FORMERLY AN INDIAN:
SOCIAL DISTANCE IN DUTCH NEW YORK

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When the Dutch first settled New York in 1621, they maintained a notable social distance from their Native neighbors. I believe this distance was at least in part caused by events in the Netherlands. The colonists arrived in the New World in the midst of the Dutch Revolt (1568-1648.) The War resulted in both establishing the United Provinces’ independence from the Hapsburg Empire and a newly defined Dutch identity. In an attempt to unify the disparate, autonomous provinces, revolutionary propagandists dug deep into the Netherlands’ history to create an imagined, immemorial cultural bond between the Provinces. One of the strategies the propagandists relied on was to cast themselves, subjects of the tyrannical Hapsburg Empire, as another marginalized group under the thumbs of the Spanish: Amerindians.

So when the first New Netherlanders arrived in the New World, they brought their recently created, amorphous identity with them. Colonial figures defined Dutch identity in relation to the Indians of New York, but also expressed concern that, when the colonists did not live up to these standards, they could not be considered Dutchman. The social distance between the Dutch and the Indians worked as a means of reifying Dutch identity, but its inevitable failure in the face of constant daily interaction meant that the Dutch ran the risk of becoming like the Indians they held at arm’s length. The thesis will conclude with a case study of two Dutch-Indian siblings, Hilletie and Jacques Van Slyck, who attempted to join their father’s community in Schenectady to varying degrees of success. Neither sibling was fully accepted into the community. Through putting effort into modeling themselves after those sketchy definitions of Dutch identity, the siblings pointed to the chimerical nature of Dutch identity. And so the Dutch colonists could never see past the siblings’ maternal heritage: they would always be former Indians.
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INTRODUCTION

In 1609, Henry Hudson took matters into his own hands. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) had employed Hudson to find a Northeastern passage to Asia north of Russia, through treacherous subarctic waters. The VOC needed to find an alternative route to the East Indies in order to avoid the Spanish-controlled Horn of Africa. At this time, the Dutch and Spanish were embroiled in the Eighty Years’ War, in which the Dutch would win their independence from the Spanish Empire. Hudson ignored his directive. Convinced by Captain John Smith’s notes, Hudson chose to explore a certain river between Virginia and New England. Though Hudson’s river would not provide this route, it did open a world to the Dutch: the New World, and the people in it.

Though Hudson’s journal is now lost to us, his first mate (and possible murderer) Robert Juet’s account dutifully records the flora, fauna, and minerals that enterprising European merchants could capitalize on. Juet also tells us about the sailors’ encounters with the native peoples of the land, whom they relied upon as guides and trading partners. But Hudson and his men distrusted these people, even when they attempted to board the Half Moon with women and children in tow. After a feast with one group, Hudson refused to spend the night on shore, ignoring the sachem’s “sorrowfull” protests — a refusal that indicated how trustworthy Hudson found his hosts. For Hudson, there

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1 This is the same John Smith who was “rescued” by Pocahontas. Hudson was an Englishman.
2 Hudson returned to America to search for a passage to Asia in Northern Canada. The crew, possibly led by Juet, set him and his son to sea in what is now the Hudson Bay. Russel Shorto, The Island at the Center of the World (Vintage Books: New York, 2004), 35.
3 I will avoid the terms “Native American” and “American Indian” to acknowledge this group’s independence from America as a political entity, particularly in the context of an historical era before the United States’ creation. My alternating the words “Indian,” “Native,” and “Amerindian” are simply stylistic choices. “Native” and “Indian” are correct in conversation.
4 For many Native peoples, bringing women and children to a diplomatic meeting signaled peaceful intentions. Hudson and his men were not used to seeing women engaged in the political sphere, and were clearly bemused by their presence. Narrative of New Netherland (NNN), ed. Franklin J. Jameson (New York: C. Scribners Sons, 1909), 20. For women and diplomacy, see Juliana Barr, “A Diplomacy of Gender: Rituals of First Contact in the “Land of the Tejas,” The William and Mary Quarterly Third Series, 61, 3 (2004): 393-434. For Juet and women, see NNN, 22.
5 Ibid., 24.
would be no conviviality between the two groups. He set the tone for Dutch-Indian relations: friendship was out of the question, a formal trade arrangement would be the only necessary basis for a relationship.

Hudson’s “discovery” prompted a flurry of excited investment. Hudson left a few men behind to maintain the fledgling fur trade while he reported his findings to his superiors. A few exploratory missions later, the WIC was granted a trade monopoly by the States General, the Dutch governing body. When the WIC imported colonists to its new colony, New Netherland, in 1624, an illicit private fur trade blossomed and interactions between the two groups intensified. But the Dutch maintained a marked “social distance” from the Amerindians of the Hudson Valley.

To the extent this distance has been questioned, scholars point to Dutch cultural and commercial interests as sufficient explanation. Historical archaeologist Nan Rothschild introduces the concept of “social distance,” referring to the near absence of Native artifacts in Dutch settlements. For Rothschild, this “rejection of Mohawk goods was symbolic and expressive of [the colonists’] desire to remain distant from indigenous people.” She suggests this social distance stems from “the priority placed on trade above all” – that laws prohibiting unfair access to Native traders “were taken seriously.” Yet the historical record shows these laws were not respected at all – and, as we shall see, the colonists and Native peoples who lived near them interacted on a daily basis. These

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8 Rothschild, “Colonialism,” 86.
9 Ibid., 104.
interactions were often more antagonistic than friendly. Though Rothschild’s articulation of this “social distance” is integral to this thesis, I believe her explanation requires further inquiry.

Donna Merwick’s *The Shame and the Sorrow* attributes this social distance to Dutch cultural tendencies. According to Merwick, the nautically-oriented Dutch “wanted to think that they could have only an anchorage alongside other peoples’ lands and cultures and, by that, have the right to only a faded-out sense of responsibility for the people and things around.”\(^{11}\) The colonists came to the New World as traders, not missionaries, but as they became more involved with their clients, they realized the New Netherland project would require more than a casual commitment to the land and peoples.\(^{12}\) Certainly, commerce served as the basis for interactions between individual colonists and Indians. Though commercial relationships need not result in friendship, they do not have to preclude them, either. There is precious little evidence of Dutch-Indian friendship. Where Merwik suggests the social distance was a product of innate Dutch qualities, I see this distance as the result of the events preoccupying the Dutch at this time. It is the Dutch ambivalence towards this encounter, combined with the instability of Dutch identity in the seventeenth, that contributed to this distance.

Adriaen van der Donck, a prominent resident of New Netherland, recognized this instability. Van der Donck published a description of the colony in the Netherlands, and specifically included a lengthy account of “Indian” (most likely Mohawk) customs in 1655. Van der Donck recorded these observations

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\(^{12}\) Ibid.
so that when the Christians shall have multiplied there, and the Indians melted away, we may not suffer the regret that their manners and customs have likewise passed from memory.¹³

In 1655, thirty years after the colony’s founding, the many Indian nations of the region vastly outnumbered the New Netherlanders.¹⁴ Van der Donck envisioned a day when the tables would be turned. If the Indians would “melt away” when “Christians shall have multiplied there,” what prevented the Dutch colonists from melting away in the present? Van der Donck’s phrase will drive this thesis. The act of “melting away” requires two or more unique constituent parts blending together to form something entirely new. However, this process does not require that the characteristics of the original parts are erased. Certain characteristics can never disappear completely: melting chocolate and caramel together does not erase the flavor of either ingredient. Thus, “melting” is not the same as “dissolving.” That Van der Donck did not use “disappear” or “vanish” indicates his intention to incorporate, rather than decimate, the Native population into the growing Dutch colony. Van der Donck did not have a purely anthropological interest in the Indians: he hoped to one day enfold Native peoples into New Netherland society. In this aspect, I believe Van der Donck was in the minority. I argue that the Dutch distanced themselves from their Native trading partners as a means to establish Dutch identity, both in the context of their recent revolt against Spain, and in an attempt to prevent themselves from “melting away,” from becoming too like the Indians, at a time when Dutch identity was still poorly defined.

Stumbling Into History

In some ways, the Dutch were ahead of their time. As a confederated non-monarchic state formed through revolution a century before its neighbors, the Dutch occupied a unique position in the seventeenth century. The Dutch Revolt was a shared

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¹³ Adriaen van der Donck, Description of New Netherland, Diederik Willem Goedhuys, trans. Charles T. Gehring and William A. Starna, eds. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 73.
¹⁴ By 1650, New Netherland boasted a population of 1600 people. Trelease, 62.
experience around which the Dutch Republic (the northern provinces of the Netherlands sandwiched between the North Sea, France to the South, and the Holy Roman Empire to the East and North) coalesced and marked the beginning of the Golden Age. Throughout the revolution, the Dutch struggled to justify their newfound unity by creating pseudo-historical cultural links. Seventeenth-century scholars like Grotius used the Dutch Revolt to justify the existence of a unique Dutch identity long before the war. In these pseudo-historians’ eyes, the Revolt did not unify a previously disparate people: it reified an ancient cultural bond.

Simon Schama’s cultural history of the Golden Age examines how the Revolt catalyzed the formation of Dutch culture, and how the participants addressed this phenomenon. Schama’s study rejected scholarly generalizations about Dutch culture— "that the business of the Dutch was business, and that their politics, religion, even their art somehow obeyed that iron law." We cannot fall back upon simplistic stereotypes when studying an entire nation: the Dutch valued more than commerce. Bearing this sentiment in mind, my thesis will examine social distance in New Netherland through a cultural, rather than commercial, lens. Schama’s work illustrates the Dutch ambivalence towards wealth in the Golden Age: they feared their newfound wealth made them immoral and complacent. The New Netherlanders introduced a new ambiguity to the already amorphous sense of Dutch identity: the act of generating that wealth would chip away at the image of the modest, hardworking, thrifty Dutchman that Grotius and his colleagues constructed during the Revolt.

The most obvious rallying point for that identity was anti-Spanish sentiment: it is no coincidence that the month after the Twelve Years’ Truce was signed – at the time a

15 The Northern provinces more or less reflect the modern borders of the Netherlands, whereas the Southern provinces, which by and large remained loyal to the Spanish comprise modern-day Belgium. See Appendix B, Figure 1.
still very uncertain peace — the East India Company commissioned Henry Hudson’s search for the Northeastern passage. This (unintentional) Dutch-sponsored foray into the New Word was predicated on damaging Spain’s imperial hegemony. In fact, propagandists constructed the Revolt itself in terms of America. Benjamin Schmidt’s *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570-1670* examines Dutch print and visual culture’s portrayals of Dutch achievements there. According to Schmidt, Dutch treatment of native peoples dominated the discourse concerning trade in the Americas. These writers found common cause with the Amerindians, particularly of Brazil through the shared experience of Spanish oppression. The Dutch alternately cast themselves as defenseless Indians and as their protectors: oppressed by the Spanish, yet able to defend themselves, they imagined a mutually beneficial relationship with the “poor Indians.”¹⁷ The colonists must have been aware of this discourse when they emigrated to New Netherland.

The first colonists arrived in 1624 under the auspices of the WIC, which had been established in 1621, at the conclusion of the Twelve Years’ Truce. The first free settlers were French-speaking Walloons who had been denied permission to live in New England. The families lived alongside Company employees and soldiers, who were usually single men. Given the colony’s position between Virginia and Massachusetts, the Directors chose to scatter the colonists across New Netherland (located between the thirty-eighth and forty-second parallel, according to Van der Donck) in order to deflect British claims of ownership.¹⁸ The settlers were divided between the southern tip of Manhattan — dubbed New Amsterdam — Long Island, New Jersey, the northern town of Beverwijck (now Albany), and eventually the site of Hartford, Connecticut, as well as parts of

¹⁸ Coordinates given by Van der Donck, 1.
Pennsylvania. As a result of the low numbers and dispersal of the settlements and trading posts, New Netherland was never densely populated by Europeans. These settlers did not create communities on virgin soil: they had to acquire the land and coexist with the neighboring Indian nations of the region.

The beaver peltries trade spurred these relationships. WIC employees were bound to promote the Company’s interests and preserve its trade monopoly. However, the employees’ meager pay, combined with the WIC’s inability to provide for New Netherland (a thread that would continue throughout the colony’s history) encouraged a lucrative black-market trade between individual employees, free settlers, private merchants, and Indians. The illegal sale of firearms to Indians would constantly threaten the colony’s safety.

Realizing the potential wealth to be had, certain members of the WIC’s own Board of Directors (the Heeren XIX) argued to open up the trade to private investors. In 1629, these directors established patroonships, fiefs of land controlled by the individual patroon that was a legally separate entity from the Company’s holdings. The only patroonship that lasted more than a few years was Kiliaen Van Rensselaer’s Rensselaerswyck, near Albany. Competition between the patroonship and the Company’s holdings in New Netherland would strain the colony’s resources.

The colony’s sparse population would also contribute to its weakness: the scattered Dutch towns were surrounded by wilderness and Native peoples. Though the Company advocated a non-interventionist policy, the colonists eventually became entangled in the complex web of Native diplomatic relations. To the south, in New Jersey, what is now New York City, and up through the Hudson River valley, the Dutch traded with over a dozen tribes speaking Algonquian-based languages (many of which would

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19 See Appendix A, Figure 2.
not have recognized themselves as belonging to a unique, cultural unit.) These peoples were beset upon from the north, by the Mohawks, one of the five nations in the Haudenosaunee league. When the Dutch realized that the Mohawks had better access to furs, they began to rely on the Mohawks for trade.

At times, violence replaced diplomacy. It was not uncommon for colonists to attack Indians in the woods, relieve them of the goods they would have traded in town, and sell them to their fellow colonists for a pretty penny. Similarly, outlying Dutch settlements were vulnerable to Indian violence. This conflict erupted on a mass scale in 1643, when then-governor William Kieft attacked neighboring Raritan, Weckquaesgeek, and Tappan settlements under flimsy pretexts, demanding tribute payments from the neighboring peoples for their “protection.” The war was widely opposed by the colonists, and prompted Van der Donck to write the Description. The region would be rocked by two more wars (see Appendix B.) The devastating consequences of the last war, the Esopus Wars, motivated the Mohawks to usher in the English invasion in 1664, transforming New Netherland into New York.

