

Colony as Microcosm
Virginia and the Metropolis

Forty-two years after the 1607 establishment of James Fort, John Ferrar – London merchant, MP, and former deputy of the Virginia Company – reflected on the colonial enterprises to North America in which he had been so invested. One of the most poignant aspects of Ferrar’s annotations, scrawled in the margins of the colonist William Bullock’s later text on Virginia, were his commentaries on policies towards the Chesapeake Algonquians. He conformed to tropes of savagery when he deemed them ‘a good loving harmelesse peopell [who] dwelt in Villages together yeat went Naked’, but he also referred to them in the past tense, as if they had irrevocably disappeared.¹ English policy-makers’ express desire to ‘civilize’ the Powhatans and other groups in the early seventeenth century had seemed, at least to Ferrar, to be a genuine aim, but this goal had already proven unattainable by the end of James’ reign. Where Bullock’s text suggested the English might quell Algonquian power by turning *werowances*, or regional leaders, into royal favourites, bestowing them with titles and jewel-embellished ribbons, Ferrar noted in his marginalia that this

was the Deliberation of the Counsell and Company 30 yeares agoe in the time of the Government heere of that Most Noble Earle of Southampton and all this and much more determined and Ordered for the Civilizinge of the Indians as a matter of the greatest consequence.²

Ferrar regarded the frequent and dynamic exchanges between the English and Algonquians as a distinct part of the early colonial project, and of the Virginia Company’s vision under Edwin Sandys and the Earl of Southampton’s direction.

¹ John Ferrar’s marginalia is reproduced in full in the online appendix to Peter Thompson, ‘William Bullock’s “Strange Adventure”: A Plan to Transform Seventeenth-Century Virginia’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 61 (2004), 107–28. <https://oieahc-cf.wm.edu/wmq/Jan04/ThompsonWeb.pdf>.

² *Ibid.*

The '[c]ivilizing of the Indians as a matter of the greatest consequence' was related to personal virtue and political identity on both sides of the Atlantic. Throughout the Jacobean period, interest in Virginia and its indigenous inhabitants pervaded political discourse. Newsletters, rumours, and diary entries about Pocahontas, the knight-ing of new governors, or the king's decision to send weapons to colonists appeared in the midst of news about Spanish threats, disgraced courtiers, and parliamentary affairs. The lead up to, and dissolution of, the Virginia Company in 1624 was a messy, drawn out, and highly personal affair. Members gave each other the lie, brawled along the Royal Exchange, and were placed under house arrest, some of them losing their tempers in front of the king. The survival of Virginia was important to men in both houses of Parliament, who fought bitterly to keep the company and their colonial interests alive. The successes of conversion – whether by exposing Algonquians to Protestant doctrine, or transforming plantation landscapes into profitable industries – implicated the honour of policy-makers and their capacity to govern. The trial-and-error nature of early colonization exhibits a clear connection between events in Virginia and decision-making in London.

Focussing on political friendships and practices of statecraft, such as counsel and collecting news, this chapter places Jamestown and Anglo–Algonquian relations within Jacobean political culture, raising attention to Virginia's formative role in developing articulations of an imperial polity. Protestant statesmen, including the king himself, developed their conceptions of governance and civility through specific responses to issues of orthodoxy and conformity provoked by the colonial experience. By the 1620s, though the Virginia Company had failed as a joint-stock enterprise, the colony had played a considerable role in shaping metropolitan articulations of empire, including the responsibility of the English state to maintain it.

Jamestown in London

The first English voyages to Virginia – especially the 1607 arrival of *Godspeed*, *Susan Constant*, and *Discovery* – are well documented. So are the hardships endured by the 104 colonists who, fearing attacks from the Spanish, established a fort along the brackish waters of the James River, where disease contributed to the high death rates further effected by hunger, cold, and conflict with the Powhatans, and with some groups who had resisted incorporation into the Powhatan

confederacy.³ When Christopher Newport, a veteran of Atlantic sea voyaging, arrived at Jamestown with the second supply of settlers in 1608, the original colonists were reduced to thirty-eight. By James' death in 1625, the population had been in flux, pending between extinction and stability, for eighteen years, surviving almost exclusively through its tobacco exports and the bounty of indigenous groups. Eleven governors had attempted to impose a functioning society through a mix of martial law and common law, in regimes that alternated from stabilizing to brutal. The year 1619, with the abolishment of martial law and the implementation of English common law, brought a renewed interest among London backers in establishing diverse industries in the region and reaping the fruits of more settled plantation.

Since the Virginia Company ended with bankruptcy and dissolution in 1624, the impact of Jacobean colonial interest on domestic politics often seems to die with it. Jamestown continues to occupy an ambiguous place in the American and English imaginary. Virginia has been viewed by some as the 'birthplace' of the United States, by others as the shameful precursor to the godly colonies of New England with its myths of the sanctified beginnings of America.⁴ In decentred Atlantic histories, Jamestown is 'another outpost on the margins of expanding European influence . . . a minor player'.⁵ Bernard Bailyn's *The Barbarous Years* focusses on the brutality evident in some Anglo-Powhatan encounters, while Karen Ordahl Kupperman concentrates on moments of intercultural exchange and mediation that highlight the richness of Algonquian life but tend to diminish the active role London councillors and the Crown played in overseeing early colonization.⁶

³ J. Frederick Fausz, 'An "Abundance of Blood Shed on Both Sides": England's First Indian War, 1609–1614', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 98 (1990), 3–56; Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975); Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600–1675* (New York: Knopf, 2012); Helen C. Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989); Martin H. Quitt, 'Trade and Acculturation at Jamestown, 1607–1609: The Limits of Understanding', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 52 (1995), 227–58; J. Frederick Fausz, 'The Invasion of Virginia: Indians, Colonialism, and the Conquest of Cant: A Review Essay on Anglo-Indian Relations in the Chesapeake', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 95 (1987), 133–56; Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project*.

⁴ James Horn, *A Land as God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Karen Ordahl Kupperman, 'The Founding Years of Virginia – and the United States', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 104 (1996), 103–12.

⁵ Mancall, 'Introduction', 13; Horn, *A Land as God Made It*; Kupperman, 'The Founding Years of Virginia'.

⁶ George Wyatt, 'A Letter of Advice to the Governor of Virginia, 1624', ed. J. Frederick Fausz and Jon Kukla, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 34 (1977), 104–29, at 115; Karen Ordahl Kupperman,

Ongoing excavations at the Jamestown archaeological site and invaluable work by colonial historians have brought detailed insight into the plight of Jacobean colonists and their struggles with the neighbouring Powhatans, but by this point a disconnect has already occurred. The narrative has travelled with the colonists to the shores of the Chesapeake, where their relationship with those in London – those who saw themselves in charge of the enterprise – has been sidelined. The death rates in early Virginia were so high that there could be more company councillors in London than there were settlers in Jamestown.⁷ What did councillors do with the information colonists sent them, and how did these accounts, riddled as they were with failures, uncertainties, embellishments, and accusations, affect the way the London council regarded not only colonial conditions, but also the necessity of government more widely? In his meticulous study of the dissolution of the Virginia Company, Wesley Craven acknowledges that ‘the events which made of Virginia the first royal colony [brought] many of the considerations which later dictated an attempt to bring all colonial settlements in a more closely knit and better administered unit under the direct supervision of the Crown’, but he concludes that colonization remained a mostly economic enterprise, a statement supported by Jack P. Greene and Kenneth Andrews.⁸ It is difficult to sustain this view when Algonquians are integrated more fully into the picture. Establishing the presence of Native Americans in Jacobean political thought brings the English civilizing project back into political decision-making. To indigenous peoples, colonization was always political.

In many ways, the colony’s failures kept Virginia alive in metropolitan debate. Policy-makers grappled with devastating death rates, colonists’ frequent complaints about provisioning, fears of Spanish attacks, regional warfare, and rumours of colonial mismanagement. In 1612, John Digby informed Dudley Carleton from Madrid that the Spanish were ‘discontented’ by rumours that the English ‘council of state’ was handling affairs in North America.⁹ ‘I informed Your Majesty how urgently these [people] are pushing forward with establishing themselves in Virginia’, pressed the Spanish ambassador Pedro de Zuñiga from London, adding, several weeks

Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project*.

⁷ Wesley Frank Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company: The Failure of a Colonial Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 296.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 335.

⁹ John Digby to Dudley Carleton, 20 October 1612, in *Calendar of State Papers: Colonial, Vol. 1*, 14.

later, that ‘everyone [is] exerting themselves to give what they have to so great an undertaking’.¹⁰ A deeply committed John Ferrar, who named his daughter Virginia after the company’s dissolution, frequently commented on his ‘great employments in the Virginia Plantations & Company’ with Edwin Sandys and the Earl of Southampton.¹¹ To Sandys, colonial affairs were a matter of state business, to be prioritized alongside discussions of free trade and impending war in Europe. ‘I will spend most of this week’, Sandys noted in 1622, ‘in writing to Virginia’.¹² Issues of government were inherent in company affairs, since those who went to Virginia went as English subjects. The royal investigation of 1623 set out to determine ‘whether the sending of so many people hath . . . been a means to cast away the lives of many of his majesty’s Subjects’.¹³ One of the reasons James felt compelled to intervene directly in Virginian affairs was because so many English men and women had perished.

The interest of statesmen in and around Whitehall was critical to the survival of the colony, but also to forging the sense of personal investment that gentlemen conveyed when they gathered news about Virginia. This adds another layer to the metropolitan colonial interest that Andrew Fitzmaurice uncovers in *Humanism and America*. Fitzmaurice finds that fears of corruption and luxury, and the recurrent rhetoric of civic-mindedness, pervaded Virginia Company literature in this period.¹⁴ His study brings the dynamism of Jacobean intellectual thought to life by situating expansionist debates within humanist political theory. While discussions of the *vita activa* feature heavily in Fitzmaurice’s book, civility receives less of a focus. Manuscript sources from Virginia, alongside imaginative literature and the material culture of the metropolis, broaden the framework supplied by print propaganda and intellectual thought and suggest a depth of colonial interest that went beyond political rhetoric, inflecting gentlemanly concepts of honour in ways that influenced how they socialized and behaved.

