"...A People of a Variety of Qualities, More Bent on Doing Evil Than Good"

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“...A PEOPLE OF A VARIETY OF QUALITIES, MORE BENT ON DOING EVIL THAN GOOD:” A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH & SWEDISH PERCEPTIONS OF AMERINDIANS IN COLONIAL NORTH AMERICA

Carl Marklund

I. INTRODUCTION

I.I. ENGLISH & SWEDISH INDIAN RELATIONS

The objective of this paper is to compare Swedish and English colonial perceptions of the North American Indians in order to evaluate and analyse to what extent and in what ways English and Swedish colonists held (dis)similar views of the Indians. At a first glance, the most obvious difference between the English and the Swedish colonial encounter with the Indians is the relative pacificity of the latter. This has led later scholars to describe Swedish colonialism as a rare example of ‘idyllic’ cross-cultural encounter between Europeans and Indians. Swedish Indian policy and Swedish-Indian relations are often being described as less confrontational and aggressive than English-Indian relations.

It can hardly be denied that the English-Indian encounter often resulted in confrontation and contestation. However, recent scholarly efforts have revealed that the English perceptions of the Indians, which have often been assumed to reflect the confrontational policies of the English, were not as contemptuous of the Indians as may have been expected. Kupperman (1980 & 2000) has emphasised the role of the intellectual and cultural concerns of the English in explaining the ambiguity and the non-linearity of the encounter between English and Indians, as well as the importance of analysing both English and Indian culture for a fuller understanding of the cross-cultural encounter.

While recent literature on New Sweden has been marginally influenced by this perspective, no study has yet been made in which the Swedish perceptions of the Indians have been systematically compared with those of other Europeans. Instead, comparative studies of

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1 The texts to be compared refer only to the colonies of Maryland, New England, New Sweden, Sagadahoc in Maine and Virginia circa 1580-1650. No experiences from English colonial activities in other areas and during other times will be taken into account. Most of the Indians that are analysed in these texts belonged to the Algonquian group.

2 The Swedish sources make mention of nine Swedes killed by the Indians. No Indian was killed by the Swedes, according to the same sources. However, the Swedes were obliged to treat the Indians kindly, and may have been reluctant to report a breach of their orders from home (see below). It is with greater certainty that we can state that the Swedes never experienced any large-scale Indian attacks like the ones directed against the English in Virginia in 1622 and 1644. Neither did the Swedish deal any preemptive strikes against the Indians, even when the Indians had reportedly gathered to discuss whether to wipe out the Swedish colony or not, an episode described by Campanius-Holm. Similar gatherings in New England lead typically to direct armed intervention from the English, e.g. the Wessagusset raid in 1623 and the Pequot War in 1637, which were both initiated by rumours of Indian plots against the English. N. E. Bahrendtz, ‘Nybyggarnas indianska grannar’, in R. Ruhnbro (ed.), Det Nya Sverige i landet Amerika (Wiken, 1988), pp. 103-116. C. G. Calloway, New Worlds for All (Baltimore, 1997); F. Jennings, The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism and the Cant of Conquest (Chapel Hill, 1975).


4 The most important such studies are found in G. Fur, Cultural confrontation on two fronts (Norman, 1993); K. O. Kupperman, ‘Scandinavian Colonists Confront the New World’ in C. E. Hoffecker et al. (eds.), New Sweden in America (Newark, 1995); H. Norman, ‘Svenskars möte med indiane vid Delaware: handel, misstro och rädsla’, in D. Blanck (ed.), Migration och mängfalld (Uppsala, 1999); L. E. Williams, ‘Indians and Europeans in the Delaware Valley, 1620-1655’, in C. E. Hoffecker et al. (eds.), New Sweden in America (Newark, 1995).
the English and the Swedish North American colonial experiences have rather tended to focus on the differences in the means and ends of English and Swedish colonial policies. The difference between the confrontational English encounter with the Indians and the relatively peaceful Indian-Swedish relations has typically been explained in two different ways. The first explanation places its emphasis on the characteristics of Swedish—and especially Finnish—culture. Its proponents claim that the Swedish and Finnish colonists of New Sweden were culturally less dominant than the English, partly due to their own forest cultural background (which included practices of slash-and-burn agriculture) which is supposed to have made them more adaptable to the Indian way of life than the predominantly urban English.5

The other explanation focuses on ad hoc developments rather than structural preconditions in the meeting between the Swedes and the Indians, stressing that the Swedes were materially less dominant than English due to their low numbers, their infrequent and scarce support from home and the unclear objectives of the enterprise. The conclusion is that material circumstances forced the Swedes to accept less favourable terms of interaction with the Indians than they might have really desired.6

While the first explanation assumes an overall mutual understanding between Swedish colonists and Indians which is very hard to ascertain due to the lack of written sources, the second explanation concentrates on material factors, largely ignoring the cultural dimension of any cross-cultural encounter. If these two different explanations are to be successfully compared and evaluated, the question must be raised: did the Swedish have different perceptions of the Indians if compared with the English? If so, in what sense were those perceptions different? In what way may they have conditioned the cultural encounter between Indians and English on the one hand, and Indians and Swedes on the other?

I.II. MATERIAL

While the English material on the North American Indians is vast and detailed, the Swedish accounts are few and often treat the Indians only secondarily. The Swedish material is typically intellectually less advanced and less related to contemporary discourses on ethnohistory and anthropology. This quantitative and qualitative poverty on the part of the Swedish material has sometimes been compensated for by various authors by using later Swedish accounts of North American Indians.7 Fur (1993), for one, frequently refers to the

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5 For this first explanation, see for example C. G. Calloway, New Worlds for All (Baltimore, 1997), pp. 5, 54-55; L. E. Williams, quoted in R. Ruhnbro, ‘Färd mot försvunna mål’, p. 97, in R. Ruhnbro (ed.), Det Nya Sverige i landet Amerika (Wiken, 1988), p. 97. The most idyllic version is presented in H. Linderholm, Nya Sveriges historia: vårt stora indianäventyr (Stockholm, 1976), where it is claimed that many Swedes (predominantly men) came to live with the Indians, but the evidence presented by Linderholm is scant. According to cultural geographers Terry Jordan and Matti Kaups, interactions and cultural exchanges were greatest in “Midland America”, where Swedish and Finnish settlers established good relations with the local Indians and produced a mixed backwoods culture that later pioneers is said to have carried to the ever-expanding American frontier, see T. G. Jordan & M. Kaups, The American backwoods frontier: an ethnic and ecological interpretation (Baltimore 1989). See also E. Niemi, ‘From Northern Scandinavia to the United States’, in D. Blanck (ed.), Migration och mängfald (Uppsala, 1999), p. 166-167 for an interesting analysis of the creation of the “Finnish-Indian myth” of cultural affinity.

6 For the second explanation, see G. Fur, Cultural confrontation on two fronts (Norman, 1993); K. O. Kupperman, ‘Scandinavian Colonists Confront the New World’ in C. E. Hoffecker et al. (eds.), New Sweden in America (Newark, 1995); H. Norman, ‘Svenskars möte med indieran vid Delaware: handel, misstro och rädda’, in D. Blanck (ed.), Migration och mängfald (Uppsala, 1999).

7 G. Fur, Cultural confrontation on two fronts (Norman, 1993); G. Fur, ‘De äro barbarorum barbarissimi. Svenskars möte med indieran och samer på 1600-talet’, in S. Dahlgren, A. Florén & A. Karlsson (eds.), Makt & Vardag (Stockholm, 1993). Jacobowsky and Jacobsen deals with the entire history of Swedish-Indian relations and are thus better motivated in their use of later sources. C. W. Jacobowsky, Svenskar i främmande land under
views of Swedish 18th century writers while her objective is to describe 17th century Indian-Swedish relations. Since some 18th century writers rely on 17th century sources, as well as interviews with old colonists, this may seem relevant, but I have nevertheless judged such an expansion of the surveyed material as unsatisfactory out of two reasons. If the objective is to study the Swedish colonial perceptions of the Indians and not the views of later Swedish authors, one must refrain from using the later accounts since these most probably will reflect different concerns than those of the colonial New Swedish, even if they rely on the same sources.

Later Swedish sources make frequent use of both foreign as well as later sources which were unavailable to the 17th century colonists of New Sweden. Writers like Israel Acrelius [1759], Tobias Biörck [1731], Thomas Campanius Holm [1702], Pehr Kalm [1748-1749] and Jesper Swedberg [1732] all used Dutch, English, French, German, and Spanish ethnological accounts of the Indians interwoven with their own accounts. Their objective was not ours, i.e. to isolate and analyse the perceptions and relations of the New Swedish and the Indians, but to create comprehensive descriptions of the Indians for their “metropolitan” Swedish audience at home. Disentangling the 17th century Swedish sources from 18th century Swedish and non-Swedish sources carries little hope of success. The present study has therefore been limited to the Swedish observations from the period while the colony was still in Swedish hands, i.e. 1638-1655, with one notable exception: Campanius Holm [1702]. Parts of Campanius Holm’s account can be directly linked to the now lost notes of his grandfather, a priest in the colony 1643-1648, and this motivates his writings being included here.

I.III. EARLY MODERN LANGUAGES OF ETHNOLOGY

Concerning the English material, the problem is quite the opposite. The voluminous English literature on the North American Indians contains a mass of varying perspectives, and it presents the same challenges as Biblical exegesis: is quite possible to come to very disparate conclusions regarding the English perceptions of the Indians. This disparity does not only follow from the vast numbers of individual English observers—with all their own personal concerns and experiences—but also from the lack of a single paradigmatic and recognizable ethnological discourse in the main current of 16th century intellectual thought. The humanist practice of comparison typically operated along the lines of what Rubiés (1995) has called three different “languages of ethnology.” First, comparative studies during the early modern era made use of the “language of civility” which “operated through the categories of savagery, or barbarism, and rationality.” Secondly, it used the “language of Christianity” which separated Christians and pagans and “interpreted historical agency in terms of Providence and sin.” Third, it incorporated a potentially overarching discourse, the “language of nature,” which interpreted both the human and the non-human world as a combination of given natural conditions, all subjected to a general natural law which revealed the reason inherent to Man, with or without access to the Christian gospel. In the present study, it is of primary interest

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8 For example, Kalm made use of oral reports and legends collected among the remaining Swedes in the Delaware Valley during the 1740s and the 1750s, some of which have clearly a background in the general colonial lore of the American east, for example the common story of the clever colonial leader who tricked a number of Indians to drag a cannon with a rope attached to the muzzle, so that the Europeans could fire and kill most of them with a single shot. A. A. Cave, ‘Why Was the Sagadahoc Colony Abandoned?’, in A. T. Vaughan (ed.), New England Encounters (Boston, 1999) p. 46.


