

**European Representations of the New World  
in Travel Narratives and Literature,  
Late-Fifteenth to Mid-Seventeenth Centuries**

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**PhD 2006  
Cardiff University**

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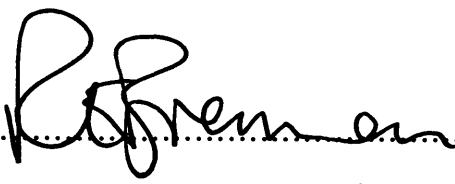
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## Summary

The thesis proposes that the point of first encounter with the New World constituted an irruption of the real into European cultural reality, and provides an example of the process by which the real (in Lacanian terms, the terrain of unmapped alterity outside the symbolic order with no cultural script) becomes incorporated within cultural reality. Unlike death, another instance of the real, the New World offered travellers the possibility of return and revelation, and, once experienced by explorers, the actuality of the New World had to be articulated: reality was constructed.

The thesis examines a selection of fifteenth- to seventeenth-century European travel narratives and literary texts within the broadly Lacanian theoretical framework suggested by Catherine Belsey's *Culture and the Real*; the methodological approach follows Belsey's practice of reading cultural history 'at the level of the signifier'. Chapter one examines, in accounts of Columbus, Vespucci and Pigafetta, the inauguration of the New World as a locus of European material and spiritual desire; differential constructions of the native; and intertextual links with earlier travel literature. Chapter two focuses on the English cultural mapping of the real of the Americas in accounts of Francis Drake's circumnavigation, arguing that new types of cultural script are developed, including a model for English colonialism. Chapter three examines textual constructions of domesticated reality on the borders of the real, in accounts of the first English settlement at Roanoke, and Jean de Léry's account of living in Brazil. Chapter four argues that, while each of the fictions discussed has intertextual links to first-hand travel narratives, the European signifier defers the materiality of the New World, using the space to explore possibilities for European culture. Texts discussed include Layfield's account of Puerto Rico, More's *Utopia*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Sea Voyage*. Chapter five comprises a short conclusion.

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## Introduction



Figure 1 *The Garden of Eden*, Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568 – 1625), c.1600

Jan Brueghel the Elder painted many versions of the Garden of Eden. In this particular example, from around 1600, he depicts a profusion of animals, coexisting in apparent harmony, within a verdant landscape. In the foreground are horses, cattle, a pig, deer, leopards, lions and monkeys, and in flight, or perched in trees, a variety of species of birds, including toucans and macaws. Two dogs appear to be barking at a pair of swans on the river. On the far bank a penguin stretches its wings, while on the near bank a pair of guinea pigs scamper about. In the distance camels, elephants, rheas and turkeys can be seen. Just to the right of the mid-point of the painting, but in the centre of Eden, are two small human figures. Adam and Eve are frozen in the instant before they taste the forbidden fruit and change everything for all of them irrevocably.

By 1600 Europe had been aware of the existence of the New World for only just over a hundred years. Its extent and content were still largely unknown. The authors of

the Book of Genesis knew nothing of the New World, yet Brueghel includes various New World species in his depiction of Eden (guinea pigs, macaws, toucans, turkeys, rheas).<sup>1</sup> This inclusion could signify the acceptance and embracing of the New World by European culture as an equal part of God's creation: the Old World and the New World co-exist, like the animals, under the beneficent eye of God. At the same time, a less comfortable reading of the painting is possible. Rather than symbolising a generous inclusion, the picture could represent a scene of European appropriation: the New World seamlessly subsumed within Europe's pre-existing cultural order.

Brueghel's painting of *The Garden of Eden* freezes the scene in the moments before the comfort and harmony it depicts are lost forever due to human actions. In the painting, Adam and Eve live in Eden, their innocence is signified by their nakedness, while nature provides beauty and sustenance in abundance without the need for work, and death is unknown. In all but the last respect, Columbus recognised Eden when he landed in the New World.<sup>2</sup> Columbus's moment of revelation, widely disseminated in his account of the landing, inaugurated insatiable European desires. These were both spiritual and material: to regain paradise and convert its people to the 'true' European religion; and to exploit its supposed gold and other natural resources. Brueghel's painting could, I suggest, be viewed as a metaphorical representation of the New World immediately prior to the moment of Columbus's arrival. Outside the frozen moment of the painting events moved on for Adam and Eve, and for the autochthonous peoples of the New World. Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise into the hard world of toil and death. The fall for the New World peoples was almost as swift; it was not, however,

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<sup>1</sup> The penguin is found in southern Africa as well as the New World. However, it was reportedly first seen and named in the Magellan Straits, Tierra del Fuego, by sailors of Magellan's company during the first circumnavigation.

<sup>2</sup> Columbus's descriptions evoke Eden at various points, and he sums up: 'In conclusion, the admiral says that the sacred theologians and learned philosophers were right in saying that the earthly paradise is at the end of the east, because it is a very temperate place, so those lands which he had now discovered are, he says, "the end of the east."' Christopher Columbus, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, trans. by Cecil Jane (London: Anthony Blond & The Orion Press, 1960), p. 174. Columbus did not, however, recognise that he had reached a fourth continent.

mythical or metaphorical: it was a very real dispossession, comprising exploitation, toil and death.

Columbus's correlation of the New World with Eden initiated one particular facet of European desire focused on the New World, and the association with Eden was a recurrent theme in several subsequent accounts. However, those who followed, and exceeded, Columbus's footsteps often, in their accounts, constructed markedly different or equivocal versions of the New World, which excited a variety of desires in their European readers. Such first-hand accounts were vital constituents of the growing corpus of documents which mapped the New World empirically and constructed it as an object of knowledge in European culture.<sup>3</sup> As so few people actually went to the New World, these texts were fundamental in forming European understanding of it: they were the major sources of information with, additionally, paintings, artefacts and a small number of New World natives brought back to Europe. Individual accounts had greater or lesser effects in their own moment: some formed the basis for power relations with far-reaching material effects; some caught the attention of popular consciousness with entertaining tales of the New World; others were lost completely. Many, with the accretion of time, have attained the status of 'history', with its attendant assumptions of veracity, and constructed a web of meaning and association in relation to the New World which, in some instances, can be seen to permeate through to meanings still current in culture today.<sup>4</sup> As a corpus, these texts, in their contemporary moment, constructed the New World as a discursive field: a newly available intellectual and physical space in which empires and colonies could be imagined and enacted.

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<sup>3</sup> As well as journals, other documents included ship's logs, pilot's logs, maps and coastal illustrations.

<sup>4</sup> For discussion of ways in which the process of naming the land and mapmaking specifically have permeated through from the colonial period to our current moment see Rebecca Ann Bach, *Colonial Transformations: The Cultural Production of the New Atlantic World, 1580-1640* (New York: Palgrave, 2000).

## II

In the biblical story (Genesis, 2.19), prior to the moment of temptation, Adam has named the animals under God's watchful eye. As Catherine Belsey observes, Adam's authority over the process is conditional: he can only give them names God approves of, thus '(re)producing an authorized vocabulary', and, by 'submitting in this way to the symbolic Law', Adam becomes the first 'organism-in-culture'.<sup>5</sup> This scene represents an imaginary moment of origin, yet, as a child learns its native language it, too, learns to name, to differentiate distinct entities from the inchoate mass of the world before its eyes. As the child learns the names of things, it also learns their authorized meanings, and, like Adam, becomes an organism-in-culture, subject to the symbolic Law, and distanced by language from the organic real.

Language is not, however, merely a nomenclature. As Saussurean linguistics demonstrates, 'far from providing a set of labels for entities which exist independently in the world, language precedes the existence of independent entities, making the world intelligible by differentiating between concepts'.<sup>6</sup> While the link between a signifier (a sound-image or written shape) and a signified (a concept) in a particular language may appear inseparable, and natural, to a native speaker, the different division of the chain of meaning in different languages proves that the relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary.<sup>7</sup> This arbitrariness points to the fact that language, the signifying system, is conventional, that 'meaning is socially constructed, and the social construction of the signifying system is intimately related [...] to the social formation itself'.<sup>8</sup> Language, then, doesn't only provide names, it also delineates concepts, enabling us to think, and, as language operates as part of a social system (it is consensual and societal), meaning is

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<sup>5</sup> Catherine Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Belsey, *Critical Practice*, p. 36.

<sup>8</sup> Belsey, *Critical Practice*, p. 39.



‘public and conventional, the result not of individual intention but of inter-individual intelligibility’.<sup>9</sup> The interrelation between the functioning of language and the construction of meaning in culture is summarised by Belsey:

If signifieds are not pre-existing, given concepts, but changeable and contingent concepts, and if changes in signifying practice are related to changes in the social formation, the notion of language as a neutral nomenclature functioning as an instrument of communication of meanings which exist independently of it is clearly untenable. Language is a system which pre-exists the individual and in which the individual produces meaning. In learning its native language the child learns a set of differentiating concepts which identify not *given entities* but *socially constructed meanings*. Language in an important sense speaks us.<sup>10</sup>

The cultural reality which language produces and orders in this way is constituted by the knowledges, beliefs and values pertaining in a particular location and historical moment. What we can know, therefore, is the reality which culture presents to us. But, as Belsey also points out, quoting Martin Heidegger, while language indicates what is sayable, at the same time, ‘language also brings the unsayable into the world’.<sup>11</sup> The unsayable is that which remains unknown in culture, having no names, no ‘visible separate entities, objects, colours, sounds’; it constitutes reality’s defining difference. Jacques Lacan terms this unknown ‘the real’.<sup>12</sup> The real, to quote Lacan, ‘is what does not depend on my idea of it’.<sup>13</sup> It is this refusal to ‘incorporate what exists into what we know exists’ which, characteristic of poststructuralist theory, leaves open ‘the

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<sup>9</sup> Belsey, *Critical Practice*, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> Belsey, *Critical Practice*, p. 41.

<sup>11</sup> Catherine Belsey, *Culture and the Real: Theorizing Cultural Criticism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p. xii.

<sup>12</sup> Belsey, *Culture and the Real*, p. xii.

<sup>13</sup> Belsey, *Culture and the Real*, p. 4.

possibility of a terrain of unmapped alterity'.<sup>14</sup> Belsey suggests that the real may be as immense as the cosmos, or, at the same time, as small and mysterious as Jacques Derrida's 'unnerving experience of meeting the gaze of his cat when he was naked'.<sup>15</sup> The Lacanian real is not, however, fundamentally unknowable. As that which culture does not take account of, does not name or articulate, it is culturally and historically specific. Incursions can be made into it, parts of its continuum isolated and made knowable in language, as, for example, by scientific discoveries, such as those of Newton and Einstein.

Another example, I propose, was the encounter with, and articulation of, the particular and vast 'terrain of unmapped alterity' constituted by the New World. It was a continent unknown to the ancients, a blank page in history, yet, ineluctably there. Once it was encountered, its eastern extent touched upon, a space of perhaps limitless possibility was opened up: how big was it? what lived there? It could contain anything. The situation facing the first New World explorers is perhaps now intelligible by comparison with the layman's understanding of the possibilities of space (and our knowledge of the cultural productions of science fiction, which defer the void of the cosmos by 'peopling' it with our own aspirations and anxieties). Once experienced, the New World pressed to be articulated: reality had to be constructed from the undifferentiated real presented to the European explorers.

From the first voyage of Columbus onwards, the 'real' of the New World began to emerge gradually as it was mapped, both empirically and culturally, to render it comprehensible to pre-existing European cultural 'reality'. In a repetition of Adam's naming of the animals in Eden, Europeans gave names to the people, places, animals

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<sup>14</sup> Belsey, *Culture and the Real*, p. 4. The conflation of what exists with what we know exists is a characteristic of cultural constructivism which Belsey critiques in *Culture and the Real*.

<sup>15</sup> Belsey, *Culture and the Real*, p. xii.

and produce of the new earthly paradise, as it was termed by Columbus.<sup>16</sup> The ultimate authority for these new names was understood, by those who gave them, to be God, but a more immediate source of authorisation was the European culture from which these post-lapsarian Adams sprang. Native names were often ignored, replaced by European names which connoted meanings already understood in Europe. However, the process was far more wide-ranging than the imposition of new names: the New World in its entirety was brought into existence for European readers as its natural and cultural history was written by and for Europeans.

In the language-based process of cultural mapping, meaning is constructed by the identification of difference, and, at the level of cultural difference, the European term was systematically privileged over the indigenous. Inescapably, Europeans could construct the New World only in terms of European culture, a fact which introduced hierarchical relations from the outset. Similarities, and more often differences, created the meanings of the New World for Europeans. This process of creation can be explored by the examination of the textual detail of the accounts which were part of it.<sup>17</sup> The process was not ordered or comprehensive, but rather, during successive waves of exploration and settlement, it was cumulative, haphazard, subject to chance. These names and meanings became known to the Europeans who never visited the New World from the testimony and the written accounts of those who did. I use the term 'originary texts' to differentiate the earliest of these first-hand narratives of exploration and settlement from later, colonial, texts, as they wrote the initial European cultural scripts for the New World, creating a European cultural reality out of what was for them the

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<sup>16</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 174.

<sup>17</sup> The reciprocal process: what native cultures made of Europeans is largely unrecorded or lost.

continent's previously undifferentiated 'real'.<sup>18</sup> Later colonial and imperial aspirations and achievements would be based upon this foundation.

The early reports of explorers and mariners constructed a New World for European readers which was, by all accounts, a marvellous, beautiful, sometimes terrifying place, containing people beyond number. Yet the world these narratives create is not a transparent window through which the reader could view the New World 'as it really was': that was as unavailable to contemporary readers as it is to readers today. Although they often relate first-hand experience, these accounts are texts, and subject to the limitations inherent in any text. The most obvious is the gap between lived experience and its graphical representation. A process of selection, both conscious and unconscious, is an unavoidable stage in the production of any text, written or pictorial. Even when an author claims to provide an objective, transparent, true record of reality, the text can only present a partial account, necessarily leaving out more than it includes.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, not every account set out to produce objectivity: it is apparent that, in some texts, particular agendas are pursued, to persuade or impress, for example. Then there is the text's blindness to its own cultural location and relativity: that which the author would not be aware of, determined by their own knowledge, preconceptions and prejudices. This is the effect of being a subject within one's own culture, as Catherine Belsey observes:

The subject is what speaks or writes, and it does so in a language which is the inscription of certain knowledges – of a culture. As subjects, we have learnt to signify in a specific society, since signification always precedes us as individuals, and meanings pertain

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<sup>18</sup> There was, of course, a cultural reality for the native New World inhabitants; for them, Europe must have constituted the real.

