Looking Out for Number One: Conflicting Cultural Values in Early Seventeenth-Century Virginia

T. H. Breen

Despite their common English background, the thousands of European men and women who migrated to Barbados, Virginia, and New England during the seventeenth century created strikingly different societies in the New World. As one historian, Thomas J. Wertenbaker, explained of Virginia, it "developed a life of its own, a life not only unlike that of England, but unique and distinct."[1] Certainly, for anyone analyzing the founding of these colonies a major problem is accounting for the appearance of diverse social forms.[2]

This essay examines the creation of a distinct culture in Virginia roughly between 1617 and 1630. Although early Virginians shared certain general ideas, attitudes, and norms with other English migrants, their operative values were quite different from those that shaped social and institutional behavior in places such as Massachusetts Bay. Virginia's physical environment, its extensive network of navigable rivers, its rich soil, its ability to produce large quantities of marketable tobacco, powerfully reinforced values which the first settlers carried to America. The interplay between a particular variant of Jacobean culture and a specific New World setting determined the character of Virginia's institutions, habits of personal interaction, and patterns of group behavior that persisted long after the early adventurers had died or returned to the mother country.

An ethnographic reconstruction of Virginia between 1617 and 1630 begins with an analysis of the values that the settlers carried with them to the New World. Here the distinction that social anthropologists make between "dominant" and "variant" values becomes relevant.[3] The men and women who sailed for the Chesapeake Bay in the early seventeenth century were certainly part of a general English culture. They shared a set of views, customs, and expectations with other Jacobeans, with New Englanders and Barbadians, with those persons who remained in the mother country. Historians of colonial America have closely analyzed this common cultural background, and there is no need to repeat their findings in detail.

From these accounts we learn that the crucial formative values transferred to Virginia were religious and political. Their constitutional heritage provided the colonials with civil and legal imperatives; their religion with a world view that structured their daily lives. Perry Miller has reminded us that the Virginians were products of the English Reformation. Both Virginians and New Englanders, he argued, were "recruited from the same type of Englishmen, pious, hard-working, middle-class, accepting literally and solemnly the tenets of Puritanism—original sin, predestination, and election—who could conceive of the society they were erecting in America *only* within a religious framework." Miller claimed that without knowledge of this theological system, the history of Virginia was no more than "a bare chronicle."[4] Other writers, without denying the importance of Cal-

T. H. Breen *is Professor of History and Director of the American Culture Program at Northwestern University. He has published extensively in the field of early American history.* *He is indebted to Paul J. Bohanan, James Sheehan, Robert Gilmour, and Peter Wood for advice and criticism.*

1. Thomas J. Wertenbaker, *The Planters of Colonial Virginia* (Princeton, 1922), p. 29. Also, Wesley Frank Craven, *The Southern Colonies in the Seventeenth Century 1607–1689* (Baton Rouge, 1964), p. 171.

2. The author intends to explore this problem in greater depth in a book-length study.

3. Social anthropologists recognize that men and women living in a complex society such as colonial Virginia identify to a greater or lesser degree with separate, but overlapping, cultures. The distinction between dominant and variant value systems is an important one for historians, for if the difference is not clearly kept in mind, they may find themselves clumsily attempting to relate dominant cultural values to variant social and institutional behavior. Such behavior, of course, is frequently the product of value-orientations peculiar to a certain subculture. As two authorities on the structure of values have explained, "in most of the analyses of the common value element in cultural patterning, the *dominant* values of people have been overstressed and *variant* values ignored." Florence R. Kluckhohn and Fred L. Strodtbeck, *Variations in Value-Orientations: A Theory Tested in Five Cultures* (Evanston, Ill., 1961), p. 3; Clyde Kluckhohn, ed., *Culture and Behavior* (Glencoe, Ill., 1962), pp. 35–44; Evon Z. Vogt, "American Subcultural Continua as Exemplified by the Mormons and Texans," *American Anthropologist*, 59 (1955), 1168, 1170–71. See also Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture* (Chicago, 1965), chap. 3.

4. Perry Miller, "Religion and Society in the Early Literature of Virginia," in *Errand into the Wilderness* (New York, 1964), pp. 100, 108 (emphasis added). Cf. C.

vinistic Protestantism, have stressed the role of English legal and political precedents in shaping institutional behavior. Wesley Frank Craven explained that the Chesapeake migrants brought "their identification with the traditions of the Common Law, a decentralized system of local administration, and parliamentary usages of government for the development of the colony's political institutions."[5]

Early Virginians undoubtedly subscribed to these general constitutional and religious values and whenever feasible, attempted to translate them into action. Anyone who has read the colony's history knows the first settlers saw God's hand behind human affairs, marched to church to the beat of a drum, and formed a representative legislative body called the House of Burgesses. But this sort of analysis does not carry us very far in understanding why Virginia society was unlike those formed by English migrants in other parts of the New World, or why despite the presence of common dominant values various groups of settlers created distinctive patterns of social and institutional behavior.

