

Early English Paradigms for New World Natives

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EVEN BEFORE Christopher Columbus returned from his revolutionary voyage of 1492–93, he began to describe for European readers the people he had encountered on the other side of the world. At times he portrayed the Indians in some detail, generalizing, to be sure, but avoiding stereotypical images. At other times he resorted to descriptive shorthand, saving time and space by comparing the unknown inhabitants of America and their customs with images familiar to Europeans. The Indians' skin, for example, he likened to 'the colour of the Canary Islanders'; their hair was coarse 'like that of a horse's tail'; their paddles were shaped 'like a baker's shovel'—images that were essentially neutral and probably helpful to readers back home.¹ But European observers increasingly described the Indians in more emblematic terms, casting them as representative human or quasi-human figures. Such identifying metaphors were usually freighted with moral or political judgments and functioned more as prescriptions than as descriptions, as paradigms for how Europeans should per-

1. J. M. Cohen, trans. and ed., *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus, Being His Own Log-Book, Letters and Dispatches* . . . (London, 1969), pp. 55–56.

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ceive American natives and, implicitly at least, how Europeans should treat them.² Almost invariably, perhaps inevitably, the proposed paradigms abetted European misunderstanding of American natives and often encouraged catastrophic colonial policies toward the Indians, in which Europeans treated New World natives as if they really were the types to which they were rhetorically compared.

This essay explores some of the paradigms on which English commentators drew in the era from Columbus's first voyage until the late seventeenth century.³ Space precludes a consideration of all the paradigms invoked in Tudor-Stuart England; instead, the focus here is on five models that flourished during those two centuries and that embodied England's groping efforts to comprehend the peoples of the New World: (1) the mythical wild men of medieval and Renaissance lore; (2) the imaginary monsters of antiquity and after; (3) the Irish of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; (4) the 'old Britons' of fourth-century England; and (5) the Lost Tribes of ancient Israel. The first two models were handy initial images, universally recognized in late medieval Europe and easily, though inaccurately, applied to the newly encountered peoples. The latter three paradigms were English inventions—late sixteenth/early seventeenth-century models contrived by imperial spokesmen when New World natives suddenly assumed a signifi-

2. 'Paradigm' is defined in the *Oxford American Dictionary* (1980) as 'something serving as an example or model of how things should be done.' In this essay, the meaning is more accurately 'an idea or image of how the natives of America should be understood and treated.'

3. My concern here is with the formation and function of attitudes towards American natives by English explorers, settlers, and commentators, whether or not they journeyed to the New World. Necessarily, then, this essay does not discuss some of the important interpretive frameworks—paradisaic, for example, or providential—which were unquestionably significant at certain times with certain observers of the American scene. Especially relevant are Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, 1964); Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York, 1978); Bernard Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Inaians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge, Eng., 1980); Karen Ordahl Kupperman, 'English Perceptions of Treachery: The Case of the American "Savages"', *The Historical Journal* 20 (1977): 263–87; and Alfred A. Cave, 'Canaanites in a Promised Land: The American Indian and the Providential Theory of Empire,' *American Indian Quarterly* (Fall 1988): 277–97.

cant role in England's public discourse. Until then, the wild man and monster served the English much as they served all of Europe.

No generic figure, real or imaginary, had more 'name recognition' in Renaissance Europe than the wild man. His national name varied from place to place: *wildeman* in Germany, *l'homme sauvage* in France, *uomo selvaggio* in Italy, wild man, woodwose, and green man in England. By whatever label, he was a ubiquitous figure in European folklore, pageantry, prose, poetry, drama, song, painting, sculpture, tapestry, and book illustration.⁴ Probably everyone in Europe, regardless of rank, location, or age, acknowledged wild men to be integral parts of his or her world. Few people claimed to have seen wild men, but they were too notorious and too frequent in the era's texts, iconography, and folklore to be doubted for a moment.

A minor strand in wild-man lore painted him in benign hues, uncivilized but gentle, often accompanied by a comparably naked and hirsute wife and child. More often the wild man was portrayed as a savage—a crude, rude, forest creature, untamed and untrustworthy. He was easily recognized by his nakedness, for he was clad only in abundant body hair and shaggy beard. He lived in a cave or crude hut; he bludgeoned his prey with a sturdy club; he lived on raw meat, wild fruit, and other forest fare, though in his most bestial manifestations he devoured human flesh. He assaulted anyone who intruded on his secluded world and ravished women

4. The standard discussion of wild men in European thought is Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1952), which should be supplemented by the lavishly illustrated catalogue by Timothy Husband, *The Wild Man: Medieval Myth and Symbolism* (New York, 1980), and Edward Dudley and Maxmillian E. Novak, eds., *The Wild Man Within: An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism* (Pittsburgh, 1972). Useful narrower studies include Olive Patricia Dickason, 'The Concept of *l'homme sauvage* and early French colonialism in the Americas,' *Revue française d'histoire d'Outre Mer* 64 (1977): 5-32; and Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility*, chs. 2 and 3. After this essay was largely written, I obtained Susi Colin, 'The Wild Man and the Indian in Early 16th Century Book Illustration,' in Christian F. Feest, ed., *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays* (Aachen, 1987), pp. 5-36. Although I appreciate that essay's contribution to the literature on wild men and Indians, I take issue with it at several points, especially its conflation of monsters and wild men, who seem to me to have played quite separate roles in medieval and Renaissance thought, although at times the boundary blurred.

who came within his grasp. He was godless, lacked right reason, and was inclined to evil rather than good (fig. 1). Late in the sixteenth century, Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* captured the essence of the 'wilde and saluage man . . . all ouergrowne with hair' so familiar to Renaissance readers,

With huge great teeth, like to a tusked Bore:
For he liu'd all on rauin and on rape
Of men and beasts; and fed on fleshly gore,
The signe whereof yet stain'd his bloody lips afore.⁵

Those bloody lips usually were unintelligible too, able to utter only a few guttural sounds. But if the wild man lacked social and linguistic refinements, he had extraordinary sexual prowess, physical strength, and knowledge of nature's secrets. The wild man was Europe's 'other,' the symbol of incivility, of near-bestiality, of untamed nature against which the presumably civilized citizens of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries measured and congratulated themselves.

Superficial connections between the wild man and the American Indian sprang readily to European minds. Most obvious was the Indians' habitation in a distant, unknown region. As Hayden White has observed in a different context, wild men were always 'associated with . . . the wilderness—the desert, forest, jungle, and mountains—those parts of the physical world that had not yet been domesticated.'⁶ To Europeans, America seemed to be just that: the distant jungle and forest ('desert' and 'wilderness' were the era's common terms) that Europeans had not yet subdued. The natives of that strange, distant, and uncivilized land *must* be wild men and hence must share with the European branch of the family tree the usual list of wild-man traits. From Columbus on, European narratives of America emphasized Indian characteristics that

5. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (London, 1977; orig. publ. 1596), Bk. iv, canto vii, stanza 5.

6. Hayden White, 'The Forms of Wildness: Archeology of an Idea,' in Dudley and Novak, eds., *Wild Man Within*, p. 7.



Fig. 1. *The Wild Man as cannibal or werewolf*. Woodcut ca. 1510–15 by Lucas Cranach the Elder. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1942 (42.45.1). All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

mirrored the wild men's deplored qualities: nakedness and cannibalism especially, but also an unintelligible language (to European ears), a lack of religion (by European definitions), and a reputed sexual libertinism (by European standards).⁷ This was a mangled image, of course; it homogenized disparate Indian culture; it stressed their worst features, distorted other features, and overlooked the Indians' many virtues. But the wild-man image of Indians spread rapidly through Europe, partly because the explorers so often arrived with wild-man expectations and partly because European listeners' and readers' preconceived notions of the wild man encouraged them to add wild-man characteristics to their mental picture of the Indian as soon as a few truly similar characteristics—nakedness, most obviously—were put before them.