Our Guides

Thanks to the vicissitudes of history, we have little descriptive documentation of New Netherland. However, just as Henry Hudson employed upon Native informants to guide him upriver, I, too, have relied upon guides from an unfamiliar cultural context, who spoke an alien language. Adriaen Van der Donck and Jasper Danckaerts have taught me much about the daily lives of New Netherlanders, and their relationship with the neighboring Indians.

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20 See Appendix A, figure 2. “Algonquian” is the word applied to a group of languages that share a common base, just as the romance languages are descended from Latin. It does not connote a cultural group, though it is sometimes used that way. Many of these tribes now self-identify as Lenape.
21 Commonly known as the “Iroquois”, the Haudenosaunee consider the term pejorative. The Tuscarora became the league’s sixth nation in 1722.
22 For more details about these events, see Appendix B, Trelease, Merwick, and Shorto.
Between Kieft’s disastrous war and the allegedly tightfisted style of his successor, Peter Stuyvesant, New Netherland was in poor shape. In 1649, Adriaen Van der Donck, a promising young lawyer, returned to Amsterdam to petition the States General to assume control of the colony. He arrived in New Netherland in 1641, fresh from the University of Leiden as the newly appointed *schout* for the *patroonship* of Rensselaerswyck (near present-day Albany).23 Because of his time in the northern part of the colony, most of the Native people he interacted with must have been Mohawk Indians. He became involved with politics in New Amsterdam and moved there in 1648. He quickly positioned himself in opposition to Stuyvesant, and was thus one of three men selected by the leading men of the colony to protest the Company's rule. His petition, *Remonstrance of New Netherland*, inspired hundreds of people to request the Company for passage to New Netherland.24 However, Stuyvesant's supporters in the Fatherland successfully thwarted Van der Donck's machinations. Forbidden from returning to his family in New Netherland, Van der Donck died in Amsterdam shortly after the publication of the pro-colonial *Description of New Netherland*, which sought to spur the colony's growth, in 1655.

The journal of Jasper Danckaerts, written in 1679, recounts the Labadist priest's travels in the colony ten years after its capture by the British. Danckaerts and his companion, Peter Sluyter, traveled through the former Dutch colony, New England, and Maryland in search of land in which to establish a community for their own Protestant sect. Danckaerts expresses revulsion towards the New Netherlanders' behavior and engages in a number of conversations with Native guides, the most striking of which is an account of Hilletie Van Slyck, a woman born of a Dutch father and Mohawk mother who tried to join her father’s community. Danckaerts displays “fanatical self-satisfaction” in

23 The *schout* served as the sheriff and attorney general for Dutch towns. The English colonists adapted this uniquely Dutch position to their judicial structure in New York.

his interactions with colonists and Indians, judging all comers by his rigorous moral standards. These conversations offer revealing details about the relationship between the Dutch and the Indians. Danckaerts' observations about the colonists are suggestive of how much the New Netherlanders diverged from the Fatherland. The pair returned to Maryland in 1683 to establish their community there. Sluyter took charge, and Danckaerts attempted to establish an abortive Labadist community in Surinam. He died in the Netherlands between 1702 and 1704, after publishing a book of psalms, and preparing an unpublished biblical exegesis. The journal exists in manuscript form; it does not appear to have been published during Danckaerts' lifetime.

I will begin by discussing the historical context of the Eighty Years’ War and how it created the fiction of an ancient Dutch tradition that connected the seven rebel Provinces. The anti-Spanish rhetoric produced during the war created another fiction: that, as enemies of the Spanish, Indians in the New World were the natural allies of the Dutch. Rebel propagandists also defined Dutch identity in opposition to Spanish characteristics. This opposition resulted in a surprising trope: the Dutch pamphleteers cast themselves as another peoples famously subjugated by the Spanish – Indians. The rhetoric the Dutch pamphleteers employed to define Dutch identity would be carried across the Atlantic to New Netherland, where it would become confused.

In the next section, we will sail to New Netherland. We will witness the creation of the social distance the colonists constructed between themselves and the Native peoples with whom they traded and worked alongside day in and day out. We will see that this distance operated on three layers: the idealized relationship between the two groups, based on mutually defined contracts; standards of Dutch morality with regard to

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26 Ibid., xxviii.
mistreatment of Indians; and sexual interaction. In every aspect, the colonists fell short of what their leaders and outside critics expected of them. Moreover, the colonists displayed a distinct cultural drift away from the Dutch identity they had struggled so hard to create. Therefore, the social distance between the Dutch and the Indians was both a mechanism of creating Dutch identity, and a contribution towards its disintegration in the New World.

Finally, the last section explores the story of Hilletie and Jacques Van Slyck, siblings born of a Dutch father and Mohawk mother. The siblings tested the limits of Dutch attitudes towards Indians. They represented the physical manifestation of the textual critiques of the colonists and their failure to maintain their Dutch identity. As we shall see, though they were recognized as Dutch, their community would always treat them as Indians. Though the siblings had attempted to melt into Dutch society, the colonists themselves prevented this process, evidence that they were committed to keeping the Dutch nature of the colony unadulterated.
I. (SELF) DISCOVERY

The Dutch Genesis

In the beginning, there was Batavia. Or Gallia Belgica, Germania inferior, or Nederland, depending on who was writing.\textsuperscript{27} In fact, there was no common nomenclature for the Netherlands until the Dutch Revolt began in 1568 (see Figure 2, Appendix A.)\textsuperscript{28} When Charles V incorporated the Low Countries into his empire, he was faced with a "hopscotch" of principalities whose relationships with each other were characterized by centuries of intermittent conflict strengthened by a strong sense of local identity.\textsuperscript{29} Under Habsburg rule, the provinces prospered. Antwerp became an important trade entrepôt, establishing the cosmopolitan image of the Dutch that would become prevalent in the seventeenth century. Dutch trade spread wealth throughout the Hapsburg empire, and the lowlanders could point to the empire's conquests in the New World as their own.\textsuperscript{30}

Yet the rise of prosperity in the lowlands was not enough to assuage the perceived injustices of Hapsburg rule: the Spanish Inquisition laid a heavy hand on the Protestant-leaning northern provinces (at least, according to revolutionary pamphleteers.)\textsuperscript{31} To make matters worse, Charles V attempted to centralize his empire by appointing his own officers to oversee the complicated system of dikes that protected the Netherlands and imposed taxes for the systems' upkeep. But each town paid for its own section of the dike network, and its power rested upon the maintenance of these dikes by elected officials.

\textsuperscript{27} These terms were used well into the sixteenth century. Peter Arnade and Henk van Nierop, "The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt," \textit{Journal of Early Modern History} 11 (2007): 253. The Northern Provinces — those that first signed the Union of Utrecht and broke away from the Empire, are Friesland, Drenthe, Overijssel, Gueeders, Zeeland, and, of course, Holland. The Southern provinces of Artois and Hainaut signed the Union of Arras (discussed later) and remained loyal to the Hapsburgs. Brabant, Flanders, and Limbourg remained contested throughout the course of the war.

\textsuperscript{28} See Appendix B. Most historians disagree as to the true beginning of the Revolt. I have chosen the beginning of the Eighty Years' War as the start date.


\textsuperscript{30} Schmidt, 24.

\textsuperscript{31} The Northern Provinces — those that first signed the Union of Utrecht and broke away from the Empire, are Friesland, Drenthe, Overijssel, Gueeders, Zeeland, and, of course, Holland. The Southern provinces of Artois and Hainaut signed the Union of Arras (discussed later) and remained loyal to the Hapsburgs. Brabant, Flanders, and Limbourg remained contested throughout the course of the war.
For Charles to appoint his own men, courtly officials who allegedly knew nothing about the office they had received — “the slippers and the tabards,” as one dike master sneered — over those who had been chosen by the people, completely discounted the traditional Dutch political structure.\(^{32}\) From the Northern provinces’ point of view, the imperial administration overstepped its bounds. In the minds of the rebels, the Northern provinces were simply asserting their traditional right to self-sovereignty: they were not interested in starting a revolution.\(^{33}\)

Paradoxically, the provinces unified around the preservation of autonomy. Or, as Schama observes, “they had come into being as a nation expressly to avoid becoming a state” — that is, rather than allowing themselves to lose their self-direction, the Dutch had to create a unity that had never existed in the first place.\(^{34}\) Eighty-six years of nominal unity under Hapsburg rule may have brought the Provinces closer to together, but not by much. When William of Orange declared rebellion in 1568, the provinces had to overcome longstanding rivalries. William had to combat the distrust between the maritime-oriented provinces, which led the Revolt and stood to profit greatly from independence, and the inland, agricultural provinces, which became the inevitable buffer zone in the fight against an empire with a superior army and weak navy.\(^{35}\) The Dutch founders had to create unity while deferring to regionalism.\(^{36}\) To protect their separate rights, the autonomous Northern provinces melted into the United Provinces.

The United Provinces expended a good deal of energy on “liberating” the South. The regions split along religious lines. The Northern Provinces of Zeeland and Holland led the initial rebellion: once it became evident that they could hold off the Spanish army

\(^{34}\) Schama, 62.
\(^{36}\) Price observes that the States General was only functional *because* of its attempt to balance regional needs with national goals. *The Dutch Republic*, 22.
the most powerful in the world — other towns and Provinces committed to the Revolt. Because the movement had been championed by Protestant leaders the Revolt took on a distinctly Protestant, tone. But Philip, as the protector of the Catholic faith, could not accommodate a Protestant minority in his empire. Meanwhile, the rebels would not accept Philip’s rule: as such, their position necessitated full independence from the Empire. The conservative, Catholic Southern nobility were unwilling to relinquish their power to the States General as their counterparts in the North had. In 1579, the Southern Provinces expressed their loyalty to Phillip and signed the Treaty of Arras. The Northern Provinces, and the Southern towns of Brabant and Flanders signed the Union of Utrecht shortly thereafter, committing themselves not only to continued war against Spain, but the creation of a new, independent state.

Though the Revolt championed the cause of Protestantism at the height of the Reformation, religion did not unify the Northern Provinces. The Dutch were less unified by Protestantism than by antipathy towards the Catholic Church that ranged “from a corrosive popular anticlericalism to a fastidious disdain among Erasmian intellectuals for its failure to live up to its own ideals.” After independence was won, Dutch leaders did not throw their support behind the Dutch Reformed Church: the Church often butted heads with local magistrates, who were more interested in preserving harmony than imposing the Church’s normative prescriptions. Though the Eighty Years’ War occurred at the apex of the Reformation, the promotion of Protestantism was not the motivating factor for the majority of Dutch rebels.

37 Ibid., 4.
38 Ibid., 8.
39 Ibid., 9.
41 Price, *Dutch Republic*, 91.
Sidestepping the prescription of religious unity, the rebel leaders had to create another rallying point. Propagandists, in an effort to persuade the Southern provinces to join their cause, claimed an ancient cultural unity amongst the provinces. Johan Junius de Jonge, the governor of Veere in the province of Zeeland, argued for these ties in 1574:

For who does not know that the provinces of these Netherlands have always derived the greatest advantage from being united with each other? Had this union not been the origin of the old custom they have always observed, of assembling towns and provinces for the meeting of the archers and crossbowmen and bearers of other old-fashioned arms, which they call the landjuweel? Why else have the towns and provinces always met for public repasts and plays by order of the authorities unless it were to demonstrate the great unity of these provinces, as Greece showed her unity in the meeting of the Olympic Games?

According to this reasoning, the provinces had been linked since time immemorial; custom bound them together, and this custom was enough to justify the creation of a nation. Ultimately, the propagandists created a fictitious ancient bond to forge a new, Dutch identity.

But the Southerners remained unconvinced. When it became obvious that the North could not persuade the Southern provinces to join them either by pen or sword, the Dutch created new strategies and tropes of self-identification. Humanist scholars like Grotius turned to the classics for the basis of the new Netherlands identity. Grotius and others rejected the grab-bag of folktales that had passed as regional history in the Middle Ages and concentrated on Roman historians like Tacitus, Pliny, and Strabo. They were particularly interested in the Batavians, a barbarian tribe who had managed to fend off Roman incursions.

Grotius and his colleagues projected their definition of Dutch identity into the past. According to Grotius’ sources, the Batavians had fought so fiercely for their independence that Rome had to declare a truce: the Batavians could retain their

42 Price and others ascribe Dutch tolerance to the desire to avoid even more internecine bloodshed. Price, Dutch Society, 130.
44 Quoted in Arnade and Nierop, 253.
45 Schama, 76; op. cit., 158.
independence and were exempt from paying tribute to Rome. The Dutch historians worked strenuously to distinguish the Batavians from the neighboring Belgae, Gauls, and Frisians — all of whom had lived within the geographical confines of the newly United Provinces, as evidenced by the multitude of place names listed at the beginning of this chapter — to prove that the Dutch had always been independent, and that it was their destiny to remain so.

The characteristics Grotius found amongst the Batavians, unsurprisingly, reflected the common conception of the Dutch national character: the Batavii (and thus their descendants) were “hardy, frugal, industrious, pious, brave, hospitable (if a trifle bibulous) and addicted to cleanliness and liberty.” Grotius claimed a direct connection between contemporary social institutions and the ancients': the Batavians governed themselves by democratic councils, and Batavian women “retained possession of their marriage portion after the nuptials, and, as widows, had free disposition,” a practice unique to the Dutch. In ascribing quintessentially Dutch characteristics to these ancient peoples, Grotius mapped his own ideals for the Dutch future onto the past.

However, Grotius’ readers were as well-versed in the classics as he. Even if the supposed character traits of the Batavians aligned with the contemporary consensus of the Dutch character, Grotius’ attempt at building a national identity fell flat. After all, the Batavians were pagans, and even if they were supposedly independent, the same ancients whom Grotius cited documented Batavian assistance in Roman battles — they had been forced to do Rome’s dirty work. These historical “truths” did not gel with the “group portrait” of the Dutch as “indomitable and pious folk.” Grotius explained these points away: the Batavians were the first to convert to Christianity in the region, so they were innately attuned to Christianity, and they fought alongside Rome as allies, not subjects.