Such problems are reduced when we realize that the early settlers in Virginia were an unusual group of Jaobeans. In no way did they represent a random sample of seventeenth-century English society or a cross section of English values. While little is known about the specific origins or backgrounds of most settlers, we do have a fairly clear idea of what sort of inducements persuaded men and women to move to Virginia. The colony's promotional literature emphasized economic opportunity, usually quick and easy riches. In his "True Relation of the State of Virginia" written in 1616, for example, John Rolfe pitied England's hard-working farmers who barely managed to make ends meet. "What happiness might they enjoy in Virginia," Rolfe mused, "where they may have ground for nothing, more than they can manure, reap more fruits and profits with half the labour."[6] And in 1622 Peter Arundle, overlooking the colony's recent military setbacks at the hands of the Indians, assured English friends that "any laborious honest man may in a short time become rich in this Country."[7] It was a compelling dream, one which certain

Vann Woodward "Southern Ethic in a Puritan World," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 25 [1968], 343–70.

5. Wesley Frank Craven, *White, Red, and Black: The Seventeenth-Century Virginians* (Charlottesville, 1971), p. 2.

6. *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 8th Report, Appendix, Part II, 31.

7. Susan M. Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London* (4 vols., Washington, 1906–35), III, 589.

Englishmen were all too willing to accept as truth. Indeed, so many persons apparently risked life and possessions in the illusive search for the main chance that John Harvey, a future Royal Governor of Virginia, begged men of integrity on both sides of the Atlantic to control "the rumors of plenty to be found at all tyme[s] in Virginia."[8]

The lure of great wealth easily obtained held an especially strong appeal for a specific type of seventeenth-century Englishman, individuals who belonged to a distinct subculture within Jacobean society. By all accounts, early Virginia drew a disproportionately large number of street toughs, roughnecks fresh from the wars in Ireland, old soldiers looking for new glory, naive adventurers, mean-spirited sea captains, marginal persons attempting to recoup their losses.[9] If contemporaries are to be believed, Virginia found itself burdened with "many unruly gallants packed thether by their friends to escape ill destinies."[10] Even Sir Thomas Dale, himself a recent veteran of English military expeditions in Holland was shocked by the colony's settlers, "so prophane, so riotous, so full of Mutenie and treasonable Intendments" that they provided little "testimonie beside their names that they are Christians."[11]

Even if Dale exaggerated, there is no reason to question that the colonists were highly individualistic, motivated by the hope of material gain, and in many cases, not only familiar with violence but also quite prepared to employ it to obtain their own ends in the New World.[12] By and large, they appear to have been extremely competitive and suspicious of other men's motives. Mutiny and anarchy sometimes seemed more attractive than obeying someone else's orders. Few of the colonists showed substantial interest in creating a

8. *4 Collections*, Massachusetts Historical Society, IX, 73.

9. See Richard L. Morton, *Colonial Virginia*, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill, 1960), I, 19–32; Sigmund Diamond, "From Organization to Society: Virginia in the Seventeenth Century," *American Journal of Sociology*, 63 (1958), 457–75; Wertenbaker, *Planters*, pp. 32–33; Irene W. D. Hecht, "The Virginia Muster of 1624/5 as a Source for Demographic History," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 30 (1973), 65–92. Cf. T. H. Breen and Stephen Foster, "Moving to the New World: The Character of Early Massachusetts Immigration," ibid., 189–222.

10. John Smith, *Travels and Works*, ed. Edward Arber and A. G. Bradley, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1910), I, 162.

11. Alexander Brown, *The Genesis of the United States*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1890), I, 506–7.

12. On the expectation of quick wealth, see, David Bertelson, *The Lazy South* (New York, 1967), pp. 19–27. Edward D. Neill, *History of the Virginia Company of London* (New York, 1869), p. 28.

permanent settlement. For the adventurer, Virginia was not a new home, not a place to carry out a divine mission, but simply an area to be exploited for private gain. It was this "variant" strain of values—a sense of living only for the present or near future, a belief that the environment could and should be forced to yield quick financial returns, an assumption that everyone was looking out for number one and hence that cooperative ventures of all sorts were bound to fail—that help to account for the distinctive patterns of social and institutional behavior found in early Virginia.[13]

The transfer of these variant values, of course, only partially explains Virginia's cultural development. The attitudes, beliefs, and ideas that the founders brought with them to the New World interacted with specific environmental conditions. The settlers' value system would certainly have withered in a physical setting that offered no natural resources capable of giving plausibility to the adventurers' original expectations. If by some chance the Virginians had landed in a cold, rocky, inhospitable country devoid of valuable marketable goods, then they would probably have given up the entire venture and like a defeated army, straggled home. That is exactly what happened in 1607 to the unfortunate men who settled in Sagadohoc, Maine, a tiny outpost that failed to produce instant wealth.[14] Virginia almost went the way of Sagadohoc. The first decade of its history was filled with apathy and disappointment, and at several points, the entire enterprise seemed doomed. The privatistic values that the colonists had carried to Jamestown, a tough, exploitive competitive individualism were dysfunctional—even counter-productive—in an environment which offered up neither spices nor gold, neither passages to China nor a subject population easily subdued and exploited. In fact, before 1617 this value system generated only political faction and petty personal violence, things that a people struggling for survival could ill-afford.[15]

13. Bertelson, *The Lazy South*, pp. 3–59; *Travels and Works*, I, 47–227; cf. Evon Z. Vogt "American Subcultural Continua," 1170–71. This classification of values was originally suggested to me by Florence R. Kluckhohn's "Dominant and Substitute Profiles of Cultural Orientations: Their Significance for the Analysis of Social Stratification," *Social Forces*, 28 (1950), 376–93.

14. Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History*, 4 vols. (New Haven, 1934), I, 78–97.

15. John Smith, *Travels and Works*, I, 47–227; T. H. Breen, "Transfer of Culture: Chance and Design in Shaping Massachusetts Bay, 1630–1660," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 132 (1978), 3–17.

The successful cultivation of tobacco altered the course of Virginia's cultural development. Clearly, in an economic sense, the crop saved the colony. What is less obvious but no less true, is that the discovery of a lucrative export preserved the founders' individualistic values. Suddenly, after ten years of error and failure, the adventurers' transported values were no longer at odds with their physical environment. The settlers belatedly stumbled across the payoff; the forests once so foreboding, so unpromising, could now be exploited with a reasonable expectation of quick return. By 1617 the process was well-advanced, and as one planter reported, "the streets, and all other spare places planted with Tobacco . . . The Colonie dispersed all about, planting *Tobacco*."[16]

The interplay between the settlers' value system and their environment involved more than economic considerations. Once a market for tobacco had been assured, people spread out along the James and York Rivers. Whenever possible, they formed what the directors of the Virginia Company called private hundreds, small plantations frequently five or more miles apart which groups of adventurers developed for their own profit. By 1619 forty-four separate patents for private plantations had been issued, and by the early 1620's a dispersed settlement pattern, long to be a characteristic of Virginia society, was well established.[17] The dispersion of the colony's population was a cultural phenomenon. It came about not simply because the Virginia soil was unusually well suited for growing tobacco or because its deep rivers provided easy access to the interior, but because men holding privatistic values regarded the land as an exploitable resource, and within their structure of priorities, the pursuit of private gain outranked the creation of corporate communities.

The scattering of men and women along the colony's waterways, their self-imposed isolation, obviously reduced the kind of ongoing face-to-face contacts that one associates with the villages of seventeenth-century New England.[18] A migrant to Virginia tended to be

16. Ibid., II, 535.

17. Wesley Frank Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company* (New York, 1932), pp. 59–63; Evon Z. Vogt and Ethel Albert, eds., *People of Rimrock: A Study of Values in Five Cultures* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), pp. 163–70; Evon Z. Vogt and Thomas F. O'Dea, "A Comparative Study of the Role of Values in Social Action in Two Southwestern Communities," *American Sociological Review*, 18 (1953), 645–51.

18. Bertelson, *The Lazy South*, pp. 38–42. Cf. Philip J. Greven, Jr., *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca,

highly competitive and to assume that other men would do unto him as he would do unto them—certainly an unpleasant prospect. Dispersion heightened this sense of suspicion. Because communication between private plantations was difficult, Virginians possessed no adequate means to distinguish the truth about their neighbors from malicious rumor, and lacking towns and well-developed voluntary organizations, without shared rituals, ceremonies, even market days, they drew increasingly distrustful of whatever lay beyond the perimeter of their own few acres.[19]

The kind of human relationships that developed in colonial Virginia graphically reveal the effect of highly individualistic values upon social behavior. In this settlement only two meaningful social categories existed, a person was either free or dependent, either an exploiter or a resource. There was no middle ground. Those men who held positions of political and economic power treated indentured servants and slaves not as human beings, but as instruments to produce short-run profits. As a consequence of this outlook, life on the private plantations was a degrading experience for thousands of men and women who arrived in Virginia as bonded laborers. Whatever their expectations about the colony may have been before they migrated, the servants' reality consisted of poor food, meager clothing, hard work, and more often than not, early death. The leading planters showed little interest in reforming these conditions. The servants were objects, things to be gambled away in games of chance, beaten or abused, and then, replaced when they wore out.[20]

But dependence has another side. In Virginia dominance went hand in hand with fear, for no matter how tractable, how beaten down, the servants may have appeared, both masters and laborers recognized the potential for violence inherent in such relationships. In the early 1620's several worried planters complained that Captain John Martin, a long-standing troublemaker for the Virginia Company, "hath made his owne Territory there a receptacle of Vagabonds and bankerupts & other disorderly persons."[21] Whether the rumors of Martin's activities were accurate is not the point. In such a society a gathering of "Vagabonds" represented a grave threat, a base from which the exploited could harass their former masters. The anxiety resurfaced in 1624 when the Virginia Company lost its charter and no one in the colony knew for certain who held legitimate authority. In shrill rhetoric that over the course of a century would become a regular feature of Virginia statute books, the colony's Assembly immediately ordered that "no person within this Colonie upon the rumor of supposed change and alterations [may] presume to be disobedient to the presente Government, nor servants to theire privatt officers masters or overseers, at their utmost perills."[22]