<sup>19</sup> Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden*, p. 11.

at a specific historical moment. To speak or write is to reproduce, however differentially, the meanings we have learnt.<sup>20</sup>

For these reasons, early modern accounts of the New World cannot be relied on to present the truth of the time or place they depict. They can, though, reveal what was thought important to record about the New World by those who went there. They are texts we can read from today's perspective 'in order to produce the possible range of their meanings', which, as Belsey suggests, 'is not the same as the range of meanings that could consciously have been identified at the time'.<sup>21</sup> This method of reading enables an examination of ways in which representational priorities alter over time and, perhaps, signal changes in cultural values.<sup>22</sup> Written and pictorial accounts representing the New World were produced from the late fifteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries (and beyond). It should be possible to identify, in texts from the first hundred and fifty years of this production, a range of European cultural values applied to, or constructed in response to, the New World, and, perhaps, changes in representational practice or priorities over the period.

Though these accounts did not represent 'truth', nor provide access to the New World 'as it really was', they constituted the basis of Western knowledge and history concerning the New World. This knowledge became incorporated into European culture by a process of writing, reading, and reinscription. Explorers read earlier accounts of discovery, which, in part, formed the basis of their knowledge and preconceptions, and influenced their own subsequent investigations. Stories were heard, told and retold over time, and re-incorporated into subsequent texts. This process of textual interweaving is described by Michel de Certeau as a constant process of displacement and

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<sup>20</sup> Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden*, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden*, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden*, p. 6.

transformation of sources, creating over time stratified works which can be approached almost as an archaeological dig. Certeau uses the metaphor of slivers of broken mirrors to illustrate this process and the distortions it introduces. He describes the text as 'induced by these fragments (broken mirrors deforming the past they represent), but it displaces and transforms them in the fiction it generates by manipulating them'.<sup>23</sup>

A similar point, on the unavoidability of intertextuality, is made by Pierre Macherey. The writer, he states, 'as the producer of a text, does not manufacture the materials with which he works' and the materials he uses are not 'neutral transparent components' which disappear when incorporated into the work. Rather, the components 'have a sort of specific weight, a peculiar power, which means that even when they are used and blended into a totality they retain a certain autonomy'.<sup>24</sup> Although accounts of the New World often dealt with new objects of knowledge, there is, as Macherey suggests, no 'first book, independent and absolutely innocent: novelty and originality, in literature as in other fields, are always defined by relationships'.<sup>25</sup> When considered in light of these theories, European accounts of early encounters with the New World could be characterised as artefacts produced by subjects writing, necessarily, from a specific cultural and historical position, their cultural knowledge formed, in part, by their reading of earlier travel literature. While the subject matter was often new, drawn from the previously unknown real of the New World, the texts would construct the New World's cultural script in a relationship (of difference) from the Old, and, in the process, both reinscribe and modify European cultural values.

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<sup>23</sup> Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 139. Certeau is here discussing a very conscious manipulation of source materials in Jules Verne's *Les Grands Voyages*, though the process also occurs in texts less self-consciously.

<sup>24</sup> Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. by Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p.41-42.

<sup>25</sup> Macherey, *Theory of Literary Production*, p. 100.

Why, then, would such a textual process matter? Can any connection be traced between first-hand accounts of the New World and material practice there? Such texts, while in a sense inescapably fictions, are not fictions in the way that plays or novels are fictional, as they do claim to represent things which had a material reality in the world. Representational practice, as Belsey states, may not have a direct correlation with actual practice, a distance which is most clearly visible in fictional literature.<sup>26</sup> However, texts which represented the New World to those who never visited it clearly did materially affect European responses. For this reason, the detail of the language used to construct such representations is significant. Lacan provides an illustration of the operation of the materiality of language:

By the very fact that the word *elephant* exists in their language and that the elephant thus enters into their deliberations, men were able to make, with regard to elephants, before even having had contact with one, resolutions far more decisive for pachyderms than anything that has happened in their history [...]. With nothing but the word *elephant*, and the way in which men use it, things happen to elephants that are favorable or unfavorable, auspicious or inauspicious - in any event, catastrophic – even before a bow or rifle has been raised against them.<sup>27</sup>

If ‘New World’ were substituted for ‘elephant’ in this quotation, and the Spanish sovereigns Ferdinand and Isabella imagined poring over Columbus’s ‘Letter’, reading about the rich lands of their new island possessions, and the timorous people, easily ‘inclined to the love and service of our Highnesses and of the whole Castilian nation’,

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<sup>26</sup> Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden*, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Bk. I, Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. by John Forrester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 178, also quoted in Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 144, n. 23.

the analogy becomes clear.<sup>28</sup> Such texts, in the hands of such powerful decision-makers, surely had material consequences, and a good deal of work in the course of the last twenty-five years has been devoted to their investigation. My own project is more modest. It is to analyse the textual maps of the real produced by the earliest explorers of the New World.

### III

The Europeans who first encountered the New World as a vast terrain of unmapped alterity were not in a position to comprehend it as a whole, and could only render it up in small pieces in their individual accounts of voyages, discoveries and interactions with natives. A visual analogy for the process would be a constantly growing multi-coloured patchwork quilt. In textual terms, the accounts provide a mass of polysemic signifiers which construct plural, and at times conflicting, meanings for the New World from the range of cultural meanings available to the European travellers at the time. This textual route by which the previously unknown real of the New World was made intelligible and incorporated into European cultural reality, between 1492 and 1630, is my interest and focus here. My aims are, firstly, to examine a selection of the early first-hand accounts as locations of cultural history: to trace the emerging meaning of the New World as an object of knowledge in European culture. The analysis will focus on the cultural values explicitly or implicitly brought to bear in the texts which construct, in a relation of difference, a range of inaugural meanings for the New World. As I hope to demonstrate, by a process of textual comparison, diverse versions of the New World and its inhabitants emerge from texts which efface or foreground different characteristics, depending on the motives driving their production. Comparative

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<sup>28</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 196.



analysis also suggests that while some accounts seamlessly reinscribe elements from earlier travel and literary writings, others appear to make conscious efforts to eschew such intertextuality. In the accounts discussed here a variety of issues emerge: the status of the author as eyewitness; new discoveries prompting proto-scientific and anthropological writing; developing ideologies of nation and empire. Secondly, I aim to examine the newly emerging space which the New World constituted for European cultural play by considering several fictional works from the period which nominally locate their actions in, or draw their sources from, the New World.

For me, the study of representations of early encounters between Europeans and the New World offers an opportunity to examine an arguably unique process by which the previously unknown and undifferentiated 'real' becomes transformed, by the textual record of individual experience, into intelligible cultural 'reality'. These moments of initial encounter have also been of interest to others, particularly Anthony Pagden, Stephen Greenblatt and Peter Hulme, who bring to bear a variety of approaches, specific foci and avenues of enquiry, aspects of which have informed my study. Pagden, for example, in *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism*, focuses on authors and sets of texts from particular moments of encounter, dating from Columbus in 1492, to Alexander von Humboldt in 1799. The series of essays forms a sustained enquiry into what he terms the 'most daunting' of the problems the "discovery" of America posed for Europe, namely: 'the possibility, and for many the impossibility, of cultural commensurability'.<sup>29</sup> Pagden argues that where things were incommensurable, that is, where they did not conform to the pre-existing European 'conceptual "grid"', they were treated as marvels and wonders.<sup>30</sup> Some of the

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<sup>29</sup> Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Pagden, *European Encounters*, p. 10

texts I examine here include wonders and marvels, but mainly these texts display tenacity in their efforts to represent lived experience, and to delimit the New World within the confines of a necessarily expanding conceptual grid, or cultural framework. I would suggest that anything which wholly fell through the European conceptual 'grid' cannot be known, as it would have remained unsayable, part of the undifferentiated real. In *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* Stephen Greenblatt has written of the encounter in terms of its marvel and wonder, tracing a route from 'medieval wonder as a sign of dispossession to Renaissance wonder as an agent of appropriation'.<sup>31</sup> My study differs from both Pagden's and Greenblatt's in that my particular focus is on the cultural values Europeans brought to bear in their representations of the encounter, and the different modes of address of the texts, which, I argue, result in very different constructions of 'New Worlds' for readers. Greenblatt wholly orientates his study around the concept of marvel and wonder, while, in this study the mode of representation of marvels is examined as one of several aspects of the texts, with a shift noted from the medieval form of presenting them, such as in medieval travel literature, to forms of proto-scientific or ethnographic writing.<sup>32</sup> While consideration of the accounts of Columbus and Jean de Léry are indispensable to Pagden, Greenblatt and myself, the accounts of Amerigo Vespucci and Antonio

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<sup>31</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 24.

<sup>32</sup> Andrew Fitzmaurice proposes that examples of wonder and apparent speechlessness noted in accounts of the New World originate in the deliberate employment of rhetorical tropes of persuasion by Elizabethan and Jacobean writers of promotional tracts, rather than as a result of the 'epistemic crisis' suggested by Greenblatt, or, as perhaps suggested by Pagden, as a sign of encounter with an incommensurable other. Fitzmaurice identifies a range of classical rhetorical devices deployed in such texts, including expressions of wonder, which, rather than signalling writers' epistemic boundaries, fulfil the textual purposes of engaging the audience's attention and then, having 'given shape to the fears of the audience, the second role of wonder is amplification of that image. [...] By inventing the unfamiliar the orator brings the audience into the same moral landscape as that proposition which he is persuading the audience to accept' (Andrew Fitzmaurice, 'Classical Rhetoric and the Promotion of the New World' in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 58 (1997), 221-243, p. 234). Speechlessness, the 'expression of a failure of language', is another rhetorical trope: *paralipsis*, particularly the figure, *aporia*. As Fitzmaurice notes: 'These figures alert the audience to the extraordinary nature of the subject and enable us to "say that we are passing by, or do not know, or refuse to say that which precisely now we are saying"' (Fitzmaurice, 'Classical Rhetoric', p. 234).

Pigafetta are not dealt with by Pagden or Greenblatt in any detail, specifically not in the form of comparative analysis followed here.

Columbus's account of the New World has also been a particular focus for some of Peter Hulme's work, which has also informed this study. Hulme has written extensively on encounters in the Caribbean, from Columbus to the present day, from a post-colonial theoretical perspective.<sup>33</sup> His work to date does not use Lacanian theory, nor has he focused on accounts which cover the mainland of South America, such as those of Vespucci, Pigafetta, and Francis Fletcher, or the accounts of settlement of Léry, Hariot and Lane included here.<sup>34</sup> Hulme has also orientated much of his extensive work on Shakespeare's *Tempest* around its New World associations, including readings of Caliban as a type of Carib Indian.<sup>35</sup> *The Tempest* has also been a focus for some of Greenblatt's work, notably on Columbus's treatment of native language in relation to Caliban.<sup>36</sup> My reading of *The Tempest* here takes account of these studies, but focuses more specifically on the text's intertextual links with medieval, as well as early modern, travel literature.

The study *America Magica: When Renaissance Europe Thought it had Conquered Paradise* traces genesis of eight myths and their transference into New World settings.<sup>37</sup> I have discussed the incorporation of myth as a function of the reinscription of cultural meanings in successive texts, as theorised by Macherey and Certeau specifically here.

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<sup>33</sup> For example: Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986) and *Wild Majesty: Encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day*, ed. by Peter Hulme and Neil L Whitehead (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

<sup>34</sup> Stephen Greenblatt discusses various later accounts, such as those of Thomas Hariot and William Strachey in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, 'Prospero and Caliban' in Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, pp. 89-134.

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, 'Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century' in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. by Fredi Chiappelli (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 561-580.

<sup>37</sup> Jorge Magasich-Airola and Jean-Marc de Beer, *America Magica: When Renaissance Europe Thought it had Conquered Paradise*, trans. by Monica Sandor (London: Anthem Press, 2006).

Following the first encounters between Europeans and the New World (the main concern of this study) there followed a highly active period of colonisation and exploitation, initially pursued by the Spanish and Portuguese, then, somewhat later, by the English. Study of this period has been intense across a range of disciplines including history and literary studies from the imperial period through to the post-colonial period. In recent years, with the study of cultural production no longer limited to an accepted literary canon, there has been much interdisciplinary crossover between historiography and cultural theory, which has not been welcomed unequivocally by historians.<sup>38</sup>

During the early twentieth century the Hakluyt Society published many accounts of exploration and settlement, often edited and with contextualising introductions or critical appraisals by eminent historians, such as *The Roanoke Voyages* cited here, edited by David Beers Quinn. Quinn wrote extensively and authoritatively, particularly on the English colonisation of the New World and Sir Francis Drake.<sup>39</sup> Other Hakluyt publications cited here include Irene A Wright's *Spanish Documents Concerning English Voyages to the Caribbean, 1527-1568*, which presents a range of documents from Spanish archives. Although Wright cautions readers that, as each of these documents had a case to make, they may not present an 'honest statement of fact', she believes, 'the truth can be discerned', even so.<sup>40</sup> Wright herself rather skates over events following the battle of San Juan de Ulua, when Drake's *Judith* apparently deserted

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<sup>38</sup> Dane Kennedy has critiqued the incursions of literary theorists, particularly post-colonial theorists, into the field of historiography (Dane Kennedy, 'Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory', in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 24 (1996) 345-363).

<sup>39</sup> Works edited or written by David Beers Quinn, and often cited by subsequent scholars, include: *The Roanoke Voyages, 1584-1590: Documents to Illustrate the English Voyages to North America under the Patent Granted to Walter Raleigh in 1584* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1955); *The Hakluyt Handbook*, 2 vols (London: Hakluyt Society, 1974); *England and the Discovery of America, 1481-1620: From the Bristol Voyages of the Fifteenth Century to the Pilgrim Settlement at Plymouth* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974); *New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612*, 5 vols., ed. by David B Quinn, with Alison M Quinn and Susan Hillier (New York: Arno Press and Hector Bye, 1979); 'Early Accounts of the Famous Voyage', in *Sir Francis Drake and the Famous Voyage, 1577 - 1580: Essays Commemorating the Quadricentennial of Drake's Circumnavigation of the Earth*, ed. by Norman J W Thrower (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 33-48. With Paul Hulton, eds, *The American Drawings of John White, 1577-1590: With Drawings of European and Oriental Subjects* (London and Chapel Hill: British Museum and University of North Carolina, 1964).

<sup>40</sup> Irene A Wright, ed., *Spanish Documents Concerning English Voyages to the Caribbean, 1527-1568* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1929), p. 11.

Hawkins's stricken *Minion*.<sup>41</sup> Sir Richard Carnac Temple's 'appreciation of the achievement' of Drake's circumnavigation introducing *The World Encompassed*, and Zelia Nuttall's *New Light on Drake*, provide further examples of uncritical presentations of Drake customary in works written during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>42</sup> By contrast, Clements R Markham, in his introduction to *The Letters of Amerigo Vespucci and Other Documents Illustrative of His Career*, first printed by the Hakluyt Society, appears at pains to draw readers' attention to Vespucci's vagueness, and to provide evidence of the fabrication of his first voyage; Markham also notes the shallowness of Vespucci's 'self-vaunted' classical knowledge, and dismisses his claims to have been a ship's pilot.

