obvious dilemma should not prevent us now from trying to subject the texts about the conquest of Mexico to a critical and skeptical reading.

### A Novel Form of Justice

#### The Burning of Qualpopoca

The *conquista* of Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec empire and seat of the ruling dynasty of the Mexica, has been the subject of innumerable historical studies. Its textualization in the documents of Cortés, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, the *Historia general* of Bernardino de Sahagún, and others has recently attracted the attention of literary theorists as well. The chronology of events is quickly recaptured: setting out from Cuba in 1519, the expedition reached the mainland, fought a few battles with the coastal inhabitants, founded the city of Veracruz, and then, contrary to the orders of the Cuban governor, Diego Velázquez, moved inland toward Tenochtitlán. Forming alliances with "friendly" Indian nations and defeating those who offered resistance in bloody battles, of which the massacre of six thousand Indians at Cholula is the most outstanding example, the Spaniards soon gathered a huge army of Indian warriors, especially Tlaxcalans, who grasped the opportunity to free themselves from the political shackles of the Mexica. The army arrived in Tenochtitlán in 1520 and was greeted by Motecuhzoma, who offered them his hospitality. With the aim of overthrowing the Mexica rulership, Cortés arrested Motecuhzoma and then hurried back toward the coast to meet the army of Pánfilo Narvaez, sent by Velázquez to punish him for his disobedience. After having defeated Narvaez he returned to Tenochtitlán. There the Spaniards were put under siege in the royal palace by the Mexica the result of a massacre carried out by Pedro de Alvarado's troops in Cortés's absence and of the subsequent Aztec revolt. Motecuhzoma, the imprisoned ruler, was killed while trying to appease his people, and the Spaniards left the city in flight in the so-called *noche triste*. Back in Tlaxcala, Cortés rearranged his forces, entered new alliances, and then put Tenochtitlán under siege until the inhabitants gave up and the Aztec capital was taken in 1521.

The *Second Letter*, and this is important, was written by Cortés while the Spaniards were licking their wounds at Tlaxcala, after their defeat in the *noche triste*. The letter was dispatched to King Charles I of Spain (only recently crowned Holy Roman Emperor Charles V), who does not seem to have paid much attention to its contents but was probably pleased with the treasure that accompanied it. He was busy suppressing the *comunero* revolt in Spain (1520/22), which hardly allowed him time to dwell on Mexican splendor.

The *Second Letter* of Cortés is perhaps the most compelling demonstration among early colonial texts of how narrative and action interlock in the extension of European power to America. <sup>5</sup> Making frequent use of the narrative techniques of flashback and foreshadowing, Cortés carefully prepares the royal reader for the central scene: Motecuhzoma's transfer of the Aztec land title to himself, representing King Charles. During one of the most astounding colonial encounters in history, Motecuhzoma here welcomes Cortés as the descendant of a foreign leader who had once ruled the people of Mexico but had left them when they began to disregard his orders. "And we have always held that those who descended from him would come and conquer this land and take us as their vassals," says Motecuhzoma. "So because of the place from which you claim to come, namely, from where the sun rises, and the things you tell us of the great lord or king who sent you here, we believe and are certain that he is our natural lord, especially as you say that he has known of us for some time." Little wonder that Cortés "replied to all he said as I thought most fitting, especially in making him believe that Your Majesty was he whom they were expecting" (Cortés 1986, 8587; cf. Cortés 1985, 11617).

As a textual event, the imperial donation is crucially interrelated with the information that Cortés claims to have previously given to Motecuhzoma and that obviously contained a tactical lie: of course Charles had not known of the Aztec empire "for some time"; he only learned of its existence through the letters of Cortés. In the same text Cortés claims that he had presented himself to the Indians in the Valley of Mexico as an emissary of Charles with explicit orders to advance all the way to the capital and that he was thus unable to return, even if he wanted to. The Mexicans, Cortés claims, responded to the news by declaring their allegiance and servitude. Later in the *Second Letter* Cortés takes the Mexicans' alleged willingness to

cooperate with the conquerors as a sign that "*ab initio* they had known Your Sacred Majesty to be their king and rightful lord" (Cortés 1986, 55, 7980, 113).

It is obvious that Cortés is fabricating a story of original Spanish overlordship over Mexico in which neither the Mexicans nor Charles could possibly have believed. 6 The myth of the ancient leader he constructs can be seen as solving two legal issues at once: first, Cortés's personal dilemma of having to justify his violation of the orders of Velázquez, and second, his interest in supporting Charles's efforts to unite church authority and state power within the all-embracing ideology of universal divine kingship, represented by his own person. Until then, the notion of Spain's a priori right to possess the West Indies had rested on the papal donation by Alexander VI, put down in the bull *Inter caetera* of 1493, where Spanish possession of the West Indies is considered rightful as part of the extension of the Christian empire. While Charles, within the more general context of the secularization of rulership and the emergence of the modern nation-state, was certainly interested in translating this religiously grounded imperial ideology into a secular right of world rulership, Cortés had to find a legal foundation for his action independent from the sphere of influence of Velázquez, whose governorship in the Caribbean rested on the papal donation. So Cortés and Charles had a common desire for transgressing the realm of church law while retaining its ideology of preordained universal rulership.

The *Second Letter* is one of the earliest political documents that clearly privileges state power over church power in its construction of a theory of the translation of empire from east to west. This is apparent from a pronouncement at the beginning of the *Second Letter* where Cortés compares the conquest of Mexico with the extension of Spanish overlordship to Germany in the previous year of 1519 (Cortés 1986, 48). But at the same time, his privileging of secular power was the result of the strategic necessity of liberating himself from the jurisdiction of Diego Velázquez.

It is the *First Letter* of Cortés, written from Veracruz, that helps to forge this liberation. Now generally attributed to Cortés himself, this letter was, according to its own information, written by a kind of revolutionary committee, formed by the soldiers of Cortés who had resolved to shake off the unjust and selfish rule of Velázquez and to put themselves under the exclusive jurisdiction of King Charles. The

"mutineers" inform the king that they have temporarily deposed Cortés as the direct representative of Velázquez but then immediately reinstated him. They argue the legitimacy of their action on the grounds of one of the most important medieval legal documents: the *Siete partidas* of Alfonso X (written in 1256/63). This document presents "a cogent picture of the organic unity that should naturally prevail between the king and his subjects, bound together in mutual concern for the upholding of the commonweal against selfish private interest" (Elliott 1986, xviii; cf. Elliott 1967, 44, 51). Applied to the *First Letter*, Cortés and his army represent the true community of Spanish subjects, whereas Velázquez is only interested in filling his own pockets. With this juridical twist, aided by medieval civil law, Cortés sought to foreclose any legal consequences of his future march to Tenochtitlán. Not without admiration, J. H. Elliott calls the public dismissal and subsequent reinstatement of Cortés as leader a "brilliant legalistic maneuver" (Elliott 1986, xix).

With the *Second Letter* Cortés offers another example of his rhetorical skills in transforming his rebellion into service to king and country. By appealing to Charles's imperial ambitions, the legend of ancient leadership, which he constructs at the same time, complies with the logic of *reconquista*, which guided Spanish expansion to America and is articulated in numerous comparisons of Mexican culture with that of the Moors. When he describes the marketplace of Tlatelolco, for example, Cortés draws the telling analogy with the silk market at Granada (Cortés 1986, 104). Tlaxcala, too, reminds him of the last Arab bastion in Spain. Then again the strangeness of the Mexican town seems to exceed the possibilities of Cortés's linguistic arsenal: "The city is so big and so remarkable that, *although there is much I could say of it which I shall omit*, the little I will say is, I think, almost unbelievable, for the city is much larger than Granada *and very much stronger*, with as good buildings and many more people than Granada had *when it was taken*" (67, emphasis added). The trope of negation here works in favor of a particular kind of description, and the incapacity to report adequately about this strange place is revealed as an unwillingness to do so. The militaristic language of orientalism that Cortés employs is coupled with a refusal to use any other language than this. The comparison of Tlaxcala with Granada "when it was taken" not only hints at the possible future of Tlaxcala but also magnifies the military strength of Cortés himself.

The pervasive orientalist imagery that Cortés shares with other chroniclers of the conquest may testify to the Spaniards' reflex of viewing America as another country to be gained for civilization from foreign despotism. But the center stone in the ideology of lawful (re)conquest expounded in the letter is, of course, Motecuhzoma's speech of submission. Its strategic position becomes fully apparent from the paragraph that directly succeeds it. In one of the flashbacks that repeatedly interrupt the narrative flow of the *Second Letter*, Cortés retrospectively develops a theory of native conspiracy to prepare and justify his arbitrary arrest of Motecuhzoma. The crucial evidence consists of certain letters that Cortés had already received at Chohula and that informed him of a "treacherous" plot and subsequent "rebellion" against the Spanish force at Veracruz by the inhabitants of Almeria. During the fight, which was led by the cacique Qualpopoca, several Spaniards and many of their Indian vassals were killed. Cortés accuses Qualpopoca of treachery and Motecuhzoma of having masterminded the whole affair. He deems his suspicion to be reason enough for arresting Motecuhzoma, even before securing the final evidence. Qualpopoca, who has to be sent for and is thus at first conveniently absent, figures as the crown witness to convince Charles of the necessity of capturing Motecuhzoma (8792).

When Qualpopoca finally arrives, he behaves so impertinently (replying to the Spaniards' questions with counterquestions) and shows himself so unwilling to cooperate (denying his inquisitors' claim that he had acted on Motecuhzoma's command) that he and his companions are sentenced to be burned in public. Hoping to escape death, they renounce their previous statements and "said unanimously that it was true that Mutezuma had ordered it to be done, and by his command they had done it. Thus they were burnt publicly in a square, with no disturbance whatso ever." At the same time Motecuhzoma is put in irons (9091).

This outrageous action receives its legal justification only retrospectively as a consequence of Cortés's rhetorical manipulation of the sequence of events. After all, Cortés already know of the fight before entering Tenochtitlán, which means that Motecuhzoma's "treachery" preceded his speech and surrender. The attack on the Spaniards (which Motecuhzoma may or may not have ordered) was a lawful means of defense against foreign intrusion. Only if the



narrative sequence were to coincide with the chronology of events could the emperor's hostile designs against the Spaniards be regarded as an act of treachery which then might or might not have justified Cortés's harsh measures against Quälpopoca and Motecuhzoma. Even within the logic of the text, moreover, the precondition of treachery is precisely the faithfulness of Motecuhzoma's speech of submission.

This specific constellation of the fictions of original Spanish rulership and subsequent native treachery corresponds to the central Spanish legal construction for sanctioning colonial violence in America, the *Requerimiento*. If nobody contradicted this linguistic act of translating a foreign people into subjects of the Spanish crown, then even initial native resistance could be interpreted as rebellion justly to be requited with military force. Needless to say, there was little opportunity to contradict a document that was read out in an unfamiliar language while the battle had already begun thus the practice of Cortés (Cortés 1986, 59). Native "rebellion" is in fact the principal argument Cortés later used for justifying his siege of Tenochtitlán (166).

It is becoming clear, I think, that the actual imprisonment of Motecuhzoma is embedded in a complicated rhetorical web that consists mainly of the contradictory testimony of deceased people and the manipulation of the narrative sequence. As is also becoming clear, the reader of the letter is no exception to this tactic. Charles of course completely depended on the information chosen and arranged for him by Cortés who, as he writes, carefully excluded data that were "too lengthy," "too tedious," and "too little pertinent to the issue" (90). This unwillingness to report sharply contrasts with the lengthy quotation of Motecuhzoma's speech, for whose veracity Charles has to rely on the author's testimony alone as Cortés mentions later, he lost all written agreements with the Mexicans during his army's flight from Tenochtitlán (143). In this light, his passionate claim of truth is not altogether out of place: "Your Majesty may be certain that if my account has any fault it will be, in this as in all else of which I give account to Your Highness, too short rather than too long, because it seems to me right that to my Prince and Lord I should state the truth very clearly without adding anything which might be held to embroider it or diminish it" (102). The diplomatic method Cortés employs is that of practical Machiavellianism.

Although *Il principe* was written in the same year as the *Second Letter* and thus cannot have served him as a handbook, such a guide of action would hardly have been necessary for a trained Spanish lawyer who was probably well acquainted with the political maneuvers of King Ferdinand (one of Machiavelli's models of the "virtuous" ruler), the romances about El Cid, and the coercive practice of the Inquisition courts. 7

The narrative of imperial donation as it is presented by Cortés gains ideological closure from Motecuhzoma's second speech, this time addressed to an assembly of the lords of various provinces, in which he repeats the ancient leader story almost verbatim and exhorts his tributary subjects to acknowledge Cortés as the lawful representative of their new sovereign (Cortés 1986, 9899). This second speech, which poses a full-fledged surrender, is immediately preceded by an account of the "rebellion" of Cacama, Motecuhzoma's nephew and ruler of Tezcoco, who had gathered a military force to liberate Tenochtitlán but was captured by some of Motecuhzoma's people under the pretense of a diplomatic meeting (Cortés of course forgets to mention that the captors had acted out of fear for Motecuhzoma's life). As soon as Cacama arrived at Tenochtitlán he was put in irons like Motecuhzoma before him. Again, the speech is closely related to an act of treachery an act of native treachery, as Cortés would have his reader believe that he entirely stayed out of the proceedings himself. The ideological tale of native treachery, either against the conquerors or against each other, together with the presentation of native speeches of submission, here emerges as the main rhetorical strategy for justifying the Spanish conquest.

But as is usually the case, this ideological function of Motecuhzoma's speech and conspiracy was soon forgotten or even subverted in later accounts of the same incident. No longer burdened by the need to justify conquest and personal disobedience, both Bernal Díaz and Francisco López de Gómara (both of whom wrote much later, in the 1560s and in 1552) admit that the burning of Qualpopoca was a necessary prerequisite for imprisoning Motecuhzoma, which in turn was the key to conquering Tenochtitlán. They also mention a significant detail that Cortés excludes: the finding of Motecuhzoma's treasure in a secret chamber of his palace, which directly preceded the affair with Qualpopoca, (Gómara 1964, 16869, Díaz 190816, 2:8486). Gómara, in his version of Motecuhzoma's

speech (which is based on the *Second Letter* and was later partly adapted by George Peckham), does not even attempt to preserve the myth of imperial donation in that he first repeats it but then makes Motecuhzoma add: "And so, my lord captain, you may be sure that we shall obey you, *if you are not deceiving or tricking us*, and that we shall share what we have with you. *And even if what I am saying were not true*, such are your valor, fame, and knightly deeds that I would willing[ly] do so (in any case), for I know well what you did in Tabasco, Teocacingo, Cholula, and elsewhere, vanquishing so many with so few" (Gómara 1964, 141; emphasis added).

Gómara's elaboration of the speech reveals the *Second Letter* to be what Malcolm Evans has called, in a different context, an "acknowledged illusion," a piece of writing that re-presents to the reader its own specific theory of textual production. <sup>8</sup> Gómara seems to be aware of, and to actually parody, Cortés's method of fully exploiting his position as author, of endowing the characters of his semi-fictional report with speech and depriving them of this privilege at his own pleasure and expediency. But the charade was complete only if recognized as such by the royal reader himself. In the "age of the theater" (Foucault), the *Second Letter* apparently drew its authority less from its historical faithfulness than from the dramatic power of its performance. While some readers (including some modern commentators, as we shall see) were captivated by the text's verisimilitude, others, Gómara among them, seem to have appreciated it for its visible construction of an acceptable, rather than a truthful, representation of reality (Gómara reports the speech even while doubting its veracity). So for Gómara, as probably for Charles (not to speak of Cortés), truth is a function of power.

Gómara's temporal detachment manifests itself in a rather moralistic way in his account of the burning of Cualpopoca, in which he embellishes the sparse information he inherited from Cortés with his own imagination and possibly with pieces of oral narrative from other conquistadores:

Twenty days after the arrest of Moctezuma, his servants, who had been sent with his order and seal, returned, bringing Cualpopoca, Cualpopoca's son, and fifteen other noblemen who, as had been ascertained by inquiry, were guilty participants in the plot to kill the Spaniards. Cualpopoca came to Mexico with a large company, as befitted a great noble (which he was), borne on a rich litter carried

on the shoulders of his servants and vassals. As soon as he had spoken to Moctezuma, he, his son, and the fifteen gentlemen were delivered in fetters into the hands of Cortés. He took them to one side and questioned them, and they confessed that they had killed the Spaniards in battle. Cualpopoca was asked whether he was a vassal of Moctezuma, and he answered: "Why, is there some other lord whose vassal I could be?" By which he meant virtually that there was not. Cortés said to him: "Much greater is the King of the Spaniards whom you slew while they were under a safe-conduct, and now you shall pay for it!"

They were more severely questioned [tortured], and they unanimously confessed they had killed the Spaniards, partly in obedience to the instructions of the great lord Moctezuma, partly on their own account, *as they had in war killed others who had invaded their country, in which case they could do so legitimately*. Cortés, acting on their confessions, sentenced and condemned them to be burned; and they were burned publicly in the great square, in view of all the people, who looked on in complete silence, without rioting, terrified by this novel form of justice imposed in the kingdom of Moctezuma, by strangers and guests of their great lord. (Gómara 1964, 17677, emphasis added)

As in his version of Motecuhzoma's speech, Gómara, after all the biographer of Cortés, here again subverts the carefully erected edifice of surrender and subsequent rebellion. The humanistic undertone of the passage implicitly questions not only the reliability of Cortés's information but also the legality of Spanish action in Mexico. But that action, it seems, is now sanctioned by its significance as a modern *Iliad*. For Gómara, imperial action has become a text, a heroic fiction to be added to its famous precursors, from the romances about Alexander and Julius Caesar to those about El Cid. This metamorphosis of the *conquista* into romantic art is the crucial difference between the *Historia general* and the narrative of colonial justification of Cortés.

A more curious version of these events was provided by one of the Spanish captains, Andrés de Tapia. Like Gómara, Tapia wrote his report in the knowledge of the *Second Letter* but apparently without grasping its rhetorical point. He mentions no speech of surrender, only the "conspiracy" and the finding of the secret treasure. It is here, where the need arises to explain the Spaniards' annexation of Aztec gold, that Tapia inserts the ancient leader story, thereby

unhinging its original function: to legitimate the conquest in the king's eyes (Tapia 1963, 39). Being an ordinary soldier, Tapia was little concerned with Cortés's grand schemes of colonization. Thus, while Motecuhzoma's speech came in handy for Tapia to turn him into some fairy-tale king who freely distributes all his wealth, it is now missing when it comes to explaining the harsh treatment of the "traitors." Tapia bluntly reports that Qualpopoca

confessed to having done that injury to the Spaniards when he had said that Moctezuma had commanded him to do it. The marqués [Cortés] ordered all the arms taken out of the arsenal we have mentioned, which were bows and arrows, spears and slings, and wooden swords with flint blades. There were about five hundred cartloads, and he had them burned together with Qualpupoca, saying it was necessary to burn them so that Qualpupoca could be burned (Tapia 1963, 42).

Tapia deviates from Gómara in not seeming to be particularly struck by this introduction of a "novel form of justice" to Mexico. His attention is not caught by the burning of Qualpopoca himself but by that of the weapons. An inquisition trial against members of a foreign nation on their own territory seems to have been more natural for Tapia than the strange fact that there was no firewood in Tenochtitlán to carry out the sentence. He apparently did not at all understand the significance of the inquisition drama, initiated by Cortés to establish his authority over the Indians and to mask from his reader the shaky legal foundation of his own actions. Tapia's semantic displacement is perhaps most valuable for giving us an idea of the extent and importance of the incident. What can be gathered from the Spanish sources is that at least seventeen caciques were first tortured and then publicly burned and that "five hundred cartloads" of wooden weapons were necessary to fuel the fire. Still, the execution, apparently a crucial event during the Spaniards' first stay at Tenochtitlán, is downplayed by Cortés and romanticized by Gómara, and it draws attention to itself only through a curious metonymic slippage in Tapia's report.

But the most remarkable "account" of the execution of the caciques is the refusal to narrate it, on the part of the only Mexican source describing the events at Tenochtitlán, the *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España* of Bernardino de Sahagún. Book 12 of

this compound product, gathered from the reports of native eyewitnesses of the *conquista*, does not even mention Qualpopoca and has completely "forgotten" the crucial event of his burning. But the gap has practically become invisible, for it is filled with an account of the later massacre of participants of the feast for Huitzilopochtli. This bloodbath, in which many Aztec leaders were killed, was conducted by Pedro de Alvarado during the absence of Cortés, who had gone to meet Narváez. In its sequence of events, the *Historia general* places the massacre between the finding of Motecuhzoma's treasure, which, according to Spanish reports, had directly preceded the inquisition trial, and the final imprisonment of Motecuhzoma, which the other reports give as the immediate result of the execution of the caciques. 9

Thus the Aztec chroniclers themselves kept silent about this traumatic experience, thereby continuing the silence that Gómara had attributed to the onlookers of the burning. But they occluded that silence with an account of Spanish cruelty whose realistic detail is unmatched by Spanish chronicles:

Then they struck the arms of the one who beat the drums; they severed both his hands, and afterwards struck his neck, [so that] his neck [and head] flew off, falling far away. Then they pierced them all with iron lances, and they struck each with the iron swords. Of some they slashed open the back, and then their entrails gushed out. Of some, they split the head; they hacked away their heads to pieces; their heads were completely cut up. And of some they hit the shoulder; they split open and cut their bodies to pieces. Some they struck in the shank; some on the thigh. Of some, they struck the belly, and then their entrails streamed forth. And when one in vain would run, he would only drag his entrails like something raw, as he tried to flee. Nowhere could he go. And one who tried to go out, there they struck and pierced him. (53)

### The Traveling Theory of Quetzalcoatl's Return

The result of the textual strategies of occlusion found in the *Second Letter* is that the burning of Qualpopoca and its significance within the legal-rhetorical web of the document, as well as within the "symbolic action" of Cortés in Tenochtitlán, have received little or no attention in the scholarship about the *conquista*. Even the widely received study by Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America* (1982),

which is inspired by an awareness of ideological textual processes and which approaches the material with the methodical tools of structuralism and semiotics, seems to be dazzled by the rhetorical power of the *Second Letter*.

Todorov uses Cortés as his crown witness for demonstrating the "symbolic superiority" of the Europeans over the Aztecs. Searching for an explanation for the "extraordinary success" of the *conquista*, Todorov finds it in "one specific feature of Western civilization . . . it is, paradoxically, Europeans' capacity to understand the other. Cortés affords us a splendid example of this, and he was conscious of the degree to which the art of adaptation and of improvisation governed his behavior" (Todorov 1987, 248). The Europeans' art of improvisation, Todorov continues, is closely related to their more sophisticated "'technology' of symbolism," which ranges highest on an evolutionary scale: "this evolution can be reduced, for simplicity's sake, to the advent of writing. Now, the presence of writing favors improvisation over ritual, just as it makes for a linear conception of time or, further, the perception of the other" (252). This is not to say that people who could write could automatically improvise Todorov rather regards the presence or absence of writing in a culture as an "index of the evolution of mental structures" that would enable the members of a literary culture to improvise and condemn those of nonliterary ones to ritual action and imitation (81).

By relying on this binary logic, Todorov tends to homogenize both cultures. The logic is Aristotelian: we have seen it at work in the texts of Columbus and Ribault, who likewise could not perceive cultural heterogeneity and complexity, and who translated cultural difference into absolute otherness. The dualistic theoretical framework of Todorov's analysis is basically identical with the dualism of the colonialist ideology it opposes. 10

Sixteenth-century reality can hardly be pressed into a dualist mold without a few kicks and shoves. Todorov's claim that the Aztecs had no writing and therefore no history repeats a Eurocentric misperception that can be found in the work of both the seventeenth-century British colonialist historian Samuel Purchas and the nineteenth-century American romantic historian William Prescott.<sup>11</sup> Contrary to Todorov's assumptions, Mesoamerican cultures did indeed use writing, and the control of texts even seems to have been similar to that of late medieval Europe that is, before the introduction of print

technology not even a hundred years prior to the *conquista*. In both cultures, writing seems to have been the prerogative of a small elite. It is the technology of the printing press, more than any "symbolic" technology, that had revolutionized the communication system and thereby greatly contributed to the European colonial project that had perhaps made it possible in the first place.

Todorov tries to prove his thesis of Europe's symbolic superiority, which is apparently also a hermeneutical superiority, by referring to the *Second Letter* of Cortés: "Our best proof we can have of Cortés' capacity to understand and speak the other's language is his participation in the development of the myth of Quetzalcoatl's return" (Todorov 1987, 116). Aware that Cortés nowhere mentions Quetzalcoatl, Todorov resorts to "native" sources:

Indian accounts of the conquest, especially those collected by Sahagún and Durán, tell us that Montezuma identified Cortés with Quetzalcoatl returning to recover his kingdom; this identification is given as one of the chief reasons for Montezuma's failure to resist the Spanish advance. . . . The notion of an identity between Quetzalcoatl and Cortés certainly existed in the years immediately following the conquest. . . . But there is an obvious hiatus between these two states of the myth: the old version, in which Quetzalcoatl's role is secondary and his return uncertain; and the new one, in which Quetzalcoatl is dominant and his return absolutely certain. Some force must have intervened to hasten this transformation of the myth.

This force has a name: Cortés, who effects a synthesis of varying data. The radical difference between Spaniards and Indians, and the relative ignorance of other civilizations on the part of the Aztecs led, as we have seen, to the notion that the Spaniards were gods. But which gods? Here Cortés must have provided the missing link, converting the rather marginal myth into the myth of Quetzalcoatl's return perfectly adapted to the language of the Other. (117)

Much can and has been said against Todorov's uncritical use of such complex sources as Sahagún and Durán. The texts of the Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún and the Dominican Diego Durán were collected between 1558 and 1575. Still, Todorov uses the postconquest and mediated native accounts that these texts contain to "fill a gap" in Cortés's text methodically a dangerous procedure. Not that there is a lack of textual gaps in the *Second Letter*. We have just seen how one of them is reproduced and filled with a "wrong"



substance in Sahagún's *Historia general* itself. The question is rather how to account for these gaps, whether by referring them to the authorial intention of representatives of the victorious party, as Todorov is doing, or whether to regard them as the result of cultural and ideological forces, which makes it difficult to squeeze them into a premodeled scheme. As the imaginative product of a monumental historicism concentrating on the deeds of great leaders, Cortés's imputed Quetzalcoatl trick is a colonialist myth that has replaced, and continues to occlude, the real (and much less dialogic) strategy for gaining control at Tenochtitlán: the burning of the caciques. To employ this strategy Cortés did not have to be particularly creative. He could rely on his knowledge of the "theatrical" court society and of the methods of the inquisition courts. The whole operation of conquering Tenochtitlán, it should be added, would have been impossible without the active help of Malinche, whose crucial function as interpreter a male-oriented historiography still tends to romanticize instead of taking seriously. 12

There have been several critiques of Todorov's dubious historical methods, which need no repeating here (see in particular Coronil 1989). The notion that Motecuhzoma, after all the ruler of one of the greatest centers of civilization, naively submitted himself to a foreign leader on the basis of his tale of ancient rulership at best articulates an ahistorical identification with the ideology of the victor.

The texts of Spanish friars, to which Todorov's thesis is indebted, explain Motecuhzoma's "paralysis," his incapacity to cope with the situation, with a series of bad omens that had swept Mexico shortly before the arrival of Cortés. It is here that the confusion of Todorov's approach may become most apparent. He correctly notes that the natives of Mesoamerica, like most other people, integrated a new event "into a network of natural, social, and supernatural relations, in which the event thereby loses its singularity: it is somehow domesticated, absorbed into an order of already existing beliefs. The Aztecs perceive the conquest, i.e., the defeat and at the same time mentally overcome it by inscribing it within a history conceived according to their requirements." This is indeed a description of the retrospective production of former "prophecies," which we have also seen at work in the native prophecy contained in Ramon Pané's book. But instead of concluding that Motecuhzoma's paralysis may have been the result of just such a retrospective ascription of meaning to event, Todorov

continues his explanation of the omens: "But meanwhile, these prophecies exert a paralyzing effect on the Indians hearing them and further diminish their resistance" (7475). The word "meanwhile" obviously refers to the time of the first encounter, as it is then that Todorov perceives a lack of native resistance. But his claim does not stand historical evaluation. The Mexicans resisted furiously, thereby providing Cortés with the crucial evidence for arresting Motecuhzoma, as we have seen. It would be more to the point to say that most tribes did not *want* to offer much resistance, as they hoped that the Spaniards would liberate them from the yoke of the Aztecs. Tenochtitlán itself, however, was taken only after a long siege and against the desperate resistance of its smallpox-ridden inhabitants.

Todorov's text suffers from a fateful confounding of semiotic and positivist approaches, the first of which informs his theory of the Aztecs' and any other people's retrospective construction of historical meaning, and the second of which stands behind his claim that the "prophecies," now no longer retrospectively produced, "paralyzed" the Aztecs in 1520. The semiotic approach can be said to rest on a critical evaluation of the text as a cultural artefact inscribed with specific cultural codes, which produce historical reality even while claiming to give a faithful description of it. The positivist approach, on the other hand, equates the text with historical reality and draws its conclusions from reading *through* the text toward the actuality it presumably reflects. While a positivist approach tends to fill textual gaps according to the textual logic itself, a semiotic one seeks to disclose the structural and ideological operations of a text, but without much consideration of its referential aspect. Todorov applies both methods without clarifying the theoretical principles on which he chooses to give a semiotic reading to one part of the text but a positivist one to the other. The only metatheoretical criteria that can be found to guide his choice seems to be a universalist and dualistic notion of culture that is at best deeply troubling.

The novelty of *The Conquest of America* and its value for my own analysis undoubtedly lie in its semiotic part, which insists that the history of the *conquista* as it has come down to us is first and foremost the product of its various textualizations. From a thoroughly semiotic perspective, Cortés's power of improvisation is not deployed toward Motecuhzoma at all but toward the reader of his letters, King Charles. We have seen that the first and second letters of Cortés are

indeed carefully improvised documents aimed at justifying his own action by producing various fictions about how he won the Aztec empire: by Motecuhzoma's willing submission due to the power of an old prophecy that announced the return of an ancient leader, and by the subsequent "treacherous" comportment of the Indians. Todorov addresses this quality of the *Second Letter* when he remarks that "for Cortés. . . speech is more a means of manipulating the Other than it is a faithful reflection of the world" and that "objectivity is not the first of his concerns" (Todorov 1987, 118). The "Other" whom the *Second Letter* "manipulates," once again, is King Charles, not Motecuhzoma.

The question that remains, and that will occupy us in some detail for the rest of the present chapter, concerns the actual role that the myth of the return of Quetzalcoatl may have played during the conquest of Mexico. The readiness of a large section of scholarship to take this myth at face value is apparently deep-seated. Todorov's argumentative ambivalence has turned into the "truth" of the statement of George Marcus and Michael Fischer: "Just as the Hawaiians received Captain Cook as a god, so the Aztecs understood Cortez as a returning god." 13

A cursory evaluation of scholarly literature dealing with the conquest of Mexico reveals a widespread fascination with the notion that the fall of the Aztec empire was effected by Motecuhzoma's confusion of Cortés with the god Quetzalcoatl. Miguel León-Portilla's famous account of the *conquista* from the perspective of the losers, *Visión de los vencidos* (1959), bears out the German translation of its title as *Rückkehr der Götter* (Return of the gods): the whole book is organized around the Quetzalcoatl myth. In his introduction the author describes the meeting between the Spaniards and Motecuhzoma, "who had come out to meet them in the belief that the white men must be Quetzalcoatl and other gods, returning at last from across the waters now known as the Gulf of Mexico" (León-Portilla 1962, vii, xv). In his exposition of the events leading up to the fall of Tenochtitlán, León-Portilla follows the account of Sahagún's *Historia general*, which, as we have already seen, is not the most reliable source for historical reconstruction, although an invaluable one in terms of colonial *mestizaje*.

The Swiss historian Urs Bitterli, who puts forward the idea that the natives reacted to European visitors with fits of "mysterium

tremendum" ("a sensation of trembling awe, which is present in all acts of divine worship"), likewise harps on the theme of Cortés-Quetzalcoatl: "That the arriving Europeans were often regarded as gods is particularly well testified by the native records in Mesoamerica. We know from Aztec sources that Motecuhzoma regarded Cortés and his companions . . . as the god Quetzalcoatl and his train, whose return had been announced by prophecies" (Bitterli 1986, 24).<sup>14</sup> A little further down he explains Motecuhzoma's dispatching sorcerers to bewitch the Spaniards as evidence of the Aztecs' belief that the newcomers must be "evil spirits." But the contradictory information derived from the Mexican sources add up to the statement, supported with a quote from Sahagún, that in any case Motecuhzoma was incapable of action (26). The other two sources that Bitterli uses are the above-mentioned book by León-Portilla and *La vision des vaincus* by Nathan Wachtel (1971).

In their introduction to a recent collection of essays about the conquest of America, René Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini take a semiotic position by regarding the "so-called facts of conquest" as "human constructions" (Jara and Spadaccini 1992, 24). A few pages later, however, they seem to have forgotten their reservations about the faithfulness of colonial texts and conclude that "Quetzalcoatl . . . was reincarnated in Cortés the conquerer," a reincarnation that convinced the Mexica that their "destruction" was "imminent." Jara and Spadaccini support their statement by quoting Motecuhzoma's speech to Cortés, for which no reference is given (4344). But the by now experienced critic quickly finds the source: it is the speech recorded in the *Historia general* of Sahagún.

Not giving up the hope of clarification so soon, we may turn to the newly edited *Cambridge History of Latin America* (1984) and find relief in John Elliott's essay on the Spanish conquest, in which he expresses his deep suspicion of Motecuhzoma's speech and the alleged "*translatio imperii*" (Elliott 1984, 181). Elliott explains Motecuhzoma's reluctant attitude toward Cortés as the "normal behavior of the Mexica to ambassadors, who traditionally enjoyed immunity" (181).

But if we want to learn more about the Indians' reaction to the Spanish arrival promised by Nathan Wachtel's essay "The Indian and the Spanish Conquest" in the same volume, we encounter a familiar story:

Widespread throughout America was the myth of the civilizing god who, after his benevolent reign, disappears mysteriously, promising men that one day he will return. In Mexico there was Quetzalcóatl who departed towards the east, and in the Andes Viracocha who disappeared in the western Sea. Quetzalcóatl was supposed to return in a *ce-acatl* (one-reed) year. . . . In Mexico the Spaniards came from the east, and 1519 was indeed a *ce-acatl* year [and, surprisingly, the same prophetic fulfillment happens in Peru]. . . . Accordingly the Indians' shock assumed a specific form: they perceived events through the framework of myth, and, in certain circumstances at least, conceived the arrival of the Spaniards as a return of the gods. (Wachtel 1984, 2089)

The last sentence is quite revealing. The "shock" of the Indian (Bitterli's "mysterium tremendum"; Todorov's "paralysis") is already the result of/what we "know" they believed: that the gods promised their return at a certain date from a certain direction. The sentence also expresses its insecurity about its own reversal of chronology and causality by trying somewhat to relativize its previous statements in the clause "in certain circumstances at least," which looks like an effort to introduce a historical dimension into an otherwise ahistorical argument. After quoting an account that Motecuhzoma had received of the newcomers (which Wachtel takes from León-Portilla and which León-Portilla took from Sahagún), the text continues: "The scene in which Moctezuma received the Spaniards . . . as if they were gods has remained famous" (209). And in order to do his best to keep up with that tradition, Wachtel quotes Motecuhzoma's speech, which he takes from Sahagún.

Apparently the contradiction between the essays of Elliott and Wachtel in the *Cambridge History* points toward a contradiction within the historical material itself. All the texts quoted so far that mention the initial identification of Cortés with the returning god Quetzalcoatl ultimately depend on a single source: the *Historia general* of Sahagún. Elliott, by contrast, whose piece is based on the Spanish sources, subsumes the speech under the category of Cortesian "ingenious tissue of fact and fabrication" (Elliott 1984, 181) and does not mention Quetzalcoatl.

Surely the romantic myth was more successful than the theory of legal make-believe. It disseminated into popular culture in such fantastic studies as the books by Pierre Honoré, Robert Charroux, and

Erich von Däniken. In his book with the promising title "I Found the White God," Honoré gathers evidence that shows that practically every significant European culture had sent embassies and settlers to America before the "discovery" by Columbus. The story of the white, bearded, blond-haired, blue-eyed gods is an essential ingredient of this tale, in which the New World appears as the playground of antiquity (our friend Prince Madoc is the only one not listed in the record) (Honoré 1976).

One of the latest examples of this dissemination occurs in a recent German translation of Bernal Diaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*: arriving at the famous welcome scene, we read, instead of the dry remarks in the original ("Then Montezuma spoke other words of politeness to him" and "Montezuma replied'Malinche, you and your brethren are in your own house, rest awhile' "), Motecuhzoma's famous speech, taken from Sahagún. 15 The ideological necessity of recording the speech can hardly become more obvious than in this case of editorial manipulation in which a text is inserted from another document where the original is considered incomplete. The editorial intervention is reinforced by the addition of an epilogue by Tzvetan Todorov in which he summarizes his main theses: the primary reason for the Spaniards' victory was Motecuhzoma's hesitant attitude, which in turn must be ascribed to the existence of the legend of Quetzalcoatl's return at the time of the Spaniards' arrival (Diaz 1988, 634), as well as to the fact that "Moctezuma stands on the lowest step of semiotic incapacity," misinterprets the others' signs, and is "unable to perceive the Spaniards as equals (human beings) and at the same time as different" (624; my translation). Cortés, as we already know, ranges on a higher level of communication (653).

Although, Todorov writes, there is a lack of documents that could teach us more about the mental universe of "this strange ruler" (Motecuhzoma), we can be "certain . . . that the Indians initially perceived the Spaniards as divine beings," as "teules" (634). In addition to their lack of writing and their cyclical concept of time, the Aztecs now also have a "closed" mental universe (642). Todorov's single native textual source to support this renewed claim is the *Historia general* of Sahagún, whose authenticity is somewhat doubted but which is then nevertheless used as a reliable source of information (654). As we shall see, the *Historia general*

is probably the most complex document of the cultural clash in America.

What is important here is the link Todorov draws between the return myth and the claims of some of the conquistadores that they were regarded as gods and were called "*teules*," a term used by Bernal Diaz. Diaz is also the source of the official definition of the Nahuatl term *teotl*, of which *teule* is the Hispanicized version, in the *Diccionario de aztequismos* of 1965. *Teotl* is here translated as "dios" and explained as "The name that the Mexicans gave to the Spanish conquerors after they saw them disembark at Veracruz because they believed them to be gods [Nombre que dieron los mexicanos a los españoles conquistadores desde que los vieron desembarcar en Veracruz, porque creían que eran dioses]" (Robelo 1965, 244, my translation). The logic, which should be familiar by now, is of the circular kind so characteristic of ideological narratives: *teotl* means "god" because the Mexica believed the Spaniards to be gods, which is proven by the fact that they called them *teotl*. The statement denies the hermeneutical trap in which we are caught: we simply do not know what the Aztecs "believed." All we can do is trust Bernal that "*teotl/teule*" is really what the Aztecs said. To put it differently: we have to draw our conclusions from a critical evaluation of the signifiers, since the signifieds are no longer available to us in any easy way. And because all the signifiers (texts) that we have are already influenced by the effects of the *conquista*, crucial aspects of Aztec reality at the time of conquest lie beyond our intellectual reach.

As can almost be expected by now, the *Diccionario de aztequismos* relativizes its own definition when quoting directly from Bernal Diaz, who writes that *teule* is the name the Indians give to their idols, "or gods, or demons [o dioses, o demonios]" (247; emphasis added). It similarly quotes an anecdote from the *Historia verdadera* of Diaz that tells of how the Spaniards received their new title: Olintecle, the cacique of Xocotlán, asks the Cempoala Indians, allies of the Spaniards, for the meaning of their arms and horses. The Cempoalans reply that they can be used in killing anyone according to the desire of their owners. The natives of Xocotlán, according to Diaz, conclude, "Surely they must be Teules" Diaz adds that "I have already said that Teule is the name they give to their gods or idols or *such like evil things* [luego de esa manera Teules deben de ser. Ya he dicho otras veces, que a los idolos o sus Dioses o cosas malas,

llamaban Teules]" (247; cf. Diaz 190816, 1:22122; emphasis added). As in the case of the cannibals, it is of little help to consult an official dictionary on the meaning of a term whose definition is derived from the texts under scrutiny here. The dictionaries themselves are almost by definition deeply inscribed with the colonial narratives that can be found at work in the primary sources.

The process of discursive constitution is clearly represented in the quoted passages: it begins with the Spaniards' show of technological superiority, merges into the ambivalent identification they consequently receive from the Indians (gods, or bad people, or demons) and culminates in the unequivocal and selective definition of the term mentioned at first: *teotl* equals "dios." The "reality" of this definition, a definition that is effected by a process of selection and exclusion, in turn becomes the central component of theories of Native American paralysis and mental inferiority propagated by Todorov and others. 16

Todorov's new category for defining the difference between Spaniards and Aztecs, the dichotomy of open versus closed universes, appears to be particularly invalid for supporting his thesis after his own analysis has shown the mind of Columbus to be basically "closed" and medieval (Todorov 1987, chapters 1 and 2). Columbus's search for the Grand Khan and the earthly paradise and for biblical passages announcing his voyage to the Indies; Bernal Díaz's comparison of the Spaniards' entrance into Tenochtitlán with a scene from *Amadis* (Diaz 190816, 2:37); the ubiquitous presence of monsters, unicorns, Amazons, and tales of the Blessed Islands in the reports of the early travelers: all of these seem to testify to a certain cognitive blockage or "closedness" of "the early modern European mind." But cognitive blockage was no hindrance to colonial action.

Curiously, Todorov's argument that the Aztecs were incapable of dissociating signs from the reality they signify (their incapacity, that is, for semiotic thinking) can be extended to Todorov's own reading of the sources, which he tends to reify and universalize according to the requirements of a Eurocentric "mythical structure" of identity and difference. Owing to its binary logic, *The Conquest of America* not only freezes the two cultures into a Manichean antagonism that denies the intercultural and intracultural differences and conflicts leading up to the fateful encounter at Tenochtitlán. It is also incapable of describing historical change: after all, the sixteenth century



in Europe was a transitional period that saw a reorientation and realignment of diverse and conflicting cultural paradigms and values in practically all realms of social experience: economics, law, religion, aesthetics, communication, political organization, historical consciousness, and so forth. The encounter with American cultures evidently accelerated and diversified this process, in addition to its undeniable, and often lethal, impact on the development of the American cultures. Any fairly historical description of a clash of cultures such as the one in Mexico would have to include a notion of the simultaneous existence of, and the constant exchange between, dissimilar cultural structures.

Thus most of Todorov's arguments must be rejected on historical and theoretical grounds. Still, it is far from easy to give an account of the colonial encounter at Mexico that would be historical without falling into the positivist trap and theoretical without falling into the textualist trap. In the following pages, I try to unsettle some of the mythical foundations on which the tale of Quetzalcoatl's return rests, followed by a few suggestions as to how the Spanish arrival may have been interpreted from an indigenous point of view. As the textual situation does not allow any full counternarrative nor indeed many definite statements, the account will have to remain fragmented and at times speculative. All we can do in a situation like this is try to provide what Jameson has called a "strong misreading" of the sources and to replace the monolithic truth claims of conventional scholarship with a few minor truths, surrounded by gaps in the records that will never be filled (Jameson 1981, 13).

"Later Let Us Know What It Meaneth"

The Prophetic Past of the *Conquista*

The immediate effects of colonization on Mexican culture were such that today hardly a text survives that could be said to be genuinely pre-Cortesian. One of the first actions of the Spaniards, once they realized that the Aztecs did have written records, consisted in burning all codices (picto/ideographical texts) they could find (Carrasco 1982, 6).<sup>17</sup> This of course does not mean that they destroyed the memory of the Mexican peoples: after all, the historical tradition of Mesoamerican cultures consisted of a combination of written text and memorized and ritualized oral history, with the codex function-

ing as a kind of narrative skeleton or reference system to support the oral performance, which usually consisted of songs (see Carrasco 1982, 2223; Scharlau and Münzel 1986). Reading and writing was an art taught in special schools, the *calmecacs*, and the exercise of it was reserved for members of the social elite. Consequently, when the texts were destroyed by the Spaniards, the oral memory still existed and began to be transcribed by Spanish friars as well as by Mexican authors. It quickly adapted to the new situation, became insecure without the textual base, and divaricated in different directions (regionally, socially), where it mingled with independent oral traditions. In short, it created a perplexing task for historians accustomed to looking for *the* original version.

Naturally, the *crónicas* by Spanish friars and members of the native elite can be considered reliable in many respects and agree with each other on various issues. In other respects, however, these texts contradict each other to the point of scholarly despair. The myth of Quetzalcoatl's return is one of these cases. Any attempt to explain it thus has to be based on what David Carrasco, following Ricoeur, calls a "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Carrasco 1982, 11; Ricoeur 1981, 67). It must take into account the social and cultural affinities of the authors, the fact that some authors belonged to a common school or tradition and thus influenced each other, and above all the circumstance that their texts are never the products of one individual but always the outcome of a process of negotiation and exchange between several informants and authors. The texts we are dealing with are not coherent entities but are made up of other texts, oral tradition, and ritual songs, all of which are selected and more or less skillfully pieced together by an individual whom we will, for the sake of simplification, call the author. In other words, Mesoamerican chronicles are polyvocal, heterogeneous, and heteroglossic texts that frustrate any expectation of narrative closure but rather quite often reveal their status as sites of ideological and political conflict.

Perhaps the most adequate point of departure is to comply with the demands of ideological necessity and summarize the events of the *conquista* as represented in the *Historia general* of Bernardino de Sahagún. The *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* is the most detailed source about Mexican life and culture we have. At the same time it is a truly polyvocal document. The information it contains was collected over many years by Sahagún himself and

several of his native students from the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco and is based on the oral testimony of old people, mostly survivors from the elite. It was written in several stages by Sahagún's scholars in Nahuatl between 1558 and 1569 and then received the final touch from Sahagún himself, who ordered the material according to the encyclopedic form common at that time. Thus the overall shape of the *Historia general* largely agrees with that of classical histories, especially the *Antiquities* of Flavius Josephus and the *Natural History* of Pliny (see Carrasco 1982, 45), whereas its contents are the common product of the Franciscan friar Sahagún and his Christianized disciples, who retained more or less strong ties to traditional Mesoamerican thinking and culture. As a result, the *Historia general* combines a European humanist and ecclesiastic (Franciscan) tradition with various memories of the Aztec pastor rather, with the contemporary interpretations of that past by the remaining representatives of the Mexican elite at Tlatelolco.

Book 12 of the *Historia general*, which deals with the *conquista*, opens with the enumeration of terrible portents that predict the fall of Mexico. We read of a pillar of fire that appeared in the eastern sky and remained there for a whole year, the sudden eruption of fires in the temples of Huitzilopochtli and Xiuhtecuhtli, the appearance of a comet that turned into a fire shower, the mysterious and tempestuous rising of the waters of Lake Texcoco without any wind, the voice of a woman crying in the air at night that her sons were already lost, an obsidian mirror found in the head of a bird that, when brought to Motecuhzoma, showed armed men seated on deer and then disappeared, and the apparition of deformed people with two heads who predicted destruction and likewise disappeared when brought to Motecuhzoma (Sahagún 195082, 13:13).<sup>18</sup> Having established this setting of brooding doom, the text continues by developing the famous figure of the quivering Motecuhzoma, who, incapable of action, sits in his palace and awaits the end of his empire. We are told that Motecuhzoma sent the vestments of three gods to Cortés and that his messengers dressed Cortés in the clothes of Quetzalcoatl (13:15), an episode that is generally used to support the argument that Motecuhzoma identified Cortés with Quetzalcoatl. This event, however, is not mentioned by Cortés, nor are these objects included in the list of items sent to Spain.<sup>19</sup>

The exposition of events from the perspective of the Mexicans, which devotes much space to reinforcing the image of a paralyzed and dumbstruck Motecuhzoma, culminates in Motecuhzoma's welcoming speech to Cortés:

O our lord, thou hast suffered fatigue; thou hast spent thyself. Thou hast arrived on earth, thou hast come to thy noble city of Mexico. Thou hast come to occupy thy noble mat and seat, which for a little time I have guarded and watched for thee. For thy governors [of times past] have gonethe rulers Itzcoatl, Moctezuma the Elder, Axayacatl, Ticoç, Auitzotlwho, not very long ago, came to guard [thy mat and seat] for thee and to govern the city of Mexico. Under their protection the common folk came here. Could they, perchance, now find their descendants, those left behind? O, that one of them might be a witness to marvel that to me now hath befallen what I see, who am the only descendant of our lords. For I dream not, nor start from my sleep, nor see this as in a trance. I do not dream that I see thee and look into thy face. Lo, I have been troubled for a long time. I have gazed into the unknown whence thou hast comethe place of mystery. For the rulers [of old] have gone, saying that thou wouldst come to instruct thy city, [that] thou wouldst descend to thy mat and seat; that thou wouldst return; thou hast suffered fatigue; thou hast spent thyself. Arrive now in thy land. Rest, lord; visit thy palace [that] thou mayest rest thy body. Let our lords arrive in the land. (Sahagún 195082, 13:42)

In essence, this oration contains the same information as that found in the *Second Letter* of Cortés. But it is less explicit about the claim of the latter that the Spaniards were greeted as the descendents of a foreign ruler. It rather creates the impression that Motecuhzoma is greeting the mythic ruler himself whose government the Aztec rulers had held in trust for several generations. Although the visitor clearly has godlike qualities (he descends from heaven), his name is not mentioned. There is no identification in this passage of Cortés with Quetzalcoatl.

An earlier passage in book 12, however, claims that the Mexicans who met the first Spaniards at the coast of Mexico in 1518 (the ship of Juan de Grijalva) identified them with "Quetzalcoatl Topiltzin" (13:5). The strangers are seen again the next year, this time the ships of Cortés (whose name is never mentioned). As before, Motecuhzoma

is informed of the arrival by messengers. The Aztec ruler quickly sends out messengers to call for a meeting of the caciques: "For thus he thought, and it was so regarded, that this was Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl who had arrived. For thus was it [held] in their hearts that indeed he would comethat he would come to land on and visit his domain. For verily he traveled there [to the east] when he went" (13:910).

Interestingly, the authors here transgress the imaginary line between individual and collective thought: the Spaniards are identified with a leader, whereas Motecuhzoma's "thought" is deduced from the general belief ("it was so regarded" and held "in *their* hearts") in the coming of Quetzalcoatl.<sup>20</sup> Taken together, and only then, these two passages may be regarded as the initiation of the myth that Motecuhzoma identified Cortés with Quetzalcoatl, which I have discussed above. Still, there is no explicit mention in the *Historia general* that Motecuhzoma actually addressed Cortés as Quetzalcoatl. It is likewise impossible to determine whether he and his subjects awaited the return of a supernatural being or of a human leader. The *Historia general* contains fragments of different stories, which do not quite fit together. Although the text itself does not solve the discrepancy, closure was quickly provided in the process of its reception by a readership that was apparently highly interested in the myth of Motecuhzoma's confusion. In the remainder of this chapter, I examine at some length why this might be so by taking a closer look at the individual elements of the myth.

The three important elements that the authors of the *Historia general* implicitly declared responsible for the fall of Tenochtitlán are the cosmological determination of this event, expressed in the portents; Motecuhzoma's paralysis in the face of this seemingly inescapable destiny; and the expected return of a god or a mythical leader. The leader is occasionally called Quetzalcoatl.

Before exploring the many disguises that Quetzalcoatl assumed during the time after the *conquista*, I want to address the important feature of the portents that were said to have predicted the end of the Aztec empire, a feature found in many other sources besides Sahagún and that, as we have seen, is connected with the peculiar characterization of Motecuhzoma.

Many native chronicles mention phenomena similar to the ones described in the *Historia general*. The anonymous author of the

*Anales de Cuauhtitlan* (1544/45) writes of a "trail of cloud" in the east that was first seen in 1508 (*Anales* 1974, 284). A little later this apparition transforms into a huge flame and is interpreted as a bad omen. The chronicler of Chalco and Culhuacan, San Antón Muñon Chimalpahin, gives a description of similar phenomena (Chimalpahin 1958, 11). Both authors stress the fear of the people at perceiving these cosmic signs. In another source Chimalpahin writes of an earthquake in the year 1489, which was followed by the apparition of a being that the old people called *moyohualitohua*, "the one who talks at night." But he does not mention that these phenomena were interpreted as portents (Stenzel 1980, 82). For the years 1508, 1509, and 1510 he mentions strange lights and cloudy apparitions that plunged the people into terror. Chimalpahin's own report, however, does not transport the spirit of this sensation it is utterly dispassionate and dry.

Much in contrast is the narrative of Diego Muñoz Camargo, the chronicler of Tlaxcala, who picks up the descriptions in Sahagún's *Historia general* and embellishes them in such a way that Cortés and his troops indeed appear to have descended from the heavens, which is why the Indians took them to be gods and were convinced that the end of the world was near. While everybody is trying to hide (which of course does not correspond with other reports), the images of the gods tumble down from the temples, and Cortés approaches Tenochtitlán through an apocalyptic scenery of earthquakes and shooting comets (Stenzel 1980, 83).

Other texts tell of prophetic announcements of the *conquista*. Alvarado Tezozomoc, one of the chroniclers of Texcoco (a member, with Tenochtitlán and Tlacopan, of the Triple Alliance), mentions that Nezahualpilli, the ruler of Texcoco, predicted the fall of Tenochtitlán to Motecuhzoma in 1509 (León-Portilla 1962, 14). And in 1536 a Mexican priest, Martín Ocelotl, was tried for heresy by the first bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga. On this occasion he testified that he and others had been imprisoned by Motecuhzoma in 1510 for predicting the arrival of bearded people. Unfortunately, all of his companions had died in prison, and Martín Ocelotl had to defend himself against witnesses who testified that he had told them that he had been cut into pieces in prison but had pieced himself back together again after a while (Stenzel 1980, 75). Alvaro Tezozomoc, in his *Crónica mexicana* of circa 1598, reports a similar case in 1519,

when Cortés was already underway and Motecuhzoma ordered his magicians to explain the events to him. He threw them into prison because they gave him impudent answers. First of all they said that they did not see any omens and when asked to give their prognoses they replied: "What can we say? The future has already been determined and decreed in heaven, and Motecuhzoma will behold and suffer a great mystery which must come to pass in his land. If our king wishes to know more about it, he will know soon enough, for it comes swiftly. This is what we predict, since he demands that we speak, and since it must surely take place, he can only wait for it" (quoted after León-Portilla 1962, 14). These magicians, according to Tezozomoc, disappeared from prison by making themselves invisible.

One might ask what magicians are good for if they nourish such a deterministic attitude toward cosmic events. After all, a magician's task is not only to predict the future but also to devise means of outwitting fate. Such were the orders of the sorcerers whom Motecuhzoma, according to Sahagún, had sent toward Cortés and his troops, commissioning them to bewitch the Spaniards (Sahagún 195082, 13:21, 33). In the case of Martín Ocelotl, we can see the magician's efforts to retain his reputation by giving a verbal show of his talents (piecing himself together and predicting the arrival of bearded men). Tezozomoc's text, by contrast, illustrates a fusion of old magical and new Christian beliefs: the wizards, although skilled in the art of escaping from prison, are shown to relegate the prognostic part of their profession to a (Christian) deterministic view of the future. It should be noted that Tezozomoc was a Christianized native of Texcoco, thus uniting within himself two traditions that were interested in depicting Motecuhzoma as the helpless victim of a foreign fate. These regional affiliations of the authors and their informants can hardly be overemphasized. Even among the three partners of the Triple Alliance considerable enmity arose from questions of prestige and disputes over leadership. Texcoco was the first of the partners to join the Spaniards against Tenochtitlán. The main reason for Cortés's victory is often seen in his ability to recognize these internal dissensions (which were apparently not very different from those at European courts) and use them to his advantage by adapting his knowledge of the intrigues in Spanish courtier society to the new environment. Mexico was not that different after all which allowed Cortés to improvise in the first place.

David Carrasco hints at these regional quarrels when he mentions that the picture of paralyzed Motecuhzoma might well be the product of Sahagún's and the other authors' native informants, who seized the chance to take revenge against the Mexica by presenting their ruler as a weakling. Sahagún's informants were inhabitants of Tlatelolco, and they might still have resented the annexation of their town by Tenochtitlán in 1473, only fifty years before the arrival of the Spaniards (Carrasco 1982, 48). 21

Mesoamerican chronicles are filled with stories about portents of all kinds. The *conquista*, according to these texts, was not the first important political event to be predicted by terrible omens. Alva Ixtlilxochitl, another Christianized native author from Texcoco, gives a picturesque account of the signs announcing the fall of the Toltec empire. The catastrophes, which Ixtlilxochitl also regards as punishment for the Toltecs' abominable sins, began with a series of rainstorms and hurricanes that lasted almost a hundred days. The rain then turned into toads falling from the sky and destroying the buildings. The next catastrophe was a great drought, followed by frost and hailstorms, which destroyed the harvest. After the earth had recovered, it was devastated anew by huge swarms of locusts, worms, and birds. Twenty years later, the people of Tula found a white-skinned and red-haired boy in a cavern,

who must have been the devil, and they took him to the city to show him to the king. When he saw him he ordered that he be taken back to where they had found him because he appeared to be a bad omen; and then the boy's head began to putrefy and many people died from the stench. The Toltecs tried to kill him but no one managed to get near him because everyone who approached him died instantly; and with this bad odor he caused a great epidemic throughout the country, so that nine hundred out of a thousand of the Toltecs died. (Ixtlilxochitl 1952, 1:4849)<sup>22</sup>

For this reason, Ixtlilxochitl continues, all white-skinned and red-haired boys were sacrificed when they were five years old. The faithfulness of these passages may certainly be doubted on the grounds of their similarity to biblical accounts of catastrophes. But apart from this, it is important to note that the inhabitants of Mexico knew well how to protect themselves against the fulfillment of bad omens.



Supporting evidence can be found in the *Historia general* of Sahagún, although this text emphasizes the paralyzing effects of the portents. The fifth book, which is dedicated to the everyday life of the Aztecs, contains a description of the means to be taken against portentous occurrences. The cry of an owl, which was traditionally regarded as a bad sign, was defused by saying, for example: "Go quietly, O knave, thou with the big eyes sunk deep! Thou hast lain with thy mother!" (Sahagún 195082, 5:163). The most imaginative omen is probably the "night ax," which was sometimes heard by nightly sojourners as a sound like someone chopping wood. The night ax, when approached, "took the form of Tezcatlipoca, to make sport and fun of people," and the best way to deal with it was to "seize it, hang on to it," and not let go. When the courageous traveler had exhausted the night ax it became visible and looked "like a man without a head a headless one, with neck severed at the nape, and with chest framework and belly broken open. Thus they said it was thought that that which was heard was his [split] chest framework when its halves met [like] a mouth continually opening and closing, with a sucking sound." To overcome the apparition, the traveler would seize its heart, tear it out, and then bargain with the heartless "ax" for the highest possible ransom: "Thus he then received as reward all earthly happiness and contentment flowers, tobacco, riches; capes, lip pendants, head bands." Only for cowards did the specter mean misery and poverty but even that was never quite certain (5:15759).

A certain chafer ("like a brilliant red spider") was likewise considered a bad omen: if it entered someone's house, one quickly "traced lines on the ground in the four directions. . . . And in the middle, at its center, [one] placed [the chafer] and there spat upon it." If it went northward, the beholder knew that he was soon to die. Other directions were not dangerous. But even in the worst case, one could still ignore the omen by saying, "Let it do [what it will]; let the little insect be aspersed! . . . Later let us know what it meaneth!" and leaving it at a crossroads. Another method was to hang it up. If it was gone the next morning, the sign was bad; if it was still hanging, it did not mean much. "And when they placed it in the midst of spittle or wine, they said it was made drunk by it. And also it was stated that sometimes it spoke in two [ways]: it also boded good. Perhaps something fortunate would be one's reward" (5:16970).

These are instances of magical practice, common in all parts of the world, by which the fear of the future is expressed and then banned in the form of evil portents and their neutralization or reversal with the help of a suitable antidote and courageous reactions. We can see that in Mesoamerican thinking an evil sign is "empty" and meaningless unless it is "ratified" by a future event, and the daily practice shows that people used their imagination to prevent this ratification (Stenzel 1980, 78). Their ritualized or even playful reaction to seemingly providential designs stands in absolute contradiction to Todorov's assumptions about the fatalism of the Mexicans (Todorov 1987, 66, 75).

Interestingly, however, Todorov also supports the opposite view: "The whole history of the Aztecs, as it is narrated in their own chronicles, consists of realizations of anterior prophecies, as if the event could not occur unless it had been previously announced. . . . Here only what has already been Word can become Act" (66). He also suspects that "the omens were invented after the fact" (74). If they were, they must be regarded as textual "events" rather than prior events that influenced the action of the Aztecs, because both "Word" and "Act," both "event" and "previous Announcement," are preserved in one and the same text that was written after the event. This thesis is supported by the absence in the earliest native sources, the *Anales de Tlatelolco* of 1528 and the *Historia tolteca-chichimeca* of circa 1544, of any mention of omens announcing the conquista (Stenzel 1980, 75). A critical examination of the sources suggests that it is unlikely that the Indians' prophetic belief was responsible for their "distorted image of the Spaniards during the first encounters, and notably for the paralyzing belief that the Spaniards are gods" (Todorov 1987, 75; emphasis added).

To say that the omens mentioned in the postconquest chronicles are textual rather than real events does not mean that they are not historical. It is important, however, to make a theoretical distinction between the history that really happened and that we can only approximate, on the one hand, and the textual strategies by which that history was retrospectively construed, on the other. The texts in which this history is preserved would thus have to be dealt with as mythical constructions. As myths, they transport information about "what really happened," but they do not do so in any fully reliable or complete way.

Evidently, different cultures have different strategies of historicizing that is, mythologizing events. Neither the Spaniards nor the Mexicans of the sixteenth century were masters of positivist scholarship the histories they wrote down (and also up) quite openly responded to the ideological requirements of the social groups they were written for. (The same of course applies to positivist claims of objectivity.) They were not primarily driven by a desire to give a faithful image of American reality.

