

**Autobiography of a good savage... by himself!**  
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The title of this article might appear both paradoxical and redundant. Paradoxical because, from a European point of view, a savage does not write autobiographies. First, the “good savage” does not write: he is of an oral culture and ignores writing. Secondly, he hardly has a self since his individuality is put aside in favor of the community. The last part of the title, on the other hand, might sound redundant indeed. However, in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century mainly, but also in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many autobiographies of more or less good “savages” were published by white men who had listened to them and transcribed their lives in books. *Black Elk Speaks* is one of the most famous of those dubious autobiographies which were not written by the individual who says *I* in its pages. The subject of this article is not one of those collaborative autobiographies but an autobiography actually written by the carrier of the name inscribed on the front cover.

Talking about the “good savage” might also appear problematic. The “good savage” is more a concept than an actual reality; it is an idea – which justifies the use here of quotation marks to frame the expression – invented by the “civilized” Europeans. The “good savage” at the center of this article is Charles Alexander Eastman, even if, at the time he lived (end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), the myth of the good savage had somehow waned. The Indian was more often than not a “bloodthirsty savage” or a “vanishing American.” However, and probably because these two descriptions of the Indian were predominant, Eastman produced a description of himself and of his people that corresponds in many respects to the description of the “good savage.”

Eastman had had two lives. From his birth to the age of 16, he was reared as a Sioux warrior, named Ohiyesa. At 16 he was sent by his father, who was convinced of the superiority of the White Man’s way, to the White Man’s school, where he became Charles Alexander Eastman. He later became a doctor, using white medicine on the Pine Ridge reservation, where he witnessed the Wounded Knee massacre in December 1890. Eastman also became a writer and essayist. Among other writings, he published *Indian Boyhood* in 1902, *The Soul of the Indian* in 1911 and *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* in 1916. The present article will pay particular attention to *Indian Boyhood* and *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*. Both are autobiographies, the first dealing with the author’s Sioux childhood, the second with his adaptation to, and adoption of, the White Man’s world. It can be argued that Eastman, in these two works, is providing us with two visions of the New World. In *Indian Boyhood*, as I will attempt to argue, he gives a renewed representation of the “good savage.” In *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, he gives his vision of what the New World has become after the arrival of the Europeans, but also a vision of what is a new world to him, the Old World as brought to his people by the colonizers.

Does Eastman internalize the discourse of the colonizer to the extent of rehabilitating an invention of the European Renaissance, or is something more at stake? In

Eastman's vision of the White Man's new world, the Indian is good and noble indeed, and the anthropophagous beast is the White Man.

### **Appropriation (?) of the myth of the good savage**

When he writes, Eastman is an Indian assimilated to the white Euro-American culture. *Indian Boyhood* is the vision that a "civilized" man has of the time when he was a "pagan and uncivilized man":

The North American Indian was the highest type of pagan and uncivilized man. He possessed not only a superb physique but a remarkable mind. But the Indian no longer exists as a natural and free man. Those remnants which now dwell upon the reservations present only a sort of tableau – a fictitious copy of the past.  
(foreword)

This could very well have been written by a white colonizer. The use of the third person to talk about "the North American Indian" places Eastman outside the group to which he is referring, as if he were an anthropologist and his own people become the object of his study. He uses the colonizer's derogatory vocabulary ("pagan," "uncivilized"), which he seems to have perfectly integrated. It is strange to read this very Eurocentric language under the pen of a Sioux writer. What is also striking in this first paragraph is the past tense used by Eastman. He clearly describes a people that was but is not anymore. He describes the Vanishing American, a notion that justified so many federal policies of assimilation and acculturation. If the reader is not aware that the author of these lines is a Sioux, and if he has no clue of his activist career to defend the rights of his people, he can hardly detect the touches of bitterness and nostalgia hiding behind the violent denial in these lines.