The distrust that permeated Virginia society poisoned political institutions. Few colonists seem to have believed that local rulers would on their own initiative work for the public good. Instead, they assumed that persons in authority would use their office for personal gain. One settler called Governor George Yeardley, a man who grew rich directing public affairs, "the right worthy statesman for his own profit."[23] William Capps, described simply as an old planter, referred to the governor as an "old smoker" and claimed that this official had "stood for a cypher whilst the Indians stood ripping open our guts."[24] Cynicism about the motives of the colony's leaders meant that few citizens willingly sacrificed for the good of the state. In fact, Virginia planters seem to have regarded government orders as a threat to their independence, almost as a personal affront. William Strachey, secretary of the colony, condemned what he labeled the general "want of government." He reported, "every man overvaluing his owne worth, would be a Commander: every man

N.Y., 1970); Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years, Dedham, Massachusetts 1636–1736* (New York, 1970); John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York, 1970); and T. H. Breen, "Persistent Localism: English Social Change and the Shaping of New England Institutions," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 32 (1975), 3–28.

19. See, Philip A. Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols. (New York, 1895), II, 522–24, 568. William Capps wrote from Virginia that the typical planter's attitude could be summed up in this statement: "I will forsweare ever bending my mind for the publicque good, and betake me to my own profit with some halfe a score of men of my owne and lie rootinge in the earth like a hog and reckon Tobacco and unquem by hundredths, and quarters" (*Records of the Virginia Company*, IV, 38–39).

20. The fullest account of the servants' lives in early Virginia is Edmund S. Morgan, "The First American Boom 1618 to 1630," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 28 (1971), 169–98. This instrumental view of human relationships extended even to marriage (*Records of the Virginia Company*, I, 566).

21. Ibid., II, 42. See also Lyon Gardiner Tyler, ed., *Narratives of Early Virginia 1606–1625* (New York, 1946), pp. 247–78.

22. *Records of the Virginia Company*, IV, 584.

23. *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 8th Report, Appendix, Part II, 39. Also, Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia*, ed. Louis B. Wright (Charlottesville, 1968), p. 44.

24. *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 8th Report, Appendix, Part II, 39.

underprising anothers value, denied to be commanded."[25] Other colonists expressed agreement with Strachey's views. During the famous first meeting of the House of Burgesses in 1619, the representatives of the various plantations twice commented upon the weakness of Virginia's governing institutions. Toward the end of the session, they declared that whatever laws they passed in the future should go into immediate effect without special authorization from London, "for otherwise this people . . . would in a shorte time growe so insolent, as they would shake off all government, and there would be no living among them."[26]

The colonists' achievements in education and religion were meager. From time to time, Virginians commented upon the importance of churches and schools in their society, but little was done to transform rhetoric into reality. Church buildings were in a perpetual state of decay; ministers were poorly supported by their parishioners. An ambitious plan for a college came to nothing, and schools for younger children seem to have been nonexistent. The large distances between plantations and the pressure to keep every able-bodied person working in the fields, no doubt discouraged the development of local schools and parish churches, but the colony's dispersed settlement plan does not in itself explain the absence of these institutions.[27] A colonywide boarding school could have been constructed in Jamestown, a Harvard of Virginia, but the colony's planters were incapable of the sustained, cooperative effort that such a project would have required. They responsed to general societal needs as individuals, not as groups. Later in the seventeenth century some successful planters sent their sons at great expense to universities in England and Scotland, but not until the end of the century did the colonists found a local college.[28]

An examination of Virginia's military policies between 1617 and 1630 provides the clearest link between social values and institutional behavior. During this important transitional period, military affairs were far better recorded than were other social activities, and the historian can trace with a fair degree of confidence how particular military decisions reflected the colonists' value system. And second, in any society military efforts reveal a people's social priorities, their willingness to sacrifice for the common good, and their attitudes toward the allocation of community resources. Certainly, in early Virginia, maintaining a strong defense should have been a major consideration. Common sense alone seemed to dictate that a group of settlers confronted with a powerful Indian confederation and foreign marauders would, in military matters at least, cooperate for their own safety.[29] But in point of fact, our common sense was not the rule of the seventeenth-century Virginian. The obsession with private profits was a more compelling force than was the desire to create a dependable system of self-defense. This destructive individualism disgusted John Pory, at one time the colony's secretary of state. In 1620 he reported that Governor Yeardley asked the men of Jamestown "to contribute some labor to a bridge, and to certaine platformes to mounte greate ordinance upon, being both for the use and defense of the same Citty, and so of themselves; yet they repyned as much as if all their goods had bene taken from them."[30]

Virginians paid dearly for their failure to work together. On March 22, 1622, the Indians of the region launched a coordinated attack on the scattered, poorly defended white settlements, and before the colonists could react, 347 of them had been killed. The details of this disaster are well known.[31] The Massacre and the events of the months that followed provide rare insight into the workings of the Virginia culture. The shock of this defeat called into question previous institutional policies—not just military ones—and some colonists even saw the setback as an opportunity to reform society, to develop a new set of values.[32]

Virginia's vulnerability revealed to some men the need to transform the privatistic culture into a more tightly knit, cooperative ven-

25. William Strachey, "A True Reportory of the Wracke," in Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 20 vols. (Glasgow, 1906), XIX, 67.

