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The End of an Era

The integration of Amerindians into European colonial societies

The American colonial period was a time of immense change across the Americas—a time of conquest and opportunity, war and alliance, conversion and resistance, destruction and integration. It was a time when great societies would fall, and ancient ways of life would come to an end. It was a time when a native population would be forced to conform to new rules within a new society.

This paper describes the extent of native integration (or lack thereof) within each of the major colonial powers in the New World: the Spanish, the Portuguese, the English, and the French up to the beginning of the 18th century, with the bulk of attention given to the Spanish and English. Each power encountered unique circumstances and thus fostered unique relationships with the local indigenous populations.

Europeans in America found themselves with utterly unfamiliar people who at once presented a responsibility, an opportunity, and a curiosity. On one hand, they felt an obligation to the peoples' spiritual, material, and physical welfare. As Christians and civilized Europeans, they felt it was their duty to deliver these people from their savage condition. On the other hand, the universal tendency of greed and the natives' innocence and weakness drove a desire to exploit them. Ultimately, both resulted in nearly the complete destruction of Amerindian ways of life. The transatlantic conquests also had a major impact on Renaissance thinking, and can be said to have begun the modern science of ethnology.¹

The Spanish colonies in America are an extraordinary tale of conquest. Thanks to their military supremacy and cunning strategy, the few hundred men led by the famous conquistadors Cortes, Pizzaro, and Alvarado were able to overthrow empires of millions. The societies they conquered were not primitive. They had achieved remarkable skill in sculpture, construction, pottery, weaving, and working precious metals. The Aztecs built magnificent cities and temples. The Incas had an extensive system of roads, aqueducts, and an elaborate administration bureaucracy. And the Mayas had a highly sophisticated science of astronomical measurement and a detailed calendar system.²

In the conquest of the Aztecs and the Incas, Cortes and Pizzaro both recruited armies from the fringes of the native empires to aid in the raiding of the capital cities. The friendly towns aided with food, fighters, and information. In Cempoala, Cortes first learned of Quetzalcoatl, the Aztec's divine hero who was said to return to earth around the time of the Spaniard's arrival. With horses and firearms, the likes of which the natives had never seen, exploiting the myth was all too easy. Cortes was brilliant at integrating the fears of the natives into his strategy for conquest. After deposing the king Montezuma, Cortes assumed command of the Aztec society with relative ease. The same was true of Pizzaro with the Incas and Alvarado with the Mayas. In both of those cases, the conquistadors pitted one rival ruler against the other to ultimately subdue both.³

Because the societies they encountered were so advanced, the new leaders simply had to conquer the capitals and impose themselves on top of an existing social and political structure, tapping into the tax revenue and administrative organization that was already there.² The money poured in. While resistance did occur—particularly in Peru, the brutal submission tactics of the conquistadors, coupled with the native societies' need for social order and inability to mobilize in large numbers, prevented any substantial uprisings.

The Spanish Crown outlined a strict policy of native treatment early on and tried its best to enforce it throughout the new colonies. The Indians were entitled to the same rights of Spanish citizens. They were protected by the law, maintained property ownership, could

not be enslaved, and could sue Spaniards and be sued by them. They were even allowed to maintain their own laws, except when these were deemed barbarous to the Spanish. By the mid 16th century the self-appointed captains and governors had been replaced with Crown officials, and an extensive Crown bureaucracy was set up to oversee the administration of the colonies. Special courts, called *audiencia*, were set up to hear the grievances of the Indians.⁴

At first, the Spanish ruled over the natives within *encomiendas*, which were native villages 'commended' to the care of a local Spanish official, the *encomiendado*. It was like feudalism, but it had one important distinction (at least in legal theory): the grant of *encomienda* did not imply a cession of land or property. Natives remained free and they maintained property rights to the land they occupied. In this way, it was very similar to the Aztec, Inca, and Mayan systems they were already used to. *Encomiendados* were responsible for overseeing the protection of the natives as well as their education and Christianization. The idea of the *encomienda* was to establish paternal communities within existing native villages where natives were enlightened to European and Christian ways through friendly discourse. *Encomiendados* did of course collect taxes, which usually took the form of food, cotton clothing, or forced labour. But taxation was nothing new to these people, only the overlord had changed.²

Encomiendas initially proved quite effective in Spanish America. Indians supplied food, clothing, and other supplies to sustain the colonists, and they built dwellings, buildings, and churches. But as more immigrants came over they put an even greater strain on the native agricultural villages, and eventually led to their collapse.⁴

The food supply was not the only thing that was running short. As the economy grew, so too did the demand for labour. Weaving, sugar making, shipbuilding, and particularly mining all relied on Indian labour. Simultaneously, the labour supply was going down. The Indians were dying in staggering numbers. They had no immunity to European diseases like smallpox and influenza. Crowded conditions in the mines exacerbated the situation.