10 This description of early modern ethnological discourse is derived from Pagden (1986) and Rubiés (1995), see A. Pagden, The fall of natural man 2nd ed., (Cambridge, 1986); J. P. Rubiés, ‘Christianity and Civilization in
to see how the English and Swedish perceptions of the Indians relate to this complex ethnological framework.

II. ENGLISH COLONIAL ENTERPRISES & OBJECTIVES

During the course of the 16th century, English royal power consolidated itself. England had gradually emerged as the arch-enemy of Catholic Spain. At the same time, English society underwent radical socioeconomical change: while the rise of urban merchant groups upset the traditional distribution of power and wealth, the population at large was subject to the combined effects of religious tensions, slow but marked inflation, rapid population growth, the enclosures movement, not to mention frequent and severe epidemics. The perceived chaos in English social order seemed to herald nothing less than the eclipse of cosmic order. In 1611, John Donne (1573–1631), priest, poet, and personal friend of John Smith (1579–1631), later colonial leader in Virginia, interpreted the situation in what he called “An Anatomy of the World:”

And now the Springs and Sommers which we see,
Like somnes of women after fifty bee.
And new Philosophy calcs all in doubt,
The Element of fire is quite put out;
The Sun is lost, and th’ earth, and no mans wit
Can well direct him, where to looke for it.
And freely men confesse, that this world’s spent,
When in the Planets, and the Firmament
They seeke so many new; they see that this
Is crumbled out againe to his Atomis.
’Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone,
All just supply, and all Relation;
Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot,
For every man alone thinks he hath got
To be a Phoenix, and that there can bee
None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee...

Sermons were preached where it was claimed that new settlements in the New World would serve as a means to reinvigorate the failing English nation. Others held that divine providence had revealed America in the right moment so that the righteous might flee the withering Old World and continue their godly mission in a pristine New World, unburdened by sin. However, the first impetus to American colonisation came from external, rather than internal religio-political and economical causes. Anglo-Iberian antagonism made privateering against Spanish shipping in the Caribbean a profitable enterprise and served as a motive for the first colonial attempts, in addition to the desire to explore, to find precious minerals, and to probe the North-West Passage to Cathay. It was only when El Dorado failed to materialise in North America that more mundane commercial objectives took over.

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11 For a general analysis of the crisis of the European intellectual world in the late 16th century and early 17th century, see S. Toulmin, Kosmopolis (Stockholm, 1995).


the high expectations and the enormous costs involved in the first colonial attempts, English royal interest was limited to the granting of patents and ideological support. The first settlements were typically organised as military outposts by private investors and companies. Later colonies resulted to a higher degree from spontaneous emigration of families, often triggered by religious persecution combined with millenarian expectations among radical Protestant groups. But religious motivations were not confined to sectarians. In fact, most English colonies were expected to convert the native Americans to Christianity, even though proselytism became a more prominent feature in Puritan New England than in the other English colonies. The strength of these forces can be witnessed by the ever increasing flow of English crossing the Atlantic during the 17th century. By 1660, over 70,000 English had settled in North America.

II.1. ENGLISH PERCEPTIONS OF THE INDIANS

The voluminous colonial English literature on the encounter with the New World does not only reflect the sheer magnitude of the English exodus. It is also an indication of the curiosity, exoticism and intellectual concerns which were felt by the English metropolitan audience at the time, living in an era of social upheavals and spiritual insecurity as they did. It is in this perspective that Indian society could serve as a suitable contrast for a comparative view on English culture and society. If the Indians followed the same principles as the English, i.e. honoured social distinctions and set hierarchies, it could be assumed that these principles were part of the natural order of human life, which in its turn could be used in the debate on the social crisis in England. Traditionally, human societies were measured against a set list of criteria of ‘civility’, such as complex language, government by hereditary hierarchy, urban organisation, religion and agriculture, the latter implying providence for the morrow. Using these criteria, armchair travellers and eyewitnesses alike often found the Indians wanting. Witness for example the views of William Bradford, governor of Plymouth:

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16 An unproportionate percentage of the early colonists were literate, the Massachusetts Bay Colony for example had more university-trained men than any other society in world history, see K. O. Kupperman, Settling With the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640 (Totowa, 1980), p. 12.


18 For example, the anonymous writer of the ‘A Relation of Maryland’ claimed that: “hee that sees them [Indian societies], may know how men lived whilst the world was under the Law of Nature, and, as by nature, so amongst them, all men are free, but yet subject to command for the publike defence”. Anonymous, A Relation of Maryland, F. L. Hawks (ed.), (New York, 1865), p. 32.

...those vast & unpeopled countries of America, which are Fruitfull & fit for habitation, being
devoyed of all civill inhabitants, wher ther are only salvage & brutish men, which range up and
downe, little otherwise than the wild beast of the same...20

This ‘negating’ view of the Indians gave a distinct and clear picture of the Indians, and also
served to promote English territorial rights when combined with the legal principle *vacuum
domicilium* – the idea that a land was free to settle if it was not habitated and cultivated by
civilised people. But it could not answer to the challenge of the new intellectual concerns
described above. Neither could it satisfactorily fulfill the colonists’ need for a practical
understanding of the Indians. More complex and ambiguous descriptions were to come,
although the rhetorical stereotype of Indian barbarism would become standard in English
literature. The first English expeditions fully expected to find cannibals and monstrous men.
However, far from doing so the first reconnaissance voyage sent out by Sir Walter Raleigh (ca
1555-1618) to present day North Carolina in 1584 found “the people [to be] most gentle,
loving and faithfull, void of all guile, and treason, and such as lived after the manner of the
golden age”. Most importantly, the captain of the expedition could report that “the earth
bringeth forth all things in aboundance, as the first creation, without toile or labour”.21
Prelapsarian bounty could hardly be combined with cannibals, and reports of man-eaters and
other monsters became less and less common. Later, when English writers told of faraway
tribes, usually belonging to groups hostile to the native informants of the respective writers,
cannibalism could sometimes be reported again.22 Kupperman (2000) has showed how editors
in England soon became skeptical of these reports and stopped printing them.23 Neither does
the English texts support the commonly held view that the English made use of the Medieval
stereotype of the furry ‘Wild Man’ to conceptualise the Indian.24

II.II. INDIAN PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Rather than depicting furry wild men, the first English pictures of Indians were remarkably
realistic, even ungainly so, in stark contrast to German and Italian prints of the same time.
Ralegh had ordered the 1584 expedition to bring back Indians to England so that his scientific
associate Thomas Harriot could learn Indian language and gain better information of the land
before the first batch of colonists were sent over. Harriot himself did accompany the second
expedition in 1585 in order to provide his patron with a complete scientific study of Virginia,
which was to be illustrated by the artist John White. White’s watercolours were remarkably

20 W. Bradford, Of Plymouth Colony (1948), p 26. Compare the similar tone of Bradford’s eyewitness account
with the following statement from Robert Johnson, who never visited America: “...wild and savage people, that
live and lie up and downe in troupes like heards of Deare in a Forrest: they have no law but nature, their apparell
skinnes of beasts, but most goe naked: the better sort have houses, but poore ones, they have no Arts nor
Science...”. R. Johnson, ‘Nova Britannia’ [1609], in P. Force (comp.), Tracts and Other Papers, Relating
Principally to the Origin, Settlement, and Progress of the Colonies in North America 4 vols. (1844; Washington,
21 One of the reasons given to motivate English colonisation was in fact to "ayde the Savages against the
Canniballs", George Peckham’s ‘True Reporte’ quoted in K. O. Kupperman, Indians & English: Facing Off in
Early America (Ithaca, 2000), p. 47. A. Barlowe, ‘The first voyage made to the coastes of America’, in R.
Hakluyt, The Principall Navigations, Voiages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation [1589], D. B.
24 K. O. Kupperman, Settling With the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-
1640 (Totowa, 1980), p. 40. For contrary views, see R. F. Berkhofer, The White Man’s Indian. Images of the
American Indian from Columbus to the Present (New York, 1978); G. Fur, Cultural confrontation on two fronts
(Norman, 1993); P. L. Wilson, ‘Caliban’s Masque. Spiritual Anarchy & The Wild Man in Colonial America’, in
realistic in style and free of mannerism. They were not intended as mere illustrations to Harriot’s text, but were of scientific value in themselves since physical appearance was seen as indicative of the person’s character and social position. Visual characteristics were most essential as status and identity could not always be trusted to be inherited and linear, but rather consciously construed and maintained.25

English literary accounts express a general admiration of the physical perfection of the Indians. In particular, their good health was admired. It was commonly held that the Indians either sun-bathed or artificially coloured themselves to attain their “tawny” or “tanned” skin colour, which resulted from the assumption that the Indians were white at birth.26 The facial characteristics of the Indians did not attract as much attention, and were generally not considered particularly beautiful or handsome. There are fewer examples of English appreciation of Indian female beauty than of Indian male “goodliness.”27

II. III. INDIAN ADORNMENT

Since habit functioned as a mirror of social distinctions in English society, and thus served as a sign of civility, Indian clothing and adornment were of great interest to the English.28 For example, Jesuit reports from Maryland claimed that although Indian sachems held absolute power over their subjects, they could not be compared to European monarchs since they only differed slightly in dress from the rest.29 In the context of colonial cultural encounter, dress also took on a new meaning, symbolising different lifeways, English and Christian contra Indian and pagan, respectively. Wearing English clothes was identified with Christianity, as when Father Andrew White assured his superiors that the Indians “exceedingly desire civill life and Christian apparrell”.30 Indian fashion on the other hand was identified with paganism, as indicated by Samuel Purchas’ reproach of the young dandies of London, whose provocative hairstyle – “the Love-locke”, was influenced by the male cut of the Powhatans. Purchas’ judgement was harsh. He saw “Christians imitating Salvages, and they the Divell”.31 A notable exception to these opinions was presented by Thomas Morton, who claimed that the Indians were more handsome in their own habit, without thereby denying

