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HIS113

December 13, 2020

Primary Source Response- 14.3b: *Letter Describing His First Voyage* (Christopher Columbus, 1493)

1. In Christopher Columbus's letter to the king and queen, he makes many observations about the new lands and people. All of his observations have a sense of superiority over the people that were on the land already. He seems to be judging their choices and comparing it to his own "normal" choices. Columbus's observations seem to have a sense of fake pity and real judgement. He looks down on them and thinks that they are not living as well as he is. The observations are very judgemental and snobby. I haven't read any of the other accounts from other explorers, but Columbus's has an obvious superior feel to it and judgement for the natives that lived on those lands. He emphasizes most their fear of him coming to their land and them being wary. He also emphasizes that they are very different and have different values. The evidence that I see in the text of Columbus shaping his account for his audience and his own purposes is that he seems to be trying to put himself in good light. He keeps saying how he has given them things and has tried to be comfortable with them. He is also trying to get the person reading the letter to relate to him and his feelings that he is superior. Columbus is avoiding anything that would make him sound bad and is trying to record the observations in the nicest way possible.
2. The screen image of the people of Caribbean that Columbus projects is that they are weirder than normal and that they are very different. He uses words to describe them that indicates that he thinks they are not normal. They are doing weird things that "normal" people wouldn't do, such as keep their hair long. Columbus paints himself as a savior of these people. He makes them seem like they are dumb and don't know how the world works. The people of the Caribbean's screen image of Columbus would be very different. They would probably see him as a snobby intruder. They would see him as someone with wrong morals and values. They would probably not have respect for him or what he is doing. These differences would occur because each side has a different life view and perspective. Each person would see the other as strange and new. They each have different morals and motivations that the other does not. Columbus and the people on the island all have such a different life and goal in life. It was foreign to each and how they view the other would be affected by their different lives.