This kind of writing convinced some scholars that Eastman had endorsed the theories of social darwinism and scientific racialism, which stated that "races" are in competition with each other and that only the best survive. It is the doctrine of "the survival of the fittest" developed by Herbert Spencer. The English philosopher, who applied Nature's law to the human species, was extremely popular at the turn of the century. His books sold very well and his ideas were spread by scholars, teachers, journalists. Judging only by *Indian Boyhood*, Eastman's first writing, and by Spencer's influence on the American society of the time, the contention that Eastman was a social darwinist is understandable. However, it is hardly tenable if we keep in mind the rest of his literary production. Some chapters of *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* and some more activist writings, in which he vehemently criticizes the White Man's civilization, tend to prove this accusation unfair. Even in examining closely *Indian Boyhood*, it is very difficult to find any hint at the supposed inferiority of Indian cultures and peoples however on the wane they may have been at the time. On the contrary, Eastman uses a very eulogistical style to depict a truly idyllic picture of the "North American Indian:"

The Indian boy was a prince of the wilderness. He had but very little work to do during the period of his boyhood. His principal occupation was the practice of a few simple arts in warfare and the chase. Aside from this, he was master of his time.

Whatever was required of us boys was quickly performed: then the field was clear for our games and plays. There was always keen competition among us. We felt very much as our fathers did in hunting and war – each one strove to excel all the others.

It is true that our savage life was a precarious one, and full of dreadful catastrophes; however, this never prevented us from enjoying our sports to the fullest extent. As we left our teepees in the morning, we were never sure that our scalps would not dangle from a pole in the afternoon! It was an uncertain life, to be sure. Yet we observed that the fawns skipped and played happily while the gray wolves might be peeping forth from behind the hills, ready to tear them limb from limb. (53)

At first sight, this passage might seem paradoxical. On the one hand the author idealizes the free life of the “prince of the forest;” on the other hand dangers seem to be lurking. Yet, it is not a feeling of insecurity that prevails here. It is rather an impression of an idyllic harmony with nature: men depend on the law of nature as well as any other creature of the forest, and this consciousness is almost appeasing. The serene beatitude, imbued with stoicism and fatalism, which resonates from this passage is the perfect description of the Rousseauistic natural man.

Mircea Eliade wrote that “the myth of the good savage only takes over and extends the myth of the Golden Age, that is to say the perfection of commencements” (42). This is indeed what Eastman is describing, the beginning of the world, a prelapsarian natural world destroyed by “civilization.” No matter the dangers lurking in the woods, the life of the good savage is idealized because he lives in harmony with Nature. His representation oftentimes takes on the mythic tone that suits such an Edenic world:

To me, as a boy, this wilderness was a paradise. It was a land of plenty. To be sure, we did not have any of the luxuries of civilization, but we had every convenience and opportunity and luxury of Nature. We had also the gift of enjoying our good fortune, whatever dangers might lurk about us; and the truth is that we lived in blessed ignorance of any life that was better than our own. (Eastman: 1902, 184)

Eastman’s idyllic descriptions are also very much imbued with the notions of friendship and communication between men and animals, notions that Eliade clearly describes and associates with the myths of a return to a Golden Age. In a passage from *Indian Boyhood*, the reader learns that young Ohiyesa “was apparently capable of holding extended conversations in an unknown dialect with birds and red squirrels” (7). Of course, this passage might only be ironic and playful. However, it contributes to the representation Eastman wants to give of himself as close to Nature, especially when the light-hearted description of a particular conversation he had with a squirrel which had awakened him is followed by a more serious conclusion: “It was a common thing for birds to alight on my cradle in the woods” (7).

The belief in animal friendship is obviously imbued with animism, the beatific and sacralizing vision of Nature and the harmony in the relationship between Man and his environment: “The animals are regarded as his friends, and spoken almost as tribes of people, or as his cousins, grandfathers and grandmothers” (Eastman: 1902, 42). Human kinship with animals is a corollary of the myth of Mother-Earth. The Earth is indeed mother to all natural elements; consequently, its offspring – men, animals, plants, but also rocks, minerals – are all part of one and the same family. In a way, when he rehabilitates the primordial animal friendship in his text, Eastman recovers the Golden Age, the primordial Paradise, lost not only to his people but also, ironically, to his white readers. Yet, in Eastman’s representation, the Fall has not

been due to an original sin, as it is the case in the Christian tradition. Here, an external element is responsible for the Lapse: the arrival of the White Man. Still, although it is not explicit in Eastman's work, the Indians are sometimes considered responsible for the Fall because they did not oppose the arrival of the white men, they did not chase them away, push them back into the ocean. This is what Neolin, a Delaware prophet who endeavored to call his people to resistance in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, claimed. When he uttered the words of the "Master of Life" in 1762 and 1763, he explained to the Delaware that He had created a land for the Red Man and one for the White Man. If today, He has made the animals of the forest, which had so far provided for the needs of the Red Man, run away, it is because the Red Man let the White Man steal his lands and does not push him back to the other side of the ocean, to the land the Master of Life had created for him.