The assumption that Indians were American wild men emerged early and lasted long, despite abundant evidence to the contrary. Indian hairiness is a case in point. Columbus reported that the natives had remarkably little hair, which other early first-hand accounts confirmed, yet for decades, European engravings of Indians frequently portrayed them with profuse beards or considerable body hair. A flagrant example is the illustration in a 1505 edition of Amerigo Vespucci's *De Novo Mundo* (fig. 2), which vividly contradicts the author's earlier insistence that the Indians 'have no hair whatever on their bodies.'⁸

European accounts of the Indians sometimes used the term 'wild,' but more often they substituted other labels that had been

7. For evidence of European fascination with Indian nakedness, see almost any sixteenth- or seventeenth-century description of American natives. For example, Columbus's first log-book description of the Indians (as paraphrased by Bartolome de las Casas) begins: 'Immediately some naked people appeared . . .' (Cohen, ed., *Voyages of Columbus*, p. 53; see also pp. 55, 60, 72, 117). Columbus was also the first European to write about the Indians' presumed lack of religion and language, and of their cannibalism (*ibid.*, pp. 56, 118, 121). Amerigo Vespucci and the other early reporters made comparable statements and added promiscuity to the list. See, for example, *The Letters of Amerigo Vespucci and Other Documents*, trans. Clements R. Markham (London, 1894), pp. 5–16, 47; and Edward Arber, ed., *The First Three English Books on America, (?1511)–1555 A.D.* (Birmingham, Eng., 1885; repr. New York, 1971), pp. 50, 70, 78, 81, 103, 106, and *passim*.

8. *Letters of Vespucci*, trans. Markham, p. 6. For later efforts by French writers to refute the Indians-as-hairy-wild-men myth and its tenacity, see Dickason, 'Concept of *l'homme sauvage*,' pp. 19–22.



Fig. 2. *Hirsute Indian couple*. Illustration in Amerigo Vespucci, *Epistola Alberico: De Novo Mundo* (Rostock, ca. 1505). Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Library.

applied to the mythical forest-dweller. In any case, the paradigm was unmistakable. Indians, like wild men, were perceived as 'uncivil', 'barbarian,' 'brutish,' and 'savage.' Similarly, European commentators' numerous lists of qualities the Indians supposedly lacked implicitly employed the paradigm: they had no laws, no morals, no personal property, no government, no reasonableness, and so on and on.⁹ In sum, American natives shared enough pre-

9. See, for example, W[illiam] Bullein, *A Dialogue Both Pleasant and Pitifull* . . . (London, 1578), sig. [K8].

sumed characteristics with Europe's mythical 'other' to make European observers imagine the conventional wild-man traits even where they emphatically did not exist. Europeans back home, getting information mainly through word of mouth over vast distances, were even more prone to plug the few reported facts into a preconceived model. Eventually, as the reports from America accumulated and became more accurate, and as Indians in Europe became more commonplace — as slaves or curiosities or emissaries to European governments — a truer picture of the Indians emerged on the Continent and in England. But the process was slow and uneven. In English pageantry, Indians often resembled wild men far into the seventeenth century.

Wild men, of course, were imaginary in that none really existed. Still, they were perceived as primarily human in appearance and in salvageability: given the right encouragement and a change in environment, they could become good citizens. Many wild men, in fact, were reputed to be fallen men — backsliders, who escaped to the forest for some traumatic reason and who could be reclaimed by the love of a maiden or a forgiving society.¹⁰ Not so the true monsters of ancient and medieval lore. Whereas wild men were essentially human despite some beastly characteristics, monsters were essentially bestial, with some human attributes of body or mind. And if wild men inhabited the nearby forests, monsters lived in more remote places — the ocean deep, for example, or far, far into the land, in what John Donne called 'the round earth's imagined corners.'¹¹

Few people doubted the monsters' existence, even though such creatures, like wild men, rarely showed their faces but were always over the next ridge or in the next river valley. Sightings at sea, on

10. Bernheimer, *Wild Men*, pp. 15–19.

11. John Donne, 'Holy Sonnet,' in *The Complete Poetry of John Donne*, ed. John T. Shawcross (New York, 1968), p. 340. The standard work on the species is John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge, 1981). See also Rudolph Wittkower, 'Marvels of the East: A Study in the History of Monsters,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 5 (1942): 159–97.

the other hand, were not unusual, probably prompted by dolphins, whales, floating debris, or moonbeams on the water. Such evidence only corroborated Greek and Roman authorities, especially Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, and medieval authorities, especially St. Augustine's *City of God*. Several English editions of Pliny's works appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and must have been widely read by educated men and women; surely Renaissance enthusiasm for classical writers reinforced existing notions of creatures without heads or with several heads, with scales and fins, or with a single foot that served as an umbrella.¹² In the early seventeenth century, Edward Topsell's heavily illustrated books on the world's quadrupeds and serpents, although skeptical of most undocumented sightings, included some imaginary species.¹³ And for the less educated reader, cheap and sensational pamphlets pandered to the age's fascination with monsters of every kind and purpose.¹⁴

Columbus's voyage opened a new hemisphere for monster lairs, and new sightings came quickly. Some were of giants, some of mermen, some of human bodies with dog-shaped heads.¹⁵ Not that any well-informed European (many, of course, were not well-informed) believed that all Indians were monsters, at least of the grotesque types. Columbus had squelched that rumor on his return from America in 1493. He had not, he assured anxious readers, 'found the human monsters which many people expected.' Yet Columbus planted the seeds for the very supposition he denied.

12. Caius Plinius Secundus, *A Summarie of the Antiquities, and Wonders of the Worlde* (London, [1566]). Other full or partial editions of Pliny's work (variously titled) were published in English in 1585, 1587, 1601, 1611, and 1634. See Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, pp. 9-21, for a catalogue of the species most frequently mentioned by classical and medieval writers.

13. Edward Topsell, *The Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes* (London, 1607), esp. pp. 13, 441-42; Topsell, *The Historie of Serpents* (London, 1608), esp. p. 201.

14. Wittkower, 'Marvels of the East,' pp. 193-94.

15. For example: Pietro Matire d'Angheria, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India* . . . , trans. Rycharde Eden (London, 1555), 218v-19r; 'The Travailes of John Hortop,' in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, 12 vols. (Glasgow, 1903-05; orig. publ. 1589), ix: 461; Lawrence Keymis [or Kemys], *A Relation of the Second Voyage to Guiana* (London, 1596), sig. C3v; George Abbot, *A Briefe Description of the Whole Worlde* . . . , 6th ed. (London, 1624), sig. X3v.

His Indian informants told him that on one island the people had tails and that on another island they ate their captives, stories that Columbus passed along without denying—because he could not—their veracity.¹⁶ It was a short step from believing in such inhuman humans to assuming that the headless Blemmyae of classical lore prospered in America.¹⁷ Predictably, the Blemmyae and other bizarre monsters appear frequently and graphically on maps, in book illustrations, and in other American iconography (fig. 3). Several English narratives of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries lent credence to the legends. The redoubtable Walter Raleigh, as late as 1596, told of monsters in Guiana with ‘eyes in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middle of their breasts.’ No, he hadn’t actually seen any, he admitted, but after repeated confirmation of their existence by his native friends, ‘I am resolved it is true.’¹⁸

As the probability faded that America harbored grotesque monsters—except, perhaps, the headless anthropophagi—the suspicion grew that Indians might be outwardly human but inwardly monstrous. Pope Paul’s bull of 1537 and the pleadings of Bishop las Casas in the 1550s had tried to establish definitively that Indians were true humans, but doubts persisted.¹⁹ A frequent refrain in European writings admitted that Indians looked like humans but

16. Cohen, ed., *Voyages of Columbus*, pp. 119, 121. Columbus sometimes suggested that he conversed quite well with the natives and at other times that they could scarcely communicate at all, which raises doubts about the accuracy of his understanding of native knowledge. On the linguistic dilemmas of culture contact, see Stephen Greenblatt, ‘Kidnapping Language,’ *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago, 1991), pp. 86–118; Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (New York, 1991); and Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London, 1986), esp. ch. 1.

17. *The History of Herodotus*, trans. George Rawlinson (London, 1910), I: 329, tells of man-eating ‘androphagi.’

18. Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of the Large and Bewtiful Empire of Guiana*, ed. V. T. Harlow (London, 1928; orig. publ. 1596), pp. 56–57. Raleigh’s informants called the headless people ‘Ewaipanoma.’ The effectiveness of Raleigh’s testimony is suggested by the Archbishop of Canterbury’s assertion as late as 1624 that ‘no sober man should any way doubt of the truth’ that anthropophagi inhabit Guiana (Abbot, *Briefe Description*, sig. X3v).

19. The writings on Spanish attitudes are voluminous, especially on Las Casas and his role in shaping official and popular perceptions of the Indians. See especially Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge, 1982).