Indians preferred their communal ways and had little desire to work full-time for the Spanish—even for wages. As demand for labour grew, a system of forced labour rotation known in Peru as *mita* and *repartimiento* in New Spain, became the norm. Indian villages were required to produce a certain percentage of their male population for a certain number of weeks work in rotation throughout the year. They were paid, but the rates were notoriously low. Also, although the Crown prohibited the seizure of Indian land, the Spanish still managed to wrestle control of land from the natives one way or the other (bribing was common). Those who lost control of their land usually had no choice but to remain there as labourers. Because they remained poor, landlords would lend them goods and money in exchange for promised labour, thus leading to debt slavery.

As the Indians were forced to work in the mines or seek employment in Spanish trades, the labour supply for communal farming decreased. Also, grazing cattle from Spanish ranches would often wander into the Indian villages and destroy crops. The native agriculture broke down. Indians had no choice but to don Spanish clothing and leave their communities for the Spanish towns to become part of the money economy. This brought them into more sustained contact with the Spaniards, which led to more disease and deaths. Those that survived were eventually integrated into Spanish society. As their villages reverted to desert, their ancient way of life came to an end.⁴

While the Spanish economy was taking its toll on *encomiendas*, the friary had devised its own scheme for fulfilling its mission while protecting the natives. They argued for the segregation of natives into mission towns built specifically for their habitation, where they would be under ecclesiastic supervision and protected from exploitation. They argued that natives would not only benefit from the teachings of the Church but also the economic and social advantages of urban life apart from the Spaniards. They put a great deal of effort into luring Indians into these towns and planting Catholicism firmly in the native society.

The friary was extremely successful, owing primarily to Indian psychology. The Indians had been accustomed to ceremony and ritual which centred on their communal agriculture. The Spanish, with their destruction of temples, prohibition of pagan ceremonies and dances, and forced labour in mines and towns, destroyed this way of life and created a void in the Indians' spiritual and social life. Christian faith and church-building helped to fill that void. The natives build magnificent churches—owing to a desire to replace the lost splendour of the pagan temples. Spiritual ritual was much more elaborate than that of Europe, representing an attempt to replace the ceremonious life that had been lost. A new, hybrid theocracy emerged throughout New Spain with its own priesthood.

“The cult of the Virgin was superimposed upon, and confused with, the cults of earth-mother and corn-goddess. The war-gods were forgotten, because they had proved so patently powerless against Spanish steel. Pagan fertility rites were Christianized, by the including of a preliminary Mass and a procession through the village with the images of saints, or of local gods—for the distinction was often little understood. The outward sign of this intermingling of cults can be seen to this day in sixteenth-century churches decorated by Indian craftsmen. Angels are carved wearing feather bonnets, and the Madonna is depicted with the swarthy skin and lank blank hair of an Indian.”⁵

As can be imagined struggle for colonial control ensued between the friars and the secular Spanish employers, no doubt heated by the labour shortages. Under the new King Phillip II, policy changed against the friary, and Indians were to be Christianized and integrated into secular society. The friary's dream of a separate Indian Christian community was abandoned, and the natives were absorbed into a society of European type.

Nowhere was Native American integration more complete than in central Mexico. The ancient capital Tenochtitlán, renamed Mexico City, became a melting pot where

Spaniards and Indians lived and worked side by side. Indians became masters of European crafts and entered guilds with Spaniards. They became masons, carvers, and silversmiths. Some even set up their own ventures in mining or trade and became modestly rich. Indians who conformed to society in this way were prevented from ill-treatment and were generally accepted (though on a subordinate level to Europeans). Racial mixture was common, and today, Mexico's is predominantly a *mestizo* population in which people are of mixed blood and mixed traditions and take pride in both lines of heritage.⁴