The pre-lapsarian description of Nature found in Eastman's work could also be found in the work of another Indian writer, some seventy years earlier. William Apess published *A Son of the Forest* in 1831. In the following passage, this Pequot Indian reared like a White man is mixing Edenic lyricism with animistic tones:

There was also in the neighborhood a rock that had the appearance of being hollowed out by the hand of a skillful artificer; through this rock wound a narrow stream of water: It had a most beautiful and romantic appearance, and I could not but admire the wisdom of God in the order, regularity, and beauty of creation; I then turned my eyes to the forest, and it seemed alive with its sons and daughters. There appeared to be the utmost order and regularity in their encampment. (32-33)

Eastman wrote that his people "lived in blessed ignorance of any life that was better than [their] own" (184). This seems particularly interesting in answering the question of whether Eastman, indulging in the representation of the good savage, is submitting himself to the nostalgic discourse of the colonizer – the good savage is, after all, a European invention – or if he is representing himself and his people. In the latter case, the good savage could not be considered as a myth anymore, elaborated out of a nostalgic longing for a past world. Nor could it be said that Eastman is *appropriating* the myth. It would have an historic reality, manifested by Eastman's people, which is his to represent. Yet there is an undeniable idealization of this representation, which seems to be infused with a biblical rhetoric, but which might only be an impulse, or an instinct common to all societal groups. Nostalgia, which consists in creating a meaning of the past which has nothing to do with the actual existence of the past, might be vital to all societies. Nostalgia seems to give meaning to the past in order to make it eternal, even if it is not its original meaning, what Baudrillard called "retrospective hallucination" (11), or the creation of a souvenir. The question is: when does a group need to idealize its past? When in contact with another group? The nostalgic urge might be independent of any encounter. However, the strength of its manifestation and the degree of idealization in which it results probably depend on how forcefully the other culture attempts to impose its own "retrospective hallucination."

Eastman opposes the representation of his past not only to the representation of his past that the white man wants to impose, but also to his own representation of the White Man's past. Indeed, Eastman's representation of the White Man is in confrontation with the idealized representation the latter has of himself.

### The white cannibal

Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the White Man had represented, thus invented, the Indian who had been, in chronological order, a noble savage, a bloodthirsty beast and a Vanishing American. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cinema has represented the Indian in the same ways, although not perhaps in the same order. In the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, more and more Indians started to make their voices heard in the mainstream discourse, both to correct the representation of themselves and to create their own representation of the colonizing White Man.

In his childhood memories, Eastman gives a physical description of the “pale-face,” as clichéd as the image of the Indian given by the Whites of which we can have numerous visual examples among Curtis’ photographs:

Occasionally, we also played “white man.” Our knowledge of the pale-face was limited, but we had learned that he brought goods whenever he came and that our people exchanged furs for his merchandise. We also knew that his complexion was **pale**, that he had short hair on his head and long hair on his face and that he wore coat, trousers, and hat, and did not patronize blankets in the day-time. **This was the picture we had formed of the white man.**

So we painted two or three of our number with white clay and put on them birchen hats which we sewed up for the occasion; fastened a piece of fur to their chins for a **beard** and altered their costumes as much as lay within our power [...] Their merchandise consisted of sand for sugar, wild beans for coffee, dried leaves for tea, pulverized earth for gun-powder, pebbles for **bullets** and clear water for the dangerous “**spirit water**.” (Eastman: 1902, 60-61)

Of course, it is ironic to read this passage now. White children play “cowboys and Indians”; the Sioux children play “white man.” The representation of the White Man by the Sioux children is significant. As the white colonizers were struck by a few characteristics of the Indians which were very unusual to them – the nakedness of the first “savages” encountered, the bow and arrows, the feathers and body paint – the Sioux children are struck by what they had never seen before – a beard – and by what would violently strike their mind – bullets and alcohol. Besides all the attributes given the “White Man,” the last sentence of the first paragraph is particularly interesting. It has to be taken literally: they indeed formed, shaped, created a picture of the White Man, as the White Man had created a picture of the Indian, which became a reality with more validity and existence in the White Man’s world than the actual Indian.