46 Ibid., 78.
47 Ibid., 79.
The artificiality of the humanists' historical creation, what Schama terms an “extended exercise in verisimilitude” was patently clear to any well-read person. Even if Dutchmen themselves did not point out the mendacity of these national historiographies, others noticed. Writing almost sixty years after Grotius’ Liber de Antiquitate Republicae Batavorum, the English traveler Owen Feltham wrote a rather unflattering account of the Netherlands. After sniffing at the sparse Dutch aesthetic, Feltham turns to Dutch architecture. The Dutchman’s home resembled a spurious castle, Feltham observed, and he prominently displayed his coat of arms:

it may be, that is to shew you his Pedigree, for though his Ancestors were never known, their Arms are there [over the doorway]; which in spight of Heraldry, shal bear their Atchievment with a Helmet for a Baron at least Marry the Field perhaps shall be charged with three baskets, to shew what trade his father was. Executions are Plentifull as Gentry is scarce.48

Feltham’s stinging satire states what the Dutch could not afford to: in spite of their arguments that the Revolt was not, in fact, a revolution, the Dutch had created a brand new country, and no amount of historical skullduggery could hide that fact.49

Compared to other Protestant-oriented uprisings at the time, the Revolt achieved something entirely new. The Provinces’ eastern neighbors in Germany were also consolidated under Hapsburg rule. The Revolution of 1525 began a long conflict in the German principalities between Catholics and Protestants that would ultimately contest Hapsburg authority. In the end, these duchies won religious autonomy, but they were still beholden to the Hapsburgs.50 Similarly, the Protestant uprising to the Provinces’ South, in France, resulted in the 1598 Edict of Nantes, which allowed limited toleration for Protestants.51 In both instances, the Protestant factions did not sever themselves from the

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49 Price, The Dutch Republic, 171.
50 Wayne Te Break, Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500-1700, (Berekly, CA, 1998), 49.
51 Ibid., 67.
Catholic authorities who oppressed them. But the Dutch Revolt resulted in a new, independent, Protestant state, resulting in a sense of ambiguity about the nation's future.

Though the Revolt ultimately created a nation where there had been none before, the Dutch of the late seventeenth clung to conservatism. As Price observes,

> Whether in politics, religion or literature change was seen as corruption or decay: Spanish rule had been criticised in terms of the Batavian constitution [a document that supposedly unified the Batavian tribes], protestants [sic] called for a return to the early church, and writers were called upon to emulate the example of ancient writers.\(^{52}\)

The Dutch had to make a place for themselves amongst the more established European nations. Although they felt the need to create a uniquely Dutch culture, they also had to remain within European norms. Though Dutch novelists wrote in (and created) the Dutch vernacular, they had to adhere to traditional forms. In an attempt to establish the new Republic – the only one in Europe – the Dutch cited ancient Batavian political structures. During the creation of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Dutch relied heavily upon the structure of the early Catholic Church. As Price observes, “too distinctive a culture would be necessarily inferior” – Feltham’s imperious satire realizes these fears.\(^{53}\) The Revolt paradoxically resulted in a union of provinces that defended their autonomy. It also created a national character that defined itself through clinging to fictitious ancient traditions.

Perhaps recognizing this weakness, some propagandists placed the new, fragile identity of the independent Northern Dutchman in opposition to that of the Hispanicized Southerner.\(^{54}\) The Revolt brought the already extant discourse on Hispanicized Dutchers to new polemic heights. For the Northern propagandists, “the demonising of some Dutchers was used to retain the notion that, fundamentally, all other Dutchers formed one community.”\(^{55}\) If the Southerners would not join their cause, it

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 135.
\(^{53}\) Price, *Dutch Republic*, 135; 130.
\(^{54}\) Pollmann, 130.
\(^{55}\) Ibid., 258.
must be because they had been corrupted by the Spanish. One 1602 poem exhorted the Southern cities of Antwerp and Brussels,

Do you want to remain in slavery for ever
To a people barbaric, ugly, deformed and tanned,
who throughout the world commit their tyranny?
...Follow the noble Batavians, don’t let yourself be dishonoured
By the domination of such an evil monster. 56

The poet precedes Grotius’ history of the Batavians by eight years. He anticipates Grotius’ argument of Batavian descent, and uses the tribes’ “noble” legacy to inspire the Southerners. He urges the Southerners to reject the tyrannical, “barbaric” “monsters” who hold them in “slavery.” The poet, then, builds the image of the true Dutchman in negative terms: where the Spanish are tyrants, the Dutch value self-sovereignty; rather than barbaric, they are “noble.” I believe the “tanned” descriptor suggests sexual intermingling with Moors (and possibly Indians): the Dutch, on the other hand, were unadulterated by such external and decidedly un-Christian influences. The New Netherlanders will complicate this construction.

Jacob Viverius, in his popular *Mirror of Spanish Tyranny* (1601) makes the sexual connection more explicit. “Yes, kiss your Spanish swain,” he writes, “and get the Spanish disease.” Viverius here referred to venereal disease, though this turn of phrase is striking: Viverius links Hispanicization to disease and impurity. Viverius conflated sexual intimacy with political allegiance – ultimately, disloyalty to the Dutch cause. By casting the Southerners as whores kissing their “Spanish swain,” Viverius impugns their collective character: whatever the realities of the Spanish occupation in the South, that the Southerners would welcome their overlords with open arms and open legs suggests a fundamental flaw in the South’s moral character. In this time of political crisis, good Dutchmen – which, as we have seen was a tenuous category at best – should maintain

56 Quoted in Ibid., 256.
57 Quoted in Ibid., 257.
their own political, cultural, and “racial” identity.\(^{58}\) This distaste for mixing would be exported to New Netherland.

**Revelation of the New World**

It is no coincidence that the two screeds against Hispanicization would refer to the New World — the “tyranny” committed “throughout the world” in the first, and the “Spanish disease” in the second referred to the Spanish conquest.\(^{59}\) One of the major tropes throughout the revolutionary propaganda was the Spanish misrule of its empire, particularly in the New World.\(^{60}\) Dutch writers obsessively chronicled the plight of the Indians: if the Spanish behavior in the Indies was any indicator, so the argument went, the Dutch could expect no better treatment if they submitted to Spanish rule. Controlling the dikes was simply the first step. Viverius did not use the word “slavery” casually—he invoked the image of the benighted, enslaved Indian to highlight the travails of the Dutch. The figure of the Indian served as a both a propaganda tool and a sounding board for constructions of Dutch identity.

As the Revolt progressed, propagandists rallied around the cause of the Indians. The Dutch only knew the Indian through print, through the lusciously exoticized adventure tales of the Spanish conquistadors, and the critical accounts of Spanish colonialism from missionaries like Bartoleme Las Casas, the French Huguenot Nicolas Le Challeux, and the Italian footsoldier Girolama Benzoni, who served under the Spanish colonial administration.\(^{61}\) In short, the Dutch amplified the Spanish Black Legend to justify their independence. The lurid accounts of Indian mistreatment in the New World

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\(^{58}\) Scholars agree that “race” as we conceive of it did not exist until the nineteenth century. For just one of many examples, see Nicholas Hudson, “From ‘Nation’ to ‘Race’: The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought,” *Eighteenth Century Studies* 29,3: 247-264. Chaplin argues that American colonialism was a critical factor of creating race (Joyce Chaplin, “Race,” in *The British Atlantic World, 1600-1800*, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York, Palgrave McMillian, 2002), 154-174).

\(^{59}\) Syphilis came to Europe after the Conquista.

\(^{60}\) See Schmidt for an extensive analysis of this literature. The following argument follows Schmidt closely.

\(^{61}\) Schmidt, 44-54.
mirrored Spanish atrocities on the home front.\(^{62}\) If the Dutch did not throw off the yoke of Spanish oppression, the pamphleteers warned, they could expect the same treatment from the Spanish.

In attempting to make sense of their allies, the Dutch "drew" the Indians into their "hazy horizons of expectations."\(^{63}\) Eschewing the former trend of painting the Indian as a frightening warrior, the Dutch tried to "domesticate" him by portraying the figure as gentle and sleepy.\(^{64}\) Dutch propagandists faced the dual project of constructing an Indian and Dutch identity: "the rebels’ projection of the New World corresponded to broader efforts to articulate a ‘Dutch’ world: to shape a distinctly Dutch identity at the very moment that such a coherent, national construct seemed most in doubt."\(^{65}\) These propagandists borrowed liberally from Peter Martyr’s 1510 account of the Spanish colonies, De orbo novis – initially printed, of course, in the Provinces. Martyr, a Milanese scholar who critiqued Spanish colonization though he was under their employ, depicted Indians as innocents, remnants of the lost Grecian Golden Age, rather than primitives. This metaphor cast the Spaniards as villains, ruthlessly destroying the Native idylls for the sake of profit.\(^{66}\) Seventy years later, the propagandists would seize upon Martyr’s image and fit it to their purposes.

Once the Dutch began making contact with the Indians, they sang their newfound allies’ praises. Godefridus Udemans, whose sermons were published throughout the 1640s, the last decade of the war, was a preacher in the small Zeeland town of Zierikzee. He used the figure of the Indian as a positive role model for the Dutch. Udemans admired their “cities, villages, splendid dwellings, manner of governance, incalculable multitude

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 120.
\(^{63}\) Merwick, 48.
\(^{64}\) Schmidt, xxii, 123-138.
\(^{65}\) Ibid., 75.
\(^{66}\) Ibid., 18.
of peoples, and so forth." His approval of Native "burgerlijcke deughden" (civic virtue) suggests his own ideal vision of the United Provinces projected onto Native peoples: an orderly government in a densely populated land of urban centers. For Udemans, one of the most admirable qualities of the Indians was the love of their fatherland and their unwillingness to leave it, as opposed to the wealthy children of merchants who prospered from the Revolt. They "spend so much time in their peregrinations...that they...forget their own Fatherland or begin to disdain it." Udemans juxtaposed the image of the simple, conservative, and uncorrupt Indian who lived amongst abundant natural riches to the extravagant merchant class. The Dutch had fallen short of their own ideals: Udemans urged his audience to turn to the Indians for moral guidance.

Yet the military alliance with indigenous Americans (whom the Dutch saw as a single unit) was more pressing, and more obvious, in New Holland (Brazil.) There, the Dutch and Tupinamba fought together to oust the Portuguese from the colony. New Netherland, by contrast, was not threatened by the Spanish, nor, after the Twelve Years' Truce, was it likely to be (see Appendix B.) To what greater purpose, then, did the New Netherlanders contribute? Whom were they defending? Were they betraying Patria by leaving it? How did the use of Indians in the Dutch self-fashioning project complicate the colonists' self-perception once they interacted with Indians in the flesh? Were their children, born in the New World, truly Dutch? If they developed their own customs, could they even be considered European? The New Netherlanders existed in a perpetual cloud of ambiguity. This ambiguity would have a profound effect on their relations with the Indians.

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67 Quoted in ibid., xvii.
68 Quoted in ibid.
69 Ibid., 262-263.
70 The WIC invaded the Portuguese colony in 1630.
II. TRADITIONS AND ENCOUNTERS

Though safer and more predictable than a trip to the East Indies, the voyage to New Netherland was certainly no pleasure jaunt. Leaving from Amsterdam, the voyage usually took two to three months. Travelers rented cabins by the day, but for most people, the cost made it a luxury. The majority of travelers must have traveled beneath the decks, tossed amongst their trunks, nostrils filled with the reek of livestock housed nearby. Merchants’ records indicate that transatlantic travel was fairly routine. As with air travel today, of course, that knowledge did not necessarily assuage the uncomfortable colonists’ fears. Physically uncomfortable, the trip must have taken an emotional toll as the settlers worried about their futures: would they be able to make a go of it? If they were contracted laborers, would their masters be fair or capricious? Would they die, friendless and far from home on a distant shore? If so, would it be by accident, disease, or by the hand of an Indian?

The colonists’ mixture of optimism and apprehension must have been compounded by the ambiguity of New Netherland’s mission. If the Dutch had a supposedly natural alliance with the Indians, as the Revolutionary pamphleteers argued, then New Netherland had no strategic value: opposing the Spanish was foundational to the fledgling Dutch identity, and the New Netherlanders must have been at a loss – they had no Spanish to fight. Its only strategic value was as a supplier to New Holland (Brazil), where WIC and Tupinamba soldiers united to oust the Portuguese. Schmidt observes that even the Dutch propaganda machine was at a loss when it came to New Netherland: whereas New Holland was the site of “classical, epic” military triumphs and heroism, its

72 Ibid., 45.
smaller and poorly-funded cousin to the North was merely illustrated as a scriptural land of plenty. The ambiguity surrounding the rationale for New Netherland, I believe, both contributed to and was a product of the social distance between the Dutch and the Indians. The Dutch-Indian encounter and its ramifications for Dutch identity manifested itself in a number of different ways, which I present here as three layers of encounter: the conceptual framework upon which New Netherland was built, moralizing against cultural degeneration, and reactions to Dutch-Indian sexual contact.

Before we examine the social distance between the New Netherlanders and Indians, we will first take a glance at the ways non-Dutch groups were incorporated into the colony. We will then examine the nature of Dutch-Indian social distance in the colony.

How Dutch Were the Dutch?

An ocean and a timezone away, we can imagine a colonist gazing over the walls of Fort Amsterdam, wondering about his friends and family in patria, if they missed him, how they were getting along without him. Heaving a sigh as he turns his gaze inland, wondering how any sense of communal village life could be recreated in the tiny seaside town of strangers. Referring to African slaves and European colonists alike, Mintz and Price observe that the transatlantic voyage was life-altering:

no group, no matter how well-equipped or how free to choose, can transfer its way of life and the accompanying beliefs and values intact from one locale to another. The conditions of transfer, as well as the characteristics of the host setting...will inevitably limit the variety and strength of effective transfers.

As Jacobs illustrates in his intensive study, the Dutch colonists practiced Dutch traditions and transmitted cultural norms as much as they were able. But the colonists also had to

74 Schmidt, 259.
75 Certainly, there are more points of contact and ways to articulate them than those presented here.
76 Adriaen Van der Donck accurately calculated a six-hour time difference between the colony and the Netherlands. Jacobs, 14.
invent cultural institutions that were unique to the colony: they would have to incorporate
to incorporate African slaves and Indians into their society.\textsuperscript{78} Jacobs' demonstration of Dutch cultural
continuity shows us just how strong the settlers' commitment to that continuity was —
whether or not they had been born in the United Provinces.