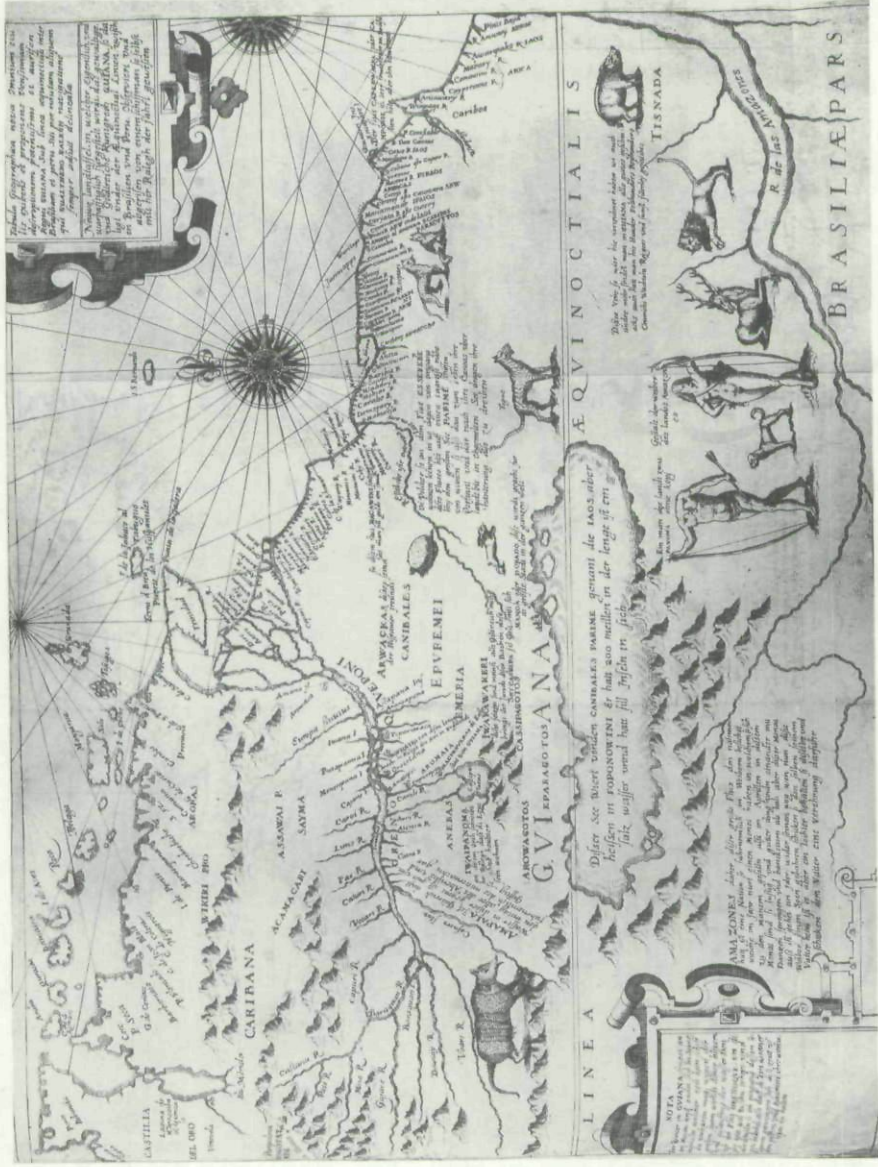


Fig. 3. Headless Blemmyae among New World creatures. Map in Theodor de Bry, America, Part VIII (Frankfurt, 1590). American Antiquarian Society.

lacked essential human qualities. An English tribute to explorer Martin Frobisher, for example, lauded his expeditions of the 1570s to lands

Where dreadfull daungers are not scarce,
 where pleasures few are found,
 Where sauage beastes deuoyde of sense,
 doe runne like men on ground.²⁰

Three decades later, the Reverend Robert Gray articulated the same persistent sentiment: the Indians in Virginia, he advised his readers, are 'worse than those beasts which are of most wild and savage nature.'²¹

Such notions of Indian monstrosity in character and habits rather than in form were spurred by frequent and exaggerated accounts of New World cannibalism. To Europeans, cannibalism was ipso facto monstrous; if Indians were cannibals, Indians were monsters. This logic, combined with the suspicion that Indians were too cruel to be human (while turning a blind eye to their own forms of cruelty), encouraged Europeans to resort almost instinctively to the monster paradigm during peaks of animosity against American natives. Samuel Purchas, clergyman and the younger Hakluyt's successor as England's principal literary propagandist, proclaimed in the aftermath of the Powhatan uprising of 1622 that the Indians of Virginia had 'little of Humanitie but shape [and were] . . . more brutish then the beasts they hunt'; in the throes of New England's worst Indian war, a colonial poet dubbed the enemy 'Monsters shapt and fac'd like men'; the Reverend Cotton Mather variously decried the same natives as '*Indian Dragons*,' 'horrid *Cannibals*,' '*Devils Incarnate*,' and 'the most beastly and bloody things that ever wore the Shape of *Men*.'²²

20. John Kirckham in Thomas Ellis, *A True Report of the Third and Last Voyage into Meta Incognita* (London, [1578]), sig. [C3v].

21. Robert Gray, *A Good Speed to Virginia* (London, 1609), sigs. B1-C3.

22. Samuel Purchas, *Purchase His Pilgrimes*, 4 vols. (London, 1625) IV: 1814; [Benjamin Tompson], *New Englands Crisis, Or a Brief Narrative of New-Englands Lamentable Estate at Present* (Boston, 1676), p. 19; Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Cbristi Americana: or, the Ecclesiastical History of New-England* (London, 1702), Book VII: 110-11.

The monster paradigm, it seems clear, functioned differently than its wild-man counterpart. The latter had initially been Europe's image of all Indians; and if it was fundamentally pejorative, it nonetheless was flexible enough to acknowledge benign characteristics and even to evolve in the eighteenth century into the Noble Savage image.²³ The monster paradigm, by contrast, was not a description of the norm but instead a wholly pejorative metaphor, a verbal excess, an excoriation of Indians at their imagined worst. The perception of Indians-as-monsters existed alongside Indians-as-wild-men throughout the sixteenth century and faded rapidly thereafter, although in America the paradigm enjoyed a long and inglorious career as a sporadic militant metaphor.²⁴

By the final quarter of the sixteenth century, English interest in America had begun to catch up to the continent's. Prodded by the two Richard Hakluyts and a handful of other literary imperialists, English officials and especially English investors began to appreciate America's usefulness. The available territory between Spanish Florida and French Canada did not contain precious metals to be mined (though the hope persisted), or Indian cities to be plundered, or a vast native population to be exploited for labor and tribute, but as a place to settle England's surplus population, to produce mundane raw materials, to attack Spanish fleets or ports, and to promulgate the gospel to the heathen, North America had impressive potential. To achieve the desired goals, however, the

23. The Noble Savage paradigm, which is outside the scope of this essay, drew partly on the wild-man tradition, partly on the image of the Indians as relics of the Golden Age, and partly on themes peculiar to eighteenth-century Europe. The extensive literature includes Hoxie Neale Fairchild, *The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Naturalism* (New York, 1928); Henri Baudet, *Paradise on Earth: Some Thoughts on European Images of Non-European Man*, trans. Elizabeth Wentholt (New Haven, 1965; orig. publ. 1959); and Hayden White, 'The Noble Savage Theme as Fetish,' in Fredi Chiappelli, ed., *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, 1976), 1: 121-35. A useful concise summary is in Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, pp. 72-80.

24. Contributing to skepticism about monsters was the heightening of systematic scrutiny of the subject, as reflected in works such as John Spencer, *A Discourse Concerning Prodigies* (Cambridge, 1663).

natives must be addressed as integral to empire-building and confronted as realities rather than abstractions. The English now had compelling reasons to contrive their own, largely self-serving, paradigms for understanding New World natives.