In the next passage, there is another more complex picture of the White Man and of his technology, a representation of white men almost as supernatural beings, reminiscent of how the Aztecs had perceived Cortès and his men:

On the other hand, I had heard marvelous things of this people. In some things we despised them; in others we regarded them as *wakan* (mysterious), a race whose power bordered upon the supernatural. I learned that they had made a “fire-boat.” I could not understand how they could unite two elements which cannot exist together. I thought the water would put out the fire, and the fire would consume the boat if it had the shadow of a chance. This was to me a preposterous thing! (Eastman: 1902, 239-240)

Apart from showing the innocence of the Indians in a primordial paradise, that is to say before the advent of modern technology, this passage shows that before the white men came with their destructive technology, the universe was in order, the elements definitely in their right place. The arrival of the White Man brought the Fall of the primitive man and it brought chaos: fire and water were blended. This blending of the elements marks a point of no return to a golden age, lost forever.

Men are the sons of Nature. Mother Earth shelters them, provides them with food, and protects them. When men forget this vital relationship that links them to Nature, they forget where they are coming from, who they are and so become dehumanized. If the white men are dehumanized, it is because they are uprooted, not only because they have crossed an ocean from one continent to another, but also because they have lost all natural links to the earth, as if they had cut the umbilical cord. It is because the White Man has reified Nature that the Indian can explain his attitude which consists in considering that the earth has been put at his disposal by God so that he can take everything it has to give. Interfering with the elements is one sign of this dehumanization, which is described in different ways in the works of the Indian writers. When they dehumanize the white man, they seize a weapon much used against them since they day they were described as wild pagan beasts which they turn back against the whites.

For instance, Eastman explains that the Sioux warriors do not count *coup* on white men; it would be too degrading because they do not fight like real warriors: they “are driven forward like a herd of antelopes to face the foe,” they fight “from compulsion and not from personal bravery” (Eastman: 1902, 241). In this description, the white soldiers do not only appear as cowards, they are treated like game too easy to hunt.

What is more interesting in the reversal of dehumanization, however, is the representation of the White Man as a cannibal. This reversal is obvious in the comparison that Eastman draws between the two cultures in the following passage:

The Indians are a patient and clannish people; their love for one another is stronger than that of any civilized people I know. If this were not so, I believe there would have been tribes of cannibals among them. White people have been known to kill and eat their companions in preference to starving; but Indians – never! (Eastman: 1902, 14)

Eastman is not the only one, ironically, to worry about the cannibalism of the white men. Similar representations can be found in Apess and Sarah Winnemucca (1883). The latter writes that, as a child, she was scared of the white man because of fearful stories mothers used to tell their children: “Our mothers told us that the whites were killing everybody and eating them. So we were all afraid of them” (11). This is what David Murray writes about the representations of white cannibalism:

The whole idea here of an Indian being in danger from whites when he ventures into the forest is both a historical truth and an ironic reversal of white fears, anticipating the startling opening scene of Thomas Sanchez' *Rabbit Boss* (1972), in which a Washo boy comes across white people (members of the ill-fated Donner party who tried to cross the Sierras into California) committing acts of cannibalism. (59)

If it is likely that the Paiute women were telling these stories so that their children keep away from the Whites, it is also very probable that they were inspired by the events that actually took place in the Sierra Nevada in the 1840s. Sarah Winnemucca, who was born around 1844, never explicitly mentions the Donner party, but the Sierra Nevada was on her tribe's territories, and the following dialogue between two women of her tribe is very certainly a reference to this group of explorers:

“Surely they don't eat people?”

“Yes, they do eat people, because they ate each other up in the mountains last winter.” (15)

For two weeks at the end of September and beginning of October 1846, the pioneers of the Donner party traveled along the Humboldt River near which the Paiutes lived. It is known that this tribe came upon the explorers, since the journals of the expedition mentions that their cattle had been stolen by a group of Paiute Indians. In October and November, they attempted to cross the Sierra Nevada. In December, the survivors resorted to cannibalism after they ran out of supplies. It is very likely that their misadventures inspired legends of white cannibalism throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, up to the days of Eastman.