The drawback of these editions is that their editors and translators aspire to distil and present the 'truth' of events from the texts they translate, edit, introduce, footnote and gloss. Added to this traditional historiographical approach is the specificity of their own historical position: such nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historians were, as Kenneth Parker has argued, inescapably 'immersed' in the 'discourses of British imperial ideology',<sup>43</sup> and, while this does not detract from the scholarly worth of their work (they still offer, in many cases, the most authoritative edition available), editorial perspectives which, upon first publication, would have passed unremarked, could now provide material for post-colonial analysis. That is not my project here, however.

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<sup>41</sup> John Hawkins published his own account of the episode in 1569, in the aptly titled: *A true declaration of the troublesome voyage of M. Iohn Haukins to the parties of Guynea and the west Indies, in the yeares of our Lord 1567, and 1568*.

<sup>42</sup> Zelia Nuttall, *New Light on Drake: A Collection of Documents Relating to his Voyage of Circumnavigation, 1577-1580* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1914). Drake, particularly, was very positively presented in many books published during the colonial period, see, for example John Barrow, *The Life, Voyages, and Exploits of Admiral Sir Francis Drake, Knt* (London: John Murray, 1843), and Edwin Munroe Bacon, *The Boy's Drake: Stories of the Great Sea Fighter of the Sixteenth Century* (London: n.p., 1910).

<sup>43</sup> Kenneth Parker, ed., *Early Modern Tales of Orient: A Critical Anthology* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 7.

As objects of study, the origins of empire and the development of colonial identities (British, European and Atlantic), have attracted the attentions of many historical scholars. In some instances, this argues in favour of a distinction between discovery and colonisation. For example, the story of the European transatlantic conquest and colonisation is retold from a comparative standpoint, with specific focus on the constructions of 'distinctive colonial identities', in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, edited by Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden. A European focus is also adopted by Pagden in his study of the development of imperial ideologies in Spain, Britain and France, in *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500-c.1800*. British colonialism is the subject of *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, edited by Canny, which presents a collection of essays by historians reassessing the beginnings of the British Empire. While much of this work is devoted to the process of colonisation Canny's introduction to the work opens from a different perspective. He observes that the 'study of the British Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries presents special difficulties because no empire, as the term subsequently came to be understood, then existed'.<sup>44</sup> From this apparently unpromising beginning Canny traces the rather hesitant route by which England moved from the internal colonization of Ulster to the plantation of Virginia. He notes that the English, although proven navigators, were 'slow to follow up their "Discoveries" and to claim domination over foreign peoples and trading routes, as the Iberians did so spectacularly from the outset'.<sup>45</sup> Canny questions historians' assumption of a connection between exploration and exploitation, and the establishment of overseas empires as the inevitable

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<sup>44</sup> Nicholas Canny, 'The Origins of Empire: An Introduction', in Nicholas Canny, ed., *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 1-33, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Canny, 'Origins of Empire', p. 2.

consequence of discovery, which, he concludes, is disproved by the English poor performance as colonizers during the period.<sup>46</sup>

David Armitage's essay in the same volume, 'Literature and Empire', examines the relationship between literature, rhetoric and the 'slow growth of a comprehensive imperial ideology for Britons'.<sup>47</sup> He, like Canny, questions generally held assumptions about the beginnings of empire, here in relation to literature, when he states that the 'association of the age of reconaissance with the era of renaissance' is an 'enduring myth' of modernity.<sup>48</sup> He makes the point that 'only with the rise of linguistic nationalism in the nineteenth century were literature and Empire traced back to common roots in the late sixteenth century',<sup>49</sup> suggesting that Richard Helgerson, for example, nourishes such a myth, while Armitage prefers to follow the line, proposed by J H Elliott, that new discoveries exerted only a 'blunted impact' on Europe. Armitage concludes that 'the knowledge that the new discoveries were only haltingly received into European consciousness has taken away one plank of the Renaissance myth of modernity'.<sup>50</sup> Armitage develops his argument to state that:

The impress of Empire upon English literature in the early-modern period was minimal, and mostly critical where it was discernible at all, while contemporaries understood literature and empire, what Bacon

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<sup>46</sup> Canny, 'Origins of Empire', p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> David Armitage, 'Literature and Empire', in Nicholas Canny, ed., *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 97-123, p. 113.

<sup>48</sup> Armitage, 'Literature and Empire', p. 99.

<sup>49</sup> Armitage, 'Literature and Empire', p. 100.

<sup>50</sup> Armitage cites chapters three and four of Richard Helgerson's *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) as nourishing the myth 'by juxtaposing the Elizabethans' discovery of the English nation with their exploration of the wider world' (Armitage, 'Literature and Empire', p. 100, n. 8). See also Jeffrey Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to The Tempest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 18, and J H Elliott, 'Renaissance Europe and America: A Blunted Impact?', in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. by Fredi Chiappelli (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 11-23.

called *res literaria* and *imperium*, in terms far different from those adopted by modern scholars.<sup>51</sup>

Such questioning of current orthodoxies is relevant to my own study, as it points to a differentiation I too wish to make between my project and the post-colonial one in terms of both materials and methodologies. In Armitage's words:

Post-colonial studies have generated proto-colonial studies, and recent scholarship has found the literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to be deeply, because necessarily, inflected by the 'imperial' experiences of racial difference, irreducible 'otherness', assertions of hierarchy, and national self-determination. However, to apply modern models of the relationship between culture and imperialism to early-modern literature and Empire demands indifference to context and inevitably courts anachronism. It is therefore necessary to be as sceptical about post-Imperial demystifications as it once was about mid-Imperial complacencies. [...] Both 'literature' and 'empire' are modern categories that have been projected anachronistically on to the early-modern period.<sup>52</sup>

J H Elliott critiques a similar form of teleological methodology, in relation to the study of the formation of colonial identity and the process of emancipation. Although this traces origins meticulously, it risks simplifying a range of complex processes, 'which by

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<sup>51</sup> Armitage, 'Literature and Empire', p. 102.

<sup>52</sup> Armitage, 'Literature and Empire', p. 102. Armitage's position is contested by, for example, Bruce McLeod, who argues that, rather than, as he presents Armitage's position, literature occupying a 'spectral' non-place in relation to colonialism, for McLeod, culture, particularly literary culture, 'catapulted back and forth across the Atlantic and processed the new spatial and social relations' (Bruce McLeod, *The Geography of Empire in English Literature 1580-1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 24-5). McLeod does rather undermine his argument, in my view, as he admits that 'those promoting imperialism were few and through canon formation have perhaps become larger than life' (McLeod, *Geography of Empire*, p. 25).



no means moves through logical stages to a preordained dénouement'.<sup>53</sup> My selection of materials here is based upon the thesis that it is possible to differentiate inaugural texts, which initially constructed the New World for a European readership and opened up the theoretical and physical space which enabled empires and colonies to be imagined and implemented, from later texts written from the position of colonial settlement. As Elliott further observes, the ideas of later seventeenth-century colonists were shaped by the experiences, as defined in their accounts, of the earliest explorers:

By the seventeenth century the New World conjured up visions in the European consciousness of gold and silver in abundance and of native Indian peoples lacking the rudiments of civility. These visions consciously or unconsciously shaped the attitudes and reactions of seventeenth-century colonists, differentiating them from the first generation of European arrivals, whose expectations of the New World had been formed exclusively in Europe.<sup>54</sup>

The texts explored in my thesis include the earliest accounts of the New World, together with the first narratives of English settlement in the Americas. I argue that these texts, many working from a basis of wholly European expectations, *construct* the visions which subsequently entered European consciousness. I do not attempt to include later 'colonial' texts in this study, and resist the post-colonial approach which Elliott identifies as teleological. I agree with Mary Fuller's observation that 'one need not deny the violence of colonialism to say that the earliest history of the English in America was hardly one of mastery or proficiency. It was hardly possible to predict what happened

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<sup>53</sup> John H Elliott, 'Introduction: Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World', in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. by Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 3-14, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Elliott, 'Colonial Identity', p. 5.

later from reading the history of 1576 - 1624'.<sup>55</sup> Although Spanish colonialism was well underway before the period of English colonialism referred to by Fuller, I would suggest that it is also not possible to predict the particular form of bloody conquest perpetrated by the Spanish from reading the accounts of Columbus, Vespucci and Pigafetta.

My project also differs from that of other collections of predominantly historical essays. These include *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, which contains two seminal, often cited essays: J H Elliott's 'Renaissance Europe and America: A Blunted Impact?', and Stephen Greenblatt's 'Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century'.<sup>56</sup> The variorum collection *Facing Each Other: The World's Perception of Europe and Europe's Perception of the World*, draws together scholarship on the New World, Pacific, Africa, China and Japan, from the earliest explorations into the late eighteenth century. As the editor, Anthony Pagden, observes, the articles address the relationship between travel and the other which provided, initially, a measure of space between civilised European and primitive origins, leading to the advent of anthropology, where the other is treated on their own terms, and recognised as the missing subject of early ethnography.<sup>57</sup> Notable articles in this publication include J H Elliott's 'The Discovery of America and the Discovery of Man', and Stephen Mullaney's 'Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs: The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance'.<sup>58</sup> Historical accounts which focus on the maritime aspects of the period include many works by Kenneth R Andrews including

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<sup>55</sup> Mary C Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America, 1576-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 12.

<sup>56</sup> In Fredi Chiappelli, ed., *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

<sup>57</sup> Anthony Pagden, ed., *Facing Each Other: The World's Perception of Europe and Europe's Perception of the World* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. xxxiv.

<sup>58</sup> J H Elliott, 'The Discovery of America and the Discovery of Man', pp. 159-183, and Stephen Mullaney, 'Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs: The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance', pp. 185-212, in Pagden, *Facing Each Other*.

his authoritative and often cited *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630*, which provides comprehensive historical context for English voyages of the period.<sup>59</sup> Encyclopaedic coverage of the many voyages to the New World is provided by Samuel Eliot Morison's two volumes: *The European Discovery of America: The Southern Voyages A.D. 1492-1616*, and *The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages A.D. 500-1600*, which sets English voyages in context among the many expeditions mounted by other European countries.<sup>60</sup>

Studies such as those described above provide the historical framework, setting out events which actually happened, in relation to Europe and the New World in the early modern period. Reference to them is vital to this study; however, my aim is not to provide an historical thesis, nor to rehearse in this text work already admirably undertaken elsewhere. Although highly conscious of the historical context of the texts examined here, my approach differs quite fundamentally from that of the historian. As I have indicated, historians principally set out to discover what happened in the past, and, in general, are therefore inclined to look to the source documents they consult for access to the 'truth' beyond the text. My interest is not in what lies 'beyond' the texts themselves, but in the cultural reality they present to their readers. What is unique about the first-hand accounts discussed here, I argue, is that they construct a reality for Europe from the real of the New World, defining and differentiating that which had not previously been mapped by Europeans. I approach these works from a perspective prior to that of the historian, not focusing on the events, but rather, on how, out of something

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<sup>59</sup> Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). See also *Elizabethan Privateering: English Privateering During the Spanish War 1585-1603* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), and *Drake's Voyages: A Re-assessment of their Place in Elizabethan Maritime Expansion* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967).

<sup>60</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Southern Voyages A.D. 1492-1616* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); *The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages A.D. 500-1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

European languages had not previously mapped, reality was formulated in the words and cultural meanings available. Therefore, this project is not about the history of discovery. Instead, it is about the difficulties of describing that which had not previously been experienced. My method involves the analysis and comparison of texts precisely to highlight their differences and contradictions, their silences and evasions, their motivations and objectives; I dwell on the nature of text *qua* text, the potential for multiple readings, the proliferation of unanticipated meanings, and the necessity of reading today from a different perspective than that of their contemporary readers. The thesis strives to highlight the differences in constructions of the New World which emerge from the accounts examined, precisely because such contradictions are often effaced by historians eager to create a coherent, fluid narrative, which relates a unified 'truth' of events.

Over the last twenty-five years, in addition to this historical research, much scholarly work on the early-modern period has also been undertaken in the interdisciplinary field of literary-historical criticism. Individual works are often organised around a particular theme, or theoretical proposition. As previously noted, Stephen Greenblatt's study of early New World encounters is entirely orientated around wonder, and, while this work has been very influential, its focus on one specific organising principle has drawn criticism. For example, Thomas Scanlan, in *Colonial Writing and the New World 1583-1671: Allegories of Desire*, critiques Greenblatt's *Marvelous Possessions* as treating the colonial phenomenon as something 'exported intact from Europe' and asserting that 'renaissance beliefs and perceptions were determinant in the construction of Europe's colonial empires', rather than, as Scanlan argues, colonialism being 'a complicated set of negotiations between the imperial nation

and its colonies'.<sup>61</sup> Also, while not disputing the specifics of Greenblatt's reading of Jean de Léry's text, Scanlan would 'hesitate to suggest' as Greenblatt does, that 'wonder constitutes the resting place of any reading of this text'.<sup>62</sup> Scanlan's own study is based on the thesis that colonial texts operate as allegories serving to construct a specifically Protestant colonial identity, which, in turn, he argues, is constitutive of an English Protestant identity. Scanlan's text provides a synthesis of historical contextualisation and biography to support his discussion of the genesis of a Protestant colonial identity in texts from the late sixteenth to the late seventeenth centuries. My study differs from Scanlan's in that I engage in far more detailed textual analysis than his, and I am primarily concerned with the construction in language of culturally intelligible reality from a previously unmapped and unknown real, and in the specific textual strategies which create particular meanings, either in line with the authors' stated intentions, or of which their authors would not be aware, and which may only be grasped by reading from today's perspective.

I would, perhaps, query Scanlan's use of the term allegory to describe Bartholomé de las Casas's account of the atrocities of the Spanish in the New World, *A Brief History of the Destruction of the Indies*. Rather than saying one thing and meaning another, Las Casas's treatise seems to me to propound a very direct meaning. I would, though, fully agree with Scanlan that a defining difference between an English concept of colonialism and that of the Spanish and Portuguese was 'what the English saw as their uniquely humane and compassionate approach toward the native populations they encountered'.<sup>63</sup> My project here is to demonstrate how such ideas of ideology are expressed in a particular text, and the specific textual strategies which construct it.

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<sup>61</sup> Thomas Scanlan, *Colonial Writing and the New World 1583-1671: Allegories of Desire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.2.

<sup>62</sup> Scanlan, *Colonial Writing*, p. 209, n. 25.

<sup>63</sup> Scanlan, *Colonial Writing*, p. 22.