As I have already indicated, Motecuhzoma's "paralysis" is a case in point. Interestingly, the *Relaciones originales de Chalco* of Chimalpahin contain an account of a leader's paralysis very similar to the one found in Sahagún and his modern epigones. The author relates the fall of the Tepanec empire, which gave way to the ascending Mexica dynasty in the fourteenth century and thus constitutes the last significant political turning point in the Valley of Mexico before the Spanish invasion. The text mentions the fate of Maxtlaton, the last Tepanec leader, who is said to have lost a ball game against his soothsayers that caused him to weep and that he took as an evil omen. After this defeat he is said to have declared to his people that they would now have to serve the Mexica, and his subjects followed his order. According to Chimalpahin, Maxtlaton then died on the spot. The author does not mention any battle, as do other sources, which also depict the Tepanec leader as a bloodthirsty warrior who died in battle. Clearly, the ritual ball game (which had a strong religious significance in ancient Mesoamerica) functions here as a symbolic displacement of a political event that apparently could not be explained otherwise (Stenzel 1980, 7677).<sup>23</sup>

The similarity between the depictions of Maxtlaton and of Motecuhzoma might lead us to the conclusion that paralyzed Motecuhzoma was modeled on paralyzed Maxtlaton. However, the contrary might also apply. Chimalpahin's text was written between 1606 and 1631, when Motecuhzoma's denigrated image was already firmly established. In other words, the history of preconquest Mexico may, in certain respects at least, have been retrospectively realigned with postconquest historical mythology, in a rhetorical move similar to the psychic mechanism of *Nachträglichkeit* analyzed by Freud.<sup>24</sup> The "paralyzed leader" should thus be regarded as a narrative trope or ideologeme that seems to have come in handy for native historians of various regions before starting its remarkable career through

American and European scholarly texts. Besides the recurrence of the ideologeme in different contexts, which deprives the image of paralyzed Motecuhzoma of its historical singularity, that image is incompatible with the information that the Aztec leader sent sorcerers to rid himself of Cortés. Obviously, there is no need for sorcerers if the fate is preordained.

The final word in this discussion about the chronological status of the portents belongs to Francisco López de Gómara, who relegates them to the place they deserve in the sequence of the *conquista*. The chapter of the *Conquest of Mexico* that describes the fall of Tenochtitlán, including the final defeat of Cuauhtémoc's troops (an event at which Cuauhtémoc is said to have wept, like Maxtlaton, but that was preceded by the most valiant resistance of the Mexica), is followed by a paragraph that describes the portents presaging the fall. (This paragraph, quite tellingly, precedes the one relating the torture of Cuauhtémoc.) The omens reported by Gómara consist of an "illumination" in the east (the spot of Cortés's future landing), flames in the east, and a cloud of smoke. These phenomena, as we have seen, are reported in several other sources and might be based on fact. On the other hand, the eastern lights are reminiscent of the Christian imperial mythology of *ex oriente lux*. Gómara continues:

They also saw armed men fighting in the air, a novel and marvelous thing for them, which gave them a good deal to think and worry about, for there was talk among them of white and bearded men who would come to take the country during the life of Moctezuma. The lords of Texcoco and Tacuba were greatly disturbed, saying that the arms of those men in the air were like the sword of Moctezuma, and their dress like his dress. Moctezuma had great difficulty in placating them, alleging that the garments and arms were those of his ancestors. (Gómara 1962, 294)

Likewise, a prisoner destined for sacrifice, "who was bewailing his ill fortune and death, and calling upon God in heaven, saw a vision which told him not to fear death, because God, to whom he had commended himself, would have mercy on him." Before he was sacrificed he announced the coming of a better religion (29495).

The providential tone of these passages is more than obvious. The *ex oriente lux* symbol is in keeping with Gómara's general strategy of depicting Cortés as the Christian knight who liberated Mexico from tyranny. Of particular interest is the image of the men fighting in the

air, whose European origin Gómara implicitly states by his remark that it was "novel" and "marvelous" for the Mexicans and which is reminiscent of the heavenly hosts fighting the army of Antichrist in Christian iconography. As it appears in Gómara's text, Motecuhzoma's transfer of responsibility to his ancestors after first having been identified with the fighters himself has a truly Cortesian ring. While the native lords think that the swords and dress are Motecuhzoma's and Motecuhzoma claims that they belong to his ancestors, "we" of course "know" that they are forebodings of the Spanish arrival that the "ancestors" are the Spaniards. In its textual relationship between this transfer of meaning and the "talk" of the coming of "white and bearded men" the passage reiterates the fiction of ancient rulership expounded in the *Second Letter*. In combining the Christian language of providential fulfillment with the imperialist rhetoric of *reconquista*, the passage represents an ideological amalgamation of religious and secular symbolism. Embedded in this portent, which must surely have been "a novel and marvelous thing" for the Indians, are the two major legal arguments for the justification of conquest: mission and original rulership.

True to its double ideological inscription, Gómara's portent has a twofold heritage: whereas the fighting men, the appearance of the angel, and the eastern illumination are found in exactly the same way in Toribio de Benavente Motolinia's *Memoriales* (Motolinia 1970, 8283), the image of warriors fighting in the air also figures prominently in an important context of the texts under discussion here: the *Discorsi* of Niccolò Machiavelli (written between 1513 and 1519) contain a chapter on signs and portents in which we read:

Whence it comes I know not, but both ancient and modern instances prove that no great events ever occur in any city or country that have not been predicted by soothsayers, revelations, or by portents and other celestial signs. . . . everybody knows how the descent into Italy of Charles VIII., king of France [1494.], was predicted by Brother Girolamo Savonarola; and how, besides this, it was said throughout Italy that at Arezzo there had been seen and heard in the air armed men fighting together. (Machiavelli 1950, 257)

Machiavelli also names a Roman counterpart of the various voices crying at night mentioned in Mesoamerican texts: "One Marcus Caedicius, a plebeian, reported to the Senate that, passing through

the Via Nuova at midnight, he had heard a voice louder than that of any man which commanded him to notify the Senate that the Gauls were coming to Rome" [258]. Machiavelli, often considered the inventor of "modern man," almost sounds like a Todorovian Aztec when he writes that, although he is not quite certain where to locate the origin of these "spirits, who by their superior intelligence foresee future events," the "truth of the fact exists, that these portents are invariably followed by the most remarkable events." Significantly, Machiavelli makes no mention of divine providence. He definitely favored its secular equivalent, *fortuna*, a force that could be regulated with the help of human willpower or *virtù* (see Reichert 1985, 3040). By having recourse to a concept with pagan (i.e., Greek/Roman) roots and coupling it with a notion of human flexibility of the mind, which may be said to turn Machiavelli into the theorist of the art of "improvisation," he transgresses the confines of Christian providential determinism. The account of portents in the *Discorsi* certainly cannot be taken as an indicator of its author's fatalism. As my previous discussion has suggested, the same statement applies to most of the accounts about such events in Mesoamerica.

The religious providential logic, which the passage from Gómara seeks to reconcile with a secular concept of imperialism, is much stronger than the secular providentialism to be found in Machiavelli. Part of the reason for this is the special position assigned to America by the prophetic thinking of the age. Gómara's text embodies the secularized branch of a philosophy of history whose theological strand becomes most apparent in the writings of the Franciscan friars in Mexico, above all Toribio de Benavente Motolinia. His *Memoriales* are among the earliest documents that contain reports about portents of the fall of Mexico. As the quotations from his epigone Gómara have shown, the omens described in his text (eastern light, fighting heavenly hosts, angel) are clearly derived from a Christian, or more specifically a Franciscan-chiliastic, background. The importance of this particular theological school for our context can hardly be overemphasized: Bernardino de Sahagún and his disciples shared the same tradition.

The centrality of prophetic or eschatological thinking to the Franciscans should quickly be recapitulated. Expanding upon the teachings of Joaquim de Fiore (d. 1202), whose "prophetic" work was not printed until 1519 and is thus synchronous with the *conquista*,

the Franciscans perceived the New World as the hope of the old, degenerated one in Europe (see LaFaye 1976, 3031; Reeves 1976). They regarded America as the place of typological fulfillment, with the events of the *conquista* having been prefigured by events described in the Old and New Testaments. The most important biblical prophecy to be fulfilled on earth was the Revelation of Saint John, which promises the return of the Messiah and, after the final battle with the forces of Antichrist, the millennial kingdom of a New Jerusalem. The idea of the coming of the Messiah was of course very common throughout the Middle Ages, and there was always a rich choice of candidates for the role of Antichrist (see Cohn 1970, Reeves 1969). Apocalyptic expectation disseminated into popular culture, which caused the extension of the Messiah myth to secular leaders such as Frederick Barbarossa in Germany and Charlemagne in France (Phelan 1956, 13). Most medieval emperors were missionary-kings and endowed with Messiah-like qualities (12). We have already seen hints of the providential role of Cortés in the texts of Gómara (and, implicitly, in the texts of Cortés himself), an idea that was to be fully developed by Gerónimo de Mendieta a few decades later (see LaFaye 1976, 31).

But this widespread popular belief in earthly fulfillment of biblical prophecy at the same time posed a considerable challenge to the Catholic Church. Rome, which shared the eschatological thinking of the Franciscans, deeply resented its application to specific earthly events. After all, the concrete expectation of Christ's return collided with the self-image of the pope as the earthly representative of Christ. For the church, then, the belief in the Apocalypse was a factor of integration only as long as it remained historically and politically indeterminate and idealistic (see Koselleck 1979, 22). The discovery of America opened up new possibilities of resolving this conflict. By shifting the place of terrestrial apocalyptic fulfillment from Europe to America, the Franciscans at the same time escaped the danger of persecution. As the millennial kingdom, according to the Franciscans' belief, could begin only after the conversion of all Gentiles, the Indian mission in America was regarded as the vehicle of universal redemption. For them, "the most important aspect of the discovery was not the finding of new lands but the revelation or unveiling of a new part of humanity, the promise of a rich harvest of souls" (LaFaye 1976, 31).

In the first part of the sixteenth century, the climate of messianic expectation must have been considerable: while the Reformation

movement came into full swing, quite a few Franciscans regarded Luther as the Antichrist and plunged into feverish missionary activity in order to bring about the preapocalyptic requirements in America (3234). Understandably, this theological necessity left little room for the appreciation of an independent American history, which had to be included in a biblical-typological framework unless that framework was badly damaged. Christian universalism simply did not allow for the existence of whole peoples altogether untouched by the Christian spirit. This process of integrating the Native Americans into the history of "mankind," which soon found expression in theories about the Indians' Jewish origin, can be seen at work in some of the stories about preconquest portents and in the widespread legend of Quetzalcoatl's promised return.

These considerations should complicate assumptions about the Mexicans' prophetic expectations, as the apocalyptic ring of such expectations can evidently be traced to a certain branch of European theological and, in the case of Cortés and Gómara, secularized thinking. The sources suggest that the European contribution to a prophetic interpretation of the conquest is much more evident than that of native America, whose attitude toward history appears to have been less deterministic and more "open" than the apocalyptic tradition in Europe. Owing to the hybridity of the texts, it is ultimately impossible to figure out the precise distribution of European and Native American intellectual traditions, both of which again greatly varied within themselves. All statements about the "Aztec world picture" before the conquest must necessarily remain tentative. But what can be suggested with relative authority is that the kind of apocalyptic thinking that forms the basis of today's popular beliefs in the legend of Quetzalcoatl's return is less evident for Mesoamerican mentality than for the Judeo-Christian philosophy of history. Of course neither culture can be grasped in terms of an ideal ("cyclical" or "prophetic") type. Rather, both cultural realms were highly heterogeneous in themselves. There was a strong cyclical tradition in Europe, especially among the peasantry, whose life was organized according to pagan rituals and the seasonal cycle. In addition to this, the common people in Mesoamerica, as we shall see, may have entertained utopian hopes not unlike, but still essentially distinct from, European expectations of the return of the Messiah.



One trait was certainly common to both cultures: though in different ways, both furnished events with meanings retrospectively according to current ideological and political requirements. But then the reinvention of history in the service of the present seems to be a practice common to all cultures. In any case, the Mesoamerican concept of history seems to have permitted a similar, if not greater, openness of action than its European equivalent. At the same time it seems to have provided similar grounds for ritualized action. <sup>25</sup> The texts under discussion here were written under the influence of both historiosraphical traditions. They are instances of a process of ideological amalgamation that unites formal structure and thematic elements from both cultures, not without producing discordant notes.

As we have seen, the *Historia general's* full-blown prophetic model of Quetzalcoatl's promised return (including its peripheral component, the "paralyzed leader") is contested, in the same text, by a native tradition of open prognostics that erodes the unifying structure of dynastic historiography. In this very indeterminacy and heterogeneity, the *Historia general* may be seen to reproduce the larger discursive struggles that characterize postconquest Mexican society in the sixteenth century. A key figure in the complex ideological negotiations of the *Historia general* is the Toltec hero-god Quetzalcoatl, whose multiple inscriptions in the texts after the conquista is the topic of the following section.<sup>26</sup>

### A Mexican Madoc?

After having questioned and complicated the common assumptions about a deterministic Aztec world picture, which is thought to have deprived the members of Mesoamerican cultures of the capacity for spontaneous reactions to foreign intrusion, I will now look at the mythical figure of Quetzalcoatl itself. More specifically, I will examine the degree to which the myth of Quetzalcoatl participated in the process of ideological *mestizaje* of postconquest Mexico, primarily in the texts with a Franciscan background.

As we have seen, the earliest text that describes the encounter between Motecuhzoma and Cortés, the *Second Letter* of Cortés himself, does not mention a figure called Quetzalcoatl. Significantly, the oldest source that establishes a link between Cortés and the expected return of Quetzalcoatl is also the one most riddled with

apocalyptic portents and stories of cosmic plagues: Toribio Motolinia's *Memoriales*, written between 1530 and 1546 (Motolinia 1970, 1016). Motolinia's description of the round temple of Quetzalcoatl in Cholula is followed by the remark:

The Indians say that this *Quezalcovatl* was a native of a town they call *Tulla*, which he left to establish the provinces of *Tlaxcalla*, *Huexucinco*, *Chololla*, etc., and who afterward went toward the coast at *Covazucualco*, where he disappeared, and they always expected that he would return [*siempre le esperaban que habia de volver*]; and when the ships of D. Hernando Cortés and the Spaniards who conquered this land appeared, when they saw them come sailing, they said that already there came *Quezalcovatl*, and that he carried temples across the sea; but when they disembarked they said that they were many gods [*pero cuando desembarcaron decian que eran muchos dios*]: in their language they said *quiteteuh*. (Motolinia 1970, 45, my translation) 27

In Motolinia's description Quetzalcoatl first appears as a human leader but is then identified as a god by the natives, a notion that Motolinia despises.<sup>28</sup> In addition, the passage recalls the above-quoted account of the Spaniards' landing in the *Historia general* of Sahagún, which likewise betrays a confusion about numbers. The Spaniards, but not Cortés himself, are initially identified with Quetzalcoatl; an identification that is quickly revised at a very early moment: once the Spaniards disembark, they are only "many gods," or, more precisely, "many god" and the return of Quetzalcoatl, we may assume, is still expected. But the Indians' interpretive shift from Quetzalcoatl to "many gods," as recorded by Motolinia, may likewise recall Columbus's story of the initial identification of the Spaniards as cannibals by the Arawaks, as well as the account of the successive interpretations of the cacique's vision in the *Relación acerca* of Pané. There can indeed be no doubt that at least the Indians of Cholula [where Motolinia was stationed] initially called the Spaniards by the same name that they also gave to their idols which were of course not benevolent gods to be revered in a Christian sense but, as we shall see, a company of demons and tricksters to be feared, respected, and at times outwitted.

The passage from Motolinia's *Memoriales* reveals that Quetzalcoatl was one of the primary deities of Mesoamerica and that his name was also held by priests or priest-kings who kept his office on

earth. The role of the deity Quetzalcoatl is more easily recapitulated than that of the leader (or leaders) of the same name, as sufficient extratextual (mostly sculptural) evidence exists of its many features in Toltec and Aztec mythology. To begin with, Quetzalcoatl was one of the principal deities of the Toltecs, whose empire had disintegrated by the time the Mexica arrived in the Valley of Mexico, but who had handed down innumerable cultural traces to succeeding civilizations. The reign of the Toltecs was generally regarded as a kind of golden age.

Quetzalcoatl figured as a creator god among the Toltecs; he was regarded as the fundamental provider of maize (most important food plant in Mesoamerica) and as the main agent of important cultural achievements: stonecutting, fabrication of featherworks and jewelry, writing, architecture. In his latter quality he figured as the patron deity of the history schools of the nobility, the *calmecacs* (Carrasco 1982, 173). His most common appearance is in the form of Ehécatl, god of winds and hurricanes, who is also associated with rain, moisture, and fertility. Another of his guises is as the god Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli, a personification of the planet Venus (the morning star), who is associated with spiritual transformation. In sculptures Quetzalcoatl is often represented as emerging from the mouth of a feathered snake, hence his name (*quetzal* = feather of the Quetzal bird; *coatl* = snake). The Mexica adopted Quetzalcoatl as part of the twin deity whose other and darker half, Tezcatlipoca (= "smoking mirror"), was associated with warfare, the night, the jaguar (symbolizing the earth), and sorcery. Aptly, Tezcatlipoca was the patron deity of thieves and magicians and lent his features to most ghostly apparitions at night. He was also the patron deity of the schools of commoners (Gillespie 1989, 154; cf. Berdan 1982, 12529). 29

Together, Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca represented the eternal cycle of creation and destructiontheir antagonism practically kept the world going. Tezcatlipoca was the deity who presided over the first of the four successive "suns," or mythical-cosmic ages, which were connected with earth, wind, fire, and water, respectively. According to the *Leyenda de los soles*, the inhabitants of the first sun, "Four Jaguar," were eaten by jaguars when the earth was destroyed; those of the second sun, "Four Wind" (managed by Quetzalcoatl) were carried away by hurricanes and transformed into monkeys; those of the third sun, "Four Rain," were buried under a fiery rain

and turned into chickens; and those inhabiting the fourth sun, "Four Water," were consumed by a deluge and then turned into fish. After the destruction of the fourth sun, the gods made several attempts to create humanity and finally succeeded with the outstanding participation of Quetzalcoatl/Tezcatlipoca, who dissipated the waters of the deluge, hoisted the sky (which had fallen down during the general turmoil) and then created fire (Tezcatlipoca) and humanity (Quetzalcoatl). Meanwhile, other gods created other fundamentals such as rain, night, the stars, and the underworld (*Leyenda* 1974, 32440; cf. Berdan 1982, 12021).

The creation of humanity was not easy. Quetzalcoatl was sent into the underworld by the other gods and had to retrieve the precious bones of the people of past ages from the lord of the underworld, Mictlantecuhtli. After his successful return, the gods splashed their own blood on the bones and ashes, and from this mixture emerged the first man and the first woman. Only then were the sun and the moon created by way of another autosacrifice, and the fifth and present sun, "Four Movement," could begin (Stenzel 1980, 1213; Berdan 1982, 12122).

In most sources, representations of Quetzalcoatl, the creator god, are blended with those of a legendary Toltec leader by the name of Topiltzin Ce Acatl Quetzalcoatl (or either one of these). The relatively un-Christianized *Leyenda de los soles* (ca. 1558) relates that he was the son of Mixcoatl (Camaxtli according to other texts), one of the four hundred Mimixcoa ("cloud snakes") of the Chichimecs, and of his wife, Chimalman. He was born in the year *ce acatl* (one reed) and lived for fifty-six years. According to the *Leyenda* he undertakes several conquests with his father, revenges his father's death against the four hundred murderous uncles and, after many more conquests, moves to Tlapallan on the Gulf Coast, falls sick, and dies. His people bury him (*Leyenda* 1974, 35172). Despite his mythical origin, Quetzalcoatl is here characterized as a man who dies without making any promises.

After his death, the *Leyenda* continues, the Toltec empire slowly disintegrates. Quetzalcoatl's successor, Huemac, is first powerless against the devastating impact of a carnivorous boy (similar to Ixtlilxochitl's red-haired and foul-headed one) and then loses a ball game against the rain gods (similar to the one lost by Maxtlaton). After several disastrous years he is forced by the rain gods to marry

one of his daughters to a leader of the Mexica (i.e., the Aztecs), who are just arriving from the north. Then Toltec power completely declines and the Toltecs are scattered in all directions, as had already been predicted by the rain gods. Political power is transferred to the Aztecs (37879).

Another version of Topiltzin-Quetzalcoatl's life is contained in the *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* (1544/45), a text that seems to be related to the *Leyenda* and was found bound together with it. The *Anales* likewise render Quetzalcoatl as having divine and human qualities at the same time. His mother, Chimalman, conceives him by swallowing an emerald (the birth of Huitzilopochtli, the main god of the Mexica, is often portrayed in a similar way). After burying the bones of his father in the shrine of Quilaztli, Quetzalcoatl arrives at Tollantzinco (Tollan), where the Toltecs elect him as their leader and priest. Ten years later, writes the anonymous chronicler, Quetzalcoatl died at Tollan, "according to the tradition of Texcoco" (*Anales* 1974, 75).<sup>30</sup>

This information is subsequently contradicted by the insertion of a passage that is evidently taken from a source other than the records of Texcoco.<sup>31</sup> Deserting its initial annal form and adapting a more epic tone, the text now relates that in the year in which Quetzalcoatl was first reported to have died, he actually erected his four houses of penance at Tula (Tollan), where he spent his time with fasting and penance rituals, sacrificing snakes, birds, and butterflies (*Anales* 1974, 7576; Bierhorst 1974, 26). He develops several arts and teaches his people the manufacture of jewelry and featherworks and the cultivation of their fields with various food plants. He is described as a great artist and architect who lives in pious reclusion, shielded from the population by his pages. Conflict approaches when certain demons, led by Tezcatlipoca, appear and exhort him to sacrifice human beings, which Quetzalcoatl refuses to do. After eleven more years, Quetzalcoatl dies. "And they say that he went to Tlilan Tlapallan to die" (Bierhorst 1974, 28).

After mentioning the name of his successor, the text takes another chronological backward leap to describe in detail the events of the eleven years that were simply listed before. Apparently, the story of Quetzalcoatl had motivated the chronicler to include as much of the rich oral tradition as possible. The ensuing passage is completely void of a year count and evidently derived from oral tradition:

Then they tell how Quetzalcoatl departed: it was when he refused the sorcerers' decree that he make human offerings, that he sacrifice humans. Thereupon the sorcerers deliberated among themselves, . . . [saying] "He must leave his city, for we shall live here," . . . And they said, "Let us make pulque. We will have him drink it, to corrupt him, so that he will no longer perform his sacraments."

And then Tezcatlipoca said, "I, I say we must give him his body to see!" (2829)

After some entreating Quetzalcoatl apprehends his body in a mirror brought to him by Tezcatlipoca and discovers his ugliness. The sorcerers then dress him in noble garments and make him drunk with pulque. Merry with drink, Quetzalcoatl commits incest with his sister. On the next morning, suffering from the effects of his intoxication and from great remorse, he resolves to leave Tula. His servants bury his treasure, and after a lot of wandering and weeping the party reaches Tlapallan on the coast: "And so in the time, in the year 1 Reed, when he'd reached the sacred shore, the celestial waterso it is told, they saythen he halted and wept and gathered up his attire and put on his plumes, his turquoise mask, et cetera. And when he was dressed, then at once he set fire to himself, he surrendered himself to the flames" (36). His ashes arise, surrounded by precious birds, and his heart rises upward and turns into the morning star. "Such was the life, in its entirety, of him who was called Quetzalcoatl. He was born in 1 Reed. And also he died in 1 Reed, and so it is reckoned he lived for fifty-two years. And so it is finished: in the time, in the year, 1 Reed" (37). No promises. No returnexcept for the symbolic return as the morning star.

The version of the *Anales* clearly represents an amalgamation of various traditions and texts. It contains a strong portion of Mesoamerican mythological motives (Quetzalcoatl's birth, his function as the bringer of cultural achievements, the fight with his dark alter ego, the metamorphosis into the morning star).<sup>32</sup> But certainly this story cannot really be called a "true myth" (Séjourné 1960, 54), as it combines cosmological elements with a more recent historical myth that is pieced together from various cultural backgrounds. Besides the universal mythical motives of incest and the shock inflicted by narcissistic recognition, the story also contains a mystified version of dynastic history: the fall of the Toltec empire is translated into an individual battle between the personification of the primary god of

the Toltecs, Quetzalcoatl, and Tezcatlipoca, one of the main gods of the Mexica. As in other cases, the complex reasons for the fall of an empire are translated into a private drama and a fight between innocent men and sorcerers. Needless to say, the depiction of the Aztecs is not very favorable either. The various traditions gathered in the *Anales* clearly do not stem from the last ruling class itself. The Toltec past, by contrast, is evoked as an equivalent of the European golden age.

The tradition of the pious and benevolent Toltec leader Quetzalcoatl was fully consolidated in the *Historia general* of Sahagún. We first encounter Quetzalcoatl in the third book as the Toltec priest, whose characterization largely agrees with that in the *Anales*.<sup>33</sup> But whereas the *Anales* depict Quetzalcoatl as a priest-king, he is now clearly distinguished from the king of the Toltecs, Huemac, whom the *Leyenda* had named as his successor. Both the spiritual and the political leader become the victims of the tricks of Tezcatlipoca, now called Titlacahuan. Quetzalcoatl gets drunk on pulque and is told by Tezcatlipoca to leave for Tlapallan. After Tezcatlipoca, by adopting another disguise, has succeeded in marrying Huemac's daughter and after the Toltecs are badly decimated because of the sorcerers' dealings, Quetzalcoatl finally leaves for the east coast. After extensive wanderings he reaches Tlapallan: "Thereupon he fashioned a raft of serpents. When he had arranged [the raft], there he placed himself, as if it were his boat. Then he set off going across the sea. No one knows how he came to arrive there at Tlapallan!" (Sahagún 195082, 3:36).

In addition to the quite unconvincing separation of church and state, which must be attributed to the European influence of Sahagún's disciples, the version of the *Historia general* dispenses with any reference to the mythical birth and final transformation of Quetzalcoatl found in the two previous sources. Similarly, the historical-dynastic part of the *Anales* here appears in a truncated and diluted form. And again, there is no mention of a promised or expected return of Quetzalcoatl. Like Prince Madoc, he simply disappears.

Book 10 mentions a heavily Christianized god Quetzalcoatl. He is represented as the single god of the Toltecs, who accepts sacrifices only in the form of snakes and butterflies from the priests bearing his name. The *priest-king* Quetzalcoatl is only said to have led his people to Tlapallan (11:170).

The famous notion of Quetzalcoatl's return finally appears in the passage, already quoted, from the last book of Sahagún (book 12). There the arrival of the first Spaniards at the coast of the mainland is earmarked with a comment similar to the one in Motolinía's text: "they [the Indians] thought that Quetzalcoatl Topiltzin had come" (13:5). The rest of the story, culminating with Motecuhzoma's speech (in which he does not mention Quetzalcoatl), has already been outlined above.

The data to be gathered from these four texts still provide quite meager support for the scholarly return legend: the mythical-historical expositions about the god and Toltec leader Quetzalcoatl do not refer to any promise of his return; only the accounts of the first sighting of the Spaniards mention an *expectation* of his impending arrival. Both of these sources, Motolinía and Sahagún, were compiled under strong Franciscan-eschatological influence. In addition, the passage from Motolinía quickly revises its own statement that the Indians took the Spaniards for the returning leader (not god!) Quetzalcoatl and replaces it with the general identification of the Spaniards with "gods" (*quiteteuh*).

Thus, despite considerable inconsistencies in the source material (and this is only a summary of the main texts), two competing mythical narratives seem to evolve: a predominantly native one, according to which the priest-king Quetzalcoatl-Topiltzin disappears in the east without any promises (*Anales, Leyenda, Historia general*), and a more clearly Christianized one. The latter describes Quetzalcoatl as a god or leader who was expected back and with whom the Spaniards were initially confused until they received the more general epithet *quiteteuh*. Sahagún's *Historia general* gets very close to uniting the two traditions when the authors claim to know what Motecuhzoma "thought": that the Spaniards were "Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl who had arrived" (13:9). Although not even the *Historia general* explicitly claims that Motecuhzoma "thought" Cortés to be identical with the returning Quetzalcoatl, it seems to be the textual site at which the myth began.

But the "Franciscanized" documents seem to contain a native component that does not appear in the "native" texts, the *Anales* and the *Leyenda*. In one of the most astounding passages of the *Historia general*, Sahagún's famous "confutación" at the end of book 1, the polyvocal and dialogic character of the collection becomes more



evident than ever. Whereas in many instances the Franciscan's shaping hand can be discerned through critical reading, it here intervenes directly in order to launch a thundering attack at his disciples' nativist leanings. After denouncing several other gods as demons and necromancers, Sahagún turns to Quetzalcoatl:

These, the ancients, worshipped an idol (called) Quetzalcoatl, who was ruler at Tula. And you named him Topiltzin.

He was a man. He was mortal, for he died; for his body corrupted. He is no god.

And though a man of saintly life, who performed penances, he was not to be worshipped as a god. The things which he did (which were) like miracles, we know he did only through the command of the devil. He is a friend of devils. Therefore he must needs be accursed and abominated; for our Lord God hath caused him to be thrust into the land of the dead. The ancients held that Quetzalcoatl want to Tlapallan; (that) yet he will return. He is still expected. This is not true; this is falsehood. For his body died; here on earth it became dust, it became filth. And his soul our Lord God damned and caused to be thrown into the land of the dead. In that place it is. It will forever suffer in the flames.  
(Sahagún 195082, 1:3940)

Sahagún's wrath at his students must have been considerable. After all, not only does the passage reveal that "the ancients," which include the surviving keepers of the oral tradition of Tenochtitlán and Tlatelolco (Carrasco 1982, 193), speak of Quetzalcoatl's expected return from Tlapallan, but it also reveals that Quetzalcoatl's return was expected at the very date when Sahagún wrote his confutation ("He is still expected"). A parallel passage is found in Sahagún's own prologue to book 8, where he describes the Toltec leader Quetzalcoatl as a "great necromancer and inventor of necromancy" and compares his activities among the natives with those of King Arthur among the English. The fall of Tollan is rendered thus:

This city was destroyed and this king put to flight. They say he traveled to the east, that he went to the city of the sun called Tlapallan, and that he was summoned by the sun. And they say he is still alive and that he is to reign again and rebuild that city which [his enemies] destroyed. And so to this day they await him.

And when Don Hernán Cortés came [the natives] thought it was he. And they received, they took Cortés as such until his behavior and that of those who came with him disabused them [hasta que, su conuersacion, y la de los, que con el venian, los desengaño]. (1:6970)

Here we finally learn, for the first time and from the pen of Sahagún himself, of an identification of Cortés with Quetzalcoatl, whose return was apparently expected by the people. Again, there are clear references to the oral character of this tradition ("they say"; "to this day they await him"). There is no mention, however, that *Motecuhzoma* confused Cortés with Quetzalcoatl. In keeping with this, Sahagún's characterization of Motecuhzoma likewise deviates from that given by his native authors. He emphasizes his bravery, warlikeness, strategical skills, splendid management of government affairs, and cruelty (70). The hiatus between the native version of events and that of the Franciscan friar is remarkable. It illustrates the rupture within the *Historia general*, which is all too often disregarded by traditional readings of the text. These passages illuminate the conflict between attempts of the native authors to paint Quetzalcoatl in Christian colors, to turn a rather uncertain expectation of his coming into a fait accompli and Motecuhzoma into a trembling coward, and the opposite attempt of their master Sahagún to contest such an idealization of a native "sorcerer." If the Indians' belief that the Spaniards were identical with the god Quetzalcoatl had persisted only as long as the invaders behaved nicely, it cannot have been entertained for very long and it certainly cannot have been entertained by Motecuhzoma when he greeted Cortés.

Most importantly however, these passages refer to an oral tradition among the inhabitants of Mexico, who appear to have nourished a nativistic and revivalist hope that their ancient leader-god would come and liberate them from Spanish bondage. The existence of such an underground belief within postconquest Mexican society is further suggested by other native texts. The anonymous *Codex Vaticanus A* (also called *Codex Ríos*), which dates from the same period as the *Historia general* (after 1566), relates that Quetzalcoatl (who is here a mixture of wind god and Toltec leader), before entering the sea at Tlapallan, had told his people to wait for his return,

which would take place when the time was ripe, and so they are still waiting for him today. When the Spaniards arrived in this country they believed it would be him, and today, after the year 1550, when the Zapotecs rose up they explained it with their belief that this god has come, as was expected, to redeem them. Quetzalcoatl was born on a day One Reed and so they had thought that the Spaniards must be their god, because they say that he had prophecied the coming of

a bearded people who would subject them. (quoted after Stenzel 1980, 33; my translation)

The whole passage is quite contradictory, as it traces the identification of the Spaniards with Quetzalcoatl (again this blending of singular and plural) to a coincidence of dates which, as we have seen in the comments of Nathan Wachtel and others, was later expanded by scholarship.<sup>34</sup> Further confusion is created by the reference to the expectation of two parties: Quetzalcoatl himself and the bearded conquerors. This seeming competition of *two* simultaneous return myths was smoothed out in later scholarly versions, which conjoined them by turning Quetzalcoatl into a bearded god who had promised his return.<sup>35</sup> This, as well as the fusion of the god Quetzalcoatl with the Toltec leader, shows that this text, which had been written down by a Dominican friar, has been exposed to the alienating influence of various forms of post-conquest mythologization. The short quotation indicates the beginning of the further divarication of the myth in the mid-sixteenth century.

But the most crucial aspect of the passage from the *Codex Vaticanus A* is its reference to the Zapotec revolt of 1550, from which we can however tentatively infer a connection between the contemporary belief in the coming of Quetzalcoatl and native resistance against Spanish rule. From the 1550s onward, then (if not before that), the Quetzalcoatl myth may have served as ideological munition to support Indian resistance movements. The evidence of such a use is scant, however. Ironically, the information of the possible existence of such a nativistic expectation is partly based on Sahagún's attempt to mitigate its influence in his text. But apparently his disclaimer was not strong enough for saving the *Historia general* from royal censure. This remarkably dialogic compound product was not published until the nineteenth century.

The existence of a counterhegemonic Quetzalcoatl myth is further suggested by two later texts. Ixtlilxochitl, whose work is dated around 1600 and contains an adventurous mix of contradictory earlier versions, modifies his account of Topiltzin-Quetzalcoatl's death by adding that many Indians believed that he and other Toltec kings still lived in Xico and that he had not gone to Tlapallan, as well as "three hundred other fables that they still believe, that he must leave that place someday, just as the Portuguese still believe that the King D.

Sebastian will return and that he is still alive" (Ixtilxochitl 1952, 1:56; my translation).

Like Ixtilxochitl, Chimalpahin was a good convert and thus relates the common belief in the coming of Quetzalcoatl without much personal concern. In his version (161530), which is apparently based on current oral tradition, Topiltzin, king of Tollan, died in 1051 after promising that he would come back to resurrect the Toltec empire. All of the nine rulers of Tenochtitlán were aware of this prophecy, especially Motecuhzoma, who was uncertain whether Cortés was Quetzalcoatl or not. Chimalpahin adds his own opinion that Tollan was destroyed by Our Lord Jesus Christ because of its great sins and that Topiltzin had gone in the direction of the sunrise because he had been called by the sun (a nice example of Mesoamerican syncretism): "And in the following manner the old men of distant times say: 'He himself lives and endures, who will never yet die, and he will come again, he who comes to rule' " (Chimalpahin 1958, 12, 12728; my translation). Chimalpahin also mentions that the Mexica rulers belonged to the lineage of Quetzalcoatl, that this lineage still existed, and that it would reclaim its imperial power once again.

The texts of both Ixtilxochitl and Chimalpahin thus suggest the existence of a nativistic-revivalist belief in Quetzalcoatl's return at the beginning of the seventeenth century, a belief from which even the serious convert Chimalpahin does not altogether distance himself. Franciscan millennial structure and native counterhegemonic oral tradition finally merge in these texts.

Clearly, this underground belief is not identical with the "scholarly" versions that evolved over the centuries. If anything, it merely indicates that the Spaniards might have been confused with Quetzalcoatl at the beginning but that the error was soon detected. But even this statement may apply more to the mental climate from which the cited texts arose than to genuine impressions of the Mexicans at the first encounter. If, as Motolinia claims, a nativistic expectation of Quetzalcoatl existed when the Spaniards arrived, other texts claim that it existed *after* the *conquista* as well and may even have fueled native resistance such as the Zapotec revolt of 1550. As we have seen, such underground beliefs in the return of mythical political leaders and the comeback of a mythical golden age were also a widespread feature in European societies. The question that

can no longer be answered with certainty is whether the "structure of expectation" was a recent European import, aptly turned against the invaders, or whether it had a foundation in Mesoamerican tradition as well.

As we could have expected, the most important native texts do not reveal what Motecuhzoma "really" thought about Cortés when he first met him and the European texts give little hope of clarification. The Dominican friar Diego Durán, desperately rummaging Mexican history for proofs of pre-Columbian Christianization, established the famous link between Quetzalcoatl-Topiltzin and Saint Thomas, the only apostle who went far enough east to have had a chance of reaching America (see LaFaye 1976).<sup>36</sup> This gave rise to further speculation about Quetzalcoatl's foreign (i.e., European) origins, which usually went hand in hand with the above-mentioned depiction of Cortés as a providential leader. Quetzalcoatl's prophecy of the coming of white and bearded men became an important ingredient of this school (Tovar, Las Casas, Mendieta, Acosta).

It was reserved for the Franciscan friar Juan de Torquemada to reconcile the providentialist myth with a secular-humanist tradition. He describes the Toltecs as noble superhumans, an elaboration of their noble character and extraordinary abilities already mentioned in the *Anales* and the *Historia general*. According to Torquemada's thesis, they owed these qualities to their earlier mingling with a foreign people of unknown origin (Torquemada suggests Rome, Carthage, and Ireland). That people's leader was called Quetzalcoatl and was of course not expected to return because he had already come from a distant land (Wales?). While Torquemada feels obliged to relate the by now (1600) well known story of Quetzalcoatl's expected return and his identification with the Spaniards, he cannot resist adding: "This lie had preserved itself in those times" (Torquemada 1975, 1:25455, my translation). With Torquemada, then, a secular European tradition could happily join the various other branches {native and ecclesiastical} of a mythological discourse that owed its success to the fact that it offered a retrospective legitimation for the usurpation of native power to the conquerors, a means to overcome the traumatic consequences of the *conquista* to the native chroniclers, and the ideological substrate for future Native American resistance against Spanish domination.

Owing to its polyvocal character and multiple authorship, the *Historia general* presents the perhaps most inconsistent version of the myth. It thereby reflects the Mexicans' concern with rescuing parts of their mythical tradition and their efforts to compensate the traumatic reality of colonization. Consequently, the several pieces on Quetzalcoatl that the authors give may rather be read as a series of attempts of Mexican native intellectuals within postconquest society to come to terms with their recent past by integrating the figure of Quetzalcoatl into the providential framework that was superimposed on their own culture by their Franciscan education. They do not, however, pose genuine accounts of Mexican reality in 1520.

What can be said after these lengthy elaborations is that Quetzalcoatl was a multifaceted figure in Mesoamerican texts at the time following the Spanish arrival. What can be positively *excluded* now is the claim that Motecuhzoma confused Cortés with Quetzalcoatl, as the earlier texts contain no evidence for this claim. The modern scholarly myth as presented by Todorov and others is the product of a selective reading and arbitrary combination of various texts. The process of selection and combination is guided by an ideology of the cultural superiority of the victorious culture. It does not distinguish between the different "voices" of the texts it cites in support of such a view between those of the colonizer and those of the colonized. In my own attempt to piece together the various fragments of the myth I have tried to acknowledge this crucial difference even where both voices have become almost indistinguishable because they share the same incomplete text.

The reality of 1520 cannot be grasped today in any satisfactory way. Still, to say that for us it only consists of a number of contradictory texts, and that there is no possibility of tracing these contradictions back to the history of cultural conflict that produced them, would amount to not only a renunciation of historical scholarship but also a denial of an alternative indigenous history whose existence, as we have seen, is hinted at by numerous textual traces. Even if these traces cannot be recomposed to form a complete Mesoamerican counternarrative (the "completeness" of the European tradition is itself merely the result of its rhetorical arrangement), it should be possible for us to draw a few careful conclusions from the

scant evidence we have, if only to contest the widespread notion that pre-Columbian America was a continent without a history of its own. What follows, then, are a number of speculations about what the pre-Cortesian reality of the Quetzalcoatl myth may have looked like. These speculations draw their justification from the fact that the dominant historiography sketched above is hardly less speculative but certainly more complicit with the persistent notion of Western superiority over non-Western peoples.

### Quetzalcoatl and the Negotiation of Imperial Anxiety

Chimalpahin, the chronicler of Culhuacan and Chalco, supplied a valuable piece of information that might take us closer towards the "native point of view" and that is supported by other sources as well: in the above quote (p. 127) he refers to the common opinion that the nine kings of the Mexica (i.e., Aztec) dynasty belonged to the lineage of Quetzalcoatl, that this lineage still persisted, and that it would reclaim the rule over Mexico one day (Chimalpahin 1958, 127). This seems to contradict the generally held opinion, reinforced by the "historical" expositions in the *Leyenda* and the *Historia general*, that the Mexica were a nomadic or Chichimec tribe that had come from the north (their mythical place of origin, Aztlan) and invaded the Valley of Mexico in the twelfth century when the Toltec empire had already disintegrated.

New insight is to be gained from a document dating from 1532, the *Juan Cano relaciones*, also called *Origen de los mexicanos*, which was drawn up by a Spanish friar on behalf of Juan Cano and his wife, Doña Isabel. Its purpose was to secure a share of feudal property to the couple by proving Doña Isabel's noble lineage via her father, Motecuhzoma. This text traces Motecuhzoma's lineage directly to Quetzalcoatl-Topiltzin of Tollan. The document, too biased to be entirely trusted, claims that the Tenochtitlán dynasty inherited the rule over Mexico from the Toltecs by way of the rulers of Culhuacan, who were of Toltec descent (Soustelle 1955, 11415; Carrasco 1982, 36; Stenzel 1980, 18). This information ties in with the marriage theme in both the *Leyenda de los soles* and the *Historia general*: according to both documents, Huemac, the last Toltec ruler, is forced (by the rain gods; by sorcery) to marry his daughter to a representative of the Mexica.

Several other sources allow the conclusion that the Mexica politically bolstered their military ascension to supremacy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with a series of diplomatic marriages into the ranks of the remnants of the Toltec empire, who lived at Culhuacan. This social and symbolic translation of empire was accomplished by 1375 and cleared the path for legitimate Mexica rulership (Carrasco 1982, 15657). The similarities with dynastic practice in Europe are clear. But the wholesale acquisition of Toltec cultural heritage that accompanied Mexica-Toltec intermarriage was much more rigid than, say, the early medieval emperors' ideological orientation at imperial Rome in Europe. According to Carrasco, the Mexica not only adopted the language spoken at Culhuacan but also changed their farming methods and expanded their pantheon. They pragmatically acquired political supremacy at the cost of "contaminating" their previous cultural identity. This cultural openness, a prerequisite for exercising political power, is the reason for what may appear as a chaotic "job sharing" among the Aztec gods and for the frequent mingling of divine attributes. Thus Quetzalcoatl, the central deity of the Toltecs, was welcomed to the Aztec pantheon as the benevolent part of Tezcatlipoca while simultaneously sharing certain functions with the main deity of the Aztecs, Huitzilopochtli. The process of transculturation was finally sealed in about 1430, when Mexica overlordship became firmly established in the Valley of Mexico.

According to some documents, an extraordinary case of historiographical manipulation took place at that time: Itzcoatl, ruler of the Mexica, ordered the burning of codices with the explanation that "It is useless for everyone to know black ink, red ink [the codices]. He who is borne, who is carried on the back [the people] will behave badly, and the earth will be prey to intrigues. That is why numerous lies have been fabricated and many have had themselves adored like gods" (quoted after Gruzinski 1989, 25).<sup>37</sup> Book 10 of the *Historia general* contains a similar account relating that the history of the Chichimeca (Aztecs) "was burned when Itzcoatl ruled in Mexico. A council of rulers of Mexico took place. They said: 'It is not necessary for all the common people to know of the writings; government will be deformed, and this will only spread sorcery in the land; for it containeth many falsehoods' " (Sahagún 195082, 11:191).<sup>38</sup>

If the quotations were given any credence, they would refer to a considerable anxiety of power among the rising Mexica dynasty.



Such anxiety, as the quote from Sahagún suggests, may in part be attributed to tendencies among the subject peoples to adore "false saints" instead of clinging to the officially prescribed creed. These populist leaders were known as *ixiptla*, or man-gods according to Gruzinski, personifications or reincarnations (literally, *ixiptla* means "skin," "bark," "envelope") of divine power, that is, of the Toltec god Quetzalcoatl.

Apparently, the Mexica were in danger of losing the grip of power by the appearance of an increasing number of populist *ixiptlas* claiming spiritual leadership for themselves or for the districts (*calpulli*) they represented. As Gruzinski states, the burning of the codices initiated an extensive process of ideological purification. In an ideological process that may remind us of the reinvention of the Madoc legend to serve British imperial interests, the Aztecs' nomad Chichimeca past was replaced with an unequivocal Toltec heritage, and the *ixiptla* were either assassinated or forced to choose between a spiritual or secular profession. Whereas the belief in man-gods was institutionalized by encouraging purely mystical vocations on the one hand and by officially turning sacrificial victims into short-term man-gods on the other, the popular aspirations became ritualized and were thereby defused. And not quite unlike the way in which the medieval European popular hope for the return of the Messiah was defused by endowing emperors with messianic qualities, the original political-spiritual double inscription of the *ixiptla* was transferred to the Mexica leaders themselves (Gruzinski 1989, 2526).<sup>39</sup> This process resulted in a further consolidation and centralization of power and a sharpening of social distinctions. It is also a clear instance of the appropriation of subversive popular tendencies by the dominant social group, and again testifies to the flexibility of the Mexica elite in dealing with resistance from the lower ranks and regional powers.

Moteczuhzoma's decision to admit Cortés and his men into Tenochtitlán may appear in a different light now. The Aztecs' politics seem to have consisted in a partial containment and redistribution of threatening impulses from below or outside and not in their total marginalization or exclusion, a method by which alone no power would be able to persist.

If the Mexica undertook so many efforts to rewrite their past and trace their lineage to Quetzalcoatl, the Toltec deity must indeed have

exerted a powerful influence in Mesoamerica. This conclusion is sufficiently supported by sculptural and other nontextual evidence (see Carrasco 1982; Séjourné 1960; Gillespie 1989). David Carrasco's analysis of Mesoamerican settlement structures (of the cities of Teotihuacan, Cholula, Tollan, Xochicalco, Chichén Itza, and Tenochtitlán) has revealed that the Quetzalcoatl cult was the organizing symbol of all ceremonial and political life. As such, it was also the legitimating principle of power and authority in Mesoamerica (Carrasco 1982, 2, 55, et passim). Following Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner, Carrasco identifies the "symbol of Quetzalcoatl" as a "root paradigm" that, by operating within a society through everyday practice and reaching beyond the cognitive level of human action, ensures the cohesion of that society (by sanctioning political power) but at the same time bears a subversive potential (174).<sup>40</sup> The figure of Quetzalcoatl would thus have functioned as an implicit organizational principle or "deep model of action" (Carrasco 1982, 175) of Mesoamerican societies that was adopted and integrated by the Mexica as the only means of attaining and sustaining political power.<sup>41</sup>

An interesting picture evolves from the consideration of this new evidence. Todorov's dichotomy vanishes behind the impression that Aztec politics did bear remarkable similarities with aspects of Spanish and English national-colonial policy. The Machiavellian treatment of religion cannot escape recognition: the state policy appears to have been guided by the principle, shared by the Spaniards, that the "knowledge" of the subject people's culture and the infiltration of their religious beliefs are the necessary precondition of, or at least the most secure path toward, political domination.<sup>42</sup>

But the power of the Mexica, increasingly condensed in a small ruling elite, became more and more threatened from within the conquered provinces. Their response consisted in reinforcing their lofty position by a tyrannic reign, which probably led to the increasing numbers of human sacrifices and a perversion of the spiritual origins of that practice. Most historians agree that the political and ideological foundations of Aztec power were stretched to the breaking point at the time of the Spaniards' arrival owing to the incapacity of the Triple Alliance to manage the conquered provinces.<sup>43</sup> David Carrasco mentions the "anxiety" that usually accompanies a reign based on such a policy of oppression: "While the Aztecs had claimed

divine right to the Toltec legitimacy . . . they suffered the anxiety that their authority was illegitimate. . . . Both their claim to legitimacy and their anxiety about destruction were partly identified with Quetzalcoatl and Tollan" (150).

At this point it would be tempting to allow the trope of "paralyzed leader" back to the company of historical truths. Carrasco in fact follows this path, which leads him to accept not only the stories about the debilitating effects of preconquest omens but also, sadly enough, Motecuhzoma's speech as related by Cortés (151, 18789, 2023). In doing so, Carrasco transfers a cultural or social form of anxiety to the personal psyche of Motecuhzoma. To be sure, most psychoanalytical categories are difficult to apply to social rather than individual processes. But it is important to overcome such a restriction. The "anxiety of power" to which Carrasco refers, and which evidently accompanied European colonial action as well as Aztec power politics, becomes manifest only by its effects, such as the ideological manipulation of history and religious belief, the concentration of power in a few hands, and similar phenomena. It should certainly not be confused with the kind of hysteria attested to Motecuhzoma by Sahagún's authors and some exponents of modern scholarship.

If the concept were applied to Motecuhzoma as the representative of Aztec power, it would seem proper to recall Freud's distinction between various forms of anxiety. In the context of the Mexicas' repeated active suppression of *ixiptla*, Motecuhzoma's anxiety with regard to Cortés would more likely correspond to what Freud has termed *Realangst* (as opposed to neurotic anxiety with its paralyzing effects). If the Indians of Chohula (according to Motolinia), and perhaps even Motecuhzoma himself, initially identified Cortés as an incarnation of Quetzalcoatl, that is, an *ixiptla*, the anxiety arising from this identification would have been of a concrete kind: for Motecuhzoma, *ixiptla* was a familiar category. This form of *Realangst*, it should be noted, usually results in the very opposite of paralysis. It causes concrete and decisive action (Freud 1977, 309). And if Motecuhzoma was in a state of imperial anxiety (on which not all experts agree), this is precisely the form it took, according to the traces of the alternative account of his behavior contained in the *Historia general*.

While the point about Motecuhzoma's and the Aztec dynasty's fear is suggestive in terms of the ideological instability of all narratives

of the legitimation of oppression, it would seem important to note that Motecuhzoma's anxiety with regard to the disruptive force of Cortés and his company was probably very concrete. Not only is his decision to allow him into Tenochtitlán after the failure of his magicians in keeping with Mesoamerican attitudes toward strangers and ambassadors, but he may also have fancied this to be the easiest way to rid himself of the intruder. 44

As already mentioned, the Mexicas' invention of their Toltec past was accompanied by the claim that their leaders were incarnations of both Quetzalcoatl (Toltec) and Huitzilopochtli (Aztec) at the same time.<sup>45</sup> This must have led to an interesting configuration in which the Aztec rulers, official personifications of appropriated Quetzalcoatl, were confronted with the persistent popular belief in the "reincarnation" of Quetzalcoatl from within their own ranks.<sup>46</sup> In the light of this competition between ruling elite and tribute-paying provinces over questions of political-spiritual legitimacy and identity, the idea that Motecuhzoma might have confused Cortés with Quetzalcoatl is not without irony. Although Motecuhzoma's real sensations concerning Cortés must remain a topic of endless speculation, it is probable that he initially took Cortés to be one of those *ixiptla* who turned up periodically to challenge Mexica leadership a rival from the fringes of his empire who might best be dealt with on a diplomatic basis (not excluding the possibility of later assassination). Following Carrasco, we might call it the "irony of empire" that the destruction of the Mexica dynasty was later explained with a fiction that bears a striking resemblance to their own strategies of historical manipulation and ideological appropriation of native myths.

This is not to deny that Motecuhzoma's admittedly careful reaction to the offenses of Cortés may partly have resulted from a similar anxiety of illegitimate rulership as that which inspired Cortés's invention of the ancient Spanish-Mexican leader in order to divert attention from the illegitimacy of his own action. If Cortés constructed, in his letter to King Charles, the fiction of Spanish lineage with a distant Mexican leader whose empire the Spaniards were to inherit, he may well have unknowingly reproduced a counterhegemonic native mythical structure that fueled the resistance of the common people against Aztec domination and later against Spanish domination as well.

A common trait of both Mexican political power and political power in Europe was their privileging of mythical narratives of origin to an inconvenient nostalgia for historical truth. The truism that history is shaped retrospectively in the service of current political needs could hardly find stronger support than in this case of the construction of legitimate rulership on the basis of lineage by two successive imperial powers. The irony of imperial history is that one of these powers was on the decline while the other, fueled by recent reconquest and a universalist providential ideology, had only recently set out to conquer the world.

The recognition that the history of Mexico is to a large part the ideological product of both pre- and postconquest historiographic mythmaking has led several scholars to dispense with any attempt to reconstruct a past that they deem to be entirely beyond their reach (see, for example, Rabasa 1993, chapter 3). Susan Gillespie, with whose deconstruction of the Cortés-Quetzalcoatl myth I largely agree, has developed the theory that the Aztecs not only reinvented their own past, molding it into a tight structure of the cyclical repetition of rulership, but also meddled with Toltec history in order to prolong their cyclical concept into the distant past (Gillespie 1989, xli et passim). My reservation about her approach is that her interpretation responds suspiciously well to the binary method of structuralist analysis a method that at times leads her to dehistoricize the material.

According to Gillespie's theory, the Mexica turned Quetzalcoatl into what she calls the "recycled king" of Mesoamerica and projected the fate of Motecuhzoma, the last incarnation of Quetzalcoatl, back to former rulers who played similar roles at certain historical turning points. The selection of Motecuhzoma is of course in itself highly problematic, as there were two further rulers of Mexico before the fall of Tenochtitlán. Why not project back the fate of Cuauhtémoc? The decision to choose Motecuhzoma would already seem to comply with a Eurocentric historiography that equates the "fall" of Mexico with the invented *translatio imperii* of Cortés. Gillespie's argument gets into acute danger when she tries to interpret the meeting of Motecuhzoma and Cortés as a cyclical repetition of the mythical struggle between Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca (15457). Obviously, there is no textual evidence to support an identification of Cortés with Tezcatlipoca although the idea does not lack a certain fascination. 47

But another of the thoughts Gillespie develops is quite intriguing: she suggests regarding the Aztecs' notorious inclinations to reinvent their history according to political needs as a reason for their "underdeveloped" writing system. It would obviously have been too troublesome to burn the codices every once in a while instead of keeping the paintings rare and ambiguous and just altering the oral narrative that accompanied them (xxvi). 48

The problem with Gillespie's theory of the "quick and profound" postconquest realignment of Mesoamerican history is that it is hard to imagine in actuality, as it seems to depend on the notion of a kind of ideological mastermind or collective intention that dictated and coordinated the historiographical alterations. Gillespie's attempt to squeeze the material into a rigid structuralist model illustrates once more the quality of the myth to pose unsurpassable problems for traditional source criticism as well as for structuralist and semiotic attempts to explain it. All of them ultimately fail in trying to subject the texts to a logic of origins or to a binary system. Any treatment of a complex historical process such as the *conquista* of Tenochtitlán has to take into account the dialogic and heterogeneous character of the texts, no matter how unsatisfactory and "incomplete" the results of the analysis may be.

The myth of Quetzalcoatl's "return" (in its implicit sense of messianic fulfillment) was engendered some time around 1550 in a situation of ideological flux and deep cultural uncertainty. It must be regarded as the ideological outcome of the persistent need for colonial justification on the one hand and of postconquest trauma and cultural disruption on the other. This condition of temporary flux and discursive chaos soon merged into a process of discursive and ideological adaptation, regulation, and realignment to serve the needs of both colonizers and subjects of colonization. The Spanish friars fitted the native god-hero Quetzalcoatl into their messianic historical structure, and the Mexicans conversely appropriated that structure to their own political ends. Both sides were interested in producing a "paralyzed" Motecuhzoma who is either the victim of universal providence or of his own megalomania. The ideological outcome, the presentation of Motecuhzoma greeting Cortés as the returning god Quetzalcoatl, acquired dominance only at a very late point and was fully exploited in romanticist and Eurocentric historiographical writing.

The myth ultimately owes its existence to a strange similarity between two "nomadic" societies and their respective cultural narratives for legitimating imperialist action. Both Spaniards and Aztecs construed their national lineage and identity on the foundation of a series of strategic repressions of political guilt: the sanctification of sacrificial victims as man-gods and the passing off of Motecuhzoma's imprisonment as a result of a combination of imperial donation and native treachery are two of the crudest examples of this process. On both sides, the tactical adaptation of underground myths was a central element of the consolidation of power: we have witnessed a similar process in the English nationalists' translation of the Welsh legend of Prince Madoc into an instrument of English colonial expansion. The particular quality of the Quetzalcoatl myth is that it derives from a dialogical process between otherwise quite dissimilar cultures (clearly the difference between Spanish and Aztec culture was much greater than that between English and Welsh, or Aztec and Toltec, culture) but perhaps it owes its longevity to precisely this power to bridge such a cultural hiatus, to activate elements of structural similarity from a mass of cultural difference.

The analyses in this and the previous chapter have shown quite a few similarities between Mexican, Spanish, and English constructions of a history of origins. A history, it seems, that is indispensable for extending political control to other peoples. One of the main differences between European and Mesoamerican strategies is that the Aztecs achieved dominion not only by adopting their view of historical origins from the people they were seeking to dominate but also by reorienting many of their cultural practices. Spain and England, by contrast, were in the process of fixing in language and print a unified and homogeneous national identity, which they sought to trace back to classical antiquity. Ironically, then, the European sense of cultural identity now appears to have been less flexible than that of the Mexicans, who had, at least until quite recently, apparently been less afraid of cultural amalgamation.

As Eric Cheyfitz and others have pointed out, the translation of empire that was effected in the consolidation of nation-states in sixteenth-century Spain and England was accompanied by a consolidation and homogenization of language. 49 Antonio de Nebrija's by now proverbial comment on the use of his Castilian grammar of 1492,

that language had always been the companion of empire, is perhaps the most explicit statement of this complicity of language and imperialism. 50 Not surprisingly, Nebrija was a close friend of the Italian humanist qua historian of Spanish westward expansion Peter Martyr, for whose *Decades* he wrote two prefaces (see Cro 1990, 1924). Obviously, the Spanish censors who prohibited the printing of the *Historia general* of Sahagún, in part because of its "excessive" use of Nahuatl, were not the first to realize the importance of controlling communication as the only means for controlling people (see Adorno 1986, 14). Itzcoatl must have known this as well.

Thus the language of the Mexican people was silenced in official discourse (and has been until our own century) for fear of a loss of ideological control. But the silencing of it was accompanied by an act of reinvention through the colonial power itself: the "speeches" of Motecuhzoma and other leaders have become some of the most powerful rhetorical instruments in the legitimation of rulership. Thus any claim to the dialogic character of the Mexican material must be made with care. Certainly Motecuhzoma's "speech" does not pose such a dialogic element within European colonial discourse. It rather represents one of the sharpest rhetorical weapons that that discourse could invent. What better news could there possibly be for a conquering power than the information that the seat of the ruler had been kept warm for it for centuries and would now be generously transferred? The larger discursive context of the *conquista* as we know it today not only belies such complacent notions of cultural electedness but also proves the existence of a "history from below" (or "from elsewhere") that the hegemonic discourse could never altogether silence. It succeeded to do so only toward the European public, which had been its main addressee from the very beginning.

We will return to the trope of the native speech in a later chapter (4). For now it is important to note that Richard Hakluyt, contrary to Tzvetan Todorov, realized the ideological quality of Motecuhzoma's "oration" and deleted it from the second edition of the *Principall Navigations*, together with the fables of David Ingram and Sir John Mandeville (Hakluyt 1905, 7:134). As we shall see, the speeches of native rulers, in spite of their crucial function of advertising the superiority of colonial power, were never quite free from subversion.<sup>51</sup>

The analysis of the genealogy of the Quetzalcoatl myth in postconquest Mexico necessarily remains the only attempt within



this book to reconstruct, in however fragmented and incomplete fashion, something like the native perspective on the European invasion of America. Thanks to the existence of postconquest native Mexican texts, it is possible to develop at least a tentative dialogical picture of the colonial encounter. In the chapters to follow the chances of reconstruction are next to nonexistent, and it becomes increasingly clear that the European texts are speaking solely to themselves.

## Chapter 3

### The Politics of Colonial Representation

The textualization of the Spanish experience in Mexico and Peru provided an important ideological and political reference point to English ventures in both North America and the Caribbean. In addition, early European texts about America were composed in a general atmosphere of economic, political, and ideological change, a state of transition that the accounts of colonial travel not only articulate but in which they were actively involved. A central aspect of this transitional phase is the emergence of new modes for the representation of reality while older forms continued to exert their influence.

This chapter seeks to exemplify this process in exploring the ways in which the representational strategies of two outstanding colonial documents contributed to the emergence of an English colonial identity at the end of the sixteenth century. Both texts, Thomas Harriot's *Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588) and Sir Walter Raleigh's *Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Beautifull Empire of Guiana* (1596), were included in Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations*. At the same time, this chapter examines the ways in which both texts seek to emancipate themselves from the Spanish example even while imitating it in important ways.

#### Thomas Harriot and the Technology of Textual Production

Thomas Harriot's *Brief and True Report* has been hailed by literary historians as one of the most important texts of the early colonial encounter in America. Historians proper, however, are more reserved about its documentary value. Without doubt, the text owes much of its

fame to the inclusion in its third edition of a series of engravings, based on the watercolors of John White, that have deservedly been accredited with a high ethnographic value. The pictures have been commented on elsewhere (see Campbell 1992, Hulton 1978, and Hulton 1984); my own discussion concentrates on Harriot's text itself. In addition, I try to reintegrate his protoethnographic document into a discussion of English colonial history that emphasizes the political aspect of Harriot's text, including the formal mode in which it is presented.

First published separately by Richard Hakluyt in 1588 and then again in the *Principall Navigations* in 1589, Harriot's account of the first colony under the patent of Sir Walter Raleigh reached recognition and fame in Europe through its tetralingual edition in the first volume of the *Great Voyages* collected by the Flemish Huguenot engraver Theodor de Bry in 1590. This version of Harriot's text, now illustrated with the paintings of John White, amounts to a remarkable Protestant joint venture for the promotion of colonialism. Because of Hakluyt's intervention, de Bry had changed his original plan to begin his huge collection with the accounts of the French Huguenot colony at Florida and consented to disregard chronology in favor of Harriot's report, which documents the Roanoke experience of 1585-86 (Hulton 1972, xix-xiii). Well aware of the promotional power of text and image, Hakluyt had at least symbolically catapulted England, or more precisely the colonial project of Sir Walter Raleigh to which Harriot served as scientific advisor, into the leading position of Northern European expansion.