27 Concerning English lack of interest in Indian faces, see K. O. Kupperman, Settling With the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640 (Totowa, 1980), p. 35. For metropolitan English preconceptions on Indian looks a typical example can be found in ‘Eastward Ho!’, a play performed in 1605 in which one of the characters—a typical Elizabethan sea-dog and supposed eyewitness—Captain Seagull, makes a reference to Ralegh’s ‘lost colony’ of 1587: while Indians were judged to lack good looks, they were assumed the appreciate a handsome English face so much more, and thus intermingling ensued. B. Jonson, G. Chapman & J. Marston, ‘Eastward Ho!’ [1605], in B. Gibbons (ed.), Elizabethan and Jacobean Comedies (Tonbridge, 1984), [Act III, Scene iii], p. 230-231.  
them the right to convert if they so wished. Indian fondness of body paint received a varied reception among the English. William Strachey remarked for example that among the Indians “he is [considered] the most gallant who is the most monstrous and ugly to behold” when referring to this practice. It was also noted that the Indians shared this practice with ancient inhabitants of the British Isles, who indeed fancied themselves in blue paint to the extent that the Romans called them Picti.33

Like the Picts, the Indians were often reported to be naked. ‘Nakedness’ was a complicated term which connoted a number of different qualities and conditions, as diverse as savagery, immodesty, poverty, wretchedness and defencelessness. While ‘nakedness’ did not imply complete nudity but rather to be comparatively unclothed in comparison to a “properly” dressed Englishman (statements of Indian ‘nakedness’ were often followed by descriptions of Indian dress, for example comparing Asian Indian leggings to Irish or Turkish trousers), early colonial promoters assured that the “naked and unarmed people in Virginia” would prove easy to overcome for the English with their advanced military technology.34 A number of eyewitnesses, while repeating the ‘received wisdom’ of Indian military technology, also warned against making simple inferences about Indian nature from their so called nakedness.35

As for immodesty, a euphemism for sexual promiscuity, Morton claimed that the Indians were ashamed of their nakedness and that they seemed “to have as much modesty as civilized people, and deserve to be applauded for it”, simultaneously expressing his libertine skepticism by ridiculing “any meaning attached to clothes beyond the utilitarian one”. In doing so, Morton combined Christian primitivism and Tacitean criticism of sophistication when he stated that “Cloathes are the badge of sinne, and the more variety of fashions is but the greater abuse of the creature”.36 Nakedness could thus also imply virtuous simplicity and innocence, and was therefore not always a marker of savagery and promiscuity.

I.IV. INDIAN RELIGION

Even if the Indians could be reported as living in a paradisical state by some, they were clearly not beyond the reach of the Devil, whose influence could be witnessed in the religious

practices of the Indians. For example, the liminal phase of the so called ‘black boy ceremony’ an Algonquian rite of passage, was misunderstood by early English observers who reported than the Indians sacrificed their young boys to the devil. As the presumably dead boys tended to reappear some time later these reports were soon corrected. Another point of confusion concerned the demography of the Indian pantheon. While Harriot claimed that the Roanoke Indians were monotheistic, others believed they had two gods, deities of good and evil, easily identifiable as "God & the Devill". Still others counted up to over thirty deities.

Thomas Morton, for his part, claimed that the Indians in fact lacked religion and rejected thereby the authority of Cicero, who viewed religion as a marker of humanity since he still considered the Indians human. Most English writers claimed that the Indians had little organised worship, and most of what they saw reminded them of what would be directly identified as sorcery and devil worship at home. Roger Williams, one of the more radical Protestants among the Puritans was not alone in refusing to find out more about these practices because of fear for his soul. This fear did not hinder some Englishmen from collecting Indian legends and traditions, including various myths of creation, which were the object of both curiosity and ridicule, of contempt as well as serious humanistic study. Strachey for one recounts an Indian creation story, “a pretty fabulous tale indeed”, in which a “mightie great Hare” created all creatures including men and women. Religion provided both English and Indians with their most reliable causal explanations. Most Englishmen believed Indian magic to be effective and it is symptomatic that one of the few to doubt was the sceptic Morton.

II.V. INDIAN LANGUAGE

Another Ciceronian criterion of humanity was language and also here the English opinions varied widely. While for example Morton and Winslow believed Indian language to be vast and complex, John Smith found it poor. Modern linguistic analysis has proved both right. Ives Goddard has argued that the Indians most probably spoke simplified pidgins rather than

41 R. Williams, A Key into the Language of America (London, 1643), p. 118-121.
the complex ‘authentic’ Indian language when communicating with the Europeans, not only to make things easier, but also so that they may avoided the risk of being understood at all times.46 Beside the practical need of studying Indian language, Christian eschatology provided another reason: during the building of the tower of Babel, God had confounded the universal tongue but it was assumed that still some traces of that original language would be possible to find in all languages, including those of the Indians. To try to recover it would be a natural consequence of God’s recent revelation of these hidden continents, which in its turn was taken to signal that the culmination of human history was to be expected.47 Thus, Indian language could be understood in the general Christian context where it fulfilled a specific eschatological role.

II.VI. INDIAN GOVERNMENT & JUSTICE

While modern research claims that Indian political processes were geared towards consensus-building rather than coercion, most 17th century English observers agreed unanimously that the Algonquian political system was essentially ”monarchical”. Indian rulers were typically seen as omnipotent.48 English assumptions on Indian government can perhaps be related the changing nature of Indian political and economical systems which accommodated to the new economical and political structures which emerged after contact.49 But it is clear that the English suffered from their own prejudices which hindered them from attaining a correct picture of Indian conditions. For example, the absence of written laws led many Englishmen to conclude that the Indians lacked law altogether.50 Harriot, on the other hand, could give a detailed account of Indian customary law thanks to his knowledge of Indian language and his personal contacts with Indian elders who shared with him their experience as judges.51 Despite Harriot’s insights in the Indian judicial system English and Indian legal principles continued to collide throughout the colonial period, even though uneasy compromises were worked out gradually.52

II.VII. INDIAN SOCIAL LIFE

Algonquian Indians were essentially sedentary within a given area, but moved seasonally between different abodes, which led some English observers to conclude that the Indians were nomadic. Morton claimed with irony that the Indians could hardly be said to be more nomadic than the English gentry, the members of which moved seasonally between their city houses and their country estates.53 The English notion of Indian nomadism is reflected in the scant notice the English took of Indian architecture, which they regarded as impermanent.

50 This prejudice against non-literary cultures is all the more remarkable since the English judicial system also incorporated customary law, which was not always codified at the time.
Pre-marital sexual liberty and polygamy was initially often reported, but later claimed to apply only to sachems and other high ranking persons. The view that Indian women were enslaved and exploited by Indian men proved more durable and was directly connected to perceived male Indian laziness. While some English observers claimed that Indian inheritance was patrilinear, others, including Smith and the anonymous writer of A Relation of Maryland’ found it to be matrilinear. Overall, the English did not fully grasp the position and role of women in Indian society, despite their fundamental concern with distinctions between the sexes and within the family as indicators of civility.

II.VIII. INDIAN SOCIAL & MORAL CHARACTER

The Indians were referred to as "savages", “wild Americans”, ”naturalls”, “natives”, “Barbarians”, sometimes as "Indians". A “Savage” was a wild person, characterised by ”beastly ferocity”. However, the English texts often speaks with surprise, bordering to admiration, of the high degree of “humanity” among the Indians, who nevertheless were still called “savages”.6 Roger Williams remarked that ”there is a favour of civility and courtesie even amongst these wild Americans, both amongst themselves and towards strangers”, they were indeed ”intelligent, many very ingenious”.5 Morton was of the same opinion but remarked that many of his compatriots thought otherwise.6 Obviously, there was no absolute dichotomy between “humanity” and “savagery”, even though the norm was to see them as separate, thus the surprise and admiration to find aberrations from this rule. Thus, the English use of the term “savage” is hard to analyse the value of, since it cannot simply be said to be an evaluation of the Indians and their ways, as it quickly evolved into a generic term used for all Indians that were not Christian.

Two negative traits of Indian themes social and private moral became common themes in all the English literature: laziness and alcoholism. Others admired Indian social order. Williams found neither beggars, nor orphans or widows unprovided for among the Indians. In addition to the outcome of the civility test mentioned above, Englishmen also judged the moral character of the Indians on account of their gestures, behaviour, manners and postures, including greetings. Williams wrote:

...the Natives are of two sorts, (as the English are). Some are Rude and Clownish..., the Generall, are sober and grave, and yet chearful in a meane, and as ready to begin a Salutation as to Resalute, which yet the English generally begin, out of desire to Civilize them...60

Also, Indian generosity and willingness to help signalled the moral valour of the Indians. Williams found "it [to be] a strange truth, that a man shall generally find more free entertainment and refreshing amongst these Barbarians, than amongst thousands that call themselves Christians”.

57 R. Williams, A Key into the Language of America (London, 1643), pp. 1-2.
59 R. Williams, A Key into the Language of America (London, 1643), pp. 4, 29.
60 R. Williams, A Key into the Language of America (London, 1643), pp. 1-2.
61 R. Williams, A Key into the Language of America (London, 1643), p. 16.
virtuous because of its frugality. They typically refrained from making the connection between simple ways and simple minds.⁶² English commentators used the Indians to criticise degenerated sophistication of contemporary English society in a manner akin to Tacitus’ usage of the contrast between the robust virtues and manly customs of the Germanic peoples and the moral decline of the effeminate and overrefined Romans.⁶³

II.IX. CIVILISING THE INDIANS

Tacitus had also wrote admiringly of his father-in-law, Agricola, who had subjugated the savage Britons and brought them to civility. Some English intellectuals in New England saw a historical continuity between the role of the Romans in civilising the Britons and the role of the English in civilising the Indians.⁶⁴ But the task of civilising the Indians was not easy to begin with, and the lack of consideration and common decency among the English themselves did little to help the matter. In Virginia, one John Penreis lamented that the Indians used to look upon the English as gods on account of their justice and virtue, but now they were despised for being “worse than Divels”, due to the “treacherous & inhumane Cruelty” of private traders who seized both Indians and their property without restraint.⁶⁵ On the other hand, Englishmen who wished to replicate the Roman civilising mission on American soil never doubted that violence would prove to be necessary. Strachey implicitly described the Indians as children when he defended the intended methods of the civilising program by stating that it would be ridiculous to reproach the father for exercising violence, when he only beats his child “to bringe him to goodnes”.⁶⁶ Despite this willingness to use harsh methods in civilising the Indians, very few actual measures of “civilising” were actually carried out by 17th century settlers.