Scanlan invokes Jaqueline Rose's reading of Lacan on loss and desire, and further readings of Lacan by Franz Fanon and Homi Bhaba. I would agree with Scanlan's reservations on the limitations of post-colonial psychoanalysis employed in transhistorical ways to conflate differences between early modern writing and later nineteenth century colonial writers. I also share his doubts about its ability to explain everything, such as, for example, the English conscious desire not to replicate the Spanish model of bloody colonisation. I have drawn on Lacanian theory in terms of the real and the construction of meaning, and to some extent, in Chapter four, on Lacan's understanding of the potential of the real to disrupt cultural reality, as another facet of the constitution of loss and desire. I have not dealt with the later application of psychoanalytic theory by such writers as Fanon and Bhaba, as it is not relevant to this project, dealing, as it does, predominantly with the construction of the colonised subject.

Another literary critic, Jeffrey Knapp, cites Greenblatt as an inspiration for his work, and also adopts a thematic approach, focusing on the term 'trifling'.<sup>64</sup> Knapp's interest is the 'literary "New World" texts of Renaissance England' which conflate the 'trifles' of unworldly poetry and unworldly England, notably More's *Utopia* (1516), Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590-96), and Shakespeare's *Tempest* (1611). These, he states, revolve around 'three interlocking issues: the problem of an island empire; colonialism as a special solution to the problem; and poetry as a special model of both problem and solution'.<sup>65</sup> In addition, Knapp discusses a range of extra-literary texts which he characterises as also 'concerned with English otherworldliness as a national, poetical, and imperial issue'.<sup>66</sup> These include Thomas Hariot's account of Virginia, also examined here. While relating the Virginia texts to the positions of Queen Elizabeth and

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<sup>64</sup> Knapp, *Empire Nowhere*.

<sup>65</sup> Knapp, *Empire Nowhere*, p. 7.

<sup>66</sup> Knapp, *Empire Nowhere*, p. 8.

Sir Walter Raleigh, and to the *Faerie Queen*, Knapp's reading of Hariot's *Briefe and True* account concentrates on his representation of tobacco, proposing that Hariot used tobacco as a synecdoche for the impact of colonisation, his 'ambiguous' position on tobacco providing an intentional indication of his position on settlement.<sup>67</sup> My own analysis of Hariot's text, however, focuses on the construction of difference and distance between the English and the natives, and contrasts this textual strategy with the very different approach evident in Ralph Lane's account. In discussing More's *Utopia*, and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Knapp asserts that they 'combine otherworldly poetry and nation, and then direct them both toward the New World, only by placing England, poetry, and America – or rather by *displacing* them – Nowhere'.<sup>68</sup> My own analysis of these texts proceeds from reading the first-hand accounts they reference, arguing that the reality they attempt to construct is deferred in the fictions, replaced by a variety of differently theorised scenarios for English social organisation.

The thematic focus of Mary Fuller's study, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America, 1576-1624*, concerns the process of 'self-conscious' colonial identity formation, taking as its materials the 'printed texts which were both generated by and helped to generate England's entry into American discovery and colonization between 1576 and 1624'.<sup>69</sup> Fuller sets out her project as primarily an historical one of rereading primary documents to contribute to a revised understanding of England's early contact with America, and 'to suggest that if the history of those early decades is about any one thing, it is about the ways in which the failure of voyages and colonies was recuperated

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<sup>67</sup> Knapp, *Empire Nowhere*, p. 150-151. Louis Montrose bases his theory of a gendered discourse of discovery on the expression of the relationship between Queen Elizabeth and Sir Walter Raleigh in Raleigh's *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana* (London: Robert Robinson, 1596). Louis Montrose, 'The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery', in *Representations*, 33, Special Issue: The New World (1991), 1-41.

<sup>68</sup> Knapp, *Empire Nowhere*, p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> Fuller quotes Peter Hulme as attributing the "'obsessive" documentation of the early English voyages and colonies to a "self-conscious effort to create a continuous epic myth of origin for the emerging imperial nation"', and Richard Helgerson, in *Forms of Nationhood*, as setting 'Richard Hakluyt in the company of other writers engaged in a "generational project" of articulating the idea of an English nation' (Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 1).

by rhetoric, a rhetoric which in some ways even predicted failure'.<sup>70</sup> Her reading aims to revise the reception of texts which have, from 'the Victorian era on', had their 'claims of heroism and mastery' accepted.<sup>71</sup> Fuller contrasts sonnets with the detailed record keeping, or 'mercantile writing' (which involves features of synchronicity, denotative reference, and privacy) carried out during voyages, arguing that they are opposites. Sonnets, Fuller states, assert unique untranslatable selves, while creating marketable *public* identities, whereas mercantile writing is directed towards the external world and is largely incapable of speaking about the self (though Fuller does allow that some writers found them to speak of the self. Mercantile texts are denotative, recording facts, and, Fuller maintains, intended to be as transparent as possible: 'the task of the writer is almost more to transcribe or to copy *from* the world of objects and events rather than to author a text as such'.<sup>72</sup> In support, Fuller cites Montaigne's apparent commendation of the account of 'the simple man' as providing the 'truth' about a distant place. However, Montaigne's appeal to the simple man is far from simple itself, as Michel de Certeau has admirably demonstrated.<sup>73</sup> My readings of the texts discussed in this study, by contrast with Fuller's, proceed from the proposition that transcribing or copying from the world of objects cannot produce a transparent 'truth' of that world, or make it present. Travel accounts, as Certeau explains, 'constitute language in its relation to that which it is unable to appropriate, that is to say, in its relation to a (t)exterior [un *hors-texte*]'.<sup>74</sup> Meaning is generated by the text, not by looking 'through' the text, and this is a process from which the author cannot be effaced as mere cipher. However 'simple' the interlocutor, they inescapably speak from their own present cultural moment, and

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<sup>70</sup> Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 12.

<sup>71</sup> Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, frontispiece.

<sup>72</sup> Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 8.

<sup>73</sup> Certeau discusses Montaigne's essay 'Of Cannibals' in his chapter 'Montaigne's "Of Cannibals": The Savage "I"', in *Heterologies*, pp. 67-79.

<sup>74</sup> Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 73.



make conscious and unconscious choices about what to include and exclude from their text. The process of selection alone means that such a text can never be simple or transparent, nor can it present the 'truth' of a distant place.<sup>75</sup> My study differs from Fuller's project in that I focus on the lack of transparency and the textual strategies involved in the production of meaning in the texts examined.

Bruce McLeod brings together literature and geography.<sup>76</sup> He takes as his theme the central question of how literature functions in relation to imperialism, and how geographical space at home and abroad was envisioned in cultural productions between 1580 and 1745.<sup>77</sup> McLeod argues that 'a great deal of national culture during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was imbued with a geographical imagination fed by the experiences and experiments of colonialism'; he uses this theoretical basis to ground his readings of works by Edmund Spenser, John Milton, Aphra Behn, Mary Rowlandson, Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. In this very interesting study, McLeod's scope is very different from mine, as he focuses on the construction of spatial relations which cohere to form a 'socio-spatial system known as an empire'.<sup>78</sup>

In a sense, Rebecca Ann Bach comes closer. She focuses on the transformative process enacted during England's colonial period which, she argues, not only redefined 'the territory and people the English encountered, but also importantly refigured the territory and people of the metropolitan centre'.<sup>79</sup> Bach explores the colonising practices of naming and mapping as a struggle for hegemonic definitions of spaces and people: 'colonial names and maps show colonial power and conflicts among colonists, as well

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<sup>75</sup> See Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden*, pp. 1-25.

<sup>76</sup> McLeod, *Geography of Empire*.

<sup>77</sup> McLeod, *Geography of Empire*, p. 8 and p. 12.

<sup>78</sup> McLeod, *Geography of Empire*, frontispiece.

<sup>79</sup> Bach, *Colonial Transformations*, p. 3.

as resistance by native and creolized settler communities'.<sup>80</sup> The process, as apparent in mapmaking, is aptly described by GNG Clarke:

nomenclature, as one aspect of the look of maps, becomes a primary ingredient of the visual dimensions of possession: a verbal pattern through which culture speaks itself *onto* the land; renaming as it wipes clean one history and rewrites, as it renames, its own history onto the surface of the map (and land).<sup>81</sup>

As Bach points out, the politics of such a transformational practice are still apparent today. For example, we now only recognise names such as 'United States' rather than the original native names. While Bach actively criticizes the power acts that created this situation, she must use the names as they are the only ones her readers will understand.<sup>82</sup> While this thesis is concerned with the earliest stages of the process of construction of meanings of the New World, Bach's work examines examples of its continuation, as meanings are continually reiterated and reinscribed in successive forms of cultural production.

Like maps, literary fictions also interrogate and display cultural values, and many critical textual studies of New World narratives include readings of, or allusions to, more ostensibly fictional writing. The two works most often cited are Shakespeare's *Tempest*, as mentioned above in relation to Peter Hulme, and Thomas More's *Utopia*. Stephen Greenblatt has written in depth on *Utopia*, though with more emphasis on its place within a theory of the Renaissance sense of self than its specific New World associations.<sup>83</sup> This study differs in that its theoretical approach analyses the fictional texts discussed as sites of deferral of meaning: while accounts of the New World may

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<sup>80</sup> Bach, *Colonial Transformations*, p. 69.

<sup>81</sup> G N G Clarke, qtd. in Bach, *Colonial Transformations*, p. 87.

<sup>82</sup> Bach, *Colonial Transformations*, p. 69-70.

<sup>83</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, 'At the Table of the Great: More's Self-Fashioning and Self-Cancellation' in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 11-73.

provide incident and a nominal location, these texts provide a cultural reality which stands in place of the actuality of the New World. The fictional works examined here are ones which can be related specifically to some of the first-hand accounts already discussed. For example, *Utopia* names Vespucci as a character, and draws on his account. *The Tempest* combines allusion to both medieval travel tales and New World accounts; a mix found, as will be discussed, in the accounts of Columbus and Pigafetta. It also references the Virginia of Hariot and Lane, and the tempest which marooned William Strachey on Bermuda. The *Sea Voyage* also draws on Strachey's experiences, and foregrounds the issue of New World piracy. I argue that these texts, unusually, purport to have New World locations (though not, in the case of *The Tempest*, a literal one), yet, more obviously than the many texts which merely allude to the New World (such as Spenser's *Faerie Queen*), these texts defer the actuality of the New World, using it instead as a blank, unwritten canvas on which to enact issues of English society.

Finally, many works, particularly those written from a post-colonial theoretical perspective, discuss the politics of colonialism. Politics is not my project. The texts examined here, I have argued, inaugurate meanings for the New World, and, in constructing it as a locus of material and spiritual desire, of course, they set the conditions of possibility for the subsequent colonial possession and exploitation, and the development of sophisticated ideologies of empire (as noted in the works of Anthony Pagden, for example). The New World clearly changed the political landscape and history of Europe from the moment it entered into European knowledge. In the limited scope available here, I have confined myself to close analysis of aspects of the construction of the New World in specific texts, and not broadened out my discussion to the subsequent consequences of that knowledge, as this work has already been

admirably undertaken by scholars such as Mary Louise Pratt.<sup>84</sup> A good deal of such work employs a post-colonial theoretical framework, and concerns itself with the power relations between coloniser and colonised, possessor and dispossessed. Also, many works treat as a continuum texts from a period which, I have argued, constitutes the inaugural stage of the process, with those produced in the later period of colonial settlement. They draw no distinction between a conscious enactment of established colonial discourse and practice, and a prior position when the meaning of the New World was still in the early stages of construction.

In my project a distinction is drawn between the earliest texts which construct inaugural meanings, and, arguably, set the basis of knowledge upon which colonial ideas found fertile ground for development, and those later texts produced from a position of established colonial settlement. Politics and ideologies of empire and colonialism as they subsequently developed are not, therefore, discussed here. The post-colonial concern with tracing the development of relations between coloniser and colonised, and particularly those which deal with the subaltern experience, does not form part of this project. While there are a number of first-hand indigenous accounts of the early years of Spanish conquest in the New World, I have not focussed on these, as my plan is to investigate the construction of the New World for Europeans by Europeans.<sup>85</sup> Like Mary Fuller, I do not intend to attempt to 're-animate the victim's side of the story'.<sup>86</sup> Scholars such as Barbara Fuchs and Inga Clendinnen have focused on Spanish or indigenous perspectives. Clendinnen provides a fascinating insight into Aztec interpretations of the actions of Cortéz and his conquistadors.<sup>87</sup> Fuchs discusses constructions of Spanish identity, Spanish fictions of the period, and indigenous

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<sup>84</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>85</sup> See p. 106, n. 1, for references to indigenous accounts of the conquests of Mexico and Peru.

<sup>86</sup> Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 12.

<sup>87</sup> Inga Clendinnen, "'Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty': Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico", in *New World Encounters*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 12-47.

American writers, characterising her project as one of considering sameness, as against the fundamental theorisations of difference as constitutive of meaning proposed by Saussure, Derrida, Lacan and Foucault. The position I start from, by contrast, is that difference is fundamental to the construction of meaning in language, and, as theorists following on from Saussure have demonstrated, to the construction of cultural meanings and values. This thesis, predicated on the notion of difference, examines in detail the process by which conscious and unconscious identification of difference constructs meanings out of the undifferentiated real, articulating intelligible cultural reality.

The majority of the materials this study examines are created at the advancing edge of discovery or settlement: the point at which the real is encountered, directly engaged with, and rendered intelligible in writing as reality. For this reason, I have drawn a distinction between, on the one hand, the first accounts of a particular encounter or settlement, and, on the other, the continuing textual production generated by ongoing exploration, colonisation and trade. The texts discussed here construct the New World as an intelligible space newly available, theoretically and physically, for Europe to expand into. The 'bloody conquest' of the New World in the sixteenth century undertaken by the Spanish and Portuguese is not, I have suggested, anticipated in the accounts of Columbus, Vespucci and Pigafetta, nor specifically encouraged by them. Drake's *World Encompassed* does specifically present the New World as a space for English colonisation, though it posits paternalistic plantation rather than Spanish-style conquest as the model. The accounts of Ralph Lane and Thomas Hariot construct conflicting version of this model in practice in the first English settlement in Virginia.