26. Tyler, ed., *Narratives*, pp. 277–78.

27. Philip A. Bruce, *Social Life in Old Virginia*, ed. Harvey Wish (New York: 1965, pb. ed.), 56, 293–4; Craven, *Southern Colonies*, 132, 142–3.

28. See Louis B. Wright, *The First Gentlemen of Virginia* (Charlottesville, 1964), pp. 95–113; Beverley, *Present State of Virginia*, chap. 8.

29. See Louis M. Terrell, "Societal Stress, Political Instability, and Levels of Military Effort," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 15 (1971), 325–46. See also "The First American Boom," 181. On the character of Virginia's Indians in this period, see Craven, *White, Red, and Black*, pp. 39–67.

30. *Records of the Virginia Company*, III, 302.

31. A full account is in Morton, *Colonial Virginia*, I, 72–85.

32. On the colonists' immediate reactions see William S. Powell, "Aftermath of the Massacre: The First Indian War, 1622–1632," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (1958), 44–75; John Smith, *Travels and Works*, II, 584; *Records of the Virginia Company*, III, 612.

ture. Local rulers bravely announced that "this Massacre will prove much to the speedie advancement of the Colony and much to the benifitt of all those that shall nowe come thither."[33] No longer would the planters live so far apart. Shortsighted dreams of tobacco fortunes would be laid aside, and the people would join together in the construction of genuine towns. And most important, the settlers would no longer evade their military responsibilities. As the members of the Virginia Council wrote only a month after the Massacre, "our first and princypall care should have beene for our safetie . . . yet its very necessarie for us yett at last, to laye a better and surer foundation for the tyme to come."[34] But despite the death and destruction and despite the bold declarations about a new start, the colonists proceeded to repeat the very activities that contemporary commentators agreed had originally caused the people's immense suffering.

Even though the Indians remained a grave threat to security throughout the 1620's, the settlers continued to grumble about the burden of military service. Each person seemed to assess the tragedy only in personal terms—how, in other words, had the Indian Massacre affected his ability to turn a profit. By the end of the summer of 1622, there were unmistakable signs that many people no longer regarded the defeat of the Indians as a community responsibility. Few men talked of the common good; fewer still seemed prepared to sacrifice their lives or immediate earning power in order to preserve the colony from a second disaster.

Even as the governor and his council were weighing the various military alternatives, colonists were moving back to their isolated frontier plantations. The dispersion of fighting men, of course, seemed to invite new military defeats. But the danger from the Indians, although clearly perceived, was not sufficient to deter Virginians from taking up possessions which one person declared were "larger than 100 tymes their Nomber were able to Cultivate."[35] In a poignant letter to his parents in England, a young servant, Richard Frethorne, captured the sense of doom that hung over the private plantations. "We are but 32 to fight against 3000 [Indians] if they should Come," he explained, "and the nighest helpe that Wee have is ten miles of us, and when the rogues overcame this place last [Martin's Hundred], they slew 80 Persons how then shall wee doe for wee lye even in their teeth, they may easily take us but that God is mercefull."[36] Frethorne wrote this letter in March 1623, just twelve months after the Massacre had revealed to all the survivors the consequences of lying in the Indians' teeth.

33. *Records of the Virginia Company*, II, 116. Also, ibid., 96. John Smith, *Travels and Works*, II, 579. In July 1622 James I heard about the Virginia disaster and "apprehended the cause thereof to be . . . that the Planters in Virginia attended more their present proffitt rather than their safety" (*Records of the Virginia Company*, II, 96).

34. Ibid., III, 71, 161, 302, 613; IV, 10, 22–25, 65–66; Craven, *Dissolution*, pp. 195–203; Darrett B. Rutman, "A Militant New World, 1607–1640" (unpublished thesis, University of Virginia, 1959), p. 243.

35. *Records of the Virginia Company*, IV, 66, 70; *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd. ser., 6 (1926), 120.

The Virginia Council protested to colonial administrators in England, "It is noe smale difficultie and griefe unto us to maintaine a warr by unwillinge people, who . . . Crye out of the loss of Tyme against their Commanders, *in a warr where nothinge is to be gained*."[37] By contrast, the village militia in Massachusetts Bay provided an effective fighting force precisely because the soldiers trusted those persons who remained at home. In theory, at least, most New Englanders defined their lives in terms of the total community, not in terms of private advancement, and the troops had no reason to believe that their friends and neighbors would try to profit from their sacrifice.[38] But in Virginia long before the massive enslavement of black Africans, human relationships were regarded as a matter of pounds and pence, and each day one man chased the Indians through the wilderness or helped build a fortification, another man grew richer growing tobacco. When William Capps in 1623 attempted to organize a raiding party of forty men to go against the Indians, he was greeted with excuses and procrastination. Almost in disbelief, he informed an English correspondent of the planters' train of thought, "take away one of my men, there's 2000 Plantes gone, thates 500 waight of Tobacco, yea and what shall this man doe, runne after the Indians. . . . I have perhaps 10, perhaps 15, perhaps 20, men and am able to secure my owne Plantacion; how will they doe that are fewer?