In Peru, integration was much less complete. Even today, Peru is a country with a predominantly Spanish Catholic ruling class and an Indian pagan peasantry. When Pizarro founded the new capital on the coast at Lima, he emphasized the division between the two cultures. The geography played a role as well, with the Indians remaining in the mountains and the Spanish settling along the coast. The ancient capital at Cuzco was situated in the Andean plateau and was not ideal for cavalry or the shipment of goods from Peru's harbours.³ Pizarro was first and foremost a warrior, and did not look at native integration in anything other than an exploitative sense. Hispanicization in Peru was therefore less intense than in Mexico and the Indians were more resistant. Missionaries lacked the fervour of their Mexican counterparts. Christianity, where it was accepted at all, was secondary to the native religion. Indians, so long as they paid their tribute and performed the labour demanded of them, were left to themselves. This is not to say they were unaffected, however. Like the natives of Mexico and Guatemala, their way of life suffered from the disintegrating forces of colonialism. Of the Peruvians, Parry writes "they lost much of what was best in their old culture, without acquiring much of the culture of Spain."⁶

All of the major European colonial powers had wound up at one point or another in Brazil, but unfortunately for the natives it was the Portuguese who assumed ultimate control. The Portuguese did not have the same attitudes about Christianization and protection of natives' rights as other European powers. Brazil also did not receive much attention from Lisbon—rule was left to individual privateers who were granted

practically ultimate authority over their jurisdictions. In such a lawless land, treatment of the natives was often brutal and enslavement was common. With the Portuguese settling along the coast, the natives retreated inland. Hunting expeditions were conducted deep into the Amazon to find and round up slaves. *Bandierantes*, as they were known, even attacked Spanish Jesuit missionary settlements and enslaved an estimated 70,000 Christian natives. The Portuguese found the natives to be unsuitable for plantation labour. The Indians were small in stature and not ideal for the physically demanding work of sugar making. They were employed as domestic servants or were exported. For their plantations, the Portuguese had another source of labour at their disposal: West African slaves, which they would import by the thousands every year.²⁴

This is not to say that Brazil was the only place that Amerindians were enslaved. In fact it became common practice across the Americas in one form or another. In Virginia and Carolina towards the end of the 17th century as well as French Louisiana, a similar policy of rounding up natives was undertaken and a slave-based economy emerged there. In all cases, however, Amerindian slaves were treated quite differently from African slaves. They were treated as human beings and usually put to work as domestic servants, while Africans were systematically dehumanized and treated like cattle, often put to work in the most appalling conditions.

The native populations of North America encountered by the French and English were vastly different from those of Spanish America. They were primitive in technology and organization, and as such were much harder to control. The Spanish were able to impose themselves on an existing social and economic structure with the advantage of roads, administrative officials, taxation, and an abundant food supply, etc. The wealth and power of these societies fell in the laps of the Spanish, while the English and French would have to build their own society, brick by brick. They could not rely on native labour or native tribute to support the establishment of the settlement. They had to colonize, which took a huge effort and a great deal of time before profitable colonies would be established. This created an entirely different dynamic with regards to the natives.

The first lasting settlement in Virginia was established at Jamestown in 1607 after three successive failures at Roanoke Island. From Roanoke the English derived a deep mistrust for the natives, and many wanted as little contact as possible. Roanoke had unfortunately not, however, taught them the importance of being self-sufficient, and thus they maintained a dependency on the natives for food and other necessities that proved to be a major source of friction and lasted up until war broke out in 1622.¹⁰

For most Elizabethans, and the Puritans especially, the natives, with their barbarous sacrifices, cannibalism, and other pagan practices, represented subjects of the Devil. James I acknowledged this in his *Daemonologie*: “where the Devill findes greatest ignorance and barbaritie, there assayles he grossliest...” Some even contended that the Indians weren’t human at all, but instruments of the devil in human form.¹¹

Englishmen lacked the missionary zeal of the French and Spanish. They made feeble attempts, but were never very successful. Nor were the Indians very interested in converting to Christianity or adopting European ways.¹⁰ The Puritains felt no paternal obligations to the natives like the Spanish did, and largely regarded them as a lost cause. The charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony forbade the sale of firearms and liquor to the natives, but the responsibilities ended there. They did not exploit the Indians, nor did they try to absorb them into society. Primarily they were ignored, and as the colonies expanded, pushed aside.⁷

In Virginia, conversion attempts were more earnest, but were still largely unsuccessful. According to one missionary, Jonas Stockam, efforts to bring the Gospel to the natives in kindness were met with “derision and ridiculous answers.” They “devoure” gifts offered to them, “and so they would the givers if they could.” The natives showed more interest in the Book than what was in it. Hariot writes that they were “glad to touch it, to embrace it, to kisse it, to hold it to their brests and heades, and stroke over all their bodie with it...”¹²