While many critical studies of travel narratives have been written recently,<sup>88</sup> the primary texts examined here have not, in the main, been the subject of new translations or republications.<sup>89</sup> Cecil Jane's translation of *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* dates from 1960, R A Skelton's translation of Pigafetta's account of Magellan's circumnavigation, *Magellan's Voyage*, from 1969 (Folio Society reprint 1975), while Clements R Markham's *The Letters of Amerigo Vespucci and Other Documents Illustrative of His Career* was first published by the Hakluyt Society in 1894, and reprinted in 1964.<sup>90</sup> The original collections of voyage texts in Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1580-1600) have been supplemented by subsequent publications by the Hakluyt Society of collections of related documents with commentaries, such as *The Roanoke Voyages 1584-1590*, edited by D B Quinn (London: Hakluyt Society, 1955). The most recent publication of Sir Francis Drake's *World Encompassed* is the 1971 reprint of the 1926 edition of *The World Encompassed and Analogous Contemporary Documents Concerning Sir Francis Drake's Circumnavigation of the World*, edited by N. M. Penzer, with an appreciation of the achievement by Sir Richard Carnac Temple.<sup>91</sup> For English texts I have chosen to take advantage of the most authoritative modern edition, such as those listed above, or to work with the earliest

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<sup>88</sup> Collections of essays which offer historical, geographical, and theoretical overviews of travel writing include: *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, ed. by Jaś Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés (London: Reaktion, 1999); *Perspectives on Travel Writing: Studies in European Cultural Transition, Volume 19*, ed. by Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); *Cambridge Companion to Travel Literature*, ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Works orientated around more literary texts include Claire Jowitt, *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics 1589-1642: Real and Imagined Worlds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), and Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance 1545-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

<sup>89</sup> Two exceptions are Janet Whatley's translation of Jean de Léry's *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, trans. by Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), and Luciano Formisano's translation of Amerigo Vespucci's letters: *Letters from a New World: Amerigo Vespucci's Discovery of America*, trans. by Lucian Formisano (New York: Marsilio Classics, 1992).

<sup>90</sup> Columbus, *Journal*; Amerigo Vespucci, *The Letters of Amerigo Vespucci and Other Documents Illustrative of His Career*, trans. by Clements R Markham (New York: Burt Franklin (Hakluyt Society reprint), 1964); Antonio Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage: A Narrative Account of the First Navigation*, trans. and ed. by R A Skelton (London: The Folio Society, 1975).

<sup>91</sup> Sir Francis Drake, *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake*, ed. N M Penzer (Amsterdam: N. Israel and Da Capo Press, 1971 (reprint of *The World Encompassed and Analogous Contemporary Documents Concerning Sir Francis Drake's Circumnavigation of the World* (London: Argonaut, 1926)).

available printed version of the text (often in facsimile), with reference to earlier manuscript versions where necessary (one example is Francis Fletcher's 'Notes'). For foreign texts I have used the most recent translation, which, as noted, could be quite old, with reference to manuscripts where available to check translations of particularly significant words.<sup>92</sup> For literature and drama the most recent authoritative edition has been used. I have reproduced spellings, contractions and italicisation as they appear in the source texts.

#### IV

The thesis comprises four chapters, each divided under a number of sub-headings, with a concluding fifth chapter. The first chapter opens with an introduction contextualising the texts the section addresses: Christopher Columbus's 'Letter' and *Journal* recording his first voyage (1492-3); Amerigo Vespucci's published letters relating his four voyages (1497-1504); Antonio Pigafetta's account of the first circumnavigation (1519-22). The primary focus of the section is on ways in which the texts structure encounters between Europeans and New World natives, and construct the New World as a locus of European desire. The second section goes on to examine the intertextual evidence that knowledge of earlier travel literature influences the preconceptions of the explorers, and the differential reinscriptions of earlier texts apparent in their accounts. At the same time, the authority of individual experience over the ancient authorities begins to figure as a site of contestation. Subsequent sections of the chapter examine representations of native nakedness, colour and ornamentation in relation to the European attitudes the representations connote. I discuss the texts' intended addressees in as much as

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<sup>92</sup> Preferring his use of language, I have chosen to use Markham's translation of Vespucci rather than Formisano's. There appear to be few differences of substance; attention is drawn in a footnote to the one example in quotations given here.

comparison between the texts indicates that they appear to define each text's agenda. The remaining sections of the chapter examine the different figures of the New World and its natives constructed in the various texts in relation to representations of sexuality, cannibalism and the natural world.

The second chapter focuses primarily on two accounts of Francis Drake's circumnavigation (1577-80): Francis Fletcher's 'Notes' and the 1628 compilation *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake*, published by a nephew of the Admiral who shared his name and title. A textual comparison of the two aims to highlight how in these texts the New World provides a locus for the beginnings of new, semi-empirical writing, focusing on observation and recording, proto-ethnographic writing, and mapping and measuring. At the same time, vestiges of medieval wonder and marvel begin to decline in importance. The second section of the chapter examines the New World as a stage on which European rivalries were played out, and which offered the opportunity for the production of a text which posited desirable constructions of Englishness, a quintessential English maritime hero, and a theoretical concept of English colonial practice.

In the accounts discussed in the first two chapters relations with native peoples are somewhat limited, due to the nature of voyage exploration, particularly circumnavigation. The third chapter examines accounts of early settlement. Here, relations with the New World peoples are much more central to the texts. The chapter examines the quite different constructions of the natives which result from three texts of settlement: Jean de Léry's account of his sojourn with the Tupinamba tribe in Brazil, and Ralph Lane's and Thomas Hariot's accounts of the first English American settlement, in Roanoke. I argue that the very different reactions sought from readers by



these accounts are a result of the conscious textual strategies of their authors, which stem from their very different projects.

The fourth chapter considers the New World as a new space opened up for the cultural play of fictional literature. While the actuality of the New World is deferred in the texts discussed, they each have intertextual links, to greater or lesser degrees, with first-hand travel narratives. The chapter begins with consideration of an example of the two-way process of cultural inscription. John Layfield's account of Puerto Rico is said to have informed his translation of sections of the Book of Genesis in the King James Bible. However, examination of his account appears to demonstrate that his knowledge of the Bible and Eden was equally influential over his representation of Puerto Rico. Other focal texts are Thomas More's *Utopia* in relation to Amerigo Vespucci's accounts, and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Sea Voyage* in relation to William Strachey's account of shipwreck in Bermuda and eventual arrival in Virginia. I argue that, rather than attempt to offer fictions which matched the actuality depicted in the first-hand accounts, these texts take its place: the European signifier defers the materiality of the New World in all its difference. That fictional texts did not transcribe their plots directly from first-hand accounts indicates that the New World primarily constituted a space for textual experimentation, the working out of possibilities for European culture and society, while the 'real' of the New World was kept at a safe distance by cultural play. The fifth chapter comprises a short conclusion to the thesis.

## Chapter One

### Rewriting the Edge

As realisation dawned in Europe that there was a fourth, previously unknown, continent, the authority of classical sources was called into question. The ancients had believed that neither the torrid zone nor the antipodes were habitable. Erasmus wrote in 1517 that in classical times ‘to speak of the antipodes was thought prodigious folly’, while, in his own day, ‘unknown countries are discovered [...] the boundaries of which no one has yet been able to trace fully, though they are known to be of enormous extent’.<sup>1</sup> As ancient authorities had nothing to say about the New World, and as explorers pushed further into the unknown, narratives which related personal observation and experience filled the textual void.

This chapter will examine three early first-hand accounts of the New World: texts positioned at the inception of the process of constructing the New World for a European readership. Christopher Columbus’s letter and *Journal* covering his first Atlantic crossing and explorations in the Caribbean (1492-3), both written during the voyage, will be discussed. The letter was widely published from 1493 onwards, and the holograph *Journal* was, on his return, presented to the patrons of the expedition, the Spanish sovereigns Ferdinand and Isabella. The *Journal* was never published in full and was lost; all that survives is a partial summary made by the Dominican historian Bartolomé de las Casas in 1552.<sup>2</sup> Also examined are the two widely published letters relating Amerigo Vespucci’s four voyages to South America, undertaken between 1497

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<sup>1</sup> Erasmus, ‘Letter to Dukes Frederick and George of Saxony, Antwerp, 5 June 1517’ in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, trans. by R A B Mynors and D F S Thomson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), iv, pp. 373-383, p. 381

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Columbus, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, trans. by Cecil Jane (London: Anthony Blond & The Orion Press, 1960). Las Casas completed the summary of Columbus’s journal in the same year he began to write the *Historia de las Indias*, his indictment of Spanish treatment of New World natives. Jane discusses arguments

and 1504.<sup>3</sup> Third, Antonio Pigafetta's account of the first circumnavigation of the world under Magellan (1519-22).<sup>4</sup> The only complete record of the voyage to survive, Pigafetta's text, which drew heavily on his daily journal, was finished in 1525. The account was circulated in several manuscript copies, and was included in published collections such as Richard Eden's *Decades of the New World* (1555) and Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589). It was not published as a single work until the twentieth century.

The primary focus of this chapter will be to compare the texts' staging of European and New World encounters with the aim of demonstrating that, even in these earliest accounts, very different figures of 'the native' are constructed. I suggest that these result from various cultural assumptions, evident in the texts, which shape observation and enquiry and frame what is written. These accounts constitute the beginning of a process by which authors' cultural reality constructs the limits of possibility for the encountered 'real' of the New World. The texts' treatment of the question of human monstrosity provides an initial instance for comparison.

### **I have so far found no human monstrosities**

'In these islands I have so far found no human monstrosities, as many expected, but on the contrary the whole population is very well formed'.<sup>5</sup> Christopher Columbus

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concerning whether las Casas falsified the spirit of the journal, but concludes that he did not (Columbus, *Journal*, p. xvii).

<sup>3</sup> Amerigo Vespucci, *The Letters of Amerigo Vespucci and Other Documents Illustrative of His Career*, trans. by Clements R Markham (New York: Burt Franklin (Hakluyt Society reprint), 1964). All quotations are taken from this edition; significant variations in Formisano's translation are indicated in footnotes (Amerigo Vespucci, *Letters from a New World: Amerigo Vespucci's Discovery of America*, trans. by Luciano Formisano (New York: Marsilio Classics, 1992)).

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage: A Narrative Account of the First Navigation*, trans. and ed. by R A Skelton (London: The Folio Society, 1975).

<sup>5</sup> Columbus, 'The Letter of Christopher Columbus', in *Journal*, pp. 191-202, p. 200.

included this observation in the letter he wrote in 1493 to his patrons, the Spanish sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, in which he described the results of his voyage to discover a western sea route to Cathay (China). Desire to develop trade links with this reputedly immensely rich trading nation provided the motivation for the voyage. We now know that Columbus did not encounter the eastern islands off Cathay but, rather, islands off the coast of a previously unknown continent. Columbus did not expect this, nor did he realise that it had happened.<sup>6</sup>

Columbus's knowledge and expectations were based upon both ancient written authorities and more contemporary accounts. The ancients equipped him with knowledge of only three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. Marco Polo, the main contemporary source of information about Cathay, detailed the riches of the mainland, and also recorded reports of over seven thousand islands in the China Sea, most of them inhabited, but difficult to reach, and each providing wood, spices, peppers, gold or 'other rarities', all of marvellous value.<sup>7</sup> What Columbus had expected to find, then, was the mainland of Cathay, ruled by the Great Khan, or the rich islands on which he believed he had landed.<sup>8</sup> He also thought, as the quotation from his letter indicates, that he would find 'human monstrosities'.<sup>9</sup>

As well as the desire for geographical exploration and development of trade, Columbus's letter indicates an interest in the type of people who populated regions barely known to Europeans. Clearly, readers were assumed to share his expectations

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<sup>6</sup> Columbus died in 1506 without accepting that he had encountered a new continent.

<sup>7</sup> Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. by Ronald Latham (London: Penguin, 1958), p. 248-9.

<sup>8</sup> Columbus may also have been influenced by the myth of King Solomon's gold mines, located in the biblical lands of Tarshish and Ophir, and also associated with Polo's description of the isle of Cipango, and identified the island of Hispaniola with these gold-rich lands (see Jorge Magasich-Airola and Jean-Marc de Beer, *America Magica: When Renaissance Europe Thought it had Conquered Paradise*, trans. by Monica Sandor (London: Anthem Press, 2006), chapter 3, 'King Solomon's Mines in America', pp. 53-67, p. 61).

<sup>9</sup> Magasich-Airola and Beer propose that Columbus 'forged a curious image of the world, one that was a sort of projection of the Middle Ages with its fantastical geography', his ideas formulated in response to his reading, including Pierre d'Ailly's *Ymago Mundi* (1410) (which included details from Ptolemy's *Geography*), Pliny's *Natural History* and *The Travels of Marco Polo* (Magasich-Airola and Beer, *America Magica*, p. 27-8).

that ‘human monstrosities’ would be found. What formed these specific expectations? As virtually no Europeans, including Columbus, had previously travelled to Cathay, the few written texts on the subject were the major sources of information. The two most influential travel narratives of the period were both fourteenth-century: Marco Polo’s *Discovery of the World* (c.1300),<sup>10</sup> and *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (1356).<sup>11</sup>

Both Polo and Mandeville were accepted sources of geographical reference in the late fifteenth century.<sup>12</sup> However, they provided little practical geography: it would be very difficult to construct a map from either text. Polo’s book related his travels across a large part of the then known world, including Japan and India, but it was the accounts of the Great Khan’s rich trading centres in Cathay which most excited European interest. Mandeville’s book details the eponymous author’s pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and travels beyond.<sup>13</sup> Among its many fables and marvels, it, too, paints a glittering picture of Cathay, and also of the lands and court of Prester John in India. Both books include references to ‘human monstrosities’ inhabiting the islands of the China Sea, though they do not make up a large part of either narrative.<sup>14</sup> Polo describes the island of Andaman where the people have no king, are idolaters and live like wild beasts. This is a not unusual picture in his text, but here, in addition, he tells readers, ‘You may take it for a fact that all the men of this island have heads like dogs, and teeth and eyes like dogs; for I assure you that the whole aspect of their faces is that of big

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<sup>10</sup> Marco Polo’s ‘Description of the World’ (*Divisament dou Monde*, now more usually known as *The Travels of Marco Polo*) was written at the end of the thirteenth century. It circulated initially in manuscript form, and, from 1477 onwards, in printed form.

<sup>11</sup> Sir John Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, trans. by C W R D Moseley (London: Penguin, 1983).

<sup>12</sup> Polo’s account, now accepted as the more factual of the two, was not treated as such a reliable source as Mandeville during the fifteenth and sixteenth-centuries. Mandeville’s *Travels* is now known to be a collection of other travellers’ accounts, compiled by a still unidentified author. See Rosemary Tzanaki, *Mandeville’s Medieval Audiences* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 2-6, for discussion of Mandeville’s possible identity and sources.