The first free settlers of the colony were French-speaking Walloons who had fled
from the Southern Provinces. Whereas most of the colonial officials hailed from the
newly United Provinces, the record shows us that the majority of the WIC's low-level
employees (such as farm hands) had actually immigrated to the United Provinces from
elsewhere.\textsuperscript{79} Cohen's demography reveals that only 50.8\% of settlers were from the
United Provinces, followed by 18\% from Germany, and 7\% from the Spanish
Netherlands. The remaining settlers hailed from other Scandinavian countries.\textsuperscript{80} Yet the
“polyglot” colony evinced a strong, Dutch cultural influence: from political structures,
holidays, the celebration of important life events, architecture, even to agricultural
methods, the colonists clung to Dutch practices as much as was applicable.\textsuperscript{81} There are
very few instances of discord between these ethnic groups in the colony, which leads me
to assume that those settlers who were not from the United Provinces conformed to Dutch
practices, and those who \textit{were} native Netherlanders accepted these foreigners.

The Directors recognized the value of welcoming non-Dutch settlers. After
Stuyvesant's 1653 attack on the Swedish colony at what is now Wilmington, Delaware,
the Directors encouraged Stuyvesant to welcome the Swedes into the colony: “the influx

\textsuperscript{78} Though it thrived in the Indies, slavery was prohibited in the United Provinces. See Jacobs, 380 – 388.
For the slave experience in New Amsterdam, see Sivertsen, 139-143.
\textsuperscript{79} Price notes this trend for emigration to the East Indies, \textit{Dutch Society}, 94. See Cohen and Rink for New
Netherland.
\textsuperscript{80} David Steven Cohen, “How Dutch Were the Dutch of New Netherland?,” \textit{New York History} 62 (1981):
43-60.
\textsuperscript{81} See Oliver Rink, “The People of New Netherland: Notes on Non-English Immigration to New York in the
Goodfriend argues that, like the Indians, English settlers were permitted to “coexist” in the colony but
maintained a distinct “social distance.” Joyce D. Goodfriend, “Foreigners in a Dutch Colonial City,” \textit{New
York History} Fall 2009: 241-269.
of free people should not be impeded...to the extent of our power we protect and guard all, who are willing and have submitted to our laws and customs, like our inhabitants [already in the colony].” Adriaen van der Donck welcomed this opportunity for growth. According to his character, the Dutch Patriot, in the dialogue that concludes the Description, “the Dutch have compassionate natures and regard foreigners virtually as native citizens...[anyone] who is prepared to adapt, can always get off to a good start here [in the Netherlands.]” The Patriot realizes that sending these foreigners off to New Netherland would not only benefit the colony, but patria as well: The Netherlands “should actually gain people [citizens] because those living in New Netherland or similar colonies turn into Hollanders as effectively as those from abroad who become citizens here always remain loyal to us.” Both the Directors and Van der Donck conceived of the Dutch as open, tolerant, and “compassionate” to all comers, providing their willingness to melt into Dutch culture. But this compassion, as we will see in the case of Hilletie and Jacques Van Slyck, the Dutch-Mohawk siblings, would not be extended to Indians or people of Indian descent.

These assertions of tolerance, however, masked the ambivalence in Dutch society towards assimilating immigrants. Van der Donck is speaking to the social anxiety caused by immigration to the newly prosperous urban centers of the United Provinces. The influx of wealthy immigrants from the Southern Provinces, as well as poorer folk from the surrounding region, strained the Dutch cultural project at its onset. The Southerners were regarded with suspicion, lest they lapse and become loyal to the Spanish. Only

83 Van der Donck, 129. Comment in brackets is Gehring’s.
supporters of the Revolt could truly love patria and its culture.\textsuperscript{85} Van der Donck’s dialogue is actually a foreign policy proposal: these new immigrants could reinforce the meager numbers in New Netherland and rid the nation of unemployed soldiers and the troublesome refugee population left over from the conclusion of the war. They would then be incorporated into Dutch culture and become loyal to the state. In spite of the obvious Dutch skittishness towards melting into other cultures, which we have seen with regards to Hispanicization and will see with the Indians, they welcomed those who would melt into Dutch culture. Considering that many New York place-names bear the names of prominent non-Dutch Republican New Netherlanders, the non-Dutch colonists seem to have lived up to Van der Donck’s word.\textsuperscript{86}

But some groups would always be on the margins. The Jews of New Amsterdam could not open shop, nor could they purchase great burgher rights, which would have given them significant standing in the community.\textsuperscript{87} Similarly, blacks could purchase their own freedom, but their movement within colonial Dutch society was severely limited.\textsuperscript{88} Yet both Africans’ and Jews’ testimonies were accepted into court. In the early modern period, crimes were only punished by the court when they disrupted public order. Across Europe, the prosecution of crime was a communal affair – to bear witness was to uphold community standards. The word of a Jew, slave, or African freedman was held as equally valid as a Dutchman’s, even though they were not totally accepted into colonial society.\textsuperscript{89} On the other hand, Indians could not give testimony in court, which leads

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 213.
\textsuperscript{86} Jonas Bronck, for whom The Bronx is named, was of Danish extraction. The town of Norman’s Kill is named for two Norwegian brothers (Cohen, 57). Rutger Jacobson, from Utrecht in South Holland, rose from a farmhand in Rensselaerswyck to a prominent merchant in Beverwijck and New Amsterdam. Many of the most prominent men of New Netherland hailed from these far-flung areas, as well (Cohen, 57-58).
\textsuperscript{87} Jacobs, 379.
\textsuperscript{88} Sivertsen, Jacobs, 380-388.
\textsuperscript{89} Jacobs, 387.
Jacobs to observe that they were forever on the periphery of colonial society. Even those close to the Indians were removed from this most important of community functions. One Jan Platneus’ testimony was considered invalid because he “committed adultery with wildinnen [Indian women].”

Whereas Van der Donck and the Directors portrayed the Dutch as liberal and tolerant, we see that this tolerance was not applied to certain groups in the colony. As we shall see, Indians were never fully embraced, even when they expressed a willingness to, in Van der Donck’s words, “adapt” to New Netherland society.

At Arm’s Length

The earliest accounts of the native New Yorkers depict them with an eye to their customs, their clothing, the natural resources around them and, of course, the materials they lacked. The detailed descriptions of their lifestyle could inspire the inventive merchant with a list of the goods they might buy. The Indians often repurposed the copper from kettles, a scarce resource in the Hudson valley, for arrowheads and ceremonial use. The kettle came to be of such importance that it became a burial object. But sometimes merchants missed the mark — Adriaen van Laer was disappointed to learn that red duffel cloth did not sell as well as other colors: the red scared away animals. The Native penchant for Dutch sweets forced Governor Peter Stuyvesant to pass an

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90 Ibid., 389; Trelease, 94. Even as the victims of crimes, an Indian could only bring a case to the Dutch courts if he or she were sponsored by two Europeans.
91 As quoted in Jacobs, 395.
93 Trelease, 49.
ordinance against selling anything with white flour in it to Indians — otherwise, there would be no bread for the colonists.94

In exchange for these goods, the Indians performed a number of services for the Dutch. In addition to providing beaver pelts, the neighboring Indians acted as guides, messengers, day laborers, journeymen, hunters, fishers, servant girls, and apprentices.95

Until the free settlers’ farms were functional, the Dutch were dependent upon the Indians’ goodwill for their survival. As evidence for social distance, Rothschild notes that there are no Indian artifacts in extant Dutch assemblages, possibly a sign that the Dutch had carefully avoided any appearance of absorbing Native cultures.96 One of the most difficult aspects of life to reconstruct for the archaeologist are interpersonal interactions: while it is true — and significant — that the Dutch did not adopt Native material culture, an assemblage of animal bones tells us nothing about who obtained the animals, where they were caught, and for what they were exchanged. The historical record picks up this slack: though the two groups interacted often, the Dutch kept their Indian trading partners at arm's length.

These tasks brought colonists and Indians into daily contact with each other, but in only one case that we know of did an actual friendship develop. Jasper Danckaerts, the Labadist minister, describes a dinner with an Indian (also dubbed Jasper) and the colonist family who hosted him. When he was a younger man, Jasper would bring fish to the family daily, during the “dear time” of the early days. “For this reason,” notes Jasper, “these people possess great affection for him and have given him the name of Jasper, and also my nitap, that is, my great friend.” This friendship blossomed, and Jasper “never

94 Marcus P. Meuwese, “‘For the Peace and Well-being of the Country’: Intercultural Mediators and Dutch-Indian Relations in New Netherland and Dutch Brazil 1600-1664,” (PhD diss., University of Notre-Dame, 2003), 326.

95 For information on apprentices, see Strong, The Algonquian Peoples, 267-287.

comes to the Manhatans without visiting them and eating with them, as he now did, as among his old friends.” When asked why he had been so dutiful, Jasper replied that he enjoyed doing good things for good people, and that “Maneto” had ordered him to do so. 97

Though it may be difficult not to see Jasper’s aid as opportunistic – as did his hosts, who pointedly observed that Jasper often got drunk during his forays into Manhattan – it is also worth considering his reasoning at face value: why is it so impossible to believe that Jasper genuinely felt compassion for the Dutch, who, during that “dear time” struggled mightily to eke out an existence? This episode is the only suggestion of a true friendship that we have on record. How bizarre, considering the frequency with which colonists and Indians saw each other.

Many of the interpersonal relationships between the Indians and colonists were based on trade. As Merwick notes, not all commercial relationships need to result in social interaction. 98 In fact, exploitation formed the basis of most of these relationships. The liquor trade vixed every governor who set foot in New Netherland. Jasper was but one of many who fell prey to opportunistic colonists. The next day, Jasper returned, explaining to Danckaerts that he had given away the fishing hooks gifted to him by the minister, as well as his stockings and shoes, to an English settler for rum. 99 Danckaerts scolded Jasper and reminded him to find God. According to Danckaerts, this form of exploitation was endemic in the colony. 100

In spite of the government’s efforts to prevent the liquor trade, the colonists were able to circumvent these orders: could anything but a genuine concern for the Indians’

97 Manitou, or Manitoba, means “spirit” or “Great Spirit” – a general term that sometimes also refers to personal guardian spirits. Danckaerts, 76.
98 Merwick, 60.
99 Danckaerts, 78-79.
100 Ibid., 79-80.
well-being motivate the colonists to treat the Indians more equitably? Danckaerts blames the colonists’ loose morals:

It makes me blush to call by that holy name those who live ten times worse than these most barbarous Indians and heathen, not only in the eyes of those who can discriminate, but according to the testimony of these poor Indians themselves.¹⁰¹

“Barbarous” and “heathen” as the Indians were, even they knew that the Dutch were not living up to the Christian standards they had established for themselves and expected the Indians to follow. The colonists acknowledged this moral failure, but did not seem especially bothered by it. As far as they were concerned, treating the Indians with trust, concern, and respect was not their problem.

The enterprising Adriaen Van der Donck realized that it should be. As he did with non-Dutch colonists, the schout advocated incorporating Indians into Dutch society. Firstly, the label wilden, or “uncivilized person,” for their seemingly lax social structures was unjust because

as the Christians, to set themselves apart, give foreign nations the names of Turks or Mamelukes or barbarians, since the term heathen is too general and little used abroad, they did not wish to include the American natives in that term either. Similarly, the terms black and white are customary among those who have business overseas, to distinguish the Negroes from our and similar nations, but neither of those names quite fitted the Americans, who tend toward the olive colored. Therefore our people, at the spur of the moment rather than with forethought...called them wilden.¹⁰²

As observed in the previous section, wilden seems to translate into the early English version of “savage”: “creatures without fixed abode, law, or polite customs...without guile or hypocrisy.”¹⁰³ But this word is inappropriate; as Van der Donck’s Description showed, the Indians had culture, albeit at an early stage.¹⁰⁴ The word only stuck because it was “the first name that occurred to them [the first colonists.] And since the first opinion of women and the uneducated is best,” he observes sardonically, “it seems

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 179.
¹⁰² Van der Donck, 75-76. Shaw notes that the word also appears in records of the WIC’s factories in West Africa. Susan Elizabeth Shaw, “Building New Netherland: Gender and Family Ties in a Frontier Society,” (PhD diss., Cornell University, 2000), 14-15.
¹⁰⁴ Humanists like Van der Donck (who, after all, was trained at the center of humanism, Leiden) thought the Indians participated in a less-evolved form of civilization (Greenblatt, 21.)
appropriate that they be called *wilden*..." What the colonists had really found, he suggests, is an entirely new peoples.

Even distinguishing the Indians by skin color is simply not sufficient because Indians are "born white," and their skin darkens like the Gypsies or heathens who roam through our country, or like the country folk who are much in the open...Their yellowness is no fault of nature, but only an acquired feature due to the heat of the sun, which burns more powerfully than in this country.

Though skin color and "racial" characteristics had not yet been linked in the sixteenth century, Van der Donck seems to present a counterargument to this supposition. The Indians, he insists, are not so different than the Dutch: their skin color is "no fault of nature" but of habit. Because Van der Donck did not see skin tone as a "fault of nature," or insurmountable difference, it should not be difficult to incorporate Indians into New Netherland society.

If the Indians were not so different than the Dutch, then, according to Van der Donck, the Indians themselves could be taught to be Dutch. Van der Donck notes that upon arrival, many Dutchmen were "infatuated" with Native women: though their "color, speech, and dress are so different," familiarity erased strangeness. In fact, "if they were instructed as our women are, they would no doubt differ little from them, if at all."

Clothing, language, and customs could all be adopted and, as we have seen, Van der Donck did not see skin color as an obstacle to assimilation. But clothing, language, and customs were crucial aspects of identity in the early modern period. Van der Donck seems to have realized that as the interaction between different cultures intensified, more than a hat would be needed to distinguish between ethnic groups.

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105 Van der Donck, 76.
106 Ibid., 74.
107 Ibid., 75.
108 For the importance of clothing in the early modern period, see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009.)
However dubious a project it might be to “civilize” Indians, the Indians themselves wanted to be taught—at least, according to Van der Donck. Because the children quickly “revert to Indian manners” after completion of their apprenticeships, it would be ideal to construct a boarding school for these children. Van der Donck’s assertion seems rather suspect, given the Reverend Jonas Michaelius’ earlier claim that Indian parents were “very loth” to part with their children, and often reclaimed them before they could be properly instructed. Yet Van der Donck recognized that becoming closer with the Indians—never mind, of course, what the Indians themselves thought—was necessary for the success of the colony. As we will see with Jacques and Hilletie Van Slyck, Van der Donck was unique in this ready acceptance of peoples of Native descent. But if the Indians could be schooled, the Dutch could win them over peacefully: they could succeed where the Spanish had not.