Thus, the White Man is a wild beast. As a child Sarah Winnemucca was frightened to tears at the sight of a white man, albeit friendly. When her grandfather asked her not to be scared of her “white brothers” she would respond that “they looked so very bad I could not help it” (23). This is how she tells about her first encounter with the monsters, two white men coming to her and her grandfather:

My mother said there were two white men coming with them.

“Oh, mother, what shall I do? Hide me!”

I just danced round like a wild one, which I was. I was behind my mother. When they were coming nearer, I heard my grandpa say, –

“Make a place for them to sit down.”

Just then, I peeped round my mother to see them. I gave one scream, and said, –

“Oh, mother, the owls!”

I only saw their big white eyes, and I thought their faces were all hair. My mother said, –

“I wish you would send your brothers away, for my child will die.”

I imagined I could see their big white eyes all night long. They were the first ones I had ever seen in my life. (25)

Sarah Winnemucca was very young when this dialogue is supposed to have taken place. It is impossible to know how much was actually said and how much was recreated by the imagination of the autobiographer. In any case, the purpose of the representation of this dialogue is clear. It conveys how scary the hairy pale faces could be to young Indians. Of course, once an adult, Winnemucca would not be as frightened. However, the representation of the White Man as a horrible hairy-faced monster is recurrent in her work, and even the President of the United States does not escape Winnemucca's dehumanizing prose when she is asked to tell her people that they are going to be removed once more in the dead of winter:

“What! In this cold winter and in all this snow, and my people have so many little children? Why, they will all die. Oh, what can the President be thinking about?”

Oh, tell me, what is he? Is he man or beast? Yes, he must be a beast [...]. I have never seen a president in my life and I want to know whether he is made of wood or rock, for I cannot for once think that he can be a human being. No human being would do such a thing as that, – send people across a fearful mountain in midwinter.”

[...] Every night I imagined I could see the thing called President. He had long ears, he had big eyes and long legs, and a head like a bull-frog or something like that. I could not think of anything that could be so inhuman as to do such a thing.  
(205)

“The thing called President,” “a beast,” “so inhuman,” etc.: we are very far here from the tender paternalistic expression that the colonizers had imposed to the infantilized colonized to refer to the President, the Great Father in Washington. The red children lost their innocence at the sight of the evil caused by those who claimed to do them only good. After representing the White Man as a beast, and after it was obvious that he obeyed very little the Christian principles he advocated, the only choice remaining was to depict him as a pagan in order to completely reverse the weapon of racial stereotyping.

### **The pagan White Man**

Charles Alexander Eastman was a very religious man. In his second life, he became a Christian. However, he never mentions his Christianity as a submission to the colonizer’s religion. It is hardly a conversion. In his various books, he gives the reader extensive knowledge of his natural religion, the religion of the Sioux, and how he used to worship the “Great Mystery” before the encounter with the White Man’s world. Eastman is actually the illustration of one of the predominant reasons for the relative success of the missionaries in attempting to convert the Indians. They very often found in the Christian principles they were taught in the White Man’s schools values which were very close to their tribal values.

When he wrote *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, Eastman had experienced the Euro-American civilization and religion for more than thirty years. If he still thought the Christian religion was good and that the spirit of Jesus was good, he had cultivated a certain amount of bitterness at the way some White Men used it. He traveled extensively around the Christian world and was an observer of some aspects of white civilization antagonistic to Christian values. He was taken through Chicago, New York and Boston, where he discovered poverty, which brought him to compare civilizations:

I was taken by slum and settlement workers to visit the slums and dives of the cities, which gave another shock to my ideals of “Christian civilization.” Of course, I had seen something of the poorer part of Boston during my medical course, but [...] not in a way to realize the horror and wretchedness of it as I did now. (147)

Eastman then explains that his people “could not conceive of the extremes of luxury and misery existing thus side by side,” that according to the Sioux worldview, “the coarse weeds, if permitted to grow, will choke out the more delicate flowers” (147-148). His Sioux education had taught him that religion is in all actions and everyday behavior and attitudes. Thus, he does not understand why white civilization as a whole is not impregnated with its founding Christian values.