Hakluyt had good reason for pushing the promotion campaign in favor of Virginia, since potential financiers became increasingly uninterested in risking their money in a country apparently devoid of treasure. After the defeat of the Armada, England's attention once more rested on the rich Caribbean, and Roanoke was not least established as a military base for English privateers returning from raids on the Spanish treasure fleet. The founding of Roanoke Colony by Sir Richard Grenville and Ralph Lane was part of a large-scale privateering offensive in the Caribbean under the command of Sir Francis Drake and John Hawkins, which in turn was partly triggered by a recent Spanish trade embargo imposed on English ships (Quinn 1955, 1:6; Quinn and Ryan 1983, 88; Morgan 1975, 28, 3435). But

England's first attempt to settle in America was only slightly more fortunate than the one of Ribault's Huguenots (who had been massacred by the Spanish in 1565). When Thomas Harriot published his account about his one-year sojourn at Roanoke (July 1585-June 1586), the second set of settlers were desperately waiting for a supply ship from England. In 1590, when John White finally returned to Roanoke, he found the colony deserted and sailed back to England without having been able to search for the "lost colonists." (As chapter 4 demonstrates, the myth of the "lost colony" would later provide important ideological ammunition for the colonization of Jamestown.)

Harriot's *Brief and True Report* achieved its fame not primarily as a historical record or imaginative travel account but as a scientific treatise and, together with White's pictures, as a protoethnographic record of Native American lifestyle. In fact, the combination of text and image in de Bry's edition shifted the emphasis away from Harriot's extensive descriptions of edible plants and other merchantable products toward the representation of the native Algonkians, who are the exclusive topic of the engravings, based on White's watercolors. The illustrated version, with its images of strange people posed before conventional European backgrounds, seems to have responded at once to the readers' desire for accurate information and, possibly, to their exotic instincts (see Campbell 1992, 186).

Appealing to several groups of readers at once, the *Report* was drawn up to renew English colonial euphoria, which had suffered a serious backlash after Roanoke had been abandoned by the first colonists in 1586 without having brought any profit. In the preamble of his *Report* Harriot therefore feels compelled to address and ridicule the English promoters of anticolonial sentiment, charging them with having published ill and false reports about the colony. The reason of the colonists' discontent, Harriot asserts, was that they either never came out of the island or that they belonged to that sort

that after gold & silver was not so soone found, as it was by them looked for, had litle or no care of any other thing but to pamper their bellies. . . . Some also were of a nice bringing up, only in cities or townes, or such as never (as I may say) had seene the world before. Because there were not to be found any English cities, nor such faire houses, nor at their owne wish any of their old accustomed dainty

food, nor any soft beds of downe or feathers, the countrey was to them miserable, and their reports thereof according.  
(Harriot 1905, 35152)

Harriot's polemic fully aims at discrediting the critics instead of addressing the contents of their complaints. As we shall see, he had good reason for doing so, as his own account, written from a defensive position, is hardly less partial than those he attacks. Apparently resisting the lure of "dainty food" and "sold & silver," Harriot assumes a scientific stance and tries to keep his style dispassionate and objective.

The *Brief and True Report* has often been praised for its innovative and scientific makeup. It stands out among the volumes of narratives about America for relying on a new formal mode for the representation of reality. In contrast to the Spanish historian Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, for example, who wrote a natural history of America in the conventional encyclopedic form in 1526, Harriot fully dispenses with any scholastic reference in his tableaux of American fauna and flora. Oviedo's famous description of the ocelot is still indebted to medieval tradition: although he realizes that the *tigre* he encountered in Mexico is at variance with the *tigres* in the natural histories of Pliny and Ptolemy, he retains the formal convention of collecting all accessible data, such as classic texts, anecdotes, popular tradition, and so on, for describing the animal (Oviedo 1986, 9395; cf. Scharlau 1983). Harriot, by contrast, throws overboard all scholastic cargo and concentrates on the mercantile aspect of American nature. He emphasizes the various possibilities of its commodification and reveals his own identity as one of the main exponents of the new empirical science.

The contrast between Oviedo's and Harriot's style reflects the emergence of what Michel Foucault has called the classical episteme, which distinguishes itself by a separation of words and things in the representation of reality and by its urge for an "exhaustive ordering of the world" (Foucault 1973, 3942, 74).<sup>1</sup> But here arises the question whether the new rational model of representation is more realistic than the old one. Foucault clearly says no: on the contrary, the form of the scientific table, by admitting only those data that fit the categories defined by the observer, reveals less about the nature of things than did the old accumulative form. The essential difference between the two models, according to Foucault, lies in what is *missing* in the catalogue:

The words that had been interwoven in the very being of the beast have been unravelled and removed: and the living being, in its anatomy, its form, its habits, its birth and death, appears as though stripped naked. Natural history finds its locus in the gap that is now opened up between things and words a silent gap, pure of all verbal sedimentation. . . . Natural history did not become possible because men looked harder and more closely. One might say . . . that the Classical age used its ingenuity, if not to see as little as possible, at least to restrict deliberately the area of its experience. Observation, from the seventeenth century onward, is a perceptible knowledge furnished with a series of systematically negative conditions. (Foucault 1973, 12930, 132)

In the context of what the previous chapters have taught us about the role that language played in the colonial discourse of early modern Europe, this is a crucial remark: Foucault says that the new scientific language contains a set of formal and generic preconditions that do not sharpen its grasp of reality but that, conversely, superimpose their own logic of selection and exclusion on that reality. In this process of reduction, the "living being" of the things to be observed is even further removed from textual representation than in the earlier episteme. Its banishment is not even registered: the retreat of text from reality leaves, as Foucault says, a "silent gap." We will see to what extent Harriot's text engages in a politics of silent gaps while claiming to give a full "scientific" description of Virginia.

The scientific format of Harriot's text in no way silences the impact of older discourses of natural abundance and exuberance. Rather, as a transitional work, it translates those discourses into the new idiom of quantification. As Hans Galinsky has observed: "The fabulous enters via the quantitative, the disproportion between minimal labor and maximum yield" (Galinsky 1977, 16). In addition, Harriot deviates somewhat from the mode of the catalogue with which the text begins by inserting a number of anecdotes once he arrives at describing the Algonkians. The significance of these anecdotes becomes fully apparent only from within the larger context of European colonialism. The text's ideological dimension demonstrates the crucial complicity of ethnography as a science with processes of colonial domination.

The last part of the *Report*, on which my analysis concentrates, deals with the "nature and manors of the people." As Stephen

Greenblatt claims, it introduces us to an intellectual conflict between religious orthodoxy and the emerging rationalism of the new science (Greenblatt 1981).<sup>2</sup> Greenblatt has further shown that the *Report*, far from being a transparent record of events at Roanoke, is a cultural artifact, a testing ground of competing beliefs and ideologies. These, I suggest, include a colonial ideology that can be found at work in other colonial texts as well. Greenblatt justly claims that the principal aim of Harriot's description of the Algonkians' "nature and maners" is to convince the readers of their tractability. The Indians are not to be feared, Harriot writes, as they have great respect for English weapons and are intelligent enough to respond to English "friendship and love" with "low" and "fear" of their own (Harriot 1905, 37475). Love and fear are best inspired by capitalizing on the Indians' magic beliefs, which, as Harriot tries to show, make them respond with awe to the settlers' display of military technology. The whole remainder of Harriot's tract in fact circles around the topics of technology and religion. As it develops, these two discursive strands continually interact with each other and endow the text with dialectical tension.

Personifying the epistemological uncertainty of a liminal historical period, Harriot may be regarded as a religious skeptic (Greenblatt 1981, 4344). While he no longer seemed to believe that natural phenomena could be explained along moral lines alone, his scientific research had not yet enabled him to replace the theological model with a scientific one. Troubled by some aspects of religious doctrine without dispensing with it altogether, Harriot developed a strong interest in the Algonkians' magic beliefs, facilitated by his having learned some of their language from Manteo and Wanchese, the two Roanoke Indians who had been brought to England by the previous expedition of Arthur Barlowe and Phillip Amadas of 1584. Harriot, by having had "speciall familiaritie with some of their priests," claims to have witnessed how the shamans and weroances (or chief lords) effected social cohesion by intelligently manipulating the beliefs "of the common and simple sort of people" with the help of magical practice.

The "priests," as Harriot assures his readers, were nonetheless "brought into great doubts" about their own religion when comparing it with the superior faith of the colonizers. That respect, he then admits, was invoked less by complicated metaphysical debate than by

the effects of the settlers' assortment of advanced technology, including compasses, perspective glasses, fireworks, guns, spring clocks, and reading and writing. The technological superiority of the Europeans, Harriot claims, has gained them the reputation of gods or demigods among the simple natives, a conclusion similar to the one Bernal Diaz had drawn from being called *teule* by the Mexicans (Harriot 1905, 378). A few years later (1606), the official instructions of the Virginia Company would actually include the order to inflict a sense of the Europeans' superhuman nature in the Indians by a careful use of technology and communication (see Quinn 1979, 5:197).

As Greenblatt has argued, the logic embedded in Harriot's story and in the instructions of the company is that of applied Machiavellism, which treats religion not as a value in its own right but as a necessary prerequisite of state power. In spite of its crucial function during the colonial encounter in America (after all, Columbus himself had already employed the "god trick"), this political concept was still discussed in secret by England's intelligentsia (Greenblatt 1981, 4445).

Owing to his insight into the importance of adapting to the social rules of a people to be conquered, but owing also perhaps to his secret fascination with the animistic beliefs of the Algonkians, Harriot is not very successful in arousing the true Christian faith in them. When he gives them a Bible they treat it like a fetish, touch their bodies with it, and are apparently eager to share in its magic powers. They do so, Harriot claims somewhat helplessly, "to shew their hungry desire of that knowledge which was spoken of." The Indians subsequently join the English in their prayers, "hoping thereby to be partaker of the same effects which we by that meanes also expected" (Harriot 1905, 379). Cultural difference between heathen Algonkians and Christian Englishmen is on the verge of collapse here. Both engage in the same actions, hoping for the same benefits. This rather un-Christian behavior reminds us that magic beliefs were far from being rooted out in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. 3

The Indians were apparently more flexible than their visitors in assimilating new ritual practices and quickly got used to asking the colonizers to pray for their recuperation from sickness and for a good harvest, "promising that when [the corn] was ripe we also should be partakers of the fruit." The sentence reveals the essentially symbiotic



nature of this colonial relationship. While Harriot is concerned about inflicting a sense of awe on the Algonkians (and a sense of his success in doing so on the readers), the Indians apparently quickly comprehended the essential weakness of the newcomers. Harriot's marginal remark about the Indians' corn calls attention to the rather unpleasant fact that the English demigods, for all their technological expertise, were incapable of planting their own corn. Like Laudonnière's people, they depended on the Indians' benevolence or, as Harriot is at pains to demonstrate, their "low" inspired by "fear." English technology at Roanoke, and later in Jamestown as well, was of a peculiar kind: it facilitated the destruction of others but did not secure the survival of its masters, whose existence, ironically, fully depended on the cooperation of the people they sought in vain to subject.

The trickiness of the technological power show becomes apparent when a disease breaks out among the Algonkians that leaves the English unharmed. Apparently not having minded so far to be identified as gods by the Indians, the colonizers now desperately try to displace responsibility on to the Lord himself, telling the Indians that God sent the disease as punishment for "subtile devise[s] practised against us." Obviously, Harriot himself is unable to explain the phenomenon scientifically and thus resorts to a moral explanation. This way, he claims, he hopes to sustain colonial power at Virginia. With the self-validating circularity so typical of colonial narratives, Harriot takes the Indians' deaths as proof of their treacherous disposition, without distinguishing friend from foe. When members of the friendly Roanoke tribe and their wereance Wingina entreat the English to stop the disease, they are "perswaded that it was the worke of our God through our meanes, and that we by him might kill and slay whom we would without weapons, and not come neere them" (Harriot 1905, 379). Harriot's ambivalent use of the term "perswaded" is instructive here, as it is not at all clear whether Wingina's persuasion was based on his independent judgment or was the result of an explanatory dialogue with the colonists. The scene in fact recalls the one between Columbus and his Arawak interpreters, who "are always assured" of his divine origin by their frequent "intercourse [*conversación*]" with him (Columbus 1988, 10).

Just what this dialogue consisted of Harriot does not report. Whatever it might have been, the Almighty's reputation fully collapses

when everybody suddenly recuperates. Harriot asserts that the Indians, despite the Christians' pious disclaimer, now took for granted that the disease "came to passe by our meanes, & that we in using such speeches unto them, did but dissemble the matter, and therefore came unto us to give us thanks in their manner, that although we satisfied them not in promise, yet in deedes and effect we had fulfilled their desires" (Harriot 1905, 37980). The course of events probably had to leave the Algonkians with the impression that the colonizers' assertions of the omnipotence of their God were, as Greenblatt's writes, "polite nonsense" (Greenblatt 1981, 52).

According to Harriot, the incident has reinforced his Machiavellian politics of winning the Indians' admiration by his technological show. He quotes their interpretations of the event to give the readers an idea of how English colonial rule was consolidated in Virginia. The Algonkians ostensibly regarded the settlers as a mixture of gods, ancestors, and powerful masters of magic technology:

Some would likewise seeme to prophecie that there were more of our generation yet to come to kill theirs and take their places, as some thought the purpose was, by that which was already done. Those that were immediatly to come after us they imagined to be in the aire, yet invisible and without bodies, and that they by our intreatie and for the love of us, did make the people to die in that sort as they did, by shooting invisible bullets into them. (Harriot 1905, 381)

This apocalyptic narrative would sound like music in the ears of all colonizers, as it perfectly agrees with, and thereby presents a sort of excuse for, English colonial plans. The contents of the Indians' "prophecie" perfectly tie in with Harriot's overall argument against the slanderous reports mentioned at the beginning. After having quoted the Indians' various opinions at some length, Harriot finishes his cultural experiment with the assertion of impending colonial control, expressed, as Mary Campbell has found, in the language of the marriage vow: "These their opinions I have set downs the more at large, that it may appeare unto you that there is good hope they may be brought through discrete dealing and government to the imbracing of the trueth, and consequently to honour, obey, fears and love us" (38182; see Campbell 1992, 189).

The *Brief and True Report*, its ethnographic value notwithstanding, is above all a demonstration of the establishment of colonial

power in America. More precisely, Harriot can be seen to put his scientific knowledge to the service of colonial expansion. But if the British spectacle of power was as successful as he claims, the question that remains unanswered by Harriot is why the first colony had to leave Virginia apparently head-over-heels on 19 June 1586.

Stephen Greenblatt has referred to Harriot's conflict between scientific and religious beliefs in terms of the subversion of Renaissance authority and its subsequent containment. The subversiveness of Harriot's text, according to Greenblatt, consists in its "testing" of the Machiavellian model of turning religion into an instrument of colonial rule, as well as in the "recording" of Indian voices, which forms an element of "instability" within the dominant discourse but is at the same time indispensable for, and even produced by, colonial power in order to keep the Algonkians under control and to bring their culture "into the light for study, discipline, correction, transformation" (Greenblatt 1981, 51).

With what we know about the rhetorical strategies of Hernán Cortés and his epigones and about the centrality among these strategies of the native "speech," we should be careful not to take Harriot's text at face value in this regard. Rather, the main purpose of the recording of the Indians' reactions to English technology and English disease seems to have been to instruct the skeptical readers, the "Adventurers, Favourers, and Welwillers" of the enterprise (Harriot 1905, 351), with what kind of "discreete dealing and government" the natives would best be brought under control. This at least is what Harriot himself tells us of his intentions. The recording of the Indians' speeches thus functions to establish textual authority toward the internal opponents of English colonial settlement. It contributes to silencing native concerns in the future by claiming to give them a voice. We have seen the same strategy at work in the *Second Letter* of Cortés. (Surely, when even the Indians themselves prophecy their destruction, no humanist could complain if that prophecy came to pass and the case of Machiavelli shows that sixteenth-century humanists entertained a firm belief in the fulfilment of prophecies.)

Neither can Harriot's quibbles with church authority, which were very common at the time, be called subversive, as the undermining of theological doctrine in the *Report*, again, was prerequisite for extending colonial power to America. This extension of power rested on the rhetorical capacity of Harriot's text to create a sense of cultural

(technological) superiority in the readers rather than on showing compasses to Indians. The "magic technology" of English scientific inventions thus operates less on the minds of the Algonkians at Roanoke in an actual colonial setting than as a trope within colonial discourse by which the colonial power demonstrates its cultural superiority to itself. 4 To regard the treatment of religious orthodoxy at Virginia as "subversive" is to fall short of understanding the principal mechanisms of colonialism, which, as the case of Cortés shows most compellingly, depended on the disregard of legal and moral codes and on their replacement with the tenets of Machiavellian realpolitik. Judged by Greenblatt's standards for subversiveness, Hernán Cortés probably was the prototype of the subversive character only that his "subversion" was at the same time the beginning of settlement colonialism in America.<sup>5</sup>

Like that of Cortés in Tenochtitlán, then, Harriot's "'technology' of symbolism" (Todorov 1987, 160) was extended toward two sides at once: his demonstration of technological tools to the Indians, which presumably ushered in their belief in the colonizers' magic powers (but certainly not their readiness to subject themselves to the strangers), finds its symbolic (i.e., rhetorical) equivalent in recording their alleged speeches and thus convincing critical readers of their tractability, as well as deflecting attention from the uncertainty and anxiety that accompanied the colonial enterprise in Virginia. The rhetorical organization of Harriot's text does to the readers what the technological show ostensibly does to the Indians. Thus Harriot seeks to establish colonial power toward two sides at once; over the "treacherous" Indians, who are punished for their credulity, and in defense against the "slandorous" critics of the Virginia enterprise back home. It is their common awareness of the ideological function of writing that most clearly unites Harriot and Cortés, via the Machiavellian ideology shared by both.

One could then say that the logic on which the *Brief and True Report* operates is a belief in the effectiveness of manipulating human minds in a sort of scientific experiment whose location is not primarily colonial Virginia but the *Report* itself. Harriot presents himself as a scientific Prospero, arranging the figures of his text in a constellation most convenient to advertise the English colonial project and, as a minor effect, his own improvisational skills.<sup>6</sup> What we have in Harriot is an intelligent technology of narrative or rather

a technology of textual production, as his ethnographic catalogue manages to avoid the demands of narrative closure.<sup>7</sup>

The dramatized account of the colonial encounter in the section on the "nature and maners" of the Indians, while making use of all the advantages provided by the narrative mode (rhetorical strategies of persuasion, of demonstration, of the positioning of characters within a dominant discourse), is ultimately embedded in an overall scientific discourse that *per definitionem* eludes the demands of narrative closure. As Mary Campbell has noted, the composition principle of the *Report* "involves a freedom from narrativea reliance instead on the depiction of isolated 'objects' and the schemata of classification and taxonomy" (Campbell 1992, 188). Perhaps the persisting fame of the *Report* in the scholarship about Virginia is precisely owing to its selective and "anecdotal" account of Virginian reality.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, Harriot's "ethnographic" account is incomplete: it does not include descriptions of Algonkian social organization, their ceremonial cycle, or their farming methods. The expectations of objectivity and exhaustiveness that we are used to attaching to a scientific text are here only apparently met in a project that denies a large part of the reality of which it claims, or has been made to claim, to give a neutral description. Being neither an exhaustive narrative of events nor a comprehensive scientific description of Native American lifestyle, the text settles in a generical limbo. It combines the representational possibilities of two discursive paradigms with their specific "play of prescriptions" that designate their exclusions and choices (Foucault 1977, 199).

The discursive shift from the preclassical to the classical episteme, which Foucault interestingly calls the displacement of the "age of the theatre" by "that of the catalogue," is not reproduced in Harriot's text as a clean break but rather as a conflict between various discourses (religious, scientific, colonial), in a way that betrays the political underpinnings of the epistemological transition Foucault observes (Foucault 1973, 131). Harriot's tract may thus be regarded as the inscription of an English colonial identity at the beginning of European expansion, an illustration of the process of cultural self-invention that necessarily reduces the Indians, but also the critics at home, to treacherous and slanderous characters. Despite its shortcomings as a historical record, the *Brief and True Report* documents

in important ways the operations of European colonial discourse in America. That discourse, to the extent that it prepares and justifies colonial action, is as "historical" as the events themselves. Its main function consists in giving a selective and distorted image of reality, an image that appears coherent only on the condition of leaving significant gaps. Some of these gaps may regain their "speech" when we confront Harriot's *Report* with the second account on the Roanoke experience.

### Ralph Lane and the Failure of Narrative

Toward the end of his report, Harriot does mention that some violence had been used against the Indians (Harriot 1905, 382). But owing to its peripheral location, that remark is usually ignored or downplayed by nonhistorical scholarship. That Harriot does not give us the whole story may become evident when we juxtapose his demonstration of English superiority toward the Indians with his polemic against the slanderers at the beginning. Certainly, if the Algonkians were so magnificently brought under control and made to share their harvest with the colonizers, there should have been no reason for so many settlers to return dissatisfied with the Virginian commercial paradise. At the end of the *Report* Harriot promises to publish a "Chronicle" of the events at Roanoke "when time shall be thought convenient" (Harriot 1905, 386). But perhaps time never was convenient. The manuscript, at least, has never been found. Fortunately for us, another chronicle of the Roanoke settlement, though inconclusive and obscure, can serve to illuminate and fill some of the gaps in Harriot's text.

Ralph Lane's "Discourse on the First Colony," written after his a return to England in July 1586, cannot really be called a chronicle, since it demonstrates a marvelous disregard for the rules of chronology. Its first part, a description of the country, merges into an incoherent narrative that tries to explain the hasty return of the settlers with Sir Francis Drake on 19 June 1586. As reasons for the return Lane names the loss of supplies due to "tempest, and foule weather" and the "conspiracie of Pemisapan, with the Sauages of the mayne to haue cutt vs off, &c." (Lane 1955, 25556). Accordingly, the text is dominated by two topics, sustenance and Indian treachery.

D. B. Quinn attributes the chronological and argumentative muddle of Lane's report to his "lack of lucidity in composition"

(Quinn 1955, 266, n. 1). Certainly less lucid than Harriot's *Report*, Lane's account at the same time gives better insight into the events at Roanoke. More specifically, it represents a remarkable rhetorical deferral of an incident it is at pains not to specify, an incident to be situated between the two reasons for the return, "treachery" and lack of supplies: the massacre of the inhabitants of the town Dasemunkepeuc on 1 June 1586, when all its principal weroances were slain and their leader, Pemisapan, decapitated (Lane 1955, 18786). The whole "Discourse" can be regarded as an attempt to justify this attack, which is excused as a preventive blow in response to Pemisapan's "conspiracy." Pemisapan is the central character in Lane's plot, and the master plotter against the colonists. To add to the confusion, Pemisapan turns out to be identical with Harriot's friend Wingina, the weroance of the Roanoke tribe who had thanked the English for their cooperation in getting rid of the disease.

As Lane informs us, Wingina had changed his name after the death of his brother Granganimo, and if we believe Lane, he must have changed his whole character along with it. Most of the actions Lane describes are in one way or another related to his assertion of Pemisapan's evil purposes of getting rid of the settlers. Lane's knowledge of this plan, which allegedly includes the intention to poison the settlers and to form an alliance to wipe them out (the action that was then "prevented" by Lane's attack by night), rests on the testimony of two prisoners he had taken during an unexplained assault on an intertribal conference at Chawanoac: Menatonon, the invalid weroance of the Chawanoac tribe, and his son Skiko, who was held captive at Roanoke settlement after Menatonon had been set free. Besides relying on these two informants, at least one of whom made his statements under torture ("I laid him [Skiko] in the bylboes, threatening to cut off his head"), Lane bases his theory on signs of conspiracy. These consist in the simple but momentous habit of the Indians to desert their settlements and leave the English without supplies (265, 276, 28485). If we consider that the Algonkians maintained a subsistence economy with little surplus production, based on a combination of agriculture and hunting, fishing, and gathering, it should be easy to understand that they could not permanently sustain a couple hundred "grasshopper guests" who were apparently unable to shift for themselves (Morgan 1975, 40).

Haunted by dreams of golden empires and of a fabulous trade route to China, Lane's crew set out on an inland expedition on the Roanoke River in search of a mysterious mineral and possibly the Northwest Passage. They had indeed little chance to "pamper their bellies" after the surrounding Indian tribes had deserted their villages in response to English encroachment. In the end the explorers, who had found neither gold nor the western sea, barely survived by feeding on "dogs porridge" and were chased back to Roanoke through a Conradian nightmare of invisible Indians calling their names, laughing, singing, and shooting arrows at them from the riverbanks (Lane 1955, 27172).

In obvious ignorance of the fact that the Algonkians were simply trying to survive in a time of scarcity (March), Lane blames Pemisapan for having masterminded the whole affair: "Menatonon confessed vnto me [that Pemisapan] sent them [the other tribes] continuall worde that our purpose was fully bent to destroy them: on the other side he tolde me that they had the like meaning towards vs" (265). What sounds like ungrounded mutual enmity or a "natural" intercultural misunderstanding may in fact be explained along causal lines: if Pemisapan really wished to destroy the colonizers (and the reliability of the information may somewhat be doubted), his plan was merely the result of their unbearable encroachments on his people's food resources. Apparently unaware of these complexities, Lane presents the suspicion of Indian treachery back at Roanoke as one of the reasons for the river expedition to return, as if danger of starvation were not reason enough already.

At the same time he asserts that "we had no intention to be hurtfull to any of them, otherwise then for our copper to haue had come of them" (266). The sentence is self-explanatory: if the Algonkians refused the forced trade, the English might be forced to change their "intentions." But obviously the Indians were less troubled by the settlers' "intentions" than by their practice of attacking assemblies and of forcing them to trade their precious corn for copper (which they may have delighted in but which cannot be eaten). Unmentioned between English good intentions and unproven native treachery lies the incident of Chawanoac and the kidnapping of Menatonon and Skiko, which Lane excludes as a possible reason for the Indians' starve-out strategy.



Since we are dealing not with a journal but with a retrospective narrative, we do not know whether the suspicion of treachery was really one of the reasons for the expedition to return. In any case, the specter of Indian treachery from now on dominates Lane's text and develops a factuality of its own. The trope of treachery aptly joins the trope of magic technology a little later when Lane claims that Pemisapan was occasionally under the political influence of one of his elders, Ensenore. The strange fact that needed explanation is that after Lane's return, Pemisapan and his people, instead of acting out their conspiracy, once again agreed to fish and grow corn for the settlers; they even allotted them a piece of land to grow their own corn (we are not told whether they did) (27980). Ensenore's main function in this turn of events, according to Lane, consisted in reconciling his countrymen, who had long before begun to "blaspheme" the English god, to their earlier belief in the English as powerful magicians or ancestors, "an opinion very confidently at this day holden by the wisest amongst them, and of their olde men, as also, that they haue bene in the night, beeing 100. myles from any of vs in the ayre shot at, and stroken by some men of ours, that by sicknesse had dyed among them" (278).

Lane neglects to reveal how he gained access to his knowledge of the Algonkians' council speeches. But regardless of how it entered Lane's text, the "invisible bullet" story is invoked at a very sensible point indeed, operating to sustain the trope of treachery, which is in danger of being unhinged by the natives' incompatible behavior. The theory of the Indians' principal but as yet unproven treacherousness, which is the only possibility to legitimate English acts of violence, can be upheld in the face of contradictory evidence only by inserting the anecdote of magic technology for which Harriot's report has become famous.

While, thanks to Ensenore's influence, new corn has been sown for the settlers in April, the danger of starvation is still acute, as harvest cannot be expected until July (280). This period can be bridged only with hunting and gathering, that is, with the Indians hunting and gathering for themselves as well as for the Englishmen. By the end of April (Ensenore, the guarantor of colonial hierarchy, had conveniently died on 20 April), Pemisapan finally moves to the mainland "to see his grounds there broken vp, and sowed for a second crophe," but also

to withdrawe himselfe from my dayly sending to him for supply of victuall for my company, for hee was afrayde to denye me any thing, neither durst he in my presence but by colour, and with excuses, which I was content to accept for the time, meaning in the ende as I had reason, to giue him the jumpe once for all: but in the mean whiles, as I had euer done before, I and mine bare all wrongs, and accepted of all excuses. (284)

With breathtaking arrogance Lane here turns Pemisapan's obvious conflict between observance of the rules of hospitality and his fear of starvation into a mixture of greed and duplicity crying for punitive action. The passage presents a full-scale projection of the Europeans' insolence onto the weroance, who merely struggled to save his people's lives. At the same time, Lane's representation of English strength is at best the result of serious miscalculation. We can see how he is wriggling to retain his authority with the readers, trying to preserve the image of English control and to prepare them for the violent action that was for him the only possible means to exert control: in Lane's opinion, Pemisapan's third reason for moving to the mainland (one or two reasons are never enough for Lane) was to gather all surrounding forces and prepare to uproot the colony on 10 June. The news, according to Lane, was "discouered by Skyco," who, strangely, served as a reliable spy after having been tortured by his English captors shortly before (28485).

But again, this supposed conspirational plan, whose contents Lane, as usual, renders in full detail before revealing its dubious source, is mentioned in connection with an English attempt to procure food, which now allegedly served only as a red herring for executing the final "preventive" blow: "I sent to Pemisapan to put suspition out of his heade, that I meant . . . to come by him, to borrow of his men to fish for my company, and to hunt for me at Croatoan, as also to buy some foure dayes prouision to serue for my voyage" (285). Pemisapan temporizes, whereupon Lane's group enters his town, Dasemunkepeuc, under a pretext and destroys the tribe (287). Nothing is related about the week between the massacre and the arrival of Drake's fleet on 10 June (which thus coincided with the date of the ostensible Indian attack). But we can be sure that the foul weather—a sign of God's wrath?—was not the principal reason for rushing back to England.

Despite the remarkable dissimilarity of Lane's document of colonial paranoia and Harriot's optimistic treatise, the two texts share

a number of ideological strategies to sustain authority toward the readers. Both consist of an interplay of factual information and unproven claims and assumptions. Like Harriot's *Report*, Lane's "Discourse" relates to historical actuality but simultaneously produces its own discursive reality. The main feature of that "second-degree reality" is the assumption of Indian treachery. It would probably be wrong to dismiss Lane's assertions altogether, as it appears plausible that the Algonkians were indeed looking for ways to defend themselves against the lazy and arrogant newcomers. Nevertheless, neither their "subtle devices" (Harriot) nor Pemisapan's "conspiracy" (Lane) can be proven to possess any material existence; they are mere claims in English texts. Like the Indians' speeches, native treachery is a rhetorical construction drawn up for English readers. <sup>9</sup> Indian treacherousness is the secret assumption behind Harriot's reader-oriented "anthropology" of colonial communication and domination, as well as behind Lane's legitimation of colonial violence. As an ideological narrative, it functions to occlude an aspect of colonial reality whose knowledge would have severely affected the recruitment of settlers and the moral sensibilities of politicians and financiers.

As in the case of Cortés and Motecuhzoma, the trope of native treachery is here again combined with a previous native act of submission. And again, native submission is construed as a reaction to European claims to a supernatural identity. The strategic constellation between the trope of magic technology and the narrative of treachery, which both Harriot's and Lane's texts seek to establish, performs within an English colonial context the ritual act of the *requerimiento*. Though clearly distinguishable from Motecuhzoma's "speech," which mentions the expectation of the return of an ancient leader, the prophetic speeches of Harriot's Indians may be regarded as the ideological legacy of the Spanish predecessor in the English colonial context. This discursive translation takes place at the same time as the concept of universal kingship wandered from Charles V to Queen Elizabeth (see Yates 1985, 51, and my section on Raleigh, below).

The parallels between Harriot's and Lane's texts and the *Second Letter* of Cortés are indeed numerous. All three are concerned with deferring accounts of colonial violence: Cortés to legitimize his disobedience by way of a "just" conquest, Lane and Harriot to keep up

the image of native tractability with a view toward future settlement in a land devoid of treasure (that might have been worth the trouble of dealing with hostile savages). Among the strategies of occlusion employed by all three texts, the trope of the native speech and prophecy figures prominently, not least to dissemble their monological character. But as Ralph Lane's "failure to narrate" shows, the ideological pair of awe and treachery can be made plausible only by the kind of technology of textual production employed by Harriota technology that relies on the blurring of genres, on the production of a genre cocktail by which the unpleasant part of colonial reality is occluded and leaves hardly a trace. In this regard, Harriot's text, aided by White's harmonious and timeless pictures, has even superseded the *Second Letter*, whose strategies of selection and exclusion are much more obvious than those of Harriot's ostensibly scientific tract.

The incoherence of Lane's account is due to its inability to resolve the conflict between, on the one hand, the need to respond to the rules of chronology and causality (of "plot") inherent in the mode of narrative and, on the other hand, the need to meet the political demands for the suppression of colonial violence. Events at Roanoke could not be made into a narrative and remain politically digestible at the same time. In Harriot's *Report*, whose greater lucidity is the result of generic choice, the representation of colonial violence is, in Mary Campbell's terms, "avoided generically." This may point toward a complicity between the concepts of "empire" and of "empirical knowledge," which Campbell has hinted at (Campbell 1992, 18788). Both colonialism and the new science emerged at about the same time in Europea synchronicity that is yet waiting to be sufficiently assessed by scholarship.

There is an afterplay to Harriot's and Lane's incongruous accounts. Occasionally, the mobilization of European "magic technology" came into conflict with the settlers' immediate interests of survival. The episode I have discussed gains a sad symmetry from reiterating one of the first punitive actions by Richard Grenville against the town Aquascogoc, on 16 July 1585. The Indians were accused of having stolen a silver cup (classical case), "and not receiuing it according to their promise, we burnt, and spoyled their come, and Towne, all the people being fledde" ("*Tiger Journal*," in Quinn 1955, 1:191). The

settlers' destruction of their own base of subsistence is typical of what Peter Hulme has referred to as the crucial contradiction in early Virginia, the colonizers' "massive, almost self-destructive effort . . . to create the self-image of the technologically superior" (Hulme 1986, 168). In consideration of these two cornerstones of the Roanoke enterprise, the destruction of the cornfields to revenge the theft of a silver cup, and the destruction of a tribe for fear of starvation, Lane's initial remarks in his letters to Francis Walsingham and to Richard Hakluyt in August 1585, that Virginia was a "vaste Countrey yett unmanuredde" and that the "Sauages that possesse the land . . . know no vse of the same," amount to something more than fierce irony (Lane in Quinn 1955, 1:203, 209).

The further development of European-Indian relations at Roanoke is epitomized in the well-known myth of failed colonial beginnings already mentioned, the "Lost Colony." When the painter John White, now governor, returned to Roanoke with a second set of settlers in 1587, he found it difficult to "renew our olde friendshippe" with the natives:

At our first landing, they seemed as though they would fight with vs: but perceauing vs begin to marche with our shot towards them, they turned their backes, and fled. Then Manteo their countreyman, called to them in their owne language, whom, as soone as they heard, they returned, and threwe away their bowes, and arrowes, and some of them came vnto vs, embracing and entertaining vs friendly, desiring vs not to gather or spill any of their come, for that they had but little. (White 1955, 526)

The Indians ask the settlers to give them little tokens or badges so they may not be confused with their enemies. But the anxiety of treachery, now rather of revenge, soon picks up its old course. An Englishman is slain "by the remnant of Winginoes men," the weroances of the surrounding tribes do not follow White's call for a general assembly, and the English decide to revenge the death by attacking the enemy town only to end up killing their Indian friends who had come to gather the fruit and corn left to rot in the deserted village. Finding themselves "thus disappointed of our purpose," the English "gathered all the come, Pease, Pumpions, and Tabaco," and declared their long-term ally Manteo lord of Roanoke and Dasemunkepeuc (53031). On his second return to Roanoke in 1590 John White found his colony deserted.

In the light of the events of 1587, which were probably known to Harriot (he composed his *Report* at about the time of White's return), his text assumes the quality of a retrospective utopia. When his famous account was first printed, the situation he describes had long turned to the negative. His text thus shares the fate of most ethnographic texts that generically exclude history from their representations of foreign cultures (see Campbell 1992, 189, 192). And while de Bry was busily engraving White's pictures, the second Roanoke colony probably suffered the consequences of the Europeans' incapacity to adapt to the lifestyle of the country they intended to possess, of their misleading expectation that the inhabitants of that country would, as Harriot had formulated, "honour, obey, feare and love us." This self-confident attitude was supported, and its shortcomings masked, by a scientific mode of making the colonial experience available for the European public. It is certainly no coincidence that Harriot's text has become famous while Lane's tortuous narrative is today still largely forgotten. 10

Thus the success of Harriot's text derives from the fact that, contrary to Lane's narrative, its scientific form allowed it to give an "ordered" image of Virginia without the need to tell the whole story. Lane, owing to his bad luck of having to write a narrative account, had to register the gaps that have become "silent" in Harriot's catalogue. The comparison of the two texts illustrates how the discourse of colonialism in early America mutates into new forms by entering into a dialectical relationship with the emerging discourse of natural science. The new genre of the scientific report here assumes, in the terms of Foucault, the function of a "discursive regularity" that interacts with, and thereby transforms, existing discourses (Foucault 1981, 67).

The different logic of representation guiding the textual production of Harriot's *Report* cultural, not individual logic has also engendered a different rationale for the justification of conquest. The crucial moment is perhaps its abolition of history and its denial of authorial mediation (there is hardly any visible narrative agency in the *Report*). The catalogue, in its "objective" detachment and "automatic" selectivity, claims timeless and universal validity. A specific historical moment is frozen into an image that claims to represent the whole history of the Roanoke colony. The temporal sequence underlying and organizing the narrative form (and which

thereby caused so many problems for Lane) is obliterated in Harriot's text, including the need to account for the removal. With the redemption of a specific colonial incident from the history in which it is embedded, the very need to justify colonization now also disappears. Harriot's account of American abundance and potential commodification supplants earlier narratives of justification, and although the chimera of the Indians' love and the prophetic determination of their action is preserved, Harriot's text makes it plain that their sympathy and obedience will be the result of their fear of English military technology and not the result of superstitious beliefs alone. His text implicitly signals the readiness to employ violence if good intentions are not requited with submission and servitude.

The practical Machiavellism embedded in Harriot's *Report*, while differing from that of Cortés in many respects, also presents the logical continuation of its Spanish predecessor. Above all, it uniquely exemplifies how the conflicts and historical facts of English colonialism are increasingly suffocated by an objectivist logic of representation.

The following section looks at a text that at first impression widely differs from that of Harriot, above all in its emphatic profession to the mode of narrative. Still, Thomas Harriot and Sir Walter Raleigh closely collaborated in the colonial ventures in both Roanoke and Guiana. It remains to be seen whether that collaboration manifests itself in the rhetorical strategies they employ.

### Sir Walter Raleigh and the Translation of Empire

The real hero of the Virginia enterprise was of course Sir Walter Raleigh, the patent holder of the colony, its main investor, and above all, the man who had changed the native name of the country, Wingandacoia, to Virginia.<sup>11</sup> This symbolic act of an English courtier, bestowing a new name on a future colony to express his and his country's indebtedness to the benevolence of the virgin queen Elizabeth, marks an important juncture of the discourse of colonialism with another powerful discourse of the English Renaissance, that of female rulership. As we shall see in chapter 5, this match was to breed a large and heterogeneous offspring.

Richard Hakluyt, the rational reverend and propagator of English imperialism, went out of the way of his usual metaphorical ascer-

icism in his Latin dedication to Sir Walter Raleigh, prefixed to Peter Martyr's *De orbe novo* (1587). Violating his method of avoiding abundant imagery and relegating his ideological message to the formal organization of his texts, Hakluyt breaks into praise of Raleigh's Virginian romance when he writes:

To what end do I exhort you or admonish you to persist in your project, when only recently you sent me letters from Court in which you freely swore that no terrors, no personal losses or misfortunes could or would ever tear you from the sweet embraces of your own Virginia, that fairest of nymphs though to many insufficiently well known, whom our most generous sovereign has given you to be your bride? If you preserve only a little longer in your constancy, your bride will shortly bring forth new and most abundant offspring, such as will delight you and yours, and cover with disgrace and shame those who have so often dared rashly and impudently to charge her with barrenness. *For who has the just title [iure merito] to attach such a stigma to your Elizabeth's Virginia, when no one has yet probed the depths of her hidden resources and wealth, or her beauty hitherto concealed from our sight?* Let them go where they deserve, foolish drones, mindful only of their bellies and gullets, who fresh from that place, like those whom Moses sent to spy out the promised land flowing with milk and honey, have treacherously published ill reports about it. (Hakluyt 1587, n.p., emphasis added) 12

The passage is delicately ambivalent: Raleigh is imagined as the future husband of fertile and nymphlike but as yet untouched Virginia, which was given to him by the barren queen, while those who charge Virginia with barrenness are condemned to walk in shame. The reference to the biblical promised land "flowing with milk and honey" wonderfully rounds off Hakluyt's image of Virginia as a ripe female body awaiting the male seducer. The ideological center of the passage turns out to be the italicized sentence, which is implicated in two ideological narratives at once. The "stigma" applied to "Elizabeth's Virginia" obviously symbolizes the charge of barrenness imputed to the newly discovered land by a group of frustrated colonizers (the "foolish drones, mindful only of their bellies and gullets" are easily identified as the slanderers of Harriot's epistle). But within the second metaphorical story, that of Sir Walter making love to the land, "stigma" also stands for the wound to be inflicted upon Virginia's body through Raleigh's symbolic act of



penetration. The sexual metaphor thus operates within two narratives: one of slander, and one of conquest. Within the latter, the phrase "just title" seems to be the key term. If Raleigh's act of penetration is read as a metaphor of an act of conquest, the sentence addresses the legal dilemma that the promoters of colonialism inevitably faced: How could Virginia's depths be "justly" probed without first causing a stigma? Or, translated into the English logic of colonial legitimation: how can we claim an a priori right to the possession of Virginia when it is the act of possession itself that gives us a "just title" in the first place? 13

On a third level, the phrase "Elizabeth's Virginia" may even suggest that the probing of Virginia's "depths of . . . hidden resources and wealth" may also be enacted upon Elizabeth herself, or, to adopt Annette Kolodny's useful phrase, Sir Walter's symbolic lay of the land amounts to an imaginary lay of the queen (see Kolodny 1975).

With this extremely rich imagery, Hakluyt conveys three messages at once: first, his condemnation of slanderous reports based on ignorance; second, and in a rather latent way, a recognition that the act of taking possession is necessarily at odds with the law of nations; and third, the difficulty of Elizabethan males in having to deal with a female sovereign.

What is most important here is the idea, contained in Hakluyt's erotic imagery, that the possession of the new land is only lawful once it has been penetrated, once its hidden resources are known just as it was imagined that a woman could be possessed after "probing her depths." Such a cynical legal norm, it seems, posed a moral problem in 1587 if perhaps unconsciously. We shall see how the moral standards had changed by 1596.

Raleigh proved to be less "constant" in his carnal affairs than Hakluyt had metaphorically hoped. He apparently favored more earthly unions and incurred his queen's displeasure by marrying Elizabeth Throckmorton in 1592. At about the same time, England's first romance with Virginia came to an end, as the bride displayed a disturbing capacity for swallowing the European fertilizer instead of breeding it into "abundant offspring." When the Roanoke colony was finally given up in the 1590s, Raleigh switched his attention to a more southerly and more promising bride. His famous report about his expedition to the Orinoco in 1595, *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich,*

*and Beautifull Empire of Guiana*, was published in 1596 and saw two reprints in the same year. It has since been regarded as a classic of Elizabethan travel writing and, less frequently, as a classic of empire.

Placed alongside Thomas Harriot's *Brief and True Report, the Discoverie*, although written ten years later, appears remarkably old-fashioned. Above all, it fully exploits the repertoire of what Stephen Greenblatt refers to as the discourse of the marvelous, entertaining the readers with stories of cannibals, Amazons, Plinian monsters, and the golden empire of El Dorado, with its capital, Manoa (see Greenblatt 1991, 24). This entertaining quality sets Raleigh's text apart from Harriot's (pseudo)scientific tract and tempts us to categorize it with the texts of the premodern episteme. While this provisional classification shall be accepted for the moment (Raleigh's sense of representation seems to bear clear similarities with Oviedo's), more important here is the way in which his practice of imaginative and subjective bricolage relates to the larger issue of English imperialism.

The topic of reliability opens up the first problematic of this text: most of its modern interpreters are disturbed by questions concerning Raleigh's belief in his own stories and his intention in telling them. It is interesting that most historians are convinced that Raleigh fully believed in the tales of wonder he records, while literary scholars seem to regard them as mere rhetorical strategies in response to the readers' expectations of marvelous stories.<sup>14</sup> While the question of personal motive remains unanswerable in historical hindsight (and in any case less interesting), we should nevertheless be able to gain some insight into Raleigh's mental universe by calling to mind the historical situation of textual production. What is unbelievable today may not have been so in 1595, and between the two choices for characterizing Raleigh's attitude, either as that of a medieval mind or that of a modern travel liar, there should be a third option.

During the sixteenth century the possible existence of a large kingdom at the heart of the South American hemisphere was a widely shared belief. According to Raleigh's modern editor, his own "discovery" of Guiana was preceded by no less than twenty-eight expeditions in search of the legendary El Dorado, some of which Raleigh refers to in his account (Harlow 1928, lxx). Most of these were undertaken by Spanish conquistadores (Diego de Ordaz, Alonso de Herrera, Geronimo de Ortal, Ximenez de Quesada, and the notorious Lope de Aguirre, to name but a few), but the German Welser family

also had its share in the enterprise, not only in financial terms but above all in terms of violence. The Venezuelan expeditions of Ambrosio Alfinger (1530/32) and Nikolaus Federmann (1538) are among the cruellest in the history of the conquest.<sup>15</sup> The pattern was always the same: obsessed with the idea of golden Temples of the Sun and other treasures hidden in the jungle by the last survivors of the Incas, the conquistadores plowed the rivers of the Amazon basin and wandered through today's Columbia and Venezuela, often for several years. Their quests were accompanied by plundering and destroying the villages on their way in search of food and to vent their frustration about finding no Inca gold.

The myth of El Dorado, as we find it in Raleigh's text, is the outcome of a long process of mythological condensation and divarication. One of its origins seems to be the report of an Indian emissary from New Granada to the last Inca Atahualpa, who told the Spaniards of a former ritual practice at the lake of Guatavita in Chibcha territory, during which a priest-king covered his body with powdered gold, went into the lake, and presented offerings of gold to the gods. This religious custom is very likely to have actually existed in the area until around 1480 (Harlow 1928, 1; Pastor 1992, 160). Owing to the complicated communication process between Spaniards interviewing the Indians about legendary cities and the natives reporting about (or inventing) whatever they thought was expected, the story of El Dorado ("the gilded man") soon became superimposed on other rumors concerning golden Temples of the Sun or, by extension, a golden city that was said to have been erected by survivors of the last Inca dynasty somewhere in the rain forest north of the Amazon River. This story, too, was partly grounded in reality, as a large temple and town had been found by the expedition of the Welser Georg von Speyer at La Fragua (in today's Venezuela) in 1538. With the fusion of gilded man, golden city, and treasure lake, the signifier El Dorado increasingly expanded until it finally came to refer to the entire complex of mythical elements. The mythical town thus came to resemble Tenochtitlán, which was similarly filled with treasure and located at the center of a lake.

The persistence of the myth can be attributed to the fact that some of the Indians' stories turned out to be quite precise. Philip von Hutten's expedition, for example, was led to a fairly large city in the Papamene province that was inhabited by members of the Omagua

nation, a Carib group whose economic and cultural development surpassed that of the surrounding groups. Von Hutten purported not to have seen much of the town, as he was repelled by fifteen thousand native warriors (Harlow 1928, lviii; Pastor 1992, 161).

Without doubt the most imaginative account of El Dorado stems from Juan Martin de Albujar, to whom Raleigh refers as Johannes Martines and who was captured by Caribs in the 1570s. Martines turned native and claimed that he had married a native woman, held the position of a cacique, and lived on the upper Caroni River for ten years before returning of his own accord. In addition, he claims to have visited the golden city of Manoa (according to him the native name of El Dorado). Martines is Raleigh's crown witness for the existence of Manoa and the possibility of its discovery for the English nation. Raleigh in fact claims to have seen a copy of Martines's relation, which was in the possession of his Spanish prisoner and informant, Don Antonio de Berrio. Berrio, the governor of Trinidad, held the Spanish patent for Guiana and had been the latest knight errant in search of El Dorado. As such, he proved an invaluable source of information for Raleigh. According to Sir Walter's paraphrase of Berrio's copy of the relation of Martines (and the empirical situation is typical of the *Discoverie* as a whole), Martines was saved by the Indians from a canoe in which he had been set out as punishment for some mischief. The natives

caried [him] into the land to be woondred at, and so from towne to towne, untill he came to the great city of Manoa, the seat and residence of Inga the emperour. The emperour . . . caused him to be lodged in his palace, and well entertained. Hee lived seven moneths in Manoa, but was not suffered to wander into the countrey any where. He was also brought thither all the way blindfold, led by the Indians, untill he came to the entrance of Manoa it selfe, and was foureteene or fifteene dayes in the passage. He avowed at his death that he entred the city at Noon, and then they uncovered his face, and that he travelled all that day till night thorow the city, and the next day from Sun rising to Sun setting yer he came to the palace of Inga. (Raleigh 1904, 60)

After seven months he asked leave to return and was sent back in the company of native guides loaded with gold. The party was attacked by other Indians, however, and he could only rescue his life and two gourds filled with gold nuggets. These he donated to the

church at his death, together with his relation, which "is to be seen in the chancery of Saint Juan de Puerto Rico" (359).

Raleigh's *Discoverie* demonstrates a conspicuous incapacity to differentiate between the reality of a text like the relation of Martines and the reality actually encountered. It constantly engages in mingling fictional and referential levels of signification. If we recall Foucault's distinction, the theory of representation underlying Raleigh's text thus appears to be basically medieval. Unlike Harriot and his selective view of American reality, Raleigh seems to take delight in piling one secondhand account upon another. In summarizing the outcome of his interviews with various native chiefs, for example, he refers to several native peoples inhabiting Guiana, among them

a nation of people, whose heads appeare not above their shoulders; which though it may be thought a meere fable, yet for mine owne part I am resolved it is true, because every childe in the provinces of Arroimaia and Canuri affirme the same: they are called Ewaipanoma: they are reported to have their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouthes in the middle of their breasts, and that a long traine of haire groweth backward betweene their shoulders (406).

Raleigh then admits that his knowledge of the existence of this Plinian race (the Bellmyae, who were also evoked by Columbus and Ingram) derives from his conversations with the son of Topiawari, the ancient chief of Aromaia, who had returned to England with him. Raleigh's further reflection on the topic shows his indecision whether to accept the testimony of others and European book knowledge or to rely on the rules of common sense:

but it was not my chance to heare of them till I was come away, and if I had but spoken one worde of it while I was there, I might have brought one of them with mee to put the matter out of doubt. Such a nation was written of by Mandevile, whose reports were holden for fables many yeeres, . . . whether it be true or no, the matter is not great, *neither can there bee any profit in the imagination*; for mine owne part I saw them not, but I am resolved that so many people did not all combine, or forethinke to make the report (406, emphasis added).

Additional evidence is provided by a Spaniard, "who being esteemed a most honest man," had assured Raleigh of having "sene many of

them." But then Raleigh prefers to withhold the name of his eyewitness, "because it may be for his disadvantage" (445).

Raleigh's approach to the problem of the reliability of such reports is clearly guided by a logic of common sense and of expediency. For one, he says that it must be logically impossible that so many people share the same fictions. The second reason in support of the faithfulness of the reports is Raleigh's interesting notion that there could be no "profit in the imagination": that an invention that does not serve any obvious purpose may just as well be the truth. In other words, Raleigh resorts to the category of interest to support his tendency to take the stories about the monsters at face value.

The larger philosophy behind this argument is Raleigh's phenomenological skepticism, expressed in one of his essays that locates the truth of a thing not in the outer world but in the mind of the beholder. In his essay "The Sceptic" Raleigh writes: "I may tell what the outward object seemeth to me; but what it seemeth to other creatures, or whether it be indeed that which it seemeth to me, or any other of them, I know not" (Raleigh 1829, 553). Raleigh thus believes the truth of a phenomenon to be a matter of subjective perception, a very "modern" philosophical idea that apparently stands in diametrical opposition to Harriot's claims to scientific objectivity. One man's fiction may then, according to Raleigh, be another man's truth, and somehow all of this also has to do with the use of the story (with its "profit").

The presence of mythical tales in the *Discoverie* may then be assessed as a symptom of the hermeneutical skepticism that accompanied the emergence of modernity. There seems to be little sense in the wish to decide whether Raleigh believed in El Dorado and the monsters or just made tactical use of these stories to push forward the colonial project. In this case, in which truth is declared a function of subjective perception on the one hand and of its usefulness on the other, the matter must remain undecided. Perhaps owing to the general ideological flux of Raleigh's time, two contradictory positions are uneasily united within one statement. 16

To accept such tales as the one by Martines certainly was still the rule at Raleigh's time after all, the edition of the *Principall Navigations* then in circulation still included both the *Travels* of Mandeville and the adventurous stories of David Ingram and Prince Madoc. In 1596 it would have made more sense to believe in the existence of a

third American empire besides Mexico and Peru than not to do so. In any case, the narrative logic of the *Discoverie*, just as that of its anonymous companion piece ascribed to either Raleigh or Harriot, "Of the Voyage for Guiana," hinges on the belief in the existence of El Dorado, or the golden city of Manoa.

But Raleigh's textual practice of bricolage, of combining different texts (mostly Spanish) and rumors (Spanish and Indian) in producing his story of the golden empire, must also be regarded as a response to a serious referential dilemma. After all, his venture had been a complete failure and did not at all live up to the promises of the *Discoverie's* title. The imaginative exuberance of Raleigh's text contrasts sharply with the fact that he did not "discover" the "large, rich, and beautifull Empire of Guiana," that his party had instead merely cruised along the Orinoco for about four hundred miles, made a few friendly contacts with the neighboring native groups, and returned in a hurry to escape the dangers of the rain season. Even this was no discovery at all, as Raleigh's Spanish prisoner and informant, Don Antonio de Berrio, had already "discovered" the whole area before him. Raleigh's venture thus deserves the name only insofar as he discovered Guiana for Queen Elizabeth and the English nation. This secondhand character of the enterprise itself is then reiterated by the intertextual politics of his text. 17

The referential dilemma of Raleigh's text evokes Mary Campbell's assertion that the subjective and literary quality of Raleigh's narrative style creates a stronger sense of verisimilitude or authenticity than nonmetaphorical descriptions (Campbell 1988, 253). While the argument may in this form be open to debate, it is certainly possible to say that Raleigh was very much interested in establishing his authority toward his readers.<sup>18</sup> One of his strategies in doing so is to foreground his personal experience as a token of authenticity. He had good reason for doing so. After all, there had even been bad talk that he had hidden in Cornwall until the return of his fleet, and that he had purchased his samples of gold on the Barbary Coast (Raleigh 1904, 339, 346). Raleigh's response to such onslaughts consists in his notorious practice of hyperbolic self-dramatization: "I wil be contented to lose her highnesse favour & good opinion for ever, and my life withall, if [the treasures of Guiana] be not found rather to exceed, then to equal whatsoever is in this discourse promised or declared" (348).

Raleigh's rhetorical assertions of the faithfulness of his report at the same time identify him as a true courtier:

But it shall be found a weake policie in me, either to betray my selfe, or my countrey with imaginations, neither am I so farre in love with that lodging, watching, care, perill, diseases, ill savours, bad fare, and many other mischiefes that accompany these voyages, as to woo my seffe againe into any of them, were I not assured that the Sunne covereth not so much riches in any part of the earth (405).

Raleigh here invokes his aristocratic sensibility to prove the authenticity of the hidden treasure. His self-dramatization as a guarantor of the truth of his account greatly contrasts with Harriot's and Cortés's usual denial of authorial agency. The reason for the extreme subjectivity of Raleigh's report may indeed be found in the elusiveness of an actual referent (El Dorado, Manoa, gold). The text thus constitutes an attempt to replace that missing referent with the authenticity of its author's experience and vision of reality. Raleigh's denial of using artistic or rhetorical means is at the same time a demonstration of his text's rhetorical artifice. Curiously, the strong presence of Raleigh's personality in his text appears to be at least in part the logical consequence of the non-existence of any significant real object to write about. 19

But as scholarship has confirmed, Raleigh did not merely use his person as a token of textual authenticity. His text, and the voyage itself in fact, also figured as a token of his ideal love toward his queen. The main force that drove him to Guiana, Raleigh claims in an unmatched act of courtly self-fashioning, was his passionate desire to regain the favor and sympathy of Elizabeth by presenting to her a new and rich colony in South America:

I did therefore even in the winter of my life, undertake these travels, fitter for bodies lesse blasted with misfortunes, for men of greater abilitie, and for mindes of better encouragement, that thereby, if it were possible, I might recover but the moderation of excesse, & the least test of the greatest plenty formerly possessed. If I had knowen other way to win, if I had imagined how greater adventures might have regained, if I could conceive what farther meanes I might yet use, but even to appease so powerful displeasure, I would not doubt but for one yeere more to hold fast my soule in my teeth, till it were performed. (Raleigh 1904, 339)



Raleigh's voyage of discovery is here implicated in a narrative of courtly romance to which it has often been reduced in literary scholarship. But as we shall see, his rhetoric of personal chivalry is intricately intertwined with colonial concerns.

Raleigh was definitely pursuing a grander exploit than his fellow gentleman seadogs: "It became not the former fortune in which I once lived, to goe journeys of picory, it had sorted ill with the offices of Honour, which by her Majesties Grace I hold this day in England, to run from Cape to Cape, and from place to place, for the pillage of ordinaries prizes" (340). He exhorts his royal reader to regard his journey as a "painfull pilgrimage" instead. By this act of self-fashioning Raleigh rhetorically distinguishes himself from his fellow privateers as a secular knight and models his action on the cultural concept of the quest or *aventure*.

It is in this context that the often-quoted "poetic" passages of the *Discoverie* receive a second meaning. Reaching the farthest point of his river journey, Raleigh views the "strange overfals of the river of Caroli," which he describes in the following terms:

When we were come to the tops of the first hilles of the plaines adjoining to the river, we behelde that wonderfull breach of waters, which ranne downe Caroli: and might from that mountaine see the river howe it ranne in three parts, above twentie miles off, and there appeared some tenne or twelve overfals in sight, every one as high over the other as a Church-tower, which fell with that fury, that the rebound of water made it seeme, as if it had bene all covered over with a great shower of raine: and in some places wee tooke it at the first for a smoke that had risen over some great towne. (4034)

The prospect widens into a supreme pastoral vision:

I never saw a more beautifull cuntry, nor more lively prospects, hils so raised here and there over the valleys, the river winding into divers branches, the plaines adjoining without bush or stubble, all faire greene grasse, the ground of hard sand easie to march on, either for horse or foote, the deere crossing in every path, the birdes towards the evening singing on every tree with a thousand severall tunes, cranes and herons of white, crimson, and carnation pearching in the rivers side, the aire fresh with a gentle Easterly winde, and every stone that we stouped to take up, promised either golde or silver by his complexion. (404)

Apart from its indisputable arcadian quality, the passage demonstrates how the explorers' practical interests ("easie to march on") blend with a projection of Renaissance literary conventions. The comparison of the Caroli falls with a church tower and the trompe l'oeil of a "great towne" with smoking chimneys exemplifies Raleigh's tendency to aestheticize American reality. More specifically, the metaphors are reminiscent not only of the Red Crosse Knight's vision of Jerusalem in the first book of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590) but also of Bernal Diaz's famous account of his first sight of Tenochtitlán.<sup>20</sup> European ideal city and American city here merge and become superimposed on Raleigh's expectation of finding Manoa, the ideal golden city of the last Incas. Significantly, the depiction of the pastoral scenery which follows upon this evocation of crusader mentality melts down to a promise of material wealth.

On their return, Raleigh's crew encounters a second waterfall rushing over a "mountaine of Christall." As before, Raleigh, "being a very ill footeman" (Raleigh 1904, 404), can only view the natural marvel from

afarre off and it appeared like a white Churchtower of an exceeding height. There falleth over it a mighty river which toucheth no part of the side of the mountaine, but rusheth over the toppe of it, and falleth to the ground with so terrible a noyse and clamor, as if a thousand bells were knockt one against another. I thinke there is not in the world so strange an over-fall, nor so wonderfull to behold: Berreo told mee that there were Diamonds and other precious stones on it, and that they shined very farm off. (418)

The similes betray the larger discursive setting of the whole account, a setting that is informed by the imagery of Spenser's nationalist epic. But it also bears the traces of Odysseus's vision of the Mount of Purgatory in Dante's *Inferno* (26.12742), as well as of Columbus's vision of the earthly paradise near the mouth of the Orinoco.<sup>21</sup> The mountain of crystal that bears diamonds and other precious stones is paralleled in the *Faerie Queene* by both the heavenly city of Jerusalem, with its walls of "pearle and precious stone, that earthly tong / Cannot describe," and the earthly city Cleopolis, an allegory of London and seat of the Faerie Queene, alias Elizabeth, with its "bright towre all built of christall cleene."<sup>22</sup> Raleigh's description of his venture as a "painfull pilgrimage" is a direct quotation from the

*Faerie Queene*, sensibly enough from the scene in which the Red Crosse Knight receives the promise that his earthly battles in the service of his country will soon be superseded by his entry into sainthood.<sup>23</sup>

So the *Discoverie* is in part modeled after an archetypal narrative of knight errancy that finds its most aestheticized contemporary expression in Spenser's epic poem. The intertextual relationship is much too complex to be discussed in full here. Raleigh's account of his river journey also bears a certain similarity with Spenser's account of Sir Guyon's journey to the Bower of Bliss in book 2. What is important to note here, however, is that in the *Faerie Queene* great emphasis is put on the temperance of both knights; their continence in carnal matters is regarded as the absolute precondition for attaining their goals (Jerusalem, the destruction of the sinful Bower of Bliss). The notion of temperance, as we shall see, regulates the discursive economy of the *Discoverie* as well.<sup>24</sup>

The relationship between the imaginative journey of Spenser's Red Crosse Knight and the actual journey of Sir Walter Raleigh, which is inscribed in Raleigh's choice of similes and names, to a large part determines Raleigh's view and his presentation of colonial relationships as well. In fact, Spenser's fiction is itself part of the nationalist narrative that Richard Hakluyt and others were so busy to produce when they construed the legend of Prince Madoc. Spenser, by borrowing much of his nationalist materials from the Italian poet Ariosto, made a major contribution to the translation of the ideology of universal kingship from the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to Elizabeth. Raleigh's excessive reliance on Spanish sources for developing his notion of an English empire in Guiana partakes in the same process of ideological translation.<sup>25</sup>

Usually, the knight performing a "painfull pilgrimage" or chivalric *aventure* is implicated in a triadic structure: good (usually a beautiful virgin) is defended against evil. As Hakluyt's use of the ideologeme of chivalry in the "Discourse of Western Planting" has shown, the liberating knight depends for the success of his actions on a victim to defend (the Chichimecas and Cimarrons in Hakluyt's case) and an enemy to defend the victim against (the Spaniards). Guiana afforded both at least after a certain period of ideological alignment.

Seeking to acquire new territories for his queen, the Elizabethan knight is at the same time a good imitator of his enemy's methods.