36. *Records of the Virginia Company*, IV, 58–59.

37. Ibid., IV, 451; *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd. ser., 8 (1927), 210. Also, Wesley Frank Craven, "Indian Policy in Early Virginia," ibid., 3rd. ser., 1 (1944), 73.

38. See T. H. Breen, "English Origins and New World Development: The Case of the Covenanted Militia in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts," *Past and Present*, No. 57 (1972), 74–96; Breen and Foster, "The Puritans' Greatest Achievement," 5–22; Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee, Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690–1765* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967).

let them first be Crusht alittle and then perhaps they will themselves make up the Nomber for theire own safeties."[39] Perhaps Frethorne's anxiety grew out of the knowledge that no one beyond Martin's Hundred really cared what the Indians might do to him and his comrades.

Such foot-dragging obviously did nothing to promote colonial security. Regardless of the planters' behavior, however, Virginia leaders felt compelled to deal with the Indians. After all, these appointed officials did not want to appear incompetent before the king and his councillors. But the Virginians soon discovered that in the absence of public-spirited citizen soldiers, their range of military responses was effectively reduced to three. The governor and his council could make the business of war so lucrative that Virginians would willingly leave the tobacco fields to fight, entrust private contractors with the responsibility of defending the entire population, or persuade the king to send English troops at his own expense to protect the colonists from their Indian enemies. Unfortunately, each of these alternatives presented specific drawbacks that rendered them essentially useless as military policies.

The first option was to make the conditions of service so profitable that the planters or in their place, the planters' servants, would join in subduing the common enemy. In times of military crisis, such as the one following the Great Massacre, both Company and Crown officials tried their best to persuade the settlers that warfare was not all hardship and sacrifice—indeed, that for some men, presumably not themselves, Indian fighting could be an economic opportunity. For the majority, however, such arguments apparently rang hollow. The colonists had learned that local Indians made poor slaves, and in a spacious colony like Virginia, the offer of free land was an inadequate incentive for risking one's life. The promise of plunder drew few men away from the tobacco fields, and with typical candor, Captain John Smith announced in 1624, "I would not give twenty pound for all the pillage . . . to be got amongst the Salvages in twenty yeeres."[40]

39. *Records of the Virginia Company*, IV, 38–39; John Smith, *Travels and Works*, II, 588. Also, *Acts of the Privy Council, 1628 July–1629 April*, p. 88. Vogt and O'Dea report a fascinating parallel in their study of Mormon and Texan subcultures in New Mexico. "Comparative Study of the Role of Values," 650.

40. John Smith, *Travels and Works*, II, 590. The settlers, desperately needed food after the disaster. But even so, the governor had to warn Virginia troops against private trading with the enemy unless they had received their commander's authorization (*Records of the Virginia Company*, III, 655). On the value of land in relation to the labor force and on the quality of Virginia's rulers during the 1620's, see Morgan, "First American Boom."

A second possible solution for Virginia's military needs was to hire someone to defend the colonists. The merits of this approach seemed obvious. The state could simply transfer public funds to groups of enterprising individuals who in turn might construct forts along the rivers, build palisades to ward off Indian attacks, and even in some cases, fight pitched battles along the frontier. Unlike the New Englanders, who generally regarded matters of defense as a community responsibility, much like providing churches and schools, Virginians accepted the notion that private contractors could serve as an adequate substitute for direct popular participation in military affairs.

In this belief the Virginians were mistaken. A stream of opportunists came forward with schemes that would compensate for the colony's unreliable militia. Without exception, however, these plans drained the public treasury but failed to produce lasting results. Indeed, Virginia's social values spawned a class of military adventurers—perhaps military profiteers would be a more accurate description—who did their best to transform warfare into a profitable private business.

Some of the private military schemes of the 1620's were bizarre, others humorous, almost all misallocations of public revenues.[41] In the summer of 1622 a sea captain named Samuel Each, whose military qualifications remain obscure, offered to construct a fort of oyster shells to guard the mouth of the James River. Each's project seemed a convenient way to secure the colony's shipping from possible foreign harassment. For his work, the captain was promised a handsome reward, but as was so often to be the case in the history of seventeenth-century Virginia, the contractor disappointed the settlers' expectations. The proposed site for the fortification turned out to be under water at high tide and "at low water with everie wynd washed over by the surges."[42] One colonist sardonically described Each's

41. Captain Roger Smith in 1623; *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd. ser., (1928). 52; *Records of the Virginia Company*, IV, 229; William Capps in 1623; ibid., IV. 37; Captain Bargrave in 1623, "Lord Sackville's Papers Respecting Virginia, 1613–1631," *American Historical Review*, 27 (1921–22), 493–538, 733–65; Samuel Mathews in 1630; William W. Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large*, 13 vols. (Richmond, 1819–23), I, 150, 175. In 1623–24 Captain John Smith proposed sending an army of professional rangers to Virginia, led by Smith (*Travels and Works*, II, 588).