A Contract “In Their Manner”

The WIC’s directors mandated a neat, orderly, and legally enforceable settlement process. They conceived of their project as an alternative to Spanish colonization. Wouter van Twiller, the fourth governor of the colony, boasted to his New English counterpart that the United Provinces had no plans “to take the land from the poor Natives, as the Kinge of Spaine hath done by the Pope’s Donation.” We intend to acquire it ‘att some reasonabl and convenient price, which God be praysed wee have done hitherto.’ The Company’s instructions to Verhulst, the first governor, demanded that “no one do the Indians any harm or violence, deceive, mock, or contemn them in any way, but that in addition to good treatment they be shown honesty, faithfulness, and sincerity in all

109 Van der Donck, 108.
111 Merwick’s paraphrase. Merwick, 82.
contracts." The governor must strive to maintain friendly relations; if the Indians refused to vacate land that the Dutch wanted to purchase, then the colonists would be obliged to live amongst the Indians in peace.112 Certainly, the most famous episode of these contracts is Peter Minuit's purchase of Manhattan, the actual fairness of which is disputed today.113

The legal transactions advised by the Directors in their instructions to Verhulst represented proof of Indian consent that the colonists had not stolen the rug from under their hosts' feet. Verhulst was to ensure that for every land transaction, the colonists and Indians must agree to a contract, "signed by them [the Indians] in their manner, since such contracts upon other occasions may be very useful to the Company."114 That the WIC dictated the contract be sign in the "manner" deemed comprehensible to the Indians indicates that the Directors wanted to build a relationship of mutual consent: the Indians were partners, not subjects. At face value, this directive puts the abstract notion of the Native ally against the Spanish (discussed in the previous chapter) into practice. Unlike the Spanish oppressors vilified in revolutionary propaganda, the WIC would forge an empire through contractual agreement. But these contracts served another, less idealistic purpose: they would be used against the English as proof that the Dutch were the rightful

113 It is now fairly common knowledge that Amerindians did not have the same concept of landed property that Europeans did. Whether or not Peter Minuit and other Europeans knew this, whether or not Minuit made the contract in good faith — even the actual terms of the exchange — fuel many a historian's grist mill. But in the end, these quibbles are unimportant to those for whom it matters most. While these debates are of intellectual interest, the academy often forgets the emotional aspect of history that is of more importance to everyone else. Many Lenape feel a sense of loss and betrayal with regard to Minuit's deal, as it marked the beginning of a long, arduous expulsion from their ancestral lands. See Oesterling, In Search of the Lenape, for information about the Lenape. Evan Pritchard provides a history of New York City from a Native perspective: Native New Yorkers: the Legacy of the Algonquin People of New York. (San Francisco: Council Oak, 2002).
114 Instructions to Verhulst.
owners of New Netherland, both on their own terms and in the eyes of the Indians who had sold them their land, fair and square (in the eyes of the Dutch, at least).\textsuperscript{115}

But when diplomacy broke down with the onset of Kieft’s War in 1643, Netherlanders on both sides of the Atlantic expressed disgust at Kieft’s offensive. The war caused the colonists to question the true purpose of the colony. The colonists had failed to achieve the Directors’ objective of maintaining peaceful relations. They had themselves become the oppressors.

One trader, David De Vries accused Kieft of the worst imaginable offence: “Did the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands ever do anything more cruel? This is indeed a disgrace to our nation...who has always endeavored...to spill as little blood as possible.”\textsuperscript{116} De Vries equates Keift with the arch-villain of the Eighty Years War. Cornelis Melijn, a private trader in New Amsterdam with his own axe to grind against the WIC, explained to the Dutch reading public that the Indians had risen against New Netherland for the same reasons the Dutch themselves had rebelled against the Spanish: the West India Company was greedy and tyrannical.\textsuperscript{117} As Schmidt articulates this phenomenon, the Dutch soldiers, like the Spanish during the Revolt, had “snatched innocent babes from their mother’s breasts, dispatched young and old into freezing rivers,” and the WIC, like the Hapsburgs, “enslaved the colony with unfair taxes” and harsh trade restrictions.\textsuperscript{118}

On the conceptual level, the WIC and its agents had constructed its Indian policy in accordance with revolutionary propaganda: their relationship with the Indians would be predicated upon trade, diplomacy, and consent, as opposed to the Spanish, who, in those writers’ eyes, had subjugated Dutchman and Indian alike. At this level of encounter,

\textsuperscript{115} The English had claimed that the land was part of Virginia and, since Hudson was an Englishman, the right of discovery belonged to them. Schmidt, 246.
\textsuperscript{116} NNN, 228-229.
\textsuperscript{117} Merwick, 156.
\textsuperscript{118} Schmidt, 280-281.
then, Dutch identity was constructed in terms of the Revolt and allying with those who shared their experience as Spanish subjects as allies. When this alliance deteriorated, it made sense that the oppressors—the Dutch colonists themselves—should be compared to the antithesis of Dutch virtue: the Spanish barbarian. Ultimately, the encounter resulted in a sense of lost Dutch identity.

**Moral Degeneration**

If the Spanish were barbaric in their treatment of Indians and the Dutch themselves, then the colonists had a lot to answer for. If the ideal Dutchman was thrifty, hardworking, sober, chaste, and honorable “in having no debts,” the colonists could hardly be said to live up to those qualities.¹¹⁹ Preceding Danckaerts by thirty years, the Domine Megapolensis illustrates his experience with several Mohawks who attended his services:

> When we pray they laugh at us. ...When we deliver a sermon, sometimes ten or twelve of them...will attend...and afterwards ask me what I am doing and what I want, that I stand alone and make so many words, while none of the rest may speak. I tell them that I am admonishing the Christians, that they must not steal, nor commit lewdness, nor get drunk, or commit murder....They say I do well to teach the Christians; but immediately add...“Why do so many Christians do these things?”¹²⁰

The Mohawks’ questions, which Megapolensis interpreted as insolent, rather than as genuine curiosity, reflect their attempts to understand Christian teaching: the Mohawks were on the brunt end of the sins listed above. If true Christians were expected to follow Megapolensis’ teachings, then the Dutch colonists certainly did not live up to these standards. How Christian could they really be, if they did the opposite of what they were told? Though Megapolensis’ colleagues in the Netherlands almost certainly decried the same moral failings to their own congregations, the moralizers of New Netherland could use Indians as a rhetorical device to illustrate the colonists’ degeneration. The colonists’ mistreatment of Indians was also treated as a moral benchmark. For the colonists to behave as wildly as they did, it meant they had lost their grip is civilized Dutchman.

¹¹⁹ Quoted in Schama, 53.
¹²⁰ *NNN*, 177-178.
Writing in 1655, Adriaen Van der Donck explained to his continental Dutch audience that he could no longer call Indians “natives” — thirty years after the first wave of settlement, there were “now also many natives not originally from there, but Christians born of Christians.” If Indian “natives” and “native Christians” were exclusive categories, then so too were “Dutch” and American-born “natives.” In the early modern period, one’s birthplace was essential to his or her identity: if the second-generation New Netherlanders were not born on the soil of the Netherlands proper, then who were they?

Over twenty years later, Danckaerts and his companion Sluyter found that the difference between Dutchmen and New Netherlanders was actually grounded in reality. According to Danckaerts, Indians could see the difference: when Danckaerts and Sluyter approached a group of Indian families, they remarked “Look these are certainly real Dutchmen, actual Hollanders.” Robert Sanders asked them how they knew it. We see it, they said, in their faces and in their dress. ‘Yes,’ said one, ‘they have the clothes of real Hollanders; they look like brothers.” By Danckaerts’ time, fashion amongst the colonists had changed (possibly with the introduction of English goods), but the travelers’ faces were different than the New Netherlanders — presumably, they were fairer than their countrymen, who spent more time working outside. That the distinction could be made by outside observers suggests that the New Netherlanders had strayed too far from their homeland.

Indeed, the settlers’ isolation from Amsterdam was a frightening prospect for the early modern Dutchman. Travel necessitated self-transformation,

121 Van der Donck, 75.
122 One notably rambunctious colonist, Anthony the Turk, was so-called because of his birthplace in Morocco, though his father was Dutch (see footnote 16 in Sivertsen, 204.)
123 Danckaerts, 200.
For in order to travel you must, of necessity, leave something of yourself behind. The metropolis is where that self-defining, self-creating “espirit national” is generated. In abandoning it, the traveler is compelled to become another kind of being.  

This process was all the more true of the Dutch emigrant: the longer one stayed away from the metropole, the less Dutch he or she would become. And if one did not behave like a proper Dutchman, then one was, of necessity, something other than Dutch. For Van der Donck, the children of New Netherland could not properly be named Indians, but they certainly were not Dutch, either.

Van der Donck felt it necessary to point this cultural drift out to his readers. In describing a garment he refers to as a *cootlap* ("balls cover"), he apologizes to his continental Dutch readers for his crude language: the word may appear unseemly to some in this country, but this shows that words simply have their usage, and in that country it is such that the word does not offend the ear of delicate women and maids.

For Van der Donck, the split between the colony and the continent had already occurred by 1655. Van der Donck winks at and acknowledges the colonists’ crude conversation, so routine that did not even offend New Netherland maids. To his scandalized continental readers, Van der Donck explains that “words simply have their usage” – that the meanings of words could change depending on the speaker. Such a statement was daring in a time when language and culture were inextricably linked – particularly when Dutch writers of this era were attempting to establish Dutch literary language. But for Van der Donck, this linguistic shift showed that, once a person or word was removed from its original context, “words simply have their usage.” I see a hint of pride in Van der Donck’s apology: he and his peers in the colony were shaping something new, exciting,

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125 Van der Donck, 79.
and, as it appeared in 1655, imminently successful. Though Van der Donck does not discuss immorality amongst the colonists (his ire was directed at those in charge,) he clearly sees a movement away from Dutch cultural mores.

But others expanded upon the correlation between distance from patria and mischief in the colony. The Directors General of the WIC wryly admonished Governor Peter Stuyvesant in 1652: “we have noticed that the climate over there does not improve people’s characters.” We can expect that the Directors were not being literal, however, there is the obvious undertone that the colony’s distance enabled its settlers to act inappropriately. Van der Donck rushed to defend his colonists. Before launching into a description of Native marriage customs, the former schout assured his readers that even if life in New Netherland was different than what they were used to, courtship customs “among our people...[are] the same as at home [in the United Provinces.]”

Danckaerts did not see this continuity. He was appalled by the Dutch New Yorkers’ “wild worldly world.”

I say wild, not only because the people are wild, as they call it in Europe [perhaps a reference to the Dutch word wilder?], but because almost all the people who go there to live, or who are born there, partake somewhat of the nature of the country, that is, peculiar to the land where they live.

Though the Directors’ reference to climate and behavior was ironic, Danckaerts clearly saw the wild, unsettled country of seventeenth-century America as the root cause of the colonists’ incivility. We can see his connection between location and barbarism in his comment on Schenectady, the easternmost settlement of the colony:

As these people live in the interior of the country, somewhat nearer the Indians, they are more wild and untamed, reckless, unrestrained, haughty, and more addicted to misusing the blessed name of God and to cursing or swearing.

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127 This assertion of a new culture seems strange, given Van der Donck’s patriotic dialogue described above – he is establishing New Netherland’s place within the United Provinces while celebrating its unique culture.
128 Correspondence 1647-1653, 156.
129 Van der Donck, 84.
130 Danckaerts, 44.
131 Ibid, 196.
For Danckaerts and his contemporaries, culture was a porous and tenuous organism: the colonists had, in Pagden’s words, left something behind. This “something” was their civility. “Wild and untamed,” the colonists had become unmoored from the Christian standards that had kept them in check because they lived “somewhat nearer the Indians.” In Danckaerts’ construction of encounter, proximity to Indians, far from the metropole, encouraged immoral behavior that would not have otherwise existed.

Throughout the journal, Danckaerts bemoans the iniquities of these one-time Dutchmen. He often compares the colonists unfavorably to the Indians, whom he regarded as “dull of comprehension, [and] slow of speech.” But the colonists and their descendants were so “wild” that “Christian” was hardly an appropriate term for them: “It makes me blush to call by that holy name those who live ten times worse than these most barbarous Indians and heathens...” The colonists do not even deserve to be referred to as Van der Donck’s “Christians born of Christians:” they simply did not live up to that title, and, like the Spanish barbarians and their Hispanicized allies of the Revolt, could be excluded from the Dutch community. As shown above, this quotation referred to the practice of plying Indians with liquor and taking advantage of them. For Danckaerts and Megapolensis, the fact that even “the poor Indians themselves” recognized these faults demonstrated the colonists’ barbarity was generated by both proximity to the Indians’ “heathen”-ish ways, but also by the disingenuous manner with which the colonists treated them. In terms of morality, encounter allowed for the moral degeneration of honest Dutchmen.

But even the New Netherlanders had their standards: for many colonists, frequent sexual contact was grounds for social exclusion. Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, Rensselaerswyck’s founding patroon, was scandalized at the thought of carnal relations.

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132 Ibid., 35.
133 Ibid., 179.
among the Dutch and Indians. Writing from the Provinces, he instructed his new secretary, Arent Van Curler, “Above all, be careful not to mix with the heathen or savage women, for such things are a great abomination to the Lord God and kill the souls of the Christians when they debauch themselves with them.” He encouraged the secretary to pass an ordinance fining those caught in the act. It is possible that Van Rensselaer directed this legislation at Van Curler himself — the secretary would join Jacques and Hilletie Van Slyck’s father on several expeditions into Mohawk country. Van Curler seems to have ignored the ban — he fathered a daughter who remained with the Mohawks, in spite (or maybe because of) his marriage to Anthonia Slachboom.

In an effort to discredit Cornelis Van Tienhoven, the veteran WIC secretary, Adriaen Van der Donck informed the Estates General that

He is one of those who have been longest in the country, and every circumstance is well known to him, in regard both to the Christians and the Indians. With the Indians, moreover, he has run about the same as an Indian, with a little covering and a small patch in front, from lust after the prostitutes to whom he has always been mightily inclined, and with whom he has had so much to do that no punishment or threats of the Director can drive him from them.