Historians have recently argued that in the second half of the sixteenth century and well into the seventeenth, Ireland was England's principal paradigm for the conquest of America. 'The colonization of Ireland,' writes Bernard Bailyn, '... provided England with its model for permanent overseas settlement,' a model that many scholars find especially pertinent to English perceptions and treatment of the Indians.²⁵ The gist of the interpretation is that when English efforts to reconquer Ireland in the 1560s met with formidable resistance, the ethnocentric English deepened still further their contempt for Irish ways and beliefs, labelling them barbarian, savage, bestial. A few decades later, when the English first encountered American Indians on a substantial scale, colonists and commentators saw them as overseas Irishmen: 'English treatment of the American Indians . . . has its origins in their attitudes toward tribal Irishmen.'²⁶ The Irish, in short, served the English in a similar but more specific way than wild men had earlier served all of Europe—a readily recognizable pejorative paradigm.

The attributes the English thought they saw in both the Irish and Indians included nakedness, animal-skin clothing (where necessary), ferociousness, licentiousness, and drunkenness.²⁷ Fa-

25. Bernard Bailyn, et al., *The Great Republic: A History of the American People* (Boston, 1977), pp. 26–29.

26. The Irish paradigm has been proposed to varying degrees by, among others, Howard Mumford Jones, *O Strange New World. American Culture: The Formative Years* (New York, 1964), pp. 167–79; David Beers Quinn, *The Elizabethans and the Irish* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966), esp. ch. 9; Nicholas P. Canny, 'The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America,' *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 30 (1973): 575–98; Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: The Pattern Established, 1565–76* (New York, 1976), esp. pp. 159–63; James Muldoon, 'The Indian as Irishman,' *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 111 (1975): 267–89; and Leonard P. Liggio, 'English Origins of Early American Racism,' *Radical History Review* 3 (1976): 1–36; quotation from *ibid.*, p. 20.

27. A convenient collection of English writings about the Irish during the period here under consideration is James P. Myers, Jr., ed., *Elizabethan Ireland: A Selection of Writings by Elizabethan Writers on Ireland* (Hamden, Conn., 1983). See especially the extract from Barnabe Rich, *A New Description of Ireland* (1610), pp. 130–40, which is an extremely harsh

cilitating the projection of these assumed Irish shortcomings onto the Indians, according to champions of the Irish paradigm, was involvement in both Irish and American colonization schemes by a sizable set of promoters, explorers, and settlers: Walter Raleigh, Humphrey Gilbert, Ralph Lane, Lord de la Warr, and others. They initially served English imperialism in Ireland, where they abhorred the natives for not instantly adopting English theology and customs and for resisting English rule. Later, in America, English officers saw uncooperative Indians in the same unflattering light, applied to them the same disparaging epithets, and accorded them the same brutal treatment. Howard Mumford Jones summed up the Irish-American connection: '[T]he doctrine that the only good Indian is a dead Indian first took shape . . . in the doctrine that the only good wild Irishman is a dead wild Irishman. . . . Used to savagery in the one place, [the English] looked for it, they provoked it, in the other.'²⁸

The argument, I suggest, is exaggerated. That some observers of Britain's imperial ventures drew parallels between the relatively familiar Irish and the relatively unknown Indian worlds is indisputable and unsurprising. There may have been, too, a formative experience for Ralph Lane and a few other Englishmen who toiled for an appreciable time in Ireland and then in America, but the lists of parallels invoked and men involved are short.²⁹ Rather, the evidence points to a handful of Irish-Indian similarities, most of them incidental, but rarely to a formative model. Historians who argue for a shaping Irish precedent are barking in the wrong bog.

Early English analogies between the Irish and Indians focused on clothing and shelter. Writers on both sides of the Atlantic

assessment of the Irish but fairly representative of English attitudes in the late Tudor-early Stuart era.

28. Jones, *Strange New World*, pp. 172-73.

29. Muldoon, 'Indian as Irishman,' p. 270, holds that it was 'only natural for early explorers and *settlers* [my emphasis] to view the Indians in terms derived from the experiences of the English in Ireland.' For the handful of explorers with experience in both places, this is probably true, but the number of early settlers with Irish experience must have been exceedingly few.

sometimes likened Indian houses to Irish hovels and described Indian clothing as 'Irish-like mantles.' Critics of the Indians also occasionally castigated Indians for doing—or not doing—various things that Englishmen considered typical of the Irish: for living like nomads and practicing sorcery, for example, or for not manuring their fields or fencing their lands. Indian character, in English eyes, also suggested some highly pejorative parallels: treachery, lechery, superstition.³⁰ In sum, from an English perspective, the Irish and Indians were comparably uncivilized and unchristian (see fig. 4). But a similar judgment applied, in English eyes, to much of the world's population. As an English schoolmaster lamented in 1622, ignorance of true religion and sound learning promoted 'inhumanitie' in 'the Irish, the Virgineans, and all other barbarous nations.'³¹ The Irish happened to be the nearest 'barbarians' of significance to the English, the Americans were the most distant.

If colonial Ireland had been colonial America's principal model, and if the Irish had been a paradigm for the Indians, the surviving literature would not, presumably, be so silent on both subjects. England's leading imperialists—the two Hakluyts, George Peckham, John Smith, Samuel Purchas, and their contemporaries—wrote much about colonization but extremely little about Ireland's relevance to America. They rarely devoted a whole sentence, never a whole treatise, to the subject.³² The reason, I submit, is that the men concerned with England's overseas expansion were too aware of the profound differences between the Irish and American peoples, and between the Irish and American colonial contexts, to expend much ink on minor parallels. Judging from the literary and pictorial evidence, the Irish experience played a far lesser role in

30. Canny, 'Ideology of English Colonization,' pp. 587–89, nicely summarizes English views of the Irish in the late Tudor–early Stuart era.

31. [John Brinsley], *A Consolation for our Grammar Schooles, . . . More Specially for All Those of the Inferiour Sort, . . . Namely, for Ireland, Wales, Virginia, with the Sommer Ilands*, 2 ed. (London, 1622), p. 3.

32. See, for example, the paucity of meaningful connections to America in the references to Ireland in E.G.R. Taylor, ed., *The Original Writings and Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts*, 2 vols. (London, 1935), I: 71, II: 267, 328, 341, 377.



Fig. 4. Irish men and women of the early seventeenth century. Border illustrations to map of Ireland in John Speed, *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* (London, 1611). Courtesy of the Henry E. Huntington Library.

shaping English thinking about colonization and native inhabitants than did the Spanish experience in America (a large topic in its own right), which served some English observers as a positive model and—just as important—served others as a negative paradigm.³³ That said, it is nonetheless true that in the early decades of English America, occasional Irish parallels helped English readers to form handy, if often distorted, images of the newly encountered natives and their customs.³⁴

Another idea spawned by England's expansion into America had a more tangible influence on English images of the Indians. Like the other paradigms considered here—indeed like extended metaphors at any time and place—this new model surfaced, spread, then disappeared in keeping with its users' conscious or subconscious needs. The wild man and the monster served Europeans effectively as long as Indians were considered largely in the abstract and as long as the basic questions about them remained elementary: What do they look like? Are they human? Are they incorrigible cannibals? When answers to the fundamental questions gained general acceptance, those paradigms lost their interpretive power, except—as noted earlier—for rhetorical or theatrical flourishes.

By the time England joined the race for New World colonies, its imperialists and prospective colonists needed paradigms that addressed more subtle and more specifically English concerns about the Indians, especially about their character and malleability. Were they amenable to English control? Would they barter gladly and, from the English standpoint, profitably? Did they crave the English variety of Christianity? (The English were sure that the

33. For a concise summary of this point, see K. G. Davies, *The North Atlantic World in the Seventeenth Century* (Minneapolis, 1974), pp. 4–5. The influence, both pro and con, of the Spanish experience on English colonization is beyond the scope of this essay but deserves extensive further study. Much has been written on Spanish and English colonization, of course, but little on the connections between them.

34. For a sign that the Irish paradigm may be losing force, compare the coverage of the topic in the first edition of Bailyn, et al., *Great Republic*, pp. 26–29, with the fourth edition (Lexington, Mass., 1992), pp. 24–26.

Indians had overwhelmingly rejected Spanish Catholicism, but Protestantism—Anglican or Puritan—might be another matter.) Would the Indians adopt English customs of agriculture, education, family structure, dress, and speech?