Direct conversion by preaching from the Bible was obviously having little effect. Conversion tactics took on other, more subtle, forms. George Thorpe wrote in 1621 that Indians “affect English ffassions” and would be “allured” into more extensive imitation of English ways by gifts of “apparel & householdstufe.” He constructed an English-style house for the Powhatan chieftain Opechancanough. Englishmen opened their homes to the Indians in the hopes that by revealing the benefits of civilized life, they would naturally want to become part of it. Robert Johnson suggested training native children in the ways of English society and religion would be the best way to ensure integration. A college at Henrico was conceived as well as a school at Charles City to train Indian children. Funds were allocated, but these plans were cut short by the war.¹²

In short, the English failed to transform native life. “Although money flowed into the colony for missionary purposes and much preparation went into the new college, instructions from London were never sufficiently compelling to make either whites or Indians do what they chose not to do.”¹²

Pocahontas, the most famous example of a successful English conversion, serves as a striking illustration of the problem with the attitude towards the natives that prevented more conversions like her. John Rolfe was taken with her, and she soon accepted Christianity and became his wife, and has thus been a figure of romantic legend ever since. But Rolfe did not marry her out of love. He married her “for the good of this plantation, for the honour of our countrie, for the glory of God, for my own salvation, and for the converting to the true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, an unbelieving creature...” but not because he loved her. His affection for her was purely sexual and was something that he struggled with greatly. He saw her beautiful savagery as a “diabolical assault” on his puritanical morality—one that could only be subdued by Christianizing and marrying her. “In his mind libidinal fantasies, biblical prohibitions, and fear of Satan had become entwined with the doctrine of savagery. He appeased his anxieties only by resolving to convert Pocahontas and thus purify his sexual urges and obliterate the vestiges of savagery.”¹³

An interesting phenomenon occurred in North America where Indians who had felt like their gods had failed them would pray to Christian God yet not convert to Christianity. In Spanish America, the denunciation of the old gods was quickly followed by embracing Catholicism, but not in North America. Chief Wingina at Roanoke prayed to the Christian God when he fell ill and Indian shamans could not cure him. John Smith wrote that Chief Quiyoughcohonnocks believed the Christian God to be more powerful than his own and would often implore him to “pray to my God for raine, for their Gods would not send them any.” But he would not convert himself.

The Powhatans recognized that Jamestown was in dire straits and drove hard bargains for the ailing colony. As the years went by, the English dependency only grew as did the Powhatans’ reservations about helping them. At times the English would strip native fields by force. The Indians tried to remedy the situation by teaching them how to grow corn and build weirs in the river for fishing. With all their efforts, the colonists failed to make much progress, probably owing to their pride and resentment of relying on the natives. By emulating the natives, they were sinking to the level of savagery. By trading, or by taking what they needed by force, they emphasized the separation and superiority of their culture. Also, land that might have been used to grow corn was instead used for tobacco, and time that might have been spent learning from the natives was instead spent searching for gold, illustrating that the European’s primary motivation was wealth rather than self-reliance.¹⁴

The situation at Jamestown became so bad that many resigned themselves to living with the Indians, bringing the issue of savagery versus civility to the forefront of English politics. It was not only a threat to the colony, but a threat to European society. Laws were enacted that made flight to the Indians—or even not trying to escape when captured by the Indians—punishable by death. But the population leakage continued. By 1612, it’s estimated that some 40-50 Englishmen had married and lived with the Indians.¹⁴

In the year of 1620, the *Mayflower* arrived in New England carrying Puritan emigrants and their families. It is a familiar image of modern Americana: Puritan pilgrims with

shiny shoes and brass buckled hats sitting down to feast with the colourfully dressed natives after the Thanksgiving harvest. Unfortunately, the image is quite fictional. Furthermore, peace and cooperation in New England were short-lived, and in Virginia, war was already on the brink.