<sup>13</sup> This book, first circulated in Europe in the mid-fourteenth century, was far more widely available than Marco Polo’s, and, by implication, more influential: ‘by 1400 some version of the book was available in every major European language; by 1500, the number of MSS was vast and some three hundred have survived. (For comparison, Polo’s *Divisament dou Monde* is extant in only about seventy.)’ Introduction to *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, p. 9.

mastiffs.’ They are as cruel as they look, he continues, as ‘whenever they can get hold of a man who is not one of their kind, they devour him’.<sup>15</sup> Mandeville’s account is even more ‘marvellous’ in incident and description than Polo’s, and his collection of monstrosities appears comprehensive. In just one page he describes the ‘many different kinds of people in these isles’, including one-eyed giants, headless people, flat faced people, large upper-lipped people, very small people with no mouths, people with ears to their knees, people with feet like horses, those who walk on all fours and climb trees, an island of hermaphrodites, eight-toed people who walk on their knees, one-footed people,<sup>16</sup> people who live on the smell of a certain kind of apple and, he concludes, there are many others ‘too numerous to relate’.<sup>17</sup> Mandeville also has a version of the dog-headed men. His inhabit the island of Natumeran, are called Cynocephales, and, unlike Polo’s dog-heads, ‘despite their shape, [they] are fully reasonable and intelligent’ and only eat those they capture in battle.<sup>18</sup>

The texts of both Polo and Mandeville draw on classical sources and Christian iconography for their accounts of human monstrosities, reinscribing them in what they, as authors, claim to be factual travel narratives. Pliny the Elder is one source: Book 7 of his *Natural History* describes examples of monstrous races collected from earlier texts, almost all of which are represented in Mandeville’s list.<sup>19</sup> The races were illustrated in Christian *mappemondes* such as the fourteenth-century Hereford Cathedral *mappa mundi*. Such maps represented ‘encyclopaedias of Medieval beliefs’ and, as well as

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<sup>14</sup> The China Sea, according to Polo, was the name applied to the wider ocean in the region: ‘And, when I say that this sea is called the China Sea, I should explain that it is really the Ocean’ (Polo, *Travels*, p. 248). The Andaman Islands are in the Indian Ocean.

<sup>15</sup> Polo, *Travels*, p. 258.

<sup>16</sup> According to Pliny the one-footed people, called Sciopods, use the foot to shade themselves from the sun, and ‘move in jumps with surprising speed’ (Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. by H Rackham (London: Heinemann, 1938-63), II (1938), p. 521).

<sup>17</sup> Mandeville, *Travels*, p. 137.

<sup>18</sup> Mandeville, *Travels*, p. 134.

<sup>19</sup> Pliny, ‘Book 7’, *Natural History*, pp. 513-529. For discussion of Pliny’s sources, see John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 5-25.

showing the three known continents, they were illustrated with a mass of symbolic and allegorical figures from medieval legend and the Bible, including the Garden of Eden.<sup>20</sup>

The Plinian races in the Hereford map, as in this example from a thirteenth-century Psalter, are presented as individual figures, located together in a row or line on the outer right edge of the circular map:



Figure 2 World map with Christ Pantocrator from a Latin Psalter, c. 1250

The Plinian races were allocated an identifiable position on the map, as was the Garden of Eden. Both are located at the edge of the land, contained within the known world, but on its margins. Precisely the regions Polo and Mandeville purport to have visited, and where Columbus and subsequent explorers also located themselves.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Peter Whitfield, *Mapping the World: A History of Exploration* (London: Folio Society, 2000), p. 33.

<sup>21</sup> Columbus located himself specifically in relation to the *mappemondes*: 'And he said that he believes that these islands are those without number which in the *mappemondes* are placed at the end of the east. And he said that he believed that in them there were very great riches and precious stones and spices, and that they extend very far to the south, and spread out in very direction' (Columbus, *Journal*, p. 62).

At the same time as these symbolic maps were drawn, mariners were constructing practical navigational maps known as portolan charts. These charts were criss-crossed by direction-finding lines used for compass sailing, and showed details important to pilots and sailors: coastal features such as harbours, river mouths, rocks and currents; they rarely included any inland features.<sup>22</sup> In this, the earliest dated example, from 1318, the Black Sea is shown (north is at the foot).

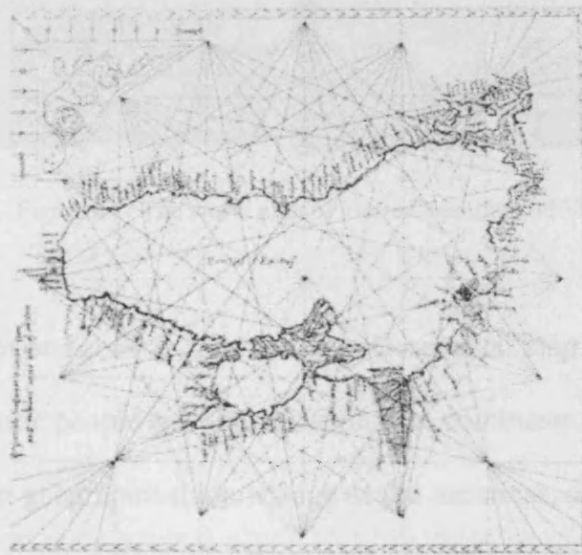


Figure 3 Portolan chart by Petrus Visconte, dated 1318

Comparison of these two maps suggests that in the middle ages it was possible for two worldviews to coexist: the practical, and the symbolic and allegorical. In later maps, the two views, on occasion, appear to combine in decorated portolan charts which, together with navigational and coastal information, included illustrations of people, buildings, animals, and sometimes mythological beasts or monstrosities.<sup>23</sup> One exceptional example is Pierre Desceliers' world map from 1550.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Bricker, *Landmarks of Mapmaking* (Ware: Wordsworth, 1989), p. 24-5.

<sup>23</sup> The level of inclusion of allegorical and mythical figures appears to reduce considerably after the medieval period, though examples persisted, such as in the 1375 Catalan Atlas which includes the Great Khan (Whitfield, *Mapping the World*, p. 43); a Genoese world map (1457), includes strange birds, beasts, and sea monsters (Whitfield, *Mapping the*



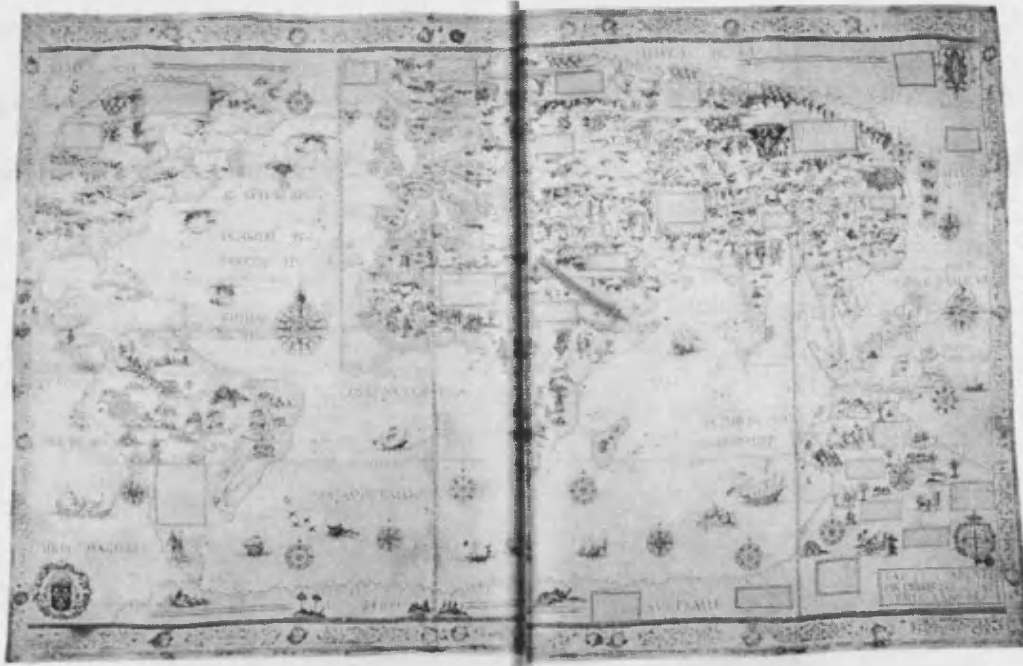


Figure 4 The world map of Pierre Desceliers, 1550

The navigational lines and coastal information in Desceliers' map are richly augmented by illustrations of exotic people and animals filling the continents. The map incorporates the latest geographical knowledge of the Americas, and also includes, in the north, various native and European figures, a castle, fish-eating bears, emus, and, possibly, a unicorn. To the south are Spanish fortifications, mining, warring cannibals, monkeys and parrots, and, in the far south, Patagonian giants. Europe, Asia and Africa are illustrated by the familiar figures of Christ, the Great Khan and Prester John, camels, elephants, and an occasional griffon. Across the south of the map is the region of 'La Terre Australle' its eastern extent reaching northwards to meet the islands of the South China Sea. Here camels and elephants are depicted, and three sets of natives. The most southerly group, recalling Polo and Mandeville, comprises richly dressed male and female dog-headed cannibals in process of butchering a naked third. It is possible to

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*World*, p. 54); Juan de la Cosa (1500) includes Blemmyae (Whitfield, *Mapping the World*, p. 83). In maps of, or including, the New World, monsters are not placed there, though cannibals and the Patagonian giants are usually represented, as for example, in Pieter van den Deere's 1611 world map (Whitfield, *Mapping the World*, p. 118-9).

conclude that, in the sixteenth century, map-makers, as well as depicting new geographical discoveries, still looked to literary sources and the tradition of the *mappemondes* for information.<sup>24</sup>



Figure 5 Dog-headed cannibals from the Desceliers world map (detail)

Can the same mix of literary sources and empirical investigation be identified in the written accounts of exploration of the period, or are new forms of representation developed? The navigational log, completed on all voyages, could be equated with the portolan chart, in that it recorded the basic details of the voyage necessary for mariners. Journals, such as those produced by Columbus, Pigafetta and Vespucci, provided much more scope for the inclusion of detail and observation, perhaps comparable to, or different from, the Desceliers map.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Whitfield states that printed maps of the 1540s were outdated compared with contemporary manuscript maps, as access to Spanish and Portuguese charts was restricted, and literary sources were still prevalent. The influence of Marco Polo can, he suggests, still be traced in maps made as late as the 1620s (Whitfield, *Mapping the World*, p. 63). One example of this overlap is Sebastian Münster's 1540 edition of Ptolemy's *Geographica* which, in its plate representing Asia, depicts Blemmyae, a Sciopod, Anthropophagi preparing a meal, and a Cynocephale (Bricker, *Landmarks*, p. 104).

<sup>25</sup> This brief discussion of maps is intended only to provide a visual analogy to the different types of writing generated during voyages. It is beyond the scope of this study to consider the extremely important political and ideological functions of maps during the period. There are many scholarly works which focus on various aspects of cartography and chorography, including: on the history of mapping and geography, works already cited by Whitfield and Bricker; on the representational strategies of maps (issues of measurement, visualization and narrative), foregrounding social and political dimensions of maps as spatial constructs (with a focus on maps in England and Ireland) see Bernhard Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); on the instrumental uses of maps in the field of trade and commerce, looking predominantly eastwards rather than towards

Columbus, believing himself to be among the islands off Cathay, recorded in his *Journal* his attempts to locate the mainland and its cities and the enquiries he made about other ships, the whereabouts of gold and spices, and ‘monstrosities’, as, for example:

The admiral showed to some Indians of that place cinnamon and pepper – I suppose some of that which he had brought from Castile as a specimen – and they recognised it, as he says, and indicated by signs that there was much of it near there, towards the south-east. He showed them gold and pearls, and certain old men replied that in a place which they called ‘Bohio’ there was a vast amount, and that they wore it round the neck and on the ears and legs, and also pearls. He further understood that they said that there were large ships and merchandise, and that all this was to the south-east. He also understood that far from there were men with one eye, and others with dogs’ noses who ate men, and that when they took a man, they cut off his head and drank his blood and castrated him.<sup>26</sup>

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the New World, see Jerry Brotton, *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World* (London: Reaktion, 1997). Studies directly concerned with issues of mapping and the New World include Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), especially chapter three, ‘The Land Speaks’, pp. 105-147; focussing on the political aspects of chorography and cartography, and their relation to literature, Bruce McLeod, *The Geography of Empire in English Literature 1580-1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), and Rebecca Ann Bach, *Colonial Transformations: The Cultural Production of the New Atlantic World, 1580-1640* (New York: Palgrave, 2000). Both works consider maps as agents of, in Bach’s terms, a process of ‘colonial transformation’ in naming, conceptualising, and possessing space. G N G Clarke suggests that ‘nomenclature, as one aspect of the look of maps, becomes a primary ingredient of the visual dimensions of possession: a verbal pattern through which culture speaks itself onto the land; renaming as it wipes clean one history and rewrites, as it renames, its own history onto the surface of the map (and land)’ (qtd. in Bach, *Colonial Transformations*, p. 87). Such a writing of culture and history can be seen on the Desceliers map: detailed in the Old World, being written onto formerly empty regions of the New. A related point, on the politics of colonial appropriation, is made by McLeod: ‘chorographical descriptions enact a resignification that implies a formerly vacant topography. In what is clearly a colonial move, the new maps displaced other representations of the nation in order to make space for a more authentic design’ (McLeod, *Geography of Empire*, p. 97). In a bald sense, maps also registered individual ownership in colonial enterprise, a point made by Jane H Ohlmeyer, in ‘“Civilizing of those rude partes”: Colonization within Britain and Ireland, 1580s-1640s’, in *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. by Nicholas Canny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 124-147, p. 140.

<sup>26</sup> Columbus, ‘Journal of Christopher Columbus’ in *Journal*, pp. 3-187, p. 52.

For Columbus, then, as an explorer in unfamiliar territory, the whereabouts of Plinian races form a legitimate part of his enquiries. His text records not only what he sees but also what he understands he has been told, as in the above example. Other similar reports include the people of Avan who are 'born with tails', and, living on the island of Carib, 'a people who are regarded in all the islands as very fierce and who eat human flesh'.<sup>27</sup> These Caribs also 'have intercourse with the women of "Matinino"' who 'engage in no feminine occupation, but use bows and arrows of cane [ . . . ] and they arm and protect themselves with plates of copper'. Columbus concludes that the Caribs 'are no more malformed than are the others, except that they have the custom of wearing their hair long like women'.<sup>28</sup> Men with tails, Anthropophagi and Amazons, are all races described by Pliny.

The monsters have not been seen, and, apart from the Caribs, reports of them were few. In Columbus's text, the process by which the real is mapped and ordered can be seen as one of comparison and testing between what is expected, on the basis of existing European knowledge and literary authority, and what is actually found. The limitations are apparent here, defining the questions Columbus can ask and the subjectivity of his interpretation of what he is told. In this example, natives only indicated direction 'by signs', yet the 'old men' provide detailed information about gold and pearls, shipping and merchandise, as well as the whereabouts of human monstrosities. All this, Columbus states, he 'understood'.<sup>29</sup> With only a few weeks'

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<sup>27</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 198 and p. 200.