As Chapter 1 argued, policy-makers’ shifting policies towards colonization and settlement brought with them a sense of responsibility towards governance and oversight. When he hastily scrawled his initial impression

¹⁰ Pedro de Zuñiga to Philip III, 1 April and 12 April 1609, in *The Jamestown Voyages under the First Charter, 1606–1609: Vol. 2*, ed. Philip L. Barbour (London: Hakluyt Society, 1969), 158–9.

¹¹ John Ferrar, ‘A Life of Nicholas Ferrar’, in *The Ferrar Papers*, ed. B. Blackstone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 20–1; ‘The Ferrar Papers at Magdalene College, Cambridge (Continued)’, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 11 (1903), 41–6, at 42.

¹² Edwin Sandys to John Ferrar, 23 September 1622, Ferrar Papers, FP 416.

¹³ Quoted in Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company*, 272.

¹⁴ Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America*, 68.

of the Chesapeake in a letter, the gentleman William Brewster praised the landscape as an 'Infynyt treasuor', so long as 'the kings Maj[esty]' could find a way to control this 'moste Statlye, Riche kingdom' by conquering it.¹⁵ Over the course of the early seventeenth century, the bays, rivers, and lands that Brewster had acclaimed became better known in metropolitan discourse. Gentlemen envisaged political spaces in relation to coordinates of the James River, and phonetically spelled out Algonquian place names and Powhatan groups: 'Chicepeiake', 'Kiskiack', 'Weromocomoco', 'Pamunkie'.¹⁶ What another gentleman called 'the London colonie' was indeed the project of a number of gentlemen who viewed colonization as a legitimate arena for their political ambitions.¹⁷ This helps to make sense of John Donne's attempt to become secretary of Virginia in 1609, for example, which is often considered an eccentric footnote in the poet and clergyman's otherwise illustrious career. Struggling to find political advancement after the disastrous decision to marry Anne More in secret, the poet's bid for secretary was perhaps desperate, but it was not arbitrary. Donne's unsuccessful attempts to occupy an administrative colonial role, like the more successful William Strachey or John Pory, suggest that politically minded gentlemen, whether aspiring members of the gentry or younger sons of prominent families, turned to America as a means of advancement from very early on. Without an appreciation of the place of Virginia in metropolitan political culture, the gentlemanly investment in colonization seems random or outlandish, obscuring the role of colonization in shaping developing concepts of political thought and activism prior to the English civil wars.

Converting Savagery

This section relates the religious ideals of Protestant authorities to developments in Virginia and to theological discourses about conformity in England. The providential framework through which gentlemen viewed plantation involved a rigorous demand for religious orthodoxy that also served to advance their political and civil aspirations. The Virginia Company charters proclaimed the conversion of Native Americans as the primary aim of colonization. Desiring to make 'a Virginian . . . thy Neighbour, as well as a Londoner' presented an inclusive vision of

¹⁵ 'A p[ar]t of a letter of William Brewster gent fro[m] Virginia', 1607, Hatfield House, CP 124/17r.

¹⁶ Ibid.; John Hagthorpe, *Englands-exchequer* (1625; STC 12603), sig. E3v; Thomas Dale to the Earl of Salisbury, 17 August 1611, in *Jamestown Narratives*, 554.

¹⁷ Thomas Holland to the Earl of Salisbury, 30 October 1609, Hatfield House, CP 128/24r.

community that nonetheless required indigenous assimilation.¹⁸ To policy-makers, creating a transatlantic polity hinged on a Protestant civility that demanded confessional allegiance to Church and state. Anglican preachers in London supported James' vision of *imperium* as a monarchical project. In *A good speed to Virginia* (1609), Robert Gray actively propounded the use of force in conversion and settlement, anticipating the more stringent governmental policies of the 1620s.¹⁹ 'All Politicians doe with one consent', Gray said, 'holde and maintaine, that a Christian king may lawfullie make warre uppon barbarous and Savage people, and such as live under no lawfull or warrantable government, and may make a conquest of them'.²⁰

These discourses held political as well as spiritual weight. In his dedication to members of the Virginia Company, Gray wrote that he preached his sermon from Sithes (now Sise) Lane in London. This was in or near the residence of John Ferrar, where the Virginia Company held its meetings, and where Ferrar frequently received letters from his friends in Jamestown.²¹ Authorized colonial intelligence from secretaries and councillors arrived at the Ferrar household in letters sealed with impressed wax stamped with their signet rings, several of which have been found at the Jamestown site, including Strachey's.²² The sermons delivered by ministers like Gray, therefore, did not just operate as vague endorsements of the colonizing mission, but within this nexus between Protestant theology and colonial decision-making, between company affairs in London and the latest news arriving from Virginia to 'my very worthie frend M[aste]r John Ferrar, at his house in St Sithes Lane'.²³

The same year that Gray declared conquest to be a legitimate project of the civil state, the clergyman William Symonds, who later edited John Smith's *Map of Virginia* (1612), compared the English to the Israelites wandering through the wilderness on their way to the Holy Land. Symonds likened the Algonquians to the idolatrous gentiles who opposed the Israelites, providing obstacles to God's designs for his chosen people. In their struggles to find the Promised Land, the Israelites 'were cursing and killing enemies', Symonds said, who were 'no better than Canibals' and those Atlantic 'savages' the

¹⁸ Quoted in Thomas Festa, 'The Metaphysics of Labour in John Donne's Sermon to the Virginia Company', *Studies in Philology*, 106 (2009), 76–99, at 92.

¹⁹ Robert Gray, *A good speed to Virginia* (1609; STC 12204), sig. C2v.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. C4r. On conquest theory, see Pagden, *Lords of All the World*.

²¹ 'The Ferrar Papers. At Magdalene College, Cambridge (Continued)', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 10 (1903), 414–18, at 415.

²² William Strachey's signet ring, pre-1611, Jamestown Rediscovery, JR-424.

²³ 'The Ferrar Papers. At Magdalene College, Cambridge (Continued)', 415.

English currently faced.²⁴ ‘I should more admire Virginia with these inhabitants’, Alexander Whitaker wrote from Jamestown in 1611, ‘if I did not remember that Egypt was exceedingly fruitful, that Canaan flowed with milk and honey before Israel did overrun it, and that Sodom was like the garden of God in the days of Lot’.²⁵ The lessons of the Old Testament reminded the English that ‘in a strange Countrey, we must looke for enemies’.²⁶ In such circumstances, force was called for and in many cases encouraged. ‘Here then is a *warrant*’, Symonds urged, ‘that where godly men are constrained to encounter with cursers, such as are the Priests of the Gentiles, it is Gods ordinance to bring a curse upon them, and to kill them’.²⁷ As in Ireland, the ‘problem’ of idolatry could not be isolated from politics: ‘as it is a greate sinne, soe it is allsoe a matter of most dangerous consequence’.²⁸

Whitaker expressed a vivid interest in the power of Algonquian rituals (Figure 3). He described an almost dream-like world saturated with harvest and rain dances, fire, the sound of rattles, and the rustling of plants. Yet those who participated in these formidable customs ‘tossed smoke and flame out of a thing like a censer’, and the ‘[i]mage of their god’ that Whitaker sent to the London council resembled to him ‘a deformed monster’, a term also used to describe the pope.²⁹ Whitaker believed the rituals indicated the Powhatans’ ability to contemplate holy matters, however misguidedly, and anticipated sharing the gospel with them.³⁰ This could not be done without initial violence, as governors like John Smith and Thomas Dale indicated when they openly reported the devastation of Algonquian places of worship. English responses to encountering these holy places were rife with mistrust and unease, and the violence against Powhatan buildings and objects was not unlike the iconoclasm practised against Catholic churches in England into the 1640s, where destroying images was spurred by biblical imperative and often considered a political act of reform.³¹ ‘We Beate the Salvages outt of the Island burned their howses ransaked their Temples, Tooke downe the Corpes of their

²⁴ William Symonds, *Virginia. A sermon* (1609; STC 23594), sig. Gv.

²⁵ Alexander Whitaker to William Crashaw, 9 August 1611, in *Jamestown Narratives*, 550; Whitaker, *Good newes from Virginia*, sig. G2v.

²⁶ Symonds, *Virginia. A sermon*, sig. Gv. ²⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. G2r.

²⁸ ‘The Judg[e]m[en]t by way of p[ro]testacon of the Archb[isho]pp and Bishops of the Realme of Ireland’, 23 January 1624, British Library, Add MS 12496, f. 340r.

²⁹ Whitaker to Crashaw, in *Jamestown Narratives*, 550. ³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ On iconoclasm, see John Walter, ‘“Abolishing Superstition with Sedition”? The Politics of Popular Iconoclasm in England, 1640–1642’, *Past & Present*, 183 (2004), 79–123; Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 152–88; Margaret Aston, *The King’s Bedpost: Reformation and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).



Figure 3 John White, 'A festive dance', c.1585–93. This detail of a dancing figure shows the fluidity and naturalism of the artist's sketches, and his attention to Algonquian patterns of life. Courtesy of the British Museum/© The Trustees of the British Museum.

deade kings from their Toambes', reported George Percy, younger brother to Henry Percy, the ninth Earl of Northumberland, 'and Caryed away their pearles Copp[er] and bracelets wherw[i]th they doe decore their kings funeralles'.³² To Percy, the brutality of reform, of destroying sacred spaces and viscerally extracting jewellery from the dead, was a natural product of purging idolatry.

On 29 November 1618, the newly appointed governor of Virginia, George Yeardley, dined with James at one of the king's royal residences and hunting lodges in Newmarket. The account of this dinner exhibits James' keen preoccupation with non-conformity in Virginia and England.

³² 'George Percy's "Trew Relacyon"', 245.