If English colonization of North America were to be successful and peaceful, England needed Indians who could be gently subdued, gradually converted to English ways, and eventually absorbed into Anglo-American society. In 1587, the younger Hakluyt expressed a widespread late-sixteenth-century English assumption that 'no greater glory can be handed down [to posterity] than to conquer the barbarian, to recall the savage and the pagan to civility, to draw the ignorant within the orbit of reason, and to fill with reverence for divinity the godless and the ungodly.'³⁵ Hakluyt and many of his contemporaries had no doubt that they could do just that to the Indians. Accordingly, a new notion of Indian pliability emerged in the 1580s, initially in reports on England's efforts at colonization on Roanoke Island off the Carolina coast and later in the promotional literature of early Virginia.³⁶ The principal symbolic players in this new paradigm were the Englishman's own ancestors—the Picts and Britons who inhabited the island when Julius Caesar and the Roman legions imposed their brand of civility in the early centuries after Christ.³⁷

The first significant application of this paradigm to the Indians appeared in the second edition (1590) of Thomas Hariot's *Briefe and True Report* on the Roanoke colony.³⁸ Hariot had accompanied

35. Richard Hakluyt, 'To the illustrious and right worthy Sir Walter Raleigh,' in Taylor, ed., *Writings of the Two Hakluyts*, II: 368.

36. For a variant interpretation of the motives behind England's post-1590 view of the Indians, see Loren E. Pennington, 'The Amerindian in English promotional literature,' in K. R. Andrews, N. P. Canny, and P.E.H. Hair, eds., *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic, and America, 1480-1650* (Detroit, 1979), pp. 175-214.

37. This paradigm had already been applied to the Irish, though apparently quite seldom. It probably did not seem apt in the Irish case because they had demonstrated from the outset a sturdy resistance to English efforts at anglicization. Still, the 'old Britons' paradigm serves as a link between English views of the Irish and the Indians: English observers believed both peoples were at a primitive level of social and theological progress and needed, as had the old Britons, a hefty dose of civility and Protestantism. See Canny, 'Ideology of English Colonization,' pp. 588-90, 595-96.

38. Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia* . . . (Frankfurt,

the expedition of 1585–86 as resident scientist, cartographer, ethnologist, and interpreter, having learned a smattering of the Algonquian language from two Indians carried to England a year before.³⁹ Hariot's pamphlet, first published in quarto in 1588, had no illustrations; two years later, it was reissued in folio by the Flemish Protestant publisher Theodor de Bry, lavishly illustrated with his engravings of watercolor paintings by John White. The latter had also been on the Roanoke expedition and would return as governor of the 1587 colonial effort; in both 1585 and 1587, White sketched almost everything he saw—flora, fauna, and especially Indians. Scholars now praise White's Roanoke paintings as accurate and significant contributions to anthropology, art history, botany, literature, and zoology.⁴⁰

Almost wholly overlooked by modern readers, except as curiosities, is the de Bry edition's appendix: five large pictures—three of Picts and two of Britons. According to the *Briefe and True Report*, White found illustrations of Picts and Britons 'in a oold English cronicle' and rendered copies in watercolor for de Bry, who then made engravings—somewhat mannered and embellished—for the new edition of Hariot's book.⁴¹ The purpose of the pictures, according to Hariot (or perhaps the younger Hakluyt, who may have written the captions) was 'to shoue how that the Inhabitants of the

1590). This was subsequently designated Part I of the de Brys' series on America and the only one published in English. On the de Bry illustrations (the publisher/engravers' principal contribution to discovery discourse), see especially Bernadette Bucher, *Icon and Conquest: A Structural Analysis of the Illustrations of de Bry's Great Voyages*, trans. Basia Miller Gulati (Chicago, 1981).

39. On Hariot's remarkable career and writings, see Muriel Rukeyser, *Traces of Thomas Hariot* (New York, [1971]); and David B. Quinn, 'Thomas Harriot and the New World,' in John W. Shirley, ed., *Thomas Harriot, Renaissance Scientist* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 36–53.

40. On White's paintings, see especially Paul Hulton and David Beers Quinn, *The American Drawings of John White, 1577–1590, with Drawings of European and Oriental Subjects*, 2 vols. (London and Chapel Hill, 1964); Paul Hulton, *America at 1585: The Complete Drawings of John White* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1984); Christian F. Feest, 'The Virginia Indian in Pictures, 1612–1624,' *Smithsonian Journal of History* 1 (1966): 1–30; and Paul Hulton, 'Images of the New World: Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues and John White,' in Andrews, Canny, and Hair, eds., *Westward Enterprise*, pp. 195–214.

41. At least one of the paintings was recently discovered to have been by Jacques Le Moyne. See Hulton, 'Images of the New World,' pp. 211–12; and Hulton, *America at 1585*, pp. 17–18, 132.

*great Britannie haue bin in times past as sauuage as those of Virginia.*⁴² To emphasize the point, White and de Bry made the ancient English appear more barbarous and ferocious than the Indians portrayed in the main section of Hariot's book: one Pictish man is wholly naked (not even a loin cloth), hideously tattooed from head to foot; his right hand holds a dripping head, and another severed head lies on the ground. The women appear less militant than the men but are almost as bare-skinned and ostensibly uncouth (figs. 5 and 6). The implication is clear: henceforth the reader should think of the Indians of North America in terms of his or her own ancestors—those barbarous, heathen primitives who might have remained in idolatry and ignorance had not Roman soldiers introduced them to Christianity and European civility. A new paradigmatic trend was underway.

Evidence of the Indian-as-Old-Briton echoed repeatedly in England's early-seventeenth-century imperialist literature. In 1610, for example, the Reverend William Crashaw preached to the Virginia Company of London that

the time was when wee were as sauage and vnciuill, and worshipped the diuill, as now they do, then God sent some to make vs ciuill, and others to make us christians. If such had not been sent vs we had yet continued wild and vnciuill, and worshippers of the diuill: . . . [S]hall we not be sensible of those that are still as we were then?⁴³

A broadside ballad, issued in London in 1612 to raise money for the Virginia colony through an English lottery, expressed a similar sentiment (to be sung 'To the tune of Lusty Gallant'):

42. Hariot, *Briefe and True Report* (1590 ed.), sig. E. According to J. A. Leo Lemay, White's drawings of Indians 'changed English and European perceptions of their own ancestors. Henceforth, Europeans viewed their progenitors as versions of the American Indian. Thus the Amerindian influenced European ideas of civilization's development.' Lemay, 'The Beginnings,' in Louis D. Rubin, ed., *The History of Southern Literature* (Baton Rouge, 1985), p. 14. Perhaps Lemay is right, but I think the evidence is clear, as I have argued in these pages, that the influence was primarily—I suspect wholly—in the other direction: that Europeans, especially the English, viewed Indians as latter-day Picts and Britons. The paradigm's purpose and function were to shed light on the Indians, not on the Europeans' ancestors.

43. William Crashaw, *A Sermon Preached in London before the Right Honourable the Lord La Warre, Lord Gouvernour and Captaine Generall of Virginea* (London, 1610), sig. [C4v].



Fig. 5. 'Pict' man, engraved by Theodor de Bry from watercolor by John White. Illustration in Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the Newfound Land of Virginia* (Frankfurt, 1590). American Antiquarian Society.

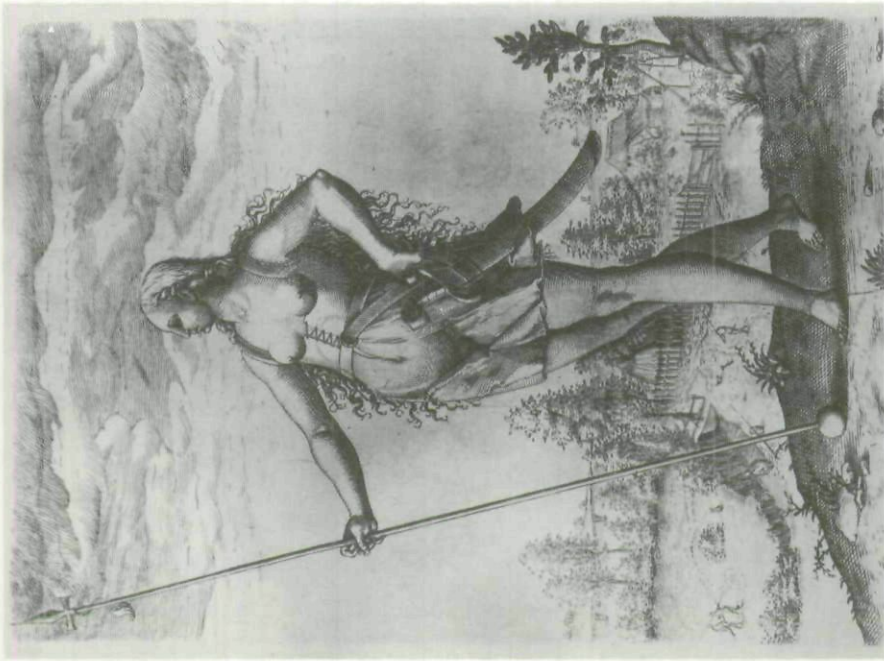


Fig. 6. 'A Women nig(b)hour to the Pictes,' in the same book.