As Louis Montrose has shown, the figure of the Spaniard, personified in Raleigh's text by his prisoner Antonio Berrio, is at once "an authority to be followed, a villain to be punished, and a rival to be bested" (Montrose 1991, 18).<sup>26</sup> Some of the complexity of Raleigh's text derives from its need to state three functions of the Spaniard at once: while his own credibility largely depends on the information and previous action of Berrio and others, Raleigh at the same time seeks to deny this identity of English and Spanish political designs in order to open up a space for the English colonization of Guiana.

The parts in this ideological charade are distributed right at the beginning of his account, when he emphasizes Berrio's cruelty against the Indians and gives a vivid description of the lamentable state of several caciques whom the Spaniards had tortured until they were "almost dead of famine, and wasted with torments" (Raleigh 1904, 353). The Spaniards' uncivil behavior is then functionalized for explaining the violence of the English, who "at the instance of the Indians" burned and sacked the Spanish colony at San José. This action is immediately followed by a first council between the English liberators and the surrounding tribes, during which

by my Indian interpreter, which I caried out of England, I made them understand that I was the servant of a Queene, who was the great Casique of the North, and a virgine, and had more Casiqui under her then there were trees in that yland: that shee was an enemye to the Castellani in respect of their tyrannie and oppression, and that she delivered all such nations about her, as were by them oppressed, and . . . had sent mee to free them also, and withall to defend the countrey of Guiana from their invasion and conquest. I shewed them her Majesties picture which they so admired and honoured, as it had bene easie to have brought them idolatrous thereof. (353)

The natives henceforth call the queen "Ezrabeta Cassipuna Aquerewana, which is as much as Elizabeth, the great princesse or greatest commander." The passage exemplifies Richard Hakluyt's theory of conquest by defense, put forth in the "Discourse of Western Planting." The picture of the queen serves a similar function as Harriot's assortment of modern technology, with the significant difference that the awe of the Indians here becomes an important element in Raleigh's courtly romance. Raleigh, much like Cortés and Harriot, implicates the reaction of the people to be colonized into a dialogue with his (royal) reader.

But the gendering of the colonial relationship that the text seeks to perform (effeminate Indians to be "delivered" from aggressive Spaniards) is endangered by the fact that the Indians, especially Indian women, do not appear to be so helpless as to fit into the chivalric triad without problems. Toward the end of his journey Raleigh encounters a female cacique who is "inheritix of that Province . . . [and] came farre off to see our Nation, and asked me diverse questions of her Majestie, being much delighted with the discourse of her Majesties greatness, and wondering at such reports as we truely made of her Highness many vertues" (Raleigh 1904, 423). The status of the caciqua as a dangerous rival of Queen Elizabeth, as her possibly less virtuous American counterpart, is only insufficiently neutralized by Raleigh's remark that it was "*our* Nation" that she came to visithe term here referring not to the English discoverers but to their new Indian allies, the Aromaias, who would probably have been surprised to find how quickly their sovereignty was absorbed in Raleigh's text. The attitude of the Native American "inheritix," it seems, too much resembles that of Elizabeth herself to subsume her under "our Nation." For the time being, she is therefore made to inhabit the margins of Raleigh's colonial anthropology, a fate she shares with the Amazons, whose queen she may well be.

This mythical race of "warlike women" (366), as Raleigh learns from his native informants, lives

on the South side of the river in the provinces of Topago. . . . The memories of the like women are very ancient as well in Africa as in Asia: In Africa those that had Medusa for queene: others in Scithia nere the rivers of Tanais and Thermodon. . . . [In] many histories they are verified to have bene, and in divers ages and provinces: but they which are not far from Guiana doe accompany with men but once in a yere, and for the time of one moneth, which I gather by their relation, to be in April. (367)

They feast with the men for one month and then depart. If they deliver a son he is sent to the father, while daughters are kept, "all being desirous to increase their owne sex and kind: but that they cut off the right dug of the brest, I doe not finde to be true." Male prisoners are likewise kept for company for a while but are then put to death: "for they are sayd to be very cruell and bloodthirsty, especially to such as offer to invade their territories" (367).

Raleigh's apparently untrammelled belief in the existence of an "Amazonian anticulture" in Guiana (Montrose 1991, 26) was probably additionally motivated by the fact that the race of woman warriors was usually believed to dwell near the mythical El Dorado. 27 At the same time, their readiness to defend the territories bearing the object of English male desire not only echoes Columbus's conjunction of cannibalistic Caribs and gold-bearing islands but also the Tilbury speech of Queen Elizabeth. In this speech, the virgin queen, who is reported to have been attired "like an *Amazonian* Queene," warns the Spanish king not to dare to "invade the borders of my Realm," in defense of which she herself would be willing to "take up arms" (quoted in Montrose 1991, 2728).

The problem that presented itself to Raleigh was how to extend English overlordship to a country that was so ready to defend itself, that seemed to be no more in need of the services of English knights than Elizabeth herself. His chivalric project was then at once threatened not only by his failure to produce any hard evidence for the existence of the Guianian Celiopolis but also by the fact that those native inhabitants who were presumably closest to the source of wealth seemed as able and resolved to defend themselves against the Spanish villains without patriarchal aid as the English queen in her "Amazonian" speech. Such a constellation hardly facilitated the entry of the English knights. Their offers too much resembled those of their Spanish rivals.

But as Louis Montrose has shown, the Englishmen had one trump to offer by which they could clearly distinguish themselves from the Spaniards. This is the crucial quality of the Spenserian knights: their temperance. The opportunity for Raleigh's men to capitalize on their gift of sexual continence offers itself when they form an alliance with the people of Aromaia and their 110-year-old cacique Topiawari. In a series of long conversations with Topiawari, to whom Raleigh attributes "inward feeling at the losse of his Countrey and liberties" (Raleigh 1904, 400), Raleigh learns the tragic story of how the Aromaias had been deprived of their women by their enemies: the "cannibals," the Spaniards, and the Epuremei. The latter Raleigh supposes to be the direct borderers of Manoa.

More specifically, the Aromaias seem to be the victims of an extended woman trade that had established itself in Guiana. One "great nation of Canibals," Raleigh writes, even maintains a "contin-

uall market of women for three or foure hatchets a piece, they are bought by the Arawacas, and by them sold into the West Indies" (407). The lustful Castilians are apparently themselves fully engaged in the woman trade with the "cannibals,"

which are of that barbarous nature, as they will for three or foure hatchets sell the sonnes and daughters of their owne brethren and sisters, and for somewhat more, even their owne daughters. Hereof the Spaniards make great profit: for buying a maid of twelve or thirteene yeres for three or foure hatchets, they sell them againe to Margarita in the West Indies for fifty and an hundred pezos, which is so many crownes. (376)

The Epuremei seem to be particularly specialized in this slave trade with native women. In fact, as Topiawari informs Sir Walter, the women of Aromaia had only recently been kidnapped by the Epuremei. Their loss had caused the poor Aromaias to have only three or four women per man instead of ten or twelve as before, whereas the Epuremei now had fifty or a hundred each (41213).

Little wonder then that the Englishmen, finally sensing a chance for knightly exercise, eagerly form an alliance with Topiawari's people to retrieve the Aromaia women from their enemies. The particular convenience of the deal for the English lies in the fact that the Aromaias seem to be interested only in satisfying their carnal desire and are ready to leave all material exploits of the joint venture to the temperate Englishmen. It is their sexual restraint, then, that allows the Britons' entry into the political landscape of Guiana and promises them a rich revenue in native gold. The incontinent Spaniards, by comparison, do not even seem to have been satisfied with swapping women with the "cannibals" but revert to outright theft. They

tooke from them both their wives and daughters dayly, and used them for the satisfying of their owne lusts, especially such as they tooke in this maner by strength. But I protest before the Majestie of the living God, that I neither know nor beleeve, that any of our company one or other, by violence or otherwise, ever knew any of their women, and yet we saw many hundreds, and had many in our power, and of those very yong, and excellently favoured, which came among us without deceit, starke naked.

Nothing got us more love amongst them then this usage: for I suffered not any man to take from any of the nations so much as a

Pina, or a Potato roote, without giving them contentement, nor any man so much as to offer to touch any of their wives or daughters: which course so contrary to the Spaniards (who tyrannize over them in all things) drewe them to admire her Majestie, whose commaundement I tolde them it was, and also wonderfully to honour our nation. (391)

Clearly, Raleigh tries hard to reestablish his good relationship with the envious queen. Like the Red Crosse Knight, Raleigh and his men shun the enjoyments of "loose loves" in favor of a higher goal, the honor of the nation (Spenser 1968, 124 [1.10.62]). The language here oscillates between two discourses: references to sexual temptation, Spanish incontinence, and English chivalry are increasingly expressed in terms of plunder and retribution and of economic exchange. Had it not been for the hawk's eye of Sir Robert Cecil, who censored Raleigh's manuscript before it was released for publication, the ideological tale of English continence would have collapsed by a blunder at the end of his text: "Those that are not married, and will christen of theis [sic] nacions shall buy wives for themselves and their friends for 3 or 4 hatchets a peece of all ages, and not inferior in shape and favor to any of Europe, cullor excepted." 28 The suppressed passage offers a good glimpse of the problems Raleigh had to deal with: his tract not only served to develop a self-image of the English colonizer as national hero and to regain the queen's favor but was at the same construed as a propaganda piece. The text thus addressed a heterogeneous readership, part of which probably became increasingly interested in receiving reliable proof of Guiana's treasure, which Raleigh was unable to provide. So while Raleigh attempted to write a nationalist piece with the kind of imperial symbolism that attended that discourse, he was also compelled to address the more vulgar tastes of future settlers.

In trying to reconcile the two motives informing the Guiana enterprise, exploitation and settlement, Raleigh had to find a means of displacing the topic of gold to the topic of territorial possession. After all, he aimed at a higher mark than vulgar "journeys of picory." This displacement adopts the curious form of Sir Walter's distributing pieces of gold instead of acquiring them: "I did not in any sort make my desire of gold knowen, because I had neither time, nor power to have a greater quantity. I gave among them manie more peeces of gold, then I received, of the new money of 20 shillings with



her Majesties picture to weare, with promise that they would become her servants thencefoorth" (415).<sup>29</sup> Like Raleigh's other generous "gifts" to the Indians, this one turns out to be the key to extending English overlordship to the natives of Guiana. A donation of twenty shillings is the minimal investment necessary for the acquisition of the whole empire. Needless to say, the Indians were fully unaware that they had practically swapped their territorial rights for a gold piece bearing the picture of a woman. As Montrose notes, the Indians' "very acceptance of Raleigh's dissembled gifts betokens their uncomprehending entry into the circulations of England's nascent imperial economy an economy to be fueled, in the future, by their own gold" (Montrose 1991, 23).<sup>30</sup>

Owing to the double inscription of Raleigh's text with two competing concepts of colonialism (exploitation versus trade and settlement), it is ultimately impossible to maintain the ideological difference between temperate Englishmen and intemperate Spaniards. The opposition collapses in those passages at the beginning and the end of the *Discoverie* where Raleigh admits that English action can ultimately only follow the example of its Spanish predecessor:

wee had adventured either to have gone to the great Citie of Manoa, or at least taken so many of the other Cities and townes neerer at hand, as would have made a royall returne: but it pleased not God so much to favour mee at this time: if it shall be my lot to prosecute the same, I shall willingly spend my life therein, and if any else shalbe enabled thereunto and conquers the same, I assure him thus much, he shall pedourme more then ever was done in Mexico by Cortez, or in Peru by Pizarro, whereof the one conquered the Empire of Mutezuma, the other of Guascar, and Atabalipa, and whatsoever prince shall possesse it, that Prince shall be Lord of more golde, and of a more beautifull Empire, and of more Cities and people, then either the king of Spaine, or the great Turke. (Raleigh 1904, 355)

Raleigh's rhetorical saber rattling in the absence of any proof for the existence of Manoa increases toward the end, where his tone also becomes more vulgar. The *Discoverie* ends with a promise of exploits for various tastes:

The common souldier shall here fight for golde, and pay himselfe in steede of pence, with plates of halfe a foot broad, whereas he breaketh his bones in other warres for provant and penury. Those commanders

and chieftaines that shoot at honour and abundance, shall finde there more rich and beautifull cities, more temples adorned with golden images, more sepulchres filled with treasure, then either Cortez found in Mexico, or Pizarro in Peru: and the shining glory of this conquest will eclipse all those so farre extended beames of the Spanish nation. (42526)

Obviously, as Raleigh notes a little earlier, it is important that the Indians do not realize the fundamental identity of his policy with that of the Spaniards. A loss of English continence would clearly entail a loss of native confidence, a danger to be well considered:

for then (whereas now they have heard we were enemies to the Spaniards & were sent by her Majesty to relieve them) they would as good cheap have joined with the Spaniards at our returne, as to have yeilded unto us, *when they had proved that we came both for one errant, and that both sought but to sacke & spoile them*, but as yet our desire of gold, or our purpose of invasion is not knowen to them of the empire . . . and therefore till I had knowen her Majesties pleasure, I would rather have lost the sacke of one or two townes . . . then to have defaced and indangered the future hope of so many millions, & the great good, & rich trade which England may be possessed of thereby. I am assured nowe that they will all die even to the last man against the Spaniards in hope of our succor and returne: whereas otherwise if I had either layd handes on the borderers, or ransomed the lords, as Berreo did, or invaded the subjects of Inga, I know all had beene lost for hereafter. (41415; emphasis added) 31

It is not at all clear which native group the compound pronouns refer to; the last sentence suggests that Raleigh's intention to "sacke & spoile them" comprises all Indians, friend and foe alike. Those that "will all die even to the last man against the Spaniards" are definitely Topiawari's people, who Raleigh here imagines to use as cannon fodder in a battle between Europeans. At the same time Raleigh proposes to "ransom" the leaders of his allies, "as Berreo did." This is convenient shorthand for obscuring the nature of the action to be imitated: Berrio did not ransom Indian chiefs but captured Topiawari's predecessor Morequito, forcing him to convert to Catholicism and then to cede his territories. (Spanish documents refer explicitly only to the two latter actions, but Morequito's captivity can be inferred from the remark that he was set "at liberty" afterward; see Harlow 1928, lxxxi.) The practice is familiar: as the examples of

Motecuhzoma, Menatonon, and Atahualpa show, the leaders were kidnapped as a sign and means of their "voluntary submission," then to be "ransomed" by their own people in exchange for gold. Morequito was later executed on Berrio's command.

Once again, then, an act of taking is masked as an act of liberation or (financial) investmentthe short phrase "or ransomed the lords, as Berreo did" in fact epitomizes the logic, but also the essential conflict, of Raleigh's text, representing that of the English colonial venture as a whole. The passage is extremely cynical in its adaptation of the language of economic exchange: the Indians will give their lives to the English for gaining their liberty and their women from them; the lords are "ransomed" with no further indication from whom and for what. The rhetoric of chivalric exchange and the commodification of female bodies legitimate invasion and conquest by connecting the discourse of chivalry with the language of trade. Inscribed in the phrase is the futility of trying to establish a difference between Spanish and English action. Raleigh's discourse of economic exchange ultimately fails to dissemble the essential identity of the colonial projects of Spain and England: the only thing that both nations actually sought to "ransom" from foreign claims was the land itself.

Here again the language of courtly romance proves most appropriate for expressing English male desire in symbolic terms:

To conclude, Guiana is a cuntry that hath yet her maydenhead, never sackt, turned, nor wrought, the face of the earth hath not bene tome, nor the vertue and salt of the soyle spent by manurance, the graves have not bene opened for golde, the mines not broken with sledges, nor their Images puld downe out of their temples. It hath never bene entered by any armie of strength, and never conquered or possessed by any christian Prince. (428)

The other "christian Prince," King Charles I of Spain, is already mentioned as the proprietor of the "maidenhead of Peru" at the beginning of the text (346). The difference between English and Spanish sexual conduct, which the text seeks in vain to maintain, here again collapses into identity in a fantasy of colonial exploitation and rape. But the passage contains a third layer of meaning as well: the grammatical structure reiterates Peter Martyr's description of America as a golden world (see chapter 1): "never sackt . . . nor

wrought . . . not bene torne, nor . . . spent by manurance." The grammar of the passage picks up the rhetoric of negation found in classical, especially Ovidian, descriptions of the golden age (see Greenblatt 1973, 112). Having before referred to the ideal of a peaceful life in an Arcadian world (an ideal preserved in Raleigh's occasional pastoral descriptions of Guianese landscape), Raleigh now implicates the golden-age discourse, in however truncated and displaced a manner, in a vision of colonial and sexual violence.

The "maydenhead" passage is unequalled in exemplifying the ideological and rhetorical richness of Raleigh's text. Guiana, it implies, will not be a virgin land much longer after having been traded in for the "maidenhead" of Elizabeth on the twenty-shilling pieces. Chivalric and temperate trade relations will soon give way to conquest after the Spanish example, expressed in the language of forced sexual penetration. Even more, the chivalric act of retrieving the native women for their impotent husbands can be seen as the necessary prerequisite for this final outbreak of English male fantasy: it is precisely the rescue of native women in the service of the aged "Fisher King" Topiawari that legitimates the conquest of the land itself. This constellation at the same time solves the legal problem implicit in Hakluyt's epistle to Raleigh quoted at the beginning, the problem of how to gain a "just title" without being already in possession of the land. What legitimates that possession, Raleigh's text implies, is the chivalric legacy of English colonialism itself; it is the readiness of the colonizers to rush to the defense of any nation crying for their protection and, occasionally, also of those who don't. In other words, the temporary temperance of colonial desire legitimates the eventual execution of that desire; the restraint to penetrate the country legitimates its penetration.

The fusion of Ovidian grammar with the discourse of gender relations and the language of imperialism at the same time demonstrates how a specific mix of originally separate symbolic structures operates in favor of promoting England's overseas ventures, besides providing a telling gloss on the psychological affinity between the male discourse of courtly romance and fantasies of rape and violence. Nowhere is the *Discoverie* more revealing about how it sublimates the topic of desire in the form of an idealist sexual discourse than at this point, where it imaginatively unleashes that desire in a rhetoric that still bears the imprint of the ideology of Christian imperialism qua

utopianism to be found in the *Fourth Eclogue* of Virgil (see chapter 1). The rhetorical move from chivalric exchange to new incontinence at the same time reflects a change in colonial policy: whereas the former trope is tied to the economy of privateering, the latter replaces the privateer with the plowman.

In keeping with the romance tradition that informs his text, Raleigh advocates a "continent" contempt for "loose loves" in favor of the higher goal of gaining a new continent for queen and country.<sup>32</sup> Once this goal is achieved, as the Redcrosse Knight learns, the "bloody field" of battle can be left behind and the peaceful march to Jerusalem can begin. In this final state of bliss, the Christian knight will then also be content without "ladies love." A painful pilgrimage perhaps, but apparently worth the trouble (Spenser 1968, 124 [1.10.6062]).

Eager to attain this lofty goal, Raleigh admonishes his queen, toward the end of the *Discoverie*, to put a quick end to the painful part of the pilgrimage. The text culminates in a passionate exhortation to Elizabeth to take possession of Guiana, which Raleigh praises as the certain road to empire: "And where the South border of Guiana reacheth to the Dominion and Empire of the Amazonas, those women shall hereby heare the name of a virgin, which is not onely able to defend her owne territories and her neighbours, but also to invade and conquer so great Empires and so farre removed." The problem of course is that, according to Raleigh's gendered view of colonial action, Elizabeth, though viewed as an Amazonian queen herself, was still incapable of the "masculine" acts of invading and conquering the new territory. His last move is a logical consequence of this insight. He urges Elizabeth "to possesse it, if not, I will judge those men worthy to be kings thereof, that by her grace and leave will undertake the same" (431). The military potency of female rulers, it seems, is restricted to defending their countries, as Elizabeth had stated in her Tilbury speech of 1588. A similar capacity for defense is assigned to the Amazons, whose bloodthirstiness threatens all "such as offer to invade their territories." Female rulers may "possess" a territory in the passive sense of the verb, once the act of taking possession has been accomplished by the masculine thrust of their male subjects.

Incapable of probing the "depths of hidden resources" (Hakduyt), then, female rulers were in no position ever to acquire a "just title"

to another land. As a consequence, female colonial power is imaginatively dispatched and passed over to England's manly aristocracy. Thus the text reaches its ideological conclusion in playing out foreign and domestic women warriors against each other until the "virgin" land remains at the exclusive disposition of male English desire.

### Contextualizing the Discoverie of Guiana

As I have tried to show, the discursive politics of Sir Walter Raleigh's *Discoverie* revolve around an ambiguous negotiation of several contemporary discourses. Raleigh's "technology of textual production" resembles, but in its complexity perhaps surpasses, similar processes in the texts of Herná Cortés and of Thomas Harriot. Its most significant aspect is the introduction of the symbolism of gender and of economic exchange into the discursive economy of colonialism. In Raleigh's presentation, America is not laid at the feet of the European conqueror by a native leader, as in the *Second Letter* of Cortés, nor does a demonstration of European superior technology induce the natives to accept English rule. The imposition of overlordship is now expressed as an act of exchange masked as an act of deliverance (with clear debts to Hakluyt's "Discourse of Western Planting").

While it is certainly impossible to reduce Raleigh's polysemous text to any diagram of a fixed relationship between several European discourses, the category of exchange can be seen to assume a central ideological function in the text because of its capacity for channeling the as yet unfulfilled colonialist desire into rational expression. It first appears in the form of Raleigh's frequent references to the woman trade of the "cannibals," Epuremei, and Spaniards and then in the crudely formulated passages about the Indians who willingly exchange their lives for the retrieval of their women. The ideological coherence of Raleigh's tract at least in part depends on the repeated assertion that English violence is justified because it enforces the liberation of native women.

Like the ideological constructs used by Columbus and Cortés, however, the one that serves Raleigh here is based on a profound misunderstanding of the social organization in the native Caribbean. What the Europeans regarded as trade and kidnapping would more likely seem to have been an exogamous or ritual practice, certainly

already disturbed by the introduction of European forms of slave trade into the Caribbean. 33 Raleigh's ideological split of native women into two categories, captives and Amazons, is the necessary dualist response to a social reality in which men and woman indeed seem to have entertained rituals of exchange and temporary separation, as can be gathered from linguistic and mythic evidence (see Dreyfus 1983/84 and Sued-Badillo 1986). In addition, the Arawaks of the Caribbean seem to have had a ritualistic enemy structure (Dreyfus 1983/84, 46), and Raleigh may unwittingly have entered one of their rituals of warfare, seeking to turn it into a war of conquest, the only pattern of conflict between different nation he knew.

Still, the attempt to recover the real conditions of the colonial encounter described by Raleigh has to remain tentative and incomplete. Too much of what we now accept as the Caribbean reality of the sixteenth century is actually derived from texts such as Raleigh's. Nevertheless, it is important to make the attempt of approximating that reality, if only to understand that Raleigh did not altogether fantasize his stories of women captives and Amazons but rather translated the information he received from the Aromaias into a narrative of empire and chivalry that made sense to him and that he sought to act out in Guiana.

The literary success of the *Discoverie* has been considerable and has lasted until today. Like the *Second Letter* of Cortés and the Report of Harriot, Raleigh's tract illustrates all the virtues of a Machiavellian politics of textual production. With Harriot's *Brief and True Report* it shares a strong polytropic tendency: a tendency to mix different tropes, colonial and other, in producing ideological closure. This statement defies assumptions about the premodern nature of Raleigh's procedure of representation. What may previously have appeared as the medievalism of his narrative now turns out to be the modernity of his text. That modernity consists in the calculated bricolage of different discursive traditions in the service of a specific political goal, and in simultaneously masking this process as subjective expression and courtly romance. The resulting text can stand as a surrogate of objective reality by exclusively resting on its intellectual and imaginative force. Like the different sections of Harriot's *Report*, the incoherent patchwork of mythical and personal materials in Raleigh's text is organized with a view to their effect on its readers, royal and plebeian alike.

In the domain of action, the mingling of crusader ideology and the logic of trade and investment in Raleigh's *Discoverie* is paralleled by the simultaneous existence of two paradigms of economic production—the paradigm of privateering, with its double inscription of the topic of adventure, which was soon to develop into venture capitalism, and the emerging paradigm of settlement colonialism. Raleigh's text experiments with these two patterns of colonial relations, whose opposition between perpetual movement and fixed settlement were to become ideologically epitomized and reconciled in the notion of the Puritan errand.<sup>34</sup> In doing so, it can be seen to dramatize Richard Eden's ideal of the merchant-Christian, which was to become one of the key concepts of imperialism.<sup>35</sup>

The most progressive trait of the *Discoverie* is probably its bold move from a rhetoric of justification, embedded in the use of the Native American speech in the texts of Columbus, Cortés, and Harriot (and by no means altogether absent from Raleigh's own account), to a rhetoric of colonial chauvinism, which is only insufficiently balanced by, and actually shatters, a discourse of masculine continence.

Louis Montrose has referred to this discursive explosion in Raleigh's text as a "destabilization" of the ideological coherence of the *Discoverie* (Montrose 1991, 24, 34). Not only did the discursive conflict that Montrose has so brilliantly exposed apparently escape the critical gaze of generations of pre-Derridean scholars, but the metaphor of instability also seems to be tied to an ultimately textualist perspective. The rhetorical instability of single texts may betray processes of ideological transition on a wider historical scale—processes in which they actively partake rather than subverting or destabilizing them.

The discursive "collapse" in the *Discoverie*, its futile attempt to set off English colonial practice from Spanish colonial practice, is merely one of several half-hearted efforts of English colonialists to mask their indebtedness to the Spanish rival. What is new about Raleigh's text is its straightforward dismissal of the legal and moral quibbles about the problem of just title that can still be found in the texts of his contemporaries Hakluyt and Peckham. The reason for this shedding of the moral mask was the increase and consolidation of European power in the Caribbean and Mesoamerica, as well as the growing impact of Machiavellism in political thought and practice.



The public decline of the rhetoric of colonial justification still so dominant in the texts of Hakluyt, Peckham, and others in the 1580s is accompanied by the subordinate position the *Discoverie* ascribes to the ideologeme of native prophecy. Raleigh's reference to one of the "prophesies in Peru" that "foreshewed the losse of the said Empire" and said "that from Inglatierra those Ingas should be againe in time to come restored, and delivered from the servitude of the said Conquerours" (Raleigh 1904, 431), is only a faint echo of its parallel in Mexico (and much less convincing). The story of the expected return of an ancient leader, which had developed into a full-blown myth in Mexico and occupied a central position in the *Second Letter* of Cortés, is shuffled to the margins and to the very end of the *Discoverie* at the same time that the Protestant narrative of God's providence emerges as a means of colonial justification.

In spite of its remarkable lack of biblical rhetoric, then, the *Discoverie* can be seen to reflect this important shift in colonial discourse from humanist legal rhetoric to Protestant providentialism. Echoing Hakluyt's reference to the exodus of Israel quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Raleigh puts forth his opinion that "this empire is reserved for her Majesty and the English nation" because all Spanish attempts to colonize Guiana have so far been futile (362). Raleigh's piece here again links the imagery of medieval crusadership with that of the Puritan errand. Instead of posing a case of discursive instability, then, the *Discoverie* may be read as the product of a historical period of transition. In its negotiation of the conflicting discourses of that period, it concentrates on aligning the residual medieval discourse of chivalry with the emerging discourses of adventure capitalism and Protestant providentialism, which it knits together in its gendered representation of colonial and imperial politics. Raleigh's text is one of the earliest discursive sites on which the modern logic of world empire is publicly articulated in a relatively undisguised way.

The new English language of chauvinism, which the *Discoverie* exemplifies but also controls by implicating it in the discursive structure of chivalry, deploys its full force in an unpublished tract about Raleigh's Guiana expedition whose authorship is debated but is usually ascribed to either Raleigh or Harriot. 36 "Of the Voyage for Guiana" (1596) contains an abstract of the strategic steps to be taken in order to subject Guiana to English overlordship. It fully sheds the

metaphorical burden of the discourses of chivalry and the marvelous. The "Voyage" is dominated by the Protestant rhetoric of conquest, which we will explore in the following two chapters. Here the affinities with Richard Hakluyt's thinking become more than obvious. The repercussions of the "Discourse of Western Planting" in the "Voyage" are quite remarkable. Just like the two Hakluyts, the author of the "Voyage" knows that the pursuit of colonial interests is incompatible with the ideal of peaceful coexistence.

The argumentation of the tract is quite topsy-turvy, moving back and forth between scholastic reasoning and political pragmatism, and has a tendency to establish theses in order to overturn them again. The author rejects the justification of conquest on the grounds of the Indians' idolatry and follows the Cortesian example in introducing the idea of voluntary native acceptance of English overlordship as the just basis of colonization ([Raleigh] 1928, 143). This move then poses a major problem (what if the Indians do not want to accept British rule?), which can be solved only by creating a need for protection. Evidently, the model is fit for application only in areas under Spanish control, and accordingly the author makes extensive use of the vocabulary of the *leyenda negra*, including a suggestion to confront the natives of Guiana with acts of Spanish atrocity by showing them the pictures from de Bry's edition of the *Brevissima relación* of Las Casas (so much for the emerging power of print!) (143). In addition to arousing the Indians' need for English protection, the author suggests fanning their desire for the achievements of English technology and civilization (144). After the dependency of the Indians has been achieved, the problem of idolatry might be tackled.

The "Voyage" is a compact though not always systematic outline of the British logic of empire building: the natives shall be forced to convert if they want to enjoy English protection and products in the future. But their abjuration from idolatry is also a precondition of furthering English interests: it was considered morally impossible for a Christian nation to fight against another Christian (even "papist") nation with the help of infidels.<sup>37</sup> The problem is solved by asserting the possibility of the temporary deferral of conversion or of carrying out mass conversion according to the Spanish model. The example the author uses is revealing: he suggests using the conversion of Atahualpa as a model ([Raleigh] 1928, 145). That "conversion,"

however, had consisted in kidnapping Atahualpa and slaying his people after he had thrown the Bible into the dirt. 38 The comparison suggests that the model of English "protection" was the violent action of Cortés and Pizarro. Faithfulness to this model was of course incompatible with the ideal of peaceful conversion expounded by Las Casas. Instead, as we have seen, both Hakluyt and Raleigh managed to implicate the anticonquest rhetoric of the Dominican friar into their own programs of conquest.

The truly revolutionary suggestion of the "Voyage" is to establish English political control over Guiana by way of arming the Indians against the Spaniards (that is, to use them as cannon fodder, as already suggested in the *Discoverie*) and to encourage English men to marry native women, possibly to prevent negative consequences of the previous move ([Raleigh] 1928, 14546). But according to the anonymous author, the Guianese, though intelligent enough to learn the use of English arms within a short time, are too naive ("faythfull") to consider their own emancipation. The model of Indian character underlying the text is evidently derived from Las Casas (quick of apprehension but sheepishly obedient) and as such differs from the assertions of Indian treacherousness that otherwise control so much of colonial discourse. Clearly the Native Americans' loyalty or treacherousness, goodness or badness, intelligence or stupidity depended on the ideological context within which that native character was defined.

The program of empire articulated in the "Voyage," though it does not reveal any striking new evidence, supports my previous reading of the *Discoverie*. A consideration of the second text may shift the emphasis of analysis from the more traditional contemplations of the literary, humanist, or even self-deconstructive qualities of the *Discoverie* toward its function as an important textual event within English overseas expansion. Both Raleigh's poetic skills (in describing the two waterfalls) and his empathy toward Topiawari, the wifeless man with "inward feeling," can be seen as elements of the discourse of empire that the text performs. The two aspects of the text that are generally seen to constitute its modernity, Raleigh's subjective approach and his use of literary tropes, sharply contrast with its less acknowledged modern trait: the imperial vision it expounds. At the same time, the idealist discourse of knightly temperance stands in dissonant tension with Raleigh's call to sack the country, tear open

the face of the earth, and consume the native allies in inter-European warfare. This coexistence in Raleigh's text of humanist sensibility and aesthetic complexity with colonial rapacity and aggression, often regarded as a regrettable schizophrenic breach at the heart of modernity, in fact articulates a fundamental dialectic of our modern world.

Thus the texts of both Raleigh and Harriot support Foucault's thesis of an epistemic transformation around 1600. But both likewise testify to the fact that this transformation did not consist in a sudden change of discursive paradigms, with individual texts and authors to be grouped on either side of the epistemic divide. It may rather be conceived as a fissure that runs through all or most of the texts of early modern Europe, especially those dealing with colonial relationships. While it may seem, for example, that Harriot has fully shed the images of the discourse of the marvelous, the marvelous makes its return in the language of quantification he employs. Whereas before writers and readers may have been captivated by individual wonders, fascination is now aroused by the impression of the incredible abundance of potentially consumable American nature. By contrast, Raleigh's old-fashioned tales of Amazons, cannibals, and Plinian races are embedded in a programmatic and chauvinistic outline of empire. As his comment on the Ewaipanomas has shown, truth was no stable category for Raleigh but rather a matter of expediency. In this regard he does not essentially differ from Cortés. His epistemological skepticism, coupled with an uncompromisingly imperialist vision, is perhaps one of the reasons why Raleigh's writings appear so familiar to their modern readers.

The differences between the strategies of representation in the texts of Harriot and Raleigh become less acute if the two texts are seen to stand for the two representational categories (the scientific and the humanist) that developed during the ever-divaricating process of modernity. Where Harriot makes himself invisible as an author, Raleigh turns his subjective experience into the guarantor of textual authenticity; where Harriot's *Report* operates on a scientific principle of objectivism that allows it to exclude a large part of reality, Raleigh's *Discoverie* assembles foreign texts into its own account in an act of ideological overdetermination that conceals its referential poverty.

The most important shift between the two texts does not so much consist in their different degrees of objectivity or their different

representational strategies but rather in the ways these help to occlude colonial violence. Raleigh's final admittance and propagation of violent means seems to indicate a moral change as well. But that shift is successfully masked by the metaphorical imbrication of his vision of colonial chauvinism with the language of violence against the female body. The rhetorical exclusion or deferral of colonial violence, which guides the production of both Harriot's and Ralph Lane's texts, is translated into chivalric virtue in the *Discoverie*. As the following chapters show, the lack of moral conscience that this move implies would increase in the English colonial discourse at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

## Chapter 4 "A Mortall Immortall Possession" Virginian Battlefields

### The 1609 Offensive

After Sir Walter Raleigh's abortive attempts to establish a settlement at Roanoke and to invade Guiana, England's colonial policy entered a period of relative stagnation, only to develop new zeal in the early 1600s. This revival led to the foundation of Jamestown in 1607 and to the issuing of a new charter in 1609. The year 1609 is generally marked as a political and ideological watershed; some historians even speak of the absolute novelty of British colonial policy after that date. My own reading of early Jamestown and eventually of the beginnings in New England, by contrast, is guided by the insight that even discursive novelties necessarily drag along the luggage of earlier discourses, that the novelty more often than not consists of a reorganization or translation of what went before. Though the historical significance of 1600 cannot be debated, that date can hardly be seen to have inaugurated a complete change of ideological paradigms.

In 1609 King James I loosened royal control over the Virginia Company (founded in 1606) and turned it into a joint stock company owned by 56 London merchant firms and 659 individual investors (adventurers). The company not only enjoyed full economic liberty but was also endowed with legislative and juridical authority in Virginia. By delegating the task of colonization to free enterprise, the crown had reduced its own function to the symbolic level of issuing charters (Lang 1975, 112). This economic liberalism was accompanied by a colonial ideology that significantly differed from the Elizabethan model of exploitation and privateering. The adventurers

of the Virginia Company had turned away from trying to make a fortune by either imitating Spanish action or waylaying the Spanish treasure fleet. The topic of gold, which had very much dominated English colonialism so far (epitomized in Raleigh's golden text about a goldless expedition), was now pushed to the background in favor of the more rational model of patient trade and settlement.

The new political situation demanded an ideological realignment, above all the explicit refutation of the papal donation of 1493 that had given the exclusive right of settlement to Spain. Quite understandably, the colonial impulse had long joined forces with the religious reform movement and its rejection of papal authority. In England, contrary to the states under Spanish rule, religious rhetoric did not become central until the propaganda campaign mounted in 1609 to win new shareholders and settlers. The 1609 offensive sought, in John Parker's words, to build "a missionary motive into a commercial company" (Parker 1978, 247). The main items in this new campaign were a number of sermons, widely circulated in print, that usually justified colonization on the grounds of a typological interpretation of the Bible: God's donation of Canaan to Israel was seen to prefigure his donation of North America to Protestant England. 1

Robert Gray's *A Good Speed to Virginia* is a particularly illustrative specimen of this new colonialist genre. Gray's sermon is one of the key texts for justifying English settlement in Virginia, and it contains a number of tropes to which we will return at different points in this chapter. He finds the appropriate biblical quotation to begin with in Josuah 17.14, which speaks of God's donation of Canaan to Josuah and of his explicit orders to "cast out the Canaanites though they haue Iron Charets, and though they be strong." (Gray 1609, sig. B). If read typologically, which is what Gray is doing, this quotation is a free license to cast out any people, even a civilized one as the Canaanites, not to speak of such an "uncivilized" lot as the Virginia Indians.

Gray is aware that his biblical justification is in stark conflict with current legal theory, and his whole text can be viewed as an attempt to appease humanist protestations against his theological argument. He is particularly careful to address the issue of colonial violence. Though violence against idolaters is of course biblically endorsed, Gray argues, "a Christian ought to trie all meanes before they vndertake warre: diuastation and depopulation ought to be the last thing

which Christians should put in practice, yet . . . euerie example in the scripture as I saide is a precept, we are warranted by this direction of Ioshua, to destroy wilfull and conuicted Idolators" (sig. C2).

There is little doubt, he writes, about the idolatry of the savage inhabitants of Virginia, who "worship the diuell, offer their young children in sacrifice vnto him, wander vp and downe like beasts, and in manners and conditions, differ very litle from beasts, hauing, no Art, nor science, nor trade . . . yet by nature louing and gentle, and desirous to imhrace a better condition" (sig. C2). This passage, with its elegant final move from condemning the Indians' human sacrifice to asserting their readiness for conversion, is a compound version of the major ideologemes of the English discourse about Virginia. The elements of Indian devil worship and Indian nomadism, which are dealt with in this and the following chapter, are deployed in most of the other propaganda sermons as well.

Gray has no more prescriptions than his fellow preachers as to how to put Indian conversion into effect. Indeed, he advertises the propagation of the gospel by way of magic technology, which had been so convincingly demonstrated by Harriota surprising suggestion in such a religious text. <sup>2</sup> He then sets out to tackle the main objection against the invasion of America based on canon law: that it was unlawful to "plant ourselves in their places, being vnwronged or vnprouoked by them" (sig. C3). Possession of foreign territories, according to the legal tradition of the Spanish and Dutch humanists, was considered lawful only if that territory was either uninhabited (right of discovery) or if its inhabitants had provoked and lost an armed conflict (right of conquest) (see Vitoria 1975, 6869). Gray smartly takes away the basis of this argument by embedding it in a discussion of the concept of property:

Some affirme, and it is likely to be true, that these Sauages haue no particular propertie in any part or parcell of that Countrey, but only a generall residencie there, as wild beasts haue in the forrest, for they range and wander vp and downe the Countrey, without a law or gouernment, being led only by their owne lusts and sensualitie, there is not *meum & tuum* amongst them; so that if the whole lande should bee taken from them, there is not a man that can complaine of any particular wrong done vnto him. (Gray 1609, sig. C3)

Initial uncertainties about the factual grounding of his theory ("Some affirme, and it is likely to be true") are quickly brushed aside



by the language of native bestiality (expressed in their lustful nomadism). The logic of private property, just about to start its first destructive boom in Jamestown, then pays handsome dividends here: though the words and grammar of Gray hardly differ from the Ovidian rhetoric of Peter Martyr, the humanist topos of a socialist and pastoral commonwealth is now no longer a political ideal but an indicator of the Native Americans' unreasonable state. Indian commonality, cherished by others as the perfect state of mankind, has become the key argument for justifying their dispossession while cynically claiming that no individual will be wronged (see Hulme 1986, 158). In Gray's quote, golden-age utopianism is used for disavowing the applicability of the high legal standards of Roman law, with its concept of property as an inalienable individual right provided that the individual possessed reason (see Pagden 1990, 1618). The wandering Indians of Gray's treatise, who are neither reasonable nor individuals, have forfeited any sovereign title.

Having so convincingly buttressed English just title to the whole of North America on the grounds of the Bible and Indian nomadism, Gray is able to generously deny the Europeans' intention to make use of that title. On the contrary, he asserts that the settlers will take the land only "by lawfull graunt from them, as wee can or will desire, so that wee goe to liue peaceable among them, and not to supplant them: wee desire not, neither doe wee intend to take anie thing from them" (Gray 1609, sig. C3). The repercussions of Gray's displacement of a discussion about the lawfulness of conquest to a discussion of desire can be heard in our own day. 3

If the English nation should desire otherwise, however, this likewise would pose no breach of equity: "all Polititians doe with one consent, hold and maintain that a Christian King may lawfullie make warre vppon barbarous and Sauage people, and such as liue vnder no lawfull or warrantable gouernment, and may make a conquest of them." The supporting quote comes from Saint Augustine (sig. C3). Needless to say, the issue was hotly debated among "Polititians" and far from being resolved. In short, the Indians' barbarism, represented by their assumed unsedentary lifestyle and lack of government, justified invasion for Gray, no matter whether by peaceful means or by use of force. Gray finishes his sermon by emphasizing the need for financial investment without the expectation of immediate returns (sig. D).

The main text of Gray's sermon thus clearly oscillates between secular and theological justifications of conquest, with biblical typology and the church fathers figuring as the central argument for a just title in case the secular reasons should fail, or in case the Indians should turn out not to be quite as barbarous as Gray imagines. While Gray's text makes a densely argued case for developing a regular settlement policy in Virginia, however, in his epistle to the reader he compares the colonial project with "the ships of *Salomon* which went to Ophie, and brought him home in one yeere six hundred threescore and six talents of gold" (Epistle).

This collision of the Protestant ethic with the older paradigm of Elizabethan hit-and-run colonialism Gray pictures the returning fleet as "an armie diuiding the spoile" is in fact a quite common trait of the 1609 offensive. The struggle between the medieval and the modern model is eloquently represented by Richard Hakluyt's ongoing strategy of translating foreign texts in support of the Virginia enterprise, especially his translation of the account of Hernando de Soto's Florida expedition of 1538/43. The *Relaçam verdadeira dos trabalhos quo ho Governador don Fernando d'Souto & certos fidalgos portugueses passaram no descubrimento da provincia da Frolida [sic]* (1557) by the anonymous Portuguese "Gentleman of Elvas," which Hakluyt appropriately renamed *Virginia Richly Valued* in 1609 to fit the present purpose, on closer investigation works rather against the new rhetoric than in favor of it. It can at best be viewed as an indirect argument for settlement, considering the absolute failure of the Spanish action it describes. De Soto's expedition, which sought to continue the glorious conquests of Cortés and Pizarro, ended as a disaster after a fruitless four-year search for a golden kingdom. De Soto left a trail of incredible violence and destruction among the native population, and his decimated crew returned without him in a spectacular river journey down the newly "discovered" Mississippi River.

As the account of a failed conquering expedition, the text may well be cited in support of settlement policy. But this is not what Hakluyt is doing. Instead he harps on the old themes of Spanish gold and the search for the south sea in his epistle to the readers (Gentleman of Elvas 1609, sig. A3). In terms of Indian policy, too, the Spanish example that Hakluyt seeks to harness to the new English policy strongly deviates from the prescriptions of the clergy. As John

Parker notes, both Hakluyt's motives and his method of translating continental authors were out of tune with the mood of the 1609 sermons (Parker 1978, 263). Still, we have found the old-fashioned ideal to be still active in Robert Gray's epistle as well. Despite these uncertainties, *Virginia Richly Valued* was reprinted, under a less misleading title but still as a pretext of Virginia settlement, in 1611. 4

The argumentative inconsistencies found in Gray and Hakluyt point toward the larger ideological upheavals within the colonial and theological discourses of the early seventeenth century. As John Parker has suggested, the 1609 offensive could hardly be understood if religion and economic expansion were viewed as two separate developments. Protestantism and colonialism must rather be seen as joining forces and entering a strategic alliance (Parker 1978, 254). Yet a powerful scholarly tradition continues to deny this Weberian dialect and emphasize the sincerity and exclusiveness of the colonists' religious motivation. Apparently in reaction to a strong tradition of socioeconomic historical analysis, Perry Miller set out in 1948 to reclaim Virginia as a precursor of the Puritan errand, because of the truly felt religious motives of the Jamestown settlers and propagandists. Miller, by assuming a unified intention behind the Virginia enterprise, quickly gets caught in the quagmire of the actual diversity of motives; he has to come to terms with John Smith's sneering remark about the Virginia Company "making Religion their colour, when all their aime was nothing like present profit" or his confession "not [to be] so simple to thinke, that euer any other motiue then wealth, will euer erect there a Commonweale" (quoted in Miller 1956, 103). Miller likewise seems to have had difficulties deciding whether "religion . . . was the really energizing propulsion in this settlement, as in others" (101), or whether the "discrepancy between profession [to missionize] and performance was . . . immense" (109).

Being concerned "not with events, but with ideas" (101), however, Miller was in a position to eschew the field of performance and to concentrate on the question of motive. The colonists' motives, he claims and this point concerns us most here can be determined by taking the colonial "literature," though "most of it propaganda," at face value: "to take it at face value and to the extent that it is literature, we may take it exactly that way it exhibits a set of principles for guiding not a mercantile investment but a medieval pilgrimage" (100101). Miller's dualistic logic ("not"/"but") is hard to grasp

nowadays. But even more disturbing is the concept of textuality that informs his reading of the Virginia propagandathe usual argument today being that precisely because something belongs to the category of literature it may *not* be taken "at face value" in a historical sense.

To regard a propagandistic text such as Gray's as literature seems strange enoughprovided that the term *literature* is applied to such texts that involve a willed poetic suspension of descriptive discourse (see Ricoeur 1977, 221). But to take the rhetoric of these pamphlets as a golden road to the "intention" of the English colonists amounts to taking any war propaganda or any commercial advertisement as an expression of the sincere beliefs of the parties involved. Miller's attempt to determine a unified religious motive behind every individual piece of writing, furthermore, can be successful only if the writings of authors such as Smith are *not* taken "at face value." Smith's general reputation of being a braggart and liar is helpful here, and Miller aptly claims that if Smith were telling "the bald truth," then the majority of the pamphlets and documents, including all their pious passages, must be regarded as so many "cant publications" (Miller 1956, 103). When the only choice is between truth and cant, the quantity of textual evidence, no matter how obviously propagandistic in tone, seems to be superior to eyewitness evidence.

An approach to the Virginia material with the outspoken aim to read it in terms of a unified intention is doomed to fail. By trying to squeeze the Virginia texts, including such a tortuous document as John Rolfe's pious disclaimer of his carnal desire for Pocahontas, into the prefabricated mold of religious motive, Miller's essay consolidates the overall thesis of his book, so eloquently put forth in his preface, that Virginia lacked the coherence for making a good beginning of American history. This chapter attempts, among other things, to take a closer look at the rhetorical fabrication of coherent beginnings serving nationalist ends.

### The Coronation of Powhatan and the Pitfalls of the Colonial Text

Scholarship since Perry Miller has taught us that texts cannot be divided into two compartments with the labels "true" and "false" and that the actual historical situation a text seeks to describe is always one step ahead of the limping signifier, no matter how serious the attempt may be. We have learned not to restrict our questions to

Myra Jehlen's examples are two well-known passages from Smith: the coronation of Powhatan by the English commander Captain Newport in September 1608, and one of Powhatan's speeches. Both passages were first printed in the *Proceedings of the English Colony in Virginia* (1612), a compound product of Smith and other writers, and later adapted into Smith's *Generall Historie* (1624; hereafter cited in text as *GH*). Whereas Jehlen treats the two passages as separate events and reverses their chronology in quoting them, it is my contention (agreeing with Quinn's) that they are actually related to one another but that their rhetorical and historical relationship must be expounded at some length and in some detail.

John Smith, who acts as Captain Newport's mediator to Powhatan, the weroance of the Pamunkey tribe with whom he had been acquainted during his captivity earlier that year, was upset about the Virginia Company's new instructions of September 1608. Prior to his description of the scenes referred to above, Smith fumes against the stupidity and inappropriateness of the orders from London:

How or why Captaine Newport obtained such a private Commission, as not to returne without a lumpe of gold, a certaintie of the South sea, or one of the lost company sent out by Sir Walter Raleigh, I know not; nor why he brought such a five peeced Barge, not to beare us to that South sea, till we had borne her over the mountaines. . . . As for the Coronation of Powhatan, and his presents of Bason and Ewer, Bed, Bedstead, Clothes, and such costly novelties, they had beene much better well spared then so ill spent, for wee had his favour much better onely for a playne peace of Copper, till this stately kinde of solicensing, made him so much overvalue himselfe, that he respected us as much as nothing at all. 5

The message should be clear: after Smith had worked so diligently to impress the Pamunkey ruler at low cost, he believed that the new commissions from the Virginia Company in London would only spoil his former policy. He likewise complains about the inadequacy of the exploration materials that had been sent with Newport's fleet, such as a bedstead for Powhatan instead of a boat suitable for the trip to the south sea. But not having the majority of council members on his side, Smith grudgingly submitted to Newport's orders and sent a native messenger to Powhatan to invite him to the fort. Powhatan's reply is quoted by Jehlen: "If your King have sent me Presents, I also am a King, and this is my land: eight dayes I will stay to receive them.

Your Father [Newport] is to come to me, not I to him, nor yet to your Fort, neither will I bite at such a bait: . . . [as] for any salt water beyond the mountaines, the Relations you have had from my people are false" (*GH*, 183).

Not discouraged by this reply, Newport and his train march to Powhatan's town Werowocomoco the next day to perform the coronation. They set up water basin, bed, and the other furniture for Powhatan, envelop him in a scarlet robe "with much adoe," but have to cope with his resistance when it comes to the crucial act of the coronation itself:

[A] foule trouble there was to make him kneele to receive his Crowne, he neither knowing the majesty nor meaning of a Crowne, nor bending of the knee, endured so many perswasions, examples, and instructions, as tyred them all; at last by leaning hard on his shoulders, he a little stooped, and three having the crowne in their hands put it on his head, when by a warning of a Pistoll the Boats were prepared with such a volley of shot, that the king start up in a horrible feare, till he saw all was well. Then remembering himselfe, to congratulate their kindnesse, he gave his old shooes and his mantell to Captaine Newport. (184)

Myra Jehlen is certainly right when she says that for a modern reader this scene has the quality of slapstick comedy (Jehlen 1993a, 687). It is one of the finest demonstrations of the ridiculousness of the Europeans' attempts to convince themselves of their territorial rights by performing elaborate rites. It is also known that at least some of the colonizers involved had a clear sense of the ridiculousness of such symbolic acts. But Jehlen then goes on to wonder how to account for the "subversive force of the anecdote in which the Indians assume an authority that Smith everywhere else assiduously denies them." The subversiveness of the passage, she suggests, consists in its presentation of Powhatan as the only sound participant in the scene, thereby endowing him with unusual power (687). She believes that Smith is uncertain about how to interpret the situation, that the textual slippage occasioned by this temporary loosening of authorial control may "produce materials for an alternative imperial history," and that Powhatan's prior message to Smith would usurp his own narrative: "Powhatan's understanding of European-Indian relations directly counters Smith's, while it is only through Smith's telling that we know anything of Powhatan's understanding" (689).

Jehlen's point here seems to be that Smith reports Powhatan's counterdiscourse without being aware of it. The reason for this is his "uncertainty over how to organize his historical narrative." The *Generall Historie*, she thinks, is "a weak story unable to fully transform its materials to make them cohere with its argument. These materials remain, as it were, undigested or semi-digested; they retain a quasi-independent and possibly rebellious life" (689). In the end, Jehlen claims, the quoted passages "can be seen to represent history before the fact" and may "permit us to hear the other's resisting voice" (690, 687).

While I fully share Jehlen's call for an alternative history of imperialism (rather than a new imperial history), I am extremely skeptical of her suggestions about what such a history might look like and how the voices of the colonized may be retrieved. Jehlen's arguments about Smith's lack of control over his historical narrative, though theoretically important, are in need of further textual evidence. The example she uses, Powhatan's speech, is problematical indeed and certainly does not provide any simple access to Powhatan's "understanding" of the situation. And while it is important to preserve a notion of "history before the text" rather than before the fact that history can hardly be approached by voluntarily stressing the literary or even comic quality of a colonial text on the one hand and taking it "at face value" on the other. The inconsistencies and conflicts Jehlen refers to because they occur in, and not beyond, a text will have to be located by way of careful contextual analysis if we want them to have any historical, rather than a purely subjective, significance. These textual conflicts, rather than being asserted in a surface reading, will have to be detected by way of a careful interrogation and contextualization of Smith's writings. 6

The coronation anecdote in Smith's *Generall Historie* indeed seems to contain a "subversive force," if not of the kind Jehlen wants to locate in it. In the light of Smith's explicit critique of the company's official policy, Powhatan may be seen to acquire the status of Smith's mouthpiece. His denial of Newport's invitation to come to Jamestown, by which, as Jehlen points out, Powhatan appears as a powerful and nonsubmissive potentate, at the same time reinforces the main points of Smith's initial diatribe against the Virginia Company: that too many presents would only render Powhatan more obstinate and aware of his power. Powhatan's denial of the existence

of salt water beyond the mountains likewise reinforces Smith's claim that the search for the south sea would be a fruitless endeavor, at least with the inadequate "five peeced Barge." The ridiculousness of the coronation scene is certainly in no need of authorial commentary; Smith's decision simply to give a detailed description of the scene, including Powhatan's noble return presents, is sufficient to demonstrate its political inadequacy. Smith, fashioning himself as a man of action, deeply resented such aristocratic nonsense. Whether intentionally placed there by Smith or not, Powhatan's attitude merely reinforces Smith's own critique of a particular colonial policynot, however, of the colonial project as such.

The *Generall Historie*, although it certainly does not reach the level of complexity we associate with novelistic discourse, consists of a patchwork of texts by Smith and others, more or less happily stitched together by Smith's own narrative voice. But it is far from being a full-blown historical narrative. In this regard, it cannot be compared with, for example, the *Historia de la conquista of Gómara*. The *Generall Historie* is in some respects a fairly pluralist text, though (or because) one voice ultimately prevails. The two passages under discussion here, however, were evidently composed by Smith himself, and their major function is to reinforce Smith's own position toward the Virginia Company's policy by starring Powhatan as a man too intelligent to bite at the bait of their imperial show. A man of Powhatan's size, Smith implies, can be dealt with only by a man like Smith himself.

Thus Smith not only was aware of Powhatan's powerful position in his text but rhetorically reinforced that position. At this point, at least, he seems to have been quite conscious about how to "organize his . . . narrative." Although Jehlen raises a sensitive theoretical question when she suggests that Smith's text, because of its openness, may give us access to Powhatan's "resisting voice," the example does not bear out this reading. Rather, it emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the textual layers between Powhatan's understanding and ours. In addition to recognizing the smooth organization of Smith's discourse (Powhatan's words fully sanction Smith's own earlier critique of the company), we must also register that Powhatan's message was delivered by a third person, the Pamunkey translator Namontack, who had just returned from England with Newport (*GH*, 183). Here may in fact lurk the only "weak" aspect of that passage:



considering Namontack's recent return (he is the boy who in the previous year was exchanged for the English boy Thomas Savage), we may assume that Powhatan's "understanding" of the "majestie" and "meaning of a Crowne" was better than the text is able to state. <sup>7</sup>

There is further evidence against an unproblematic accessibility of Powhatan's "understanding": his Calibanistic speech is not an isolated phenomenon in the colonial discourse about America.<sup>8</sup> It has a precursor in the *Relaçam verdadeira* of the anonymous Gentleman of Elvas, which was so diligently and paradoxically advertised by Hakluyt as prefiguring events at Jamestown and had just been reissued while Smith was drawing up his first account of Powhatan's speech. *Virginia Richly Valued* in fact contains a whole series of native speeches. Though most of them circumstantially articulate the author's humanist leanings, there is one remarkable exception, a speech by the cacique of Quigalta, delivered to de Soto at the lowest point of his career. Shortly before his death, de Soto, according to the Portuguese chronicler, sent an Indian to the cacique "to tell him, that hee was the Childe of the Sunne, and that all the way that hee came all men obeyed and serued him." (De Soto, who had been one of Pizarro's officers during the conquest of Peru, apparently attempted to acquire his own empire with the time-tested god trick.) But the cacique is reported to have replied:

That whereas he said he was the Child of the Sunne, if he would drie vp the Riuer he would beleue him: and touching the rest, that hee was wont to visit none; but rather that all those of whom he had notice did visit him, serued, obeyed and paid him tributes willingly or perforce: therefore if hee desired to see him, it were best he should come thither: that if hee came in peace, he would receive him with speciall good will; and if in warre, in like manner hee would attend him in the towne where he was, and that for him or any other hee would not shrinke one foote backe. (Gentleman of Elvas 1609, 12425)

"A most wittie and stout answer," Hakluyt remarks in the margin--but given the sheer multitude of native speeches in the text we may justly wonder how much of the cacique's answer was invented by the Gentleman, who becomes increasingly critical of de Soto's incompetence and violence. As rendered in the *Generall Historie*, Powhatan's speech may be seen to fulfil a similar function of indirect authorial critique rather than to escape Smith's authorial control.

The discourse about European encounters with nonliterate peoples was almost by definition monological, however dialogical it at times pretends to be by giving a voice to the natives. We may recall that this process had begun only two days after Columbus's arrival in the Caribbean when he quoted the Indians' welcome to the "people from heaven." At such points "the other's resisting voice" (Jehlen) is a function of colonial power itself, or at best an indicator of the internal conflicts of that power. Such rivalries existed in Jamestown, just as in "Florida": Smith consistently uses the colonial situation for voicing his antagonism against members of the nobility, while the Gentleman of Elvas, conversely, presents the native caciques as educated sages whose wisdom by far surpassed that of the parvenu Hernando de Soto.

Thus our search for "materials for an alternative imperial history," hard to perform in the first place because of the tendency of "imperial history" to exclude such materials from the narratives it produces, will have to be delayed at the moment. In most cases, such a search will only produce the story we already know, especially when it restricts itself to the telling of anecdotes.

Smith's undeniable class criticism should thus not be mistaken for an instability of the colonialist position he represents. As a Machiavellian colonialist, he was careful to play out his antagonists, Powhatan and the Virginia Company, against each other to gain the readers' highest sympathy for himself. Even though his style is by far not as "literary" as a few advocates of monumentalist historiography tend to claim, <sup>9</sup> his desire to help enlarge the British Empire was definitely coupled with a personal desire for public attention, which motivated Smith's "fictional" self-invention as a resourceful hero. Being a colonist and a member of the rising middle class, Smith repeatedly grounded his aversions against members of the gentry in what he regarded as their incapacity to carry through the colonial project. Smith's writings unite within themselves the themes of social critique and imperial nationalism. As I will show, Smith reiterated the hegemonic discourse on the Caribbean, Mexico, and Peru. While deserving, to some extent, the reputation of being a self-made man (rather than a social revolutionary), Smith was at the same time as rigorous and aggressive a colonialist as Hernán Cortés, his Spanish model.

In the following discussion, Virginia is regarded not as a new beginning, whether religious or revolutionary, but as a discursive

threshold between the Caribbean, Mexico, and New England. My argument resembles that of Djelal Kadir, who shows that the shift from the first to the second Virginia charter (1609), which consisted in a "reforming of conquest's rhetoric from the mercantile venture to a legitimating discourse that is filtered through the lens of prophetic ideology . . . augurs the Puritan project of New England, even as it echoes the earlier Spanish enterprise. . . . [The] Virginia Company's campaign hinges the New England colonial conquest with the Spanish one to the south." 10

Some of the tactical adaptations of earlier discourses to the situation in Virginia have been convincingly uncovered by Peter Hulme in his analysis of the myth of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas and its relationship with the colonialist myth of native treachery (Hulme 1985; Hulme 1986, chapter 4). The following reading first reproduces that important argument and eventually substantiates it with further empirical evidence.

### Captain John Smith's Rhetoric of Romance

John Smith wrote, and contributed to, several texts about his two-year sojourn at Jamestown, from April 1607 until October 1609. The earliest, *A True Relation*, in which he first mentions his one-month captivity at Werowocomoco (December 1607/January 1608) without mentioning his "rescue" by Pocahontas, however, was sent to England in June 1608. There it was rushed to the press, without Smith's knowledge and with heavy editorial cuts, as further propagandistic support for the 1609 offensive. This *True Relation*, which tries, in a rather chaotic style, to fashion Smith as a New World hero à la Cortés, differs considerably from the two later documents that mention the same events but seek to include them in a historical, rather than a personal, narrative. In the *Proceedings of the English Colony in Virginia* (1612), the captivity episode is cut down to a few ideologically instructive scenes, and the *Generall Historie* (1624) further narrativizes the events, now adding what Smith describes as his rescue by Powhatan's daughter Pocahontas.

The gradual appearance of Powhatan's daughter in Smith's texts is accompanied by a recession of other themes, above all Smith's Odyssean lie with which he claims, in the *True Relation*, to have diverted Powhatan's initial distrust. Hulme has shown that this

tactical lie is a central element in Smith's self-portrayal as an ever-resourceful "polytropic man," the heroic type that governs the *True Relation*.<sup>11</sup> Smith first displays his polytropic qualities at the moment of his capture by Powhatan's brother Opechancanough, whom he claims to have "amazed" by showing him a "compasse diall" and delivering a (pre-Copernican) lecture on the "course" of sun, moon, and planets.<sup>12</sup> Smith clearly models his action on the taxts of his predecessors Columbus, Cortés, and Harriot. Like they, he claims that his presentation of magic technology had won the admiration of the Indians.<sup>13</sup>

Questioned by Powhatan as to his whence and where, Smith presents the Pamunkey leader with a complicated fabrication:

Hee asked mee the cause of our comming; I tolde him, being in fight with the Spaniards our enemie; being over powred, neare put to retreat, and by extreme weather put to this shore, . . . our Pinnasse being leake wee were inforced to stay to mend her, till Captain Newport my father came to conduct us away. He demaunded why we went further with our Boate; I tolde him in that on the other side the maine, where was salt water, my father had a childe slaine, whiche wee supposed Monocan his enemie had done[,] whose death we intended to revenge. (*TR*, 55)

As Hulme has noted, "Smith's answer cunningly uses the small truths of local events to mask the central untruth about the Spaniards and the leaky boat" (Hulme 1985, 20). Smith feigns a temporary and accidental visit to put any suspicion that the settlers may have come to stay out of Powhatan's mind. Hulme has convincingly argued that Smith did not invent the lie but that his improvisation rather consisted in repeating or enacting Odysseus's encounter with Polyphemus, one of the classical master fictions about the encounter of a "civilized" with a "savage" people (2122). Like Odysseus, Smith presents himself as a shipwrecked sailor and appeals to Powhatan's hospitality according to the *jus gentium*, the "universal" agreement that travelers, ambassadors, and castaways may not be repelled. Smith's tapping of his Mediterranean archive to confront a similar situation across the Atlantic has one additional feature that we already know from another of his heroic models: like the claim of Cortés to Charles V that the inhabitants of Mexico regarded him as a legendary leader, Smith's story really addresses the readers; it demonstrates how to tame savage emperors by confronting them with

European fictions. Perhaps even more so than Cortés, Smith not only "lies without compunction, he is proud to present himself as a consummate improviser, master of discourse, 'turning' the thrust of Powhatan's question" (21).