II.X. ENGLISH PROSELYTISM AMONG THE INDIANS

Naturally, the same dilemma complicated matters when it came to the English attempts to convert the Indians. There were basically two motives behind English proselytism in America, one primarily eschatological, the other primarily religio-political.⁶⁷ Based on Indian


⁶⁷ R. R. Cawley, echoeing John Smith, have claimed a third, less idealistic, motive overarched the abovementioned ones, suggesting that colonial promoters were rather concerned with the size of their capital stocks than the salvation of Indian souls, and that the conversion plans were primarily part of the fund-raising schemes of the companies. See R. R. Cawley, The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama (Boston, 1938), p. 299; J. Smith, ‘Advertisements For the unexperienced Planters of New-England, or any where’ [1631], in E. Arber & A. G. Bradley (eds.), Travels and Works of Captain John Smith 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1910), Vol. II, p. 928. For a contrary view, see W. F. Craven, ‘Indian Policy in Early Virginia’, William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser. No. 1 (1944), p. 67. Also, the lack of success may be ascribed to the fact that no Protestant ministers were assigned only to missionary work, see A. T. Vaughan, The New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians 1620-1675 (Boston, 1965), pp. 237-239.
accounts of miracle men of ancient times, some Englishmen assumed that the Indians had once had knowledge of God, but that they had forgotten it and were constrained by their fears to worship the devil.68 It was already Raleigh’s plan to lead them back to Christianity, and this mission became even more acute under influence of the chiliasm of the day, since the prophecy of the Book of Revelations (ch. 20) said that “the end could not come until all the world’s people had heard the gospel”.69 The other reason was related to the Anglo-Iberian antagonism and the eager Protestant use of what only later was to be called la leyenda negra in general and Bartolomé de Las Casas’ criticism of Spanish mass conversions to Catholicism without previous instruction in particular.70 The English were keen to describe themselves as bringing the true faith to the Americans.

To the English, religion served not only as a marker of humanity, but also as a means of self-identification. As the English saw themselves primarily as Christians in relation to the Indians, they naturally expected Indian converts to become good Englishmen.71 Conversion was thus a question of culture wars, but the English did not plan for a violent method, even if they were not unprepared for one.72 Harriot suggested that the English should first attract the Indians with their superior arts and sciences and through the subsequent friendship bring the Indians to “embracing” civility and Christianity.73 This did not work very well, and Reverend Jonas Stockham in Virginia was cynical about the possibilities of conversion in 1621, coldly stating that “till their Priests and Ancients have their throats cut, there is no hope to bring them to conversion”.74 English kidnappings of Indian children with the intention of bringing them up in Christian religion did little to further Christianity, but far more to peril the security of the Virginia colony. In New England, missionaries like John Eliot and the Mayhew family had far greater success, and finally almost 2,500 ‘praying Indians’ lived in model settlements.75

II.XI. ENGLISH-INDIAN EVERYDAY CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

We have seen how English venturers from the beginning aspired to come into closer contact with the Indians through kidnapping Indians to get interpreters. One of them, Squanto, provided substantial help to the Puritans in Massachusetts. The Virginians also left English boys with the Powhatans for the same purpose, but generally these persons lived in a precarious intermediary state, trusted by neither side, and we may hardly speak of any English equivalent to the métis culture in New France. After the Pequot War of 1637, there were many

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71 Again, Morton held a different view, see above, p. 10.
72 For example, Pocahontas and her husband John Rolfe were conscripted for the missionary effort: when in England in 1616, the Virginia Company provided the couple with the considerable sum of £100 “...for sacred use in Virginia”. For an analysis of the implications on the personal loyalties of Pocahontas of this, see K. O. Kupperman, Indians & English: Facing Off in Early America (Ithaca, 2000), pp. 200, 203.
Indian slaves in the New England colonies, but their presence does not seem to have resulted in any more durable cultural exchange. Neither was intermarriage common. While some preached against intermarriage in Virginia (possibly indicating that some may have actually taken place), reminding the colonists of God’s displeasure at the marriage of Levi and Israel to foreign women, others saw John Rolfe’s marriage to Pocahontas as “the beginning of Virginia’s success”. 76 Despite the frequent tensions between English and Indians, the latter had quite free access the English colonies in Virginia as evidenced by the great casualties inflicted by the Indian attack of 1622. It was two Indians living with the English who warned of the impending attack. In New England on the other hand, the Indians were most often only invited to special trading stations, so that there was no risk of assaults.

II.XII. IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE FOR ENGLISH UNDERSTANDING OF ENGLISH-INDIAN RELATIONS

When Englishmen and Indians met in everyday contact, they had to mediate the cultures of each other. The English rarely appreciated Indian pageantry, singing and ”maskes” and enjoyed even less their powwows. However, they often found Indian potentates awe-inspiring, majestic and wise, but also sometimes ridiculously pompous, since they compared them to monarchs in Europe rather than to their own governors and aldermen. 77 The English seems to have missed out on the importance of the Indian symbolic language of reciprocity as well as the spiritual significance of wampum. The Indian principles of reciprocity excluded bargaining: each part gave the other exchange goods in accordance to the set value of the good. While the French ”had decoded the Amerindian system of exchange” and were soon fluent in the ’language of gifts”, the English often reported on Indian thievishness. Theft may in fact have been Indian ”attempts to force reciprocity on the English”. 78

II.XIV. INDIAN ORIGINS

Despite frequent misunderstandings of Indian culture, the English had no reasons to view the Indians as a separate race, and never did during the period discussed here. On the contrary, they often compared the Indians to different sorts of English people, even though the use of rhetorical parallels between Indians and hunting animals described above complicates the picture. 79 But since monogenism was the Orthodox Christian theory on the origin of humankind, all English observers agreed with Roger Williams that “Nature knowes no difference between Europe [sic] and Americans in blood, birth, bodies, &c. God having of one made all mankind, Acts 17. and all by nature being children of wrath, Ephes. 2.”. This did not hinder that the Indians sometimes were seen as inferior, as indicated by Williams’ warning: “Boast not proud English...Thy brother Indian is by birth as Good”. 80 If the Indians then stemmed from the same root as the known peoples of the Old World, it became

76 K. O. Kupperman, Indians & English: Facing Off in Early America (Ithaca, 2000), pp. 192-193. It was only in 1691 that intermarriage between Indians and Europeans was prohibited by law in the colony of Virginia.
important to identify exactly which ancient people had been the ancestors of the Indians, through comparative ethnography and linguistics. Most of the linguistic comparisons did not go beyond the identification of mere shibboleths, for example the pronunciation of the originally Celtic word 'penguin' provided proof for those who believed that the Indians were Welsh, descendants of one Prince Madoc, who was supposed to have discovered America in 1170. Others suggested that the Indians were "scattered Trojans", still others proposed that they descended from "those olde Tartars", and quite many, including John Eliot and Roger Williams, believed they were of Jewish ancestry, members of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, which could be taken to indicate that the culmination of history was near, as foretold in the Book of Revelation. Summing up, it can be noticed that the characteristics of the Indians as social and moral beings were of great interest to educated Englishmen, both as writers and reader as evidenced by the massive outpouring of travel accounts and ethnographies of the North American Indians which resulted from the English colonial experience. It is now time to study the character of Swedish curiosity in the Indians in order to be able to better assess the differences and similarities between English and Swedish views.

III. SWEDISH COLONIAL ENTERPRISE & OBJECTIVES

In the beginning of the 17th century, Sweden was, like England, an ambitious power on the rise, albeit from a much less favourable position. Its statesmen aspired to establish the country as the dominant economic and political power in the Baltic Sea – they strived for what they called dominium maris baltici, in an as ambitious as pompous gesture to the Roman Empire around the Mediterranean. However, Sweden was underpopulated and it suffered from a weak economy, as well as a relative cultural and intellectual backwardness. In an attempt to solve the problem at its roots, a large-scale economic, cultural and administrative reform program was initiated. This initiative amounted to nothing less than a kind of ‘civilisation program’, which was largely inspired by the commercial and political success of the Netherlands. Dutch economic interests controlled the Baltic trade and were sometimes supportive of Swedish expansionism, sometimes not. Thus, the Dutch were both mentors as well as competitors.

The reform program included some very successful administrative reforms as well as some less realistic economic projects. It is among the latter we find the New Sweden colonial project which took place in the Delaware Valley between 1638 and 1655. The Swedish government had earlier experimented with ‘colonial’ projects in its Baltic provinces, in Lapland and even in central Sweden, where Savo-Karelian Finns were invited to settle, some of who would later emigrate to New Sweden. The impetus to found a colony in New Sweden came from a former employee of the Dutch West India Company (W.I.C.) and director of New Netherland: Peter Minuit (circa 1580-1638). After having been forced to leave his position with the W.I.C. Minuit entered Swedish service and participated in the

founding of the New Sweden Company (N.S.C.) in 1637.\textsuperscript{84} With the help of Dutch capital and expertise, a small colonial settlement was established on the banks of the Delaware a year later and named Fort Christina in honour of the young Queen of Sweden. This combined Dutch-Swedish enterprise was a relatively modest affair, primarily directed towards the fur trade. The Dutch investors withdrew when it became clear that even these modest expectations would fail to materialise. The N.S.C. became a purely Swedish enterprise. The motives for the continued Swedish interest were: i) the colony’s importance for trade (tobacco); ii) its significance for practicing the nation in navigation; iii) its resources in terms of land; and iv) the possibility of spreading Christianity.\textsuperscript{85} When the colony was lost to the Dutch in 1655, its last governor Johan Risingh (1616/1617-1672) tried to interest the King, Charles X Gustavus (1622-1660), in a reconquest of the colony. In addition to the reasons mentioned above, Risingh added that New Sweden would render the Swedish king “great esteem and renown” among other Christian princes. Risingh also pointed out that colonial land could be used to reward public officials, soldiers and nobility. Several thousand families could be settled there.\textsuperscript{86} However, Risingh’s main argument remained mercantilist: through the colony, Sweden would be able to connect the Baltic trade to the Atlantic trade and thus weaken the perilous Dutch dominance in the Baltic Sea.\textsuperscript{87}