The early 17th century was a period of “armed tension” as Sheehan puts it, where both sides seemed to understand that war was inevitable. The Powhatans saw the survival of their tribe as depending on the destruction of the Jamestown settlement, and with an all-out attack they sought to annihilate the colony. They succeeded in killing 300 people, nearly one quarter of the Jamestown population, in the massacre of 1622. For the English, this cast aside all doubt and released them “from the last vestiges of humane obligation”, paving the way for the systematic annihilation of the Powhatans. The war between English and Indians, for all intents and purposes, ended the effort to integrate the Indians. From the massacre of 1622 onward, the English policy was primarily one of exclusion. Likewise, open war made the Indians more assertive of their own integrity. Battles broke out throughout English territory in New England and Virginia. The war lasted over 20 years until a treaty was established in 1646, whereby Indians were forbidden to enter territory east of the fall line. It also recognized the overlordship of the English and required the Indians to pay tribute. From then on, their leaders would be appointed by the governor. Thus, the English had driven them from their land and established political domination over them and a clear societal separation.¹⁵

The relations between the French and the Huron Indians in Canada and the Great Plains were of an entirely different sort than any previously discussed. Quebec was a trading post rather than a colony, and so the French did not impose a large number of dependent settlers on the Indians. Their food and trade goods came from France. When they did begin to colonize they were unable to attract many emigrants to people their vast colony, so population stayed relatively low (and ultimately confined to Quebec) compared to the ever-increasing numbers within the English colonies.

Samuel de Champlain befriended the Hurons and with their aid, he and his successors explored vast territories of North America from Canada to Louisiana. Franco-Huron bonds grew strong and they became united allies against both the Iroquois and the English. They built a lucrative fur trade to their mutual benefit. Many Frenchmen adopted Indian ways and took Indian wives, producing a new generation of half-castes called the *coureur des bois*. The Hurons showed unwavering support of New France well into the 18th century.⁸

The French Jesuit missionaries learned the Huron language, lived among the Hurons in the same bark-covered “longhouses,” and waged a very successful conversion campaign. They even translated the Bible into the local language. Father Jean de Brebeuf’s recommendations to fellow Jesuits show not only a keen understanding of the Huron culture but a strong compassion:

“Eat as soon as day breaks, for Indians when on the road, eat only at the rising and the setting of the sun...do not ask many questions; silence is golden...bear with their imperfections, and you must try always to appear cheerful...you must love these Hurons, ransomed by the blood of the Son of God, as brothers...”²³

Europeans, on the whole though, did not take to Indian ways because they saw it as threat to their own sense of superiority. But there were a few exceptions. Tobacco became an international addiction (and was the lifeblood of the Virginia colony), and potatoes became a staple food throughout the Americas and Europe. Spaniards adopted Inca quilted-cotton armour, and Portuguese in Brazil fought Indian-style, virtually naked. North Americans learned how to campaign in forests, how to scalp enemies, and how to travel with canoes, toboggans, or on snow shoes. They even engaged in communal native dancing.²⁰

Europeans were also fascinated with Indian medicine, believing it to be capable of curing a variety of ailments. Jacques Cartier claimed that the drink from the bark of white cedar

made by the Indians cured his men of severe scurvy. Hariot, a man of scientific background, praised the Indian medicine at Roanoke.¹⁶

The real changes would be undertaken by the natives, and by the early 17th century in South America and the early 18th century in North America, the Amerindians had really begun to conform themselves to European society. They were wearing trousers, shirts, and hats, and drank European liquor. The firearm had replaced the bow and arrow in hunting. They rode horses and raised pigs, sheep, chickens, and cattle. Iron tools were also in great demand. With the introduction of writing, a form of communication previously unknown to many natives, some Indians wrote out their histories and literature. Ixtilxóchitl in Mexico and Garcilaso in Peru wrote nostalgically of the glory of their old societies. North American Natives, after their interaction with Europeans, began to shed ancient taboos—such as mentioning the names of the dead. The white man's language became primary, and indigenous languages slowly became extinct (spurred largely by the massive disease death toll).²⁰

War was inevitable in colonial America. It was programmed into the culture of both the Europeans and the native societies. Europe had been at war at home and at sea for centuries. Likewise, native tribes were constantly battling each other, and Europeans frequently remarked of how befriending one would make you enemies to another.¹⁷ The Europeans, in general, sought at every opportunity to profit from native rivalries, and the natives were equally keen on enlisting European help in defeating their enemies.²¹

The outcome of colonialism was inevitable, too. Europeans clearly had military superiority. But the greatest weapon had nothing to do with European technology. The diseases that Europeans and their African slaves brought over were the real destroyers of native society. Smallpox, yellow fever, malaria, influenza, measles, and typhus brought death to the Amerindian populations by the tens of millions. The Indian population of Mexico dropped from around 11 million in 1519 to around 2.5 million by the turn of the century.⁴ Peru dropped from 7 million inhabitants to around half a million during the 16th century. In Brazil and across North America the story was the same. The victims were

so numerous that one New England settler wrote “[Indian] bones and skulls...made such a spectacle...that it seemed to mee a new found Golgotha.” It wasn’t until the mid 17th century that the indigenous populations of South America began to grow again.²²