Sitting with Prince Charles, the Duke of Buckingham, and other members of the king's Privy Council, Yeardley explained his aims for colonization directly to the king, where 'for a long hower and a halfe [the king] reasoned w[i]th him a lone & onely of Virginia'.³³ Concerns with orthodox behaviour and establishing civil structures occupied an ample part of this extraordinary record of the king's conversation. James asked 'what inclination the savages had to Christian religion, and how many of them had bine converted or christened'.³⁴ To James, the conversion of the Powhatans was closely tied to the need for English conformity. He enquired after the 'quality of our ministers in Virginia', and 'wished that both now & heereafter they would ever conforme themselves to the church of England, & would in no sorte (albeit soe farre from home) become authors of Novelty or singularity', promising that English ministers who returned from service in Virginia would be well preferred upon their return.³⁵ James further 'commanded that o[u]r churches should not bee built like Theaters or Cockpitts, but in a decent forme, & in imitation of the churches in England'.³⁶ James' view towards building English spaces might also be situated within long-standing strategies, in the early Church, of depriving local geographies of their 'pagan' sanctity by transforming them into sites of Christian worship.³⁷

Conformity to the Church of England, already seen in the company's ordinances against Powhatan *quiakros* or religious men and in the need to establish English sacred spaces, continued to figure large in the success of the enterprise, while non-conformity began to be articulated in relation to Algonquian unorthodoxy. Experiences in Virginia became a means of accentuating the dire situation of religion within England, describing a society as imperilled as that of the Algonquian Chesapeake. To worship the devil was 'to sacrifice to him [along] with the poore Virginians, and the Heathenish Savages', wrote Stephen Jerome in 1614, warning his congregation to take 'heede of this cursed course, and Satanical practice in thy sicknesse'.³⁸ Those who were 'worse then the *Indians*, in some of their blinde and idolatrous sacrifices' were dangerous because they 'impoverished the church' and 'impoverished the common-wealth', becoming little better than cannibals who 'devoured the people of God'.³⁹ 'Surely the

³³ 'A report of S[i]r Yeardlyes going Governor to Virginia', 5 December 1618, Ferrar Papers, FP 93.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid. John Ferrar drew a hand pointing to the words 'authors of Novelty or singularity' in the margin of his copy, reminding himself to 'note this well'.

³⁶ Ibid. ³⁷ Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape*, 40–1.

³⁸ Stephen Jerome, *Moses his sight of Canaan* (1614; STC 14512), sigs. Gg5v–Gg6r.

³⁹ Thomas Adams, *The blacke devil* (1615; STC 107), sig. Kv.

Devoll is the same here, that he is in the Indies', warned the theologian and MP Francis Rous, 'bee yee weary of your gods, O yee Heathen Christians, and serve the true God'.⁴⁰ The English might, 'in scorne . . . term [them] Savages', but 'the worse thou callest them, the worse thou callest thy selfe'.⁴¹ Expansion and conformity were both tied to Protestantism, for the English could hardly participate in converting other peoples if they were 'idolatrous' themselves. Further, because Catholicism and Spanish designs for a universal monarchy were so entwined in the eyes of Protestant polemicists, English Catholics were often accused of being opponents to English designs in North America. 'The papists', preached the colonial promoter William Crashaw to the Virginia Company, 'approve nothing that *Protestants* undertake'.⁴²

Whitaker in Virginia and Robert Cushman in New England sent manuscripts of sermons to friends in England, who used contemporary examples from the colonies to emphasize the need for English values in their congregations. Travel news seemed to confirm the assumption that godlessness would taint even 'civilized' subjects whose exposure to the wilderness eventually led to disorder:

It is reported, that there are many men gone to that other Plantation in *Virginia*, which, whilst they lived in England, seemed very religious, zealous, and conscionable; and now they have lost even the sap of grace, and edge to all goodnesse . . . It is indeede a matter of some commendations for a man to remove himselfe out of a thronged place into a wide wilderness [but] having [his] owne lusts . . . his substance is nought.⁴³

The title of Cushman's sermon was indicative. It was preached 'in an assemblie of his Majesties faithfull subjects', contrasted against those who had failed to uphold Protestant English virtues. When John Hagthorpe, a gentleman poet from County Durham, faced the possibility of migrating to America with his family if his financial conditions did not improve, he demonstrated a detailed knowledge of current geographies. The English in Virginia were:

exposed to their treacherous Enemies so that they cannot goe hunt in the woods, nor travell in safety, but with greater numbers . . . Whereas, if they had settled themselves, some of them in *Pamunkie River*, they might have

⁴⁰ Francis Rous, *The diseases of the time* (1622; STC 21340), sig. E6r. ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, sig. E5v.

⁴² Crashaw, *A sermon preached in London*, sig. H2v. See also Hagthorpe, *Englands-exchequer*, sig. Ev.

⁴³ Robert Cushman, *A sermon preached at Plimmoth in New-England* (1622; STC 6149), sig. C2r. On English concerns over deformity and sinfulness, see Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

lived secure fro[m] the salvages, there being but 8. mile at the head, betwixt it and *James River*, as in an Iland.⁴⁴

Hagthorpe also included a story of an English gentleman in Virginia who had survived the Powhatan attack of 1622. Having held ‘no correspondency or commerce with the salvages, [he] scaped free and untoucht’, since ‘the Salvages did not know his house as they did the rest’.⁴⁵ Intolerance brought with it a certain safety.

James’ dinner conversation and the writings of ministers suggest that a concern with civility and advancing Protestantism entailed underlying preoccupations with Englishness itself. Civility was a strategy for inclusion, but inclusion into a society with carefully prescribed rules. To ‘make a great nation’ in Virginia, preached Symonds, the English must ‘keepe them to themselves’.⁴⁶ Fears of cultural ambiguity were not merely rhetorical. Detractors used evidence of the failures of civility as a slur against English colonization. An informant wrote to the Spanish king Philip III in 1612 that ‘I have been told by a friend, who tells me the truth, that . . . Englishmen after being put among [the Algonquians] have become savages’.⁴⁷ ‘If he desire to know what Civilizers of people’ Protestants were, asserted the Jesuit John Floyd in a caustic response to a sermon by Crashaw, ‘let him goe to *Virginia*, where he may find one of the two or three Ministers that went thither, become savage, not any Savages made Christians by their meanes’.⁴⁸ Addressing the gentlemen of the Inns of Court, Floyd ruthlessly criticized the men who held their own civility in such high regard when Virginia existed as a glaring example of English failings to keep savagery at bay. Without the ability to control a regression to savagery, the monarch exposed his weakness in failing to secure the obedience of his subjects.

Events in Jamestown between 1607 and 1622 served as constant, often harrowing reminders that the idealism of Elizabethan visions of America and hopes of converting Native Americans were repeatedly undercut by the difficulties of establishing ‘a new BRITTAINE in another world’.⁴⁹ The brutal winter of 1609/10, with its ‘Starving Time’ that reduced Jamestown from 500 to 60 men and women, reminded the company that for all its hopes for profit, the survival of the colony was by no means assured.

⁴⁴ Hagthorpe, *Englands-exchequer*, sig. E3v. ⁴⁵ Ibid. ⁴⁶ Symonds, *Virginia. A sermon*, sig. F2r.

⁴⁷ Flores (Zuñiga) to Philip III, 1 August 1623, in *The Genesis of the United States: A Narrative of the Movement in England, 1605–1615: Vol. 1*, ed. Alexander Brown (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1890), 572.

⁴⁸ John Floyd, *Purgatories triumph over hell* (St Omer, 1613; STC IIII4), sig. Bb3r.

⁴⁹ Crakanthorpe, *A sermon at the solemnizing of the happie inauguration*, sig. D3v.

Colonists and councillors alike saw many of the events in the colonies as a struggle for the preservation of English values among an onslaught of horrors. A sense of the physicality and frailty of human beings emerged from discourses describing broken bodies and bursting hearts. Recalling his time in Jamestown in a letter to his nephew Algernon Percy in 1624, George Percy recorded the harrowing litany of miseries that struck the colonists. Though Percy movingly described the hardships suffered by those in the fort, he showed little sympathy for those who ‘cryeing owtt we are starved, [w]e are starved’ went through the marketplace claiming ‘there was noe god’, noting that they were killed by Algonquians that same day in a clear manifestation of divine punishment.⁵⁰ Those who cared only for their own safety, like the group of men who attempted to flee to nearby Kecoughtan, similarly found just ends when they were found ‘slayne w[i]th their mowthes stopped full of Breade, beinge donn as itt seamethe in Contempte and skorne’.⁵¹ To Percy, as to the governors who imposed martial law on the colony, those who failed to create a conforming polity by abandoning their duty to the commonweal deserved punishment to the point of death. Fears of abandoning civility were so strong that such actions seemed entirely justified, as Strachey iterated when he published Dale’s laws in London. ‘Contending with all the strength and powers of my mind and my body’, Strachey wrote, ‘I confesse to make [Virginia] like our native country’, a transformation only possible through an active and ruthless policy towards disorderly or self-seeking behaviour.⁵²

In the highly charged politics of colonial settings, cultural fluidity often seemed to offer a direct challenge to orthodoxy. Colonists at the first general assembly of elected representatives that met in the brick church in Jamestown in 1619 took considerable pains to uphold the ordinances of London councillors. On 4 August, the council called a captain forward on charges of speaking ‘unreverently & maliciously ag[ain]st this present Governor whereby the honour & dignity of his place & person, and so of the whole Colonie, might be brought into Contempte’.⁵³ This was Henry Spelman, one of John Smith’s boy interpreters who had first arrived in the colony in 1609. The wayward nephew of the antiquarian Henry Spelman, Henry lived with an adopted Powhatan family and wrote a short

⁵⁰ ‘George Percy’s “Trew Relacyon”’, 251. ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 247.

⁵² William Strachey, *For the colony in Virginea Britannia. Lawes divine, morall and martiall* (1612; STC 23350), sig. G4v.