\textbf{III.I. SWEDISH PERCEPTIONS OF THE INDIANS}

It is difficult to assess what preconceptions of the New World the Swedes might have had previous to their own direct experiences.\textsuperscript{88} Except for general cartographic knowledge of the time and the commonplace myths of the exotic and essentially “other” Americas, little was known in Sweden of the so called New World, with the possible exception of a few persons who may have visited New Netherland in the service of the W.I.C., some Swedish, some Dutch.\textsuperscript{89} For more direct information, the planners of the colony were thus dependent on former W.I.C. employees. Judging from the minutes of the Council of State and the instructions issued to the governors to be of the colony, the Dutch provided sober and practical information on the new continent and its inhabitants. In these texts, the Indians are portrayed as the ”just possessors” of the land in the same way as the W.I.C. usually did. They were neighbours to be treated with respect, not the least since they were potential Protestant converts. No direct anthropological or intellectual concerns can be found in this material. The number of eyewitness accounts of the Swedish encounter with the New World is also low. This is partly due to the low numbers of Swedish colonists and the short duration of the colony, but also to the fact that most of the Swedish colonists were illiterate.\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{84} Minuit’s instructions for the first expedition were drafted by Samuel Blommaert, a long-standing investor in New Netherland.
\textsuperscript{86} The Dutch conquest of New Sweden was of course a chagrin to Swedish international prestige to begin with. Risingh’s memorial is in Palmskiöldska samlingen (P.), Vol. 322, UUB; S. Dahlgren & H. Norman, The Rise and Fall of New Sweden (Uppsala, 1988), p. 14.
\textsuperscript{87} S. Dahlgren & H. Norman, The Rise and Fall of New Sweden (Uppsala, 1988), p. 15.
\textsuperscript{89} Jonas Bronck, a native of Sweden, is considered to have been the first European settler in The Bronx. For more general information on Swedish perceptions of the New World, see J-O. Swahn, ‘En värld av rikedom och monster’, in R. Ruhnbro (ed.), Det Nya Sverige i landet Amerika (Wiken, 1988).
The first Swedish eyewitness report of the American Indians stems from the first official Governor, Johan Printz (1592-1663), who arrived in the colony in 1643 and stayed for 10 years. It may be significant that his predecessor, Peter Hollender Ridder, said nothing of the Indians in his remaining correspondence. Printz’ interest in the Indians was secondary to his interest in the land as a resource and the administration of the colony. He lamented that productive American land was not wholly in “Christian” possession, but remained in “Savage” hands. Printz saw the Indians as “evil neighbors”. They were “terribly barbarous heathens” who were indeed “not to be trusted”. In a typical letter to Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna (1583-1654), Printz’ anthropological notes are blunt, brief and descriptive, far from the sophistication, eloquence, and analytical qualities expressed in many of the English accounts. With the exception of a brief note on Indian physical appearance, Printz only referred to aspects of Indian life which could be directly linked to the interests of the colony’s backers, such as the Indians’ knowledge of trade and handicraft, which indicated to Printz’ superiors that the Indians were reasonable, their dangerous but cowardly nature, which indicated that the colony needed protection, but perhaps not at great cost. Unfortunately, not all of Printz’ reports and journals have been preserved. Therefore it is hard to judge whether his practical approach to the Indians was constitutional or situational, uninterested or just pragmatic. After all, Oxenstierna can be assumed to have been more interested in practical issues linked to the survival of the colony, rather than lengthy anthropological discourses, regardless of whether Printz himself were able to deliver in that kind or not.

Per Lindeström (1632-1691), the colony’s fortification engineer in 1654-1655, expressed more curiosity in the Indians than Printz did and dealt in more detail with the natives than did any other Swedish writings. Since his account of his voyage to New Sweden, *Geographia Americae*, was not published until 1923, it was only in 1702 that the first Swedish account of America in general and the colony in particular, written by Thomas Campanius Holm, became available. Campanius Holm was heavily dependent upon non-Swedish authors, often borrowing *ad verbatim* from Louis Hennepin, Pierre-Daniel Huet, Francis David Pastorius, William Penn Jr., and John Smith. What motivates our interest in his writings here is that Campanius Holm also made use of Lindeström’s account which he combined with some notes—now lost—by his grandfather. These were the sources he relied on when describing Indian physical appearance, having never met any Amerindian personally.

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92 Fur has found Du Ponceau’s English translation to be unreliable, but unfortunately the Swedish original has not been available to this author at the time of writing. G. Fur, *Cultural confrontation on two fronts* (Norman, 1993), p. 250.
93 Thomas Campanius Holm’s grandfather Johannes Campanius (?-1664) served as minister in the colony 1643-1648 and seems to have been the only minister to have attempted to convert the Indians. It has not been possible to ascertain whether he had a special mission to proselytise among the Indians or not, but it is evident that he often visited the Indians on his travels between the Swedish congregations of the colony. Most probably, he also travelled far inland to visit the Susquehannocks. He learned Unami traders’ jargon of Lenape-Delaware, wrote a Swedish-Lenape dictionary entitled *Vocabularium Barbaro-Virgineorum*, and translated Luther’s Catechism in 1646, some ten years before John Eliot’s translation of the Bible and later printed as *Lutheri catechismus, oefwersatt pa American-Virginske Sprakter* (Stockholm, 1696). No other results of his efforts have been possible to prove historically. F. Blomfelt, *The Lutheran Churches and Their Pastors in New Sweden 1638-1655*, in C. E. Hofflecker et al. (eds.), *New Sweden in America* (Newark, 1995).
III.II. INDIAN PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Printz and Lindeström only give brief attention to the way the Indians looked to them. Lindeström notes admiringly that the Indians are well built and tall, but give no notice to Indian facial characteristics, except for the curious lack of beard among Indian men. Lindeström remarked that Indian men found it shameful to be bearded and would pull out the hair by the roots. In metropolitan Swedish culture, the beard would around this time begin to serve as a marker of social belonging, distinguishing Old Swedish peasants and priests from other, Europeanizing layers of society such as burghers and military officers, who would sport a moustache or a goatee at most. In contrast to Printz and Lindeström, Campanius Holm gives a full description of Indian looks, taking great interest in the faces of the Indians, saying that they have “broad” faces, with “small black eyes, flat noses, large lips, short broad teeth”. Campanius Holm found “the women [...] rather handsome; with round faces, high breasts”, adding that “their bodies are straight and plump”.94 Whether Campanius Holm’s comment originated with his father or grandfather or with one of his foreign informants has proved hard to ascertain, Hennepin and Huet had similar, but not identical, formulations.

III.III. INDIAN ADORNMENT

While Printz wrote of Indian ‘nakedness’ and gave a short account of the Indian use of body paint, Lindeström followed the conventional thematisations and categorisations of early modern ethnography including a full description of Indian dress and adornment, complete with a drawing of an Indian family by Lindeström’s own hand. Lindeström claimed that Indian children were naked, but went on to remark that Indians did not feel ashamed among themselves but only in the company of Christians. It is somewhat unclear whether he meant that all Indians were ashamed in the presence of Christians, or whether only the children were.95 Campanius Holm claims that “they wear no clothes, but go generally naked; for that reason they anoint themselves with bears’ grease so that their bodies may endure better the heat of the sun”. Campanius Holm does not claim that the Indians are completely nude since he shortly after this description compares their leggings and shoes to “those that are used by the Laplanders and Tartars”.96

Lindeström notes some differences between Swedish and Indian aesthetics. When an Indian bride is painted and decorated “in the best fashion in their opinion” she looks as if she was wearing “...a terrible devil’s mask...” to the Swede.97 The most prominent sachems liked to garb themselves in red and blue coats of frieze which they bought from the

96 Early modern ethnography was in its turn inspired by the categorisations of Herodotos. Concerning the Swedish usage of the term ‘naked’, Fur states implicitly that the Swedes used is as synonymous with barbarism and savagery, see G. Fur, ‘De äro barbarorum barbarissimi. Svenskars möte med indians och samer på 1600-talet’ in S. Dahlgren, A. Florén & Å. Karlsson (eds.), Makt & Vardag (Stockholm, 1993), pp. 292, 296. However, it is clear that to 17th century Swedes the word “naked” did not imply nudity and not always barbarism. As in English, described above, the term rather referred to scant and insufficient clothing for the situation, as exemplified by Printz’ descriptions of the Swedish, and fully civilised, victims of a fire as escaping “naked and destitute,” pointing out that they were only dressed in shirts in the middle of winter. J. Printz [1647], ‘Report to the Right Honorable West India Company in Old Sweden’ (February 20, 1647), in A. Johnson (ed.), The Instruction for Johan Printz [1930], (Port Washington 1969), p. 130.
Swedes, making these powerful and respected leaders of the Indians look like the orphans of the orphanage in Stockholm, who were dressed in similar uniforms, which seemed a trifle amusing to Lindeström.98

III.IV. INDIAN RELIGION

As for religion, Printz wrote that the Indians “...know nothing of God, but serve Satan with their Kintika, and sacrifice to him that he may give success in their hunts, and that he may do them no harm.”99 Lindeström says that while the Indians accept the evil actions of ‘Manitto’, whom he identifies with the Devil, they do not reject the notion of an actively beneficial God. However, they find it more practical to try to soothe the Devil than to praise God. All of this seemed quite amusing to Lindeström, who also found it somewhat ironic that their “doctores medicinae” believed that they could act “as if they were worse than the Devil”, especially since they thought it necessary to sacrifice to the very same powers they attempted to scare off.100 To Lindeström, then, the incomplete separation of good and evil in his understanding of Indian religion contrasted with the absolute dichotomy he considered normal. Furthermore, he found their religion to be idolatrous since it was based on initiation rites in which the individual adopts a personal talisman. Lindeström readily accepts the effectiveness of these talismans, guessing that their magical power derives from the might of the Devil.101 Despite the Devil’s power over the Indians, God had obviously not entirely forgotten about them, Lindeström concludes, recounting Indian “tales” which told not only of a virgin birth, but also mentioned two persons who had come to preach to the Indians in ancient times, and disappeared by ascending to the heavens after having performed many miracles.102

Campanius Holm, for his part, emphasised the Indians acknowledgment of “a Supreme Being, a Great Spirit, who made the heavens and the earth” and downplayed their alleged worship of “the evil spirit”.103 In doing so, Campanius Holm credited Indian traditions among his sources. But when speaking of the origins of the North American Indians, he rejected those same sources as “foolish and [...] evidently fabulous”.104 Here, it is clear that he

101 P. Lindeström, Geographia America [1691] (Stockholm, 1962), pp. 60, 119. In one interesting passage Lindeström claims that he made personal acquaintance with ‘Satanas’ on the Caribbean island of St. Christopher on his way to New Sweden with the ship Örnen (The Eagle) in 1654. The Devil appeared in the form of some kind of beast, called ‘hagadia’ by the inhabitants. It is hard to assess to which extent this episode should be connected to Lindeström’s superstitious character, or his desire to amuse the reader through the means of exaggeration and association.
102 According to Campanius-Holm, the Indians were baffled by the fire and brimstone sermons of the Swedish priests. The verbosity of the Swedish clergymen rendered them the Indian name “bigmouths”. T. Campanius-Holm, A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden, now called by the English Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1834). Lindeström concludes that one of the precursors to the Swedish priests, being bearded and eloquent like them, must have been one of the apostles taking heed of the words of the Bible: “euntes docete omnes gentes”. P. Lindeström, Geographia America [1691] (Stockholm, 1962), p. 120.
103 T. Campanius Holm, A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden, now called by the English Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1834), p. 139.
104 T. Campanius Holm, A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden, now called by the English Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1834), p. 32.
(most probably reflecting the views of his primary informant, Johannes Campanius) was, if perhaps not less tolerant, at least less interested in Indian culture in itself than many of the English observers, and may very well have used it to make conversion of the Indians look feasible. Even though Campanius Holm admitted that Indian worship consisted of sacrifices and dances, he made no derogatory comments of these in the way Printz and Lindeström did.

