

Maya Rodríguez,
Plaza Mayor,
Madrid,
Spain.

King of Spain,
Alcázar,
Seville,
Spain.

5th June 1600

Your Majesty,

I write with a heavy heart as I think about all of the atrocities that have been generated through colonisation. Knowing your unwavering respect for your subjects and your steadfast commitment to justice, I am writing why it is essential that colonisation be stopped. I could present a million arguments for why colonisation is wrong, but I will only go into a few here.

My first point addresses the appalling enslavement of indigenous peoples in the colonies. Imagine being a mother in Madeira, when Henry the Navigator established the first sugar plantation – strapping your baby to your back while you cut cane every hour of the day. Many enslaved families are cruelly separated, brutally beaten and given very little food and drink to sustain them. Would you wish such hardship upon our Spanish people?

My second reason refers to the death and disease caused by colonisation. When Christopher Columbus landed on Hispaniola in 1492, the Taíno people greeted him with open arms. However their friendliness proved fatal, because they could not withstand European diseases. Within a century, 90% of the Taíno people had perished. It is imperative that lessons be learned. Prevent this from happening again, I beg you.

My third argument considers the loss of culture brought about by colonisation; languages and traditions, practised for hundreds of years, are confined to history with the imposition of Spanish customs. If this continues, the world will lose its extraordinary diversity. Do you really want to dilute the rich heritage of the world's cultures?

Honourable king, I believe that putting an end to colonisation will set an impressive precedent for our Portuguese neighbours (and, eventually, the rest of Europe) to follow. Spain could lead the western world in the Catholic tenets of compassion and equality. As Plato said, 'All men are by nature equal, made all of the same earth by one Workman; and however we deceive ourselves, as dear unto God is the poor peasant as the mighty prince.'

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I hope that you agree with me and stop this objectionable practice. The future is in your hands. Follow your conscience.

Yours faithfully,

Maya Rodríguez