⁵³ ‘A Reporte of the Manner of Proceeding in the General Assembly’, in *Journal of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, ed. Henry Read McIlwaine and John Pendleton (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1915), 15.

manuscript account of Algonquian ways of life. Brought before the assembly in 1619, Spelman denied many of the accusations made by fellow interpreter Robert Poole, but not that he had informed Opechancanough, a regional leader and the younger brother of the paramount ruler, Wahunsenacah/Powhatan, that ‘w[i]thin a yeare there would come a Governour greater than this that nowe is in place’, which the assembly decided ‘hath alienated the minde of Opechancano from this present Governour, & brought him in much disesteem’, bringing ‘the whole Colony in danger of their Slippery designes’.⁵⁴

This was a serious charge, and copies of the inquest were preserved in the private papers of several members of the London council. The treachery was reinforced by the use of a specific object: Spelman was accused of manipulating diplomatic encounters by using a portrait medal of King James. The assembly deliberated ‘several & sharpe punishments’, including death, but eventually inclined towards sympathy for twenty-four-year-old Spelman.⁵⁵ Having mediated between powerful members of the Powhatan confederacy and English settlers a decade, the council may have been sensitive to Spelman’s forced exclusion from English society, where the very traits that made him un-English – for example, speaking regional dialects – were an important asset in negotiations. Nonetheless, his actions were attacked as profoundly disloyal. The assembly degraded Spelman of his captaincy and indentured him to Yeardley for seven years. Neither did the council refrain from a final biting remark: that Spelman, when hearing his sentence and failing to show appropriate gratitude or remorse, acted ‘as one that had in him more of the Savage then [*sic*] of the Christian’.⁵⁶

When the assembly derided Spelman as a ‘savage’, the reproach indicated how far political success depended on a refusal to sympathize with indigenous cultures. Spelman’s reluctance, on an earlier occasion, to offend his companion Iopassus, when pressed by Captain Argall to enquire into his religion, was one thing; it was another to report to Opechancanough, as he was said to have done, that ‘S[i]r George should be but a *Tanx wiroans*, that is, a petty governor not of power to doe any thing’.⁵⁷ In this instance, Spelman framed English political offices in relation to Algonquian ones. He depicted Governor Yeardley in Powhatan terms, as a *tanx wiroans*, just as Opechancanough became elevated in status to a king. Spelman’s

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid. A sentence Spelman never fully carried out; he died in a trading expedition in 1623.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ ‘Copie of the Examinations of Robert Poole touching H. Spilman’, 13 July 1619, Ferrar Papers, FP 113.

familiarity with 'the Indian language' and his willingness to speak to the Powhatans about English affairs became 'p[re]judiciall to the State in generall'.⁵⁸

Spelman is but one example. The other interpreter involved in the inquest, Robert Poole, was accused by John Rolfe of 'being even turned heathen' in 1620, by which Rolfe meant his negotiations were not done for the good of the colony and were therefore treasonous.⁵⁹ Though colonists trusted Poole less than Spelman, his power to undermine the colony through over-close association with Algonquian groups made the accusation especially damaging to English interests. Reverend Jonas Stockham deeply mistrusted this fluidity, reporting that 'we have sent boies amongst [the Powhatans] to learne their Language, but they return worse than they went'.⁶⁰ 'I am no States-man', Stockham professed, 'but I can find no probability by this course to draw them to goodnesse . . . till their Priests and Ancients have their throat cut'.⁶¹

Stockham's ruthless but commonplace opinion indicates the raw concerns over savagery that dominated the early Jamestown years. Councillors were inundated with letters that catalogued the effects of degeneration and misgovernment, providing stark confirmation of how easily government floundered without strict regulation. 'Our second shipp is returned out of the partes of Virginia', Ferdinando Gorges reported from Plymouth in 1608, referring to the Sagadahoc colony in Maine.⁶² The men meant to be establishing St George's fort for the Virginia Company were idly 'devidinge themselves into factions, each disgracing the other, even to the Savages, the on[e] emulating the others reputation amongst those brutish people'.⁶³ Encounters between 'exceeding subtile' Native Americans and the colonists 'whose conversation, & familiarity, they have most frequented' blurred the lines between peoples that the English had gone to draw.⁶⁴

The English, after all, had not ventured to America 'to make Savages and wild degenerate men of Christians, but Christians of those Savage, wild degenerate men'.⁶⁵ Raising young Powhatans who were then to return to their communities as representatives of English civility would 'prove also of great strength to our people against the Savages', turning them into 'fitt Instruments to assist afterwards in the more generall conversion of the heathen people'.⁶⁶ This strategy was apparent in one of the watercolours by

⁵⁸ John Rolfe to Edwin Sandys, January 1620, Ferrar Papers, FP 151. ⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Reverend Jonas Stockham, reported in Smith, *The generall historie*, sig. T2v. ⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ferdinando Gorges to the Earl of Salisbury, 7 February 1608, Hatfield House, CP 120/66r.

⁶³ Ibid. ⁶⁴ Ibid. ⁶⁵ Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimes*, sig. M6r.

⁶⁶ 'Instructions to the Governors for the tyme beinge & Counsell of state in Virginia', 1621, Ferrar Papers, FP 285.

John White, painted during or shortly after his time in Roanoke in 1585, which portrayed the young daughter of a local *werowance* holding an Elizabethan doll of a woman in a dress. This is the only image of White's that directly exhibited the English presence in Virginia. Looking up at her mother, the girl seemed to be conveying a sense of longing, as if hoping to become less like her mother and more like the object in her hand.

The young, unmarried, often poorer travellers who sailed from London to Virginia must have seemed especially vulnerable to abandoning English ways of life in the absence of community and traditional family units. Writers on either side of the Atlantic specifically framed their concerns over degeneration in terms of savagery's power to undermine English structures, especially among those of lower status. 'Marvell not if honest and understanding Christians be so hardly drawne over to these places, as namely into *Virginia*', wrote the schoolmaster John Brinsley, 'where as there are in the same so manifold perils, and especially of falling away from God to Sathan, and that themselves, or their posterity should become utterly savage, as [Algonquians] are'.⁶⁷ Intermarriage between Native Americans and the English, Symonds believed, 'may breake the neck of all good success'.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, gentlemen including Percy and Thomas West, Lord de la Warr, strove to maintain veneers of civility and sociability, importing clothing, furniture, drinking vessels, and jewellery at huge personal expense. In the midst of starvation and armed conflict, colonial officials kept sealed records in carved chests and used desks and tables. Excavations at Jamestown have uncovered objects ranging from gold rings to lace shirts and military sashes, imported Continental and Chinese drug jars to a finely wrought silver grooming tool shaped like a dolphin. Five extant goffering irons, the hollow iron tubes used to crimp and shape ruffs, speak to gentlemanly concerns with appearance but also with the time, preparation, and servant labour needed for such status display. The rich archaeological findings at Jamestown offer material evidence of how gentlemen sought a semblance of their lives and routines in England, where displays of hierarchy were seen as essential to implementing stability. Objects not only spoke to status, but also helped to effect the refining qualities of civil society, whereby gentlemen might begin to participate in the lives of leisure and cultivation that they had envisaged colonization would make possible.

⁶⁷ Brinsley, *A consolation for our grammar schooles*, sigs. A2v–A3r.

⁶⁸ Symonds, *Virginia. A sermon*, sig. F2r.

When Yeardley arrived in Jamestown in 1619, he proudly fashioned himself as the harbinger of a more concerted English polity characterized by gentlemanly refinement. Yeardley's governorship replaced martial law with what the council in London hoped would be 'a Magna Charta', laws and ordinances that would 'not be chested or hidden like a candle under a bushell' but available for reference by any members of the colony.⁶⁹ At the same time, Yeardley's instigation of the common law did not prevent the advancement of private interests. The law was never intended to be common to all, and the renewed colonial enthusiasm among the English elite in 1619, including the king, revealed that gentlemen viewed this new phase in Jamestown's development as an opportunity to enhance their own civil lives as much as to ensure the rights of English colonists. The gentry in the Virginia Company pursued plantation models that would establish recognizably English landscapes through industry and settlement, while projecting a model of civility that specifically pandered to the tastes of the elite. Yeardley's arrival in Jamestown sent a new wave of enthusiasm for colonization, with his backers expressing the belief that 'yf you would ever beginne a plantation – nowe is the tyme'.⁷⁰

James and his councillors specifically seem to have viewed the colony as a place for elite pleasure and sociability. James 'layde a strict com[an]de upon Sir George . . . in all p[ar]tes of Virginia to cherish up silkewormes, & to plant and preserve Mulberie trees', a project that reflected the king's interest in domestic silkworm cultivation.⁷¹ Around the time when James had begun to commission the Banqueting House in London, which involved an elaborate grotto and 'privy cellar' for his drinking parties, the king pressed for 'the planting of vines' in Virginia, not only because wine would bring a profitable trade, but also for purposes of sociability: 'pretious liquour' would 'drawe much good company to come & live there'.⁷² Theodore de Bry's engraving of Virginia captured these fantasies of gentlemanly sociability, conveying men fishing and hunting, the landscape populated by horses, dogs, birds, and stags.⁷³ Near the centre of the image,

⁶⁹ 'A report of S[i]r Yeardlyes going Governor to Virginia', FP 93.

⁷⁰ Ibid.; John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 28 November 1618, The National Archives, SP 14/103, f. 170v.

⁷¹ 'A report of S[i]r Yeardlyes going Governor to Virginia', FP 93; Bonoel, *His Majesties gracious letter to the Earle of South-Hampton*. As the king's silkworm expert, Bonoel was charged with caring for the royal mulberry trees.

⁷² 'A report of S[i]r Yeardlyes going Governor to Virginia', FP 93.

⁷³ The images from de Bry's *Americae pars decima* (Oppenheim, 1619) that pertained to English colonization were collated by Thomas Millet in his 'Tracts of America, trades, &c', c.1619 – 1625, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.b.335.

an English gentleman in a ruff and hat stood with his right foot gracefully forward, a hawk perched on his wrist.