III.V. INDIAN LANGUAGE

While Lindeström found Lenape language poor, he was impressed by the Indian custom to construct a new language in time of war in order to keep their plans secret, which he finds all the more remarkable given their lack of an alphabet.¹⁰⁵ He gives not a few examples of Indian language and it is interesting to note that he was aware of the Indian custom of using jargon in their contacts with the Europeans. However, the orations and body language of the sachems seemed ridiculous and pompous to Lindeström, whose view of the same episode contrasts to that of Risingh, who said that they "extolled with words, images, gestures and grand airs [their promise of greater friendship], so that we had to marvel at the Indians".¹⁰⁶

III.VI. INDIAN SOCIAL LIFE

Concerning family life, Lindeström noted that the principal wife of the Lenape sachem is the "matrona" of the extended "familia", and he acknowledged her important role in Lenape society, although he did not seem to grasp the matrilinear aspects of it.¹⁰⁷ He found their knowledge of architecture and fortifications limited, stating that the Black Minquas (the Swedish name for the Eries) were "somewhat more clever" in this respect.¹⁰⁸ This statement is somewhat contradictory since he then went on to describe the construction and grandeur of the Lenape longhouses. Despite never having been to America, Campanius Holm seems to have been better informed on the family life of the Indians than Lindeström. He had access to a wealth of sources not available to Lindeström, including the notes of his grandfather who knew the Unami traders’ jargon of Lenape-Delaware and were often in contact with the Indians. As a result, Campanius Holm did not resort to the common European stereotypes of Indian female slavery and male Indian laziness. Instead, he commented upon the high status of women in Indian society and his observations concerning Lenape settlement and habitation patterns signal a good understanding of the fundamental tenets of Lenape cultural organization.¹⁰⁹


¹⁰⁷ The terms ‘matrona’ and ‘familia’ are among the comparatively few Latin words used by Lindeström and may be a Roman parallel. P. Lindeström, Geographia America [1691] (Stockholm, 1962), p. 109.

¹⁰⁸ P. Lindeström, Geographia America [1691] (Stockholm, 1962), pp. 118, 141

¹⁰⁹ T. Campanius Holm, A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden, now called by the English Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1834), pp. 123, 133.
III VII. INDIAN GOVERNMENT & JUSTICE

As for government and justice, Lindeström claimed that the sachems demanded absolute obedience, but were neither revered nor honoured, nor were any taxes paid unto them, since they were equal to everybody else in Indian society. With little hesitation, Lindeström makes away with Indian law and justice by stating that the Indians do not honour any other law than the lex talionis, which did not seem to be a "law" at all in Lindeström’s mind, but rather a legal principle.\(^{110}\) Campanius Holm is far better informed when it comes to Indian legal practices. For example, he is able to describe the Indian system of fines in some detail.\(^{111}\)

III VIII. INDIAN SOCIAL & MORAL CHARACTER

Lindeström tells that the Swedes called the Indians “wild men” but explained that this name was not given them on account of any raving madness on their part, but because of their idolatry and their religious confusion.\(^{112}\) By the time of Lindeström’s writing, the Lenapes had also become appropriated by the Swedes who used terms such as “our savages” or “our Indians” to describe their neighbours. In his generalising and highly condensed anthropology of the Lenapes Lindeström supplied his readers with an extensive pro et contra moral assessment of the Indians. He saw them as active, willing, capable and quick learners with impressive physical features, calling them “a brave people, daring, vengeful, bellicose, passionate, heroic”, all positive qualities to 17th century Swedes, who often stressed their progeny from the Goths of the Völkervandring, who were described in similar terms.\(^{113}\) He admired their social skills and good memory, finding them “…knowledgable of conversation, eager and industrious, capable, generous, alert, cocky, inquisitive, hardy and capable of enduring much pain…”\(^{114}\) However, he also found them “…very licentious, proud, desirous of praise, promiscuous, bestial, distrustful, untruthful and thievish, dishonest, plump in their emotions, shameless and immoral etcetera…”\(^{115}\)

\(^{110}\) When the Swedish King Charles IX in 1608 ratified and had King Christopher’s Law from 1442 published it was proclaimed that the Swedish Courts of Justice should follow the Mosaic law when punishing serious crimes. An excerpt of the Pentateuch was added to the Code, and the Mosaic influence on 17th century Swedish criminal justice was considerable. Lindeström’s derogatory remark of the Indian law of retaliation may reflect oppositions between theological and rationalistic interpretations of the concept of state of nature and the theory of a general natural law. P. Lindeström, Geographia America [1691] (Stockholm, 1962), p. 117.

\(^{111}\) T. Campanius Holm, A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden, now called by the English Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1834), p. 123.


\(^{113}\) There is a vast literature on the so-called “Gothicism” or “Gothic Renaissance” of the Early Modern Swedish culture, most notable in this body of research are A. Blanck, Den nordiska renässansen i sjuttonhundratalets litteratur (1911); K. Johannesson, Gotik renässans: Johannes och Olaus Magnus som politiker och historiker (1982); J. Mjöberg, Drömmen om sagtiden, Vols. 1–2 (1967–68); J. Nordström, De yverbornes ö (1934).


Lineström’s overall moral assessment of the Indians is seemingly not in favour of the Indians: “In sum, these Indians are a people of a variety of qualities, more bent on doing evil than good...”116 But throughout his account, Lineström described the Indians as positively simple, unaware of simulation and dishonesty as they were, despite sometimes referring to their crafty and cunning nature. Lineström’s final statement on the moral and personal characteristics of the Indians differ quite clearly from his judgement above: if one only knows how to socialise with the Indians, and how to not offend them, he found them to be a steadfast and goodhearted people, ready to sacrifice themselves for their best friends.117

Indian sexuality was of great interest to Lineström, who did not try to mask his curiosity in this respect, as it seems his English contemporaries did. He made no connection between Indian nakedness and sexuality, but assures us of the bestiality of the Indians on grounds of their incestuous promiscuity, which he found to be akin to the mating of “unanimated creatures”.118 He claimed that Indian sexual liberty led to the high frequency of syphilis among them, but mentioned that they were in the possession of very efficient cures, even for syphilis, which they kept secret to the Christians.119 If he found their manner of conception bestial, he admired their childrearing practices as being supremely humane. In a reproach to his compatriots, he claimed that the Indians would never dispose of their children in the manner of Swedish prostitutes, who often would leave their babies to so-called ånglamakerskor (“makers of angels”), destitute women who would in exchange for a small fee let unwanted children die through systematic neglect.120 Campanius Holm gives a similar description, emphasising that the Indians are friendly and upright in their intercourse with strangers who treat them in the same manner, even though they sometimes can be very cunning and roguish. Campanius Holm largely draws upon Lineström for his description of Indian friendliness, but sees a connection between Indian generosity and improvidence that Lineström does not:

...there is nothing, however valuable, that they will not divide with them [their friends]: they have, indeed, not much to bestow, but be it much or little, they are always glad to share it; they neither care for to-morrow, as their hunting, fishery, and trapping always supply them with a plentiful table.121

The Indians told Campanius how they “wonder, on the contrary, at the Christians, when they see them so attentive to their comforts, [...] building for themselves houses and fortresses, as

117 Lineström mentions how the Lenapes went to Manhattan to exact revenge on behalf of the Swedes when the Dutch attacked New Sweden in 1655. Stuyvesant accused the Swedes of having instigated these “tyrannical and pagan” enemies against the Dutch, but Lineström claims the Swedes only learnt of the actions of the Indians when Stuyvesant told them. The episode is used by Lineström to prove Indian friendship for the Swedish. It must be acknowledged that this friendship also may have had quite material objectives, since the Lenapes decidedly would benefit from having two trading partners, rather than just one, most probably regardless of whether this single trading partner would be Dutch or Swedish. See P. Lineström, Geographia America [1691] (Stockholm, 1962), p. 138. For recent accounts of trade and politics in the Delaware Valley trading system, see G. Fur, Cultural confrontation on two fronts (Norman, 1993); K. O. Kupperman, “Scandinavian Colonists Confront the New World” in C. E. Hoffecker et al. (eds.), New Sweden in America (Newark, 1995); H. Norman, “Svenskars möte med indians vid Delaware: handel, misstro och rädsla”, in D. Blanck (ed.), Migration och mångfald (Uppsala, 1999); L. E. Williams, ‘Indians and Europeans in the Delaware Valley, 1620-1655’, in C. E. Hoffecker et al. (eds.), New Sweden in America (Newark, 1995).
121 T. Campanius Holm, A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden, now called by the English Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1834), p. 117.
if they were to live for ever”. When describing the moral qualities of “these Americans”, Campanius Holm most probably support himself upon Campanius’ notes when he states that the Indians are:

...acute and ingenious after their manner; for although they are in darkness with regard to religious subjects and other intricate knowledge: yet, they are very sagacious in matters of business, and easily imitate what the Christians do, when it can be of use to them: nay, when they see the Swedes do something, they can steal their arts while talking with them, without the Swedes perceiving it; and they can make the instruments which the Swedes use, sometimes neater and better than the Swedes themselves.

In contrast to Lindeström, Campanius Holm described the Indians as modest rather than licentious, which opinion may be influenced by his knowledge from his grandfather, who spent much more time in the colony than Lindeström and who made a point of visiting the Lenapes, Eries and Susquehannocks, and clearly developed a more intimate knowledge of Indian society and family life than Lindeström did during his brief sojourn in the colony. But it may also be influenced by emerging, yet rudimentary, visions of the noble savage, which began to spread across Europe at the time of Campanius Holm, which had hardly exercised any influence upon Lindeström and his contemporaries.