<sup>28</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 200. Columbus's textual conjunction of Caribs and monsters is also noted by Margarita Zamora, who, additionally, identifies this as a gendered response, as she proposes that it is 'the Caribs' anthropophagy and their long feminine hair that strike Columbus as monstrous', with both symbolising 'difference and inferiority', which, 'coupled with Columbus's comparison of the Indians to beasts', completes 'the triad which according to Aristotle constituted the category of natural servant or slave – animals, women, and deficient men' (Margarita Zamora, 'Abreast of Columbus: Gender and Discovery' in *Cultural Critique*, 17 (1990/1), 127-149, p. 141).

<sup>29</sup> For discussion of Columbus and translation see Stephen Greenblatt, 'Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century' in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. by Fredi Chiappelli (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 561-580, and Peter Hulme, 'Columbus and the

experience of the Caribbean language, translation was necessarily basic, yet, at this point, the text makes no comment on the difficulties of communication.<sup>30</sup>

It seems reasonable to conclude that, in the example of human monstrosity, the testing of literary authority by experience has somewhat equivocal results: there may still be monsters, but they are elsewhere. The report of their absence guarantees a trace of their presence, reinscribing them in the text. At the inception of a new wave of exploration, monsters are relocated, due to Columbus's fundamental preconception, from the East Indies, to the West Indies. They still appear on the map, but pushed further from the centre as the margins expand.

Amerigo Vespucci, writing in 1503-4, only a few years after Columbus, presents accounts of his four voyages in the form of two letters, one to Pietro Soderini, the other to Francesco di Medici. Both were widely published from 1504 onwards. In the letter to Soderini, Vespucci states explicitly that the text presents the New World in a form which would entertain readers:

It may be that, though your Magnificence is continually occupied with public affairs, you may find an hour of leisure, during which you can pass a little time in frivolous or amusing things, and so, as a change from so many occupations, you may read this my letter.<sup>31</sup>

Vespucci produced, arguably, the most fictional of the early accounts focused on here, as he may have entirely fabricated his first voyage.<sup>32</sup> Yet he does not introduce any of the generally accepted literary tropes of marvels, wonders, or human monstrosity. There are no first- or second-hand reports of monsters, nor does he invoke them to remark

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Cannibals' in *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 13-43.

<sup>30</sup> At other points Columbus does indicate the difficulties of translation and misunderstandings (Columbus, *Journal*, p. 92-3).

<sup>31</sup> Vespucci, 'Soderini Letter', *Letters*, p. 2. Published in 1504, the Soderini Letter covers all four voyages.

<sup>32</sup> See Markham's introduction to Vespucci's *Letters*, p. i-ii.

upon their absence. In other respects, Vespucci does not hesitate to make his narrative an exciting, racy, even prurient, 'good read'. Therefore, it may seem surprising that he does not attempt to gratify popular taste for such wonders.

Perhaps a desire to present a new, different, frame of reference can be identified in Vespucci's text. According to his own account, Vespucci recognised and proved that Columbus had not encountered Cathay, but a new and previously unknown continent. On this basis, Vespucci formulates a direct challenge to the written authority of the ancients:

It is lawful to call it a new world, because none of these countries were known to our ancestors, and to all who hear about them they will be entirely new. For the opinion of the ancients was, that the greater part of the world beyond the equinoctial line to the south was not land, but only sea, which they have called the Atlantic; and if they have affirmed that any continent is there, they have given many reasons for denying that it is inhabited. But this their opinion is false, and entirely opposed to the truth. My last voyage has proved it, for I have found a continent in that southern part; more populous and more full of animals than our Europe, or Asia, or Africa, and even more temperate and pleasant than any other region known to us.<sup>33</sup>

Vespucci clearly states that he has refuted the authority of the ancients and a literary canon which included Pliny, Polo and Mandeville, and the medieval mapmakers who drew only three continents. He lays specific claim to writing about something completely new, 'things never before written upon either by ancient or modern

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<sup>33</sup> Vespucci, 'The Medici Letter', *Letters*, p. 42. Published in 1503, the Medici Letter covers the third and fourth voyages.

writers'.<sup>34</sup> It seems reasonable, therefore, to expect that he would not demonstrate the same interest as Columbus in testing these authorities against experience in relation, for example, to human monstrosities. While Vespucci makes it clear that he will relate what he is told, as well as what he sees with his own eyes, he makes no explicit references to Plinian races in his text.<sup>35</sup>

In Antonio Pigafetta's account of the first circumnavigation under Captain-general Ferdinand Magellan (1519-1522) it is explicitly stated that the narrative is expected to satisfy the curious reader with the 'great and marvellous things' seen and experienced on the voyage.<sup>36</sup> Pigafetta's text, unlike Vespucci's, mounts no challenge to the literary authority of the ancients. Indeed, he affirms that his knowledge of the 'great and terrible things of the Ocean Sea' (the Atlantic) came from the 'reading of divers books' as well as the verbal reports of 'many clerks and learned men' at court.<sup>37</sup> He does, however, assert the authority of his own experience:

I determined [...] to experience and to go to see some of the said things, thereby to satisfy the wishes of the said lords and also mine, that it might be told that I made the voyage and saw with my eyes the things hereafter written, and that I might win a famous name with posterity.<sup>38</sup>

There was much which was novel for Pigafetta to record: he wrote his account at a time when America's status as a continent was accepted, but its full extent still uncharted.

The Pacific Ocean (so named by Magellan during the voyage) had not previously been

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<sup>34</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 42. Vespucci does describe natives who freely offer their wives and daughters to them, reminiscent of one of the monstrous races, the 'Wife givers', described by Friedman as a race who 'had a very limited popularity, appearing only in the Fables and Wonders tradition. They are an amiable race who honor and give wives to any traveller who stops among them' (Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, p. 21). Vespucci also describes giants, though not conforming to any of the Plinian versions.

<sup>36</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 27.

<sup>37</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 27.

crossed by Europeans, and its size was vastly underestimated. Yet, as well as relating some of the wealth of 'great and marvellous things' he saw with his own eyes, Pigafetta, the most eclectic of these early narrators, also incorporated myths and fables, tales heard along the way, and incidents and marvels from earlier travel narratives.

Pigafetta's narrative includes several natural marvels, such as strange birds, and a crustacean which, when swallowed by whales, leaves its shell and eats their hearts from the inside. The first marvel, encountered within days of setting out, is introduced with a peremptory 'know that' and retells as fact the story of the water tree of Hierro in the Canary Islands, which dates back to Pliny.<sup>39</sup> Pigafetta's account does not mention human monstrosities in relation to the New World; they appear during the latter part of the voyage, in the East Indies. He does not cite any specific written sources for his material, but identifies 'local pilots' as sources of oral information on monstrous races. For example: 'Our old pilot of Molucca told us that nearby was an island named Aruchete, where the men and women are no taller than a cubit and have ears so large that of one they make their bed, and with the other they cover themselves'.<sup>40</sup> It is made clear that Pigafetta did not see the people of Aruchete himself; they were prevented from going there 'by reason of the strong currents and the many reefs'.<sup>41</sup> This form of monstrosity appears to combine two races described in Pliny's *Natural History* and reinscribed in Mandeville's *Travels*: the very small people with no mouths, and the people with ears to their knees. Pigafetta also includes an account of an island of women, similar to those of Martinino, as reported to Columbus. Pigafetta's version is told to them by their 'oldest pilot':

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<sup>39</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, n. p. 33.

<sup>40</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 147.

<sup>41</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 147.



In an island called Ocoloro, below Java the Great, there are only women, who become pregnant with wind. And when they give birth, if the child is male they kill it, and if it is a girl they rear it. And if any men come into that island, they kill them if they can.<sup>42</sup>

Pilots also tell Pigafetta of a very tall tree growing in the gulf of China, the *caiu paugganghi*, home to *garuda* birds, who are 'so large that they carry off an ox or an elephant' and were first discovered by a shipwrecked boy, who escaped by hiding under the wing of a *garuda* bird when it flew to dry land to take an ox.<sup>43</sup> This story, presented as fact in Pigafetta's text, is an Arab fable, one of the tales told in the *Arabian Nights*. Incorporated within Pigafetta's account, the *garuda* bird was introduced into European culture almost two hundred years before the full *Arabian Nights* text was translated into a European language.<sup>44</sup> The elephant-eating bird is included in Theodor de Bry's somewhat allegorical etching of Magellen entering the eponymous straits:<sup>45</sup>



Figure 6 Magellan entering the Straits of Magellan

<sup>42</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 151.

<sup>43</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 151.

<sup>44</sup> The *Arabian Nights* was first disseminated in Europe and North America following a French translation by Antoine Galland in 1704-17 (Jack Zipes, *When Dreams Came True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 49).

Columbus's text, I have suggested, appears to test literary authority against new experience, and, in the process, relocates the possibility of human monstrosity to the New World. Vespucci's accounts, while perhaps mixing fact and fabrication, appear to avoid invoking ancient authorities or medieval wonders and marvels. This may be a deliberate textual strategy, an attempt to more effectively present the New World as 'new', by employing a form which made no claims to connections with the literary legacy and authority of the old world. By contrast, Pigafetta, whose historical status as one of the first people ever to circumnavigate the earth is unquestioned, produces an account of a real voyage peppered with descriptions of marvels, wonders and human monstrosities. Their incorporation appears carefully managed, as the marvels are introduced at points in the narrative of the voyage which correspond to their locations as described in the source texts. To return to the comparison with maps, both Columbus's and Pigafetta's texts bear resemblance to the Desceliers map. Vespucci's text, while not providing the accuracy of a portolan chart, appears to have erased the mythical figures from the margins.

There is one exception: Vespucci does report an encounter with giants. Gigantism, unlike other human monstrosity, appears to inhabit an equivocal region between pure textual life and material existence. Appearing as 'foul and horrible to look at', with only one eye 'in the middle of their foreheads', and eating raw flesh and raw fish, Mandeville's giants are certainly monstrous, and, fortunately, only inhabit his text.<sup>46</sup> Giants do not appear at all in Columbus's accounts. Vespucci meets giants during his second voyage. To find water, Vespucci's party land on an island off Brazil which they believe to be uninhabited. But then, 'we came upon very large foot-marks in the

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<sup>45</sup> Together with various symbolic figures, de Bry illustrates details from Pigafetta's text: a Patagonian giant swallowing an arrow, and fires along the southern shore of the Straits, which led Magellan to name the island Tierra del Fuego.

<sup>46</sup> Mandeville, *Travels*, p. 137.

sand, as we were walking along the beach'.<sup>47</sup> The sailors speculate that, if the other measurements are in proportion, the inhabitants must be very tall. Indeed, when encountered, they are. At first Vespucci's company meet only women and girls, all of whom were taller than a large man. They decide to 'to take the young girls by force', back to Castile with them, 'as a wonderful thing'. Their plan is thwarted when the native men arrive; they are even larger than the women, and appear threatening with 'bows and arrows, and great clubs with knobs'. Vespucci records his relief when they finally get back to their ships without loss. He concludes the episode: 'We called this island *the Island of the Giants*, by reason of their stature'.<sup>48</sup>

In Pigafetta's account, giants are also presented as real, unequivocal figures. He states that, after two months at anchor, over-wintering on the east coast of South America, and seeing no native inhabitants, 'one day (without anyone expecting it) we saw a giant who was on the shore, quite naked, and who danced, leaped, and sang, and while he sang he threw sand and dust on his head'. This strange apparition is not kept at a distance, but brought into their midst to see the captain. Pigafetta describes the native as 'so tall that the tallest of us only came up to his waist. Withal he was well proportioned'.<sup>49</sup> Unlike other possible human monstrosities, these giants, the Patagonians, as they were named by Magellan, are described in detail and from close quarters by Pigafetta. The interaction between the Europeans and the Patagonians continues for about three months, with Pigafetta observing their face and body painting, their mode of dress, weapons, ways of hunting and their women and children, even noting down words from their language, spoken in their 'terribly loud and strong' voices.<sup>50</sup> Before leaving, Magellan's company take two young men prisoner, but both

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<sup>47</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 27.

<sup>48</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 28.

<sup>49</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 42.

<sup>50</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 44.

die before they reach Europe. Pigafetta says of them: 'These two giants whom we had in the ship ate a large boxful of biscuit, and un-skinned rats, and they drank half a pailful of water at a time'.<sup>51</sup> It seems impossible to explain this incident. The fossil record does not contain any evidence of such giants, yet the details given in Pigafetta's account of their way of life and language are accurate of the Tehuelche tribe who inhabited the region. Neither Vespucci nor Pigafetta relate their experiences of New World giants to those found in classical or medieval literary sources. Reinscribed in first-hand New World accounts, the Patagonian giants were also reproduced pictorially in maps, such as those of Juan de la Cosa and Pierre Desceliers, where giants are represented in the southern regions of South America as consistently as cannibals and macaws in Brazil.<sup>52</sup>

To admit the possibility of monstrous races is to question the limits of what it is to be human. Throughout Pliny's account of them, the monstrous races are always referred to as 'people'. The islands Mandeville describes are 'peopled,' with 'folk' of male or female gender, despite their monstrous appearance. The inhabitants of the island of Aruchete in Pigafetta's account are still described as 'men and women', even though they are 'no taller than a cubit' and have such huge ears. There is obvious latitude in what the term 'human' could contain at this time. As the extent of the known world increased human monstrosity became more marginalised and it could, perhaps, be argued that the definition of the term human narrowed. I have suggested that some early accounts of the New World leave open the possibility that it might contain human monstrosities, but that, even there, they are elusive. The New World natives that the early explorers did encounter were always unequivocally human: the term, if it could

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<sup>51</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 47. It is in Pigafetta's account of these giants that the name of the devil Setebos is first recorded.

<sup>52</sup> For an outline of the origin of the myth of giantism, together with a summary of New World voyage accounts which describe meeting them, see Magasich-Airola and Beer, *America Magica*, chapter 8, 'The Patagonian Giants', pp. 171-189.

contain monstrosity, could clearly embrace these physically normal peoples. While the status of New World natives as fundamentally human was not seriously questioned following the ruling in Paul III's Papal Bull *Sublimis Deus* of 1537, this is not to imply that they were not defined by difference: specifically their difference from European cultural expectations.

### **They all go naked as their mothers bore them**

The attempt to map old-world cultural knowledge onto the new, in the example of the search for monstrous races, appears to have offered only limited scope as a means of making sense of the New World. Both Columbus's and Pigafetta's texts indicate that there was European interest in whether or not human monstrosities could be located. While that question remained unanswered, all three accounts foreground descriptions of the people they did encounter, indicating that this knowledge was also of interest to readers. The specific representational practices apparent in the texts construct a variety of figures of the 'native', whilst revealing various European cultural values implicated in the formulation of these constructions.