The intention behind Smith's demonstration becomes clear from his comments on his captivity in the *Proceedings*. This multi-authored text, whose bulk was probably written by Smith (Kupperman 1988, 25), now claims that Smith so "enchanted those poore soules (being their prisoner)" with his scientific discourse and his announcement of Newport's arrival that "they esteemed him an oracle; by these fictions he not only saved his own life . . . but had them at that command, he might command them what he listed." 14 The "poore soules" own "admired him as a demi-God" (*P*, 213). Smith aptly adds that the president and council of Jamestown very much "envied his estimation amongst the Salvages" (215). His "fictions," like those of Cortés, are thus designed to work in two directions. Smith's self-positioning between two groups of opponents—the Algonkians and the council members—endows the text with a modern, individualistic ideology (Hulme 1985, 22).<sup>15</sup>

Simultaneously with his acts of self-stylization, Smith at times nonetheless reveals a fundamental insecurity about the technological superiority of the Europeans. In both the *True Relation* and the *Generall Historie* Opechancanough allegedly "amazedly admires" Smith's compass; "they all stood as amazed with admiration," the *Generall Historie* asserts (*TR*, 47; *GH*, 147). But then, "within an houre after they tyed him to a tree, and as many as could stand about him prepared to shoot him." The Algonkians' amazement must have been very short-lived. As Peter Hulme has noted, the colonizers were in need of constant doses of native admiration precisely because of their unacknowledged uncertainty about the applicability of their superior technology in Virginia (Hulme 1985, 21). The function of English ordnance in the coronation scene is a good example. Its effectiveness in bestowing English overlordship on Powhatan by scaring him with a lot of noise and smoke is of course highly debatable.

Smith only gradually admits the relative technological balance that initially existed between the military equipment of the two cultures. At first he is still able to express this equality in the polytropic mode that governs the *True Relation*:  
Opechancanough asks

his prisoner to discharge his pistol at a mark six hundred feet distant. But Smith, "to spoil the practice . . . broke the cocke" wherewith the natives are discontented (*TR*, 51). The story behind Smith's behavior is that his pistol was only "level," that is, accurate, at a distance of one hundred feet and thus no more effective than an Indian arrow. He broke the cock to conceal the limits of his weapon (Barbour 1986, 1:107, n. 188). In the *Generall Historie* Smith ambivalently observes Powhatan's interest in English technology, combined with his idea of turning Smith into his ally. The weroance demands to be sent "two great gunnes, and a gryndstone, for which he would give him the Country of Capahowosick, and for ever esteeme him as his sonne Nantaquod" (*GH*, 151). Not surprisingly, Powhatan's suggestion to form a kinship bond with Smith directly succeeds the account of Smith's being rescued by Pocahontas. After all, the actual meaning of the rescue was to initiate Smith into the Pamunkey tribe and into Powhatan's clan by means of adoption by his daughter. Further evidence will confirm that the topic of technological insecurity is connected with the representation of Pocahontas.

In his analysis of the myth of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas, Peter Hulme speculates why Smith first reported on the incident in 1624, seventeen years after the fact. He assumes that Smith, though perhaps latently recognizing the meaning of the ceremony, could express it only within the context of romance: Pocahontas liberating him from her father's wrath because she was in love with him. But as Smith's demonstrations of technological and intellectual superiority show, those of his texts that appeared prior to the *Generall Historie* were so much organized according to the paradigm of Smith as the ever-resourceful hero that they did not allow for a scene of Smith being at the mercy of a young girl.

The question is of course why such a discursive shift (from magic technology to romance) should have occurred between 1608 and 1624. Hulme suggests three answers: first, Smith's growing uncertainty about the stage effects of his technology caused a decline of the discursive regime of polytropic improvisation and created the need for a new organizing discourse. Second, the *Generall Historie* differs from earlier texts in that it is the first English text that attempts to write a historical narrative of British America and such a national narrative, as we know from Perry Miller, can only develop when it is based on a coherent and meaningful beginning. It would be some-

what odd to let a national history begin with a lie, however important that lie and its presentation to the readers was at its own specific historical moment. Smith's Odyssean lie, by refusing to respond to the larger pattern that Powhatan tries to impose on Smith's presence in his country, denies the possibility of any narrative frame, whether of colonial justification or of illegitimate invasion. In short, the *True Relation*, being a text of action, tries to instruct the readers in how to do things in Virginia, whereas the *Generall Historie* is concerned with endowing these actions with a coherence that would authorize England's colonial project. In such a setting, as Hulme remarks, "only a narrative can provide proper authority" (Hulme 1985, 23). And like all narratives, whose "authority . . . derives from [their] capacity to speak of origins in relation to endpoints," a proper historical narrative can only be "written backwards" (Brooks 1979, 77, Hulme 1985, 23). From the *Aeneid* of Virgil onward, intercultural romance was a preferred beginning of colonial narratives.

Hulme's third and most subtle explanation for the appearance of the Pocahontas episode in 1624 is that the development of the romantic myth was possible only once the intercultural harmony it expresses had been superseded by the reality of colonial violence. By 1624, two years after the natives had made retribution on the settlers' constant encroachments with a desperate attempt to wipe out the colony, everyone knew that the declared intention to live in peaceful coexistence with the Algonkians had proved futile. Hulme suggests that the massacre led by Opechancanough on 22 March 1622 finally enabled Virginian colonial history to begin: "That is not to say that such a history has 1622 as its starting point, but rather that the period between 1607 and 1622 could not satisfactorily be narrativized until the 1622 'massacre' provided the authoritative organizing principle that would reduce the earlier chaos to the order of syntagmatic coherence." Hulme argues, on a psychoanalytical basis, that in 1608 the rescue was a "trauma" for Smith,

an event impossible for him to incorporate fully into a significant context or narrative. So *The True Relation* represses all mention of the incident, not risking opening in the prospective Virginian narrative a traumatic breach that no trope could close. After 1622 the 'rescue' becomes comprehensible: it can be articulated into a narrative in which Pocahontas has an increasingly central role to play as evidence that Algonkian recognition of the values of European culture could

have provided the basis for a harmonious relationship, had not the inherent viciousness of her uncle destroyed all hope of peaceful cooperation. (Hulme 1986, 172)

My only caution here would be not to assign too much "traumatic" agency to Smith, as the *True Relation* was apparently heavily edited. What Hulme rather argues is that the former repression and later dramatization of the Pocahontas episode represents a case of *cultural* trauma. This trauma is then overcome by way of historical narrative a narrative of colonial beginnings that neatly corresponds to the classical division between good (female) Indian, willing to accept European civilization by being baptized and marrying one of its representatives, and bad (male) Indian, whose hostile reaction to the Europeans can only be a result of his inborn depravity.

Hulme's thesis is corroborated by an evaluation of the representation of Pocahontas in the *Proceedings*. Pocahontas's textual presence increases together with the reports of colonial violence. Obviously chosen by Powhatan as a mediator and guarantor of peace between the two cultures from the very moment of her adoption of Smith as a brother, Pocahontas is increasingly dramatized by Smith until she becomes, first in the *Generall Historie* and then in popular history, a tragic heroine who has to forfeit her own culture for the sake of a foreign one. That tragedy was in a way enacted in 1613 by her capture, her marriage to John Rolfe, and her untimely death in England, which she was visiting as part of a large advertisement campaign in 1616. Pocahontas's death at Gravesend prompted Samuel Purchas to one of his lovely puns: "she came at Gravesend to her end and grave" (Purchas 1905, 19:119).

According to popular romance, Pocahontas died of a broken heart after having found John Smith alive and rejecting her love at Brentford. But a comparison of Smith's three texts shows the growing symbolic status of Pocahontas in the negotiation of colonial power. She is introduced in the *True Relation* as being sent to Smith by Powhatan in the spring of 1608, at a time of increasing hostilities, to retrieve a number of Indians held captive by Smith, who acted on his growing fear of Indian treachery (*TR*, 93). The *Proceedings* of 1612 give a similar account (*P*, 220). Only in the *Generall Historie* is her visit to the fort projected back in time and is now presented as a



direct result of her "love" for Smith, ensuing from their first meeting, at which she presumably prevented his execution (*GH*, 152).

The *Proceedings*, which is the text where Smith voices his antagonism to the official policy even more strongly than in the *Generall Historie* (mostly to cover up the effects of his own disastrous Indian policy), begin to rhetorically appropriate the native girl to Smith's own political purposes. During one of his wordy defenses against his critics Smith here, as elsewhere, brags about his good relationship with the Indians and aptly presents this accomplishment as the main reason for the envy of his antagonists:

Some propheticall spirit calculated hee had the Salvages in such subjection, hoe would have made himsele a king, by marrying Pocahontas, Powhatan's daughter. It is true she was the very nonparell of his kingdome, and at most not past 13 or 14 yeares of age. Very oft shee came to our fort, with what shee could get for Captaine Smith, that ever loved and used all the Countrie well, but her especially he ever much respected: and shee so well requited it, that when her father intended to have surprized him, shee by stealth in the darke night came through the wild woods and told him of it. But her marriage could no way have intitled him by any right to the kingdome, nor was it ever suspected hee had ever such a thought, or more regarded her, or any of them, then in honest reason, and discreation he might. If he would he might have married her, or have done what him [*sic*] listed. For there was none that could have hindred his determination. (*P*, 274)

Especially toward the end of the passage, Smith leaves the impression that he was prevented from marrying Pocahontas only by his insight that such a match, unlike a European dynastic marriage, could no way have entitled him to any territorial right. Smith's confusion of his love for Pocahontas with his love for "all the Countrie" fully represents the logic of his age, according to which the possession of a country was often perceived in terms of the possession of a woman and sometimes achieved through the possession of a woman. Above all, Smith implicates his intimate relationship with Pocahontas into a rhetorical assertion of his general mastery and control of the colonial situation.

Smith's boasting presumption may well have triggered an idea in one of his readers and successors as president of Jamestown. One

year after the publication of the *Proceedings* Thomas Dale sent forth his Captain Argall to capture Pocahontas. Her marriage to Rolfe did not turn the tobacco farmer into Powhatan's successor, just as Smith, who apparently was not altogether ignorant of Pamunkey rules of inheritance, had prophesied. 16 But it brought about peace between the Pamunkeys and Jamestown at a moment of crisis a peace that lasted until Powhatan's death in 1618 and the Virginia Company's new privatization policy, which started in the same year.

The benefits of intercultural marriage quickly became plausible to Governor Dale himself. Shortly after the marriage between Rolfe and Pocahontas, Dale sent Ralph Hamor to Powhatan with the purpose of procuring "a daughter of his, who (*Pocahuntas* being already in our possession [*sic*]) is generally reported to be his delight and darling . . . for surer pledge of peace" (Hamor 1615, 25, 37). Dale's reason for wanting to marry a native woman (peace) is hardly more convincing than Rolfe's (conversion). His attempt rather amounts to an enactment of Raleigh's proposal of 1596 for gaining possession of America by way of intermarriage. Hamor submits Dale's offer to "make [her] his nearest companion, wife and bedfellow" in circuitous prose, but Powhatan decides that one of his daughters in English hands is enough for securing peace (42).

As the diverse proposals of English colonists to marry daughters of Powhatan show, such a match was charged with high symbolic power, carnal lust being only one motive among many. Above all, Rolfe's marriage to Pocahontas may be regarded as a breach of English social norms, like the attempt of a member of the rising middle class to subvert the prerogatives of the aristocracy (Dale, a member of the gentry, may have attempted to reestablish the original class hierarchy). Again, the colonial situation provides the setting for carrying out class conflicts (and these surely were not carried out only rhetorically). It is Hamor's text, by the way, published in 1615, that immediately exploited Rolfe's marriage with Pocahontas for increasing the status of the merchants: his whole account is organized around that event, and its appendix contains a copy of Rolfe's letter and a sermon by Alexander Whitacker, who had conducted the wedding ceremony. It is thus understandable that Smith would himself capitalize on such a powerful discourse and mold his former acquaintance with Pocahontas into a romantic narrative, thereby

balancing the plot of native treachery and the call for revenge with which the *Generall Historie* ends.

The romance plot of the *Generall Historie* is anticipated in the *Proceedings* when, right after his consideration of the possibility of marrying Pocahontas, Smith claims that his confidante, at a time of growing intercultural tension, came "through the wilde woods" "by stealth in the darke night," and informed him about a conspiracy of Powhatan to kill him. The story is further dramatized in the *Generall Historie*, where it now disappears from its original place in the narrative sequence of the *Proceedings*, together with Smith's marriage theories (Smith 1624b, 94). 17

Pocahontas's betrayal of her father's conspiracy comes at a sensitive point in the *Generall Historie*, after a long and frustrating debate between Smith and Powhatan about trade conditions and political supremacy in the winter of 16089. We will return to this event. While the *Proceedings* likewise report this meeting, the text is silent about Pocahontas's intervention. But in the *Generall Historie* Smith claims that Powhatan, "bursting with desire to have the head of Captaine John Smith . . . neglected not any opportunity to effect his purpose." Powhatan's murderous plans were frustrated only by divine intervention and "Pocahontas his dearest jewell and daughter," who came "in that darke night . . . through the irksome woods" to inform Smith of her father's intention and to beg him to flee. She rejects his presents, telling him, "with the teares running downe her cheekes," that Powhatan would kill her if he learned of her visit. Then she disappears (*GH*, 19899). Of course nothing happens. Some Indians bring platters of food, Smith makes them taste of it to see whether it is poisoned and, having found out that it is not, feigns friendship just as he thinks that they do. The story of Pocahontas's warning is embedded in Smith's growing paranoia about Powhatan's treacherous intentions, which, however, never manifest in actuality. Clearly this miniature narrative functions to establish an ideological opposition between loving daughter and villainous father that would come to dominate the discourse about early Virginia until our own day.

The discursive scope of the Smith-Pocahontas romance is broadened by the fact that a very similar story is contained in Hakluyt's foreign model text for Virginia, the *Relaçam verdadeira* of the Fidalgo do Elvas. It contains the story of de Soto's Spanish translator Juan

Ortiz, whom the conquistadors encountered by accident near the coast of Florida and without whom the whole expedition would probably have failed at the very start. Ortiz told the soldiers that he had spent twelve years with the tribe of the cacique Ucita. According to his own report, he had apparently undergone a similar adoption ritual as Smith: "Ucita commanded to bind *John Ortiz* hand and foote vpon foure stakes aloft vpon a raft, and to make a fire vnder him, that there he might bee burned: But a daughter of his desired him that he would not put him to death," asking him to keep Ortiz as a captive instead. He is entrusted with watching over the dead and defending the corpses against wild animals until Ucita, apparently a similarly inconstant character as Powhatan, decides to sacrifice him to the "devil." Being warned by "the damsell that had deliuered him from the fire," Ortiz flees with her help to a neighboring tribe (Gentleman of Elvas 1609, 2223).

In the light of these obvious textual analogies, one may be tempted to assume that one text must have influenced the other, that Smith modeled the passages of the *Generall Historie* about his "rescue" and Pocahontas's warning on the Portuguese original. To be sure, not much can be said about the truth value of the Ortiz story itself: the official chronicler of the expedition, Luis Fernandez de Biedma, does not mention it, Ortiz died during the journey, and the Gentleman seems to have taken delight in telling romantic stories such as this. But the assumption that Smith in his *Generall Historie* was simply copying from the *Relaçam verdadeira* without regard to Virginian reality would render other passages in his texts incomprehensible. There can be no doubt that Smith was indeed initiated into the Pamunkey tribe in 1608 by entering a symbolic kinship bond with Pocahontas, and it is quite possible that Ortiz underwent a similar ceremony. But the insight that one part of a text has a grounding in reality does not imply such a grounding for the whole text. The problem seems to be that in spite of their partial reference to actual events, both stories are rendered in the language and symbolism of the recycled discourses of Europe. Especially the second part, about the hero being sneaked out of foreign captivity with the help of a native "princess," has an honorable tradition in European romance literature. The first part, the woman's intervention during an intended execution, however, does not.

John Smith himself claims to have been aided by beautiful ladies at least twice during his earlier adventurous career in Turkey and Tartaria, as he proudly admits in his dedication of the *Generall Historie* to another female sponsor, Lady Francis. Smith aptly includes "that blessed Pocahontas" in his list of those women who "oft saved my life" (*GH*, 4142). The "enamoured princess" was in fact a literary topos, or trope rather, derived from Orientalist discourse, which was available to both Smith and the Gentleman of Elvas, and probably to Ortiz as well. It is unlikely that both Ortiz/the Fidalgo and Smith have consciously inserted such a story into their narratives. These symbolic representations simply offered themselves for expressing a cross-cultural male/female relationship whose actual nature was beyond the grasp of the colonizers. 18 It is important to realize the discursive environment in which such a trope appears, especially when the same events are referred to twice (in the *Proceedings* and in the *Generall Historie*), but with changing emphasis on their particulars. It is significant that the two elements that the *Generall Historie* has in common with the *Relaçam verdadeira* (rescue and warning) should first appear together in the text of 1624, which has obviously chosen the trope of "enamoured princess" as its organizing discourse (indicated in the dedication), but that it was suppressed in earlier accounts of Smith's captivity, which still foregrounded the narrative structure of magic technology. To be sure, such articulating discourses do not pop up overnight but emerge gradually: a short reference to Pocahontas's warning in the *Proceedings* turns into a dramatic episode in the *Generall Historie*, where it is also moved to another location in the narrative sequence a central location in that text, as will eventually become clear.

### A Tale of Two Massacres

The modern editor of John Smith's *Complete Works*, Philip Barbour, implies that Smith had originally included the Pocahontas episode in the *True Relation* but that his London editor had suppressed it (Barbour 1986, 1:103, n. 123, and 108, n. 237). Barbour likewise assumes its absence from the *Proceedings* to be the result of "politic suppression," this time Smith's own, arising from the impossibility of including in his text "a hair-raising tale of the rescue of an

Englishman from a frightful death." But the question is of course *why* a story that could not be told in 1612 should not only be narratable in 1624 but even "become a legend of sorts" (Barbour 1986, 2:31). So instead of solving the riddle by assuming a possible urtext that has been politically or accidentally suppressed, it seems to be more important to find out about the collective roots of this (collective) act of repression and return. In other words, Barbour's insinuation that the Pocahontas episode may have been deleted from the *True Relation* by Smith's editor only displaces the problem from Smith's individual consciousness to the consciousness, or rather the colonial "unconscious", of Jacobean culture.

In the climate of growing nationalist rhetoric that characterizes the Jacobean era, the need for authoritative historical narratives was just as intense as the need for continual colonial propaganda, and the two requirements did not always harmonize with each other. In fact, John Smyth, one of the members of the Virginia Company in London, had voiced the sore need for a "faire and perspicuous history" of Virginia in 1621. 19 Samuel Purchas, Hakluyt's successor as editor of colonial reports, instantly responded to Smyth's call and began his work on *Purchas His Pilgrimes* in 1621, to be published in 1625 (Barbour 1986, 2:28). Captain John Smith reacted on the same need. In addition to his explicit imitation of Caesar and Cortés, Smith thus also became his own Gómara. He served the needs for both spontaneous colonial propaganda and national history.

The rules of selection and the degree of narrative closure that make up the differences between Smith's texts are evidently in part determined by the difference between the genres he was operating with. They may equally be seen to respond to the new symbolic power that the "rescue" acquired after the massacre had made it ideologically digestible for members of a chauvinist society. Hulme aptly termed the *Generall Historie's* "structure of retrospective narration" a *Nachträglichkeit* "in which the 'rescue' emerges from the shadows of the past" at a moment when it has become ideologically bearable (Hulme 1985, 25).

The possibility of such a *Nachträglichkeit* was increased by the facts that both Pocahontas and Powhatan were dead by 1624, that the Virginia Company had been dissolved by King James, and that Virginia had been turned into a crown colony. Like Thomas Harriot's illustrated *Brief and True Report*, then, the Pocahontas myth works

as a retrospective utopia. Its function as a nostalgic prehistory to the history of native treachery is deployed, with unequalled eloquence, by Samuel Purchas in his comment on the 1622 massacre:

Temperance and Justice had before kissed each other, and seemed to blesse the cohabitations of English and Indians in Virginia. But when Virginia was violently ravished by her owne ruder Natives, yea her Virgin cheekes dyed with the bloud of three Colonies (that of Sir R. Greenvile, that of Sir W.R. both confessed by themselves, and this last butchery intended to all, extended to so many hundreths, with so immaine, inhumane, devillish treachery) . . . Temperance could not temper her selfe, yea the stupid Earth seemes distempere d with such bloody potions and cries that shee is ready to spue out her Inhabitants. (Purchas 1625, xix)

The passage can be read as a direct response to Raleigh's "mayden-head" quote and the passage from Hakluyt's *Epistola* to Raleigh analyzed in the last chapter. The legal conflict that Hakluyt had metaphorically expressed in terms of defloration in 1587 and that Raleigh tried in vain to solve by clinging to, and then giving up on, a chivalric concept of male continence, is now solved by the natives themselves, who, in the imagery of Purchas, enact upon Virginia the sexual violence that Raleigh had proposed to enact upon Guiana. Raleigh's metaphorical slip had revealed the paradox of the English discourse of Spanish incontinence. But now that the work of breaking, tearing, and sacking the land is displaced on the land's "owne ruder Natives," the English gentlemen can expect high returns for extending their soothing hand to the mutilated body. Metaphorically and legally, the question of English "just title" now no longer posed a problem. Purchas's rhetorical playfulness ("immaine, inhumane"; "Temperance . . . seems distempere d") may seem inadequate for transporting the obvious political message: after three "treacherous" attacks on English settlements, the Indians had "forfeited" their right of possession (266); their "disloyall treason" had finally "confiscated whatsoever remainders of right the unnaturall Naturalls had, and made both them and their Countrey wholly English" (229).

This piecemeal evaporation of native sovereignty is reinforced by the similarity of the massacred English settlers with the type of the "Holy Patriarks [who] had a promise of Canaan, yet held no possession but with their dead bodies." Then again, and in deviance from the type, Purchas claims that it is not the earth drenched in English

blood itself that transfers the right of possession to Britain but precisely the Indians' treachery: as he notes earlier, the French colony at Florida had likewise "ended in bloody massacres," but the perpetrators of the Carolina massacre were the Spaniards, not the Indians. And even the corpses of de Soto's men caused no sufficient title, as they were simply "consumed" by the earth, not butchered with treacherous intent (228). Native treachery thus emerges as the major trope in "Virginia's Verger" of 1625 to justify English colonization and to prepare the ground for planting English national history. In the last analysis, Purchas's bloody metaphors simply repeat the logic of the *Requerimiento* that native acts of resistance were a just cause for colonial violence, a logic that had already been tailored to fit English purposes by Robert Gray and others in 1609.

In their different ways, then, both Smith and Purchas were engaged in fashioning a fit beginning for the history of the English colonial presence in Virginia. The tale of intercultural romance, which was abruptly ended by "unprovoked" native violence, provided such a beginning, although no text explicitly voices the discursive relationship between the two tropes.

But the structure of *Nachträglichkeit*, which Hulme has detected with regard to the Pocahontas romance, can similarly be found in the text of Purchas, who is interested not in romance but very much in the topic of native massacre. There is one particularity about Purchas's legitimation of conquest on the grounds of Indian treachery that does not appear in other contemporary writings: he claims that the Indians had forfeited their right by having butchered three colonies, instead of just one. The first two colonies at Roanoke, that of Grenville and of Sir Walter Raleigh, had so far been believed to have simply disappeared (see chapter 3). The claim that they were wiped out by the Indians comes as a novelty in a printed text. Adding to the confusion, Purchas on the previous page bases his claim about the treacherous massacre of the earlier colonies on a personal communication from John Smith, or more precisely, on what "Powhatan confessed to Cap. Smith," namely, "that hoe had beene at their [the Roanoke settlers'] slaughter, and had divers utensills of theirs to shew" (Purchas 1625, 228). This story is in need of unraveling. In doing so, we will eventually return to the topic of colonial beginnings and to the crucial encounter between Smith and Powhatan in the *Generall Historie*.



D. B. Quinn, the great pioneer historian of early colonialism in America, quotes Purchas as one of his main authorities in a fascinating attempt to reconstruct the fate of the Roanoke Colony. His text deserves our attention, as it implicitly addresses the question of colonial beginnings and Myra Jehlen's question of how to deal with the logical priority of history to text. Quinn gives an ingenious example of positivist historiography that in fact reads like a detective story. At the same time this is also its problem. <sup>20</sup> Quinn knows that, because of the lack of firsthand documentation, the fate of the Roanoke Colony "is not a problem to which answers can be given simply and decisively, yet they can be indicated with some degree of probability, even with some authority" (Quinn 1974, 432). Like Myra Jehlen, then, Quinn is interested in "history before the text." Quinn's recovery of that pretextual history is based on several implicit assumptions that he shares with a large part of the scholarly community. The most important of these is the assumption of native treacherousness and its particular instance, the belief that Powhatan was involved in the Roanoke massacre.

Rhetorically, Quinn demonstrates his awareness of the limits and dangers of positivist scholarship. But his terms of uncertainty, such as "presumably," "probably," and "possibly," are counterweighted by such authoritative statements as "There is no reason to disbelieve Strachey" (454) or "There is no reason to disbelieve Purchas's statement that the information came directly from John Smith, who himself had it from Powhatan" (468). As so often, some skepticism might be in place here. Even if we were sure that Smith really told Purchas of the massacre, there still is no institution besides our belief that suggests that Powhatan really confessed such a truth to Smith. As it is, William Strachey and Samuel Purchas turn out to be Quinn's crown witnesses, and he begins his Examination by quoting the only detailed account of the Roanoke massacre, written by Strachey in *The Historie of Travell into Virginia Britania*. Strachey, whose text was delivered for publication in 1612 but rejected and not published until 1849, claims that

his Maiestie hath bene acquainted, that the men women, and Children of the first plantation at Roanoak were by practize and Comaundement of Powhatan (he himself perswaded therevnto by his Priests) miserably slaughtered without any offence given him either by the first planted (who 20. and od yeares had peaceably lyved and

intermixed with those Savadges, and were out of his Territory) or by those who now are come to inhabite some parte his desart landes, and to trade with him for some Commodities of ours. (Strachey 1953, 91)

Earlier in the same text Strachey connects the story of the massacre with a rumor about clothed people living to the south in stone buildings. He believes these to be identical with "those English who escaped the slaughter at *Roanoak*, at what tyme this our Colony, (vnder the Conduct of Capt. *Newport*) landed within the *Chesapeack Bay*" (34). In other words, Strachey assumes that the Roanoke Colony was slaughtered at Roanoke in 1607 (the time of Newport's arrival) and that survivors had moved south after 1607 and taught the Indians how to construct stone houses.

Quinn well notes Strachey's temporal and geographical confusion. If, as Strachey claims, the settlers were massacred at Roanoke Island at the time of the arrival of the Jamestown colonists in April 1607 truly a "dramatic" notion (Quinn 1974, 455) this would mean that the colony had existed at Roanoke for twenty years, a theory that is corroborated neither by other texts nor by archaeological findings. 21 Quinn's faith in Strachey's testimony, however, is reinforced by the link he establishes between Strachey's account of Powhatan's massacre of the English settlers and that of his extermination of the Chesapeake tribe at the same time a connection that Strachey himself never draws. This story deserves our attention, not least because it involves an Indian prophecy.

Again Powhatan is presented as the slave of his "priests," who had told him "not long synce . . . that from the *Chesapeack Bay* a Nation should arise, which shoulde dissolue and giue end to his Empier, for which not many years synce . . . according to the auntyent and gentile Custome, he destroyed and put to sword, all such who might lye vnder any doubtfull construccion of the said prophesie . . . and so remayne all the *Chessiopeians* at this daie, and for this cause extinct." Strachey then recounts a second prophecy according to which the Pamunkeys would twice "giue overthrowe and dishearten the Attempters, and such Straungers as should envade their Territoryes," but that they "should fall into their Subiection and vnder their Conquest" the third time (Strachey 1953, 1045). As it is (these native prophecies, as we know from our

Mexican texts, are remarkably reliable), the third, victorious group of invaders are the Jamestown settlers themselves.

Strachey does not give a date for Powhatan's presumed genocidal war against the Chesapeaks, but Quinn, by seeing no reason to distrust the reliability of the report and by linking it with the other one about the extermination of the Roanoke Colony, takes it as the basis of his hypothetical alternative account of the first landing of the Jamestown colonists. Whether hostile or reluctant, the Indians' reactions to the arrivants are now viewed not as being directed at the colonists at all but as a number of mere sidesteps on their way south, where they were busy killing off the Chesapeaks "and possibly lost colonists as well" (Quinn 1974, 455).<sup>22</sup> Quinn's rather unsupported tale mainly seems to serve to close another gap in Strachey's account by providing an explanation for why Powhatan should have gone so far "out of his Territory" to kill the settlers: he acted on the dictates of his priests and their prophecy (cf. Strachey 1953, 106, 108). Once again, it is Quinn not Strachey who makes prophecy and Roanoke massacre coincide in time and in motivation.

It is important to consider that Strachey, who was the secretary of Jamestown from 1610/11, had no chance to acquire any firsthand information before May 1610, when the party of Sir Thomas Gates, to which he belonged, finally arrived in Virginia after their famous wreck on the Bermudas. After that date, Strachey seems to have picked up a few rumors from two Algonkians then living at the fort, Machumps and Kempes (61). But Quinn's main evidence for the veracity of Strachey's account is its similarity with the official instructions of the Virginia Company to Gates, issued in May 1609. The instructions, which Strachey, being the secretary, knew, contain three relevant passages: First, the company ordered Gates to remove a "convenient number" of native children from the "*Iniocasockes* or Priests by a surprise of them all and detayninge them prisoners. . . . we pronounce it not crueltie nor breache of Charity to deale more sharpely with them and to proceede even to dache [death] with these murtherers of Soules and sacrificers of gods images to the Divill." Second, the company provides the information that by the River "*Peccarecamicke* . . . you shall finds foure of the englishe aliuie, left by Sir Walter Rawley which escaped from the slaughter of Powhaton of Roanocke, vppon the first arrivall of our Colonie, and liue vnder the protection of a wiroance called Gepanocon enemy to Powhaton."

And third, the company instructs Gates to imprison Powhatan and his weroances or at least to turn them into tributaries because "he loued not our neighbourhood and therefore you may no way trust him" (Virginia Council 1609, 1418). Quinn assumes that the rather harsh instructions to imprison the weroances and priests (i.e., the political and spiritual leaders) were "the King's reactions to the report of the killings," (Quinn 1974, 457).

The crucial question here is how the king may have acquired his knowledge of the killings. No text prior to the instructions of May 1609 mentions the massacre. John Smith, however, had sent home the draft of a map of the Jamestown area of which one copy, called the Zúñiga Map, has been preserved. The map contains information on a two-man search party for "appareled" men "beyond Roonok" sent out by Smith in January 1608 (*TR*, 63). There is no further mention of the search party except that their native guide, "playing the villaine," had left the two men and returned. Their own report is unknown, but the Zúñiga Map contains the comment: "Pakerakanick. Here remayne the 4 men clothed that came from Roonock Oconohowam," also indicating the place where the guide had left the two men (Barbour 1969, 1:240). Apart from the uncertainty of the evidence for the existence of the four men (the Zúñiga Map contains a number of rather illustrious legends), 23 it is not clear whether Smith's men went to the place where the "4 men clothed" were believed to dwell and whether they were disappointed, or whether they returned immediately after their guide had left them. In any event, the four appareled men make their appearance in the 1609 instructions, where they are now identified as survivors of the "slaughter of Powhatan of Roanocke." More rumors about the lost colonists came trickling in to London, but the instructions, Strachey, and Purchas remained the only documents that mention a massacre Purchas's *Pilgrimes* of 1625 being the first text that mentions it publicly.

It is now Quinn's difficult task to speculate how the information about the massacre found its way into the 1609 instructions, and it is here where his text becomes especially relevant to the general problematic of this chapter. Quite understandably, Quinn is troubled by Smith's silence about the attack. The captain mentions only the sending out of two more search parties in December 1608 and in January 1609. But their results are disappointing: "Master Sicklemore well returned from Chawonock, but found little hope and lesse

certainie of them were left by Sir Walter Rawley." The last party likewise could learn nothing "but they were all dead" (*P*, 265). Quinn accordingly admits that

John Smith's published references to the Lost Colony and to his relations with Powhatan have little connection with the story of Powhatan's responsibility, told circumstantially if obliquely by Strachey and confirmed in its basic features by the instructions of 1609. The circumstances in which Smith became aware of the fate of the lost colonists at Powhatan's hands, and his subsequent actions and concealments must remain a matter of conjecture. (Quinn 1974, 46566)

If anything, it is Strachey who "confirmed" the 1609 instructions, not vice versa. Partly owing to such implicit chronological juggling, Quinn's belief in the reality of the massacre is apparently not impeded by the "concealments" of both Smith and Powhatan. Under the pretence of conjecture, he accordingly reads Smith's encounters with Powhatan after the coronation in September 1608 through the lens of his own circumstantial narrative of Powhatan's massacre.

A precise assessment of the time sequence is necessary at this point. Any news of the attack that could possibly have influenced the instructions of May 1609 must have left Jamestown with Captain Newport's fleet in early December 1608. Newport, who was in charge of reinforcing the colony, went back and forth between Jamestown and London and had left for England before in April 1608, returning to Virginia in September to carry out the coronation. Quinn assumes that Smith and Newport had acquired their knowledge of the massacre between the coronation and December, and he finds support with the fact that it is then,

in spite of the recent ceremonies, that Smith attempts to humiliate Powhatan and bring him to heel, though he does not refer in his narrative writings [and in no other known writings, for that matter] to any atrocities committed by him. Powhatan was evidently uneasy: after a rather time-serving truce or peace was made, he deserted his usual seat of Weromacomoco on the York River and put himself out of Smith's reach. (466)

Around that time, one of the colonists, William White, who had lived with the Indians for a while, returned to the fort and told the colonists of several executions of settlers performed by Powhatan's

people. Quinn does not look for corroborating evidence but concludes instead that White may have been the informant about the massacre as well. White must in fact have been the only informant, as Newport left for England shortly before Smith's next opportunity to learn the news, his visit to Powhatan referred to in the quote above: the visit of December 1608, during which, as Quinn correctly notes, Smith began humiliating Powhatan and finally compelled the weroance to remove further inland to a place called Orapakes (*P*, 24450). We will return to this crucial scene once more, but for now it is important to see what Quinn makes of it. His account obviously follows the logic of a model of research that demands to prove his hypothesis that the harshness of the 1609 instructions could only be the response to some previous violence on Powhatan's part.

Not satisfied with the meager possibility that William White might have been the sole source of information, and convinced that Smith himself must have been the mediator (though keeping his secret to himself for diplomatic reasons), Quinn reinvents against the thrust of Smith's own account, and disregarding the chronology of events the crucial encounter between Smith and Powhatan in December 1608:

It is highly probable that the speeches exchanged between them were much harsher and more realistic than Smith reported, and that Smith accused Powhatan of attacking and killing the lost colonists, Powhatan replying by admitting it perhaps boasting of it, possibly excusing it in some way. It was possible for him to say that he did not know the lost colonists to be English that he had a traditional policy among his people, going back to the killing of the Jesuits in 1577 [i.e., 1572], of eliminating foreign intruders. (Quinn 1974, 468)

It seems plausible to Quinn that Powhatan had responded calmly, thus enabling Smith "to go on with the establishment of a *modus vivendi* with the Indians, whereas a boastful attitude might have forced him to take a more rigid line."

Quinn's imagined conversation is guided by a number of assumptions, besides the never-questioned one that Powhatan was at least in some way involved but more likely the perpetrator of the massacre. His first assumption, that the speeches between Smith and Powhatan may have been much harsher "and more realistic," exemplifies the central problem of attempts to search for "history before the text" without clarifying the theoretical and historical grounds on which a

text may be believed or disbelieved. As in Perry Miller's text, Smith is here again presented as somebody not to be trusted. Then again, he becomes the guarantor of truth where his testimony is not documented by himself at all but comes secondhand via Samuel Purchas. Quinn's belief or disbelief in Smith's words, it seems, is wholly guided by what he "knew" all along: that Powhatan committed the massacre. Thus the faithfulness of those textual sources that tell of the massacre (Purchas and Strachey) is never doubted or only in order to be rhetorically reinforced.

Quinn's reinvention of the dialogue between Smith and Powhatan, based on Smith's own quite different account of that meeting, provokes a long overdue investigation of the colonial trope of the native speech, which, as we have seen, again and again appears at ideological cruxes in colonialist texts. But another of Quinn's assumptions deserves a closer examination as well: he imagines the Algonkians' "traditional policy" of eliminating invaders to be a kind of natural reason for Powhatan's treatment of the Roanoke settlers. Like Strachey, Quinn seems to believe in the Pamunkeys' "auncyent and gentile Custome" of exterminating newcomers rather than considering the possibility that hostile reactions to invaders may simply have been caused by the behavior of the strangers themselves. Quinn's assumption about the Pamunkeys' character is hardly borne out by the reports of their actual behavior. At the end of his essay Quinn even has to give a reason for Powhatan's *reluctance* to act according to his "tradition" and eliminate the importunate Captain and his floundering colony then and there: he assumes that Powhatan "was too uncertain of his strength" (Quinn 1974, 480). This ties in with Quinn's third prejudice: the notion that Powhatan was so much at Smith's mercy in December 1608 that the weroance may have checked his behavior accordingly (dispensing with "boastful" gestures). This assumption rests on a quite incomprehensible faith in Smith's representation of his own strength and on a serious misperception of the power situation at Jamestown.

The chronology does not favor Quinn's hypothesis: Newport, who left for England before Smith's crucial encounter with Powhatan (*P*, 240), can only have carried possible information from William White (who will feature again in this chapter). In spite of all his assumptions and hypotheses, Quinn has not been able to provide ample proof for his recurring statement, last at the end of his essay, that the

"fate of the Lost Colony *at the hands of Powhatan* may have had . . . effects on the subsequent relations" between the two parties (Quinn 1974, 480, emphasis added).

Powhatan's Roanoke "massacre" can so far only be spoken of as a "fact" because a long discursive tradition has turned it into such. As an influential discourse that mystifies the colonial encounter at Virginia, the massacre narrative, starting with the 1609 instructions and then expanded by a long line of historians, from Strachey and Purchas to Quinn, Barbour, Bridenbaugh, and Lemay, may indeed be considered a fact with its own ideological and political effects. <sup>24</sup> But a discursive fact, its real material effects notwithstanding, still must be distinguished from "what really happened" however incomplete the empirical evidence may be for making that distinction.

Quinn never really attempts to reconstruct the "massacre" himself. He wisely leaves it to us to imagine the scene: Newport's crew landing in the Chesapeake Bay in April 1607 with the Pamunkeys barely paying attention to them as they are busy running up and down the country the archetypal native pursuit, it seems to kill off as many of the dispersed survivors of the Roanoke colony as they can find. And all this trouble unfolds before the eyes of a group of settlers fresh off the boat.<sup>25</sup> The utter impossibility of such a scenario seems to be negligible in face of the attractiveness of the notion that Powhatan went out of his way to exterminate a tribe and a colony in response to a prophecy. As with the Mexican prophecies allegedly announcing the arrival of Cortés, historians here again tend to be deluded by prophetic explanations of colonial conflict maybe because such explanations tie in so neatly with what we already know about the irrationality and fanaticism of the "savage mind." How else to account for the unchallenged notion of both Strachey and Quinn that the Pamunkeys had a tradition of exterminating strangers, regardless of their behavior?

The ideological power of the narrative of Indian prophecies forecloses any impulse to look at Roanoke itself for the possible reason of the colonists' disappearance. It seems to be much easier to believe in Powhatan's massacre than to draw conclusions from such troubling reports as the one stating that the colonists left by Grenville first went to a different island, stayed a while, "but afterward departed whither, as yet we knowe not."<sup>26</sup> "We know not" is the one phrase that positivist scholarship is terrified to pronounce. But we may wonder



whether in this case such a statement might not be preferable to taking at face value not only Strachey's garbled account of Powhatan's massacre but also Ralph Lane's report about Pemisapan's conspiracy, without concluding that *Lane's* massacre at Dasemunkepeuc may have caused a hostile disposition in the nearby Algonkian tribes. Contrary to Quinn's claims, the situation at Roanoke in 1587 was far from providing the basis for a "peaceful continuation" of cross-cultural relations (Quinn 1974, 434, 479). That peace had been disrupted by the colonists from the very beginning, and there is no need to resort to the dubious realm of ethnic character to explain native enmity.

"Native treachery," the trope that governs Lane's text just as much as the texts about Jamestown, was and still is the most convenient explanation for the failure and the violence of the colonial party itself be it the extraordinary harshness of the new policy in 1609 or Smith's humiliating attitude toward Powhatan in December 1608. European colonial violence, it seems, can only be imagined as a reaction to the natives' previous and groundless (i.e., "natural") treachery. It is impossible to admit, for modern scholarship sometimes even more so than for the historical agents, that that violence is part and parcel of the European imperial project itself. The story of Indian treachery has indeed developed such a truth value over the centuries that it is usually considered out of bounds for critical reflexion. From quite early on it has established itself as the organizing logic that mystifies the effects of European colonial violence in Virginia and elsewhere.

D. B. Quinn's reading or rather writing of the conversation between John Smith and Powhatan in December 1608 leaves us with two discursive complexes that call for further investigation. First, and rather late in this book after such a multitude of native speeches, we shall take a look at the colonial trope of the native speech itself; and secondly at the rhetorical function of the male Algonkians' "character" in the discourse about Virginia.

Voices beyond Discourse?

The Native Speech between Fact and Fiction

As my analysis of colonial discourse has so far shown, native speeches are likely to be found at ideological key locations in many texts, beginning with Columbus's journal entry for 14 October 1492.

Commenting on the topos of the "savage critic," Anthony Pagden has shown that the rhetorical strategy of the native speech can be traced back to orientalist and medieval romance discourses. Pagden mentions as one of its earliest instances the "Brahman chieftain" of the Alexander romances (Pagden 1983). Later, in the Age of Enlightenment, the savage critic became a favored tool of cultural critique. But already the early European discourse about America offers instances of the native speech as an instrument of humanist and anticlerical critique usually in secondhand texts dealing with colonial relationships on a more "reflexive" level. (The Gentleman of Elvas, whose text draws subversive potential from its juxtaposition of the native cultivated orations and de Soto's barbarous actions, is a rare instance of the use of the native speech as humanist critique in an eyewitness text.)

One often-quoted example of the New World as the scene of anticlerical discourse can be found in Martín Fernández de Enciso's *Suma de geographía*, which first appeared in 1519. Enciso notes the reply of a few caciques to the reading of the *Requerimiento*. After being informed that the pope had donated America to the Spanish king they say: "The Pope must have been drunk when he did it, because he gave away what was not his to give; and . . . the king who asked and took this favour must have been some sort of madman, because he was asking for something belonging to someone else." Not that Enciso disapproved of the *Requerimiento*; he even claimed to be the first one to have read it out (quoted after Gerbi 1985, 82). His example shows that an antipapist and antiroyal posture was not automatically an anticolonial one as well. It is important to bear these distinctions in mind.

Michel de Montaigne, who, as we know, capitalized on the trope of cannibalism as a means of cultural critique, also used the native speech for his own critical purposes. In his essay "Des coches" of 1588 he included a harsh indictment of Spanish colonial policy that is clearly informed by the rhetoric of the "black legend," that prominent ideological weapon used against Catholic and imperial Spain at the time:

We have taken advantage of their ignorance and inexperience, with greater ease to incline them to treachery, luxury, avarice, and towards all sorts of inhumanity and cruelty, by the pattern and example of our

manners. . . . So many cities levelled with the ground, so many nations exterminated, so many millions of people fallen by the edge of the sword, and the richest and most beautiful part of the world turned upside down, for the traffic of pearl and pepper? Mechanic victories! Never did ambition, never did public animosities engage men against one another in such miserable hostilities, in such miserable calamities. (Montaigne 1952, 441)

To be sure, this description of the Spaniards' devastations in America at times reads like a description of the European wars of religion. Montaigne continues by referring to the *Requerimiento* and, like Enciso, "quotes" the Indians' response:

That as to their [the Spaniards] being peacable, they did not seem to be such, if they were so. As to their King, since he was fain to beg, he must be necessitous and poor; and he who had made him this gift, must be a man who loved dissension, to give that to another which was none of his own, to bring it into dispute against the ancient possessors. . . . As to one only God, the proposition had pleased them well; but that they would not change their religion, both because they had so long and happily lived in it, and that they were not wont to take any advice but of their friends, and those they knew: as to their menaces, it was a sign of want of judgment, to threaten those whose nature and power were to them unknown; that, therefore, they were to make haste to quit their coast, for they were not used to take the civilities and professions of armed men in good part; otherwise they should do by them as they had done by those others, showing them the heads of several executed men round the walls of their city. *A fair example of the babble of these children.* (441, emphasis added)

Contained by the discourse of native infantilism, Montaigne well expresses a truth that Quinn, because of his faith in Smith's self-assertiveness, ignores: the power situation at most initial encounters was much more fragile than the Europeans were willing to admit. Montaigne's double strategy of criticizing colonial politics but ultimately containing that critique becomes obvious in the last and surprising sentence. In a way that sentence, whether ironically or not, encapsulates the tragedy of humanist criticism's desire to condemn social injustice while clinging to the very myths offered by the society whose practice it condemns. But Montaigne's double-edgedness can also be viewed in terms of the emergence of a

novelistic discourse, one of whose main features is the polyphony of voices, the splitting up of the one authoritative voice of monologic texts into a multiplicity of narrative positions, with the author himself being able to become invisible behind the conflicting opinions of his characters. 27

The figure of the non-European critic of European society is in fact a central phenomenon in protonovelistic discourse. One of the finest examples from the field of colonial writing is a travel book by a Portuguese adventurer, the *Peregrinação* of Fernão Mendes Pinto (1614). Pinto, who had spent twenty-one years of his life on several expeditions to East Asia, criticizes practically every institution of his country, whether sacred or profane. The *Peregrinação*, a classic of early modern travel writing, is usually regarded as a subversive book that challenges the very foundation of European society (Catz in Pinto 1989, xxv). The text, part of which was later translated into English and published by Purchas in his *Pilgrimes* (1625), makes frequent use of the critical words of other people. Encountering a Tartar king, for example, Pinto allegedly witnesses an unsettling dialogue about the Europeans between the king and an old man:

The king: "The fact that these people journey so far from home to conquer territory . . . indicates clearly that there must be very little justice and a great deal of greed among them."

The old man replies: "It would certainly seem so, . . . for when men, by dint of industry and ingenuity, fly over all the waters in order to acquire possessions that God did not give them, it means either that there is such great poverty among them that makes them completely forget their homeland, or that the vanity and blindness engendered in them by their greed are so great as to cause them to deny God and their fathers" (Pinto 1989, 254).

This was pretty heavy stuff in the early age of colonial expansion, and the modern editor of Pinto's book regards passages such as these as the major reason why the book was not published during his lifetime (Pinto died in 1583) (xxv).

The contents of the native speeches presented to the Portuguese public in 1557 by Pinto's compatriot the Fidalgo do Elvas are evidently much less subversive; it is mainly their juxtaposition with de Soto's extreme violence (cutting off the Indians' hands and noses, for example) and the sheer number of them (no less than seventeen) that gives them a subversive quality. The use of the term *subversive* would

be inappropriate, however, if this aspect of the text were not registered as a danger by the dominant power. But it was, at least in 1609. Richard Hakluyt, owing to his unfailing instinct for ideological cruxes, stumbles over the extreme frequency of Native American humanism in the Portuguese text. In his epistle to *Virginia Richly Valued* he writes:

concerning the manners and dispositions of the Inhabitants: among other things, I finde them here noted to be very eloquent and well spoken, as the short Orations, interpreted by *John Ortiz*, which liued twelve yeeres among them, make sufficient prooffe. And the author . . . saith, that . . . all those [caciques] which came to the Gouvernour on their behalfe, deliuered their message or speech in so good order, that no Oratour could vtter the same more eloquently. But for all their faire and cunning speeches, they are not ouermuch to be trusted: for they be the greatest traitors of the world, as their manifold most craftie contriued and bloody treasons, here set down at large, doe evidently prouue. They be also as vnconstant as the wethercock, and most readie to take all occasions of aduantages to doe mischief. They are great liars and dissemblers, for which faults often times they had their deserued paiments. (Hakluyt in *Gentleman of Elvas* 1609, sig. A3)

Hakluyt of course does not mention that the Indians' "paiments" for their treachery were usually delivered in advance.

*Virginia Richly Valued* evidently constitutes a case of discursive appropriation: a text written, as we may assume, with some degree of subversive intent (a Portuguese nobleman sniffing at a Castilian social upstart), is here translated not only linguistically but also ideologically into the English colonialist idiom of native treachery. Hakluyt was probably troubled by the Indians' gift of eloquence, as the power of speech, according to European cultural theory from Cicero to Puttenham, was an unequivocal proof of civilization and a prerogative of the superior culture itself. As ancient rhetoric teaches, it was precisely a wise man's gift of eloquence that brought his people to abandon their former life of "wander[ing] . . . in the field like animals." Eloquence introduced culture and peace to primitive society and thereby wrested humanity itself from the state of nature.<sup>28</sup> But English colonial discourse, operating on the logic of Indian savagery, did not permit the notion of a civilized and eloquent adversary. The Virginian Indians, if they were to fit into the British rhetorical program, had to be barbarous and treacherous.

But so had the "civilized" natives of Mexico. My analysis of the *Second Letter* of Cortés has shown that the speech of submission entertains an ideological relationship with the claim of Indian treachery: rhetorically, it is the basis on which that claim was made plausible in the first place. Ralph Lane's and Thomas Harriot's texts demonstrate that the trope of Indian treachery had been adapted to English colonial discourse about North America as a guiding principle from the very first attempts to settle there. And again, if residually, it is accompanied by the trope of the native speech. Perhaps owing to its potential for being incorporated into a humanist critique of colonialism, the trope of the speech of submission then receded in English discourse. This does not mean that native speeches are absent from the discourse about Jamestown. But their rhetorical function significantly changed.

Generally, Indian speeches in the early colonial texts such as those of Cortés and Harriot served the interests of colonial power. At about the same time, the native speech emerged as a rhetorical tool of (not necessarily anticolonial) critique. What these two functions have in common is that they betray the intellectual and ideological affiliations of European writers rather than giving a reliable picture of colonial reality in America. Certainly Indian leaders were not observing the colonists' deeds in complete silence, but a contextual reading of their recorded speeches has shown that their words more often than not articulate European interests rather than the genuine opinions of the people to be subjected.

Nevertheless, a significant change seems to have occurred between these examples and the longish conversation between Powhatan and Smith, reported by the latter in the *Proceedings* and again in the *Generall Historie*. Powhatan's speeches may, at least to some degree, respond positively to Myra Jehlen's (though not to Quinn's) nostalgia for textual transparency. The context in which they appear certainly belies Quinn's claim that they were unrealistic. Disturbingly, rather the opposite seems to be the case. As so often, the problem we are facing is that Smith's texts, as all historical documents, are neither purely fictitious nor purely factual. The fact that the conversation with Powhatan that he relates in his first text, the *True Relation*, can only be highly imaginative, owing to Smith's lack of Algonkian, is no valid argument for disqualifying his linguistic skills almost one year later.

Eric Cheyfitz has convincingly argued that, especially in the *True Relation*, Smith's "ignorance of native languages is simultaneously acknowledged and repressed, the sign of a telling anxiety." Authorial claims of complete mutual understanding are often found next to affirmations of linguistic ignorance, not only in Smith but in most colonial texts. Cheyfitz makes a strong case when he writes that "Smith's narrative of fluid intercultural communication must announce itself, precisely because of the seamless way in which it is presented, as a fiction of an understanding that never existed, a fiction that conveys the power of eloquence to the English" (Cheyfitz 1991, 8182).<sup>29</sup> But the "fictions" imparted by the *True Relation* move within a different ideological framework from those contained in the *Proceedings*, and there is sufficient internal evidence that by December 1608 Smith either had a fair knowledge of Algonkian himself or was aided in his discussion with Powhatan by one of the youths acting as translators (Namontack, Henry Spelman, or Thomas Savage). It would be implausible to assume that the means of communication had not improved in the meantime. However, to be able to communicate with Powhatan is one thing; to give a faithful account of a conversation is quite another.

The encounter between John Smith and Powhatan in December 1608 forms the culmination of a development that began as Smith claims with Powhatan's coronation by Captain Newport in September of the same year. Newport had hoped that their ceremony would somewhat mitigate Powhatan's pride and solve the sovereignty question by turning him into a subpotentate of the English king. But as Smith signals by way of Powhatan's speech, quoted earlier in this chapter ("I also am a king, and this is my land"), quite the opposite seems to have been the case. Smith's reason for visiting the Pamunkey weroance is a familiar one: the colony had run out of food once again and "sent to Powhatan for provision." But Powhatan, after entertaining them, "began to aske, when we would bee gon" because he could not spare any food, except in exchange for weapons (*P*, 24546).

The ensuing dialogue, which gets increasingly aggressive on Smith's part, centers on the topics of trade conditions and political sovereignty. What is remarkable, and what distinguishes this fictional dialogue from the Indian speeches quoted above, is the liberty with which Smith relates Powhatan's position even though it can only have disagreed with his own interests. In response to Smith's

complaints that the Indians were attempting to starve out the colony, Powhatan says: "Yet Captaine Smith . . . some doubt I have of your comming hither, that makes me not so kindly seeke to relieve you as I would; for many do informe me, your comming is not for trade, but to invade my people and possesse my Country" (246). After Smith nevertheless succeeds in wrangling some corn out of him in return for a copper kettle, Powhatan gives him a long lecture on the advantages of peace, asking Smith, "what can you get by war, when we can hide our provision and flie to the woodes, where by you must famish by wronging us your friends." He admits his fear of Smith's military equipment but tells him that his weapons would not save him from starvation (24748). Smith replies by outrightly threatening to procure his provisions by force but tellingly adds that "for your riches we have no use, as for the hiding your provision, or by your flying to the woods, we shall so unadvisedly starve as you conclude, your friendly care in that behalfe is needlsse; for we have a rule to finde beyond your knowledge" (248).

At this point we may freely speculate which tricks Smith might still have had up his sleeve, as Barbour puts it in referring to the missing "not" before "so unadvisedly." For Smith's problem here is precisely that his weapons were useless against the weroance's threat to retreat and leave the colony to its destiny. The symptomatic stuttering, the missing "not" in the text, draws attention to the spuriousness of Smith's ultimate bluff by which he is trying to impress Powhatan (and his readers?) his empty assurance of technological superiority. The text accidentally speaks the truth: without Powhatan's help the colony inevitably faced starvation. The colonizers were on the verge of imitating Lane's action at Roanoke. Just as twenty years before, the settlers fully depended on the Algonkians' infusions of food to get over the winter. 30

After this verbal saber rattling Smith and Powhatan resume the swapping, "but the king seing his will would not bee admitted as a laws, our gard dispersed, nor our men disarmed," sighs and tells Smith that he finds his trade conditions quite unacceptable and that Newport had been a much better partner. The conflict arises from the incompatibility of the two exchange systems, whose difference is directly referred to in an earlier speech of Powhatan to Newport where he says that "this peddling manner to trade for trifles" were not "agreeable with [his] greatnes. . . . Therefore lay me down all



your commodities together, what I like I will take, and in recompence give you that I thinke fitting their value" (217). Smith is outraged when Newport, apparently unacquainted with the principal rules of Western capitalism, complies with Powhatan's wishes: "yet captaine Newport thinking to out brave this Salvage in ostentation of greatnes, and so to bewitch him with his bounty . . . valued his come at such a rate, as I thinke it better cheape in Spaine" (217). Smith obstinately rejects Powhatan's exchange rate and connects the economic conflict with the question of sovereignty: "Powhatan, you must knowe as I have but one God, I honour but one King; and I live not here as your subject, but as your friend . . . by the gifts you bestowe on me, you gaine more then by trade . . . it is not our custome to sell our curtesie as a vendible commoditie" (249). 31

At this point the conflict culminates: Smith suspects Powhatan of secretly plotting against him while he himself waits for enforcements "to have surprised the king." But before his men arrive, Powhatan deserts his town, leaving only a few warriors, as he informs Smith, "to guard his come from the pilfrie." Smith's people force the "naked divels" to carry the trade goods to the boat and depart (*P*, 249).

It is quite obvious that Smith's as well as Powhatan's speeches are more or less stylized. For example, Smith projects his pride about his emancipation from the patriarchal authority of Newport into Powhatan's speech.<sup>32</sup> But read in the context of Smith's own writings and of English colonialism at large, there can be little doubt that the basic contents of this elaborate dialogue are pretty close to the real state of affairs. The story is in its main features a repetition of the story to be wrung from Lane's jumbled account of Roanoke: colonists trying to procure food from the Indians by force of arms, Indians retreating, colonists interpreting their withdrawal as an act of treachery. As in Roanoke, the greatest menace paradoxically consisted in the Pamunkeys' reluctance, not their aggression.

Smith repeats the dialogue of December 1608 in the *Generall Historie*, with one significant change at the very end: he now adds the passage, quoted above, of Pocahontas coming through the "irksome woods" to warn Smith against Powhatan's conspiracy and rejecting his presents for fear that her father might kill her as well (*GH*, 19899). The dialogue between Smith and Powhatan obviously appears in a different light now: the insertion of the debate into a myth of filial disobedience and patriarchal wrath diverts attention

from the real issues, even though they are so extensively stated in the text. In other words, the economic and political conflict of which the passage gives evidence is embedded in, and contained by, a myth of parental despotism. The need for containment in 1624 may point toward a dangerous discursive instability in the text of 1612, an instability arising from an awareness that the balance of power was about to collapse to the disadvantage of the colonists, without Smith being able to rhetorically control that danger. Smith's impertinent tone toward Powhatan, his verbal and perhaps also nonverbal saber rattling, must be regarded as his desperate reaction to the recognition that his magic technology was ultimately ineffective.

The difficult question seems to be why Smith should have felt compelled to report this moment of crisis at such length. Here it is perhaps important to consider that he wrote the text three or four years after the event, in 1611 and 1612 at a moment, that is, after the colony had survived the "starving time" of 1609-10 and when colonial control was on the upswing again at Jamestown. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield's remarks about the need of ideology to voice its fundamental contradictions in order to convince itself of its power appear pertinent here: "the more ideology (necessarily) engages with the conflict and contradiction which it is its *raison d'être* to occlude, the more it becomes susceptible to incorporating them within itself. It faces the contradictory situation whereby to silence dissent one must first give it a voice, to misrepresent it one must first present it" (Dollimore and Sinfield 1985, 215). 33

The colonial discourse of the period around 1611 seems to have been particularly engaged in such ideological brinkmanship: Hakluyt, despite his aversion to the subversive character of its native orations, decided to reprint *Virginia Richly Valued*, thereby testifying to the possibility that subversive speeches could now be contained in view of the consolidation of English colonial power at Jamestown. And 1611 of course also saw the birth of the most famous fictionalization of colonialism, Shakespeare's *Tempest*, with its conspicuous articulation and subsequent containment of Caliban's territorial claims by way of discourses of magic technology, clownish vulgarity, and not least, native treachery (see Barker and Hulme 1985). Owing to its repertory of aesthetic strategies, *The Tempest* is a far more successful imaginary solution of the problems posed by colonial reality than Hakluyt's rather crude translation of the Fidalgo's

humanist discourse into the discourse of Indian treachery. But the ideological ruptures occluded by such aestheticizations had to show on the colonial scene itself. Incapable of sufficiently narrativizing, in 1612, Powhatan's fatal refusal and the ensuing starving time in the winter of 1609, Smith finds a safe narrative frame for the event only in 1624two years after the fulfillment of the prophecy of native conspiracy that had been expected for so long.

The characterization of Powhatan as a treacherous despot, which has governed historical scholarship based on a naive reading of Smith's texts, is thus grounded in the experience of colonial crisis and anxietyof a fundamental instability of colonial power relations. But contrary to Myra Jehlen's claims, this instability cannot be inferred from a selective sighting of decontextualized passages. The real nature and full implications of the instability at the heart of colonial power become visible only when individual anecdotes are placed in the larger political and discursive context. A differentiated treatment of colonial documents should also reveal the enormous difference between the more or less stylized inclusion of native words in Smith's *Generall Historie* and truly dialogic and polyphonic documents such as the *Historia general* of Sahagún and his native pupils. These documents, which were actually written in part by indigenous scholars, are extremely rare and altogether absent from colonial discourse about North America. Even in the case of the hybrid texts of postconquest Mexico and Peru, the attempt to retrieve a genuine native voice is a painful if not futile affair.

My analysis has shown that D. B. Quinn's reinvention of the December 1608 conversation and his integration of it into his hypothesis of Powhatan's 1607 "massacre" moves comfortably within the boundaries of the ideology of Indian treachery, which has become a natural ingredient of our thinking about colonial relationships. Above all, it serves to displace the responsibility for colonial violence to the colonized people themselves, thereby diverting attention from the extreme violence contained in such prescriptions for action as the 1609 instructions. My reading of the dialogue between Smith and Powhatan suggests, however, that Smith's growing uneasiness and impertinence, as well as Powhatan's refusal to be a "good Indian," are clearly rooted in the difficult situation at Jamestown itself and in the incompatibility of the colonizers' fantasies of superiority with the actual state of affairs.

This conclusion, though apparently accomplished by a similar means of textual-historical analysis, significantly differs from Quinn's. The difference consists in the kinds of theoretical and ideological parameters of historical analysis that are applied. I have thus tried to replace the "ideology of origins" (Althusser), which guides Quinn's analysis, with a readiness to admit the empirical limits posed by the silences of the historical record. These silences are meaningful in themselves. They can be problematized and aggravated, which is not the same as filling them with a false stuffing. The ideal of completeness and plenitude to which positivist scholarship aspires too often provokes an unreflected reiteration of Eurocentric assumptions about Europe's "others," which have already provided ideological munition to the records of colonial oppression themselves.

### Of Great Demons and a Great Hare

We are left with the task of establishing the larger ideological environment of the colonial trope of the treacherous native, which so much inspires the representation of Powhatan by Quinn and other historians. The trope is actually an instance of a quite complex discursive gendering of the colonial relationship. The best example of the overall pattern of demonizing male Algonkians is William Strachey's *Historie of Travell in Virginia Britania*, written in 1611 and 1612. Strictly speaking, Strachey, one of Quinn's crown witnesses, deserves the reputation of being the first historian of Virginia. But for reasons difficult to assess, his text was suppressed at the time and priority was given to Smith's *Generall Historie*, which appeared twelve years later.