III. IX. INDIAN-SWEDISH EVERYDAY CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

Campanius is all the more interesting, since there are few accounts of Swedes who are said to have had such a close contact with Indians. But it is clear from Lindeström’s account that Indians and Swedish often traded, hunted and socialised together. When describing the rules of social conduct between Indians and Swedes, Lindeström illustrates the perennial need of consideration, precaution and attention to the other in cross-cultural contacts. He tells us that the Indians enjoyed to come to the houses of their Swedish friends. When a Swede receives his Indian friend he has to clear the table quickly, since the Indian generally prefers to sit on, rather than at, the table. Lindeström also warns his reader of giving his Indian friend too much akvavit, even if he desires it highly, saying that they are unaccustomed to the intoxicating effects of alcohol and may become a danger to both themselves and their surroundings when drunk.

When the Swedes in turn visit their Indian friends they are received with great hospitality and presented with an abundance of food, which must be accepted gratefully, lest the savages becomes “very crazy and impatient” and the closest friendship may be turned into bitter enmity. If someone brings a horse along, Indian courtesy is extended to their new Christian equestrian friend as well, and the poor horse is fed in the same manner as the two-legged Christians, and supposed to appreciate it as much as they do. Lindeström, who otherwise rarely let a comical episode pass without comment, does not very much of this, explaining plainly that the Indians are unfamiliar with horses and therefore quite naturally “assume they eat the same as the people”.

These Swedish travels to the Indians were normally not as frequent as the Indian visits to the Swedes, but the infrequent supply of trading goods to the Swedes may have

122 T. Campanius Holm, A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden, now called by the English Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1834), p. 117.
124 T. Campanius Holm, A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden, now called by the English Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1834), pp. 126-127.
forced them at times to develop more active and direct relations with the Indians than the Dutch and the English had to. At least the English accounts do more frequently tell of meetings with Indians at the premises of English settlements. Both English and Dutch were in a better position to impose their terms of conduct on the Indians than were the Swedes.128

Chief Steward Per Brahe (1602-1680), who was highly interested in the New Sweden colonial enterprise, asked if Governor Printz could find “some Savages, who would come here with a free will; they will then see another world, we should treat them very well here. Through them one could accomplish much good among the other Savages”129 130

However, despite the quite free contacts between Swedes and Indians, which would imply a comparatively greater trust than seems to have been the case in most English colonies, Printz never succeeded in sending any Indians to Brahe. Campanius Holm claims that two Indians, a man and a woman, did express some willingness to go to Sweden, but their kinsmen demanded a guarantee that they should come back safely, which Campanius could not promise on account of the great risks involved in a transatlantic crossing. Neither did the Swedes hold Indians as slaves, or use free Indian workforce, even though there are indications that Lenape communities changed their patterns of living in order to accommodate to the needs of the Swedish colony for large quantities of maize, which the Swedes bought from the Indians. There are no secure indications of intermarriage between Swedes and Indians during the colonial period. However, a Catholic Huronian chief, Charles Ondaiondont, visited New Sweden in 1647 and complained that the Swedish men of the colony were living in vice, only thinking about the fur trade and their Indian mistresses, completely ignoring the spiritual well-being of the Indians, presumably not unlike the coureurs des bois in New France at the same time.131

III.X. IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE FOR SWEDISH UNDERSTANDING OF INDIAN-SWEDISH RELATIONS

The Swedish obviously understood the spiritual value of wampum, and Printz even had a caftan entirely made of wampum to impress upon the Indians. When speaking of the winterdwellings of the Indians, Lindeström casually remarked that the Swedish could easily exterminate all the Lenapes during wintertime, since they all lived in these large houses

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128 Risingh reports that visiting Marylanders warned the Swedes of letting the Indians walk around freely in the Swedish settlements which was obviously quite normal. J. Risingh [1653-1656], ‘A short Narrative concerning the Journey to New Sweden in America with Her Majesty’s ship the Eagle’, in S. Dahlgren & H. Norman, The Rise and Fall of New Sweden (Uppsala, 1988).


130 As Chief Steward and Lord High Chancellor of Sweden, Count Per Brahe had the highest judicial authority in the Swedish realm according to the Constitution of 1634. Brahe, both in his position as Governor-General of Finland as well as Count of Visingsborg, being the semi-autonomous ruler of his own county in Central Sweden was not foreign to the problems and practices of integrating non-Swedish groups into the administrative patterns of the Swedish military state. In Finland he was engaged in incorporating Roma and Samnis into Finnish-Swedish majority society by way of militarization of these minorities. He also took keen interest in the conversion of the Russian-Orthodox Carelians. Brahe represented the paternalistic social ideals common among contemporary Swedish high nobility. As an almost sovereign prince, he held an interest in culture and learning and aspired to maintain an impressive court at Visingsborg in the centre of his vast fiefdom, with a rich library, an observatory, a school and a printing shop, in which Swedish as well as foreign travel books were printed in Swedish. For a description of the world-view of contemporary Swedish nobility, see P. Englund, Det hotade huset : adliga föreställningar om samhället under stormaktstiden (Stockholm, 1989).

131 For Charles Ondaiondont’s visit to New Sweden, see Jesuit Relations, vol. 33, p. 135. It has also been suggested that pseudo-marital relations between Swedish and Indians would have lead to immediate exclusion from the Swedish community, see G. Fur, Cultural confrontation on two fronts (Norman, 1993). There are reasons to suspect that such liaisons would not be reported, even if they took place.
during that time. Something similar had been suggested by Printz a decade ago. As the old war dog with experience from the Thirty Years War that he was, Printz requested in 1644 that a couple of hundred soldiers should be sent over and kept in the colony:

...until we broke the necks of all of them [the Lenapes] in this River, especially since we have no beaver trade whatsoever with them but only the maize trade. They are a lot of poor rogues. Then each one could be secure here at his work, and feed and nourish themselves unmolested without their maize, and also we could take possession of the places (which are the most fruitful) that the savages now possess; and when we have thus not only bought this river, but also won it with the sword, then no one, whether he be Hollander or Englishman, could pretend in any manner to this place either now or in coming times, but we should have the beaver trade with the Black and White Minquas [the Swedish names for the Eries and the Susquehannocks, respectively] alone...

Printz continues “...and if there is some delay in this matter it must nevertheless in the end come to this and it cannot be avoided, the sooner the better, before they do us more harm.”

In contrast to Printz, Lindeström failed to see how the Swedish would benefit from such a genocide, claiming that the Lenapes in fact served the Swedish as slaves, albeit unknowingly. Furthermore, if the Indians were exterminated, Lindeström concluded, the trade would be ruined. To Lindeström, then, the Lenapes had successfully carved out a niche for themselves in the Delaware trading system, which had made the Swedes even more dependent upon them, which can scarcely have been the case ten years before, when Printz suggested their extermination, as there is little to suggest that Printz was merely a mercenary and not a calculating merchant, too. Remarkably, however, there are no indications that neither Printz nor Lindeström would have seen such a massacre as morally wrong, although historian Alf Åberg has suggested that the silence of the lords of the Senate with regard to Printz’ request may indicate that they found such a proposal “un-Christian” (Åberg, 1987). It remains just as likely, however, that neither the Swedish army nor the Swedish navy could spare any number of soldiers in the midst of the so-called Torstensson’s War against Denmark (1643-1645) which ran parallel with the Swedish engagement in the Thirty Years War.

III.XI. CIVILISING THE INDIANS

As pointed out above, Lindeström found that the Indians could be very servile if only addressed in proper ways. “If they were exercised and kept after, they would become very docile, since they are by nature capable to understand and comprehend everything that they can behold before their eyes.” In a similar vein, Campanius Holm asserts that “these Indians [i.e. the Lenapes] are the most sensible nation in all America, they are particularly well disposed towards the Christian religion”, and notes that their manners have changed greatly to the better since the Swedes first came among them. Here, however, Campanius Holm’s positive assessment of the Indians is connected to his belief that the Indians used to go naked and practice cannibalism before the coming of the Swedes. The assumed barbarity of the Lenapes thus serve to make their present relative civility all the more

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136 Campanius Holm recites evidence provided Johannes Campanius as well as Swedish clergy in the Delaware Valley during the late 17th century and early 18th century, most notably Eric Biörk and Andreas Rudman as well as the German priest Francis David Pastorius. T. Campanius Holm, *A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden*, now called by the English Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1834), p. 118.
applaudable. No other Swedish writer makes use of this logic, and neither Printz nor Lindeström or Risingh speaks of Indian cannibalism.

III XII. SWEDISH PROSELYTISM AMONG THE INDIANS

It has already been pointed out that one of the objectives for the Swedish colonial activities in North America was the spreading of Christianity. However, only small resources were given to this project, and the results were poor, if any at all. In his letters to Chief Steward Brahe, who also happened to be Governor Printz’ patron, Printz lamented that the Indians were uninterested in the Christian religion, complaining that “...when we speak to them about God they pay no attention, but they will let it be understood that they are a free people, subject to no one, but do what they please. I presume it would be possible to convert them; but only with great labor...”. In his reply, Brahe explicitly asked Printz to place the conversion of the Indians ”above all things” and concentrate on “instructing the poor, erring people”. Brahe even provided some practical advice, claiming that “outward ceremonies will do much with such savage people” and that ”the savages should, a ratione humane et primis principis, be instructed as children”.

This interest was not only dictated by the Chief Steward’s concern of the salvation of Indian souls, but also of shrewd political considerations: he advised Printz to “keep good friendship with them and allow no harm to be done to them by our own people; then you are secure from them and on their account the other neighbors will not dare to attack you”. Lindeström does not mention the Swedish attempts to Christianise the Indians at all, while Campanius Holm greatly overestimated the results of these efforts. Possibly, Campanius Holm’s overall positive view of the Indians can be linked to the fact that his grandfather was the only known missionary in the colony and that there was a renewed interest in state sponsored Lutheran missionary activity in Sweden in the beginning of the 18th century.