Following the king's discussion with Yeardley, James' courtiers proposed further schemes. Francis Bacon offered to find a means of securing a monopoly on tobacco for the Atlantic companies, while the Earl of Lincoln resolved to send 'some of his best horses . . . to sett up a Race [track]'.⁷⁴ The extractive refinement of elite plantation is evident in the planter David Thomson's letter to Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, from Massachusetts, asking whether Arundel had received the sample 'of graye marble I found in this countrie neere to Naemkeek [Naumkeag]'.⁷⁵ Thomson was clearly pandering to Arundel's well-known interest in architecture and collecting antique marbles. 'I have seene a Tobacco pype of a transparent stone lykest in my simple judgem[en]t to pure whyte Alabaster,' Thomson wrote, perhaps alluding to the quartz quarries outside Jamestown that Algonquians excavated to make crystal arrowheads.⁷⁶ Thomson also referred to Arundel's desire to know 'what places in the Countrey Vynes would thrive'; but these hopes of growing vines and acquiring marble depended on confronting the 'greater and greater multitudes of Salvages' they 'daylie discover in the countrie'.⁷⁷ The civility that colonial promoters envisaged in Virginia involved Protestant orthodoxy but also the social refinement that reform would make possible.

London and the Attack of 1622

The dangers of tolerating Algonquians appeared at the fore of public debate in London in the summer of 1622. On the morning of 22 March, between 500 and 600 men from an alliance of Algonquian groups led by Opechancanough attacked the English plantations along the James River. Having visited and dined with the English, as they were accustomed to doing, these *mecaûtea* or *muckquompaûog*, warriors or fighters, engaged in hand-to-hand combat against male and female colonists, using whatever was most readily available to them, from table knives to farming tools.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Davis Thomson to the Earl of Arundel, 1 July 1625, in *The Life, Correspondence, and Collections of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel*, ed. Mary F. S. Hervey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 502.

⁷⁶ Ibid. Quartz crystal arrowhead, c.1617–1630, Jamestown Rediscovery, 2106-JR.

⁷⁷ Thomson to Arundel, in *The Life, Correspondence, and Collections of Thomas Howard*, 502–4.

⁷⁸ The Algonquian terms used here are intended to offer a more nuanced perspective on the status of those who coordinated the attack. These translations for 'fighters' or 'valiant men' give a better idea

The attack devastated the colony.⁷⁹ Those who escaped faced famine and the gruesome task of finding and burying the dead. The death toll, recorded by the English as 347, amounted to around a third of Virginia's English inhabitants. Fledgling industries like iron and glass manufacture were destroyed. The college at Henrico, which had drawn funds from parishes across England, lay wasted, as did countless makeshift churches and houses across the plantations.

The event brought a decisive shift in Anglo–Native American relations, as colonists agonizingly realized they had misjudged their Algonquian neighbours, who may have been planning the attack for years. Colonists and councillors in London described the event as a massacre, an invasion of savagery that amounted to betrayal. Responses were highly emotive. The attack, wrote one survivor, killed many and ‘burst the heart of all the rest’.⁸⁰ The Algonquians’ intimate knowledge of English settlements and ways of life had made this more than an impersonal act of war. Yeardley’s regime had brought years of relative peace, and colonists had seemed to believe Wahunsenacah, ‘King of the savages’, would induce his people to be ‘faithful subjects of the King of England’, with peace prevailing for so many years that ‘our people went among [the Powhatans] unarmed and the Savages became so friendly that they often visited . . . and dined with them’.⁸¹

Strikingly, English writers blamed colonists most heavily for the disaster, viewing the event as proof that accommodation imperilled the civilizing project. Looking back on the time before the event, the colonist George Sandys reported contemptuously that colonists lived ‘lyke libertines out of the eye of the magistrate, not able to secure themselves’.⁸² Even ‘if they had had anie knowledge of the purpose of the Indians, the most part could not possiblie have prevented their treacheries’.⁸³ One petition to James remarked that ‘the Hostilitie w[i]th the Infidells’ had largely subsided after 1614, but that ‘wee boast not consideringe that itt lulled the English asleepe in too great securitie and consequently gave op[or]tunitie to the late bloody Massacre’.⁸⁴

of the web of allegiance between *sachems*, or ‘princes’, and their ‘chiefest warriors’. Williams, *A key into the language of America*, sigs. N4r–v.

⁷⁹ Horn, *A Land as God Made It*, 255–8.

⁸⁰ William Capps to Doctor Wynston, 1623, in *Records of the Virginia Company, Vol. IV*, ed. Susan Myra Kingsbury (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1935), 38.

⁸¹ ‘Voyage of Anthony Chester, 1620’, in ‘Two Tragical Events’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 9 (1901), 203–14, at 208–9.

⁸² George Sandys to Miles Sandys, 30 March 1623, in *Records of the Virginia Company, Vol. IV*, 70.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ ‘An answer to a Petition delivered to his Ma[jes]tie by Alderman Johnson in the names of sundry Adventurers and Planters’, 7 May 1623, in *Records of the Virginia Company, Vol. III*, ed. Susan Myra Kingsbury (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1933), 395.

Some twenty years later, after the same Opechancanough conducted another, equally destructive attack, authors continued to view the violence as the fault of 'the *English*, [who] by reposing trust and confidence in the *Indians*, gave the opportunity'.⁸⁵ The danger lay not in Algonquian might itself, but in English mismanagement: 'there is no danger in them, except you give them weapons, and stand still whilst they destroy you'.⁸⁶

As Londoners reported and discussed the news in following weeks, the event not only seemed to prove the indigenous refusal to be incorporated into English systems of law, but raised serious questions over English competence. This must have seemed especially relevant in the aftermath of the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in Europe, at a time when the supposed effeminization of the English elite also came under pointed critique. The frontispiece to Samuel Ward's *Woe to drunkards* (1622), published the same year as the attack, visually rendered this concern in a narrative that attributed idleness and overindulgence to declining English honour and strength. The oft-cited Ciceronian lament, 'O manners, O tymes', appeared under images that contrasted the martial chivalry of previous eras against a panoply of distinctly Jacobean courtly fashions including ribbons and garters, heeled shoes with rosettes, lace cuffs, and tobacco pipes.⁸⁷

Tobacco directly related courtly fashions to the imperial project, but other objects in Ward's woodcut, including Venetian glassware and dice, have also been excavated at Jamestown. Like tobacco, gaming was not confined to the elite, but the costliness of several of the surviving objects suggests gentlemen owners. The 'serpent glass' resembled the finely crafted objects gentlemen collected for their cabinets, and the ivory dice set them apart from those made from bone or lead.⁸⁸ These material glimpses of shared elite tastes between court and colony help explain the urgency of the reproaches that related moral degeneration to incompetence abroad. Although exaggerated, criticisms of the colonists focussed on the dangers of allowing martial ability to decay, damaging the fabric of domestic order. Hopes for a refined gentility uniting the English polity across the Atlantic could not precede the necessary eradication of savagery that must come first. To John Chamberlain, indulging Native Americans had sown the seeds for such an incalculable disaster. It was the 'disgrace and shame as

⁸⁵ William Bullock, *Virginia impartially examined, and left to publick view* (1649; Wing B5428), sig. C2v.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* ⁸⁷ Samuel Ward, *Woe to drunkards* (1622; STC 25055).

⁸⁸ Serpent glass fragments, c.1608–10, Jamestown Rediscovery, 7860-JR; dice, 4221-JR, 4865-JR, 4866-JR, 6629-JR, 6623-JR.

much as the loss' that made the event so lamentable, for 'no other nation would have been so grossly overtaken'.⁸⁹ The ramifications of poor management in other parts of James' *imperium* affected the reputation of England and the honour of those who governed it.

The year 1622 marked a decisive shift in English colonial policy-making. For all the professed interest in assimilating indigenous peoples, the English recognized the fundamental incompatibilities of acculturation. 'Before the last Massacre', commented Nathaniel Rich, 'o[u]r Colonyes were almost made subjectes to the Savages', forced into a state of quasi-bondage because of their dependence on Algonquian goods.⁹⁰ The shock of the assault made tolerance suddenly seem unfathomable. In cataloguing the ills besetting the plantations, the Earl of Warwick noted that it was hardly a surprise that 'the savages . . . took the advantage', a result of 'o[u]r owne p[er]fidious dealing w[i]th them & the supine negligence in letting those furious wild people to grow uppon the[m] & to delude them with faire shewes'.⁹¹ Colonial governors addressed this accusation of 'too great securitie' by noting the contradictions in the policies themselves. 'Whereas in the beginning of your L[et]res . . . you pass soe heavie a Censure uppon us', protested the distraught governor Francis Wyatt, with George Sandys, '[a]s yf we alone were guiltie, you may be pleased to Consider what instructions you have formely given us, to wynn the Indyans to us by a kinde entertayninge them in o[u]r howses'.⁹² To the council in London, the 'unwelcome newes, that had beene heard at large in Publicke Court, that the *Indians* and [the English] lived as one Nation' with 'the Salvages as frequent in their houses as themselves' was nothing less than scandalous.⁹³ Reports circulated that Jamestown was in 'pieces', and 'the market-place, and streets, and all other spare places planted with Tobacco'.⁹⁴

Behind anxieties over the English and Algonquians living as 'one Nation' lay a central problem in the civilizing project. 'Civilizing' without violence took time, and the attack had brought serious doubts about Algonquians' ability or willingness to submit to English rule. The English were 'stupid' for believing peace was a means of 'winning the

⁸⁹ John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 13 July 1622, The National Archives, SP 14/132, ff. 55r–v.

⁹⁰ 'Draft of Instructions to the Commissioners to Investigate Virginia Affairs', 14 April 1623, in *Records of the Virginia Company*, Vol. IV, 118.

⁹¹ Nathaniel Rich, 'Draft of Instructions to the Commissioners to Investigate Virginia Affairs', 14 April 1623, in *ibid.*, 118.

⁹² 'Council in Virginia. Letter to Virginia Company of London', 20 January 1623, in *ibid.*, 10.

⁹³ Smith, *The generall historie*, sigs. R2v. ⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. Vv.