Van der Donck does not seem to object to sexual relations between the Dutch and Indians; it is Van Tienhoven’s willingness to “run about the same as an Indian” that is the real mark of disgrace — the man was “mixing” with the Indians in a way that was too literal for proper Dutchmen to stomach. That Van Tienhoven flagrantly disregarded his superiors’ “punishments or threats” should have suggested that the secretary was out of control, both in terms of Company hierarchy and, as Van der Donck would have it, of proper Dutch society. However, Van der Donck ultimately failed in discrediting the corrupt secretary, yet his attempts to paint Van Tienhoven as a culturally degraded

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135 Ibid., 809.
137 NNN, 340. Though there were plenty of “light women” amongst the New Netherlanders, I take this quote to refer to Native women (Correspondence of Jeremias Van Rensselaer, ed. A.J.F. Van Laer (New York: State University of New York, 1932), 37.) See below for the practice of exchanging gifts for sex.
deviant suggests that amongst both colonists and continental Dutch, becoming too culturally and physically intimate with Indians was worthy of contempt.

The lives of the inevitable outcome of these liaisons—children—will be discussed in the next chapter. Not all Dutchmen who engaged in such relations were reviled, though regular sexual contact with Native women was clearly deployed as a mark against one’s character. The sanctimonious Van Rensselaer banned it in his own colony, allegedly fearing for the souls of his own people. In the eyes of the community, Jan Platneus, mentioned above, was not fit to contribute to the social order—whatever other complaints his peers could level at him, his liaisons with Native women was a flaw that could be called out without fear of repercussion. Van der Donck felt the accusation of such behavior was enough to ruin Van Tienhoven’s reputation. But for Van der Donck, it was not just the act itself that was shocking, it was Van Tienhoven’s donning a cootlap and behaving “the same as an Indian.” Whereas Indians were used as a straw man in moral constructions of Dutch identity, on the sexual level, the reality of intimate relations forced the colonists to confront the fact that the social distance they had created was tenuous at best. In terms of Dutch identity, there were now children who were not “Christians born of Christians,” but a new category entirely. These children embodied the metaphorical challenges to Dutch identity in New Netherland.

Van Tienhoven crossed the unspoken boundary between the two groups to “become” an Indian. We will see in the next chapter that Hilletie and Jacques Van Slyck, sought to become “former” Indians. Both children were to varying degrees excluded from the Dutch community. They represented the colonists’ failure to maintain the social distance they had constructed. This distance should have helped the colonists define their identity as Dutchmen, but in fact it did the opposite.
If the ideal Dutchman treated Indians fairly, as the WIC’s prescription of contractually based relationships meant to enforce, the colonists failed. As moral authorities like Danckaerts and Megapolensis showed, they did not live up to their society’s social code – in fact, they were more barbaric than the Indians they sough to define themselves against. In spite of this separation, the Dutch began to “melt” away – they failed the tests of Dutch identity. As such, they had to remain distinct from the Indians and these boundaries were drawn at the sexual frontier. Jacques and Hilletie – the result of transgressing this border – could not “melt away” into the Dutch colonial community: the colonists never totally accepted these people of Indian descent into their community. It reminded them too much of the amorphousness of their own identity.
III. "FORMERLY AN INDIAN"

An Open Secret

Nothing (or, perhaps, no one) could embody the colonists' fears of melting away more than children of Dutch-Indian descent. There are very few people in the Dutch historical record whose multi-ethnic heritage was acknowledged by the Dutch themselves.\textsuperscript{138} This thesis will conclude with an examination of Jacques and Hilletie, the children of Cornelis Van Slyck and a Mohawk woman, and their nephew Wouter, as described by Jasper Danckaerts. All three attempted to join Dutch society in Schenectady in the 1660s with varying degrees of success. Whereas the past two chapters discussed the construction of Dutch identity and social distance in the idealized realm of text, our investigation into the lives of the Van Slyck siblings will present how this rhetoric manifested itself in reality.

Sexual liaisons between Dutchmen and Native women seem to have been fairly common. That the colonists almost never acknowledged their children suggests to me that the Dutch in New Netherland had absolutely no interest in acknowledging intimacy between the two groups, not to mention the obligation that each group would have towards the other in an effort to raise multi-ethnic children. By Kieft's War (1643-1645), more and more families had come to the colony to make a life there, not simply to trade a few furs and go home.\textsuperscript{139} This demographic change necessitated the ability and willingness to extricate land from the surrounding Indians -- in Kieft's view, the only way to do so was to use force. During peace negotiations after the initial outbreak, the merchant and Indian sympathizer David de Vries parleyed with a group of Algonquian-

\textsuperscript{138} Meuwese lists only three: the negotiator Canaquese, and Hilletie and Jacques Van Slijck, who will be discussed here. Meuwese, 408.
\textsuperscript{139} Rink, 22.
speaking Indians at Rockaway (now in Queens).  An orator, speaking on behalf of the “sixteen chiefs” present, began his speech by observing that the Indians of the area had helped the traders whom Hudson had left behind. They had given them food, helped them hunt; they had even

given them [the traders] their daughters to sleep with, by whom they had begotten children, and there roved many an Indian who was begotten by a Swanneken, but our people had become so villainous as to kill their own blood.

De Vries abruptly cuts the orator off, claiming that the speech had become “tedious to me.” As the orator observed, if the Dutch had indeed acknowledged their offspring, would they have tolerated Kieft’s midnight raid? Would they have even come to blows? De Vries’ apparent aversion to the topic suggests that these children were an open secret in New Netherland: known to occur but never widely discussed.

De Vries’ account was published in Alkmaar in 1655 (around the same time as Van der Donck’s Description.) De Vries’ book depicted the Company’s poor stewardship of the colony. Perhaps De Vries wanted to allow the figure of the interpreter to voice his own opinion about such relationships – that the colonists should not be destroying their kin. More likely, De Vries meant to illustrate that the Company had bungled the New Netherland venture from the start: they could not control their own men even before the colony itself existed. Dutch officials “usually downplayed the role of native women in encounters to avoid the impression that Dutchmen culturally degraded themselves by entering into intimate relations with non-Christian women.” De Vries, like Van der Donck, uses perceived illicit sexuality to suit his personal agenda – in this case, denigrating the West India Company. Taking the opportunity to do so while also charging the colonists with killing “their own blood” points to just how “culturally

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140 Alternatively, De Vries was not so much sympathetic to his Native clients as he opposed Kieft.
141 NNN, 230.
142 Ibid., 231.
143 Ibid., 183.
144 Meuwese, 45.
degraded the colonists had become: to satisfy their greed, they had killed “their own blood.” Cultural degradation was the direct result of the social distance that was supposed to fend it off.

**New World Sexuality**

When the WIC’s faults were not at the center of the dialogue, however, almost all Dutch writers focused on Native women when discussing Amerindian sexuality. The proto-journalist Nicolaes Van Wassenaer informed his Dutch readers that

> Chastity appears to be of some repute among them, for the women are not all equally loose. There are some who would not cohabit with ours for any compensation. Others hold it in small esteem; especially as they are free, living without law.

In a later article, he observed that married women did not make such arrangements “for fear of their husbands. But those who are single, evince only too friendly a disposition.” Isaack de Rasieres, a prominent merchant in the colony, informed a friend about a certain fish that “makes them [Indians] lascivious. ...Our people,” he noted slyly, “also confirm this.” He describes Indians as promiscuous, but when he writes about Native women in particular he reiterates that “they are very much given to promiscuous intercourse.” Van der Donck, in his excoriating “Report of New Netherland,” condemns “Both [Native] men and women” as “utterly unchaste and shamelessly promiscuous in their intercourse, which is the cause of the men so often changing their wives and the women their husbands.” Sexual liberty came to be associated with Indians – particularly women. Though Native females’ wantonness was explicitly criticized, their partners, Dutch men, were never called to account, except as an attempt to malign an enemy’s character.

Yet Van der Donck would later change his tune. In his pro-colonial bestseller, *Description of New Netherland*, Van der Donck acknowledges these relationships with

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145 There is nothing in the record to suggest that Native men and Dutch women had or were suspected of sleeping with each other.  
146 *NNN*, 72; 81; 106; 302.
his characteristic frankness. As we have seen, Van der Donck believed that if Native women could be instructed to dress and behave like Dutch women, they would be just as desirable as their white counterparts. The schout presents a sympathetic attitude to those colonists “infatuated” with Native women: in spite of all of their differences, once one “associate[s] with them frequently the strangeness soon passes.” Rather than the “utterly unchaste” Indian portrayed in his earlier work, here Van der Donck gives greater details on courtship and marriage.

During marriage, prostitution and adultery are considered most disgraceful, particularly among the women, who would rather die than consent to it. They think it even more vile when done by the light of day or in open fields where someone might watch....If the woman is single or otherwise unattached, however, it does not matter and she may do as she pleases, provided she accepts payment. Free favors they regard as scandalous and whorelike. She is not blamed for whatever else happens to her, and no one will later scruple to propose marriage to the woman concerned. Though Van der Donck expresses “surprise” at such customs, he is not as judgemental as in the “Report.” In fact, he admires Native men for being able to “manage their womenfolk” such that “one never hears or can learn on inquiry any hatred, quarrel, or discord” among them.

In fact, Van der Donck’s depiction very nearly matches traditional Haudenosaunee courtship customs: in a matrilineal, clan-based society, children were raised by their mothers – evidenced by Hilletie and Jacques being raised as Mohawks. In the event of divorce, men were expected to return to their mother’s home. Both men and women could initiate divorce at any time. Young women and men were given a degree of sexual latitude that would have been scandalous in Europe, where relationships between sexes were closely monitored.

Because of this relative sexual freedom, in effect until the imposition of Christianity, many Native people contend that the concept of rape did not exist amongst

147 Van der Donck, 75.
148 Ibid., 86.
149 Ibid., 84.
the Haudenosaunee until colonization.\textsuperscript{150} Van der Donck notes that “nothing was done” on several occasions in which “someone” had “violated” a woman in “the woods or some other lonely place.”\textsuperscript{151} The identity of this “someone” is ambiguous: because Mohawks and other Native peoples were unable to prosecute Dutchmen under their own laws, this person could have been Dutch. If this was indeed the case, then Van der Donck is covering up for one of his neighbors. I believe these lengthy descriptions of sex in exchange for goods is meant to demonstrate the supposedly consensual nature of these relationships. However, just as the WIC’s contracts idealized a mutually beneficial Dutch-Indian relationship, this ideation never quite occurred in actuality. However common Dutch-Indian sexual liaisons were, we cannot be certain that they were all consensual.

One of these unions – presumably consensual – resulted in three children: Martin, Jacques and Hilletie Van Slyck, born over a ten-year period.\textsuperscript{152} Each child was accepted into Dutch colonial society to varying degrees. Though the Van Slyck name would become prominent in Schenectady in later years, the siblings’ maternal line would not – and could not – be forgotten.

**Former Indians: The Van Slyck Family**

April 5\textsuperscript{th}, 1634, was a fateful day for Cornelis Anthonisz van Slyck. This was the day he contracted his labor to Kiliaen Van Rensselaer’s patroonship, far across the Atlantic Ocean. Cornelis signed on as a carpenter and a mason. Like many others who were willing to exchange several years of liberty to seek their fortunes in the distant


\textsuperscript{151} Van der Donck, 102.

\textsuperscript{152} There may have been a fourth child named Lea or Leah. Alternate spellings of the surname are Van Shlick, Van Slijck, Van Slyck, Van Slycke. Jacques is also referred to in *DRCHNY* as Akus or Acks. Hilletie has also been referred to as Elletic, Illetie, Hilleitie, and even Hilde. Jonathan Pearson, *Genealogies of the Descendants of the First Settlers of Schenectady* (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1873), http://schenectadyhistory.org/families/firstsettlers/vanerde_vans.html.
colonies, Cornelis left his familial home — in his case, it was Breuckelen — and made his way north to the island of Texel. From there he sailed on the *de Eendracht*, enduring the calamities of a transatlantic voyage. He first enters the colonial record on August 12 of the same year. Two years later, he managed a farm, later bought a share of it, and seems to have owned it by 1648.\textsuperscript{153}

Whatever Cornelis’s interest in agriculture, he evidently traded in furs on the side. Cornelis conceived all of his known children with the same Mohawk woman, who may have been named Ots-toch.\textsuperscript{154} He is reputed to be the first Dutch settler in the Mohawk Valley, and was well-known and respected among both Mohawks and colonists, hence his nickname *Broer* (brother.)\textsuperscript{155} In 1639, five years after his arrival in the colony, he, Arent Van Curler, and Pieter Cornelisz were chosen to represent the Van Rensselaer family in the colony until 1641, when a young lawyer named Adriaean Van der Donck arrived to become Rensselaerswyck’s first *schout*. In 1650, Van Slyck and Van Curler negotiated the peace treaty at the conclusion of Kieft’s War and received large patents of land for their services.\textsuperscript{156} He died in 1676, four years before Danckaerts’ visit to Schenectady.\textsuperscript{157}

“Ots-toch” and Cornelis’s relationship must have begun shortly after his arrival in Rensselaerswyck. Though we do not have a birth date for their eldest son, Marten, or for Hilletie, we know that Jacques was born in 1640.\textsuperscript{158} Marten first appears in the record in 1661 as a witness to the signing of a deed. He seems to have been grown by this point;

\textsuperscript{153} *VRBM*, 809.
\textsuperscript{154} Because Pearson’s identification of the name is speculative, I will not fully commit to this name. Thus, I will invoke it with quotation marks. Jonathan Pearson, et. al., *History of the Schenectady Patent in the Dutch and English Times; Being Contributions Toward a History of the Lower Mohawk Valley* (Albany, NY: J. Munsell's Sons, Printers, 1883), 189.
\textsuperscript{156} *VRBM*, 809.
\textsuperscript{157} Pearson, *Genealogies*.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.
he died the following year, when Jacques was a young man. Jacques and Hilletie were both raised by their mother in her village. Jacques moved to Schenectady to claim Marten’s inheritance, and Hilletie seems to have joined him shortly thereafter. When they moved into the Dutch community, they converted and married into prominent families, as befitted their own father’s status. Jacques was one of the original proprietors of Schenectady, as was Hilletie’s husband, Daniel Van Olinda. Both siblings served as official interpreters for the English colonial government.¹⁵⁹

Though they served many valuable functions in Dutch and English colonial society, their mother’s ancestry would become attached to their identity like a Homeric epithet. One of the interpreters at a negotiation of terms with the Mohawks, Jacques is identified as “Akus Cornelis formerly an Indian.”¹⁶⁰ Jacques was in his forties at the time of this particular negotiation and must have been well-established in Schenectady — yet the appellation commented on a characteristic the other interpreters did not share: Mohawk ancestry. “Formerly an Indian” does not seem to be a legal term. It is not used in reference to Hilletie. Colonial clerks referred to another Dutch-Indian man, Canaqueeese, as “an Indian, who is much loved by the Maquas.”¹⁶¹ Arent Van Curler’s daughter was dubbed a “squaw” in court records.¹⁶² I believe the phrase speaks to Jacques’ active attempts to mask his matrilineal heritage, which seems to have been unconvincing to his peers.