Interestingly enough, and ironically, it was thanks to the values he was taught as a Sioux child and teenager that he did not reject Christian religion as a whole. He wrote for example that the Christ ideal “still seemed to me logical, and in line with most of my Indian training” (138). However “bitterly disappointed” (138), Eastman still believes in the Christian virtues. He simply accuses men of going astray, of being too focused on material and personal interests to be able to live up to the Christian ideal. Charles Eastman, the former “wild pagan”, turns himself into a staunch advocate of Christian values and admonishes the white readers. The following passage is taken from the last chapter of *From the Deep Woods*, entitled “The Soul of the White Man”:

From the time I first accepted the Christ ideal it has grown upon me steadily, but I also see more and more plainly our modern divergence from that ideal. I confess I have wondered much that Christianity is not practised by the very people who vouch for that wonderful conception of exemplary living. It appears that they are anxious to pass on their religion to all races of men, but keep very little of it themselves. I have not yet seen the meek inherit the earth, or the peacemakers receive high honor. (193-194)

Although not a theologian by profession, Eastman devoted much time to thinking about religion and its practices among Indians and Whites. As he wrote, he “seriously considered the racial attitude toward God” (141) by which he meant the different attitudes toward God according to ethnic origins. Remembering his childhood, he concludes that it is quite striking that the Indians’ “simple lives were so imbued with the spirit of worship, while much church-going among white and nominally Christian Indians led often to such very small results.” (141) The belief was common among the Indians converted to Christianity that they were closer to Christian values in their ancestral practices and traditions. Eastman met with a great number of Indian individuals from all tribes across the US and Canada in order to nourish his study on religious attitudes. An old warrior expressed his doubts and misunderstanding about the values the White Man claims to advocate. He even went so far as to claim, tongue in cheek, that “Jesus was an Indian” and that it was “strange that [the White Man] could not rise to these simple principles which were commonly observed” among the Indians (143).



These very brief observations, through the work of Charles Eastman mainly, on how some Indians perceived themselves and the white men lead us to conclude that the Other often seems to be a heathenish beast, whether he is from the New World or the Old. Obviously, it can be argued that Charles Alexander Eastman has culturally succumbed to the colonizing powers when he writes autobiographies in English. Practically, it is from and to the White Man’s world that he shows his visions of the New World. When he writes, he is fully part of the colonizing world. However, his historical position allows him to be the locus of two distinct perspectives.

Taking the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin as the epitome of the American autobiographic style, Robert F. Sayre describes the American autobiography as the autobiography of emulation: “Autobiography has been a way for the builder to pass on his work and his lessons to later generations, to ‘my posterity,’ as Benjamin Franklin called it. Autobiographers are both the emulators and the emulated” (156).

The following quote from the foreword of *Indian Boyhood* echoes the first lines of Franklin's autobiography indeed:

I have put together these fragmentary recollections of my thrilling wild life expressly for the little son who came too late to behold for himself the drama of savage existence. I dedicate this little book, with love, to Ohiyesa the second, my son. (Eastman: 1902, foreword)

Dear son,  
I have ever had a Pleasure in obtaining any little Anecdotes of my Ancestors. [...] Now imagining it may be equally agreeable to you to know the Circumstances of my Life, many of which you are yet unacquainted with [...] I sit down to write them for you. (Franklin, 1)

However, Eastman's first autobiography cannot be calling for emulation. He represents a world that has disappeared and he does not ask his son, born into the White Man's world, and the original addressee of his collection of memories, to go back to the pre-Columbian Golden Age, even less so when his book is finally published and his readers are eventually white people. His second autobiography can hardly be considered as showing his fellow Indians the path from deep woods to civilization since his readership is white for the most part. However, it might be possible to see it as a reminder that the White Man has gone astray from the path he was supposed to show.

Eastman has mainly two messages to convey, both of which he addresses to the people who imposed their vision of the New World: the first is that a world is lost forever, not only to the Sioux, but to humanity (this was also what conveyed the myth of the good savage in the mind of its European creators); the second is a harsh criticism of the new world which some barbarians (etymologically "the unintelligible foreigners") from the Old World had come to build instead of a world that was only new to them but which was in fact ancient, stable and perennial.

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