Savages to Civilitie'.⁹⁵ 'Not being content with taking life alone, [the Algonquians] fell after againe upon the dead', reported the Virginia Company secretary, Edward Waterhouse, 'defacing, dragging, and mangling the dead carkasses into many pieces, and carrying some parts away in derision, with base and brutish triumph'.⁹⁶ Waterhouse did see one good in the attack: the English were now free to apply greater force against resistance. They were set 'at liberty by the treacherous violence of the Savages' for 'right of Warre, and law of Nations' allowed them to 'invade the Country, and destroy them who sought to destroy us'.⁹⁷ Widely referenced in London, Waterhouse's tract equated savagery with rebellion, a view that seemed to confirm that, as with the Gaelic Irish he had encountered in Ulster twenty years before, 'savages' and English authority were irreconcilable, and conquest justified.

Ballads, poems, treatises, and letters written in 1622 encouraged subjects to actively condemn those who refuted English values and indulged savagery, projecting it as a danger to the polity as a whole. The colonists who allowed 'those furious wild people to grow upon the[m]' must now draw more distinct bounds or risk losing the largest and most promising colony the English possessed.⁹⁸ The call for bloodier initiatives against Algonquians legitimized larger-scale colonial violence as a necessity that would preserve the values of English civil society. In 1623, a broadside circulated a poem written by a 'gentleman in that colony' that celebrated conquest.⁹⁹ 'Good newes from Virginia' (not to be confused with Alexander Whitaker's 1613 work of the same name) turned the events of 1622 into a ballad that reinforced the 'savage treacheries' of the 'savage foe'.¹⁰⁰ The poem disseminated colonial news to a wider audience, exalting colonists as heroic figures:

Bould worthy Sir *George Yardly*
 Commander cheife was made . . .
 Against the King Opukingunow,
 against this savage foe . . .

Stout Master *George Sands* upon a night,
 did bravely venture forth;
 And mong'st the savage murtherers,
 did forme a deed of worth.

⁹⁵ Edward Waterhouse, 'A Declaration of the State of the Colony', 1622, in *Records of the Virginia Company, Vol. III*, 553.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 551. ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 556.

⁹⁸ Rich, 'Instructions', in *Records of the Virginia Company, Vol. IV*, 118.

⁹⁹ 'Good newes from Virginia, 1623', reproduced in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 5 (1948), 351–8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 353.

For finding many by a fire,
to death their lives they pay:
Set fire of a Towne of theirs,
and bravely came away . . .

The Kings of Waynoke, Pipskoe,
and Apummatockes fled:
For feare a way by *Charles* his Towne,
not one dares show a head.¹⁰¹

The verses displayed an awareness of particular Algonquian groups of the Chesapeake, but local names were invoked only to be razed. Those who listened to or sang the words were invited to accept the actions of colonists, and to join in the call to take action against the Powhatans.

Interest in the attack filled diaries and personal letters. The Inns of Court student William Wynn wrote to his father on 12 July 1622: 'In Virginia, the savages have by a wile come (as they weare wont) to traffique into our English howses', where they had subverted the bonds of trust and ushered war in the locus of English domesticity, the plantation house.¹⁰² The very tools of English civility – eating utensils and farming and gardening tools – had been stolen or taken as trophies, just as Wahunsenacah had confessed to John Smith that he had seen the 'carkasses, the dispersed bones of their and their Countrey men' in the lost colony of Roanoke, and proved this by showing Smith the utensils his men had recovered from the site.¹⁰³ Simonds d'Ewes, another law student at the Inns, recorded on 7 July 1622 that '[f]rom Virginia wee had exceeding badd newes for the inhumane wretches wee had given peace too thus long, conspired together [the colonists] were slaine chieffye in St Martins Hundred'.¹⁰⁴ D'Ewes' focus on Martin's Hundred is telling. The plantation may have affiliated with Richard Martin, a Virginia Company member and a respected figure at the Inns of Court, and suggests a connection between members of the Inns and their endorsement of plantation, explored at greater length in Chapter 5.

Six weeks later, d'Ewes added that he was 'partaker of an exact discourse of the massacre as I may learne it of our men in Virginia', though he deferred from commenting on the event until he could 'gett the thing it selfe' through further reading.¹⁰⁵ D'Ewes appears to have actively engaged with Virginia affairs, exhibiting a desire to gather intelligence about events

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 353–5.

¹⁰² Quoted in 'Notes', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 68 (1960), 107–8.

¹⁰³ Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimes*, sig. Mmmmmmm2r. ¹⁰⁴ 'Notes', 107–8. ¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 107.

in the colony. As in debating other current, sensational affairs, news from Virginia seemed to lend political currency, reinforced by the sense of solidarity in referring to 'our men in Virginia'.¹⁰⁶ The Cambridge reverend Joseph Mead, an avid collector and writer of news, received information of the attack around the same time. He wrote on 13 July that 'this week ill newes come from Virginia (which every man reports that come to London)', that 'the Indians . . . fell upon [the colonists] & beat out their braines scarce any escaping'.¹⁰⁷ As well as indicating the pervasiveness of the news in metropolitan discourse, Mead's comments also placed the Chesapeake within the networks of information exchange within and beyond London.

Several lost works, surviving only as brief notes in the Stationers' Register, serve as a reminder that the works on the attack that do survive may only skim the surface of London responses. As Mead noted, news of the English deaths seemed on the lips of all those 'that come to London', and only a small sample of impressions remains. The Stationers' company registers approved a ballad titled 'Mourning Virginia' for print on 10 July 1622, days after the news reached the metropolis.¹⁰⁸ By the following summer, Henry Herbert, master of the revels, licensed 'A Tragedy of the Plantation of Virginia' for the Curtain Theatre.¹⁰⁹ Though these titles indicate little about the content of these texts, Herbert would hardly have approved a play that disparaged English involvement in the Chesapeake at a critical moment in its survival, and the 'tragedy' of Virginia presumably recounted the deaths of the English at the hands of Algonquians. It is uncertain whether the play ended with bloody resolutions, though elaborate and gruesome spectacles were certainly regular features of Jacobean tragedy. Even as Herbert licensed the play, he did so under the condition that its high level of profanity be purged first.

'Our Royal Empire': Sovereignty over Savagery

The attack brought the urgency of Virginia Company mismanagement to the fore, with competing factions blaming the policies of the other for the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ 'The Indian Massacre of 1622: Some Correspondence of the Reverend Joseph Mead', ed. Robert C. Johnson, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 71 (1963), 408–10, at 408.

¹⁰⁸ Catherine Armstrong, 'Reaction to the 1622 Virginia Massacre: An Early History of Transatlantic Print', in *Books between Europe and the Americas: Connections and Communities, 1620–1860*, ed. Leslie Howsam and James Raven (Basingstoke: Palgrave 2011), 23–41, at 30.

¹⁰⁹ Claire Jowitt, *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics, 1589–1642: Real and Imagined Worlds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 202.

colony's dire circumstances. A distressed John Ferrar equated the physical carnage with the heated atmosphere of the London courts, where he held the attack against colonists' bodies to be less damaging than its effects on the honour of the London council. 'Wee have hadd a Massacre . . . no lesse unexpected nor daungerous then yo[u]rs, p[er]happs more', Ferrar wrote to Francis Wyatt, 'the execu[i]on beinge not uppon mens bodyes . . . butt uppon the Honour Credit & reputac[i]on of those . . . whereon under God the Colloneys life seemeth to depend'.¹¹⁰ Both the colonists' relationship to the Powhatans, and the resentments between opposing company factions, could be described the same way: 'the tearmes betwixt us and them are irreconcilable'.¹¹¹ The disagreements and resentments grew so impassioned that members of the company ultimately appealed to the king to arbitrate, despite the potential damage such an action might cause to their private interests.

Colonists' struggle in America did not only affect the king's image as sovereign over indigenous peoples, but also brought into question his ability to care for his own subjects. After fifteen years of the Virginia Company's relative freedom in managing overseas affairs, with successive charters granting the corporation increasing power, the royal investigation of 1623 allowed James to proclaim his sovereignty over his subjects more forcefully. The king asked his privy councillors to carry out investigations that involved travelling to Virginia and confiscating company papers from private households by force. Considering the 'faction and distraction among them, being followed on both sides w[i]th much eagernes and animositie', James forbade the House of Commons to intervene, promising 'to rid them of the thornie business touching Virginia'.¹¹² The king, Chamberlain reported, would no longer rely on the Lower House to debate the matter, but intended to bring the business under his direct oversight.

To James, as to many observers, the company had proven incapable of governing itself, much less managing colonial affairs, without his direct interference. The very structure of a joint-stock company endowed it a republican potential that did not sit comfortably with the Privy Council. Captain John Bargrave accused Edwin Sandys of harbouring a 'malicious heart to the Government of a Monarchy', though his insistence that Sandys

¹¹⁰ 'Coppie of a Letter to S[i]r Frauncis Wyatt and M[aste]r George Sandys', 18 December 1622, Ferrar Papers, FP 437.

¹¹¹ 'The Generall Assemblies Replie to those foure propositions made unto them by the Commissioners', 20 March 1623, The National Archives, CO 1/3, f. 48r.

¹¹² John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 30 April 1624, The National Archives, SP 14/163, f. 110r.

proposed a 'popular Government' in Virginia did not seem to be taken seriously, even by Sandys' opponents.¹¹³ Nonetheless, Sandys admitted that if the king disapproved of the company's government, he would need to change its joint-stock system. 'These Plantations, though furthered much by your Majesty's grace', Sandys pointed out, were upheld by private adventurers who would naturally fail to take interest in 'the regulating and governing of their own business [if] their own votes had been excluded'.¹¹⁴ Joint-stock companies were well suited for advancing commercial interests, but the territorial control and land management required to affix Virginia to the English polity was a different matter.