The destruction of the native way of life and the mass epidemics plunged the societies into abject despair and a collapse of morality. Cocaine use increased in Peru. Suicide was common. Child-bearing rates were more than halved in some parts of the Andes. Compulsory resettlement across the two continents left natives with a feeling of rootlessness. A three-tiered social hierarchy emerged, with Indians at the bottom, mestizos in the middle, and Europeans on top. After 1649, most of the destruction of the Indians in Virginia and New England was internal as disease epidemics and alcohol abuse took hold.¹⁵ “North American Indians...abandoned traditional ways and beliefs, committed acts of irredeemable folly when stupefied with drink, and with their self-confidence eroded, sank into servile dependence on the intruders.”²²

Towards the turn of the century, Englishmen began to feel a sense of remorse for the society that they had destroyed. Robert Beverley’s *History and Present State of Virginia* in 1705 is a testament to this regret. “[They] lost their Felicity, as well as their Innocence. The *English* have taken away great part of their Country, and consequently made every thing less plenty amongst them, which have multiply’d their Wants, and put them upon desiring a thousand things, they never dreamt of before.”¹⁵

For Europeans of the Renaissance, the Native American was a source of imagination and inspiration. For essayists, philosophers, and artists, he could be savage yet noble, endearing yet pathetic.⁹ For scientists and ethnologists he was a subject of fascination. Bartolomé de las Casas portrayed the Indians as “very humble, very patient, very desirous of peacemaking...very poore folke which possesse little, neither yet do so much as desire to have much worldly goodes & therefore neither are they proud, ambitions, nor couetous.”¹⁸ In Virginia, Thomas Hariot and John White also provided detailed drawings and accounts of the natives, which show careful and detached yet sympathetic observations.

Amerindian contact also changed the way Europeans saw themselves. Michel de Montaigne used the natural state of the natives in his critique of European civilization's artificiality which became an integral part of Renaissance philosophy. He argued that it might be more appropriate to use the term "savage" to the "bastardyed" society Europeans had created with "artificial devices." For Montaigne, mother nature represented true uncorrupted virtue: "where ever her puritie shineth, she makes our vaine and frivolous enterprise wonderfully ashamed."¹⁸ The Franciscan missionary Bernardino de Sahgún echoed Montaigne's sentiments in his *General History*, where he described the massive annihilation of the Indians due to disease and wrote remorsefully of the disappearance of the Indians' native culture. It covers in rigorous detail, every aspect of Aztec life including their theocracy, astrology, philosophy, social customs, government, and language, and details the atrocities of the Spanish conquest.⁹

It is clear that the Spanish achieved the best example of native integration in America—particularly in Mexico. The English failed to achieve this kind of integration because of their mistrust and because of the lack of room for compromise in their policies. They wanted nothing less than a total transformation, but without a compelling reason to change the Indians would stick to their way of life. But to make this comparison is really inappropriate. The societies encountered by the Spanish and the English were vastly different. The societies of the Aztecs, the Incas, and the Mayas were far more advanced than the indigenous tribes of North America. They had surplus food supplies. They were accustomed to taxation and centralized authority. They were used to religious rituals and sought new religious ideas when they felt their old ones had failed to protect them from conquer. The Spanish encomiendas and missionary efforts were successful because they tapped into social, political, and religious expectations that were already there, and because they served as transitory stepping stones on the way to an integrated society.

If the Spanish had landed in Virginia, it's reasonable to assume they would have met the same outcome as the English. It can be said that the Spanish were more willing to cooperate with the natives and focused their energies on *integration* rather than

conversion, but this again was primarily a matter of circumstance. The Spanish had more to gain from the natives in South and Central America and so they were not concerned so much with total conversion as they were with ensuring profit. Allowing elements of the native religion to trickle into their Christianity, for example, was not so alarming as it might have been for the Puritans. And ultimately, these native societies recognized the Spanish as conquerors, and therefore as their new leaders. The line of authority was never so clear in French, English, or Portuguese America.

The story of Amerindian integration is by and large not a happy one, but it is not the only time one culture has supplanted and fused with another. It is a story that has been repeated the world over since the dawn of time. This was a period in history where those universal human forces of greed and zeal destroyed a people and forced them into the mould of European society. In doing so, it marked the end of an era, but it also marked the start of another.

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