

Cabeza de vaca

People



The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca: Attitude Towards the Native Indians In The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca, we follow the journey of Cabeza de Vaca to one of the earliest conquests to the New World. De Vaca's perspective was not like that of conventional conquerors, but he was rather an anthropologist who accepted other cultures and traditions. De Vaca was an advocate for better treatment of Indians, which led to him being convicted and sent to Africa.

This action alone speaks volumes about the heightened prejudice that fueled in the minds of the Europeans against the Native Indians. In The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca, we witness the superior and greedy attitude of the European conquistadors, which later evolves to a civil and sympathetic view. During the 16th Century, European attitude towards Indians was dehumanizing as they felt that the Native Indians were inferior to them because they didn't have European characteristics of blue eyes and blonde hair .

The European conquistadors were looking for new land in hopes to live, seek gold and gather wealth. Europeans enslaved the Native Indians and tried to force them off the land, thus the Indians had to fight back. Religious missionaries tried to convert the Indians to Christianity, they believed that this was the right thing to do because the Indians were superstitious and savage. Due to this perception of Europeans, Cabeza de Vaca suffered greatly because of his sympathy for Native Indians. Like most European explorers, Cabeza de Vaca was inclined towards their conquest.

Cabeza de Vaca expressed sympathy and somewhat superiority towards the Indians, while welcoming their hospitable nature throughout the expedition

in order to justify his entitlement to their land. As him and his Spanish conquistadors made their westward journey, they encountered many obstacles, such as natural disasters and the initial captivity by the Native Indians. During his almost decade long odyssey, Cabeza de Vaca went through many transformations from being a conquistador to a slave, then a trader, and then a spiritual healer who was regarded almost as God by the Native Indians.

This shows how his perception and understanding changed over time, as he bonded more with the Native Indians. Although, initially, he was at the receiving end of brutality by the hands of the Native Indians, later he developed an amiable relationship with them, which resulted in him becoming an advocate for the better treatment of the Native Indians later on. Due to this, he faced great challenges and punishment, and was sent to Africa. Also, Cabeza de Vaca learned many valuable survival skills from the Native Indians during his journey there.

The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca takes us through a voyage of transforming attitudes from the initial enslavement of the conquistadors by the Native Indians, to the creation of a pleasant relationship with them later. During this expedition, we witness the changing view of Cabeza de Vaca, from an egocentric European conqueror to an advocate for the Native Indians. The penalization of Cabeza de Vaca for speaking up for the better treatment of Native Indians demonstrates the biased and repugnant attitude of the Europeans during the 16th Century.