That Jacques is portrayed as a “former” Indian suggests on the one hand that his transition into Dutch colonial society was complete — he could no longer be mistaken as or assumed to be an Indian; yet on the other, this very transition would mark him as different from the community. In his peers’ eyes, Jacques could not escape the fact that

¹⁵⁹ Meuwese, 409. They served after the English conquest in 1664.
¹⁶¹ Quoted in Meuwese, 382.
¹⁶² “Squaw” is now known as an extremely insulting term. Rothschild, “Social Distance,” 192.
he had been, at some point, an Indian, and that this would separate him from his peers. This distancin
g suggests to me that the colonists viewed Jacques as “not fully their own.”¹⁶³ Though this epithet does not
necessarily have negative connotations — after all, Jacques’ life experience certainly qualified him to interpret
these important proceedings — we will see that Jacques strove to distance himself from his past.

Towards the end of her life, Hilletie would be referred to in the British record as a “Mohack woman” under
circumstances that shall be expanded upon later.¹⁶⁴ In 1698, the date of this missive, Hilletie and her husband
owned a considerable amount of land around Schenectady, and her sons were both young men. The writer
must have known about her standing in the community, but chooses in fact to highlight her “Mohack” past
instead of her Dutch present. Unlike her brother, she is still considered to be as Native as if she had not spent
thirty years in Schenectady, which seems to speak to the colonists’ refusal to accept her into their community.

Though Van der Donck used Van Tienhoven’s alleged liaisons to discredit him, Van Slyck does not seem to
have been censured at all. His involvement with the Mohawks of the Mohawk Valley earned him respect
amongst both communities. He recognized Marten as his eldest son, and this claim seems to have been
acknowledged by the community, as is evidenced by his witnessing the deed. If there were any objections
to Jacques taking on Marten’s property, it has not survived in the record, though this is probably due to
Cornelis (who was still alive at this point) recognizing Jacques as his son. Similarly, Hilletie’s marriage to
Daniel Van Olinda must have been arranged by her father. Certainly, Cornelis must have been valued for
maintaining good relations with the Mohawks in the isolated Dutch settlement, and we can assume he
facilitated many a trade

¹⁶³ Meuwese, 383. Meuwese here refers to Hilletie, but I believe in this respect the same can be said of
Jacques.
¹⁶⁴ DRCHNY 4:363.
and land sale.\textsuperscript{165} Even so, it appears that the colonists were unwilling to forget about the siblings’ pasts.

Thanks to Jasper Danckaerts, we have more information about Hilletie’s conversion experience than her brother’s, who is portrayed in a rather unflattering light in his sister’s narrative. Taking the opportunity to tell her tale of woe to a stranger, Hilletie describes a less-than-accepting Dutch community and tells Jasper about her “full-blooded” nephew, Wouter, whose deepest desire is to convert.\textsuperscript{166} Hilletie’s narrative gives us three examples of the Schenectady residents’ reception of those who actively desired to “melt” into Dutch society. Hilletie was grudgingly accepted; her nephew Wouter’s desire to join the community was either rejected or treated with apathy. Jacques’ transition seems to have been met with approval.

**The Converted Sow and The Stupid Indian**

That the minister and the woman met at all was surely providential. Danckaerts’ traveling companion, Peter Sluyter, had fallen ill the previous day. So Danckaerts and their guide, the “prominent Indian trader” Robert Sanders, took a detour to Schenectady.\textsuperscript{167} Learning of Danckaerts’ arrival (who was traveling incognito as a doctor), “a certain Indian woman, or half-breed, that is, from a European and an Indian woman” approached the minister and asked him to advise her concerning her mute, four-year-old son.\textsuperscript{168} Danckaerts curtly dismissed her, explaining that he was not a doctor at all. Sanders suddenly intervened and explained that the woman, Hilletie, had in fact converted and been baptized. Unsurprisingly, Danckaerts changed his manner accordingly, and asked Hilletie to tell her own story.

Hilletie was raised by her mother, who

\textsuperscript{165} Greene.
\textsuperscript{166} Danckaerts, 205.
\textsuperscript{167} See footnote in Danckaerts, 199.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid. 201.
remained in the country, and lived among the Mohawks, and she lived with her, the same as Indians live together...She lived then with her mother and brothers and sisters; but sometimes she went with her mother among the Christians to trade and make purchases, or the Christians came among them....

These traders noticed that Hilletie bore “more resemblance to the Christians than the Indians, but understand, more like the Dutch, and that she was not so wild as the other children. They therefore wished to take the girl and bring her up, which the mother would not hear to....” According to this narrative, the Dutch traders recognized Hilletie as one of their own children, based on her appearance and behavior (which, as we have seen, Danckaerts failed to recognize) and desired to raise her as a proper Christian. These observations seem to suggest that the conversion could only have succeeded because of Hilletie’s ancestry: because she was a “half-blood,” she was naturally more inclined to Christianity than other Indians. But Hilletie’s mother held “an inward, unfounded hate” towards “the Christians,” and threatened to kill Hilletie if the traders did not cease their requests.

In spite of her mother’s admonishments, the young girl realized that the Christians were not such as the mother told her; the more so, because she never went among them without being well treated, and obtaining something or other. She therefore began to hearken to them; but particularly she felt a great inclination and love in her heart towards those Christians who spoke to her about God…and the Christian religion. Her mother observed it, and began to hate her....Her brothers and sisters despised and cursed her, threw stones at her, and did her all the wrong they could; but the more they abused and maltreated her, the more she felt something growing in her that attracted and impelled her to the Christians and her doctrine, at which point her family and friends “compelled her to leave them.” She “went to those who had so long solicited her.”¹⁶⁹ Here Danckaerts is careful to note that though their relationship was predicated upon trade — little Hilletie always returned from her visits with “something or other” — she was especially interested in those traders who conversed with her about the religion of her father. Without any sense of irony, Danckaerts observed that the Mohawks’ supposed “maltreatment” of the girl made her more inclined to Christianity. Abused and outcast from home, Hilletie turned to the traders.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 203.
Hilletie lived with a woman who taught her to read, write, and the skills necessary to become a competent serving girl. Though she was diligent in her tasks,

She had especially a great desire to learn to read, and applied herself to that end day and night, and asked others, who were near her, to the vexation and annoyance of the other maids, who lived with her, who could sometimes with difficulty keep her back.

She was most interested in learning Dutch so she could read the New Testament and learn from it. Once she was able to do so, she vexed her housemates with her superior knowledge, and “sometimes [rebuked] them a little for their evil lives.” Evidently, Hilletie earned enough of a reputation for her pains that it became a common insult. The colonists would often retort, “‘Well, how is this, there is a sow converted. Run, boys, to the brewer’s, and bring some swill for a converted sow.’”

Why would the maids want to “keep her back?” Were they simply annoyed by Hilletie’s moral superiority? Did they feel that she did not know her place, since she was more interested in “grasping the glory of God rather than the glory of Dutch housework?” Or were they threatened by the introduction of a woman with considerable social standing into their community? That the townspeople routinely insulted Hilletie by referring to her conversion suggests that this act was a point of contention. Referring to Hilletie as a “sow” suggests their general distaste for her – a reference to her Indian upbringing. Alternatively, the men may have simply been poking fun at her figure. Even so, it is the conversion, not her stature, that is at the root of this insult. Where Danckaerts, Megapolensis, and others invoked Indians to decry the colonists’ bad behavior, here a person of Native descent – to the colonists, a “converted sow,” still fundamentally Indian – claimed authority to do the same. The social distance had been closed, and the colonists were uncomfortable with the results.

170 Ibid., 204.
172 Hart, 78.
The astute reader will note the narration Danckaerts reports to us does not fully align with what we know about Hilletie. Though these discrepancies may be due to Danckaerts’ missionary project (discussed below), it is easy to understand why Hilletie would have wanted to share her plight with a sympathetic stranger. Surely the Dutch traders knew who her father was; at some point, Cornelis and Jacques must have acknowledged her as their relative. Though she was not the friendless waif presented in the narrative, it is likely that she did begin her life in Schenectady as a serving girl. Van der Donck himself noted that many young Native men and women were employed as apprentices and serving girls. To his dissatisfaction, however, as soon as their terms of service ended, these young men and women would return to their villages and “revert to Indian ways and manners.”173 But Hilletie did not return to her village, and I submit that her willingness to stay, which defied the usual pattern, influenced the way the colonists viewed her.

Hilletie also presented an economic threat to the New Netherlanders. According to Van Slyck family lore, she was either “given” tracts of land by the local sachems (Mohawk leaders) or inherited large tracts of land from her mother.174 Presumably, Hilletie used her connections and linguistic abilities to negotiate other deals advantageous to herself and her family. Towards the end of her life, she would be implicated in a scheme in which she and Delius, a minister who appears to have converted her, and for whom she translated portions of the Bible into Mohawk, posed as representatives of the English government in land negotiations with neighboring Mohawks. Had the pair succeeded, they would have dispossessed them of “their whole country.”175 Hilletie freely acknowledged her complicity in court. Given her upbringing, however, she must have known the vital importance of the land to her childhood community. These actions

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173 Van der Donck, 107.
174 Pearson, Genealogies (under “Van Olinda, Daniel”); Pearson, 189.
175 DRCHNY, 363.
suggest to me her willingness to divorce herself from her maternal culture for the sake of profit. But in the end, she was only regarded as a “Mohack” “Interpetress.”

Though Hilletie despaired for the souls of her neighbors, there was one beacon of hope. Her nephew, known to the Dutch as Wouter, joined Jacques in the fur trade and hunted game for him. Danckaerts eagerly inquired to meet the young man who had “abandoned all the Indians, and his Indian friends and relations....He has betaken himself entirely to the Christians and dresses like them.” Like his cousin, Wouter “has suffered much from the other Indians and his friends.” Hilletie tried to teach her cousin Dutch so he could read the Bible, but Jacques

was covetous, and kept him only because he was profitable to him in hunting beaver. He therefore would hardly speak a word of Dutch to him, in order that he might not be able to leave him too soon, and go among the Christians and under Christianity.

Like Hilletie, Wouter was drawn to Christianity through a relationship based upon economic exchange. Jasper's fears seem to assume that Wouter's presence in Schenectady would be accepted, yet if Hilletie's story is any indication, that would not necessarily be the case. Furthermore, because Wouter is “full-blooded,” he did not have the same stake in the community that Jacques and Hilletie did when they moved to Schenectady. This affair seems to have been well-known amongst the colonists. Hilletie points out to Danckaerts that, in addition to Jacques’ greed, no one is willing to take Wouter on as an apprentice because of his age. At the age of “24 or 26,” he might have difficulty learning a new trade, or was better able to pack up and leave on his own, which would result in a lost investment. The siblings had their father to smooth the transition into Schenectady for them. But without Jacques’ assistance (Hilletie’s seems to have been out of the question,) the townspeople seemed unwilling to draw him in to their community. That none of the other colonists seem to have exerted any effort on Wouter’s

176 Ibid., 364.
177 Ibid., 205.
178 Ibid., 209.
behalf would suggest their disinterest in converting a "full-blooded" Indian. Wouter’s dressing and behaving as a Christian was tolerable to a point. The colonists were either unwilling or uninterested in advocating for Wouter’s acceptance. 179

Not only did Jacques exploit Wouter, he used his nephew to deny his Native heritage. Wouter (through Hilletie as interpreter) narrates to Danckaerts his trying experiences. In one instance, Jacques challenges his nephew to a hunting competition. Jacques insults Wouter, claiming his nephew, “a mere, stupid Indian, could not shoot, but a Christian was a different character and was expert and handy.” 180 Jacques no longer thought of himself as an Indian, distinguishing himself from Wouter by referring to himself as an “expert and handy” Christian. Though Jacques believed he had completely melted into Dutch society, his neighbors seem to believe otherwise, as evidenced by his status as a “former Indian.” But try as he might to distinguish himself from “mere, stupid” Indians, to his peers he would always be a former Indian.

All three figures were drawn to the Dutch through commerce, the acceptable basis for Dutch-Indian interaction: Hilletie and Jasper owed their existence to this commercial contact. 181 Jasper presumably joined Schenectady to claim Marten’s estate. In Danckaerts’ narrative, Hilletie was attracted to the colony through the kind acts of Dutch traders. Wouter came to find work. However, the social distance described by Merwick and Rothschild did not result from trade alone. These three people of Native descent attempted to melt into Dutch society and, in the process, grappled with the definition of that identity. For Hilletie, that “Dutch-ness” meant living up to a specific code of conduct, one delineated by Danckaerts, Megapolensis, and most likely others. In the story related

179 Danckaerts, moved by Wouter’s plight, asked Wouter to accompany them in their travels. Wouter accepted delightedly, but ultimately missed the rendezvous they had arranged. 180 Danckaerts, 206.
181 This may also be true of Wouter. Family genealogist Lorine McGinnis Schulze believes that Wouter is actually Marten’s son. Lorine McGinnis Schulze, The Van Slyke Family in America: A Genealogy of Cornelis Antonissen Van Slyke, 1604-1676… (Midland, Ontario: Olive Tree Enterprises, 1996.)
above, Jasper defined his identity in direct opposition to his maternal culture: the Dutchman versus the “stupid” Indian. Wouter signified his desire to identify as Dutch by wearing “Christian clothing,” attempting to learn the language, and actively trying to understand the religion. Ultimately, they could not bridge the social distance the New Netherlanders had created to reify their own identity. No matter what they did, they would always be former Indians.
CONCLUSION

The New York State Department of Education requires all fourth graders to study the Haudenosaunee (never mind the fact that the Haudenosaunee did not occupy all of what is now New York State. The Lenape and Mahican are generally ignored.) They are also required to learn about their community’s history, which provides New Yorkers the opportunity to learn about New Amsterdam. If my experience is typical of others, the Haudenosaunee curriculum was entirely ahistorical and probably romanticized. Judging my elementary school curriculum, the only important date to know about the Indians of and surrounding Manahatta was the sale of the island to Peter Minuet in 1626. After that, it seemed, the Native New Yorkers simply melted into the ether.