After years of admonishing the Virginia council for its disagreements and poor handling of affairs, James finally 'reserved of the whole cause to his own hearing'.¹¹⁵ James seemed to have exerted considerable effort in overseeing the disputes, receiving petitions from colonists and their representatives in London and ordering Ferrar to bring all Virginia Company patents, invoices, and account books to the council chamber, to be securely kept by the keeper of the council chest.¹¹⁶ The king commissioned drafts of a new charter for Virginia. 'There is a Commission of Privy Counsellors and others appoynted to advise upon a fit Patent to be given to the Company of Virginia [at] last being overthrowne', Francis Nethersole reported to Dudley Carleton.¹¹⁷ 'The Reformation intended as I heare is that there shall be a Company for trade, but not for Government of the Countrey of w[hi]ch his Ma[jes]ty will take care'.¹¹⁸ Nethersole added that the 'popularity of the Gover[n]ment' had 'beene also o[ver]throwne' as it was 'displeasing to his Ma[jes]ty'.¹¹⁹

Tensions ran high. In his invective against the merchant Thomas Smythe, Edward Sackville, fourth Earl of Dorset, 'caried himself so malapertly and insolently that the k[ing] was faine to take him downe soundly and roundly'.¹²⁰ Several months later, the Earl of Warwick and William Cavendish, second Earl of Devonshire, were reported to have gone to France to duel over the affair.¹²¹ The gentleman Robert Bing was excluded from the Virginia commission in March 1623 because he had displayed 'saucy conduct before the Council table, and offensive behaviour to Lord

¹¹³ Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company*, 277. ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 284.

¹¹⁵ The King to the Speaker of the House of Commons, 28 April 1624, The National Archives, SP 14/163, f. 106r; Chamberlain Carleton, 30 April 1624, SP 14/163, f. 110r.

¹¹⁶ Meeting at Whitehall, 26 June 1624, The National Archives, PC 2/34, f. 344v.

¹¹⁷ Francis Nethersole to Dudley Carleton, 3 July 1624, The National Archives, SP 14/169, f. 19r.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Chamberlain to Carleton, 19 April 1623, The National Archives, SP 14/143, f. 30.

¹²¹ Chamberlain to Carleton, 26 July 1623, The National Archives, SP 14/149, f. 64.

Southampton'.¹²² He would be released from Marshalsea prison only after giving satisfaction to Southampton, for '[t]he business in hand is weighty and serious'.¹²³ James took the final measures necessary to assume clearer control of his colony in 1624, after pressuring the Virginia Company to surrender its patent.¹²⁴ Colonization, 'this worthie action reserved by the Devine providence', was to 'bee perfected and Consumate, by his Royall hands'.¹²⁵ Colonization seemed to hinge on the stabilizing presence of the civilizing sovereign who alone could now bring order to the disarray in the courts, as to the colony itself.

Policies towards and experience among the Powhatans figured large in domestic debates over the colony's fate. The deprivation of the 1609 Starving Time was attributed partly to an inability to trade successfully for corn. Members of the company cited the nightmarish conditions of Thomas Dale and Thomas Gates' martial regimes to remind their audiences that 'some were driven through unsufferable hunger unnaturally to eate those things w[hi]ch nature most abhorrs, the flesh . . . of o[u]r owne Nation as of an Indian digged by some of his grave after he had lyene buried three dayes . . . wholly devoured'.¹²⁶ Others 'put themselves into the Indians hands though o[u]r enemies, and were by them slayne'.¹²⁷ The events in 1622 crystallized the idea that the 'trecherous enemy the Savadges' helped to bring about the 'ru[i]ne of o[u]r state', though the governor and the council tried 'their uttermost and Christian endeavo[u]rs in prosecuting revenge against the bloody Savadges . . . employeing many forces abroad for the rootinge them out'.¹²⁸ The dissolution of the Virginia Company forced discussions about sovereignty to be articulated in relation to the reality of events in Jamestown.

In this way, correspondence that survives from the Virginia Company years – letters, commissions, reports, even poems directly naming members of the council – serves a distinct role in how subjects articulated political ideas. These actively influenced how the king came to project his conception of an imperial polity. Quentin Skinner argues that modern ideas of the

¹²² Attorney General [Thomas] Coventry to Secretary [Edward] Conway, 25 July 1624, in *Calendar of State Papers: Colonial, Vol. 1*, 65.

¹²³ *Ibid.*; 'Upon the humble submission of Robert Bing, gentleman', 25 March 1623, The National Archives, PC 2/31, f. 635r.

¹²⁴ Lord President [Henry] Mandeville to Secretary Conway, 17 October 1623, The National Archives, SP 14/153, f. 87.

¹²⁵ Governor Wyatt and Council of Virginia to the Privy Council, 17 May 1626, in 'Documents of Sir Francis Wyatt, Governor', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 8 (1928), 157–67, at 166.

¹²⁶ 'A copy of a Brief Declaration of Virginia in the first 12 years', 1624, Ferrar Papers, FP 532.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* ¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

state derive less from the evolution of legal theories than from the early histories, advice books, and mirror-for-princes literature emerging from the political turmoil of Italian city states in the late medieval period.¹²⁹ These tracts were concerned with how rulers might obtain honour and renown while promoting their subjects' well-being, and sought to relate regional particularities to more abstract ideas of statecraft. This view of political power, Skinner contends, as personal and open to counsel operated not unlike the absolute monarchy propounded by the Stuarts in early seventeenth-century England, where the powers of government were often considered inseparable from the character and will of the king.¹³⁰ Skinner argues that such thinking developed specifically from advice manuals and treatises in Europe, incorporating reactions against ideologies of popular sovereignty that sprang from the religious wars in France. While the influence of European political works should not be downplayed, a case might also be made for the letters that came to the attention of the king and the Privy Council as a result of the early colonial projects. The Virginia Company's struggles and ultimate appeal to James called for solutions that would benefit the common good, articulated in language that corresponded to that observed by Skinner. However coincidental, it is notable that John Chamberlain associated the Virginia Company quarrels with those of the Ghelphs and Ghibellines, supporters of competing claimants to political authority in the northern city states of medieval Italy.¹³¹ In invoking a historical example of public dispute over political authority, Chamberlain emphasized how debates about the colonies had become important issues of state, bringing quarrels into the streets and the Royal Exchange.

Gentlemen in London articulated political disintegration as a specific consequence of Powhatan agency, drawing on their knowledge of events to impart political advice. George Wyatt's letter to his son Francis contained many of the stylistic devices characteristic of Elizabethan and Jacobean political counsel. 'Let the severitie of justice not let blud too m[uch] that it cause not a Consumption in the body too weake alreddy', Wyatt urged, adding, 'State secrets and Hopes are safest kept [in] one bosome'.¹³² At the same time, the letters have a distinctly novel element in their engagement

¹²⁹ Quentin Skinner, 'The State', in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, ed. Terence Ball, James Farr, and Russell L. Hanson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 90–131, at 96.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹³¹ John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 26 July 1623, The National Archives, SP 14/149, f. 64r.

¹³² George Wyatt, 'A letter of advice', 116.

with the Powhatans. Wyatt adapted well-known attitudes towards rule and government by applying them to a world that had not been part of the English governing landscape even twenty years before. 'Your brow of Providence is to looke with Janus two waies', Wyatt wrote, 'on your owen Countrimen Christians, and on the Salvage Infidels'.¹³³ Opinions towards those 'salvages' bore on how stability and authority might be justified and achieved. Caution, Wyatt wrote, was '[t]he first Military precept your Barbarians have tought you now'.¹³⁴ These were hard lessons, he acknowledged, and only knowledge of the land and its peoples would prompt his fair-minded son to take the necessary initiatives to strengthen the vulnerable colony. Francis, Wyatt urged, must learn to be less trusting, and to respond to devastation with force.¹³⁵ Wyatt's advice to form a permanent militia to protect the area from attack sprang from a need to fight savagery: 'your Militia . . . will searve you against suche an Enimie . . . the wilde and fierce Savages'.¹³⁶ This corroborated the views of other commentators, who specified that only after colonists implemented what 'may be aptly termed a Militarie intendencie' would the colony 'tie Virginia as fast to England as if it were one terra firma with itt'.¹³⁷

Similarly, George Percy's 'Trew Relacyon', also written in 1624, used the specific conditions he had experienced in Jamestown to expound more generally on conduct. As Mark Nicholls has suggested, Percy's 'Relacyon' read like a letter of advice. Written to counsel and to guide, it emphasized the morality and deference to authority 'entirely appropriate to a narrative fashioned by an older generation for the instruction – and improvement – of the young'.¹³⁸ This reinforces the notion that those who wrote about colonization saw it as a clear parallel to, or even a didactic tool for, the civilizing initiatives within England itself. The experiences wrought among the uncertainty and hardships of that 'new' world were not incidental, even to those who never travelled there, but a comprehensive part of a widening English identity. The behaviour of *all* English subjects, contrasted against but also compared unfavourably to those 'savages' in America, was part of an overarching project that sought to promote deference and submission within the English realm and its dominions.

This is not to imply that all letters by counsellors and governors from Jamestown were specifically written to advise policy-makers on abstract matters of state, but that one substantial consequence of the struggles and

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 114. ¹³⁴ *Ibid.* ¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 118. ¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 120–1, 125–7.

¹³⁷ 'Right honorable I have tendered to my Lord President . . .', 9 Dece[m]b[er] 1622, British Library, Add MS 12496, f. 433r.