42. *Records of the Virginia Company*, IV, 74.

pile of sea shells as "a Castle in the aire" and suggested that the captain had wisely died on the job "to save his Credit."[43]

During the 1620's other adventurers followed, but their performance was no more impressive than Each's had been. These men sometimes couched their proposals in rhetoric about the common good. There was no question, however, about what considerations motivated the contractors. In 1628, for example, two of the colony's most successful planters, Samuel Mathews and William Claiborne, presented the king of England with what they called "A Proposition Concerning the Winning of the Forest." They humbly informed Charles I that their plan grew "not out of any private respects, or intent to gaine to our selves, but because in our owne mindes wee perceive [?] our selves bound to expend both our lives and fortunes in so good a service for this Plantation." One may be justly skeptical about the extent of their anticipated personal sacrifice, for in the next paragraph, the two Virginians demanded 1200 pounds "in readie monye" and 100 pounds sterling every year thereafter.[44] Governor Francis Wyatt gave the project begrudging support. He explained that because of the planters' "too much affection to their private dividents" and their unwillingness to alter their pattern of settlement in the interest of defense, Mathews and Claiborne should be encouraged to construct a fortified wall running six miles between the Charles and James Rivers.[45] The two men promised to build a palisade and staff it with their own armed servants. There is no record of what happened to this particular plan, but if it had been accepted, the servants most likely would have spent their days planting tobacco for two men already quite wealthy.

The reliance on military adventurers held dangers of which the Virginians of the 1620's were only dimly aware. As long as the price of tobacco remained relatively high, the colonists ignored much of the waste and favoritism associated with lucrative military contracts. But high taxes caused grumbling, even serious social unrest. In the early 1620's the members of the Virginia Council reported that when it came time to reimburse Captain Each, there was "a general unwillingness (not to say an opposition) in all almost but our-

43. Ibid.; Philip A. Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols. (New York, 1910), II, 129–30.

44. Colonial Office Papers, Class I, Vol. 4, No. 10 II, Public Record Office, London, microfilm, Yale University Library.

45. *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd. ser., 8 (1928), 164.

selves."[46] As tobacco profits dropped over the course of the seventeenth century, small planters and landless freemen showed an increasing hostility to private military contractors, and a major precipitant of Bacon's Rebellion was Governor William Berkeley's expensive frontier forts which appeared to do little good except for a few of the Governor's friends engaged in the Indian trade.[47]

A second difficulty with the adventurers was no bigger than a man's hand during the 1620's. The colony needed every able-bodied defender that could be found, and no one seems to have worried much about arming indentured servants and poor freemen. But in later years, Virginians would have cause to reconsider the wisdom of creating mercenary bodies composed largely of impoverished recruits. The leading planters discovered, in fact, that one could not systematically exploit other human beings for private profit and then expect those same people to risk their lives fighting to preserve the society that tolerated such oppressive conditions. As privatism became the way of life, the colony's leading planters were less and less certain whether internal or external enemies posed a greater threat to Virginia's security.[48]

A third possible solution to the settlement's early military needs lay in obtaining direct English assistance. During the 1620's Virginia leaders frequently petitioned the mother country for arms, men and supplies. In 1626—four years after the Massacre—the royal governor informed the Privy Council that the security of Virginia required "no less nombers then five hundred soldiers to be yearly sent over." On other occasions officials in Virginia admitted that as few as 50 or 100 troops would do, but however many men England provided, the colonists expected the king to pay the bill. Free protection would remove the necessity for high taxes.[49] Understandably, the English adminis-

46. *Records of the Virginia Company*, VI, 454; also, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd. ser., 6 (1926), 118; *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 16 (1908), 37. In December 1622 Captain Martin was appointed Master of Ordinance in Virginia, "with the like ffees and Proffitts as are accustomed to the like place here in England. . . ." The Company almost immediately began to receive complaints about such high salaries (*Records of the Virginia Company*, II, 169).

47. Shy, *Toward Lexington*, p. 8. Wilcomb E. Washburn defends Berkeley (*The Governor and the Rebel. A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia* [Chapel Hill, 1957], pp. 28–29).

48. Edmund Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom the American Paradox," *Journal of American History*, 59 (1972), 5–29; T. H. Breen, "A Changing Labor Force and Race Relations in Virginia 1660–1710," *Journal of Social History*, 7 (1973), 3–25.

49. *Records of the Virginia Company*, IV, 572; CO 1/4, 1; CO 1/5, 22; *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd. ser., 6 (1927), 118; 8 (1928), 165.

trators never found the settlers' argument persuasive, and royal policy makers may well have wondered what several thousand colonists were doing to defend themselves.