One reason for the lack of attention was certainly Strachey's diplomatic clumsiness. Not only does he frequently mention Sir Walter Raleigh, then sitting in the Tower of London for his suspected participation in the Gunpowder Plot of 1606, but he also dedicates his book to Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, nicknamed the "Wizard Earl," who was keeping Raleigh's company. As if this were not enough, Strachey claims that the Virginia enterprise was not really a new venture at all because it had really been begun in the 1580s by Raleigh and could not be pursued any further without his consent, as he still held the title to Virginia (Strachey 1953, 15). Strachey, whose colonial memory evidently deviated from that of his

fellow adventurers, then goes on to harp on the theme of the lost colonists. The Roanoke "massacre" is indeed the organizing ideological structure of the *Historie* (34, 49, 91, et passim). But Strachey echoes the 1609 instructions in another respect as well: apart from the frequent references to Powhatan's massacre, the *Historie* deals obsessively with the topic of human sacrifice among the Virginia Indians. Admittedly much influenced by Spanish writings on Mexico, especially by Acosta, Strachey's text contains excessive reports on sacrifices of children to the devil.

In due compliance with the logic of *translatio imperii*, Strachey opens his account of Indian atrocities by referring to the abominable practices of the ancient Britons, who, as Tacitus reports, sacrificed their children to their idols, "nay eating our owne Children, as did the Scots in those days." Just like his forefathers, Strachey claims, the West Indians sacrificed children to their Zemes, and likewise did the "Quiyoughquisocks," or priests, of the Virginians (2425). The *Historie* devotes an entire chapter to the topic of ritual infanticide (chapter 7). Strachey asserts that the shamans, "ministers of Sathan," not only kill their own children and those of strangers but also try to persuade the weroances to resist European settlement because otherwise their Okeu, or devil, would demand the blood of thousands of children (8990). It is becoming clear that the colonists, if they want to prevent the death of so many innocent souls, must either give up the colonial project or kill the priests. The latter choice, we remember, was propounded by the 1609 instructions: "you must procure from them some convenient number of their Children. . . . we thinke it reasonable you first remoue from them their *Iniocasockes* or Priests . . . and to proceede even to dache with these murtherers of Soules and sacrificers of gods images to the Divill" (Virginia Council 1609, 1415). The discourse about Virginia quickly condensed "gods images" with the children mentioned at the beginning, thus reinforcing the need to get rid of the shamans.

But as we have already seen, Strachey also connects the actions of the "priests" with those of Powhatan by claiming that the Quiyoughquisocks had instigated Powhatan against the Roanoke settlers (91). Only if both Powhatan and the priests were dispatched, Strachey claims in unison with the official prescriptions, could the other tribes live in peace: "they shalbe freed . . . from delivering of their Children for sacrifice, and the poore womens songs of lamentation

converted into reioycings . . . that the Children of men be preserved and not be slaughtered without offence given, as the devill and his QuiyoughquISOcks have ordayned." He even demands "that the fathers of those Children, and all that consent vnto the sacrifices hereafter shalbe put to death as Traytors to god, and his Maiestie" (92).

The discourse of ritual infanticide develops quite unproblematically into a separation of fathers from other family members, then into the well-established charge of Indian treachery, culminating in an equation of religious with political offense and its subsumption under English common law. Strachey provides an explanation for his tour de force two pages later: "seeing these Monsters doe offer vp vnto the Deuill their owne Children, and being hardened against all Compassion naturall and divine enforce their own mothers to deliuer them to the Executioner with their owne handes, they will easily Condiscend vnto, and assist the destruction and extirpation of all Straungers knowing or acknowledging the true god" (94). Although it is not altogether clear why one fact should arise from the other, it is of course entirely impossible to expect such a God-fearing people as the English colonists to coexist peacefully with such "Monsters."

The tale of devilish Algonkian priests sacrificing their own children is a recurring trope in the propaganda tracts of the Virginia Company preachers. Like Robert Gray, William Symonds condemns the "naked" American savages, who "know no God but the diuell, nor sacrifice, but to offer their men and children vnto Moloch" (Symonds 1609, 15). Robert Johnson fully agrees with Symonds and Gray: the Indians of Virginia, he claims, "sacrifice their children to serve the diuel, as those heathens did their sonnes and daughters to Molech," and he compares their abominable practice with that of the ancient Jews (quoted after Kupperman 1980, 64). And Alexander Whitacker asserts, with a hint of uncertainty about the reliability of his information, that the Indians "serve the Devil, for fear, after a most base manner, sacrificing sometimes (as I have here heard) their own children to him." Like "our English witches" they are "a generation of vipers even of Satan's own brood" (quoted after Porter 1979, 398). 34

As these quotations suggest, the trope of ritual infanticide points into three directions: to the Spanish discourse about Mexico, particularly in Strachey, and to the European discourses of both witchcraft and anti-Semitism. The links between the colonial ideologemes of

Indian devil worship and the European discourse of witchcraft and female sexuality have been suggested by a number of scholars (see Bucher 1981, Brauner 1992, and Kohl 1987). The most immediate image recalled by descriptions of native devil worship is the European fiction of the witches sabbath image that was in high currency around 1600, reinforced by the dynamics of religious strife. (The Great Witch Hunt took place during the period covered by this book, between 1580 and 1640.)

In his superb study on the "inner demons" of Europe, Norman Cohn has explored the cultural trope of cannibalistic infanticide, which was usually deployed in denouncing so-called witches and Jews, as well as such "conspirational" organizations as the Waldensians and the Fraticelli.<sup>35</sup> One of the authors of such an attack against the Fraticelli, who claims that they committed nocturnal orgies, killed and incinerated babies, and mixed their ashes in their communion wine, is Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, the opponent of Las Casas in the famous debate at Valladolid. He had made similar claims about the Aztecs.<sup>36</sup> The imbrications of witchcraft discourse with anti-Semitism are already apparent from their shared signifiers: terms such as "synagoge of Satan" and "witches Sabbath" were commonly used to refer to the women's alleged nocturnal habits (Cohn 1975, 261 n.). In 1470 the Spanish grand inquisitor Torquemada used the charge of Jewish infanticide to whip up anti-Semitic sentiment, and the historical archives are probably filled with similar examples (Lawson 1968, 154).

If this context is considered as the ideological climate that engendered charges of ritual infanticide against the Algonkians, the rhetorical practice in the texts about Virginia should tell us a lot about the translation of an ideologeme from one discursive realm to another, a translation that also involves discursive displacements and adaptations to the new environment.<sup>37</sup> The predominance of the trope of ritual infanticide in Virginia texts demonstrates the strong need to detect unequivocal signs of barbarism in the native inhabitants, just as the absence of Spanish oppressors occasioned the need for a new group of aggressors and a new group of victims to be liberated. The opposition that was opened up between native fathers and native children is evidently the larger structure behind the opposition Smith constructs between the merciless potentate Powhatan (later to be transferred to his brother and successor Opechancanough, as well



Fig. 4.1.  
 Theodor de Bry's adaptation of William Hole's Map of Virginia  
 (1612). From *Americae*, XIII (1634), courtesy of John Carter Brown Library,  
 Brown University.



as to his brother Iopassus) and his innocent and lovely daughter Pocahontas. But the subtleties of colonial iconography suggest yet a further identification of the Pamunkey weroance.

In the well-known depiction of Powhatan by William Hole in the upper left corner of Smith's map of Virginia (1612), the weroance is shown sitting on a platform in an arched building, attended on two sides by servants and stretching out his arm (holding a pipe) toward the right-hand servant (fig. 4.1). Barbour correctly suggests that Hole has been fusing three engravings from Theodor de Bry's edition of Harriot's *Brief and True Report*: the Indians sitting around the fire are taken from de Bry's engraving no. 17 (entitled "Their manner of prainge with Rattels abowt te fyer"); the platform in the arched building stems from de Bry's no. 22, a depiction of the "Tombe of their Werowans"; and the figure of Powhatan himself, especially his cross-legged pose, is indebted to no. 21, representing "Their Idol Kiwasa" (figs. 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4; see Barbour 1986, 1:142).<sup>38</sup> But the constellation of figures has further debts to two of de Bry's other engravings, both of which depict the Caribbean Zemi (equivalent of the Algonkian Kiwasa, or Kewase) in terms of conventional European representations of the devil (figs. 4.5 and 4.6). The most obvious resemblances between Hole's engraving of Powhatan and de Bry's of the Zemi on the title page of the fourth part of his *Grand Voyages* (1594), as well as the second Zemi in the same volume, are the two servants, one on each side, the arched form of the building, and the Zemi's/Powhatan's outstretched arm holding a pipe/pitchfork. The sagging breasts of the five-headed monster in figure 4.6 is a traditional attribute of the devil (see Bucher 1981, 73).

Another transformation was performed by Robert Vaughan, who did the engravings for the *Generall Historie* and who retranslated Hole's representation of Powhatan into one of "Their Idoll" (fig. 4.7). This new patchwork of several of the engravings based on White's paintings (the two servants are exchanged for White's "conjurer" and "priest") now also includes John Smith sitting around the fire with the Indians, as well as two witchlike figures who are distinguished from the rest of the group by their position and shade.

In other words, Powhatan is included in a semiotic network that reserves for him the same signifier as that used for the Algonkians' devilish "idoll." Inscribed in these illustrations is a symbolic mix that works to conflate the signifieds of Algonkian political leadership,



Fig. 4.2.  
"Their maner of praying." From Theodor de Bry, *Americae*, I (1590),  
courtesy of John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

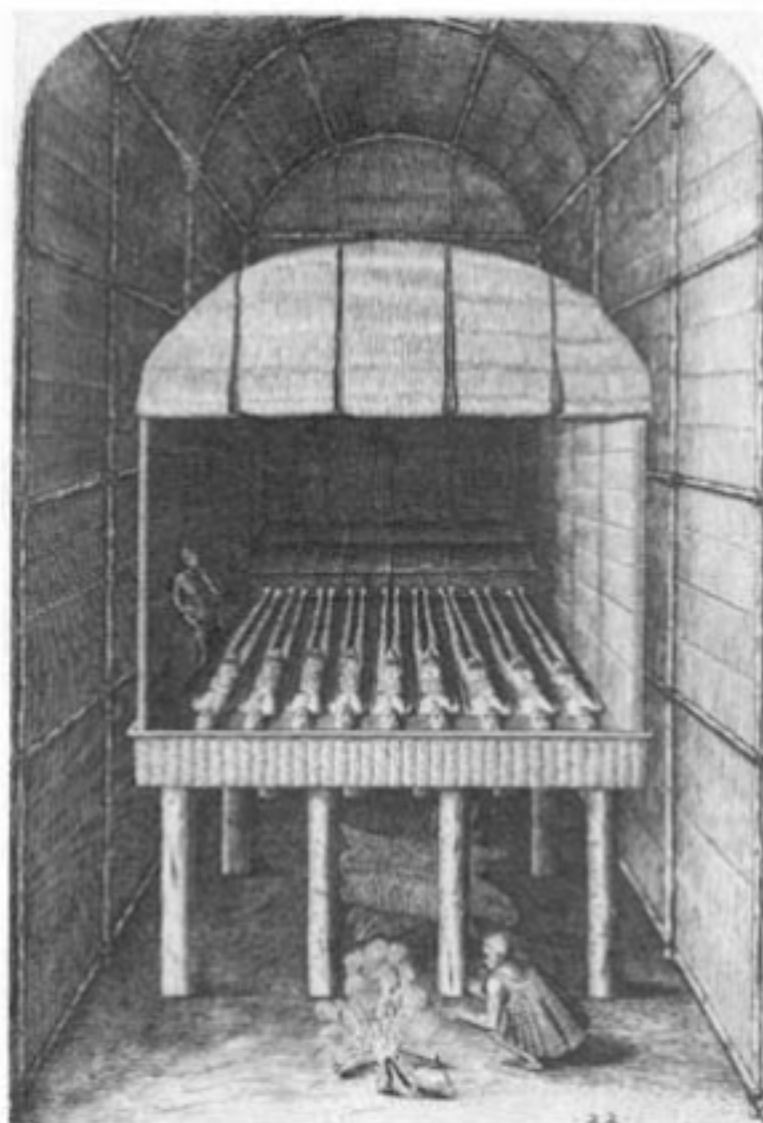


Fig. 4.3.  
"Tomb of their Weroans." From Theodor de  
Bry, *Americae*, I (1590), courtesy of John Carter  
Brown Library, Brown University.

religious worship, and burial customs. The iconographical inscription of European fantasies of the witches sabbath is itself already mediated, and displaced, through representations of Caribbean Zemi worship. These iconographic translations, which implicate the Pamunkey weroance into a cultural narrative of devil worship, complement the textual representation of the Algonkian leaders as demonic or at least treacherous characters. The characterization of Powhatan is deeply embedded in diverse discourses of "othering," colonialist and other, from which he can hardly emerge as a coherent



Fig. 4.4.  
"Their Idol Kiwasa." From Theodor de Bry, *Americae, I* (1590),  
courtesy of John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

personality. Appearing from Smith's early writings like a second Motecuhzoma (to match Smith, the second Cortés), Powhatan is then simultaneously inscribed with the residual attributes of natural treachery and devil worship, and even, at least in mediated form, of the devil himself.

But as is so often the case, there is no smoke without a fire. The frequent claims of Algonkian ritual infanticide may be obliquely connected with a Native American ritual first described by Smith in his *Map of Virginia*, interestingly enough, three years after the first propagandistic claims of the native practice of infanticide in 1609. Apparently finding what he was looking for, Smith mentions "certaine Altar stones" of the Pamunkeys, which they call "*Pawcorances*" and which "stand from their Temples, some by their houses, other in the woodes and wildernesses. Upon this they offer blood, deare suet, and Tobacco" when returning from war, hunting, and other occasions. <sup>39</sup> Only a few lines further down, Smith tells of the Indians' annual "sacrifice of children," which he then describes in



Fig. 4.5.  
Zemi worship. Frontispiece in Theodor de Bry, *Americae, IV* (1594),  
courtesy of John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.



Fig. 4.6.

Zemi worship. From Theodor de Bry, *Americae*, IV (1594), courtesy of John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

some detail (Map, 17172). As becomes clear from the description of this "sacrifice," Smith is referring to an initiation rite of young men (called *huskenaw*) during which the youths are ritually "killed," then sent to live in seclusion for nine months to be reborn and reintroduced into society. Such rituals are common among most tribal cultures. Smith also relates the answer of one of the weroances upon "being demanded the meaning of this sacrifice." The Indian replies that the children "were not al dead, but that the Oke or Divell did sucke the blood from their left breast" until some of them were dead but that the rest would return after the nine months (172). Strachey also reports on the ritual and gives an account of it similar to Smith's, including the conversation with the weroance (Strachey 1953, 9899).

There is no final clarification as to who first reported on the *huskenaw* ritual. Smith's and Strachey's reports are clearly second-



Fig. 4.7.

Robert Vaughan, "Okee." From John Smith, *Generall Historie* (1624), courtesy of John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

hand. Modern editors generally agree that both texts are based on information obtained from one of the colony's first go-betweens, William White. But the original of White's text is lost, and his report survives only in an "improved" version in Samuel Purchas's first collection of travel accounts, the *Pilgrimage* (1614). Purchas offers a wild story indeed, which is obviously based on Smith as well as White. At the most crucial point, however, when the Indians erect a

steeple of wood "to sacrifice their children to the Diuell (whom they call Kewase)" the narrator admits that he was no longer admitted to the ceremony. He only adds that he "found a woman mourning for yong Paspaha sacrificed at the Towne of Rapahanna." At this point Purchas makes an addition in his later editions of the account: "that Paspaha is now alive, as Mr. Rolph hath since related to me: and the mourning of the women is not for their childrens death, but because they are for diuers moneths detained from them. . . . Yea, the Virginians themselves, by false reports might delude our Men, and say they were sacrificed when they were not." Of course it is the Indians' fault when false reports are spread about them.

These clarifications notwithstanding, the assumption that the Pamunkeys sacrificed their children to the devil remained intact. In the *Generall Historie* Smith repeats his earlier report and likewise retains the marginal gloss "Their solemn Sacrifices of children, which they call Blacke-boyes."<sup>40</sup> But the text reveals a certain confusion about the meaning of the "Altar stones" mentioned just before the "Blacke-boy" ceremony. Their similarity with the *templo mayor* of Tenochtitlán is now less obvious than in 1612. The *Pawcorances*, according to the *Generall Historie*, now stand at places "where they have had any extraordinary accident, or incounter. And as you travell, at those stones they will tell you the cause of why they were there erected, which from age to age they instruct their children, as their best records of antiquities. Upon these they offer bloud, Deere suet, and Tobacco" (*GH*, 12324). Like so many other objects in America, the "Altar stones" give rise to a conflict of signification. But that the stones should have a meaning altogether different from the familiar one of Old Testament or Aztec sacrifice stones was still unthinkable.<sup>41</sup>

The examples of such misunderstandings and misrepresentations in the texts about Jamestown are indeed manifold, and the category of interest certainly played a crucial role for the Europeans' (in)capacity to understand Algonkian culture. Once the need to find altar stones and child sacrifice had been established, the myths deriving from the misapprehension of Algonkian culture often proved resistant to occasional clarifications such as the one by Purchas. The interest in settling the land, which plays the dominant role in the writing of all texts discussed here, seems to have prevented the colonizers from developing a perceptive apparatus that would permit them to register



similarity while at the same time acknowledging an object as belonging to a different and autonomous system of signification. For them, there existed no system of signification outside their own.

But it would be wrong to exclude the possibility that this perceptive blockage may be temporarily suspended. Perhaps the only occasions for such a suspension of European cultural bias paradoxically offer themselves where, owing to the lack of a correspondent symbolic structure, Algonkian reality could not be translated into the European conceptual universe. The usual reaction to such complete nonunderstanding we would assume to be silence and suppression. But Peter Hulme has convincingly argued in favor of the reliability of Smith's recording of Pocahontas's speech at Brentford on the grounds that he was obviously unable to grasp the meaning of her words. The reason Hulme gives for Smith to have reported what he did not understand introduces an interesting and not unproblematic new category. He suggests that Pocahontas's statement had "impressed" Smith (Hulme 1986, 147).

It may come as a surprise to find a similar compulsion to report without comprehending in William Strachey, our expert on Algonkian devil worship and prophetically motivated massacres. Surely his Eurocentric bias seems to be much too strong to expect any ethnographic faithfulness in his text. But again, colonial records are very uneven textures and not *either* faithful reports *or* utterly ideological effusions. They cannot be grasped by way of a dualist true-false concept such as Miller's. What adds to the exceptionality of the passage in question is that it comes at a point where it may be least expected. It is paradoxically the chapter about native religion in Strachey's *Historie*, where his obsession with Algonkian ritual infanticide reaches its peak, that seems to allow us a glimpse beyond the confines of Eurocentric discourse.

Strachey concludes this chapter with his account of a trading visit to the town of Iopassus (also spelled Iapazaws), one of Powhatan's brothers, in 1610. Strachey, who is aboard Captain Argall's ship, witnesses the visit of Iopassus and his curiosity about one of the men reading from the Bible. Smelling a chance for conversion, Strachey asks Henry Spelman, who had lived at Iopassus's village for a whole year, to explain the picture of the creation of the world to the Indian in his own language, which Iopassus seems to appreciate. It is necessary to quote the rest of the chapter in full:

[Iopassus] bade the boy tell the Capt, yf he would heare, he would tell him the manner of their begynning, which was a pretty fabulous tale indeed: "We haue (said he) 5. godes in all our chief god appeares often vnto vs in the likewise of a mightie great Hare, the other 4. haue no visible shape, but are (indeed) the 4. wyndes, which keepe the 4. Corners of the earth (and then with his hand he seemed to quarter out the scytuation of the world) our god who takes vpon this shape of a Hare conceaved with himself how to people this great world, and with what kynd of Creatures, and yt is true (said he) that at length he diuided and made diuers men and women and made provision for them to be kept up yet for a while in a great bag, now there were certayne spirritts, which he described to be like great Giants, which came to the Hares dwelling place (being towards the rising of the Sun[D]) and hadd perseveraunce of the men and women, which he had put into that great bag, and they would haue had them to eate, but the godlike Hare reprovved those Caniball Spirritts and droue them awaie. Nowe yf the boy had asked him of what he made those men and women and what those spirritts more particularly had bene and so had proceeded in some order, they should haue made yt hang together the better, but the boy was vnwilling to question him so many things lest he should offend him, only the old man went on, and said, how that godlike hare made the water and the fish therein and the land and a great deare, which should feed vpon the land, at which assembled the other 4. gods envious hereat, from the east the west from the north and sowth and with hunting poles kild this deare drest him, and after they had feasted with him departed againe east west north and sowth, at which the other god in despight of this their mallice to him, tooke all the haire of the slayne deare and spredd them vpon the earth with many powerfull wordes and charmes whereby every haire became a deare and then he opened the great bag, wherein the men and the women were, and placed them vpon the earth, a man and a woman in one Country and a man and a woman in another country, and so the world tooke his first begynning of mankynd, the Captayne bade the boy aske him, what he thought became of them after their death, to which he answered somewhat like as is expressed before of the Inhabitants about vs, howe that after they are dead here, they goe vp to the toppe of a highe tree, and there they espie a faire plaine broad pathe waye, on both sydes whereof doth grow all manner of pleasant fruicts, as Mulberryes, Strawberryes, Plombes etc. In this pleasant path they run toward the rysing of the sun, where the godlike hares howse is, and in the midd waie they come to a howse, where a woman goddesse doth dwell, who hath

alwaies her doores open for hospitality and hath at all tymes ready drest greene *Vskatahomen* and *Pokohichary* (which is greene Corne bruysed and boyld, and walnutts beatten smale, then washed from the Shells, with a quantety of water, which makes a kynd of Milke and which they esteems an extraordinary dainty dish) together with all manner of pleasant fruicts in a readines to entertayne all such as do travell to the great hares howse, and when they are well refreshed, they run in this pleasant path to the rying of the Sun, where they fynd their forefathers living in great pleasure in a goodly feild, where they doe nothing but daunce and sing, and feed on delicious fruicts with that great Hare, who is their great god, and when they haue lived there, vntill they be starke old men, they saie they dye there likewise by turnes and come into the world againe.

Concerning further of the religion, we haue not yet learned, not indeed shall we ever knowe all the Certaynty either of these their vnhalloved misteryes or of their further orders and pollicyes vntill we can make surprize of some of their *Quiyoughquisoeks*. (Strachey 1953, 1023)

The long quotationa unique instance of such a long recording of a native North American myth at that time calls attention to itself by its deviation from the ideological thrust of Strachey's text. It is only in the very last sentence that we are reminded of the context in which the passage appears as an alien element, both by its syntactic difference from its textual surroundings and by Strachey's uncommon gesture of giving a voice to an Indian without functionalizing that voice, and apparently even without being able to make much sense of it. To be sure, the tale of Iopassus is in the end neatly contained by Strachey's own discourse of the necessity to "surprize" (i.e., capture or kill) the native Quiyoughquisoeks, as well as in his expressions of contempt for this "pretty fabulous tale," this "vnhalloved mistery." He also records his fruitless attempt, reminiscent of similar efforts mentioned by Ramón Pané, to impose some kind of "order" on the chaos of Iopassus's story. But this design is frustrated by Spelman's lack of cooperation. The inserted dialogue between Strachey and Spelman in the interests of coherence particularly suggests that Strachey was quite helpless as to what to make of the tale.

What we have here, in short, is a protoethnographic fieldwork situation with a somewhat overstrained ethnographer, an uncooperative translator, and an informant with little care for the increase of scientific knowledge but a strong drive for storytelling. There can be

no doubt that Strachey, who more than anyone else fumed against the native "Priests," was unprepared for recording a "disordered" native tale precisely as it was told. On the other hand, there is no European folk tradition comparable to the creation story. But besides the appearance that Strachey reports a story that he could not possibly store away in his mental universe, his lengthy recording seems to be tied to no propagandistic interest and thereby stands in stark contradiction to the rest of his book. It interrupts and challenges Strachey's history of "Virginia Britania," a history that is concerned with finding its beginning in the Roanoke "massacre," by confronting it with an alternative version of Virginian beginnings. Iopassus's tale subverts Strachey's Eurocentric tale in that it reminds us that Virginia already possessed a history before the Englishmen arrived there. In addition to challenging the British sense of history, the story of Iopassus counters the monogenetic account of the book of Genesis with a theory of the polygenetic origin of mankind.

There is ethnographic evidence for the existence of similar creation myths among other Algonkian and Siouan tribes. 42 Samuel Purchas, who had interviewed Spelman a few years later, presents a much shorter and different version of the myth in the *Pilgrimes* of 1614: "a Hare came into their Countrey and made the first men, and after preserved them from a great Serpent: and when two other Hares came thither, that Hare for their entertainment killed a Deer, which was then the only Deere that was, and strewing the haire of that Deeres hide, every haire prooved a Deere" (quoted after Roundtree 1989, 190 n. 133).

In what appears as a first act of familiarization, "Caniball" becomes "Serpent," one "Hare" multiplies into three (God, Adam, and Eve?), and the fight with the evil spirits who killed the deer vanishes from the tale. The metamorphosis of the deer's hair into new deer is preserved, understandably because there is a well-known mythological analogy in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid (Cadmos killing the dragon from whose teeth the Spartans arise readily armed). That Purchas, too, gives a version of the creation myth reveals the beginning of what we might call ethnographic curiosity among even the most radical advocates of forced colonization. Like Sahagún and Durán, Strachey and Purchas seem to have developed an interest in Native American culture, maybe in order to be better prepared for replacing the Indians' "mysteries" with the true faith.

The Mexican chronicles immediately offer themselves for comparison. Like Sahagún, Strachey allows, against the thrust of his rhetorical project, an alien voice to enter into his text, where it unsettles, at least for a moment, its tight theological and historiographic principles. Strachey's recording of the Algonkian legends endows this passage with a hybridity that is absent from all other early English colonial texts about North America. Like the words of Pocahontas in the *Generall Historie*, these of Iopassus, though certainly somewhat distorted through translation and transcription, do seem to present a case of relatively faithful and disinterested recording, the main reason for this being that Strachey apparently tried in vain to make the tale "hang together the better." For once, the English monologue of colonialism seems to permit, however unwillingly, a trace from a different cultural narrative to settle in one of its structural cracks. This "alternative" narrative to that of European imperialism and this is indeed the *only* alternative narrative I can think of will never be retrieved.

Much more than Powhatan's speech in the *Generall Historie*, then, Strachey's recording of the creation legend may be viewed as a sign of ideological instability, as an example not of "history before the text" but perhaps of "text before narrativization." Certainly every text occasionally escapes authorial and discursive control, defies traditional expectations of textual closure, and may even allow the subaltern to speak. But even in this case to say that the story of Iopassus disrupts Strachey's narrative in any essential or lasting way would rest on an ahistorical understanding of the colonial situation. What seems disruptive for us was not necessarily so in 1612. The *Historie of Travell* by far lacks the polyphony and the dialogism of the *Historia general* of Sahagún.

My analysis has shown that several ideologemes that determine the colonial discourse in Virginia were borrowed and recycled from other discourses, especially from the earlier ones about Mexico and the Caribbean, but also from contemporary noncolonial discourses of cultural, social, and gender-specific oppression in Europe. This discursive borrowing, however, is not in itself a sign of instability but rather the very precondition of political change and control. As in Raleigh's Guiana text, discursive conflicts do not necessarily testify to a crisis of colonial power but may just as well sustain that power.

## The Roanoke "Massacre" and the Fiction of Colonial Beginnings

As already mentioned, the period of relative peace and uncertainty at Jamestown after Powhatan's death in 1618 finally gave way to an outbreak of violence with Opechancanough's attack of 22 March 1622 an act from which England would draw new moral justification for its now unrestrained extermination policy. It had been preceded by a wave of privatization of property since 1618, the increased exploitation of cheap English labor by the gentleman farmers at Jamestown, and a quickly growing territorial expansion due to the demands of the monoindustry of tobacco planting (Morgan 1975, 8295 and chapter 4; Nash 1974, 60). Diverting attention from the crucial importance of these economic factors, the 1622 "massacre" provided a new, or rather a familiar, rationale for future colonial action, with the chief propagators calling for merciless imitation of the Spanish example.

Edward Waterhouse, the secretary of the Virginia Company in London, urged the colonizers to grasp the opportunity offered by Opechancanough's massacre: "our hands which before were tied with gentleness and faire vsage, are now set at liberty by the treacherous violence of the Sauages, not vntying the knot, but cutting it." In faithful keeping with the historical precedent, the spoils of the Alexandrian action fall to the invaders: "So that we, who hitherto haue had possession of no more ground then their waste . . . may now by right of Warre, and law of Nations, inuade the Country, and destroy them who sought to destroy vs: whereby we shall enjoy their cultivated places, turning the laborious Mattocke into the victorious Sword . . . and possessing the fruits of others labours" (Waterhouse 1622, 2223). Finally able to step out of the limbo of legal uncertainty, the colonizers may from now on base their reaction to native "provocation" on the right of conquest. Accordingly, the biblical rhetoric, otherwise so important for justifying conquest on the grounds of the superior state of European agriculture, is here practically reversed, and the ideal of the Protestant work ethic is satisfactorily put to rest when confronted with the notorious Virginian reality. Theological sophisms such as Robert Gray's are now no longer necessary. Favoring a pragmatic approach to the problem, Waterhouse also provides practical prescriptions as to how to turn the natives into slaves:

victorie of them may bee gained many waies; by force, by surprize, by famine in burning their Come, by destroying and burning their Boats, Canoes, and Houses, by breaking their fishing Weares, by assailing them in their huntings, whereby they get the greatest part of their sustenance in Winter, by pursuing and chasing them with our horses, and blood-Hounds to draw after them, and Mastiues to teare them, which take this naked, tanned, deformed Sauages, for no other then wild beasts. . . . By these and sundry other wayes . . . may their ruine or subiection be soone effected. (24)

Like Waterhouse, who suggests molding further colonial action on the Machiavellian principle of *divide et impera*, John Smith refers to the Spaniards' colonial policy as the model to be imitated: "The manner how to suppress them is so often related and approved, I omit it here: And you have twenty examples of the Spaniards how they got the West-Indies, and forced the treacherous and rebellious Infidels to doe all manner of drudgery worke and slavery for them, themselves living like Souldiers upon the fruits of their labours" (*GH*, 299). If the English soldiers were engaged according to Smith's own strategy, based on that of Cortés (315 16), the Indian problem would soon be solved, for

where could they rest, but in the depth of Winter we might burn all the houses upon all those Rivers in two or three daies? Then without fires they could not live, which they could not so hide but wee should finde, and quickly so tire them with watching and warding, they would be so weary of their lives, as either fly all their Countries, or give all they had to be released of such an houely misery. . . . All the Pamaunkes might have been dispatched as well in a moneth as a yeare, and then to have dealt with any other enemies at our pleasure, and yet made all this toile and danger but a recreation. (317)

But all of these measures (or rather pleasures), Smith impatiently adds, "might as well have beene put in practice sixtene yeares agoe as now" (*GH*, 299). In the light of other passages in the same text, this may be a slight misrepresentation of the real state of affairs sixteen years before.

Samuel Purchas, with his unflinching sense for powerful metaphors, supports Smith's argument that the action was long overdue and retrospectively constructs a continuity between Powhatan's supposed massacre of the Roanoke settlers and Opechancanough's attack, leaving us to wonder why indeed the English needed sixteen

years to make use of their just title. Commenting on the Roanoke massacre, he writes: "their carkasses, the dispersed bones of their and their Countrey mens since murdered carkasses, have taken a mortall immortall possession, and being dead, speake, proclaime and cry, This our earth is truly English, and therefore this Land is justly yours O English" (Purchas 1625, 228).

Only after Opechancanough's attack of 1622, we could say, in slight deviation from Peter Hulme's thesis, was it possible to publicly state the assumed fate of the first colony. Only after the logic of the *Requerimiento* had finally taken root in English justifications of conquest was it possible to tackle, and solve, the uncanny problem that "as yet we knowe not" what happened to the Roanoke settlers. From a psychoanalytical viewpoint, it is not at all surprising that the Roanoke issue, after three decades of official silence, should suddenly emerge from the archives of colonial memory in Purchas's text to endow the North American section of his nationalist and imperial history with a beginning. The primal fantasy of the Roanoke massacre, believed to have taken place at just the same moment that the Jamestown settlers were landing, not only provides a succession of native acts of treachery but also endows the period between 1607 and 1622, that period of ideological and political uncertainty, with such a coherence that it is a pity Perry Miller did not recognize it. But that task, as we have seen, was unwittingly fulfilled by his colleague D. B. Quinn, who, not altogether unlike Hernán Cortés, invents or rewrites a native speech to prove a previous treacherous massacre that never took place.

The unfortunate and forgotten historian William Strachey, it seems, did not understand the dynamics of colonialist ideology at all. His constant references to the massacre and to possible survivors were just not what was ideologically needed at the time. The unofficial mention of the massacre in the 1609 instructions of course served a different purpose. The authors of the instructions had grasped the political advantages following from an initial native act of aggression, just as Purchas did sixteen years later. Purchas's linkage of the 1622 with the 1607 events has the special merit of producing a narrative of colonial beginnings that was safe for public consumption. For the English public, the Roanoke settlers simply had to be dead, not least to enable the English colonial conscience to forget England's embarrassing incapacity to send a supply ship



between 1587 and 1590. So their dead carcasses, whether really dead or just metaphorically so, like the Algonkian "Blackeb-boys," cleared or rather fertilized the ground for planting the first national myth of English America.

As Freud had declared, in a rather daring comment on his Wolfman analysis, the "reality value" of a primal scene is relatively unimportant for the development of a neurosis. Whether real or merely fantasized or displaced, he suggests, the pathological effects of the trauma remain the same. 43 Freud here seems to propose the need for transgressing an orsanicist theory of origins in favor of a genealogical theory, the need to look at the effects of a neurosis rather than quarreling about the "reality status" of its source. To translate this into Myra Jehlen's terms, we may conclude that the study of a history of remembering and forgetting after the fact should be more important than that of history "before the fact." Though this is evidently much harder to do than to say, it would seem to be an important task of historical scholarship to turn away from the search for origins and toward a genealogical study of the relations between representation and power.

All we are left with is to take a final glance at some of the textual materials that were occluded by the narrative of Indian treachery. England's colonial neurosis, of which Roanoke the Roanoke of both Ralph Lane and Samuel Purchas provides a useful example, revolves around the topic of European colonial violence, not least against Native American children. The capture of Pocahontas by Captain Argall in 1613 is a typical case. It aptly involves the "treacherous" cooperation of one of her "fathers," this time her uncle Iopassus (the storyteller): Iopassus, in return for a copper kettle, is said to have enticed Pocahontas to come aboard Argall's ship, where she was imprisoned in order to be ransomed by Powhatan in exchange for a few Englishmen living at his village, as well as for weapons and corn (Hamor 1615, 45; *GH*, 24344).

In de Bry's illustration of the incident, Iopassus, "the old Jew" (*GH*, 244), is aptly endowed with the attributes of treacherous native fathers: he looks like a devil, including feathers that resemble horns, and a tail (fig. 4.8). The middle ground shows Iopassus handing over the treasure casket of Pocahontas to the Englishmen, thus performing, according to the cultural logic of the European engravers, the symbolic cession of Powhatan's empire to King James. In the back-



Fig. 4.8.

Betrayal of Pocahontas. From Theodor de Bry, *Americae*, X (1619),  
courtesy of John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

ground, de Bry's engraving shows the continuation of the story, Governor Dale's response to Powhatan's refusal to ransom Pocahontas on the expected terms: some of Powhatan's warriors "let their arrowes flie amongst vs in the shippe," whereupon the soldiers, being "thus iustly provoked, . . . presently manned our boates, went ashoare, and burned in that verie place some forty houses, and of the things we found therein, made freeboote and pillage" (Hamor 1615, 8; cf. *GH*, 24445). So the real context of the incident is once again the settlers' never-abating need for the Indians' food supplies.

The men whom Powhatan had presumably "treacherously taken from us" together with their weapons do not seem to have been too eager to return to Jamestown. Some of them "ran to him again" after their rescue (Hamor 1615, 7). The tendency of many settlers (often ex-prisoners, "masterless men," unemployed soldiers, and other poor

indentured servants) to run away to the Indians must indeed have been a major problem at Jamestown. Their infelicity was rewarded with severe punishments (see Morgan 1975, 74). As Morgan, Jennings, and others have shown, the situation at Jamestown was often frustrating, if not desperate, mostly owing to the same incapacity of the settlers to grow their own food that had already caused intercultural conflict at Roanoke. Being unable to procure any more food from the Indians in the winter of 1609/10, some of the colonists reverted to eating each other, an action otherwise attributed only to "cannibals" and the Irish. John Smith, referring to the report of one of the survivors, has a particularly delicate account:

a Salvage we slew, and buried, the poorer sort tooke him up againe and eat him, and so did divers one another boyled and stewed with roots and herbs: And one amongst the rest did kill his wife, powdered her, and had eaten part of her before it was knowne, for which he was executed, as hee well deserved; now whether shoe was better roasted, boyled or carbonado'd, I know not, but of such a dish as powdered wife I never heard of (*GH*, 105).

The reaction to such vicissitudes consisted in raiding Indian towns. In a rarely quoted text George Percy, then president at Jamestown, describes such a raid in 1610:

We marched towards the town. . . . And then we fell in upon them, put some fifteen or sixteen to the sword and almost all the rest to flight. . . . My lieutenant bringing with him the queen and her children and one Indian prisoner for the which I taxed him because he had spared them, his answer was that having them now in my custody I might do with them what I pleased. Upon the same I caused the Indian's head to be cut off. And then dispersed my files appointing my soldiers to burn their houses and to cut down their corn growing about the town. And after we marched with the queen and her children to our boats again, where being no sooner wall shipped my soldiers did begin to murmur because the queen and her children were spared. So upon the same a council being called it was agreed upon to put the children to death, the which was effected by throwing them overboard and shooting out their brains in the water. 44

Percy then sends another party to ransack another Indian village. Returning to Jamestown, he is beleaguered to kill the "queen" of the Paspaheghs, whom he had spared so far, and the woman is stabbed to death (see Morgan 1975, 74). Such was the reverse of English claims

of Algonkian infanticide, not quite in keeping with the 1609 instructions' demand to liberate native children from their murderous fathers.

In that regard, the conversion and marriage of Pocahontas would remain the one famous exception whose function was to mystify, by way of ritualizing it, the greatest fear encapsulated in the story of the "lost colonists." The one thing that the nationalist historiography of Purchas and his followers could not stomach is the "we don't know" echoing through the infrequent rumors about survivors from Roanoke. The unacknowledged alternative to Purchas's narrative of a blood-drenched earth is typically voiced in aesthetic form, thereby testifying to the central function of art to express, but also to contain (here in the mode of comedy), society's latent fears. In their 1605 play *Eastward Ho* the dramatists George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston took the liberty to speculate on the fate of Roanoke: "They have married with the Indians, and make 'hem bring forth as beautifull faces as any we have in England: and therefore the Indians are so in love with 'hem, that all the treasure they have they lay at their feete" (quoted in Quinn 1974, 452).

To be sure, 1605 was a time when Virginia was still pictured as another Peru. Other models of cultural coexistence were much less encouraging. Behind the outcries of Purchas's carcasses we may hear the echoes of the legend of Prince Madoc: "But because this people were not many, they followed the maners of the land they came vnto, and vsed the language they found there" (Hakluyt 1589, 2:506). The specter of cultural annihilation would have to be banned for a true national history to begin (see Hulme 1986, 143). The myth of the two "treacherous massacres" provided the opportunity for coping with such anxieties and for producing a colonial memory that would establish a firm basis for further imperial action. Perry Miller's "massive narrative of the movement of European culture into the vacant wilderness of America" had begun.

Chapter 5  
Rituals of Exclusion  
1637

### The Virginian Legacy at Plymouth

Evidently, New England was not quite as "vacant" as Perry Miller imagined. But in addition to a visible native presence, it was filled with the "dispersed bones" of the "carkasses" of its original inhabitants. If we believe contemporary chroniclers, the effects of the epidemic had indeed been devastating and had turned the coastal area of today's Massachusetts into a charnel house in only two years (1616/17) an area, moreover, that John Smith had described as densely settled and fertile only a few years earlier (*GH*, 4078).<sup>1</sup> Edward Winslow writes in 1621 of the area surrounding the newly founded Plymouth plantation: "The ground is very good on both sides, it being for the most part cleared. Thousands of men have lived there, which died in a great plague not long since; and pity it was and is to see so many goodly fields, and so well seated, without men to dress and manure the same" ([Winslow and Bradford] 1622, 206).

Thomas Morton renders the effects of the "invisible bullets" in a more Jacobean manner:

[The] hand of God fell heavily upon them, with such a mortall stroake, that they died on heapes, as they lay in their houses[,] and the living . . . that were able to shift for themselves would runne away, & let them dy, and let there Carkases ly above the ground without buriall. For in a place where many inhabited, there hath been but one left a live, to tell what became of the rest, the living being (as it seems) not able to bury the dead, they were left for Crowes, Kites, and vermin to pray upon. And the bones and skulls upon the severall

places of their habitations, made such a spectacle after my coming into those parts [in 1624], that as I travailed in that Forrest, nere the Massachussets, it seemed to mee a new found Golgatha. (Morton 1838, 1819)

But unlike the carcasses of Purchas's massacre narrative, those caused by the introduction of European disease to North America were seen to deprive the native inhabitants of their ancestral territorial rights instead of giving them a "mortall immortall possession." These carcasses, as Morton states in rare agreement with John Winthrop, are the work of God.

As a sign of God's providence, the disease became for Winthrop one of the reasons for the Puritans' just settlement in New England. The official patent of 1620 likewise speaks of "God's visitation" having caused "a wonderful plague amongst the savages there heretofore inhabiting, in a manner to the utter destruction, devastation, and depopulation of that whole territory." Since no inhabitant seems to remain who would "claim or challenge any kind of interest therein," the ideologues of colonialism assumed that God had generously taken over the task of "devastation and depopulation" (Gray) himself in order to prepare the land for the arrival of his chosen people (Winthrop 1985, 73; cf. Vaughan 1979, 104, and Young 1971, 184 n.).

This natural, or rather divinely ordained, clearance of the land greatly facilitated English justifications of conquest. While the claim of Robert Gray and others that the Indians were vagrants and therefore had no territorial rights still prevailed, it could now be supplemented with the argument that the land was actually empty and thus free for European settlement. Though he did not empty out the land altogether, God rendered New England "void" where the Puritans planned to reside, as John Cotton claims: "It is a Principle in Nature, That in a vacant soyle hee that taketh possession of it, and bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it, his Right it is." The "Principle in Nature" to which Cotton appeals is the ancient right of discovery.

Still, it is not agricultural practice alone that was seen to entitle the Puritans to the possession of New England. For Cotton at least, God's promise and "speciall Commission from heaven, such as the Israelites had" were equally important (Cotton 1630, 6). If Cotton based English title on both the law of nature and God's repetition of

his promise to Israel, Winthrop preferred to restrict his argument to the classic distinction between a civilized and a noncivilized relationship to the land: "The natives in New England, they inclose no land neither have any settled habitation nor any tame cattle to improve the land by, and so have no other but a natural right to those countries." This natural right, which Winthrop associates with the common use of the land, had long been superseded in more developed countries "by enclosing and peculiar manurance," which gave its practitioners a "civil right" (Winthrop 1985, 73).

Winthrop's disqualification of the Indians' natural against the Puritans' superior civil right to the land does more than merely seek to foreclose the further applicability of the classic law of natural property. In its redefinition of the term *nature* itself, it also anticipates John Locke's theory of labor sixty years later.<sup>2</sup> In addition, it echoes Samuel Purchas's "Virginias Verger" of 1625, in which Purchas argues that "Christians . . . have and hold the world and the things thereof in another tenure, whereof Hypocrites and Heathens are not capable. These have onely a Naturall right" (Purchas 1625, 219). By killing the Virginian settlers, the Indians, according to Purchas, forfeited even their natural right "and [have] given us another Nationall right," thereby acquiring the impossible status of what Purchas calls "unnaturall Naturalls" (224, 229). While Purchas wittily writes the Indians out of the community of mankind, thereby legitimating Smith's and Waterhouse's calls for genocidal war, Winthrop, lacking an equivalent of the 1622 massacre, could not go that far. Like Locke and Cotton, he distinguishes the Indians' lifestyle from that of the Puritans in that the former depended on what is "produced by the spontaneous hand of Nature" (Locke 1965, 328), whereas the latter, by bestowing "husbandry" upon the land, "fill" and "subdue" it (Cotton). This rather misleading description of the Native Americans' use of the land is the result of a long history of partly willful misperception—the ideological heritage of the golden-age trope, whose stubbornness in the face of contradictory evidence is so nicely exemplified in Jean Ribault's report (see chapter 1).

Winthrop's and Cotton's thesis of America as *vacuum domicilium* is anticipated by frequent claims of the vagrant lifestyle of the Indians. A sample of this widespread assumption would include the claims that they "range rather than inhabit" (Purchas), "live and lie up and downe in troupes like beards of Deare in a Forest" (Johnson),

that they "live not in great numbers together, but dispersed and in small companies" (Waterhouse), that they "wander up and down like beasts" (Gray), that they "live but like deer in herds" (Symonds) and "range up and down little otherwise than the wild beasts of the same [i.e., the "vast and unpeopled countries"]" (Bradford) (Purchas 1625, 231; Johnson 1609, 238; Waterhouse 1622, 19; Gray 1609, sig. C2; Symonds 1609, 15; Bradford 1952, 25).<sup>3</sup>

As Bradford's remark reveals, it was no great step from the claim of Indian vagrancy to that of the "unpeopled" or "empty" state of their country. For a better understanding of this it is helpful to know that the masterless men of contemporary England likewise had no settlement or property rights and were, very much like the inhabitants of America, regarded as outcasts of humanity. But besides such temporal coincidences, a nomadic life style has of course been regarded as a sign of barbarism since the times of Herodotus, who positively distinguished the settled state of the Greeks from the nomadic existence of the Scythians.<sup>4</sup> But quite often, such nomadism was seen wherever it seemed politically suitable. Thus the Irish practice of transhumance (called "bollyng" by the English invaders, *buaille* in Gaelic), though hardly distinguishable from other forms of pastoralism, was constantly used against the Irish in attempts to prove their state as social outlaws and criminals (see Klein 1992, 95101, and Phillips 1994).

Ironically, though, land enclosure and sheep farming had been the practice of the English clergy and gentry since the fifteenth century. The enclosure policy transformed large sections of commonly used arable land into pastures for sheep farming. This practice contributed to the problems of unemployment (overpopulation) in the cities and of vagrancy in the countryside of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It thereby in turn provided two of the major arguments for colonial expansion: the need to get rid of surplus inhabitants and the need to find new markets for English cloth (most Indians, as can be imagined, thankfully declined).

Thomas More gives an impressive account of the enclosure policy through his persona Raphael (thereby aptly preparing an argument in favor of colonial expansion):

Now [your sheep] are becoming so greedy and wild that they devour men themselves, as I hear. They devastate and pillage fields, houses,



and towns. For in whatever parts of the land the sheep yield the softest and most expensive wool, there the nobility and gentry, yes, and even some abbots though otherwise holy men, are not content with the old rents which the land yielded to their predecessors. Living in idleness and luxury . . . they leave no land free for the plow: they enclose every acre for pasture; they destroy houses and abolish towns, keeping only the churches, and those for sheep-barns. . . . [These] worthy men turn all human habitations and cultivated fields back to wilderness. . . . The tenants are dismissed and compelled, by trickery or brute force or constant harassment, to sell their belongings. . . . They leave the only homes familiar to them, and they can find no place to go. . . . When [their] little money is gone (and it's soon spent in wandering from place to place), what remains for them but to steal, and so be hanged justly, you'd say! or to wander and beg? And yet if they go tramping, they are jailed as sturdy beggars. They would be glad to work, but they can find no one who will hire them. There is no need for farm labor, in which they have been trained, when there is no land left to be plowed. (More 1975, 1415)

It is certainly ironic to see the English colonizers derive their settlement rights from their civil status based on husbandry while their own country found itself in a state of increasing self-imposed vagrancy with the land being transformed, as More has it, into a "wilderness" because of the lack of husbandry. Certainly the New England Puritans had this situation in the back of their minds when they advocated cultivating the American wilderness. Protestant spokesmen, from Latimer in the 1530s to Laud in the 1630s, had resented enclosure policy and supported the crown's attempts to prevent it by issuing laws and acts against the speculation and conversion of common lands (see Tawney 1984, 14751,253). Like John Winthrop in his "Model of Christian Charity," Protestants expounded the importance of the commonweal as against the egotism of private property. But it was precisely in the 1630s, and increasingly under Cromwell, that Puritans began to succumb to the commercial dictate of capitalism, that they ended their resistance against enclosure policy and against the transformation of communal into private property (256). As we have seen, Winthrop already used the Indians' lack of enclosure to justify their dispossession. Apparently, for him enclosure now also included the raising of crops. This new definition left a wandering life as the only possible state for those who did not enclose (see Cronon 1983, 56). 5

A modern scholar assumes that about thirty-four thousand smallholders and tenant farmers were dispossessed between 1455 and 1637 through the transformation of the English economy (Beier 1985, 21). Enclosure policy was only one of several causes of homelessness, which was likewise achieved by the malpractices of the guilds, the oppression of craftsmen by merchants, and the general increase in food prices due to the flawed economy (Tawney 1984, 142). What is more important in our context is that the English masterless men, despite governmental efforts to fight the source of the problem, were soon regarded as a social threat, a "cursed generation" with no rights whatsoever (Hill 1972, 33). They were not allowed to settle but in fens, marshes, and woodlands and in the vicinity of coal mines, quarries, and the likewhich means they were expelled from society and treated as what one scholar calls the excrement of the body politic (Hill 1972, 35; cf. Brown 1985, 52).

As freedom of tenure still existed in uninhabited areas, the agricultural revolution produced a veritable migration to such "heathen" provinces and brought about a decline in religious education as well. No wonder then that John Aubrey described the English heathens in terms that were also applied to Native Americans: they "live lawless, nobody to govern them; they care for nobody, having no dependence on anybody." In a play of 1652 it is said of these outcasts that they "observe no law, Obey no governor, use no religion": the familiar "sans foi, ni loi, ni roi" of early reports about the American "savages" (quoted after Hill 1972, 38).

With some justification we may assume that the experience of such social unrest and conflict at home added further incentive to the Puritans' negative perception of Native American lifestyle. But savagism and the charge of nomadism themselves must of course be traced back to the classic dualism between a settled and a nomadic state as expressed in Herodotus and others.

Understandably, there was little interest perhaps less easy to understand with regard to the abundant evidence of Indian agriculture, little capacity on the part of the Puritan settlers to overcome such ancient dichotomies. But as we have seen they had more arguments than the natural versus civil rights distinction up their sleeves, most prominently "God's Providence," manifested either in God's direct donation of New England to the Puritans or by way of his word and a typological interpretation of the Bible and of history. 6

Both of these concepts, however, that of "speciall Commission from heaven" (Cotton) and that of "scripture" as "precept" (Gray), were rejected by Robert Cushman, one of the Pilgrim Fathers and perhaps the most "modern" theorist of colonial legitimation. Apparently trying to keep God altogether at bay, Cushman also anticipated a central objection against Cotton's theology that would surface during the Antinomian Crisis. He reminds his fellow believers that "whereas God of old did call and summon our fathers by predictions, dreams, visions, and certain illuminations, to go from their countries, places and habitations, to reside and dwell here or there, and to wander up and down from city to city, and land to land, according to his will and pleasure," he does not speak in such a direct way to his people anymore. Now human action must be directed by his "voice and word," not by any "extraordinary revelations" (Cushman 1622, 240).<sup>7</sup> Neither does Cushman consider the biblical precedent of God's promise of Canaan to "the seed of Abraham" as a sufficient reason for moving into America: "now there is no land of that sanctimony, no land so appropriated, none typical."

Rejecting both a typological explanation of the English presence in America and the concept of direct revelation alike, Cushman resorts to the universal state of spiritual nomadism to justify colonial action: "we are all, in all places, strangers and pilgrims, travellers and sojourners . . . having no dwelling but in this earthen tabernacle; our dwelling is but a wandering and our abiding but as a fleeting, and in a word our home is nowhere but in the heavens" (241). By appealing to a spiritual *jus peregrinandi*, in the eyes of Francisco de Vitoria one of the few just reasons for a European presence in America, Cushman now seems to dismiss the topic of possession altogether.

The similarities between the pilgrims' homeless state and the "nomadism" of the Indians seem striking indeed. But the important difference is that, although Cushman does not say so, spiritual pilgrimage sanctifies earthly possession while the allegedly aimless wandering of the Indians forfeits their territorial rights. It is precisely the nonmaterialist motive of the journey that makes the difference: in the end, it is the Europeans' religious (rather than economic) desire that sanctifies their migration into foreign lands. Cloaked in metaphysical language, Cushman's thesis actually amounts to a

Incited by this philosophy, the Pilgrim Fathers chose the former site of Patuxet to erect their earthly city Plymouth in 1620. The original inhabitants, Squanto only excepted, had died of the plague only three or four years before. Though somewhat deservedly praised for the mildness of its Indian relations (mild, that is, compared with those of the Massachusetts Bay Colony), Plymouth's early history shows clear signs of the Virginian legacy. Especially Winslow's report of 1624, *Good News from New England*, is structured along the logical lines of Indian treachery: it begins with a reference to 1622 and increasingly presents the Indians' actions as partaking in a general conspiracy against Plymouth. This trail of suspicion leads up to Miles Standish's cathartic action of killing a number of Massachusetts Indians at Wessagusett in March 1623, one year after the Virginia massacre. <sup>10</sup> The head of one of their leaders, Wittuwamat, was publicly displayed at Plymouth as a symbol of the Europeans' strength (Vaughan 1979, 87). Thus, even though the victims were very real, the whole action at Wessagusett may be viewed in terms of symbolic action as well.

The Pilgrims had settled in a power vacuum. Some New England tribes were wholly extinct, while the once greater tribes, the Wampanoags and the Massachusetts, were severely decimated and thus eager to enter into friendly relations with the newcomers. Only the Narragansetts, who lived further off in the southwest, had been spared by the disease and thus posed a potential threat to colonial plans. They aptly challenged the Plymouth settlers early in 1622 by sending a bundle of arrows which Bradford filled with powder and shot and returned to sender. No more direct threats were received according to English sources, but the settlers' intrusion into the shaky native economy and political relations led to intercultural tension, a tension that increased when the colonists began to turn their settlement into a fortification.

But the situation was too complex to look to Plymouth alone for an explanation of the ensuing conflict. New England's famous go-between Squanto, the last of the Patuxets, also had his share in aggravating the situation. Apparently trying to undermine the power of Massasoit, the chief sachem of the Wampanoags and an ally to the Plymouth colonists, Squanto, who had survived the plague only because he had been kidnapped and taken to England, made intelligent use of his knowledge of the two peoples' weaknesses to win

new followers and political power for himself. According to Winslow, he told the Indians that the colonists harbored the plague in their powder barrels and could release it at any time if he told them so; conversely he caused a false alarm by pretending that Massasoit had changed sides and conspired against the settlers, together with Canonicus, sachem of the powerful Narragansetts. The fraud was discovered by Hobbamock, a confidant of Massasoit whom the sachem had sent to live with the settlers, probably in part to prevent such misunderstandings. Massasoit furiously demanded Squanto's head, but Bradford refused to part with his interpreter, arguing that Squanto was the only mediator between the two peoples.

Considering the later development, as well as the fact that there was at least one other mediator, we may assume that Bradford was not altogether disinclined to receiving wrong information on Indian conspiracies, or, more broadly, that colonial action at Plymouth, as elsewhere, did not always benefit from being informed about the Indians' actual plans and pursuits. At Plymouth, as at Jamestown, Roanoke, and Tenochtitán, the trope of Indian conspiracy was servicable for establishing colonial rule.

According to Puritan records, the negotiations between Bradford and the messengers of Massasoit about delivering Squanto were abruptly ended by the arrival of a new ship, carrying the unholy crew of Thomas Weston, who brought the news of the Virginia massacre and settled at Wessagusett. There the rival colony soon began to contribute to the fatal development of intercultural affairs by pillaging the cornfields of the Massachusetts. In addition, the new and unwanted settlers usurped the Pilgrims' trade relations in the area. But neither Winslow or Bradford, nor John Smith, whose section on Plymouth in the *Generall Historie* closely follows Winslow's report, present the communication problem or intercolonial rivalries as causes leading to the Wessagusett massacre. As in other cases, the root of evil is seen in the Indians' treacherous disposition. Winslow claims that the alleged conspiracy of the Massachusetts Indians against both colonies was revealed to him by Massasoit through his interpreter Hobbamock and that the Wampanoag sachem was motivated to disclose the secret because Winslow had recently cured him of constipation with an improvised potion of herbs and leaves.

Winslow's cure is a central element in his claim of native conspiracy, a claim that was never borne out by subsequent events:

Standish's people had to lure the Massachusetts into a house under the pretense of trade. After having murdered them, the Pilgrims continued their punitive quest by butchering a hunting party that they caught unawares and then returned home to Plymouth. The action resulted in the departure of Weston's men to Maine, the reinstatement of Plymouth's trade monopoly, and a stable truce with the surrounding tribes, including the intimidated Narragansetts. Massasoit of course profited from the show of English power himself, and it seems likely that he had at least warned Winslow against the growing dissatisfaction among the pestered Massachusetts tribe and had perhaps even tried to demonstrate his own strength towards the Narragansetts by parading his powerful new allies. But without doubt Plymouth benefited most from the Wessagusett action by exhibiting and consolidating its power toward two sides, rival settlers and Indians, at once. Once again, then, the suspicion of Indian treachery provided the ideological justification for establishing a "safer settlement" by violent means.

The losers of the conspiracy game were the Massachusetts. Decimated by disease, deprived first of its corn and then of its leaders, the tribe quickly disintegrated. Afraid of further English attacks, or, as Winslow has it, out of their "guilty consciences," the Massachusetts "forsook their houses, running to and fro like men distracted, living in swamps and other desert places, and so brought manifold diseases amongst themselves, whereof many are dead." They were too afraid to set any corn in springtime and to enter new trade relations, "and none of them dare come among us" (Winslow 1971, 345). John Smith, in a rare fit of religious sentiment, piously commented on their disaster: "Thus you see where God pleases, as some flourish, others perish" (*GH*, 458). The pleasure, it seems, was in part that of the colonists. After all, Standish's action poses a realization of the kind of military strategy that Smith himself suggested in the same text (317). It also shows that native vagrancy may be produced at any time, even if initially missing from the actual colonial scene.

### Gendering the New Canaan

Weston's unruly colony had hardly disappeared when Plymouth was visited by the next affliction, which approached in 1624 in the person of Thomas Morton. It is Morton's *New English Canaan* to

which we owe the only alternative account to Winslow's about the fate of the Wessagusett colony and the economic and political interests behind the "massacre" (Morton 1838, 7173). For obvious reasons, his version of the episode has hardly gained the serious attention of historians (see Kupperman 1977). Of course Morton's siding with the Indians in his representation of the Wessagusett incident also has strategic significance: entering Thomas Weston's legacy geographically (Morton settled at Mount Wollaston, near Wessagusett) as well as ideologically and economically (as a very worldly-minded Anglican he quickly gained the confidence of the Indians), Morton soon attracted the wrath of the Plymouth settlers. Thus his book, published in 1637, contains not only a valuable description of native life and nature in New England but also a wild satire of the Puritans' bigotry, culminating in his hilarious account of how "Captaine Shrimp" (Standish) and his "nine Worthies" ascend Mount Wollaston to catch the "great Monster" Morton and ship him back to England (Morton 1838, 9397).

What troubled the Pilgrims most, besides the official reason they give for arresting Morton (illegal arms trade to the Indians), 11 was his unreligious and overtly sexual attitude toward the Indians and, metaphorically, to the land. Complains Governor Bradford:

[They] fell to great licentiousness and led a dissolute life, pouring out themselves in all profaneness. And Morton became Lord of Misrule, and maintained (as it were) a School of Atheism. And after they had got some goods into their hands, and got much by trading with the Indians, they spent it as vainly in quaffing and drinking, both wine and strong waters in great excess (and, as some reported) £10 worth in a morning. They also set up a maypole, drinking and dancing about it many days together, inviting the Indian women for their consorts, dancing and frisking together like so many fairies, or furies, rather, and worse practices. As if they had anew revived and celebrated the feasts of the Roman goddess Flora, or the beastly practices of the mad Bacchanalians. Morton likewise, to show his poetry composed sundry rhymes and verses, some tending to lasciviousness, and others to the detraction and scandal of some persons, which he affixed to this idle or idol maypole. They changed also the name of their place, and instead of calling it Mount Wollaston they call it Merry-mount, as if this jollity would have lasted ever. (Bradford 1952, 2056)

Teasing the Puritans for their pride in their hermeneutic skills, Morton affixed a poem to the maypole ("Rise Oedipus") that contained so many allusions and associations that the "precise seperatists" were incapable of expounding it (Morton 1838, 90).<sup>12</sup> But perhaps worse than the war of words that he initiated was Morton's introduction of pagan rites into the promised land, fertility rites that were only too well known to the Puritans from the English "heathen" countryside. Especially the maypole itself "superbly . . . symbolized at once the phallic eroticism, the interracial amity, and the attachment to ancient festivities that so infuriated the Pilgrims and because it afforded a beacon for coasting tradersthe commercial rivalry that so threatened Pilgrim business interests" (Zuckerman 1977, 273; cf. Slotkin 1973, 5865).

At issue was more than just the subversion and carnivalization of Puritan values. Morton as Lord of Misrule challenged the very "principles of authority on which [English] civilization and its colonial outposts were based" (Slotkin 1973, 64). The Ma-re Mount colony, as Morton himself termed it, by fulfilling the symbolic function of a mount and beacon by the sea and thus reminding us of Ribault's phallic pillar, posed a serious threat to the social order the Puritans sought to establish in America. In its rational rigidity, that order was in constant danger of collapse even without an adversary from outside; but the danger was increased considerably by the young colony's being confronted with a more ancient and well-trying model of communal life, based on the ritual cycle of pagan festivity (see Zuckerman 1977, 273, and Arner 1977, 229). The revels of Ma-re Mount undermined the integrity of the Puritan body politic itself; they "threatened the physical life of the colony by violating its psychological commitment to maintain an English identity, to resist acculturation to the Indian's world" (Slotkin 1973, 64).