Who knowes not *England* once was like
a Wildernesse and sauage place,
Till gouernment and use of men,
that wildnesse did deface:
And so *Virginia* may in time,
be made like England now;
Where long-loud (i.e., = lov'd) peace and plenty both,
sits smiling on her brow.⁴⁴

Use of the old Britons paradigm reached its apogee in the 1620s, with Samuel Purchas its most prominent proponent. He incorporated the image in his monumental anthology of travel narratives, *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, by asking in an editorial marginal note: 'Were not wee our selues made and not borne ciuill in our Progenitors dayes? and were not *Caesars Britaines* as brutish as *Virginians*?' (By Virginians, Purchas meant Indians of the Chesapeake region, though critics of the English settlement at Jamestown thought the colonists were brutish as well.) Almost simultaneous with Purchas's pronouncement, a promotional tract for English colonization asserted that 'the old *Brittons* . . . were as rude and barbarous' as the Indians; rather than despise them because of their present condition, the English should pity them and hope 'within short time, [to] win them to our owne will, and frame them as we list.'⁴⁵

Spokesmen on the American side of England's fledgling empire drew on the same paradigm. After several years in Virginia, William Strachey believed that

Had not this violence, and this Iniury, bene offred vnto vs by the Romanis, . . . even by *Iulius Caesar* himself . . . we might yet haue lyved [like] overgrowne Satyrs, rude, and vntutred, wandring in the woodes, dwelling in Caues, and hunting for our dynners, (as the wyld beasts in

44. *Londons Lotterie* (London, 1612), verso (facsimile in Robert C. Johnson, 'The Lotteries of the Virginia Company, 1612-1621,' *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 74 [1966]: 259-92, illustration between 270 and 271). See also the poem at the top of [Virginia Company of London], *A Declaration for the Certaine Time of Drawing the Great Standing Lottery* (London, 1615), also reproduced in *ibid.*, facing p. 259.

45. Purchas, *Purchase His Pilgrimes*, iv: 1755; Richard Eburne, *Plaine Pathway to Plantations* (London, 1624), p. 28.

the Forrests for their prey,) prostetuting our daughters to straungers, sacrificing our Children to our Idolls, nay eating our owne Children, as did the Scots in those dayes. . . .⁴⁶

These frequent invocations of the ancient Britons (many more could be cited) carried a dual message: first, and most obvious, was the paradigm that has been explicated here—that Indians should be thought of as fundamentally like the British themselves except for their backwardness in religious beliefs and behavior; both shortcomings could be rectified if the colonists converted and educated the Indians for their own good. The other message, equally significant for the future of Anglo-Indian relations, was that armed force, such as Caesar had used, might well be necessary. Purchas put the case bluntly in another editorial aside: ‘The *Romane* swords were [the] best teachers of ciuilitie.’⁴⁷ No wonder the record of English colonization contains so much bloodshed. No wonder either that the paradigm’s gentler side eroded rapidly when Indian resistance, both military and cultural, convinced English imperialists that American natives were not as malleable as the Picts and Britons (by hindsight) had been. Especially in the Chesapeake Bay area, where the paradigm was born and where it received most of its endorsements, the image of the Indians soured quickly after the Powhatan uprising of 1622.⁴⁸ The paradigm’s hopeful message had proved illusory, and with its principal point no longer viable, the old Britons model of the American Indian faded from use.⁴⁹

The final rhetorical model to be considered here had a more benign origin and outcome. Although it emerged in England and

46. William Strachey, *The Historie of Travell into Virginia Britania*, ed. Louis B. Wright and Virginia Freund (London, 1953), p. 24. Strachey appears to have begun his book in Virginia ca. 1609 and completed it after his return to England in 1611. The paragraph on old Britons could have been written in either place.

47. Purchas, *Purchase His Pilgrimes*, iv: 1755.

48. On the uprising and its aftermath, see Alden T. Vaughan, “‘Expulsion of the Salvages’: English Policy and the Virginia Massacre of 1622,” *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 35 (1978): 57–84.

49. Although the old Britons paradigm was cited far less often after the mid-1620s, it appeared occasionally in the 1630s and beyond.

America soon after the old Britons model had run its course, the notion that the American Indians were lineal descendants of one or more of the ten Lost Tribes of Israel was less a successor to the previous paradigm than it was a New England-focused counterpart. It was optimistic in that, like the old Britons model, it assumed the Indians to be ripe for conversion; it was benign in that it encouraged the colonists to 'uplift' rather than enslave or exterminate them.

The authority for the Lost Tribes paradigm was not an 'oolld English cronicle' or national memory but the far more compelling authority of Holy Writ—at least Holy Writ as some Christians interpreted certain Old Testament passages and some Jews interpreted several sacred texts. To Christian theorists, the conversion of the Jews was a necessary first step toward the final millennium; many Jews believed that the regathering of the dispersed Jews in Israel would herald the arrival of the messiah. These millennial and messianic strands of eschatology came into brief and cordial conjunction in the 1640s and helped to shape English beliefs about the Indians for nearly two decades. Thereafter, the Lost Tribes paradigm faded rapidly from the limelight but resurfaced from time to time in the remainder of the colonial era and still survives.⁵⁰

Until Ferdinand Magellan's expedition circumnavigated the globe in 1521–22, the issue of Indian origins was moot: the Americans were, presumably, Asians. Doubts nonetheless proliferated, and once the western hemisphere's separateness from the Asian continent was established, European theorists began to debate the vexing question of where the Indians had come from.⁵¹ It was now

50. The substantial literature on the connection between the Lost Tribes and the America Indians includes Lynn Glaser, 'Indians or Jews?', introduction to Manasseh ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel* (Gilroy, Calif., 1973), pp. 1–74; Ronald Sanders, *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands: The Origins of American Racism* (Boston, 1978); David S. Katz, *Philosemitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England, 1603–1655* (Oxford, 1982), esp. ch. 4; Richard W. Cogley, 'John Eliot and the Origins of the American Indians,' *Early American Literature*, 21 (1986–87): 210–25; Henry Méchoulan and Gérard Nahon, introduction to *The Hope of Israel: The English Translation of 1652*, trans. Richenda George (Oxford, 1987); and James Holstun, *A Rational Millennium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America* (New York, 1987), ch. 3.

51. The major early theories on the origin of the Indians are discussed in Lee Eldridge

axiomatic that the Indians were the New World's earliest immigrants, for *Genesis* established definitively that all humans were descended from Adam and Eve and subsequently from Noah's sons. Japhet's heirs were popularly believed to have settled in Europe, Shem's in Asia, and Cham's in Africa. From which of these strands did the Indians descend and by what route(s) did they reach the New World? The answer, some argued, was that after the Assyrians forced the Ten Tribes from Israel in the eighth century B.C., one or more of them, or parts of them, pushed slowly eastward into Tartaria and eventually, perhaps after many centuries, crossed onto the North American continent and dispersed throughout the New World. Some advocates of this theory claimed that *only* the Lost Tribes came to America; others accepted the Indians' Hebrew lineage but not their Lost Tribes origin; still others said that the Jews, whatever their tribal affiliation, shared American settlement with other Old World peoples. In any case, during the long migration across Asia and America, the Jews' religious and cultural traditions gradually eroded, hence the uncertainty in recognizing the Indians' true origins.

In the sixteenth century, several Spanish missionaries, including the great Dominican Las Casas and the near-great Franciscan Bernadino de Sahagún, speculated on the possibility that the Indians might be Jews, but the prospect stirred little enthusiasm in Spain and elsewhere; the Spanish court, unsympathetic to Jews in any guise, found the theory intolerable and tried to suppress it.⁵² As a paradigm for understanding or manipulating Indians, the Lost Tribes explanation apparently served no useful purpose.