III XIII. INDIAN ORIGINS

While neither Lindeström, Printz or Risingh made any attempts to explain the origin of the North American Indians, Campanius Holm spoke against polygenesis and pre-Adamite theories. He was sure of the Jewish descent of the Indians, which he considered to have been authoritatively proven by his grandfather’s studies in comparative linguistics, which probably in no small part went in the direction of the Jews since not a few Swedish clergymen had an inkling of training in Hebrew at this time, together with Greek and Latin. However, it has

142 See N. Jacobsson, Svenskar och indianer : studier i svenskarnas insats i den tidigare protestantiska missionens historia (Stockholm, 1922).
143 T. Campanius Holm, A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden, now called by the English Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1834), pp. 114-115. The belief that the Indians were of Jewish was common among Campanius contemporaries, see J. P. Rubiès, ‘Hugo Grotius’s Dissertation on the Origin of the American Peoples and the Use of Comparative Methods’, in J. Dunn & I. Harris (eds.), Grotius, Vol. II, Great Political
also been suggested that the Dutch legal theoretician Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) presented a ‘Swedish’ theory on the origin of the North American Indians. Grotius, who was Sweden’s ambassador to France between 1634 and 1644, engaged in a fierce polemic with Johannes De Laet in which he advanced the theory that the Indians descended from Norse Vikings, an argument supported by some quite extreme adventures in the art of liberal association, even by the standards of the time. Gliozzi (1977) has suggested that this contribution was a mercenary attempt to support the land claims of Queen Christina on the Delaware against the claims of the W.I.C., a theory rejected by Rubiés as too reductionist in its instrumentalism. Indeed, if Grotius’ Norse hypothesis was an attempt to support the Swedish colonial efforts on the Delaware, one would expect it to be mentioned somewhere in the Swedish texts. Neither the papers of the N.S.C., nor the minutes of the Council of State dealing with the colony make any reference to Grotius’ theory. The Swedish defense of the Swedish presence in North America was based solely on conventional judicial arguments and land deeds in the manner established by the W.I.C..

IV. CONCLUSIONS

IV.1. GENERAL SIMILARITIES & DISSIMILARITIES

In contrast to the English authors, most Swedish commentators on the Indians lacked a fully developed intellectual perspective on their subject, with the marginal exception of Campanius Holm. His concerns were however largely borrowed from non-Swedish texts. Possible explanations may be the greater illiteracy of Swedish colonists if compared to English colonists, the weaker penetration of the ideals and methods of humanist learning in contemporary Swedish than in English culture, less acutely felt cosmological problems in Sweden than in England, which in its turn may have rendered Indian culture less interesting to the Swedish than the English. The combination of colonial practical needs and metropolitan intellectual needs contributed to the intricate, dynamic and sometimes contradictory interconnections between different ‘languages of ethnology’ witnessed in the early English reports on Indian life. The same tension is not as prevalent in the Swedish material, which is overall characterised by a sense of crude directness.

Despite differences in intellectual outlook—or rather the Swedish lack thereof—as well as in narrative tone, the Swedish perceptions of the Indians were remarkably similar to the English. Criteria of “civility” were largely the same, and included complex language, government by hereditary hierarchy, urban organisation, religion and agriculture which were also used in very much the same ways. Despite the obvious conflict of interest between describing and analysing the Indians for their own sake and analysing them for the sake of comparing and understanding English society, all English accounts express a desire to depict the Indians and their culture as correct as possible, which meant analysing supposedly pagan beliefs. Campanius Holm on the other hand, rejected Indian traditions as false when they did

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not support directly his purpose, i.e. to describe the Indians in a positive light so that the interest in missionary activity would be supported.

While Indian social and moral character had greater importance to intellectual Englishmen than to the Swedes, the English often expressed a lack of understanding of the importance of generosity and reciprocity in not only trade, but all forms of interactions in Indian culture, which the Swedish seem to have understood. As pointed out by Kupperman, this may seem most remarkable, since both English and Swedish 17th century social system entailed patron-client relationships which operated along fairly similar lines as the Indian system of reciprocity. However, European patron-client relationships were primarily hierarchically rather than situationally determined, which Indian systems of reciprocity rarely were. While ‘negating’ views of the Indians as subhuman, irrational or constitutionally inferior were common in both English and Swedish texts, it is hard to derive any general conclusions on English and Swedish perceptions from this, on account of the wide variety of opposing reports. An example may be mentioned. Fur (1993) states that Lindeström “joined a long line of visitors to the New World who categorically charged its inhabitants with inarticulate speech and a lack of reasoning faculties as noted by Hodgen”, referring to the idea that the first would typically indicate the latter. Even if Lindeström often states that the Indians lack this or that feature of Christian Swedish civilisation, thus using the rhetoric of ‘negation’, I have not found him making any connection between poor language and lack of reason. Instead he marvels at the remarkable cognitive faculties of the Indians. It is true that he states that the Indians are simple-minded and easily duped, but he also view them as distrusting, wily, and cunning. Thus, Lindeström contradicts himself, sometimes stating the Indians as being intelligent (albeit not always using very positive terms and examples), sometimes simple (commonly using very positive examples of Indian honesty and loyalty, perhaps bordering to stupidity in contemporary eyes, but clearly impressive in Lindeström’s mind). In any case, it is hard to make any definite statements regarding the overall character of such a varied account as Lindeström’s. This is also a general problem with most of the English texts as well.

The manner in which Indian life was presented by English and Swedish writers sometimes gives hints of how the writers viewed the Indians. Englishmen often wondered at certain traits of Indian culture which they typically saw as either remarkable and comparatively admirable, given that the Indians were pagans, or as outright deplorable since Indian culture did not always conform to English moral norms. In both these attitudes many English observers made use of the complex interplay between what Teltscher (2000) in another context has called a ‘rhetoric of difference’ and a ‘rhetoric of identification’. This

147 It should be said however that Lindeström combines praise of Indian loyalty with making strong statements concerning the particular Indian fondness of the Swedes, if compared to other colonial nations, thus implying that Indian loyalty was well deserved by the Swedes, praising the latter by praising the former.
149 Analysing François Bernier’s history of the Mughal empire (1670-1671), Teltscher has suggested that Bernier, when describing the lack of private property rights in India as the root of most evils in the Mughal empire (since it gave rise to a system of “escheat”), in fact tried to warn his addressee, Colbert, of the consequences of bringing all French land under the king. Bernier thus implicitly transferred the conditions of the Orient to France. By defining the Orient as definitively “other” at the same time as he showed the possibility of this “otherness” within Europe itself, Bernier created “an unsettling sense of self-estrangement” among his readers, a literary technique which Teltscher calls the “rhetoric of difference” and the “rhetoric of identification”. K. Teltscher, India Inscribed. European and British Writing on India 1600-1800 (Oxford 2000), pp. 29-31, 33.
technique was not as common or as elaborated in the Swedish accounts, Lindeström mostly using it to attain comical effects, and only once to criticise fellow Christians (in the case of contrasting Indian and Swedish childrearing practices). In his generally positive account of the Indians, Campanius Holm refrained from using this technique.

In sum, the general similarity between the English and the Swedish accounts is striking. Similar themes are reiterated and both admiration and contempt, curiosity and disinterest, prejudice and empiricism is found in Swedish and English accounts alike. But what mechanisms sorted the outcome of these diverse European observations of Indian life? How can the English and Swedish views be understood if systematised as examples of early modern ethnological discourse? The three different ‘languages’ of early modern ethnological discourse tended to operate in conjunction and it may be exactly therefore that it became such a powerful measure to separate them in what might be called a form of application of the rhetoric of difference and the rhetoric of identification. It was shameful to Christians to hear that pagans were more “civil” in their behaviour than the Christians, since there was a strong assumption that Christianity and civility were linked. Some even understood this link as unique for Christianity. Extreme Protestants like Roger Williams used the languages of Christianity and civility quite differently than did Catholics. They emphasised the spiritual character of true conversion and repeated the need to instruct the Indians in the principles of the true faith and not just subjected them to mass baptism. Instead of trying to describe Indian culture as “better than European Christianity itself” in the manner of Las Casas and other Catholic apologetics of the Indian cause, Williams compared Indian life to the prelapsarian state, claiming that the Indians were at least on a par with, if not superior to, the civilised Europeans, exactly because they lacked the superficial Christianity which tainted European culture. However, Williams simultaneously expressed an anxiety that the Indians prelapsarian state of mind would prove too weak to benefit from true conversion. Rubiés (1995) points out that this is an “extreme example” and this seems to be the case, the other end of which may be represented by Campanius Holm’s views on the formerly cannibalistic Indians whom he assumed would become better converts. To Campanius Holm, the prelapsarian state of Indian life seemed decidedly positive, and did not present a threat to the eventual conversion of the Indians. Indeed, all Swedish commentators, except Printz, seem quite positive about the conversion and civilising of the Indians. Printz is the only realist in this sense: early on he sensed that the cultural encounter between Indians and Europeans could only evolve into conflict and not integration, which still many English hoped before the destruction of the ‘praying Indians’ during the course of King Philip’s War (1675-1676).

The separation of the language of Christianity and civility which was done by both Swedish and English Protestants in North America can be linked to the deep concerns and anxieties that many Protestants felt about their own righteousness and piety. Williams and other radical English Protestants made more sophisticated use of this logic than the Swedes did, which may be due to their explicit millenarian expectations: Their hope was indeed to reconcile the apparent tension between the languages of Christianity and civility. The worldly orientation and state supporting role of the Swedish State Church did not warrant similar intellectual adventures, to Swedish prelates the languages of Christianity and civility remained firmly linked together. But the combination of this link and the internal threat of imperfect Christianity presented all Protestants with an acute problem, since Protestantism

indeed was founded upon the internal criticism of Christianity. This heritage had to be at least
rhetorically safe-guarded. Thus it is natural to find Williams’ concerns were echoed by both
Lindeström and Campanius Holm, albeit on a lower intellectual level, when they remarked on
the existence of higher moral among the Indians than among the Christians.

But the languages of Christianity and civility were also combined with the
language of general natural law: early English educated observers did not only see Indian
hospitality and good manners as a reflection of civility as Williams did, but also as ordained
by natural law. Among Swedish observers, the language of natural law does not appear fully
until Campanius Holm combines the Indians’ prelapsarian life-style with their lack of
providence and explains this by referring to the bountiful American nature. Thus, he uses all
three languages when turning the what may seem like lack of civility into something positive.
We must not forget however that his account was influenced by non-Swedish reports and
written after the downfall of the Swedish colony.

There is a risk that this survey may have more to say about the individual
accounts than the overall differences between English and Swedish views. There does not
seem to be a clear and decisive difference between the English and the Swedish perceptions of
the North American Indians, and therefore it does not seem likely that we can explain the
relative pacificity of Indian-Swedish relations by referring to different perceptions of the
Indians. This would seem to support the material explanation, rather than cultural explanation,
of the different character of the English and the Swedish colonial encounter with the Indians.
On the other hand, no one has claimed that the history of the supposed cultural interaction
between Indians and Swedish and Finnish forest farmers would be written by Swedish
colonial administrators and officials, like the authors surveyed here. Nevertheless, the overall
similarity between English and Swedish perceptions on the North American Indians has been
established, even if the reasons for their interest were somewhat different. General ambiguity
concerning the fears of conflict and the hopes of integration has been found to be normal in
both Swedish and English colonial views of the Indians. The nature of this ambiguity will
undoubtedly be central to the further study of the European and Indian cultural encounter
along the East Coast of North America in the 17th century.

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