Wanting to preserve their Englishness, the Puritans did well to occlude all the openings of its body politic; the experience of Ireland and Virginia had shown what would happen to a cultural community once its ties were loosened. As Morton sneeringly remarks: "These are the men that come prepared to ridd the land, of all pollution" (Morton 1838, 108). Morton, by inviting cultural amalgamation at least in some respects ("Lasses in beaver coats come away, / Yee shall be welcome to us night and day": 91), may thus be called with some justification a true American provided that America is concept-



alized as a multicultural society. But the Puritan colonists, having to defend a "culturally closed system" (Vaughan 1979, xvii), packed Morton on a ship to England and timed his departure correctly for confronting him with the spectacle of his burning Merry Mount. Comments Morton: "The smoake that did assend appeared to be the very Sacrifice of Kain" (Morton 1838, 109).

Without wanting to overinterpret Morton's somewhat limping biblical analogy, it seems at least instructive that he does not identify himself with Abel but suggests the autochthonous character of his settlement (Cain's sacrifice consists in the "fruit of the ground": Genesis 4.3). The analogy evokes the difference between the Puritans' view of the land as a howling wilderness and the overtly eroticist (and gastronomic) attitude that Morton expresses in the following passage:

And when I had more seriously considered of the bewty of the place, with all her faire indowments, I did not think that in all the knowne world it could be paralel'd. For so many goodly groues of trees; dainty fine round rising hillucks: delicate faire large plaines, sweete cristall fountaines, and cleare running streames, that twine in fine meanders through the meads, making so sweete a murmuring noise to heare, as would even lull the sences with delight a sleepe, so pleasantly doe . . . they glide upon the pebble stones, jetting most jocundly where they doe meete; and hand in hand runne downs to Neptunes Court, to pay the yearly tribute, which they owe to him as soveraigne Lord of all the springs. (Morton 1838, 4142)

This is a fine piece of Jacobean pastoral prose; if read alongside Purchas's less poetic but more penetrating description of Virginia, the sexual overtones of its language become even clearer:

But looke upon Virginia; view her lovely lookes (howsoever like a modest Virgin she is now veiled with wild Coverts and shadie Woods, expecting rather ravishment then Mariage from her Native Savages) survey her Heavens, Elements, Situation; her divisions by armes of Bayes and Rivers into so goodly and well proportioned limmes and members; her Virgin portion nothing impaired, nay not yet improoved, in Natures best Legacies; . . . in all these you shall see, that she is worth the wooing and loves of the best Husband. (Purchas 1625, 242)

For both Purchas and Morton, the country's pastoral beauties are not meant to be contemplated much longer, as they are awaiting the

colonizer's husbandry and possession. Aided by the emphasis of end rhyme, Morton writes in his prologue that

not such  
Another place, for benefit and rest,  
In all the universe can be possest,

and he goes on:

Like a faire virgin, longing to be sped,  
And meete her lover in a Nuptiall bed,  
Deck'd in rich ornaments t'advantage her state  
And excellence, being most fortunate,  
When most enjoy'd, so would our Canaan be  
If well employ'd by art and industry  
Whose offspring, now shewes that her fruitfull wombe  
Not being enjoy'd, is like a glorious tombe. (Morton 1838, 10)

"Now let us sport us while we may," one feels tempted to add.

Purchas and Morton here cultivate the trope of feminizing the land, which is conspicuously absent from Puritan writing but has left a deep imprint in Elizabethan and Jacobean colonial discourse, as my chapter on Raleigh has already shown. The discursive dialectic of a "territorial conception of the female body" (Montrose 1991, 13) and a feminized conception of territorial possession extends from ancient myth over medieval and early modern cartography to modern art and science. 13 In the age of discovery this conjunction of discourses became a powerful tool for articulating European men's hegemonic longings toward two sides at once: "The ideology of gender hierarchy sanctions the Englishman's collective longing to prove and aggrandize themselves upon the feminine body of the New World, and, at the same time, the emergent hierarchical discourse of colonial exploitation and domination reciprocally confirms that ideology's hegemonic force" (Montrose 1991, 12).

The major result of the translation of the colonizers' interest in America into the terms of romance or rape was of course that the native inhabitants were excluded from the love match, as is the case in Purchas's reaction to the 1622 massacre, already quoted in chapter 4: "But when Virginia was violently ravished by her owne ruder Natives, yea her Virgin cheekes dyed with the bloud of three Colonies . . . the stupid Earth seames distempered with such bloody potions and cries that shee is ready to spue out her Inhabitants"

from the more benign symbolic equations of land and female body as found in Morton, or in Hakluyt's dedication to Raleigh (see chapter 3), to the overtly misogynist imagery we already find in Raleigh himself and that was to be further refined by Puritan writers. 16

The conjunction of the English discourse of sexual domination with that of colonial dispossession may be seen to articulate the need of a masculinely defined body politic to fortify itself against its internal and external others. The need to fortify may in turn derive from the confrontation of Puritan ideology with the more stable, and more attractive, alternative mentioned above. Like every discursive regime of subjection, this one, too, grappled with its specific anxieties.

One way of dealing with such anxieties consists in imaginatively displacing the cause of them. Peter Hulme has shown such a process of displacement to be involved in the renaming of Pocahontas as Rebecca (Hulme 1986, 145). Like so many other biblical stories, the story of Rebecca has to do with a transferral of property. Rebecca, who has been barren, gives birth to two boys after her husband, Isaac, has entreated the Lord. The children fight with each other in her womb, which God explains by telling her that "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." Rebecca begets twins, the older one, Esau, who is "red," and Jacob. One day Esau comes from the field and begs Jacob to give him some of his pottage, but his brother demands of him to "Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?," and he sells him his birthright (Genesis 25. 23-24). As Hulme correctly observes: "No text could have sat more comfortably with English desires. The colonists were of course impermeable to the irony that their settlement had only survived its early years through constant infusions of Algonquian pottage" (Hulme 1986, 146).

Another way of dealing with the anxiety caused by the actual or intended subjection of the "others" of the male body politic consisted, in New England at least, in the chopping off of some of the body's limbs. An example of this process follows.

Puritan theocracy conceived of its body politic as the earthly representative of the "body of christe whereof wee are members," as Winthrop says in the "Model of Christian Charity" (1630).<sup>17</sup> At the same time, man's spiritual relationship to Christ was often expressed

in erotic terms. As Edmund Morgan and Ben Barker-Benfield have shown, Puritan men, like other Protestants, construed their union with Christ as equaling that between wife and husband. John Cotton, for example, writes: "The publick Worship of God is the bed of loves" where "Christ embraceth the soule of his people, and casteth into their hearts the immortal seed of his Word, and Spirit" while the church "conceiveth and bringeth forth fruits to Christ" (quoted after Barker-Benfield 1972, 7273; cf. Morgan 1966, 164). John Winthrop gives a rather ecstatic account of his relationship with Christ: "methought my soule has as familiar and sensible society with him as wife could have with the kindest husbände; I desired no other happinesse but to be imbraced by him" (quoted after Barker-Benfield 1972, 73; cf. Morgan 1966, 167). Imagining themselves as brides awaiting Christ's embrace, and at the same time as indispensable members of the (male) Christian body politic, Puritan men were faced with the dilemma of occupying a male and a female position at once.

Within this narcissistic constellation there was little room left for defining the special relationship with Christ that their wives enjoyed. Toward their women, who, according to Puritan thinking, could only reach salvation through their husbands, Puritan men presented themselves in a rather oxymoronic way, as "nursing Fathers," as Winthrop tells Anne Hutchinson during her trial in 1637 ([Winthrop and Weld] 1968, 250).<sup>18</sup> Given their metaphorical practice, it is hardly surprising that Puritan men harbored some suspicion against the spiritual state of their women, whose metaphorical relationship with Christ did not involve the same necessity of symbolic gender transformation. As Barker-Benfield remarks: "The context for the explanation of Winthrop's attitude to Hutchinson . . . was the fluidity of an identity rooted in contradictions" (Barker-Benfield 1972, 7375, 83).

Anne Hutchinson, gathering around herself many (male and female) members of the community by preaching a doctrine of free grace and direct revelation without regard to the believer's gender, was quite understandably perceived as a threat by male magistrates and ministers, as she reversed "assumptions about women in a way that touched men's theological sexual identities" (82). Accordingly, Winthrop condemned her doctrine not merely on intrinsic grounds; it was hardly distinguishable from Cotton's, who, as we have seen,

also believed in God's "speciall Commissions," without facing trial but on the grounds that Hutchinson was a woman. The Bay Colony magistrates had cut off other members of its body politic before, among them Roger Williams (whose critique of Boston politics included his condemnation of the *vacuum domicilium* doctrine) and Thomas Hooker. But Anne Hutchinson was dealt with much more rigidly. After her expulsion she fled to different places (Providence, Newport) and was finally killed during an Indian attack in New York. Unlike Williams and Hooker, she was never reconciled with the Boston magistrates.

As a social threat, then, Anne Hutchinson was much more confounded with the enfant terrible Thomas Morton than with other religious dissenters. While the magistrates' treatment of Hutchinson was guided by the fear that women were intrinsically closer to God, the discussion of her ideas was carried out in the terminology of sexual depravity and promiscuity. (Like Morton, Hutchinson was labeled a libertine.) John Cotton, who was of course eager to divert charges of atheism away from himself, used the theory of Hutchinson's spiritual unfaithfulness for making unsupported claims about her promiscuous attitude in marriage. He even declared antinomianism to be purely a women's delusion (see Koehler 1976, 68).

It was Cotton, too, who announced Hutchinson's miscarriage shortly after her banishment in 1638. According to Winthrop's journal entry, reproduced in his *History of New England*, Cotton referred to the "monstrous birth" as "twenty-seven several lumps of man's seed, without any alteration or mixture of any thing from the woman." This, he thought, "might signify her error in denying inherent righteousness, but that all was Christ in us, and nothing of ours in our faith, love, etc." (quoted in Schutte 1985, 100). The Puritans' rhetorical obsession with analogy, together with their habit of sexing spiritual processes, could at times produce blasphemous conclusions, as in this example: Cotton compares the twenty-seven-headed monster with nothing less than Christ's semen. (He later retracted the statement [Schutte 1985, 100].)

In a way, according to male Puritan theory, Hutchinson even *had* to give birth to a monster, as is implied by Thomas Weld: "for looke as she had vented mishapen opinions, so she must bring forth deformed monsters; and as about 30. Opinions in number, so many monsters" (Hall 1968, 214). It is not quite clear what really happened;

Weld describes the birth as "30. monstrous births or thereabouts, at once; some of them bigger, some lesser, some of one shape, some of another; few of any perfect shape, none at all of them (as farre as I could ever learne) of humane shape" (214). The parenthetical information is perhaps most instructive: though the growth has been identified by a modern scholar as a hydatidiform mole (Schutte 1985, 90), a grapelike cluster of cysts, what is important in our context is the way it is described and the way it is used as proof of Hutchinson's "mishapen opinions." 19 Neither Weld nor Winthrop were present at the miscarriage, a fact that Hutchinson's colleague John Wheelright uses when venting his wrath against Weld: "I admire his certainty, or rather impudence: did the man obstetricate?" (quoted in Schutte 1985, 101).

In spite of the empirical dilemma, Winthrop provides us with a lengthy description of a second monster, delivered by another antinomian woman, Mary Dyer, at about the same time. That the still-born child's corpse had to be disinterred and was already "much corrupted" after having been buried for "five moneth" did not seem to mitigate Winthrop's scientific certainty. His description of the monster is additionally based on the testimony of the midwife, Jane Hawkins, who, as he tells us, "was notorious for familiarity with the devill" (Hall 1968, 281).<sup>20</sup> These hindrances notwithstanding, Winthrop gives a detailed account, which a modern scholar even praises for its scientific detail.<sup>21</sup> The description is too long to be rendered here (see Hall 1968, 281-82); it boils down to Winthrop's claim that the disinterred corpse still showed "the horns, and claws, and holes in the back, and some scales" of what he elsewhere describes as "a woman child, a fish, a beast, and a fowle, all woven together in one, and without an head" (282, 214). A woman child, in any case.

### "Arise and Take Possession"

#### The Pequot War and the Politics of Naming

It may seem far-fetched to suggest a discursive connection between Winthrop's digging in half-year-old graves for evidence of women's monstrous minds and the Pequot War—far-fetched, that is, to claim a relationship by more than temporal coincidence or to go beyond the rather general point that male Puritans needed to erect a social order on the basis of excluding, or destroying, its threatening "others,"

women and Indians. 22 Nevertheless, I will end this book by trying to show a deep psychocultural conjunction between the discourse about the Antinomian Controversy and that about the Pequot War. My own conclusions, like any conclusion based on psychoanalysis, will have to remain hypothetical but nonetheless suggestive, I hope.

The synchronicity of the events is stated in the original documents themselves. A day of thanksgiving commemorated both the military victory and the consolidation of ministerial and magisterial power (Kibbey 1987, 106). And Thomas Shepard interweaves both victories "as different aspects of a single confrontation" when he writes: "The Pequot Indians were fully discomfited, for as the opinions [i.e., the Antinomian Controversy] arose, wars did arise, and when these began to be crushed by the ministry of the elders . . . the enemies began to be crushed and were perfectly subdued by the end of the synod" (quoted in Kibbey 1987, 99).

A more subtle connection between the two events is suggested by a longish digression in the war narrative of a captain of John Endecott's Boston regiment, John Underhill. Underhill was banished from Boston for his antinomianism and a charge of adultery shortly after his return from the war and wrote his report *Newes from America* in the London exile in 1638 (see Slotkin 1973, 70). Giving an account of the Puritans' attack on Block Island, Underhill, in an amusing tone, expresses his gratitude to his wife for having convinced him to wear his old helmet, without which he would have been slain. He then digresses to dwell upon the topic of female wisdom and of "the clamour . . . I daily hear in my ears, that New England men usurp over their wives, and keep them in servile subjection. The country is wronged in this matter, as in many things else." Underhill hastens to clarify his position: "Yet mistake not. I say not that they are bound to call their wives in council, though they are bound to take their private advice." To question the correctness of Saint Paul's injunction against women's preaching would have been too much, even for a progressive antinomian (Underhill 1837, 56). Later on in his text Underhill offers a longish exposition of antinomian theology (1921).

By far the most suggestive connection between the trial against Anne Hutchinson and the war against the Pequots, a connection that Ann Kibbey has not fully exploited, is embedded in the name

Winthrop gave to Hutchinson. He called her "This American Jesabel" (Hall 1968, 310). In his *Journal*, which likewise contains the metaphor, Winthrop adds that he means the Jezebel of Saint John's Revelation, a "prophetess" who teaches the people to commit fornication and adultery. <sup>23</sup> Now, within discourse analysis, an author's claim of a particular meaning, which usually excludes other possible meanings, of course gives immediate rise to suspicion. The declared meaning may be seen to try to hide a larger story rather than being the last word. Thus Ben Barker-Benfield is absolutely right when he writes that Winthrop's comparison inevitably "conjured up Ahab's wife," the second biblical Jezebel, whose story is related in the book of Kings (Barker-Benfield 1972, 79).

Having encountered the ideological significance of such metonymic acts in the case of Pocahontas-Rebecca, we will find it worthwhile to implicate the story of the Old Testament Jezebel into our analysis of the events of 1637. Jezebel is reported to have first seduced Ahab to become a servant of Baal (1 Kings 16.31), thereby occasioning the Lord's reaction of sending a drought (17 and 18). Instead of repenting, Jezebel then slays the prophets of the Lord (18.13), to which the surviving prophet Elijah responds by causing the death of all the prophets of Baal, which ends the drought (18.40-45). Jezebel's next action is to help her husband, Ahab, acquire a vineyard he is interested in; its owner, Naboth the Jezreelite, however, is unwilling to part with it. Jezebel hires a few worshipers of Belial to kill Naboth: "And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead" (1 Kings 15). At the same time that Ahab, who "humbles" himself before the Lord, is forgiven, Elijah begins to announce Jezebel's death: "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel," and "there shall be none to bury her" (1 Kings 21.23; 2 Kings 9.10).

The conflict is passed on to Ahab and Jezebel's son Joram, who is displaced as king of Israel on the Lord's command by his rival Jehu. Jehu gives Jezebel's whoredom and "witchcraft" as reasons for making war on Joram (2 Kings 9.22). Being the victor, he enters the town of Jezreel. Jezebel, hearing of it, "painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at the window." But when Jehu lifts up his face to the window he sees only "two or three eunuchs" looking out to



him: "And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot." When his men later want to bury her, they only find "the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands," which indicates to them that Elijah's prophecy has come to pass: "In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: And the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel" (2 Kings 9.3037).

What can be said immediately is that the biblical story, here rendered at some length for reasons to become clear, negotiates the topic of the legally dubious acquisition of land, as well as the ritual act of taking possession of a piece of land by "fertilizing" the ground with the blood of its (female) inhabitant. Clearly, the universal mythological background of the story is an archetypal fertility rite (the drought is ended when the evil powers are banned, while some of that evil power is turned into valuable "dung"). The demonic whore Jezebel does not essentially differ from the other Jezebel, the one Winthrop really meant and whom he perceived as a fit patroness for Anne Hutchinson. But at the same time the story from Kings discloses a much deeper relationship between the Antinomian Controversy and Pequot War, a relationship that the involved Puritans were unable openly to admit, or perhaps even to know.

Scholars today generally agree that the origin of the first Indian war in New England against the Pequots did only in part have to do with the tribe itself, that it rather functioned as an outlet for a fermenting intercolonial economic rivalry and the kind of paranoia arising from a closed cultural system that deemed itself under constant siege from evil forces lurking beyond the pale.  
24

It is interesting that William Wood, writing in 1634, finds no extraordinary aggressiveness among the Pequots. In a mood of propagating colonization, he describes 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" (Wood 1977, 80). By 1638, however, these courteous beings had mutated into "wicked imps . . . that like the devil, their commander. . . . run up and down as roaring lions, compassing all corners of the country for a prey, seeking whom they might devour" (Underhill 1837, 15). As

cannibals, at least by way of extended simile, the Pequots might be expected to have been terrible warriors, but nothing of the kind: Underhill comments on an Indian battle with the words: "the Pequeats, Narragansets, and Mohigeners [exchanged] a few arrows, they might fight seven years and not kill seven men. They came not near one another, but shot remote, and not point-blank, as we often do with our bullets, but a rovers, and then they gaze up in the sky to see where the arrow falls, and not until it is fallen do they shoot again. This fight is more for pastime, than to conquer and subdue enemies" (26). Still, it is precisely as a band of fierce foreign invaders and conquerors, very similar to the "Caribs," that the Pequots have entered the history books. 25 Like Samuel Purchas's unmanly rapists, they have to unite within themselves two mutually exclusive personalities: the noble and pleasurable character of Pocahontas with the cunning and treacherous one of Powhatan.

Like the Narragansetts, the Pequots were a powerful tribe seeking to expand their territories, a tendency that had recently been slowed down by the separation of the Mohegans under Uncas, who apparently sought to further weaken the position of the Pequots by spreading rumors about their "conspiracies" among the Puritans (Jennings 1975, 202; Salisbury 1982, 215). But apart from such common wrangling for local hegemony, the Pequots do not seem to have given cause for particular fears. One obvious reason leading up to the war is their unwillingness to submit to Boston leadership and to pay large amounts of tribute in wampum and furs; this is of course a reenactment of the traditional misunderstanding underlying all agreements between the two cultures. What one party regarded as acts of submission was interpreted as agreements of alliance and trade by the other (see Jennings 1975, 19293).

The second cause of war was provided by the emancipatory movements of Thomas Hooker's Connecticut colony, as Francis Jennings has shown in some detail (18790). The Connecticut colony was very interested in acquiring Pequot territory but was prohibited by Boston from conducting any offensive war. Their legal emancipation thus required a native act of aggression to which they could respond under the right of conquest.

Apparently in an attempt to solve two problems at once by sleight of hand, Boston in 1636 sent Captain Endecott's forces to Block Island and then to a Pequot town under a pretense, where they

killed a few Indians and pillaged and burned their Cornfields. 26 As a result of this, the Pequots beleaguered Fort Saybrook in Connecticut after Endecott's return. Thus Endecott's action had achieved its apparent aim of raising the two rivals of Boston against each other, thereby causing a severe food shortage at Fort Saybrook, as the settlers were imprisoned in the fort and unable to work in the fields. In the spring of 1637, therefore, they decided to send a war party against the town of the Pequot sachem Sassacus. One of the motives was to acquire some badly needed corn. The action was delayed for a few months because of the Antinomian trials, but on 26 May 1637 the united Boston and Connecticut forces attacked the Pequotsexcept the town they chose to attack was not Sassacus's fort but Mystic, which was at that time inhabited mostly by women and children. The village was surprised at dawn and fired. Between 400 and 650 people, that is, the complete population of Mystic, died in the flames within a few hours or were killed by the English soldiers who had surrounded the town (Mason 1819, 141; Vaughan 1979, 154). After their Narragansett allies had deserted them because of the uncommon violence of Puritan warfare (Underhill 1837, 27), the troops pursued a group of Pequots, including their chief Sassacus, to a swamp where most of them were killed or taken captive, later to be sold into slavery. After the main action of the "war" was over, Puritan soldiers and their native allies kept persecuting the few remaining bands of Pequotsthe Indian allies mainly for fear of receiving a similar treatment themselves and for the prizes to be gained for Pequot heads and scalps (Vaughan 1979, 14850).

After a few months of continuous warfare the tribe was practically extinguished (according to Underhill about fifteen hundred Pequots were killed in only two months). The few survivors, not allowed to settle in their former territory, sought refuge among neighboring tribes and gave up their former cultural identity. Their now vacant territory became the object of a long struggle for territorial sovereignty between Boston and Connecticut, a fact that testifies to the economic motive behind the war and moreover suggests a structural relationship between this ethnic conflict and the earlier one at Wessagussett. In addition, one of the commentators of the action regarded the Mystic massacre as a response to the Virginia massacre of 1622, thereby calling attention to the continuity between the prescriptions of Smith and Waterhouse and the merciless

possession. But not unlike the bodies of Purchas's Virginia settlers, the carcasses of both Jezebel and the Pequots are presented as a kind of springtime sacrifice necessary to prepare the ground for a new planting season: more specifically, for planting European culture on it. 27 Thomas Hooker's remark that the Pequots "should be bread for us" (Mason 1819, 152) intensifies the ritualistic, or more precisely the eucharistic, aspect of the action. In the light of such comments or anticipations, the war appears as an immense human sacrifice rather than a mere military venture caused by purely political reasons (see Kibbey 1987, 102). Whether treacherous massacre or pagan sacrifice: the narrativization of colonial violence by both Purchas and Mason implies the need for an agricultural founding myth, for a symbolic insemination of the ground with a blood offering to prepare its actual possession.

While the dead carcasses of the Pequots, like that of Jezebel, prepare the ground for planting English culture in exile, their names are erased from the "face of the field": "they shall not say, This is Jezebel," we read in the Bible, and Mason tells us that the "Remembrance" of the Pequots is "cut off . . . from the Earth."<sup>28</sup> This passage in Mason's text refers to a curious event which he himself mentions: the treaty of Hartford of 21 September 1638, as a result of which the Pequots "ceased to exist as an independent polity" (Vaughan 1979, 150). Mason writes about the meeting: "The Pequots being demanded, how many of them were then living? Answered, about One Hundred and Eighty, or Two Hundred. There were then given to Onkos, Sachem of Monheag, Eighty; to Myantonimo, Sachem of Narragansett, Eighty; and to Nynigrett, Twenty. . . . The Pequots were then bound by Covenant, That none should inhabit their native Country, nor should any of them be called Pequots any more, but Moheags and Narragansetts forever" (Mason 1819, 146). It is becoming clear, I think, that Puritan demands exceeded the physical death of Pequot tribal members. What was apparently at stake was the need to create a truly vacant spot on the map, something that could be achieved only by annihilating the *name* of the defeated tribe as well.<sup>29</sup>

Ideologically, the Puritans' repetition of Jehu's act above all served the purpose of fabricating a historical beginning, a requirement that Mason states at the outset of his text (thereby anticipating Perry Miller's similar concern exactly three hundred years later): "If the beginning be but obscure, and the ground uncertain, its Continuance

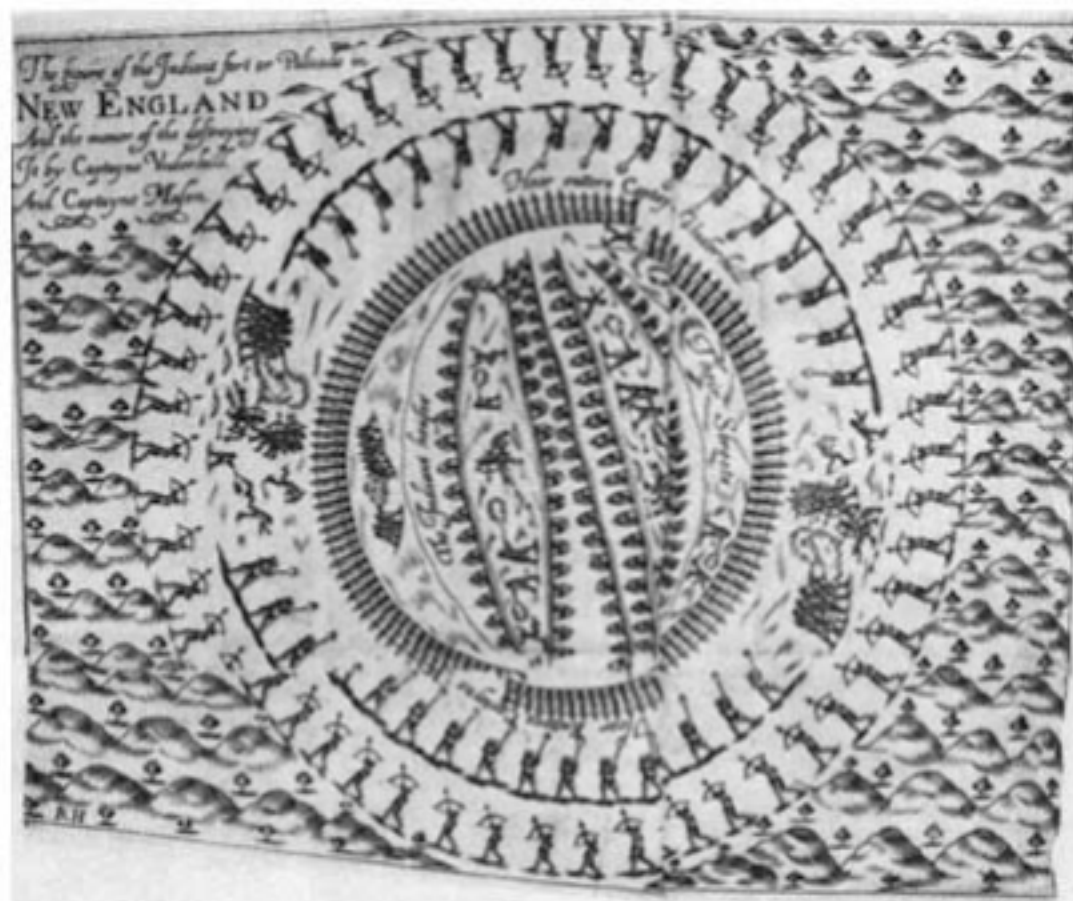


Fig. 5.1.  
Attack on the Pequot village Mystic, 1637. From John Underhill,  
*Newes from America* (1638), courtesy of John Carter Brown  
Library, Brown University.

can hardly persuade to purchase belief' (Mason 1819, 129). If the beginning of New England history is to be rescued from obscurity, Mason seems to imply, reality has to be modeled after God's word: as a repetition of the biblical precedent, the Puritans' preoccupation with erasing the name of the Pequots from historical memory may point in that direction. But the fact that the act of public forgetting is recorded in writing testifies to a keen awareness of the power of representation to shape colonial history as long as it is aided by the execution of colonial violence. The written fixation of the act of unnamng reflects the Puritans' confidence in their capacity to exert political control by the control of writing. 30 They, too, were aware of Antonio de Nebrija's insight that language had always been the companion of empire not primarily as a weapon deployed against the people to be subjected, but above all as a means of ideological justification.



Fig. 5.2.

Spanish attack on an Indian town. From Theodor de Bry, *Americae*, IV (1594), courtesy of John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

That the significance of the Pequot War is not restricted to the military defeat of an enemy is suggested by a further quite remarkable document: the map of the massacre that accompanies Underhill's text of 1638 (fig. 5.1). The first thing that probably catches the eye while contemplating this strange map is its extreme symmetry: the town itself is surrounded by three circles: the outer one of Narragansett allies, the intermediate cordon of Puritan soldiers, and its own palisade. The orderly rows of the Pequots' houses are vertically arranged; like the human figures, they are all identical, each crowned with a roof on fire. Even the fighting scenes, within as well as outside the inner circle, are doubled.

The sense of order that this engraving transports is at least in part achieved by its bird's-eye perspective. Compared to a traditional representation of an attack on a native village (such as fig. 5.2), this one conveys a strong sense of control. Contrary to de Bry's engraving,

with its dominant axis of movement from the lower right to the upper left, the Mystic map lacks all drama and motion. The participants of the battle have no individuality; their aggression and suffering is contained in, and thereby controlled by, a static and symmetrical staging of figures (not people). (One of the consequences of this is that the Mystic engraving, contrary to de Bry's, conceals the fact that many of the victims were defenseless women and children.) While de Bry's picture imparts much of the violence and brutality of the attack (which was obviously one of its propagandistic purposes), the Mystic map dehumanizes and dedramatizes the event. In doing so, it also balances, from a contextual point of view, John Mason's dramatic and moving account of the massacre. The engraving that accompanies Underhill's report is without doubt a highly abstract and stylized representation of reality, fully in accordance with the rules of Protestant rationalism.

This leads to the perhaps most unfamiliar aspect of the image. Compared with usual depictions of Indian towns, that of Mystic is remarkable for the "European" order of the buildings. Not only that, but they are also absolutely out of proportion; what may strike us most is that the houses are arranged in five long rows instead of forming the kind of rough circles we are familiar with from other depictions of native settlement structure (cf. figs. 5.2 and 5.3). We may gain the impression that Underhill's London engraver was unfamiliar with illustrations of Native American towns. But apart from the probability that he was working from Underhill's draft, this technical aspect neither explains nor mitigates the fact that the map contains a second layer of meaning. Owing to a number of uncommon representational particularities, especially the "rationalist" bird's-eye perspective and the atypical size and order of the houses, the map of the Pequot massacre is at the same time an anatomical depiction of a vulva.

31

Paradoxically, then, the engraving, whose main objective seems to be to convey a sense of order and control, at the same time transports the strongest symbol of disorder and chaos that male Puritan society may have been capable of imagining. But even as a depiction of the female genitals, the picture is deeply ambivalent, articulating at once the most terrifying vision of a *vagina dentata* and the attempt to transfix this horrible image of castration by surrounding it with the soldiers' pointed muskets. As a powerful symbol of New England's

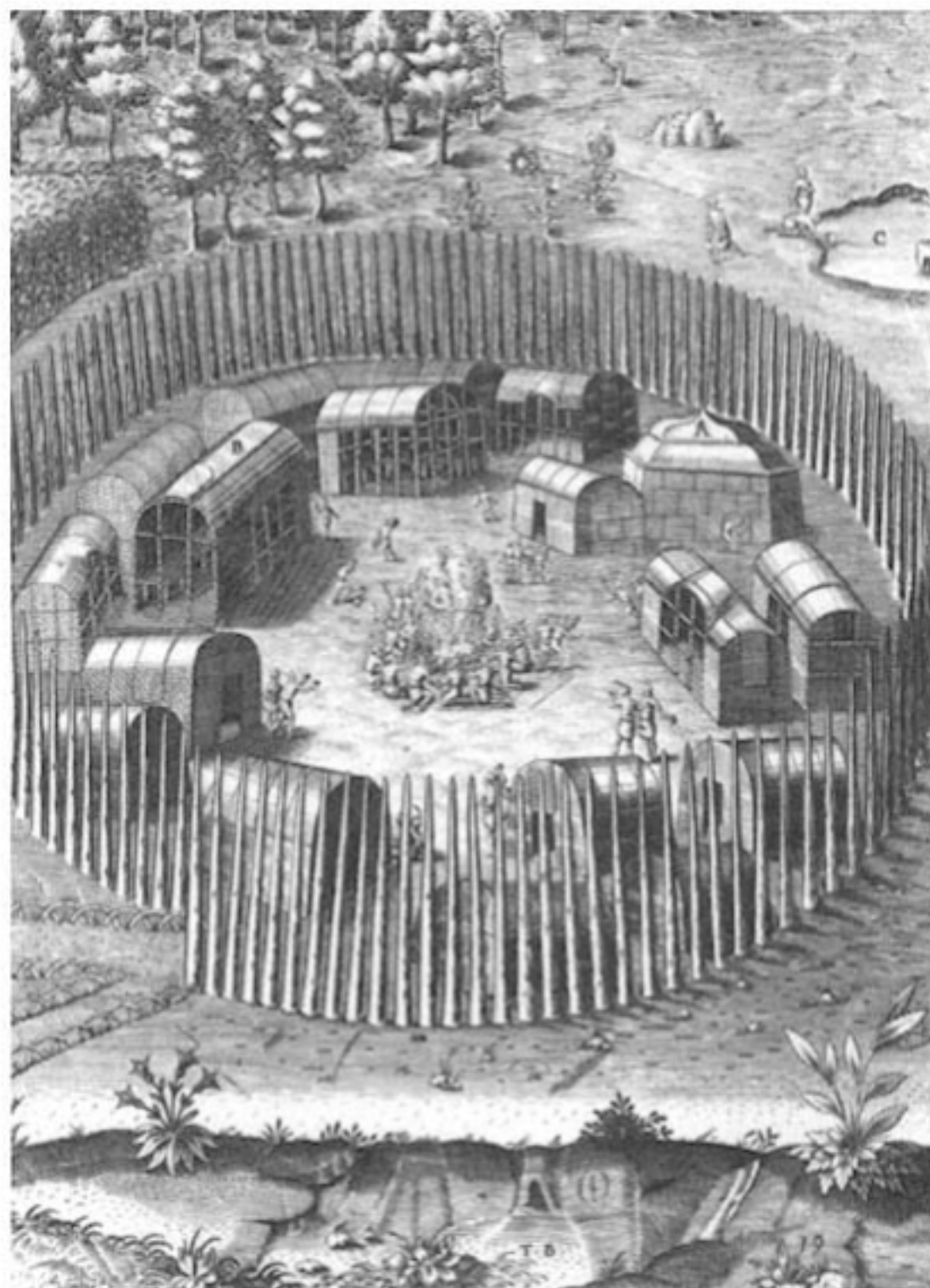


Fig. 5.3.  
Pomeioc, Virginia. From Theodor de Bry, *Americae, I* (1590),  
courtesy of John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.



"gender trouble," then, the image opens up a new possible analogy between the attack of Puritan men on Mystic and Jehu's wrath against Jezebel, which is his direct reaction to the Kafkaesque scene in which her painted face is suddenly transformed into those of "two or three eunuchs."

As the history of the war shows, it was much easier to erase the actual referents from the map of New England than to banish from Puritan society the frightful symbols of suppressed female sexuality that the Pequot village here represents. 32 The total Annihilation of the Pequots, we may speculate, was also the symbolic displacement of an action that could impossibly be exerted on all the internal others of the emerging male Puritan self: "vagrants," "libertines," "Antinomians," women.

Through producing the most troubling symbol of social chaos by following a representational logic of reason and order, the Mystic map points toward the various rituals of domestication and exclusion practiced by contemporary Puritan society in New England's struggle for absolute control that is epitomized in the fact that the signifiers of protection, the Indian town's palisades, are at the same time symbols of the severest threat against the vitality of the male Puritan body politic. But above all, the map partakes in an imaginative act of translating a dubious legal situation into a myth of rightful ownership. In unconscious imitation of archetypal pagan narratives of state foundation, both Mason's description of the Pequot victims as dung and the depiction of the Pequot town as a vulva evoke the image of an autochthonous relationship to the land that is reminiscent of Morton's comparison of his colony with Cain's sacrifice—however threatening such a vision may have been to the conscious Puritan mind. As is suggested by the "dainty fine round rising hillucks" (Morton) that surround the fighting scene qua *vagina dentata* with unsurpassable symmetry, the discursive tradition represented by New England's specter Thomas Morton was deeply embedded in the Puritans' cultural psyche itself, ready to make its return in unsuspected places.

The trace of the biblical story of Jezebel as it is inscribed in the Mystic map is a further symptom, but also an occlusion, of the anxiety that inevitably accompanies struggles over territorial and social hegemony, especially if they are carried out with such rigidity and brutality. In a society as hostile to visual representation as that

of Puritan New England, the map provided a rare symbolic outlet, one of the few occasions for articulating, and aestheticizing, the fears and anxieties that accompanied the rational project of Christian imperialism. In its very ambivalence, the map translated the repressed memory of Puritan society into an image with which it could live and which would continue to haunt the imperial discourse of the United States.

Taken together, the Puritans' actions against Thomas Morton, Anne Hutchinson, and the Pequots may be viewed as the ultimate refusal of any vision of intercultural harmony, a vision whose romantic patron saint Pocahontas would later become. Combining these gestures of exclusion, the year 1637 has generated a colonial identity of essential Englishness that could not possibly have been established in Europe. The novelty of Puritan New England, at least in these early years, seems above all to have consisted in its radical rejection of developing an American identity and in its fierce attempts to distill homogeneity out of the heterogeneous cultural ferment of Europe and native America.

Ushering in a long and doleful history of colonial relations, which Richard Slotkin has aptly described as an ongoing "regeneration through violence," enacted by a national self that was conceptualized as male, white, and Anglo-Saxon, the year 1637 marks the end point of this inquiry into early modern European colonial discourse. Having established its various narratives of colonial beginnings, European culture in America would henceforth continue to reiterate and translate these in its ongoing quest for rightful imperial action.

## Epilogue

Hayden White, whose work forms one of the theoretical pillars of poststructuralist and New Historicist criticism, has been attacked by more politically minded scholars for construing a view of history that makes itself available for extremely relativist and voluntaristic interpretations of the past interpretations that would in the worst case include neofascist denials of well-documented instances of human barbarism (see, e.g., Ginzburg 1992; cf. White 1987, 8182). In response to such interventions, White claims that his

characterization of historical discourse does *not* imply that past events, persons, institutions, and processes never really existed. It does *not* imply that we cannot have more or less precise information about these past entities. And it does *not* imply that we cannot transform this information into knowledge by application of the various methods developed by the different disciplines comprising the "science" of an age or culture. (White 1989, 20)

This statement comes as a kind of relief in the face of frequent assumptions among Western scholars that history is, to quote Paul de Man's rather extreme interpretation of an essay by Walter Benjamin, "purely a linguistic complication." Even Stephen Greenblatt, whose hostility to such a view is not very evident, has remarked that this "linguistic complication" has led to the death of Benjamin (de Man 1986, 92; Greenblatt 1991, 50). It is a complication, moreover, in which de Man may be said to have had his share, if in an indirect and "purely linguistic" way.

That for millions of people the history of racial and imperial hubris that led to the death of Benjamin was *not* a linguistic complication, nor a "by-product" of a great textual event (de Man 1986, 104), I may be seen as the impulse behind my own insistence on preserving a memory of the "real" history of political subjection and persecution, even while bearing in mind that this history is, in the case of Auschwitz, soon will be accessible to us only in textual form. The crucial question is where this insight will take us, and it seems that much hinges upon the definition of "text" going along with this claim. Since the theoretical postulation that "il n'y a pas de hors-texte" (Derrida), scholarly practice has often equated the "text" of this quote with "writing," and worst of all with "fiction." Not only would this exclude from historical analysis all extratextual evidence, including the "performed" texts we call action, but it also tends to ignore the ideological function that the equation of history with writing had in the justification of imperialism. The written text of Western history, it cannot be repeated often enough, is selective and incomplete; it has displaced other texts, whether written or not, and keeps doing so in the relativist cloak of much recent criticism.

Though he is aware of the importance of the recovery of "information either forgotten, suppressed, or obscured" (White 1989, 25), White is happy to leave this task to his more literal-minded colleagues, admitting that to limit his own analysis to the process of narrativization has a "liberating" effect for him (22). But he betrays an uncanny awareness of the political repercussions of the theoretical liberalism he advocates when tackling the critique of the Latin American scholar Gene Bell-Villada, who complains that the only response of the U.S. "critical establishment" to political oppression in Latin America consists in "its elaborate paraliterary schemes, its wars on referentiality and its preachments that 'history is Fiction, Trope and Discourse.' The families of several thousand Salvadoran death-squad victims may entertain other thoughts about history" (quoted in White 1989, 30). White rather weakly responds that the kind of "politically engaged" history of the death-squad victims, if it were written, were "all the more likely to be tropical" than other historical writings, and that history is "made on both sides of the barricades, and just as effectively by one side as by the other" (3031).

While it might be interesting to find out by way of careful analysis whether a "politically engaged" criticism is indeed more figurative

intended effects on their native audience unless accompanied by arbitrary acts of violence, which constantly threatened the power equilibrium and caused a constant fear of native revenge. This fear, translated into an implicit assumption of Indian treacherousness, may be regarded as the organizing logic of all colonial discourse in America.

Assuming that the documents of colonialism are crucially concerned with the justification of colonial power relations, this study examines some of the legitimating strategies deployed in colonial texts about America. This problematic has recently been addressed by a number of studies coming out of New Historicism and cultural materialism. Stephen Greenblatt's *Marvelous Possessions* looks at the relationship between language and colonialism in a number of ways, concentrating on the function of the discourse of the marvelous as "a redemptive, aestheticizing supplement to a deeply flawed legal ritual of appropriation" (Greenblatt 1991, 24). But like Todorov, Greenblatt often confounds textual strategies with what he takes as the authors' genuine experience and does not always clearly distinguish between the discourse of the marvelous and the sensations of the authors (of which we can speak only by presupposing textual transparency).

Whereas both Greenblatt and Todorov do not seem to be content with reading a historical event semiotically, other scholars have given up the hunt for the referent and postulate the universality of the text, without distinguishing between fact and fiction. Thus José Rabasa, in his study of sixteenth-century Spanish colonial historiography, wishes to "destabilize the ground of factuality itself" and instead confronts the colonial fictions with his own "counterfiction" (Rabasa 1993, 9). Like many other scholars of the semiotic school, Rabasa regards the texts as "rhetorical artifices and not as depositories of data from which a factual truth may be construed" (9). In denying the accessibility of any "factual truth," Rabasa likewise avoids considering matters of verification, which nonetheless, as Peter Hulme correctly states, "return in a minor key where a statement *claims* veracity" (Hulme 1986, 7). If any notion of factuality were given up, then the preference of one version of the past over another version would depend solely on aesthetic priority and democratic consentshaky foundation indeed, given the diversity of aesthetic judgment, as well as the worldwide struggle between democratic ideals and a practice of the survival of the fittest.

wholesale rejection of any law of nations and is thus diametrically opposed to the theory of international law developed by his Protestant contemporary Hugo Grotius. 8

Trying to squeeze American reality into the only remaining just reason for foreign possession, the right of discovery, Cushman then echoes the well-accepted wisdom: the land of the Indians, he writes, "is spacious and void, and there are few, and do but run over the grass, as do also the foxes and wild beasts." Contrary to the laborious Pilgrims, the Indians "are not industrious, neither have [they] art, science, skill or faculty to use either the land or the commodities of it; but all spoils, rots, and is marred for want of manuring, gathering, ordering, etc." (Cushman 1971, 243). The lack of order and the rotten state of the fields were probably results of the recent plague, but Cushman dispenses with such earthly considerations to argue that America is a "vast and empty chaos" (245). With this, Cushman became the first propagandist of the *vacuum domicilium* thesis.

But what if the land was not so empty after all? "As the ancient patriarchs," Cushman continues, removed into a more roomy place "where the land lay idle and waste, and none used it, though there dwelt inhabitants by them . . . so is it lawful now to take a land which none useth, and make use of it" (243-44). While a typological argument is sneaking through the back door of Cushman's reasoning, it is in the end more or less successfully checked by the rhetoric of the Protestant theory of labor. Typological necessity now also forces him to claim, contrary to Gray, who emphasized the Canaanites' civilized state ("though they have Iron Charets"), that the Israelites had been a more settled and industrious people than the one they dispossessed. But God's "word" at least gives no support to the thesis that Canaan, like New England, "lay idle and waste." Rejecting Cotton's theory of divine promise and lacking a native slaughter like the one that underwrote Purchas's argument, Cushman can use the Bible as a basis of legitimation only by rewriting one of its crucial passages. The turn toward a more pragmatic justification of conquest that Cushman represents a justification based on biblical hermeneutics at the same time a turn away from the sanctity of the original text.

Samuel Purchas, in similar deviation from the biblical original, provided a slightly different version of Israel's rights to possess Canaan. His view, as we have already seen, was informed by recent

events in Virginia. The "Holy Patriarchs," he writes, "had a promise of Canaan, yet held no possession but with their dead bodies" (Purchas 1625, 229). He could largely dispense with typology because his interpretation of scripture was guided by his view on post-1622 Virginia. More generally, though, Purchas quotes the holy patriarchs in support of the Winthrop-Cotton thesis (with a hint of Sir Walter Raleigh): as "men," he emphasizes, the Christians "have a naturall right to replenish the whole earth . . . especially where the people is wild, and holdeth no settled possession in any parts. Thus the holy Patriarchs removed their habitations and pasturages, when those parts of the world were not yet replenished." The English now likewise seek new habitations in the "vacant places" of Virginia "with perhaps better right then the first [i.e., the Indians], which (being like Cain, both Murtherers and Vagabonds in their whatsoever and howsoever owne) I can scarsly call Inhabitants" (22223).

By comparing the Indians to Cain, Purchas discloses one of the central conflicts lying at the root of Christian imperialism. Surely Cain is described as a murderer and vagabond in Genesis, but the Canaanites, whose place he unexpectedly takes in Purchas's analogy, were a settled and civilized people. The conflict is increased by the fact that Cain had become a murderer only through God's rejection of his, the farmer's, sacrifice in favor of Abel the shepherd's. Before he became a vagabond, Cain, like the dispossessed English smallholders and like the ideal New Englander, had tilled the ground in the sweat of his brow. It was also Cain, according to the Bible, who founded the first city, thus being the founder of civilization. Saint Augustine actually went to great pains to distinguish this "earthly city" from "such city as should be a pilgrim in this earthly world," that is, the city of God. He also informs us that Cain's name is "interpreted 'possession'" (Saint Augustine 1945, 2:82 [book 15, chapter 17]). On such a murky legal and theological foundation, compressed in Purhas's sloppy phrase "whatsoever and howsoever owne," the idealism of the Pilgrims became the most important prerequisite for their territorial claims. Next to their assumption that they may be free to settle in vacant places, their own nomadism is justified, it seems, by the fact that they carry their heavenly city on their backs: their "dwelling" on earth being, as Cushman had formulated, "but a wandering" and their "home . . . nowhere but in the heavens." 9

(Purchas 1625, 229). Clearly it is the English colonists, whose blood already drenches the ground, who now become the natural inhabitants, whereas the Indians are first somewhat mysteriously turned into a sort of monstrous birth, only to become "unnaturall Naturalls" on their "whatsoever and howsoever owne" shortly after (229, 223; cf. Hulme 1986, 160).

Losing their standing in the natural world, the native sons, unlike Milton's Death, who rapes his mother, Sin, shortly after his birth, now apparently also lose their power to "ravish" Virginia. <sup>14</sup> They thus leave it to the gentle Englishmen to marry the (confusingly still virgin) land: native intercourse did neither "impaire" nor "improove" the colony's "Virgin portion" anyhow (Purchas 1625, 242). In other words, the rude natives may try to penetrate the land as much as they want: contrary to English (husband)men, they will never be able to possess and subdue it; they will never produce any "offspring" (Morton). Montrose correctly states that "this discourse denies the natural right of possession to indigenous peoples by confirming them to be heathens, savages, and/or foragers who neither cultivate the land nor conceptualize it as real property; or it may symbolically efface the very existence of those indigenous peoples from the places its speakers intend to exploit" (Montrose 1991, 8).

The latter is the case in Morton's poem: there are no native suitors in sight who might disturb the symbolic love match between land and colonizer. Even more, Canaan's "fruitfull wombe" cries for real masculine enjoyment, without which it is in danger of withering. All the nomadic natives seem to have been capable of was an eternal foreplay; Purchas explicitly identifies their assumed lifestyle with a lack of virility when he refers to them as "more wild and unmanly then that unmanned wild Countrey, which they range rather then inhabite" (Purchas 1625, 231). After all, it is "as men" that the English "have a naturall right to replenish the whole earth" (222). The denial of property rights goes hand in hand with the denial of masculinity, while conquest is justified only if the colonizers comport themselves as real men.<sup>15</sup>

The key figure in the translation of colonial ideology from the Elizabethan and Jacobean discourses of feminization to the more rational Puritan discourse of civil versus natural rights, which suppresses the gender implications of its secular counterpart, is obviously Samuel Purchas. The writings of Purchas embody the shift



action of 1637 (see Vincent 1837, 37, 42, and Vaughan 1979, xxiii). After a few decades of strife the crown finally granted the "empty" territory to Connecticut (Vaughan 1979, 152).

The more-than-strategic significance of the attack on Mystic and the subsequent ethnocidal war against the Pequots is articulated, with apocalyptic power, by the commander of the Connecticut forces, John Mason. His religious interpretation of the Mystic massacre must be gathered together from the whole text a fact that underlines the extent to which this biblical rhetoric governs Mason's piece. Again and again returning to the event of the massacre, he comments on the burning of the Indian village with the following words:

And indeed such a dreadful Terror did the Almighty let fall upon their Spirits, that they would fly from us and run into the very Flames, where many of them perished. . . . God was above them, who laughed his Enemies and the Enemies of his People to Scorn, making them as a fiery Oven; . . . Thus did the Lord judge among the Heathen, filling the Place with dead Bodies! . . . Thus was God seen in the Mount, Crushing his proud Enemies and the Enemies of his People: . . . burning them up in the fire of his Wrath and dunging the Ground with their Flesh: It was the Lord's Doings, and it is marvellous in our Eyes! . . . 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. . . . Let the whole Earth be filled with his Glory! Thus the Lord was pleased to smite our Enemies in the hinder Parts, and to give us their Land for an Inheritance. (Mason 1819, 139, 140-1, 144, 151)

Strangely, this apparently highly emotional comment was written almost two decades after the event, in 1656. It was not published until 1677, in Increase Mather's history of King Philip's War, *Relation of the Troubles*. We may thus suspect that more was at issue than scorn and triumph over the defeat of a hated enemy. Mason's sentences rather have the character of an incantation, of a rhetorical ritual of taking possession, of repeating the extinction of the former owners in verbal form. Adding to this impression is a discursive connection with Winthrop's American Jezebel that is indeed striking: like Jezebel's body, which becomes "dung upon the face of the field," those of the dead Pequots are "dunging the ground," and like Jezebel's dead body, those of the Pequots forfeit the right of

or "tropical" than a criticism less aware of its political stance, White's second assertion appears to be a sign of precisely such political unawareness. His claim that the power to "make" history is equally distributed, combined with an equal access to public forms of representation, amounts to a blatant misperception of political reality.

It would certainly be foolish to say that deconstructionists, semioticians, and "tropologists" are the handymen of neocolonial aggression. But with the kinds of answers that Hayden White offers, Bell-Villada's claim that poststructuralist theory is quietly complicit with such politics cannot easily be dismissed and has since been repeated by other "postcolonial" critics. There are reliable indicators that the El Salvadoran death-squad victims, and many other victims of declared or undeclared colonial warfare in the Americas, will be rewarded with what the late E. P. Thompson has called "the enormous condescension of posterity" (Thompson 1968, 13). Their histories, not deemed "relevant" enough for being turned into the kind of historical narrative studied by Hayden White and others, will potentially be occluded by a scholarship consciously or unconsciously based on the theoretical doctrine of the priority of writing.

It is a great pity that the library of Alexandria burned down in 47 B.C. Our textual knowledge of American history has thus been deprived of Ptolemy's Greek translation of an ancient Maya codex that, as a renowned U.S. scholar informs us, had once been brought to "the savages of the Old World" in an effort to civilize them. The only copy of the original of this "bear codex" was destroyed by the conquistadors in Mexico, and the last translation of it was unfortunately lost in a thunderstorm (Vizenor 1991, 9, 2526).

There is a slight possibility that the Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor has consulted unreliable witnesses on the story of the "bear codex." Still, this invented piece of counterhistory reminds us of the enormous textual evidence that has indeed been lost to fires, thunderstorms, and willful acts of destruction. Other sources are still awaiting recovery from inaccessible archives, while even the available ones have often been marginalized by a scholarship that disapproves of their "blurred" and "impure" state. To begin appreciating the inestimable historical value of these hybrid texts and to begin reading them as important alternatives to official historiography will

be one of the major tasks of future scholarship. Fortunately, the sufferers of the "sentence" of European history were not displaced altogether and will increasingly contribute to defining what history and culture are all about.

For the time being, we are happily indebted to the Franciscan missionary Louis Hennepin, who has preserved a rare Native American contribution to our theoretical debate. Hennepin, whose pains were unfairly recompensed by posterity with the malicious claim that he was an impostor and travel liar, included a small conversation with a group of Lakota elders in his account of his captivity among the Sioux in 1680. "Among these people," Hennepin asserts,

one is more superstitious than the other, so that when one says to them that they have little sense, that they should not cling to such follies, they ask us, "How old are you? You aren't more than thirty or forty years old, and you want to know more than our old people. Go on. You don't know what you're saying. You can very well know what happens in your own country, because your old people have told you; but not what has happened in ours before the French came here." One replies to them, "We know everything by means of writing." These savages ask, "Before the French had come to these lands where we are, did you really know that we were there?" One is obliged to say no. "Then you don't know everything from writing. It has not told you all." (Hennepin 1683, 9193) 2

## Notes

## Introduction

1. The ideological centrality of this text has been pointed out by Peter Hulme (Hulme 1986, 13839). Since the first version of the present text, as a Ph.D. thesis at Frankfurt University in 1993, Amy Kaplan has provided a very eloquent critique of Miller's text whose main arguments correspond with mine (Kaplan 1993). With regard to the early history of American colonization, the historiographical tradition inaugurated by Miller has been criticized by Spengemann 1989 and especially Gura 1988 and Gura 1991.

2. The use of the term "occupy" here allows different interpretations. Being without a referent, it can mean "to do business" or "to trade," but also "to take possession of (a place) by settling in it." The Coverdale translation (1535) is more explicit than the Geneva Bible (1560), which Hakluyt quotes; it has "They that go downe to the see in shippes & occupie their busynesse in greate waters" (*OED*). Quoted in this context by Hakluyt, the biblical passage gestures toward the essential uncertainty of England's colonial

project at that time: until about 1607 it did not become entirely clear whether the object should be trade or settlement or both. "Trade" was considered legitimate according to the *jus gentium*, whereas "to take possession . . . by settling" was not.

3. On the writing of the nation see Bhabha 1990 and, on the Elizabethan period, Helgerson 1992.

4. Kurtz's possessive rhetoric itself reiterates Robinson Crusoe's description of his island domain as "my three plantations, . . . my castle, my country seat, . . . my bower, and my enclosure" (Defoe 1994, 164). My awareness of the parallels between *Heart of Darkness* and Miller's rhetorical founding act has been sharpened by a lecture about *Heart of Darkness* delivered by John Drakakis at Stirling University, Scotland, 24 October 1989.

5. "Letters of Patent to Sir Humphrey Gilbert," 11 June 1578, in Quinn 1979, 3:187. The earlier patent to John Cabot has a similar wording. Kadir (1992, 99, 103) provides detailed readings of the rhetoric of Spanish and English charters.

6. This is indeed a history that a contemporary of Miller's explored in a book that was reprinted once but has since been forgotten. In his book with the prophetic title *The Hidden Heritage*, the film critic John Howard Lawson undertakes a backward quest for the ideological origins of American colonization. But before finding a beginning (he had gone as far as the Middle Ages), Lawson had to publish his book in 1950 because he had to serve a one-year term for "contempt of Congress" (Lawson 1968, vii).

7. Confusingly, Todorov manages to speak of the existence of "Maya writing" on the same page (81). For a detailed critique, see chapter 2.

8. For comprehensive critiques of New Historicist practice, in particular Greenblatt's method, cf. Porter 1988; Cohen 1987; Thomas 1991, chapter 7; Healy 1992, chapter 4; and Felperin 1991. For further references see the notes in Montrose 1989.

9. Cf. Wright 1935, 4. On the importance of print for the development of colonialism and capitalism see Habermas 1962, chapter 1; Eisenstein 1979; and Patterson 1984. On its significance in the emergence of the modern "imagined" nation, see Anderson 1983, chapter 3. Febvre and Martin 1984 show that the first printers in South America exclusively printed texts that were needed for the conversion of the Indians (208). The reference to Bacon's *Novum organum* is in Eisenstein 1979, 1:21, 43.

10. Both Seed's essay and the third chapter of Greenblatt's *Marvelous Possessions* contain comprehensive analyses of the importance of language and ritual in European acts of taking possession.

11. Both anecdotes are recorded in Gerbi 1985, 34042 and 8182.

12. In 1546 Vitoria's disciple Melchor Cano even extended the "relativist" part of Vitoria's argument by denying the applicability of the *jus peregrinandi* (the "right to travel and trade"), which Vitoria quotes as a possible road to just conquest. After all, Cano writes, peaceful trade was hardly the principal pursuit of the Spaniards in America. The universal right to trade should not be seen to overrule the territorial rights of an American prince, as it did not overrule those of European princes either. Cano adds that it was the Spaniards themselves who did not act according to either the *jus gentium* or the *jus peregrinandi*, and he drily concludes that "we would not be prepared to describe Alexander the Great as a 'traveller.'" Melchor Cano, "De dominio indorum" (MS, 1546), quoted in Pagden 1990, 24.

13. This is why interpretations of *De indis* that are based on reading it "for closure" must necessarily end in confusion. The text cannot be reduced to one coherent position; its importance lies in its culturally determined incapacity to establish a unified point of view. On the text itself see Fisch 1984, 21223, and Grisel 1976. On Vitoria, see Pagden 1982, chapter 4, and Pagden 1990, chapter 1. A great amount of scholarship exists on the Spanish debates, but see especially Hanke 1965. On the thirteenth-century debate between Innocent IV and Hostiensis and its impact on the dispute about America, see Fisch 1984, 18792, and Benson 1976.

14. I therefore disagree with Djelal Kadir's somewhat monocausal and monolithic presentation of the biblical rhetoric of conquest, which completely ignores the Spanish debates (of which the dispute between Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in 1550 is only the most famous one). Kadir's claim that the providentialist rhetoric of Christianity rendered other forms of justification obsolete has led one of the reviewers of his book, Hayden White, to the misleading conclusion that European "popes, kings, and princes . . . felt authorized to grant charters" and to launch "programs of genocide in full confidence of their right to do so" (Kadir 1992, 68; White on back cover of Kadir 1992). If this were indeed so, then a verbal gesture of self-empowerment such as the *Requerimiento* would lack any discursive logic. It is little rewarding in my view to reduce the ideological heterogeneity of Renaissance Europe to a self-righteous providential master narrative not least because such a view would enable us to gesture to past acts of arbitrary violence in defense of the comparative "humanity" of present ones. The phrase "programs of genocide" is completely inadequate.

15. In spite of my disagreement with Rabasa on this crucial point, I still consider his introductory essay on the critique of colonial discourse an important piece of theoretical synthesis (Rabasa 1993, 322). Other important

essays on colonial discourse are, besides Hulme's introduction (Hulme 1986, 112), Parry 1987, Bhabha 1983, Slemon 1987, and Hulme 1989.

16. Two important postcolonial critiques of Foucauldian theory are Spivak 1988 and Said 1991.

17. I am indebted to Walter Mignolo for pointing out to me the political weakness of Pratt's term.

18. The German word for the Greek *metaphorein*, *übersetzen*, actually means both to translate and to put across or move over. Cf. de Man 1986, 83.

19. On "measuring silences" see Macherey 1978, 87. Gayatri Spivak has affirmed the applicability of Macherey's model of textual analysis to the analysis of imperialism (Spivak 1988, 286). The concept of "aggravation" is taken from Barker 1990, 107.

#### Chapter 1. Books for Empire

1. For further lists of foreign travel reports and compilations available in England, see Pennington 1978, 180, n. 1, and especially Parker 1965, 243265.

2. See Hill 1982, 159. My interest in Hakluyt's work is more oriented to its practical and political function than to its "literary" quality as a highly influential precursor of modern fiction. While serving as imaginative fodder for early modern fiction, the texts gathered by Hakluyt in turn drew on earlier fictions, mostly texts of classical antiquity, popular romances of chivalry, and the travel reports of Marco Polo, Sir John Mandeville, and others. Fictional texts such as Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*, which appeared in 1594, certainly took their impulse from travel narratives such as the ones collected in the *Principall Navigations*. Unfortunately, the imbrications of early colonialism and the emerging novelistic discourse have so far received little scholarly attention. The larger field is addressed by Parks 1974, Wright 1935, and Adam 1962, as well as Adams 1983. The influence of romance literature on early modern travel writing is discussed in Campbell 1988.

3. The claim of territorial rights by sometimes adventurous lineages, of which early nationalist England provides numerous examples (English kingship was traced back to, among others, Brutus the Trojan, the emperor Constantine, and the legendary King Arthur), is subtly parodied in William Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1.2.3395). Cf. Yates 1985, 50.

4. Gwyn Williams gives a comprehensive and fascinating assessment of the Madoc material.

5. In the last remark, William unwittingly reproduces a definition of history that is the product of Western imperial discourse. We have become

used to the notion that an event is historical only if it is preserved in writing, preferably in print. The Madoc myth "entered" a specific kind of history in 1589: a historiography of national and colonial expansion. But its "marginal" existence as an (oral) "underground story" is of course historical as well.

6. Parry 1974, 4. On the larger context of Elizabethan historical discourse, see Helgerson 1992, chapter 3.

7. On John Dee and the beginnings of English theories of overseas expansion, cf. Taylor 1934 and Taylor 1968.

8. Smith 1624, 1. Smith otherwise leaves the geographical question open: "But where this place [of Madoc's landing] was no History can show." The power of the myth was evidently dwindling after the Virginia massacre of 1622, which is discussed in chapter 4. While Smith in 1624, William Strachey in 1612, and Francis Bacon in 1622 still upheld the relevance of the Madoc legend, Samuel Purchas would finally revise the history of American beginnings in 1625: he refers to the Madoc story only to reject it as an "uncertain" basis for establishing English title to North America (Purchas 1625, 19:225). On Bacon, see Sale 1991, 328. But as Gwyn Williams shows, the Madoc myth survived the ages. After its banishment from official historiography, it became an important piece of U.S. American folklore. Welsh-speaking Indians are to be found in popular texts well into the nineteenth century.

9. See Parry 1974, 6. The well-known Irish legends and romances about the voyages of Maeldúin and the friar Saint Brendan would seem to have offered themselves as much better ways to establish a pre-Columbian link between Britain and America than the Madoc piece. But obviously, they were too well known, besides being *Irish* epics. As I have said, the functional value of the Madoc tradition does not lie merely in the vagueness of the information it contains but in the fact that it was considered part of *British* history. On Saint Brendan and Maeldúin, see Patch 1950.