Before the 1670's not a single English soldier was dispatched to Virginia. Nevertheless, despite repeated failures in gaining English assistance, the dream of acquiring a cheap, dependable military force remained strong. Had the colony's own citizens been more involved in Virginia's defense, more willing to live closer together, there would have been no reason to plead for outside support. But the spirit of excessive individualism ironically bred a habit of dependence upon the mother country, and as soon as internal problems threatened the peace, someone was sure to call for English regulars.[50]

Virginia's military preparedness was no more impressive in 1630 than it had been a decade earlier. The colony's rulers still complained that the planters "utterly neglected eyther to stand upon their guard or to keepe their Armes fitt." The Council admitted helplessly that "neyther proclamations nor other strict orders have remedied the same."[51] The settlers were incorrigible. Forts remained unbuilt; the great palisade neither kept the colonists in nor the Indians out. And in 1644 the local tribes launched a second, even more deadly attack, revealing once again the fundamental weakness of Virginia's military system.[52]

Virginia's extreme individualism was not an ephemeral phenomenon, something associated only with the colony's founding or a peculiar boom-town atmosphere. Long after the 1620's, values originally brought to the New World by adventurers and opportunists influenced patterns of social and institutional behavior, and instead of providing Virginia with new direction or a new sense of mission, newcomers were assimilated into an established cultural system. Customs became statute law, habitual acts tradition.[53]

The long-term effects of these values upon society are too great to be considered here. It should be noted, however, that seventeenth-

50. John Shy, "A New Look at the Colonial Militia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 20 (1963), 175–79; Washburn, *Governor and Rebel*, pp. 92–113.

51. H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia* (Richmond, 1924), p. 184.

52. Morton, *Colonial Virginia*, I, 152–56; Craven, *Southern Colonies*, pp. 362–63; Craven, *White, Red, and Black*, pp. 55–67.

53. See Sigmund Diamond, "Values as an Obstacle to Economic Growth: The American Colonies," *Journal of Economic History*, 27 (1967), 573.

century Virginians never succeeded in forming a coherent society. Despite their apparent homogeneity, they lacked cohesive group identity; they generated no positive symbols, no historical myths strong enough to overcome individual differences. As one might expect, such a social system proved extremely fragile, and throughout the seventeenth century Virginians experienced social unrest, even open rebellion.[54]

Nor should the grand life style of the great eighteenth-century planters, the Byrds, the Carters, the Wormeleys, mislead one into thinking that their value system differed significantly from that of Virginia's early settlers. These first families of the early eighteenth century bore the same relationship to Captain John Smith and his generation as Cotton Mather and his contemporaries did to the founders of Massachusetts Bay. The apparent political tranquility of late colonial Virginia grew not out of a sense of community or new value-orientations, but out of more effective forms of human exploitation. The mass of tobacco field laborers were now black slaves, men and women who by legal definition could never become fully part of the privatistic culture.[55] In Byrd's Virginia, voluntaristic associations remained weak; education lagged, churches stagnated, and towns never developed. The isolation of plantation life continued, and the extended visits and the elaborate balls of the period may well have served to obscure the competition that underlay planter relationships. As one anthropologist reminds us, "in a society in which everyone outside the nuclear family is immediately suspect, in which one is at every moment believed to be vulnerable to the underhanded attacks of others, reliability and trust can never be taken for granted."[56] In the course of a century of cultural development, Virginians transformed an extreme form of individualism, a value system suited for

54. Breen, "Changing Labor Force"; Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom"; and T. H. Breen and Stephen Foster, "The Puritans' Greatest Achievement: A Study of Social Cohesion in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts," *Journal of American History*, 60 (1973), 5–22.

55. Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom," and John C. Rainbolt, "The Alteration in the Relationship Between Leadership and Constituents, 1660 to 1720," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 27 (1970), 411–34.

56. Stanley H. Brandes, "Social Structure and Interpersonal Relations in Navanogal (Spain)," *American Anthropologist*, 75 (1973), 759. Also, Edmund S. Morgan, *Virginians at Home: Family Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Williamsburg, 1952), pp. 73–85. Breen, "Horses and Gentlemen: The Significance of Gambling Among the Gentry of Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 34 (1977), 239–57.

soldiers and adventurers, into a set of regional virtues, a love of independence, an insistence upon personal liberty, a cult of manhood, and an uncompromising loyalty to family.[57]

57. See Bruce, *Economic History*, II, 568–69, 579.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI LIBRARY

Weber and Kafka on Bureaucracy: A Question of Perspective

Thomas R. McDaniel

> *Whether our work is art or science or the daily work of society, it is only the form in which we explore our experience which is different; the need to explore remains the same.*
>
> J. Bronowski

The development and evolution of bureaucratic institutions in Western civilization, particularly during the present century, have been major concerns for administrative theorists and, indeed, for scholars in many disciplines. The bureaucratic phenomenon has so permeated Western society—its organizations, its individuals, its values—that its importance can scarcely be understated. The effects of bureaucracy reverberate throughout the social world. For both the humanist and the social scientist the nature of bureaucracy as a mode of organization is of critical significance in understanding modern society.

This article examines bureaucracy as viewed by two great German thinkers, Max Weber and Franz Kafka, both of whom were writing in the first quarter of the twentieth century. While Weber championed bureaucracy as the most efficient and rational type of social organization, Kafka regarded it as the most inefficient and irrational organization imaginable. Why did they reach such contrary conclusions? The answer to this question may be found by analyzing their different perspectives on social reality.

Max Weber, who provided the classic analysis of bureaucratic structure, developed a methodology to bring the study of social phe-

Head of the Social Science Division at Converse College, THOMAS MCDANIEL *has published in such journals as* Public Administration Review, *the* Southern Quarterly, *and* Liberal Education.