Nearly a century later, it appealed strongly to many Englishmen, especially to Puritans, who emphasized the preeminence

Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts, 1492-1729* (Austin, Tex., 1967). See also Don Cameron Allen, *The Legend of Noah: Renaissance Rationalism in Art, Science, and Letters* (Urbana, Ill., 1949), ch. 6; and Robert Washope, *Lost Tribes and Sunken Continents: Myth and Method in the Study of American Indians* (Chicago, 1962).

52. Glaser, 'Indians or Jews?', pp. 23-27; George Weiner, 'America's Jewish Braves,' *Mankind* (Oct. 1974), pp. 56-64, esp. p. 58; and Huddleston, *Origins of the Indians*, pp. 33-47.

of biblical authority and, in many cases, the imminence of the millennium.⁵³ In the 1640s, when several strands of millennialism flourished in England, some clergymen and their followers concluded that if the Indians were Jews a golden opportunity was at hand to convert them quickly to Christianity and thereby hasten the judgment day; God would hardly have put the Jews in so convenient a location if He had not intended His people to see the message and seize the opportunity. So thought the Reverend Thomas Thorowgood, a Presbyterian minister in Norfolk, England, who in about 1646 began to write *Iewes in America*, published in 1650.⁵⁴ Almost simultaneously, Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel of Amsterdam reached a similar conclusion, though for different theological reasons, and the two men—brought together by a mutual friend and fellow Lost Tribes advocate, John Durie—began to correspond.⁵⁵ Soon an important third party joined the international network: the Reverend John Eliot of Roxbury, Massachusetts. He had learned about the Thorowgood/ben Israel position from a fellow New Englander, Plymouth's Edward Winslow, who in the late 1640s was raising funds in England for Eliot's missionary program.⁵⁶ Menasseh ben Israel shared with Thorowgood and Eliot the basic contention that the Indians were descended from the Lost Tribes; the English edition of his *Hope of Israel* endorsed emphatically the theory 'that the first inhabitants of America, were the ten Tribes of the Israelites.'⁵⁷ The rabbi differed,

53. For the American side of this trend, see esp. J. F. Maclear, 'New England and the Fifth Monarchy: The Quest for the Millennium in Early American Puritanism,' *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 32 (1975): 223–60.

54. Thomas Thorowgood, *Iewes in America; or, Probabilities that the Americans Are of that Race* (London, 1650).

55. For the intriguing role of Antonio de Montezinos (aka Aaron Levi), see Katz, *Philosemitism*, pp. 141–49, or almost any other work cited in n. 50 above. It was undoubtedly influential—Thorowgood recounted it in *Iewes in America*, as did Menasseh ben Israel in *The Hope of Israel*—but tangential to the concerns of this essay.

56. Cogley, 'Eliot and the Indians,' pp. 215–17; Henry Whitfield, *The Light Appearing More and More towards the Perfect Day* (London, 1651; repr. *Massachusetts Historical Society, Collections*, 3rd ser. 4 [1834]): 119–21, 127–28.

57. Menasseh ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel* (London, 1652; orig. Amsterdam, 1650), p. 6. The recent literature on Menasseh ben Israel (the first name is variously spelled) is large and in some instances controversial. Even the basic message of *The Hope of Israel* is arguable.

of course, from his Christian correspondents in the desired outcome of English colonization. They wanted to make the Indians into neo-English Protestants; he hoped for their return to the Jewish fold.

For both camps, the linchpin of the Lost Tribes paradigm was the long catalogue of Indian 'rites, fashions, ceremonies, and opinions' that presumably disclosed their Jewish origins. Cases in point were the Indians' use of parables, their sequestration of women during menstruation, certain words that sounded to credible ears much like Hebrew words, and especially the practice of circumcision. The latter custom was, Thorowgood insisted, 'the mainest point of Jewish Religion.'⁵⁸ But evidence of the Indians' Jewish practices would be persuasive in England and elsewhere in Europe only if corroborated by Englishmen in America who knew native customs well; hence Thorowgood incorporated a letter from Roger Williams in the first edition of his book, one from John Eliot in the second.

Eliot had not initially subscribed to the Lost Tribes theory—perhaps had never seriously considered it—until informed by Winslow of Thorowgood's ruminations. In any event, Eliot quickly took up the cause and in the early 1650s wrote a long open letter of support that Thorowgood published in 1660 as an appendix to the second edition of his *Jews in America* (fig. 7). Eliot's letter was an exhaustive exegesis of certain biblical passages; they persuaded him that some of the Indians were descended from the Lost Tribes, the rest from a tribe that had never been 'lost' but had,

Most accounts accept the English translation's clear endorsement of the Lost Tribes theory, but Méchoulan and Nahon contend that the original edition (in Spanish, 1650) states emphatically that the Indians were not descendants of the Lost Tribes; the English mistranslation, they argue, conveyed a false impression. For purposes of this essay, what matters is Menasseh's apparent (if not real) support for the paradigm and thereby his strengthening of it among English and American advocates. See *ibid.*, pp. 6, 20, 40, 53–55, which can most easily be consulted in the Glaser edition. For evidence that Eliot considered the rabbi to be an advocate of the Lost Tribes theory, see Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Bk. III, 193.

⁵⁸ Thorowgood, *Jews in America*, p. 6; Thomas Thorowgood, *Jews in America, or Probabilities that Those Indians Are Judaical, Made More Probable by Some Additional to the Former Conjectures* (London, 1660), p. 5 (2nd pagination).

J E W S

IN

Pr 2

AMERICA,

OR

Probabilities, that those Indians are
Judaical, made more probable by some Ad-
ditionals to the former Conjectures.

An Accurate DISCOURSE is premised of
Mr. John Ellior, (who first preached the Gospel
to the Natives in their own Language) touching
their Origination, and his Vindication of the
P L A N T E R S.

Pfal. 59. 11. *Slay them not, lest my people forget, scatter them by
thy power.*

Ezek. 34. 6. *My sheep wandred through all the mountains, my flock
was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search
or seek after them.*

Greg. in Cant. 6. 13. *Bene quater reverti Sunamitis admonetur,
quod in quatuor mundi partes Judai dispersi sunt, qui ubicunq;
fuerint, in sine convertentur.* —

*Hac scripsit, non ut Doctor perfectus, sed cum docendis perficien-
dus. Aug. Epist. 130.*

THO. THOROWGOOD S. T. B. *Norfolciensis.*

LONDON,

Printed for Henry Brome at the Gun in Ivie-lane. 1660.

1660

Fig. 7. Title page to the second edition of Thomas Thorowgood's tract, 1660. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

over the centuries, migrated eastward through Asia to America. Eliot provided no list of parallel Indian/Jewish words or customs, for scripture itself demonstrated that 'these naked *Americans* are *Hebrewes*.'⁵⁹

Leaving aside the complicated theological issues that so absorbed Eliot and Menasseh ben Israel, the new paradigm was important to both men because, for the former, it encouraged English philanthropists to contribute heavily toward the missionization of the New England Indians since it would be a religious as well as a secular act; for the latter, it furthered the movement to readmit the Jews to England because (among many reasons) Protestant millennialists could thereby gain access to additional potential converts.⁶⁰ (In 1290, more than two hundred years before Spain's expulsion of Jews in the year Columbus reached America, King Edward I ousted them from England.) In the end, Menasseh's hope was only partly fulfilled: Jews were not officially readmitted, though unofficially they returned in appreciable numbers in the 1650s and thereafter. At the same time, in old and New England, the Lost Tribes paradigm invigorated long-delayed missionary efforts. With financial help from English believers, Eliot created more than a dozen 'Praying Towns' — communities of Indian converts who left their tribal homes and traditionalist relatives to join in Christian fellowship and who gradually adopted English ways of dress, housing, and farming. But fittingly for descendants of the ancient Jews, Eliot organized their government along Old Testament guidelines, appointing rulers of tens and hundreds.⁶¹

The Lost Tribes paradigm enjoyed a relatively short boom.

59. 'The learned Conjectures of Reverend Mr. John Eliot touching the Americans,' in Thorowgood, *Jews in America* pp. 1–27, quotation from p. 17. Eliot's letter appears at the beginning of some copies, at the end of others, but the pagination is separate in either case.