10. See Gewecke 1986, 31. A textual-critical account of the Huguenot colony can be found in Lestringant 1990.

11. On the golden-age topos in text and image, see Honour 1975 and Levin 1969.

12. On the reception of the pastoral tradition of Virgil, see Patterson 1987.

13. Morgan 1975, 52. On the difference between European and Native American forms of land use, see also Jennings 1976, chapter 5; Wolf 1982, chapter 3; and Merchant 1983.

14. As we have seen, Cronon's claim that monocultural fields were representative of European agriculture is hardly less problematic.



15. John White's watercolor original of the Pomeioc illustration contains no monocultural fields. The addition is clearly de Bry's.
16. Strangely, neither Henry Nash Smith nor Annette Kolodny establish a connection between the colonists' perception of the land in sexual metaphors and their simultaneous denial of the Native Americans' presence (Smith 1978, Kolodny 1975). It may be noted in this context that, according to Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue*, the ideal state of being would be achieved only "when the years [will] have confirmed you in *full manhood*" (Vigil 1983, 19; emphasis added).
17. My use of the critical term *trope* is indebted to Hayden White and Harold Bloom, who regard it as the linguistic equivalent of a psychic mechanism of defense against a literal meaning that for some reason cannot be articulated (White 1978, 3). The reason, I assume, is ultimately political.
18. For editorial information see the foreword to the facsimile reprint of the 1589 edition (Ingram 1966) and D. B. Quinn's remarks on Ingram's text in the introduction to the facsimile reprint of the *Principall Navigations* (Quinn 1965, xxxii).
19. For example, a "strange Beast bigger then a Beare" had "neither head nor necke: his eyes and mouth were in his breast"; the whole creature was "very ugly to behold" (560). The Harodotean equivalent of such a headless beast would be the Akephaloi, called Blemmyae by Pliny. See Mason 1990, 75, 78. On the monstrous human races, see Friedman 1981; Pagden 1982, chapter 2; Bernheimer 1952; and Dudley and Novak 1972.
20. D. B. Quinn calls Peckham's "True Report of the Late Discoveries" a "nationalistic manifesto in favor of an oppressive colonizing policy," "an ambitious but somewhat prosaic set of headlines of Elizabethan imperialism" (Quinn 1979, 3:2).
21. One-eyed and dog-faced monsters (called Cyclops and Cynocephali by Pliny: both were believed to live in India) form an integral part of medieval European teratology, where they are at times depicted as carnivorous. Monsters like the ones described by Columbus also people the writings of Sir John Mandeville. It is impossible to say whether we are dealing with an exclusive projection by Columbus of a European tradition or whether the dog-men also formed part of a preexisting Caribbean discourse. Arguments in favor of projection would include the actual problem of communication between Columbus's crew and the natives, as well as his notorious search for Plinian monsters. Apart from this, any analysis of Columbus's journal of course faces the problem of the material status of this text, which survives only in a summary of Las Casas, who occasionally quotes from the lost manuscript. As with the origin of most myths, that of the dog-mouthed

cannibals cannot be attributed to any individual, and the act of invention might turn out to be just another appropriation of an earlier discourse. For a critical assessment of the text of Columbus/Las Casas, see Henige 1991. For a detailed assessment of the influence of Mandeville and the European romance tradition on Columbus, see Campbell 1987, chapters 4 and 5, as well as Reichert 1988.

22. See Hulme 1986, 31. For a full account of this process, see 2233.

23. My reference to the trope of chivalry is indebted to Hulme's analysis of it in Hulme 1994, which traces this discursive constellation back to the conquest of the Canary Islands.

24. Isabella's decree was abrogated in 1524 by King Charles I, who approved of the enslavement of all Indians provided the *Requerimiento* had been read to them (see Gerbi 1985, 149, n. 60).

25. See Hulme 1986, 7887, on the different uses and implications of the terms *anthropophagy* and *cannibalism*. The main contrast is that *cannibalism* has strong connotations of violence and aggression, expressed in the claim of the ferocity with which the cannibals consumed human flesh (8384). Another critical assessment of the theme is Arens 1979.

26. Many leaders of the colonization of America had been personally involved with the English conquest of Ireland. On the connections, see Canny 1973; Jones 1968, 16775; and Carlin 1985.

27. This is not to deny the possibility that the starving Irish may in their desperation have put their hands on their dead. But the discursive dimension of Spenser's passage is apparent from the New World travelers' expectation of the "savages" to eat their dead, like the "wild Irish," without having observed such an action. It did not take long for the European discourse of savagery to become enriched by the American variant in turn, as exemplified in a letter by Sir Henry Sidney in 1566 in which he refers to the Irish resistance leader Shane O'Neill as "That canyball" (Canny 1973, 587). After a while, the line between European and American forms of savagery certainly became quite blurred. As Canny's study shows, Europe's others could frequently be located around the corner and not exclusively in distant lands.

28. The intertextual reference is to Peter Martyr's *Decades of the New Worlde, or West India*, which indeed abounds in cannibalistic details. The dried bodies, as well as those found by Chanca's crew, are reminiscent of indigenous burial customs, in which the corpses of leaders were preserved on large scaffolds in a sort of mortuaries (see fig. 4.3).

29. The Chichimecs were suspected of cannibalism by Spanish chroniclers, mainly because of their unsettled lifestyle and the subsequent difficulty of subjecting them (see Pagden 1982, 87). *Chichemeca* was the Nahuatl term

applied to any nomadic or semisedentary tribe, including the Aztecs before they settled at Tenochtitlán. Like the Caribs, then, the Chichimecs were those groups who were not organized in chiefdoms or protostates. See Lockhart and Schwartz 1983, 55, 29093.

30. The close relationship between Hakluyt's "secret" tract and Peckham's official one is hinted at by the running title of Peckham's text in the *Principall Navigations*, "Westerne planting." Hakluyt's and Peckham's brotherhood in mind with regard to colonial matters is disturbed only by Peckham's explicit proposal to imitate Spanish action, whereas Hakluyt's proposal is more implicit. But their sympathy does not seem to have been impaired by their oppositional religious affiliations. In fact, Hakluyt propagates the usefulness of the pursuit of colonization for diverting the intellectuals' attention from unwholesome theoretical and theological debates. For him, national expansion was more important than religious sectarianism.

31. Hakluyt 1979, 92. Sir Francis Drake did not wait long for acting out Hakluyt's plan and sacked a few Spanish settlements in the Caribbean and on the Mexican coast in 1586 with the help of Indians and Cimarrons. It is to be doubted, however, that his motives for "liberating" the oppressed were purely born from humanist sensibility. Ten years earlier at least he had taken a leading part in the slaughter of the six hundred inhabitants of Rathlin Island, Ireland. See Morgan 1975, 3435, and, on Rathlin Island, Dollimore and Sinfield 1985, 224. It is interesting that the successor of Coligny, Phillipe Duplessis-Mornay, entertained a plan similar to Hakluyt's in the same year. He suggested attacking Spanish settlements at the isthmus of Panama to intercept Spanish gold transports and prepare a descent to the Pacific Ocean, which would make the French masters of the spice trade. See Elliott 1970, 9293.

32. On the discourses of pastoralism and colonialism, see Hulme 1994.

33. Next to the metaphorical cannibalism of the Spaniards, the *Brevíssima relación* contains accounts of the Spaniards endorsing, supervising, and capitalizing on the Indians' "cannibalistic" practice. Las Casas claims that in a slave camp in Guatemala, the Spaniards conducted "an ordinarie shambles of mans fleshe," and that the Indians "killed and roasted children" in their presence. Instead of feeding their Indian slaves, Las Casas claims, the Spaniards "allowed" them to eat the prisoners of colonial warfare (Las Casas 1583, sig. F). In Theodor de Bry's illustrated edition of the *Brevíssima relación*, the passage is aptly accompanied by an engraving showing a Spanish butcher stand with human limbs and an Indian woman who exchanges her necklace for the meat of her compatriots. In his discussion of

this passage, Tom Conley emphasizes the symbolic translation of native cannibalism into an economic paradigm (Conley 1992, 11516).

34. French Protestants actually did functionalize the colonial discourse of cannibalism in their propaganda against the Catholics' literal understanding of the eucharist.

## Chapter 2. Motecuhzoma and the White God

1. The authorship of the *Letter* is almost as complex as that of Columbus's journal. The *Letter* was evidently "improved," probably by its recipient, Luis de Santangel (Columbus, 1988, cxlii).

2. For further information about Pané, see Arrom 1992.

3. The possible referents of the term *cariba* may well have included travelers from the American mainland who were "clothed" and who undertook occasional sea voyages. See Davies 1987, 15.

4. Evidently, the Spaniards did not wait long to demonstrate that they were no simple robbers: by the time Pané had completed his manuscript, the inhabitants of San Salvador were almost extinct.

5. A very good analysis of the rhetoric of the *Second Letter* is contained in Pastor 1992, chapter 2.

6. This view is shared by a number of historians of the conquest of Mexico. See Elliott 1986, xixxxvii; Elliott 1967, 5153; Pagden 1986, 467, n. 42; Frankl 1962; Frankl 1963; Stenzel 1980, 911; Davies 1973, 25860; Sánchez-Barba 1985, 1618; and Frank 1989.

7. On the Machiavellianism of Cortés, see Pastor 1992, 8285; on Ferdinand as a model, see Elliott 1967, 5051, and Gumbrecht 1987, 22930. On the biographical legal background of Cortés, see Elliott 1967, 43, 53.

8. Evans, significantly, formulated his thesis in a discussion of *The Tempest* and of that play's "re-presentation of its own specific mode of production in the theatre." (Evans 1989, 48). That statement can be applied to a great part of Renaissance writing.

9. Sahagún 195082, 13:47; the preparation of the Huitzilopochtli feast is rendered in great detail in chapter 19, and the massacre, also in great and gruesome detail, in chapter 20 (5354). At the beginning of chapter 21 we read that "they put Moctezuma in irons" (55).

10. I agree with Myra Jehlen that Todorov, in invoking a universal notion of civilization, tends to reduce cultural difference to an abstract negativity (Jehlen 1993b, 51).

11. On Todorov and Purchas, see Greenblatt 1991, 910; on Todorov and Prescott, see Clendinnen 1991, 6566.

12. I agree with Stephen Greenblatt, who writes that "Cortés understood next to nothing about the complex culture which he had violently penetrated, and everything he could hope to learn, beyond the enigmatic and opaque visual evidence, had to be conveyed through Doña Marina" (Greenblatt 1991, 145). But on the other hand, Greenblatt tends to treat Marina as a discursive figure in the *Historia verdadera* of Díaz (14243). A more comprehensive assessment of the discursive practice of writing the translator out of colonial texts is offered by Johnson 1992. Johnson makes it clear that Cortés's eloquence was not directed at the Aztecs but at the conquistadores, the scribes who carefully recorded his "heroic" acts, and at King Charles. "Otherwise," Johnson writes, "Cortés's rhetoric fell on deaf ears; not until he resorted to violence did he realize any authority over Amerindian civilizations" (410).

13. Marcus and Fischer 1986, 105. Another of Todorov's claims reproduced here is the one that connects illiteracy with the belief that the Spaniards were gods. Todorov asserts that the belief was most intense among the Inca, who presumably had the least developed system of communication, and least intense among the Maya, where "we find certain rudiments of phonetic writing" (Todorov 1987, 80). Although only exercised by the elite (and, one might add, an elite that had vanished by the time of European conquest), writing among the Maya is interpreted as an index of a more complex mental structure on an evolutionary scale, regardless of Todorov's disavowal of evolutionism and of the existence of writing in Mesoamerica elsewhere (81).

14. Bitterli repeats this statement in his most recent book (Bitterli 1991, 216).

15. Díaz 1988, 202; cf. Díaz 190816, 2:42, 44 (Díaz 1982, 17879). The *Historia verdadera* is a rather late source (finished in 1568, published in 1632). It draws more or less heavily on Gómara and, by extension, Cortés, no matter how much Díaz attempts to write against these two authors and the hero cult in which they partake. Thus, the "ancestors" story is not missing altogether but now appears in a different context: the theological dispute between Motecuhzoma and Cortés, in whose turn the former defends his religion against the Spaniard's attacks, mentions the parallel belief in the original creation of the world, and then continues: "and for this reason we take it for certain that you are those whom [our] ancestors predicted would come from the direction of the sunrise. As for your great King, I feel that I am indebted to him, and I will give him of what I possess, for as I have already said, two years ago I heard of the Captains who came in ships from the direction in which you came, and they said that they were the servants

of this your great King" (Diaz 190816, 2:58). Causality between religious similarities and the ancestors' announcement, as well as between Motecuhzoma's submission and his previous knowledge of the Spanish presence in the Caribbean, is established rhetorically, by the conjunctions "and for this reason [e a esta causa]" and "for as [porque]"there is no logical relationship between these statements. On the contrary, the "ancestor" part would make more sense if Motecuhzoma would willingly exchange his idolatry for the religion of his "forefathers," and his submission would appear more plausible if it had already occurred toward Juan Grijalva (the leader of the "Captains" in his speech) in 1517. The remnant from Cortés's version of Motecuhzoma's speech is here forcefully squeezed in between two incompatible statements in the service of constructing a reason for Motecuhzoma's submission. The passage suggests that the story of original rulership simply had to be told, no matter how incongruous it might be with its narrative surroundings.

16. The equivocal identification of the Spaniards as *teules* is subverted in the *Historia verdadera* itself when Diaz, paraphrasing a conversation between Cortés and Motecuhzoma, asserts that the Mexica were afraid of the Spaniards because "we shot out flashes of lightning, and killed many Indians with our horses, and that we were angry Teules, and other childish stories [echábamos rayos e relámpagos, e con los caballos matábamos muchos indios, e que éramos teules bravos, e otras cosas de niñas]". He then quotes Motecuhzoma, who says that the idea that the Spaniards could create lightning was a hoax ("burla"), resembling the tales of the people of Tlaxcala about Motecuhzoma's golden palaces (Diaz 190816, 2:5859; 1982, 18283). That the meaning of *teule* was quite equivocal is suggested by Mary Helms's comparative findings (Helms 1988, 17374). Needless to say, for a Mexican a "god" was something very different from what the Christian God meant to the Spaniards. For one, *teotl* seems to have been a quite diffuse sacred power that can infuse objects and people without being a stable characteristic of specific people (personal communication from Louise Burkhart).

17. Carrasco writes that only sixteen codices escaped the burning ordered by Bishop Juan de Zumarraga in 1531 (13).

18. In book 8 we find the same list, to which are added other stories of a wailing beam in a dance house, of the demon Cinacoatl weeping at night, "My beloved sons, now I am about to leave you," and of a woman who returned from death to inform Motecuhzoma of the coming disaster (9:3).

19. See Gillespie 1989, 195. Eduard Seler contends that the description of the clothes in which Cortés was dressed according to the *Historia general*

does not apply to the traditional garments of Quetzalcoatl but to those of Xiuhtecutli (Sahagún 1927, 59).

20. Seler's German translation from the Nahuatl differs somewhat from the English version. The critical sentence here reads "Als der [= Motecuhzoma] es hörte, sendete er sofort Boten ab, *indem er gewissermaßen so dachte*: es ist unser Fürst Quetzalcoatl, der gekommen ist. *Denn so war sein Wille gewesen, daß er wiederkommen wird*" (Sahagún 1927, 460, emphasis added). The Seler translation reveals an uncertainty about the knowledge of Motecuhzoma's thought ("for thus he thought *in a way*"). The English translation "thus was it held in the hearts of the people," on the other hand, is here replaced with "such was his [Quetzalcoatl's] will." The problem remains in both cases how the chroniclers could have known what Motecuhzoma and Quetzalcoatl thought and intended. These are interpretations which should not be accepted as reliable historical data.

21. But Carrasco then opts against modern theories of a *post eventum* fabrication of a hysterical Motecuhzoma by his rivals, supporting his opinion with "the almost identical picture appearing in Cortés's letters, written long before this [i. e., Sahagún's] account was gathered" (48). This looks very much like an attempt to drive out the devil with the help of Beelzebub.

22. The anonymous *Leyenda de los soles* (ca. 1558) contains a similar account (*Leyenda* 1974, 373).

23. Similar instances of mystification can be found in the *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* and in the history of Ixtlilxochitl, who explains a temporary military setback of the Tepanecs with the appearance of a coyote with wooden legs uttering terrible cries which reechoed between the mountains and frightened the Tepanecs to such a degree that they gave up their offensive against Texcoco (Ixtlilxochitl 1952, 1:218).

24. This idea forms the basis of Susan Gillespie's very interesting study (Gillespie 1989). *Nachträglichkeit*, according to Freud (1989), refers to a retrospective reactivation and reworking of frequently forgotten experiences or memory traces under the impression of later events. This psychic renarrativization may be seen to resemble the process of narrativizing historical events. Another case of *Nachträglichkeit* is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

25. It cannot be denied that Chimalpahin's treatment of the defeat of the Tepanecs has structural similarities with Cortés's treatment of the imprisonment of Motecuhzoma. Both authors offer symbolic explanations for real events: whereas Chimalpahin uses the native Mesoamerican trope of the ball game and of the weeping Maxtlaton, Cortés uses the European tropes of the speech of submission, of *reconquista*, and of native treachery as a symbolic

surrogate for "unexplainable" action. Similarly, both sides acted according to preexisting symbolic concepts. Cortés thus evidently modeled his crucial symbolic act at Tenochtitlán, the mass execution of Quälpopoca and the other caciques, on the inquisition rituals he was familiar with. So whereas both cultures partly improvised and partly acted according to cultural scripts, the difference seems to consist in the kinds of scripts that were at hand and in the kinds of moral code by which they were informed. A large part of the difference Todorov identifies between the two cultures is only the result of our incapacity to recognize the rituals of our own culture for what they are. Sadly enough, the staging of the inquisition trial appears normal to a European reader, as it did to Andrés de Tapia.

This is not to say that Todorov's dualistic system should be replaced with a system of "structural sameness." But the nature of the difference must be sought on another level than the one proposed by Todorov, and it is important to acknowledge the ideologically and politically successful interplay between ritual and improvisation, an interplay that took place on both sides of the cultural divide. A necessary precondition of this is the acknowledgment of Native American power of improvisation as well as European debts to ritual.

26. The following account is deeply indebted to Werner Stenzel's exhaustive and lucid essay on the genesis of the Quetzalcoatl myth (Stenzel 1980). Further summaries of the functions of Quetzalcoatl are Nicholson 1976 and Frank 1989. Elliott 1967, Stenzel 1980, and Frank 1989 agree that the identification of Cortés with Quetzalcoatl first appeared in Sahagún's *Historia general*.

27. A similar passage in the *Historia de los Indios* ends with "mas cuando después desembarcaron decian que no era su dios sino que eran muchos dioses" (Motolinia 1970, 229). For further information on Motolinia, see Baudot 1992.

28. As Motolinia mentions at another point, he had to fight against the Indians' practice of calling the Spaniards "teteuh" (another form of *teotl* or *teule*) for three years, trying to convince them that there was only one God (Motolinia 1970, 275). This is of course only one part of the problem. What really must have troubled Motolinia and other missionaries is the fact, already mentioned above, that *teteu* also signified what Motolinia designated as *demonio*. In addition to this ambivalence of the term, it was also applied to the dead, who had entered the realm of the spirits and gods (see Séjourné 1960, 85).

29. The two most important works on Mexican culture besides Berdan are still Soustelle 1955 and Katz 1972. A short and lucid overview from a Marxist



perspective is Wolf 1962. A recent assessment of preconquest Aztec culture, which consciously engages with the theoretical challenge of doing historical research in the face of poststructuralism, is Clendinnen 1991.

30. Unfortunately, the English version in Bierhorst 1974, from which I take the translation (26), is incomplete.

31. See Carrasco 1982, 3435, on the various sources of the *Anales* and the *Leyenda*.

32. See Séjourné 1960, who explores the mythical aspects of the story (5263).

33. Stenzel locates the origin of both the *Leyenda* and the *Anales* within the circle of Sahagún (1980, 42).

34. Cortés, by the way, landed in a *year*, not on a day, One Reed.

35. This synthesis is epitomized in George Vaillant's essay title "The Bearded Mystery" (1931).

36. Durán probably drew on the information contained in Gómara and Andrés de Tapia (one of Gómara's sources). Both describe Quetzalcoatl as a mythical leader of the people of Cholula who wore "a white vesture like a monk's tunic, and over it a mantle covered with red crosses," thus resembling a knight crusader more than a Mexican leader (Tapia 1866, 2:57374 [1963, 34]; cf. Gómara 1964, 13031).

37. Gruzinski takes the quotation from the *Códice Matritense*, written between 1559 and 1572 and attributed to the circle of, alas, Sahagún (Gillespie 1989, 234).

38. The insight that emerges from this fragmentary evidence is that attempts to achieve political control by way of controlling the communications system were not restricted to Spain and England. The burning of books and the centralization of textual reproduction have always been two of the most effective instruments for the exercise of political power. As we can see, Mexico was apparently no exception to this rule.

39. Thus the Aztec coronation speeches contained a phrase that reminded the future leader that he only held the office of his ancestors (or Quetzalcoatl), who would reclaim it one day (Carrasco 1982, 173; Davies 1973, 152; Gruzinski 1989, 27). This must certainly be regarded as a ritualistic phrase and not as a "prophecy" of Quetzalcoatl's "return," as which it is sometimes interpreted.

40. For "root paradigm" see Turner 1974, 26. H. B. Nicholson speaks of the pre-Cortesian Quetzalcoatl myth as a "standard Mesoamerican 'hero pattern'" (Nicholson 1976, 43).

41. John Howard Lawson, in his "hidden" book *The Hidden Heritage*, has arrived at similar conclusions about the Quetzalcoatl tradition, which he

regards as a "folk memory respected by the reigning priesthood as a concession to popular sentiment" (Lawson 1968, 194).

42. Sahagún's *Historia general* is probably the most astounding and valuable outcome of this insight, but ironically could no longer be used for the purpose of domination once it was finished. The instrument of empire had turned, through its intense representation of the dominated culture, into a possible instrument of the subversion of empire.

43. I tend to share this position, although I'm aware of the danger, pointed out to me by Louise Burkhart, that the thesis of the Mexicas' impending loss of power may be just another European myth of colonial justification.

44. Motecuhzoma's last uncertainties about the Spaniards' divine status must have evaporated when they were presented with "god food" by Motecuhzoma's messengers but could not eat it: "their stomachs turned. They spat; they blinked; they shut their eyes and shook their heads. For the food, which they had sprinkled and spattered with blood, sickened and revolted them." The magicians had orders to become active after this test (Sahagún 195082, 13:20). The experience of the second set of sorcerers sent out to bewitch the Spaniards could be read as a postconquest gloss on the theme of imperial anxiety. According to Sahagún's informants, the magicians encountered a drunkard from Chalco (a conquered province) who addressed them rudely: "What do you come to do here again? What do you now wish? What would Moctezuma yet wish to do? Hath he perchance now come to his senses? Is he now filled with a great fear? For he hath committed a fault. He hath abandoned the common folk; he hath destroyed men. People have been struck upon the head; they have been bound [in wrappings for the dead]. He hath laughed at and deceived them!" The speaker then sardonically announces the destruction of Mexico and even conjures up a mass hallucination of Tenochtitlán on fire, which convinces the sorcerers that the drunkard was Tezcatlipoca in disguise (3334). The passage, with its strong implications of social conflict, shows that at least around 1560 there must have been some popular disdain for the Mexica rulers and a combined effort to denounce Motecuhzoma by turning him into the victim of Tezcatlipoca's scorn. Tezcatlipoca was the god of the common people and, as we have seen, the personification of dynastic transformation. I should add that I do not read these passages as descriptions of "what really happened" in 1520 but rather as textual evidence that contradicts or problematizes other claims of the authors of the *Historia general*.

45. Although I take Motecuhzoma's speech in the *Second Letter* to be largely apocryphal, it is interesting that the only time it mentions the word "god" is when Motecuhzoma denies the stories of the Tlaxcalans about his

godliness and fabulous wealth. In a gesture with biblical undertones Motecuhzoma then raises his clothes "and showed me his body, saying, as he grasped his arms and trunk with his hands, 'See that I am of flesh and blood like you and all other men, and I am mortal and substantial' " (Cortés 1986, 11617). Note also that Motecuhzoma here evidently considers Cortés to be human and not a god.

46. At least two fifteenth-century rulers of Texcoco and Tlatelolco seem to have been regarded as man-gods (Gruzinski 1989, 23).

47. For believers in stories of returning gods, Cortés's identification with Tezcatlipoca would have been perfect had he arrived in September. In that month the Mexica celebrated the annual feast of *teotl eco*, "Arrival of the Gods." Tezcatlipoca was usually the first one to turn up (because he was young and nimble). If Cortés had appeared on 28 September, who knows, he might have shared the sad fate of Captain Cook, who, as some historians claim, was greeted by the Hawaiians as their god Lono, whose ritual they were just celebrating when the British arrived. According to Marshall Sahlins, the natives later killed Cook for not acting according to the script (Sahlins 1985). On *teotl eco*, see Sahagún 195082, 2:21, 11820. For a powerful critique of Sahlins's structuralist thesis and method, see Obeyesekere 1992.

48. Carrasco suspects that the Mexica might even have gone back to Tollan with hammer and chisel to realign the Toltec sculptures with current "historiography" (Carrasco 1982, 53). I would rather tend to regard the Mexicans' peculiar treatment of their historical past as a latent structure of Mesoamerican *mentalité*.

49. Cheyfitz finds much older historical evidence of such a complicity between language and imperialism in Charlemagne's decision to transport Alcuin from England at the end of the eighth century to help him reform the educational system of the Carolingian empire. As part of the program, Alcuin composed a rhetoric book that states the fundamental importance of rhetoric for carrying out proper rule (Cheyfitz 1991, 112).

50. According to the anecdote, Nebrija had been asked about the usefulness of his book by Queen Isabella and had responded: "Siempre la lengua ha sido compañera del imperio" (which is usually translated, and thereby utilized, as "Language is the perfect instrument of empire"; Quoted in Hanke 1959, 127, n. 31). Bernard Vincent (1991) has examined the synchronicity of the "discovery" of America, the expulsion of the Moors and Jews, and the appearance of the first Castilian grammar. On the same topic see Mignolo 1992 and Johnson 1992.

51. The trope can be traced back to antiquity. Again, Cortés could draw on textual models, from Caesar's *Gallic War* to the books of Livius and the

Alexander romances. See, for example, the speech of Taxiles in Plutarch's biography of Alexander the Great.

### Chapter 3. The Politics of Colonial Representation

1. Especially in early seventeenth-century England the will to knowledge took a specific form, developing what Foucault has called the "science of the gaze" (Foucault 1981, 55, 70). Although this process is generally connected with the name of Francis Bacon, Harriot may be seen as one of its early representatives.
2. Greenblatt 1981; a revised version appears in Greenblatt 1988. Though my conclusions differ from Greenblatt's, my own account is very much indebted to his analysis of the textual politics of the *Brief and True Report*.
3. Keith Thomas quotes an interesting case of European paganism among English peasants almost a century after the events at Roanoke: "In Essex in 1656 there were said to be people as ignorant of Christianity as the Red Indians; in the Isle of Axholme the inhabitants had been virtual heathens . . . in parts of Wiltshire there was total ignorance of religion; in Hampshire there were 'ignorant heathenish people.' When thirteen criminals were executed after the London sessions in 1679 the prison chaplain found them 'lamentably ignorant of the principles of religion, as if they had been born in Africk and bred up amongst the savages of America' " (Thomas 1971, 196). Cf. Wright 1943, 30.
4. I'm drawing on Hulme's discussion of the trope of magic technology of which he writes: " 'magic technology' is not a topos denoting the power of European technology to fascinate the 'primitive mind' . . . but a *trope* by which the economy of colonial discourse marks out *for itself* a boundary line between 'technology' and 'ignorance.' 'Native fascination' is a discursive symptom of colonialist anxiety about its own technology, an anxiety that can only be assuaged by constant doses of alien admiration" (Hulme 1985, 21).
5. To be sure, Cortés and the authors who helped stylize his person provided a model for action to later colonizers, Harriot included. But that model can be regarded as subversive only from an ahistorical and Eurocentric point of view. I agree with Andrew Hadfield's claim that the Indians' "superstition" and their voices are colonial representations and that the specific rhetorical function of these voices in European texts must not be ignored in critical readings of the colonial encounter (Hadfield 1991, 910). Carolyn Porter's contention that Greenblatt's New Historicist essay "isn't historical yet" is thus quite to the point (Porter 1988).

6. Shakespeare's *Tempest* is evidently the major dramatic negotiation of colonialism in England of that period but lies beyond the scope of this book. The topic has sufficiently been discussed in the past ten years. See, for example, Barker and Hulme 1985; Hulme 1986, chapter 3; Brown 1985; and Cartelli 1987. For critical assessments of the former essays, see Skura 1989, Vaughan 1988a, and Vaughan 1988b. See also Mackenthun 1996.
7. My argument here and throughout is indebted to Hayden White's important essay "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality" (in White 1987).
8. If any genre would apply to the last part of Harriot's tract it would be the genre of anecdote, as Campbell notes (Campbell 1992, 187, 189). It is probably owing to this quality that it has been chosen for analysis by the "anecdotal" thinker Greenblatt. But neither the *Brief and True Report* nor the other colonial anecdotes Greenblatt uses in various essays seem to me to pose disruptions of historical metanarratives, as Greenblatt at times claims. See Greenblatt 1990, 58.
9. On the trope of treachery in English colonial discourse, see Hulme 1986, 16367.
10. Neither Greenblatt nor Campbell pay much attention to Lane's text and concentrate instead on the more "interesting" *Report* of Harriot.
11. Quinn registers about fifteen different spellings of Wingandacoia. The actual meaning of the word ("You wear gay clothes," as Raleigh writes in the *History of the World*) is suggestive of the communication processes involved in early colonial encounters (Quinn 1955, 1:11617).
12. The translation is in Taylor 1935, 2:36768.
13. The paradoxical fact implied in this passage is that according to British law, based on Roman civil law, the right to own was established only by the fact of ownership itself (See Seed 1992, 190). Francisco de Vitoria and others had made it plain that the desire to possess did not give a title to do so (see the discussion in my introduction). The main problem of colonialism was how to translate desire into just title.
14. V. T. Harlow and Mary B. Campbell may count as representative of the historians' and the literary scholars' view. Cf. Harlow 1928 and Campbell 1988, chapter 6.
15. See Harlow 1928, xlii et passim, and Pastor 1992, 15360, for a full account. See also Whitehead 1992.
16. Stephen Greenblatt has shown this double inscription in his discussion of Raleigh's *History of the World* (Greenblatt 1973, 14045).
17. Mary Fuller has addressed the problem of deferral and lack of referentiality in Fuller 1991.

18. Campbell's modernist approach to Raleigh's text which, after all, makes a strong claim to authenticity may not provide the most fortunate method for historical inquiry. In the light of discourse analysis, it has become difficult to rescue a seemingly untrammelled realm of subjectivity from cultural texts, let alone from such politically motivated texts as the *Discoverie*.
19. Raleigh's tendency to exaggerate actually helped break his neck twenty years later when his last expedition to Guiana was unable to locate the gold mine. That mine, although only based on hearsay, had expanded into a mountain of gold in Raleigh's fantasy and his desire to escape the Tower. But as there is seldom smoke without a fire, a gold mine has later been found in the area. Cf. Lorimer 1982.
20. Spenser 1968, 12224 (50.10.5562). Raleigh was an intimate friend of Spenser, but the implicit dialogue between the *Discoverie* and the *Faerie Queene* could certainly be pursued beyond the critical notions of direct influence and intertextuality. Bernal Diaz, whose *Historia verdadera* Raleigh cannot have known, compares his own and his companions' first view of the Mexican capital to a scene from the chivalric romance *Amadis de Gaula* (Diaz 1908, 2:37).
21. Meeting the enormous surge of the Orinoco while anchoring near Trinidad on his third voyage in 1498, Columbus develops his geographical theory according to which the Orinoco was one of the four rivers flowing from the earthly paradise, which he locates somewhere near Raleigh's Manoa (Columbus 1988, 2:3638).
22. Spenser 1968, 123 (1.10.55, 58). The parallel has been indicated by Stephen Greenblatt (1973, 109). Spenser's account of the two cities leads back to Saint Augustine's distinction between the earthly city, "which Cain built and which is of this world, wavering and transitory," and the City of God, "which is founded above in the eternity of bliss" (Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, 15 and 18). This theme is picked up again in chapter 5.
23. Spenser 1968, 124 (1.10.61). A further intertextual reference to Book 1 of the *Faerie Queene* is Raleigh's single act of naming one of the rivers the "river of the Red crosse, our selves being the first Christians that ever came therein" (Raleigh 1904, 381).
24. It was through my numerous discussions with Susanne Scholz that I became aware of these parallels between the *Discoverie* and the *Faerie Queene*.
25. The ideological continuity between the imperial symbolism of England and Spain provides the denied foundation of Raleigh's attempts to stress the opposition between the two countries. Just as Hernán Cortés and

Francisco Pizarro emerge as the prototypes of colonial action in the *Discoverie*, "Elizabethan imperial symbolism is influenced in many ways by imitation, conscious or unconscious, of the dazzling figure of Charles V" (Yates 1985, 51). This adaptation of Spanish imperial symbolism in Elizabethan England is perhaps best illustrated by Spenser's indebtedness to Ariosto's epic, *Orlando Furioso*. The transformation of the ideal of divine kingship from Charles to Elizabeth also caused some of the upheavals in the contemporary gender discourse and resulted in the presentation of Elizabeth as Astraea-Virgo, a complex character symbolizing fertility and barrenness at the same time (33). The English translation of *Orlando Furioso* by Harrington contains a direct reference to Drake's circumnavigation, glossing the royal seal of Charles V (a ship passing through the pillars of Hercules with the famous motto "plus outre") (5455). (The same emblem was to reappear as the frontispiece of Francis Bacon's *Novum organum* of 1620.) The imagery of Raleigh's text underlines its admitted indebtedness to a celebration of the notion of universal kingship for England.

26. My following discussion is greatly indebted to Montrose's superb essay.

27. Since the Middle Ages, Amazons had been associated with great quantities of gold, silver, and precious stones. They frequently appear as appendices of El Dorado in the Spanish reports that Raleigh used. See Pastor 1992, 15659.

28. I am quoting from an unpublished manuscript of the *Discoverie* that was recently found in an English private collection by Joyce Lorimer. The manuscript is on the whole much more vulgar than the published version and contains corrections and deletions in the handwriting of Robert Cecil, who acted as royal censor at the time. I am indebted and hereby express my gratitude to Joyce Lorimer, who permitted me to read a typescript of the manuscript which she is in the process of preparing for publication. Hereafter cited as Raleigh MS.

29. There is a similar scene in the *Journal* of Columbus. On 18 December he shows one of the natives a "gold *excelente* on which your Highness are sculptured, and . . . I told him how your Highness commanded and ruled over all the best part of the world, and that there were no other princes as great" (Columbus 1989, 243).

30. Again Raleigh is more explicit about the conditions of the future trade relationship in the unpublished manuscript: "Merchants shall sell our worst trash, our thinnest kerseys, sayes, Lynnen, hats, beads, and all sorts of Iron works for a marveyulous price" (Raleigh MS).

31. The exclusion of the italicized passage from several editions of the text is an additional indicator of its "intolerable ideological dissonance"

(Montrose 1991, 24). It is missing not only from the Penguin edition of Hakluyt's *Voyages and Discoveries* (1972), which Montrose refers to (where the elision is not even indicated), but also from the more recent edition of the *Discoverie* in the volume of Raleigh's *Selected Writings*, ed. Gerald Hammond, again Penguin (1984) (where deletions are at least marked). Modern editors demonstrate an admirable sensibility for ideologically symptomatic locations in these texts. A critical history of the editorial canonization of colonial texts through the discursive practice of editing and quotation remains yet to be written.

32. The homonym *continent* practically cries out for punning. Thus Montrose comments on Raleigh's emphasis on English temperance as against Spanish lust: "Raleigh's discovery of a new continent discovers him to be newly continent" (Montrose 1991, 11). This is a gloss on the pun by an anonymous contemporary of Raleigh's who commented on his fall from grace after his "earthly" marriage: "All is alarm and confusion at this discovery of the discoverer, and not indeed of a new continent, but of a new incontinent" (10).

33. Jalil Sued-Badillo (1986) has argued that the myth of the Amazons was actually superimposed on a native Caribbean ritual practice of separating the sexes for a certain period to reinforce their sense of gender-specific social obligations and to facilitate their social self-definition. The firsthand information that Sued-Badillo uses is from Ramón Pané, whose very early protoethnographic text is about the nearest we can get to Caribbean reality.

34. On the importance of Raleigh's thinking for English Puritanism, see Hill 1965, chapter 4. The golden city of Manoa as it is evoked by Raleigh not only resembles the earthly and heavenly cities in the *Faerie Queene* and in Saint Augustine but also anticipates Winthrop's "city upon a hill." Raleigh's choice of imagery for describing the waterfalls seems to point in the same direction.

35. Eden formulated the early modern transition from crusader to merchant ideology in his 1556 preface to his translation of Spanish colonial texts. See Williams 1990, 12830.

36. The collaboration of the two has apparently been very close. Harriot also wrote a set of instructions for Raleigh's 1595 Guiana voyage. See Hill 1965, 141, and Andrews 1984, 29293.

37. This had been the topic of a hot and finally unresolved debate between Poland and Germany in the early fifteenth century. The German Order had dragged Poland in front of the Council of Konstanz for having used non-Christian allies in their war against Germany in 141011. See Fisch 1984, 11116.



38. Again, in the legal discourse of the time, this anecdote has a wider importance. Most theorists of imperialism agreed that the explicit denunciation of Christianity provided a just cause for conquest. For an analysis of different versions of this event in Spanish histories, see MacCormack 1989.

#### Chapter 4. "A Mortall Immortall Possession"

1. The most important sermons dedicated to colonial expansion to Virginia were Robert Gray, *A Good Speed to Virginia* (London, 1609); Robert Johnson, *Nova Britannia* (London, 1609); William Symonds, *A Sermon Preached at White Chapel* (London, 1609); Daniel Price, *Sauls Prohibition Staide* (London, 1609); and Richard Crakanthorpe, *A Sermon at the Solemnizing of the Happie Inauguration . . .* (London, 1609). For discussions of these sermons, see Parker 1978; Pennington 1978; Wright 1943, chapter 4; and Kadir 1992, 123-30.

2. Gray's example is Columbus, who claims to have prognosticated an eclipse of the moon to awe the Indians into resuming their food supplies (sig. C2).

3. As recently as 1992, in the summer of the quincentenary of the "discovery," the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs declared its right to eliminate tribal recognition at its own pleasure, but then echoed Robert Gray in calming down the upset Native Americans by adding: "It isn't the policy *or desire* of the secretary of the Interior to seek to reduce the number of tribes or set out to take away tribal status from any legitimate tribe" ("BIA's new Power over Tribes: Now You Exist, Now You Don't", Associated Press, Seattle, 22 June 1992; emphasis added.) As the continuity of the U.S. policy of desire has shown in the past, there is indeed nothing to worry about.

Gray's point about the impossibility of inflicting individual harm through the deprivation of communal rights came to provide the ideological structure of U.S. Indian land rights legislation, thus making it practically impossible for the indigenous population to sue the government to respect their fishing, hunting, and spiritual rights. See the famous *GO-Road* decision of 1989, in which the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the suit of the Yurok, Karok, and Tolowa tribes for preserving a sacred area in northern California by comparing the tribal legal status with that of an Anglo-American child. The comparison of the rights of infidels with those of children was already discussed in sixteenth-century Spain.

4. *The Worthy and Famous History of the Travels, Discovery, and Conquest of Terra Florida* (London, 1611). In support of the 1609 offensive Hakluyt also issued a translation of part of Marc Lescarbot's *Histoire de la*

*Nouvelle France: Nova Francia; or, The Description of That Part of New France, Which Is One Continent with Virginia* (London, 1609), as well as his own translation of Hugo Grotius's *Mare liberum* (1608). Lescarbot's description of New France in terms of the classical golden age would seem to be just as unfit to support the 1609 project as the Portuguese text but certainly more encouraging for future settlers (see Pennington 1978, 185).

5. Smith 1986, 2:181. The *Generall Historie* is hereafter cited in the text as *GH*.

6. My reservations about Jehlen's claims largely agree with the ones Hulme (1993) brings forward in his response to Jehlen's critique.

7. Eric Cheyfitz arrives at the same conclusion (Cheyfitz 1991, 9, 81). On the exchange of boys, see Lemay 1991, 15354.

8. Powhatan's initial remarks are strongly reminiscent of Caliban's speech in Shakespeare's *Tempest* ("This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother" [1.2.333]), which was first performed in London in 1611 while Smith was working at the *Proceedings*.

9. I am particularly thinking of the presentation of Smith as a protorevolutionary American hero in Lemay 1991.

10. Kadir 1992, 126. Kadir's discovery that the religious rhetoric of Spanish and English justifications of conquest did not undergo significant alterations between 1503, when Columbus wrote his *Libro de las profecias*, and 1609, when preachers such as Robert Gray and William Symonds were engaged in a very similar "papalism without a Pope" (127, 129), supports my own thesis about the subtle continuities of colonial discourse since 1492, even while emphasizing the discontinuities that necessarily evolve from the constant adaptation to new historical and political conditions. These discontinuities and breaks can perhaps easier be gleaned from descriptive and eyewitness texts, which Kadir excludes from his discussion. The discontinuities of these texts arise from their need to negotiate between prefabricated concepts and the reality they sought to describe.

11. Hulme derives his notion of "polytropic" from the first line of the *Odyssey*, where it is applied to Odysseus to characterize him as a "man of many ways," "much traveled," and "cunningly intelligent or even slippery and deceitful" (Hulme 1985, 20).

12. Smith 1986, 1:47. *A True Relation* is hereafter cited in the text as *TR*.

13. If it were true, as some scholars suggest, that Opechancanough is identical with the Chesapeake Indian picked up by a Spanish expedition in 1570, renamed Don Luis de Velasco and educated in Seville, then Smith's compass trick may have missed its intended effect. See Hulme 1985, 27, and Bridenbaugh 1981.

14. Smith 1986, 1:215. The *Proceedings* are hereafter cited in the text as *P*.
15. I thus agree with Cheyfitz that Smith, through his textual eloquence more than through any "real" technological presentation, produced a "fantasy of absolute control" (Cheyfitz 1991, 7879).
16. King James, the addressee of Rolfe's famous letter, would seem to have less resented Rolfe's plan to marry a "strange wife" than the violation of social standards involved in the marriage between a member of the merchant class and a member of the (Native American) aristocracy.
17. I have to resort to the facsimile edition of the *Generall Historie* owing to a serious technical defect in the Barbour edition of 1986.
18. On the trope of the "enamoured Muslim princess," see Hulme 1986, 300, n. 13. Smith gives a full deployment of it in his accounts of hairbreadth escapes in the *True Travels* of 1630 (see Smith 1986, vol. 3).
19. This is the year in which King James abolished the state lotteries for raising financial support for Virginia, which created the need for further private investment.
20. The following critique is in no way meant to denigrate Quinn's exceptional contribution to the historiography about colonial America. My own text is deeply indebted to his comprehensive and authoritative work as a historian and editor. The object of my critique is rather a tendency within positivist scholarship as a whole to claim authority and objectivity even where these claims are defied by a fragmentary empirical situation. Such ungrounded assertions may lead to wrong and dangerous conclusions. So what follows is an analysis of the *mythical* dimensions of a presumably objective text.
21. Quinn later admits the lack of such findings: "an occupation extending from some time fairly soon after 1590 to about 1607 would have left substantial archaeological traces" (478).
22. The "great smoakes of fire," which the Jamestown settlers encounter and which Quinn assumes to be the burning Chesapeake villages where the Roanoke survivors presumably also lived, were identified as brush fires to clear new farmland by the party of George Percy, which went there to find out (Quinn 1974, 455; cf. Percy 1969, 134). Significantly, the Indians once again seem to have been employed in agriculture where the colonial logic assumes long-distance warfare.
23. To an Appalachian mountain range it adds the authoritative gloss: "Hear the salt water beateth into the riuer amongst the rocks being the south sea," and it also indicates a "Saluag people Dwelling vpon this seay beyond this mayne that eate the men & women" (Barbour 1969, 1:240). This should remind us that such early documents, which are largely the products of

hearsay and cross-cultural misunderstanding, must be handled with care. On maps and misunderstanding, see the work of J. Brian Harley.

The "villainous" guide, by the way, was the weroance of Paspahegh, the tribe that was directly dispossessed by the Jamestown settlers which may perhaps explain his lack of cooperation (*TR*, 63).

24. Philip Barbour bases his belief in the massacre on Purchas's assertion of having received oral information from Smith in his *Pilgrimage* that is very similar to the one quoted above. Quinn's admitted uncertainties are turned into established truths by Carl Bridenbaugh and A. J. Leo Lemay. Bridenbaugh fully reproduces Strachey's text, including the prophecies, and adds that "on April 26, 1607 Powhatan's braves had wiped out the members of the Chesapeake Nation . . . and with them, as Strachey learned, a number of white men from Raleigh's 'lost Colony' of Roanoke who had lived among the Chesapeake for about two decades." This version is a simplification of Quinn's reading of the texts; it is not corroborated in this form by any of the colonial texts themselves. Lemay, too, presents a simplified version of Quinn's interpretation, brushing over its frequent statements of doubt with the recurring claim that Quinn's hypothesis, now a thesis, "makes good sense" (see Barbour 1986, 1:26566 n.; Bridenbaugh 1981, 67, Lemay 1991, 155). James Axtell refrains from commenting on the Roanoke myth but reproduces Strachey's and Quinn's claim that Powhatan, acting on the prophecy, had "exterminated the whole tribe of 'Chessiopeians' to hedge his bets." Axtell generally takes colonial accounts of Native American prophecies at face value although his own account of them makes quite clear that the prophecies were postconquest inventions and European fabrications (Axtell 1992, 35).

25. It is perhaps no coincidence that the picture that comes to mind is that of Herod's troops raiding Nazareth to kill off all small boys. After all, Strachey not only spread the news of the "massacre" but also helped disseminate the common belief that Pamunkeys were sacrificing their children to the devil.

26. An information given to John White in 1587, quoted in Quinn 1974, 435.

27. See Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia, which form the basis of his theory of the novel (Bakhtin 1981).

28. As Cicero writes, an eloquent wise man "transformed [men] from wild savages into a kind and gentle folk." Eric Cheyfitz notes that the inception of civility with the means of eloquence resembles a "scene of primal colonization" (Cicero, *De inventione* 1:2, quoted after Cheyfitz 1991, 113).

29. Cheyfitz claims that from the beginnings of the translation of empire in the eighth century the gift of eloquence was occupied by the colonizer and

"civilizer" himself. Because it is the colonizer who demonstrates his superiority by displaying his oratory, any attempt of the natives to do the same must necessarily be rebuked as an indecent assault on the integrity of European cultural theory (Cheyfitz 1991, 11215). The varying uses of the trope of the native speech in European texts point toward an ongoing debate about the topic of civility itself.

30. The "not" is added in the *Generall Historie* (197), but its absence at this crucial point may be taken as a psychopathological tripping whether on Smith's part or on that of the printer cannot be discerned and is in any case less important. My point here is that in this case even the coincidental slip of a printer has a larger meaning because it reveals a secret understanding of the power situation at Jamestown. This statement may gain some support from another famous misprint, of a passage from the *Declaration* by Edward Waterhouse, which calls for a genocidal war against the Virginia Indians after the 1622 massacre. Waterhouse proposes to chase the Indians with bloodhounds and "Mastives to teare them," but in the errata at the beginning of the text "to teare" is exchanged for "to seaze" (seize) (Waterhouse 1622, 24, n.p). Again, the error is closer to colonial reality than the corrected version. Both the pictures of de Bry about Spanish violence in the Caribbean and the *Brevissima relación* of Las Casas show the dogs to "teare" the Indians "in peeces" (Las Casas 1583, sig. A2). Alden T. Vaughan is thus correct when he writes that Waterhouse did not "advocate" the use of dogs to "teare" the Indians. But even though the dogs were not likely to have grasped the change of politics, Waterhouse's disclaimer appears in a context of advocating the imitation of Spanish action, a context that would not have prompted any alteration in the colonial mentality with regard to Indians and dogs, regardless of what Waterhouse may have "intended" (see Vaughan 1978, 79).

31. The Algonkian economy was based on the exchange of gifts. Social prestige was not connected with possessing material goods but with the ability to distribute them. The classic study on this topic is Mauss 1970.

32. "Captain Newport you call father, and so you call me, but I see for all us both, you will doe what you list, and wee must both seeks to content you" (248).

33. The statement, made in an analysis of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, is reminiscent of Foucault's notion that a dominant discourse strategically integrates counterhegemonic discourses in order to exert control. We have to be careful, however, to apply this concept to the early modern period, as it is debatable whether power actually had to tolerate dissenting voices. Certainly, the rise of the middle class in Elizabethan and Jacobean England did

produce such a need. In our case it would perhaps be better to say that colonial power thought it could *afford* Powhatan's dissenting voice.

34. The Gentleman of Elvas quotes Ortiz's claim that the natives of Florida likewise committed human sacrifices to the devil, "and they report, that when he will haue them doe that sacrifice vnto him, he speaketh with them, and telleth them that he is athirst" (Gentleman of Elvas 1609, 23).

35. See Cohn 1975, 288. On the larger intellectual implications of the witch hunt, see Easlea 1980.

36. Cohn 1975, 53. Cf. Berkhofer 1978, 1112, and Todorov 1987, 154. The claim of Aztec cannibalism is in Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, *Democrates alter* (1535).

37. Another such translation process took place between English discourses on Ireland and on Virginia. When Smith, a diligent user of that analogy, compares Powhatan's "faire robe of skinnes" with an "Irish mantell," he drags along a whole train of ideological connotations (*GH*, 155). The Irish mantle was for an English reader an emblem of criminality and duplicity which may add an interesting turn to the coronation scene and Powhatan's present to Newport. I'm indebted to Bernhard Klein for referring me to the cultural symbolism in the English discourse on Ireland (see Klein 1992).

38. Hole's bricolage is also described in Feest 1967, 67.

39. Smith 1986, 1:171. The *Map of Virginia* is hereafter cited in the text as *Map*.

40. The name, so resonant with European fantasies of devil worship, has created a minor scholarly debate until it was decided that "Blacke" really should be spelled *blake* and is a northern dialect word for "pale" or "white." The boys were, according to the reports, indeed painted white, not black. See Barbour 1986, 1:171 n.

41. Or had been forgotten: the Old Testament does contain accounts of memorial stones (Genesis 28.1822, Joshua 4.19).

42. The hare is a culture hero and trickster figure among several Algonkian tribes as well as tribes of the southern United States. The Algonkian culture hero Nanabozho, for example, occasionally takes the shape of a hare (Martin 1982; Brotherston 1979, 17677; Christian Feest, personal communication). The Great Rabbit is likewise a trickster figure in the mythologies of several Siouan language groups, especially the Winnebago (Robert E. Bieder, personal communication).

43. Freud 1989, 17677; cf. Brooks 1979, 78. The reference to the texts of Freud and Brooks is in Hulme 1985.

44. George Percy, *A Trewe Relacyon* (1612), quoted after Sale 1991, 277; spelling modernized.

## Chapter 5. Rituals of Exclusion

1. Some historians speak of a decimation of up to 90 percent of the population (see Heimert and Delbanco 1985, 73 n., and Young 1971, 18384).
2. See Hulme 1990, 2829. Locke, sharing Winthrop's opinion that the earth was originally made for the common use of men, of course introduces God's other gift to man, reason, as the motor for turning the common garden into private property. For the classics, by comparison, reason and nature had still been inseparable. For Locke, as for Winthrop, it is "Inclosure" that distinguishes the (unreasonable) existence of the "wild Indian" from the (reasonable) one of industrious civilized men (see Locke 1965, 328). On the original unity of reason and nature, see Pagden 1990, 1618.
3. The vagrancy trope was also used by Columbus to justify the enslavement of the Indians (Greenblatt 1991, 66). For a full discussion of the trope, see Jennings 1975, 7176.
4. See Hartog 1988; on the trope of barbarism in classical antiquity, see Greenblatt 1991, 12427, and Pagden 1982, chapter 2.
5. On the translation of the European concept of property to America, see Cheyfitz 1991, chapter 4.
6. The Protestant concept of typology that underwrites Puritan colonial reasoning is, as Bercovitch explains, "the historiographic-theological method of relating the Old Testament to the life of Christ (as 'antitype') and, through him, to the doctrine and progress of the Christian Church." It may be traced back to Luther's concept of the Second Coming as having an "immediate and wordly significance" (Bercovitch 1967, 167, 179). Djemal Kadir (1992) has traced back typological thinking to the Franciscans.
7. Djemal Kadir provides a somewhat different reading of Cushman's texts, viewing him as another manifestation of an apocalyptic master narrative of colonial justification (Kadir 1992, 16267).
8. *De jure belli ac pacis* first appeared in 1625, and it does not contain a single just reason for colonial conquests except for the right of discovery, i.e., the right to occupy a previously uninhabited land (see Peach 1985, 4344, 55).
9. The murkiness of biblical definitions did not prevent the Boston court from ruling, in 1652, that the Puritans' property rights were exclusively based on Genesis 1.28 and 9.1, as well as Psalm 115.16a decision that occasioned a London royal commission to throw up its hands in horror at such theocratic legislation (see Vaughan 1979, 111). The centrality of the story of Cain and Abel within the context of colonial legitimation is discussed in Hulme 1994.

10. Winslow 1971, 278, 33839. The following summary is based on Jennings 1975, Vaughan 1979, and Salisbury 1982.
11. Everybody was trading firearms to the Indians to enhance the quota in beaver furs (see Zuckerman 1977, 259).
12. On Morton's poetry, see Shea 1988 and Arner 1971/72.
13. According to Greek mythology, Athens was founded by accident when Hephaistos, pursuing Athene, lost his semen, out of which grew Erichthonios. This first autochthonous citizen was raised by his virgin mother Athene (see Weigel 1990, 157). This founding myth may be seen as the archetype of all other imaginative versions of European men "laying the land" (see Kolodny 1975). Two of the maps associating a geographical area with the body of a female sovereign are Matthias Quad's "Allegory of Europe" (1587) and the famous "Ditchley" portrait of Queen Elizabeth by Marcus Gheeraerts (ca. 1592), which shows Elizabeth "standing upon her land and sheltering it under her skirts" (Montrose 1991, 1415). There are several allegorical engravings of America as a woman, most famously "America" by Theodor Galle (ca. 1580), of whose "powerful conjunction of the savage and the feminine" Louis Montrose has given a superb analysis (37). On the modern manifestations of this conjunction, see Weigel 1990 and Theweleit 1977. The perhaps best known modern expression of the analogy of wilderness and female body is Freud's denomination of female sexuality as a "dark continent" a comparison that articulates the complex discursive relationship between the emerging science of psychoanalysis and Wilhelminian/Victorian imperialism. But it was Columbus who preceded Freud by comparing the shape of the earth with a woman's breast, with the earthly paradise, located in America, as the nipple (Columbus 1988, 2:30).
14. After being raped by her son, Sin begets "yelling monsters" that crawl in and out of her womb (Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 2.778802). Milton's Sin is modeled on Spenser's *Errour* (*Faerie Queene*, 1.1.13). These parallels, in which Virginia occupies the place of female monsters, anticipate the Puritan demonization of both female sexuality and the land. See Mackenthun 1996.
15. I do not find much evidence in the early modern colonial texts in support of Annette Kolodny's thesis that the colonizers regarded and represented the land as a (benevolent) maternal body. The only metaphorical incidence in that direction is Purchas's image of Virginia "spewing out" (i.e., giving birth to) her native inhabitants. Like Elizabeth, her patron saint, (and like Athene), Virginia is here conceptualized as a virgin-mother (on Elizabeth, see Purchas 1625, 226). Otherwise the land is clearly symbolized as the colonizer's potential spouse. To speak, against the majority of the evidence, of the land as symbolic mother is symptomatic of a general his-



torical myth in U.S. criticism: first, the denial that the feminization of the land articulated a process of dispossession (rather than, say, filial revolution); and second, the denial of the European roots of the American experience (see Kolodny 1975, 58).

16. As such, Purchas's writings also represent a crisis of signification at a time of ideological and political upheavals. Combining Puritan and non-Puritan discourses of possession, a task that leads to frequent contradictions and logical impossibilities in "Virginia's Verger," Purchas surely deserves more scholarly attention than he has received so far. James Boon's short and lucid evaluation of Purchas's nationalism and anthropology in his writings about Asia is a glorious exception (see Boon 1982, 154174). Perhaps not least because of the unabating predominance of an exceptionalist view of American history, Purchas's ambivalent and "polluted" position has been largely underrated if not ignored.

17. Winthrop 1963, 197. This concept leads back to the Middle Ages and the idea that Christ's mystical and divine body is represented on earth by the Christian soldier. The state and its royal potentates were likewise conceptualized as earthly representatives of Christ's body, a tradition that Winthrop preserves and translates into the Puritan context (see Brauner 1992).

18. The report was first published anonymously but was evidently written by Winthrop.

19. The connection between monstrous opinions and monstrous birth is already established in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, aptly enough in the scene about the Red Crosse Knight's encounter with Error, which prefigures both Purchas's description of Virginia "spewing out" her inhabitants and Milton's description of Sin. Error is described as a mixture of woman and serpent who lives in a den and of whom "there bred / A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed, / Sucking upon her poisonous dugs, each one / Of sundry shapes, yet all ill fauored." When the knight attacks Error, the sucklings creep into her mouth. At her death, she spews out black poison, "lumpes of flesh," and "loathly frogs and toads" without eyes. But her vomit is also "full of bookes and papers" (Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, 1.1.15 and 20). It may be seen as one of ideology's instructive twists that the word error is derived from the Latin *errare*, to wander (as in *errand*, which is the pursuit of Spenser's knights and of New World pilgrims alike). In its constructions of cultural otherness, European imperialism constantly gazes back upon its own denied monstrous image. It seems that its legitimacy to "go on" ("plus oultre," the motto of both King Charles I of Spain and of Francis Bacon) is based on destroying the monsters that are exclusively produced for this purpose.

20. The witchcraft associations of the discourse about the Antinomian Controversy are obvious. The *Short Story* was reissued in 1692, the year of the Salem witchcraft delusion; the first Boston witchcraft accusation occurred in 1638, one year after the expulsion of Hutchinson (see Schutte 1985, 88, and Demos 1982, 402).
21. See Schutte 1985, 9091. That we are able to give a clinical name to the birth does of course not mean that Winthrop's description is scientific or neutral. For example, he clearly writes "horns," not, as Schutte's clinical description has it, "bony protuberances" (91 n.). It's important to keep apart the two aspects of signification (referential and symbolic) and to be aware of the complex ways in which they interact.
22. See Kibbey 1987, chapter 5. My analysis is largely indebted to Kibbey's account but differs from it in crucial points. Contrary to Kibbey, I think it's important to psychologize the material.
23. Revelation 2.2023. See Barker-Benfield 1972, 79.
24. The following summary is based on the original records, as well as on Jennings 1975 and Vaughan 1979.
25. See Alden T. Vaushan, who bases this knowledge on Roger Williams's claim that *Pequot* was an Algonkian term for "destroyer." The myth of their foreign origin was propagated by William Hubbard in the 1670s (Vaughan 1979, 115). This revision in the characterization of the Pequots recalls Strachey's and Quinn's statements about Powhatan's and the Pamukeys' character, including their tradition of exterminating newcomers.
26. The Pequots were accused of having killed two traders, but even the authors of the war narratives admit the spuriousness of the charge. Underhill even renders the Pequots' defense against the accusations in a long direct quotation quite similar to Smith's rendering of Powhatan's position in the *Proceedings*. This sympathetic passage typically ends with Underhill's insinuation of the Pequots' cannibalism quoted above. See Vaushan 1979, 123; Mason 1819, 131; Underhill 1837, 89.
27. The dunging of enemy territory with the bodies of its inhabitants is also performed by Talus, the fighting machine in the Ireland quest of the *Faerie Queene* (5.7.7).
28. The intricate ideological relationship between the story of Ahab's wife, evoked by the antinomian context, and the destruction of the Pequots is expressed in fictional form by Herman Melville, who names his multicultural ship that disappears in the ocean *Pequod* and its monomaniacal captain Ahab. Thus *Moby Dick* may itself be seen as a complex negotiation of early American imperial history and of the erasure of cultural diversity by which that history is marked. One of Winthrop's reasons for explicitly excluding the

Jezebel of Kings from his structure of meaning was evidently the fact that such an analogy would have suggested an identification of the Puritans' deeds with those of the possessive Ahab, which had to be avoided. The Jezebel of Revelation, whose story does not evoke such disquieting analogies, was definitely safer for consumption.

29. Ann Kibbey certainly has a point when she describes the Puritans' act as their "appropriation of Adamic power" to "rename the world according to the Puritan new Adam's sacramental sense of people and things" (Kibbey 1987, 102). However, there is a difference between, say, Columbus's and Smith's and the Puritans' Adamic acts of renaming things in America and the act of *unnaming* that succeeded the Pequot War. In addition, the Puritans cleared the ground not only symbolically but materially as well, an action that may be anticipated and ideologically prepared by Columbus and Smith but was never actually pursued by them with such rigidity. The physical undoing that accompanied the Puritans' act of unnameing was also an enactment of Smith's post-1622 prescriptions for colonial warfare. At the same time, it was an enactment of God's injunction to Israel to take possession of Canaan: "ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, *and destroy the names of them out of that place*" (Deuteronomy 12.3; emphasis added).

30. . . . and much less an unconscious drive to make the world bend to the power of representation, which would be a more traditional, and apologetic, interpretation of this event. I'm grateful to Peter Hulme for clearing my head on this issue.

31. Ann Kibbey calls attention to this as well, but in my view misses the full ideological and psychological implications of this "coincidence" (see Kibbey 1987, 110). Francis Jennings uses the map as a cover illustration of his superb revision of Puritan colonial history but apparently doesn't realize the symbolic dimensiona dimension that may become obvious only if the Pequot War and the Antinomian Crisis are regarded as two aspects of the same problem.

32. The palisades, which stand for the threatening teeth in my "second reading," are traditionally symbols of domestication and of course of exclusion of everything beyond the pale of the *civitas* (see Weigel 1990, 159). From antiquity onward, cities were often imagined as female: Augustine's earthly city becomes the habitat of women "of evil conditions" who bring disorder into the neat dualism of earthly and heavenly city by seducing the (male) "citizens of God" (Saint Augustine 1945, 88 [book 15, chapter 22]).

## Epilogue

1. Paul de Man refers to the wars of religion as a "by-product" of Luther's translation of the Bible.
2. I am grateful to Bruce Greenfield for pointing out this text to me and for allowing me to quote from his translation.

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