Even as a third grader (my private school had its own curriculum) the questioned nagged me: So where did the Indians go?

To say the least, this thesis has been long in the writing.

While the construction of this particular episode in history deserves a thesis of its own, suffice it to say that our separate narratives of the Dutch and the Indians represent these groups’ legacy: the Dutch ideal of separation was realized in posterity, if not in reality. Though the colonists were more entangled with their trading partners than they would have liked, their legacy presents them as separate and as isolated from each other as if the entire Native population of the Hudson Valley had quietly packed up and left as soon as the deed to Manhattan was signed.

So, what happened to “the Indians?”

The Algonquian-speaking peoples of Long Island, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania were forced to move West by the British. Many of these nations banded together under the name Lenape. The Lenape have been pushed to Oklahoma in a long series of painful
However, there are several Native communities that have remained in their ancestral homeland such as the Nanticoke Lenape in Bridgetown, New Jersey; the Ramapough Lenape in Mahwah, New Jersey; and the Shinnecock of Long Island, who were federally recognized in 2009, to name a few. The Haudenosaunee still maintain reservations in upstate New York and Canada. The Mohawk reservation Akwesasne straddles the US-Canadian border, which has become a flashpoint in US-Mohawk relations: where the American government sees a security liability, the Mohawks see any outside interference as a breach of sovereignty.

New York City is home to 87,241 people of Native American or Alaska Native heritage, the largest urban concentration of Native peoples in the country. The National Museum of the American Indian is housed on the former Customs House on 1 Bowling Green, which was built on the site of Fort Amsterdam.

And what about the Dutch? As Danckaerts’ narrative has shown, even after the English invasion in 1664, the area’s Euro-Americans were largely Dutch or Dutch-descended. But the Dutch did not quietly accept English rule. Jacob Leisler, a soldier under Governor Stuyvesant during the Dutch period, led an attempted Calvinist takeover of the city and ruled it from 1689 to 1691, confident that King William, who hailed from the Provinces, would approve. Leisler was hanged and beheaded for his pains, but not before he rallied a number of New Yorkers who had originally known their home as New Netherland. Rensselaerswyck, which had been privately owned by the Rensselaer family, became a part of New York State in 1845. Since then, the old Dutch families have intermarried with other Euro-Americans. But for the orange in the state flag and Dutch place names, the New Netherlanders have melted away.

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182 See Oestreicher.
So what, my third-grade self asks, is the point? As we have seen, the Dutch were tolerant of their Native neighbors in a way that other European colonial powers were not. There was no real attempt at incorporation or conversion. As far as social interaction was concerned, the Dutch were content to let the Indians be. I do not use “tolerance” in any utopian sense of the word: as we have seen, there were colonists, like Kieft, who were only too happy to see the Indians dead.

But we do not know how much Dutch violence was motivated or justified by hatred of Indians: Kieft and his papers perished at sea, so we know nothing of his own motivations. The only records we have of him were written by people who abhorred him, as such, there are some truly nauseating atrocities associated with him, but we can never know how factual these stories actually are. Excepting Kieft’s personal defense as an unknown variable, I have not come across anything openly or subtly advocating the extermination of Indians. The Peach and Esopus wars were regarded by many as detestable land grabs, not heroic projects. Perhaps the tone this rhetoric would have changed had the increase in emigration to the colony continued, but the English cut this stage of New Netherland’s growth short.

This tolerance was not born of loving-kindness. As we have seen, the Dutch colonists needed to keep their colony Dutch, and that meant the exclusion of Indians, even, to a certain degree, former ones. During the earliest phase of the settlement, the fur trade was the colony’s only raison d’etre. As immigration increased, the potential for permanent settlements and the conflict for land that came with it became more apparent. But Danckaerts showed that, even so, friendships (such as there were) begun at the colony’s inception remained in tact through the English invasion. Which, of course, meant his Dutch friends kept Jasper the Indian at a careful distance. This tolerance came to be because the Indians successfully kept the Dutch at a disadvantage: unable to attain
military dominance during the Dutch period, the New Netherlanders had to be content with a delicate equilibrium of power.

It is this point of equilibrium, I believe, that can be an opportunity. Walter Mignolo presents a new vision of cosmopolitanism that celebrates diversity. For Mignolo, “diversality” should be the postcolonial response to the hegemonic, universalist vision that Van der Donck embodied when he described the Indians melting away. Diversality requires an acknowledgement, acceptance, and celebration of different cultures. In order for this vision to succeed, Mignolo argues, we must be willing to put aside or “dissolve” cultural relativism.184

I do not think this process is as easy as Mignolo would wish, but I do believe that cultural relativism is born from unequal power dynamics between two cultures. The Dutch-Indian relationship was created through commerce, which in a capitalistic model necessitates both parties taking advantage of the other to maximize profit. As such, the two groups sized each other up as soon as Hudson put foot to North American soil.

In order to attain a cosmopolitan world vision, then, we must envision a world where the interaction of peoples (or cultures, or nation-states) must be on equal ground, without fear, without cheating, without opportunism. The Dutch achieved some aspects of diversality; they were unwilling to actively acculturate Indians who were otherwise well-integrated into their daily lives. But they did not, for the reasons outlined in this thesis, create any form of cultural exchange. Nor, as enactors of the colonial, universalist interpretation of cosmopolitanism, could they have been expected to. But we can view this historical moment as a missed opportunity. If we are to attain any sort of cosmopolitan vision on this globalizing planet, we need to realize that accommodation and exchange – not fear and rigidity – will win the day.

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Figure 1. The Netherlands at the signing of the Union of Utrecht. Flanders and Brabant were hotly contested territories during the war.

This map has been reproduced under the Creative Commons License. It can be found at http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3e/Map-1579_Union_of_Utrecht.png
FIGURE 2. New Netherland, and some of its settlements. This map follows Trelease, 3.

This map has been reproduced and modified under its Creative Commons License. Special thanks to Danny Jutten for the translations from German. This map is meant to be illustrative and is not necessarily to scale. Errors in the placement of Rensselaerswyck (the orange square) are mine. The original file can be found at http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/08/Delaware01.png.
APPENDIX B: TIMELINE

Events in Holland are marked in Italics. Indian wars are marked in bold and Italics. Events in New Amsterdam are in plain text.

1482 – The Netherlands are captured by the Holy Roman Empire, which was based in Spain.

1568 – William the Silent, Prince of Orange, rebels against King Philip II of Spain because of high taxes, persecution of Protestants, and Philip's attempt to centralize his empire. Begins the Eighty Years' War. During the course of the war, the seven Northern provinces of the Netherlands declare independence from the Empire, form into a republic, and are eventually recognized as an independent country. By the end of the war, the Dutch will have built the most powerful trade fleet in the world and will have extended their sphere of influence into Asia, Africa, and the New World, in some cases capturing Spain's holdings. They will have established a global trade empire.

1579 – The Protestant northern provinces sign the Union of Utrecht, a pledge to aid each other in case of Spanish invasion. The Union of Utrecht was a declaration of solidarity against the southern provinces, which continued to be loyal to Spain. Granted minimal authority to States General and allowed Provinces to retain rights.

1581 – The Act of Abjuration is signed, declaring the northern provinces' independence from Spain. They became known as the United Provinces.

1588 – No longer a series of duchies or the protectorate of France or England, the United Provinces become an independent republic.

1602 – The Dutch East India Company is formed. The States General grant it a trade monopoly in Asia that would last for 200 years. It is the first corporation that engages in international trade in the world.

1609 – (March) Beginning of the Twelve Years' Truce between the United Provinces and the Spanish-controlled southern provinces. Though the war would drag on, the Truce was the effective turning point of the Revolt: after the Truce, the Spanish had to recognize the Provinces as an independent state.

(April) Henry Hudson, an Englishman, sails on behalf of the Dutch East India Company in search of the Northwest Passage. Finds the river that would later be named after him. Initiates trade with the local Indians and reports his findings to his backers in Holland. Hudson seems to have been the first European trader in the southern New York region.

1611 – Adriaen Block and Cornelius May (after whom Cape May in New Jersey is named) explore the Hudson and Delaware rivers, map the area, and establish trade contacts with the Native population.

1621 – (March) The Truce with Spain ends. Some Dutch conservatives see the need to expand the Republic's influence into the New World.

(June) The Dutch West India Company (VOC) is created and granted a trade monopoly over the region.
1624 and 1625 — The Company transports settlers to Governor's Island and Albany. Willem Verhulst is the first director of the colony.

1626 — The Dutch in Fort Orange attempt to defend their trading partners, the Mahicans, against the Mohawks. The Dutch and Mahicans are defeated and the director of the fort, Van Criekenbeeck, loses his life.

Peter Minuit becomes director of the colony. Negotiates an alliance with the Mohawk and use of Manhattan Island with the Lenape. Relocates the colony onto the southern tip of the Island. The National Museum of the American Indian is located at the site of Fort Amsterdam.

1629 — In an effort to stem smuggling, encourage immigration, and raise profits, the Company grants patroonships to Dutch investors. The patroonships were essentially fiefs where the patroons established the rule of law, though they were required to trade through the VOC. Rensselaerswyck was the only successful patroonship.

1634 — The Mohawk choke off the fur supply, attempting to play the Dutch and the French off each other. Harmen van den Bogaert is the lead negotiator for a group that is led into the interior of the country by Mohawk guides. They are the first recorded Europeans to travel that far into the Mohawk Valley. Van den Bogaert wrote a journal describing his journey and the customs of his hosts. Includes a Mohawk word list.

1638 — Willem Kieft, the fifth director of the colony, succeeds the incompetent Wouter van Twiller.

1640 — Jacques Van Slyck born.

1643-1645 — Kieft's War. One of the most dramatic failures of diplomacy in the United States. During February of 1643, Kieft attempts to raise cash for the colony by turning the colony's alliances with its neighbors into a protection racket and demanding "tribute" from the neighboring tribes. The Indians refuse to pay the tax. The Tappans comment that "The sachem [Kieft] must be a mean fellow; he had not invited them to come and live here, that he should now take away their corn." If anyone was to demand tribute, it should have been the Native hosts.

Kieft had circulated a petition in support of attacking the Indians, but most of the Dutch appear to have opposed the war, in spite of increasing violent incidents on both sides. Kieft ignores the colonists' orders nighttime attacks on two villages near Pavonia in New Jersey and Corlaers' Hook in Manhattan. On the night of the initial attack, a number of Raritans sought shelter at Fort Amsterdam, assuming that the raid had been undertaken by a rival tribe and knowing the Dutch to be friends. Upon the soldiers' return, Kieft praised the soldiers for their wholesale slaughter of women and children.

During the course of the war, Dutch settlements in Brooklyn, Newtown, and Newark were destroyed, in addition to many Native towns in the area. The Dutch army burned Indian crops and attacked Indian villages on festival nights. Men, women, and children...

children on both sides were killed in the war. A peace was finally concluded in New Amsterdam on August 30, 1645. One colonist wrote of the war: “Our fields lie fallow and waste; our dwellings and other buildings are burnt; not a handful can be planted or sown this fall on all the abandoned places. All this through a foolish hankering after war; for it is known to all right thinking men here, that these Indians have lived as lambs among us until a few years ago, injuring no one, and affording every assistance to our nation.”

1647 – Kieft’s authoritarian measures and reported cruelty against Indian captives disgusted Dutchmen in both Amsterdams. Peter Stuyvesant arrives in New Amsterdam to relieve Kieft of his duties. He was selected in 1645, after the Company directors heard about Kieft’s heavy-handedness. Kieft dies in a shipwreck on his way back to the Netherlands.

1648 – The Peace of Munster concludes the Eighty Years’ War.

1649 – Van der Donck returns to Amsterdam.

1650 – Publication of Report of New Netherland. Within a week of its publication, Van der Donck and the Company charter a ship for 200 settlers.

1655 – The Peach War. Supposedly began when a Dutch settler killed a Munsee woman whom he caught taking peaches from his farm. By this point the local Native population had been greatly weakened by European diseases and war. Many Indians were reduced to poverty, and, if she was poor, this woman was most likely acting out of desperation. Alternatively, she could have taken the peaches under the assumption that she had as much right to them as the farmer did. By this point, the Dutch habit of allowing livestock to roam had become a major point of contention, as the animals tended to take food from Indian farms and villages.

While Stuyvesant and the army were away, attacking New Sweden (Wilmington), a group of 500 or so Indians – possibly Mohawks, Mahicans, Esopus, Wappinger, Hackensack, and other New Jersey and lower Hudson bands – wreaked havoc in New York City and the surrounding areas. They claimed they were searching for members of tribes from Eastern Long Island, an explanation that Stuyvesant accepted. He blamed the colonists’ rashness for creating ill will with their Native neighbors. The Indians took 150 colonists hostage. All but a few of the captives were eventually returned. The war prompted Stuyvesant to forbid relations with Indians, and to consolidate the fledgling city closer to the fort.

First edition of Description of New Netherland.

1656 – The VOC loses its colony in Brazil to the Portuguese. New Netherland is now the struggling company’s only holding in the New World.

1658 – The village of Harlem established.

186 Quoted in ibid., 119.
1659 – 1663 — Two localized wars between the Esopus and the Dutch colonists in what is now Ulster country. Drained Dutch resources. The death knell of any attempt at mutual understanding between the Indians and the Dutch.

1660s — Hilletie and Jasper born.

1664 — The English invade New Amsterdam. The Dutch surrender without a fight, much to Stuyvesant’s disappointment.

1667 — Hilletie and Jacques inherit land from their mother.

1676 — Cornelis Van Slyck dies.


1701 — February 10; Hilletie dies.
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