¹³⁸ 'George Percy's "Trew Relacyon"', 237.

debates over Virginia was to force a better articulation of the transatlantic polity, and to do so in ways that put these ideas more concretely into motion. Privy councillors specifically asked for details on how the colony 'now stands in respects of the Salvages'.¹³⁹ When Francis Wyatt wrote to the London assembly describing how the colony might be secured in 1623, and again the following year, he did so in direct response to its specific requests for information.¹⁴⁰

The 'Discourse of the Old Company', written in 1625, serves as a final example. Composed by defeated members of the company after the loss of its charter, the discourse acknowledged that Virginia's best hope for survival now rested in the king's direct control. Old members of the company used the document largely as a space to defend and to justify their actions against the slanders brought about by the company's fall, and the Sandys–Southampton faction specifically called to mind 'those Twelve yeares Govern[en]t' between 1607 and 1619 to paint a picture of stunning failure in the absence of strict metropolitan oversight. Members described the destitution, poor defences and resource control, martial law, few women, 'doubtfull Termes' with the Powhatans, and severe restriction of 'their Lib[er]ties, being violently deteyned as serv[an]tes' to conclude that nothing but the king's 'Royall authoritie' would work for the good of everyone involved.¹⁴¹ A dedicated London council, acting in the interest of the state while protecting the private interests of English subjects, would enable 'by his Ma[jes]ties Royall authoritie, w[i]th consent of Parliament, bothe Plantac[i]ons might be annexed to the Imperiall Crowne of this Realme'.¹⁴²

Only strict royal and parliamentary control would allow Virginia to truly be incorporated into the unique governing system of the English state in ways that would benefit monarch and subject alike. When overseen by 'Royall authoritie, w[i]th consent of Parliament', the 'Imperiall' polity would promote economic activity that deployed traditional systems of indentured labour, land management, and governance to achieve expansion and longer-term settlement. The articulation of kingly participation depended on the management of savagery:

¹³⁹ 'The general Assemblies answer to those Propositions made by the Com[m]issioners to be p[re]sented to the lords of his Ma[jes]ties most hono[ur]able privy Counciel', 20 March 1623, British Library, Add MS 62135(II), f. 211r.

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, the letters between the General Assembly of Virginia and the Privy Council commissioners, March 1624, in *Calendar of State Papers: Colonial, Vol. 1*, 28–9.

¹⁴¹ 'Discourse of the Old Company', April 1625, in *Records of the Virginia Company, Vol. IV*, 519–21.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 546.

The wounds w[hi]ch since that great wound of the Massacre, it hath more lately received, from their hands whom it least beseemed, are still so wide & bleedinge, that unlesse his Ma[jest]ie, and yo[u]r Lo[rdship]ps as deputed from him, shall vouchsafe to apply a Sovereaine hande for the healing of them, *wee are resolute of opinion*, that it is impossible, the Plantation carried as formerly by private persons, should either prosper or long subsist.¹⁴³

Heavily involved with the royal investigation, the privy councillor Julius Caesar collected reports from his brother-in-law John Martin, then in Virginia, who suggested that members of the nobility be appointed 'by his Ma[jes]ties counsel and company two seates, the first in Opuhankanos Island in Pamaunkey river . . . The second at Okanahone River' to better control Algonquians and other colonists.¹⁴⁴ The internal disputes, the significance of the 'wound of the Massacre', and news from the colony prompted James and his councillors to involve themselves in colonization in more active and intrusive ways. As the lawyer Thomas Floyd wrote in 1600, the chief purpose of monarchy – the 'royal estate of an empire or government' – was to avoid the 'sturdy stormes of pinching misery' and dissent, and the aftermath of the attack called for a forceful manifestation of royal sovereignty.¹⁴⁵ 'We humbly refer unto your Princely consideration', the assembly wrote to James in 1624, '[i]nvokeinge that divine and supream hand to p[ro]tect us'.¹⁴⁶

Despite James' persistent belief in a monarch's absolute authority, the Virginia Company had not, in its early stages, been a domain where the king had sought to impose his authority with any real force. The early 1620s must therefore be seen as a decisive moment in which the English Crown recognized its responsibilities towards overseas settlements for the first time.¹⁴⁷ In his capacity as lord chancellor, Francis Bacon wrote to investors in 1620 to inform them that the king had instructed him to apply renewed energy to recovering the debts due to the Virginia Company for the advancement of plantation.¹⁴⁸ The honour of the state was involved, Bacon wrote, and the enterprise could not be allowed to fail. In 1623, Samuel Purchas attributed the successful flourishing of an imperial polity

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 530. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁴ John Martin to Julius Caesar, [1622?], British Library, Add MS 12496, f. 436r.

¹⁴⁵ Thomas Floyd, *The picture of a perfitt common wealth describing aswell the offices of princes* (1600; STC 11119), sig. B10v.

¹⁴⁶ 'The answer of the general assemblie in Virginia to King James', 16 February 1624, Ferrar Papers, FP 527.

¹⁴⁷ 'A report of S[i]r George Yeardlyes going Governor to Virginia', FP 93.

¹⁴⁸ Francis Bacon to an adventurer for Virginia, November 1620, Ferrar Papers, FP 193.

to the king's 'singular, masculine, reall, regall, absolute [power] over his own', framing the triumph of the civilizing project in distinctly masculine and royal terms.¹⁴⁹ In 1624, Captain Bargrave wrote to the Duke of Buckingham about draft proposals given to the king, 'whoe promiseth to read it himself, this being the sole and onley safe and profitable way to plant Virginia'.¹⁵⁰ Following his father's death in March 1625, Charles immediately affirmed that he would maintain the plantation as he did the rest of his dominions, expressing his belief that joint-stock companies were good for business but dangerous to the state. Virginia would 'immediately depend upon Our Selfe, and not be committed to any Company or Corporation', Charles proclaimed, 'to whom it may be proper to trust matters of Trade and Commerce, but cannot bee fit or sage to communicate the ordering of State-affaires'.¹⁵¹

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By the 1620s, the presence and possibility of America was woven into the lives of those who were committed to advancing the civil life of the realm and the reputation of their nation. Viewing plantation through the lens of metropolitan oversight reveals how deeply Virginia's fortunes had become related to Protestant providentialism and the honour of imperially minded gentlemen. The 'care that I have of this plantation', Richard Martin wrote in 1610, is a '[f]ire that doth not onlie burn in mee, but flames out to the view of everyone'.¹⁵² The colonial intelligence addressed to London gentlemen was often the result of this active desire to stay informed. '[L]et me understand', Martin told Strachey, praising his faithfulness as an intelligencer and urging him to 'deale Clearly w[i]th me'.¹⁵³ It was 'the direction & protection of Godes divine providence' that would allow the English to 'shine as the starres in the firmament', and colonists and councillors alike were 'partakers of this promisse [*sic*]'.¹⁵⁴

James' eventual decision to involve himself directly in Virginia Company debates is significant. Firstly, it suggests that by acknowledging 'that worke w[hi]ch wee have begunne', the king was prepared to assume responsibility for Virginia, and that his interference was the result of the letters and petitions presented to him and his Privy Council from 1619

¹⁴⁹ Samuel Purchas, *The kings towre* (1623; STC 20502), sig. D6r.

¹⁵⁰ Captain John Bargrave to the Duke of Buckingham, October 1624, The National Archives, SP 14/173, f. 150r.

¹⁵¹ Quoted in Horn, *A Land as God Made It*, 279.

¹⁵² Richard Martin to William Strachey, 14 December 1610, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.321, f. 62r.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, f. 63r. ¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, ff. 62v–63r.

onwards.¹⁵⁵ Secondly, James' increased attention to America suggests that the king recognized that addressing affairs in the colony was crucial to settling the tensions wrought between competing visions of government and civil society held by members of the elite in his own realm. The Earl of Warwick had attributed the miseries that had befallen those in the colony 'p[ar]tlie through want of good gov[ern]ment and direccons both here and there', and the new patents were to be confirmed by acts of Parliament that provided stronger measures of oversight from London.¹⁵⁶ The process through which this occurred fostered a more nuanced dialogue about the realities of what political expansion actually involved.

In advocating 'the civilizing of the Indians as a matter of the greatest consequence', the Virginia Company had encouraged gentlemen to view their own civil self-awareness through the intimate conditions of encounter. While Bermuda and Newfoundland often entered debates over commodities like tobacco, fish, and ambergris, prolonged interaction with the Powhatans necessarily involved discussions of subjugation and rule, forcing complex articulations of English civility. Some might be 'discouraged from this worthy enterprise, by raylers and scoffers', wrote the keeper of the king's silkworms, John Bonoil, but such men were 'next a kinne, indeed, to the hatefull Savages, enemies herein to God, their King, and Country'.¹⁵⁷ Bonoil's text read like a conduct manual, linking colonial support with the appeal of silk cultivation and a disdain for those who derided expansion. Englishmen who mocked the wishes of 'God, King, and Country' were not only uncivil, but also actively *against* the civilizing project. Refinement would come from setting themselves apart: 'there is a naturall kind of right in you, that are bred noble, learned, wise, and vertuous, to direct [the Algonquians] aright, to governe and command them'.¹⁵⁸

By the time Thomas Hobbes – himself a shareholder in the Virginia Company, where he attended meetings with his patron, William Cavendish, in the 1620s – published *Leviathan* in 1651, he sought to paint a picture of civil government that both conceded to the rights of the people while promoting absolutist political allegiances, reconciled in citizens choosing to 'renounce and transfer' their authority to a guardian of state, the monarch.¹⁵⁹ Without a king, Hobbes maintained, the state

¹⁵⁵ 'Commission to Sir Francis Wyatt', 26 August 1624, in 'Sir Francis Wyatt, Governor: Documents, 1624–1626', ed. Minnie G. Cook, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 8 (1928), 157–67, at 160.

¹⁵⁶ Nathaniel Rich, 'Notes of Letters from Virginia', May/June 1623, in *Records of the Virginia Company*, Vol. IV, 161.

¹⁵⁷ Bonoil, *His Majesties gracious letter to the Earle of South-Hampton*, sig. M3v. ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Skinner, 'The State', 117.

remained a headless aberration, a government no more effective than those held by 'savages' living outside the structures and institutions that society offered. Hobbes specifically evoked Native American ways of life as examples of lust-driven communities that let nature dominate reason, drawing on tropes about continual warfare that were partly a reflection of the ideas crystallized under James.¹⁶⁰ The many exchanges between London and the Chesapeake not only helped a fledgling colony to stabilize and to develop its distinct identity in its critical early decades. They also exposed a metropolitan sphere that was invariably implicated in the world it had sought to transform.

¹⁶⁰ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651; Wing H2246), 62–3.