60. For a discussion of Menasseh's additional goals, see Méchoulan and Nahon, eds., *The Hope of Israel*, p. 58.

61. On Eliot's Praying Towns, see Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620–1675*, rev. ed. (New York, 1979), chs. 9–11. Eliot's efforts to persuade Christian nations, especially England, to adopt the biblical model met stiff resistance. See his *Christian Commonwealth, or, The Civil Policy of the Rising Kingdom of Jesus Christ* (London, [1659]). On the reaction to Eliot's book in New and old England, see Maclear, 'New England the the Fifth Monarchy,' pp. 244–57; and Holstun, *Rational Millennium*, ch. 3.

About two decades after it first appeared in England, the theory of Jewish origins had few active advocates, partly because the paradigm's greatest champions passed from the scene: in 1655 Winslow succumbed to disease in the English campaign against Jamaica, and in 1657 Menasseh ben Israel died, brokenhearted, en route to Holland after pleading the Jews' case to Oliver Cromwell.⁶² Thorowgood lived to 1669 but was silent (at least in print) after 1660. Eliot lived until 1690, but as early as the mid 1650s his enthusiasm seems to have waned. Although his missionary work continued with undiminished vigor, he ceased to give public support to the Lost Tribes explanation of Indian origins.⁶³ Not that he discarded it altogether; as his fellow Puritan clergyman, Cotton Mather, wrote in a biographical sketch of Eliot, the apostle to the Indians 'was willing a little to indulge himself' in the 'wish' that the Indians were dispersed Israelites and continued to find cultural parallels for which, Mather quipped, Eliot believed there were '*throwgood* Reasons.' Until the end of his life, Mather implies, Eliot's attachment to the Lost Tribes theory may have weakened but it never broke.⁶⁴

Eliot's enthusiasm for the theory may have eroded in light of his own experience and counterattacks by skeptics. Chief among the latter was Hamon L'Estrange, whose book of 1652, *Americans no Jewes, or Improbabilities that the Americans Are of that Race*, argued that the supposed Jewish customs exhibited by the Indians were figments of wishful thinking that withered under close scrutiny. L'Estrange insisted, for example, that instances of cannibalism among the ancient Jews (cited by Thorowgood) were rare and from necessity, whereas 'the barbarous custome of the Americans is a nationall helluonisme innatured by fierce malice and fewde, . . . an habituall practise and delight in eating mans flesh.'⁶⁵ Prob-

62. Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 240-42.

63. Cogley, 'Eliot and the Indians,' pp. 220-22.

64. Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Bk. III: 192-93.

65. Hamon l'Estrange, *Americans no Jewes, or Improbabilities that the Americans Are of that Race* (London, 1652), pp. 61-62. For other critiques of the Indians-as-Jews theory, see Allen, *Legend of Noah*, pp. 127-29.

ably Eliot also lost confidence in the Indians' Jewish origin as he increasingly understood the natives of eastern New England and their languages. He lived too close to the Indians—especially at the Praying Town of Natick—not to see that their customs bore only superficial resemblance to Jewish practices; he was too good a linguist of both Hebrew and Algonquian to be misled by false verbal similarities; and he was too keen an observer not to notice, sooner or later, that most of the proposed parallels were simply not true. Circumcision, for example, was not a custom among New England Indians, despite a report to the contrary that for a time Eliot had taken to be accurate.⁶⁶

With the list of supposed Jewish customs among the Indians sharply reduced, Eliot could no longer endorse the Lost Tribes theory with his earlier sureness, and without Eliot's enthusiastic support, the Jewish paradigm in England was severely damaged unless new experts on Indian culture offered new evidence. None did. Advocates of the paradigm appeared later in the century—William Penn, for example, and, in the eighteenth century, the Indian trader and administrator James Adair—but they expressed faith more than facts.⁶⁷ As a significant paradigm for English perceptions of the Indians, the end had come in the 1660s. Millennial-minded New Englanders continued to wonder about the fate of the Lost Tribes and about the origin of the Indians, but they were not persuaded that the two questions had the same answer. About the time of Eliot's conversion to the Lost Tribes paradigm, the New England poet Anne Bradstreet had expressed a more skeptical view:

Where now those ten Tribes are, can no man tell,
Or how they fare, rich, poor, or ill or well;
Whether the *Indians* of the East, or West,

66. Thorowgood, *Jews in America*, pp. 9–10; Thorowgood, *Jews in America*, p. 14 (2nd pagination); Eliot in Whitfield, *Light-Appearing*, pp. 14–18.

67. 'Letter from William Penn to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders, 1683,' in Albert Cook Myers, ed., *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey, and Delaware, 1630–1707* (New York, 1912), pp. 236–37; James Adair, *The History of the American Indians* (London, 1775).

Or wild *Tartarians*, as yet ne're blest,
Or else those *Chinoes* rare, whose wealth & arts
Hath bred more wonder then belief in hearts:
But what, or where they are; yet know we this,
They shall return, and *Zion* see with bliis.⁶⁸

Half a century later, Cotton Mather would conclude less gracefully but more concisely that 'we know not *When* or *How* those *Indians* first became Inhabitants of this mighty Continent.'⁶⁹ That seemed to be the prevailing view.

Indians-as-Jews would not be the last paradigm applied widely by Europeans to the American Indians—the Noble Savage was yet to come—but it was the last predominantly English model and very nearly the last effort by Europeans to try to cram the Indians into preconceived notions of how they looked, how they would behave, and how they should be treated. Henceforth, with the important exception of the Noble Savage image (another large topic in itself), the English and other Europeans sought to understand America's natives more particularly and realistically. To be sure, foreign perceptions were often clouded by prejudice and stereotypes and increasingly by racism, but the application of paradigms from the English experience had largely run its course.

England's two centuries of reliance on paradigms that reflected their own perception of strangers and that served their own political interests was, of course, neither unique nor surprising. As Edward Said observes, 'all cultures impose corrections upon raw reality, changing it from free-floating objects into units of knowledge,' because '[i]t is perfectly natural for the human mind to resist the assault on it of untreated strangeness. . . .'⁷⁰ Unfortunately for

68. [Anne Dudley Bradstreet], *Several Poems Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning* . . . , 2nd ed. (Boston, 1678), pp. 81–82.

69. Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Bk. III: 190.

70. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978), p. 67. Said's observation applies as well, of course, to the Indians' reaction to the strangeness of Europeans: American natives employed paradigms from their own cultural context to make sense of the newcomers. See, for example, Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (New York, 1984), esp. ch. 2.

the colonial experience in general and the Indians in particular, the initial Old World reaction to the 'untreated strangeness' of the New World was to demonize it by applying pejorative paradigms—wild men or monsters—to its inhabitants. (The countertrend that saw America as a Garden of Eden and the natives as undefiled primitives would lie fallow until resurrected by the eighteenth-century philosophes.) And demonizing too often led to destroying. 'Once perceived as beasts,' Keith Thomas concludes about the sixteenth-century English tendency to dehumanize some categories of humankind, 'people were liable to be treated accordingly.' When lines began to be drawn more clearly between animals and humans, the new perception 'legitimized the ill treatment of those humans who were in a supposedly animal condition.'⁷¹ The wild-man and monster paradigms thus help to explain, though not of course to justify, the early colonial policies of the Spanish and Portuguese, and later of the French, Dutch, and English. To the limited extent that the English also employed a pejorative Irish paradigm in America, it was largely old wine in new bottles.

The other two English paradigms were far less pejorative than the wild man and monster images; Old Britons and Lost Tribes reflected a significantly different sociological syndrome. Again, Edward Said's generalization is apt: '[C]ultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformations on other cultures, receiving these other cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be.'⁷² Because the English desperately hoped that the Indians in their sphere of control could be won to Protestantism and English ways, they saw them as they wanted to see them—rude pagans like their own ancestors or displaced Jews whom God had placed where His people would fulfill His mission. In both cases, so long as the paradigms remained vital, they wielded an ameliorative influence on colonial policy: away from

71. Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500–1800* (London, 1983; American ed. differently subtitled), p. 44.

72. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 67.

warfare and enslavement, toward education and acculturation. But even then, the effect was not fundamentally, only relatively, benign, for the projectors of the paradigms gave the Indians limited choices in the matter. Although ostensibly fashioned to help Europeans understand American natives and their cultures, the paradigms more often reinforced the Europeans' own expectations and intentions and validated, in their eyes, conquest and conversion.

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