The first level of description in the accounts is purely visual: how the natives looked. For Columbus, the attribute it appears important to relate first is their lack of clothes. After crossing the Atlantic, the initial landing is on a small island, where 'immediately they saw naked people'.<sup>53</sup> This observation is repeated throughout the islands Columbus visits, as he summarises in his letter:

The people of this island and of all the other islands which I have found and of which I have information, all go naked, men and women,

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<sup>53</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 23.

as their mothers bore them, although some of the women cover a single place with the leaf of a plant or with a net of cotton which they make for the purpose.<sup>54</sup>

Vespucci reports his first encounter in similar terms:

We anchored with our ships at a distance of a league and a half from the shore. We got out the boats, and, filled with armed men, we pulled them to the shore. Before we arrived we had seen many men walking along the beach, at which we were much pleased; and we found that they were naked, and they showed fear of us, I believe because we were dressed and of a different stature.<sup>55</sup>

Vespucci, unlike Columbus, contrasts explicitly the difference between naked natives and clothed Europeans. He attempts to ascribe reasons for the natives' fearful reaction, suggesting that it is because of the Europeans' clothing and stature. While their clothes obviously and visually signal difference, it is not clear what is meant by a difference of stature. It could easily be that the natives were taller than the Europeans, rather than shorter as might, perhaps, be the most obvious connotation. It is possible that an assumed European superiority could be undermined by their portrayal as generally shorter than the natives. Vespucci's text ignores another potential explanation for the natives' fear: the Europeans' arms. Columbus had noted that the natives 'have no iron or steel or weapons, nor are they fitted to use them. This is not because they are not well built and of handsome stature, but because they are very marvellously timorous'.<sup>56</sup> Although they had no metal weapons themselves, it does not necessarily follow that the

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<sup>54</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 194.

<sup>55</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 194.

natives would not recognise weapons for what they were, and view Vespucci's approach as the prelude to an attack.

Pigafetta's first recorded encounter with native peoples is with the Tupi (Tupinamba) of Brazil. For the Tupi, unlike the natives in the previous two accounts, this was not their first experience of Europeans, as, following Cabral's expedition of 1500, the Portuguese had maintained trading bases in Brazil. Differing from Columbus and Vespucci, Pigafetta chooses to present firstly the poor trading skills of the natives, who give 'for a knife or a fishhook five or six fowls, and for a comb a brace of geese'.<sup>57</sup> When he describes the people themselves their longevity is more striking to him than their nakedness: 'some of these people live a hundred years, or six score or seven score years, or more, and they go naked, both men and women'.<sup>58</sup> He does then go on to describe their appearance: 'And those people, both men and women, are not quite black, but tend to tan colour, and they openly display their shame, and have no hair on any part of their person'.<sup>59</sup>

The natives' nakedness signalled an obvious difference, in European eyes, of levels of civility between them, and was, clearly, an important point for the accounts to record. Although the natives are depicted as unselfconscious and innocent in their nudity the European response is one of discomfort at perceived indecency, as indicated by concern to record whether women, particularly, 'hide' or 'openly display' their 'shame', or 'cover their privy parts'.<sup>60</sup> Vespucci draws attention to the different attitudes:

Although they go naked, yet that which should be concealed is kept  
between the thighs so that it cannot be seen. Yet there no one cares,

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<sup>57</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 36.

<sup>58</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 37.

<sup>59</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 38.

<sup>60</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p.57.

for the same impression is made on them at seeing anything indecent as is made on us at seeing a nose or mouth.<sup>61</sup>

Pigafetta may or may not register some discomfort during a visit to a prince's house in Zzubu (Philippines). They are entertained by 'very beautiful' naked or partially naked girls ('almost white and as tall as ours') playing music; then he and a companion are forced into physical closeness: 'The prince made us dance with three of them who were quite naked'.<sup>62</sup> The image of clothed men dancing with naked women while others, also in states of undress, play music, may have conjured associations with the brothel for readers. However, what may be represented is Pigafetta's difficulty in 'placing' these people, as they would appear so contradictory to his own society. There is courtesy, as he would have understood it, in the civility of harmonious music, offered as entertainment by a nephew of the local king; yet, this is juxtaposed to the barbarity of the naked, or semi-naked, women in company.<sup>63</sup>

While constituting difference in perceived levels of civility, native nakedness also provided clear proof of fundamental physical sameness: there is no possibility of hidden monstrosity. The accounts of Columbus, Vespucci and Pigafetta describe people, almost without exception, who are well formed, well proportioned, handsome, and of similar stature to the Europeans.

An aspect of native appearance often recorded in connection with nakedness was colour. Three points of comparison are used: European whiteness, the mid-range colour of the Canarians, and the blackness of the negroes of Guinea. Columbus states that 'the whole population is very well formed, nor are they negroes as in Guinea, but their hair

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<sup>61</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 81.

<sup>63</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 81. Pigafetta, unlike Vespucci, did not record a similar encounter in the New World.



is flowing and they are not born where there is intense force in the rays of the sun'.<sup>64</sup>

'They are not at all black, but the colour of Canarians, and nothing else could be expected, since this is in one line from east to west with the island of Hierro in the Canaries'.<sup>65</sup> Pigafetta notes that some of the people 'are not quite black, but tend to tan colour'.<sup>66</sup> Vespucci observes: 'the colour of their skins inclines to red, like the skin of a lion, and I believe that, if they were properly clothed, they would be white like ourselves'.<sup>67</sup> Both Columbus and Vespucci indicate that skin colour was believed to be a direct reaction, like a suntan, to the strength of the sun. This was particularly extreme for those living on the Equator, but could be reversible, they suggest, given correct clothing. Such an understanding would imply no ascription of inherent difference or of pejorative characteristics to a particular colour. However, Pigafetta describes Tupi canoeists who he clearly finds intimidating: 'And those who wield the paddles are black men all naked and shaved, and they look like enemies from hell'.<sup>68</sup> Columbus seems to implicitly connect whiteness with goodness:

The Christians told the admiral [Columbus] that all these people were more handsome and of better character than any of the others whom they had found up to that time [...] As to their personal appearance, the Christians said that there was no comparison either for men or women and that they are fairer than the others; among them, they saw two young women as white as any that could be found in Spain.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 200.

<sup>65</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 24-5.

<sup>66</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 38.

<sup>67</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 37.

<sup>69</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 96.

Though black skin colour is not presented in specifically pejorative terms, all three texts position readers as sharing an understanding that whiteness is the more desirable skin colour.<sup>70</sup>

Body painting and ornamentation are also noted when natives' physical appearance is described. Columbus records a wide variety of decoration: some are 'painted white and some red and some in any colour that they find. Some of them paint their faces, some their whole bodies, some only the eyes, and some only the nose'.<sup>71</sup> The text offers no suggestions as to the significance to the natives of these practices, nor indicates that any enquiries were made. Pigafetta notes that the Tupi men and women habitually tattooed their faces and bodies, and that the men wear 'a ring surrounded by the largest parrot feathers, with which they cover the part and backside only. Which,' he concludes, 'is a very ridiculous thing'. They also make 'three holes in the lower lip and wear small round stones about a finger in length hanging from them'.<sup>72</sup> Pigafetta records his own opinion of the wearing of feathers, but does not speculate on the significance to

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<sup>70</sup> Michael Neill has made the point, which appears to be borne out by the European accounts discussed here, that prior to the seventeenth century a 'certain ethnographic objectivity' was observable in travel literature, citing Hakluyt's collection as figuring 'variations of dress, weapons, manners, custom, social organization, and (above all) religion [...] at least as prominently as differences in skin and feature' (Michael Neill, "Mullatos", "Blacks," and "Indian Moors": Othello and Early Modern Constructions of Human Difference, in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 49 (1998), 361-74, p. 366). While Neill observes that 'the English (like other Europeans) brought some important cultural baggage to their encounters with foreign peoples: ideas about genealogy, about the biblical separation of humankind, and about the moral symbolism of color, all of which pushed them toward an essentialist reading of phenotypic difference', he notes that this is not the whole picture, and quotes Karen Ordahl Kupperman's argument that 'because they were predisposed to think "in terms of socially or culturally created categories," treating most "differences between people [...] [as] [...] 'accidental' [...] [consequences of] environment or experience," they had not yet learned to "divide humankind into broad fixed classifications demarcated by visible distinctions." [...] categories such as "civil" and "barbarous," "naked" and "clothed" were often of far more significance in establishing the boundaries of otherness than the markers of mere biological diversity' (Neill, "Mullatos", "Blacks," and "Indian Moors", p. 366). This situation would alter in the seventeenth century, Neill points out, as there was a shift in 'definitions of alterity away from the dominant paradigm of culture' to a position where it was 'possible to see color emerging as the most important criterion for defining otherness' (Neill, "Mullatos", "Blacks," and "Indian Moors", p. 367). See also Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), for a study of ideas of 'race' and 'otherness', originating in medieval and classical times and developed in the early modern period (including contact with New World natives), and intersecting with gender and class difference. Loomba considers these vocabularies of race in relation to several of Shakespeare's plays. Of particular interest is Loomba's discussion of changing ideas of the origin of skin colour. She suggests that the climactic theory of skin colour (that it was a direct result of exposure to the strong sunlight), as expressed by Columbus and Vespucci, was beginning to be questioned during the period (Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*, p. 53-55).

<sup>71</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 24.

<sup>72</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 38.

the Tupi of any of the practices he describes. Vespucci, reporting an attack on natives of the island of Iti, imparts more information:

They all had their bodies painted with different colours, and were adorned with feathers. The interpreters told us that when they showed themselves plumed and painted, it is a sign that they intend to fight.<sup>73</sup>

In this example, the natives are not discrete objects for observation, they are in direct, violent, interaction with the Europeans. Understanding the meaning of the native decoration in this situation was of material interest to Vespucci's party, and the reason, perhaps, for it being recorded.<sup>74</sup>

Vespucci's text also presents more information on the native reaction to the Europeans than the accounts of either Columbus or Pigafetta. While native appearance constitutes an object of knowledge for the European gaze, Vespucci records that the process was not one-way. Europeans themselves are presented as objects of curiosity: 'many people came to see us, and were astonished at our appearance and the whiteness of our skins'.<sup>75</sup> The news of their novelty was clearly spread among the natives, as Vespucci later notes: 'we were seventeen days in this port, enjoying it very much, and every day new people from the interior came to see us, wondering at our faces and the whiteness of our skins, at our clothes and arms, and at the shape and size of our ships'.<sup>76</sup> Vespucci's account indicates that the points of difference which the Europeans recorded were of similar interest to the natives: their colour and clothing. Of course, he may not have noticed other areas of difference and interest to the natives, so his report can only be partial. For example, he does not mention their reaction to another obvious point of difference: the Europeans' beards. Vespucci himself noted that the natives 'do not allow

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<sup>73</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 19.

<sup>74</sup> See also Ralph Lane's initial misunderstanding of Algonkian singing in Virginia (Chapter Three, p. 185).

<sup>75</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 17.

<sup>76</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 25.

any hairs to grow on their eyebrows, nor eyelashes, nor in any other part except on the head', while Pigafetta observes that the Tupi have 'no hair on any part of their person'.<sup>77</sup> As the natives were habitually and deliberately hairless, the European facial hair must have been an object of curiosity, if not wonder, but their reaction is not recorded. Pigafetta does note one specific native reaction, and, in a rare example, record the native ascription of meaning to what they see of the Europeans:

For [the people] thought that the small boats of the ships were the children of the ships, and that the said ships gave birth to them when the boats were lowered to send the men hither and yon. And when the boats were lying alongside a ship, they thought that the ships were suckling them.<sup>78</sup>

What could be termed proto-ethnographic observation appears in an early stage of development in these texts. Native appearance was recorded as a matter of interest, but there is no consistent impulse to interrogate meanings or to understand how appearance and ornamentation fitted within native cultural systems. This could, in part, be a consequence of the lack of common language, yet, beyond this, the three accounts differ in approach. In Columbus's and Pigafetta's texts the observation is detached: the distance between the subject and object consistently maintained. By contrast, in Vespucci's account, the two are revealed in an interactive relationship, as, for example, in the battle at Iti where there is direct contact, indeed conflict, and understanding of the

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<sup>77</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 6, Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 38. An insight into the way in which Columbus represented such native hairlessness may be offered by a detail of translation discussed by Margarita Zamora. In developing her argument on the deployment of the Aristotelian concept of natural slavery in Columbus's text, Zamora notes that 'the Spanish word *mancebo* (male adolescent, or youth) is used to describe the Indians who come to the beach to greet the Spaniards. While the choice of this term could be interpreted as serving an idealizing function, describing their youthful physical beauty, *mancebo* also has the important connotations of incomplete masculine sexual, intellectual, and moral development' (Zamora, 'Abreast of Columbus', p. 137). It may be that Columbus initially assumed that the hairless native men were adolescents, in contrast to European adult males, who customarily wore beards.

<sup>78</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 40.

native culture's symbolism provided a warning about their intentions. Vespucci's text, then, opens up dual possibilities: that native appearance has cultural meaning, and, that this may be connected with native capability to exert, in this case, detrimental effects on the Europeans. These implications are not as evident in either Columbus's or Pigafetta's texts, where the detached style of recording encourages readers to understand implicitly that the natives, with some exceptions, had little capacity to materially affect the European observer.

**'Most Christian and most exalted and most excellent and most mighty princes'**<sup>79</sup>

All three texts present the New World natives' nakedness, skin colour and ornamentation to readers in similar terms. However, the accounts differ markedly in their representations of native behaviour, particularly in relation to sexual practice and cannibalism, and, to a lesser degree, in their representations of the natural world. I would suggest that the initial or intended addressees of the accounts had an effect on the decisions the authors made when choosing what to represent (or remain silent upon), and their style of presentation. These decisions lead to rather different constructions of the New World and its natives in the three texts.

Columbus addressed both his letter and the *Journal* to the Catholic sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, who funded the voyage, and, he clearly hopes, will support future expeditions. As Columbus had not succeeded in either of his objectives (to find gold and initiate contact with the mainland trading centres of Cathay), the voyage could be dismissed as a complete failure. Perhaps to forestall any possible disappointment or criticism from the Sovereigns, and to appeal to their assumed expectations, Columbus's

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<sup>79</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 3.

account presents his achievements in a consistently positive light. The territorial possessions claimed for the crown are detailed, noting the beauty and fertility of the islands, and their potential as sources of revenue. The people are described as prospective new subjects, characterised as easy converts to the Catholic faith and potentially able servants. Gold is reported as plentiful, even though Columbus had not actually seen any quantity of it. In addition to these explicit statements, when compared with either Vespucci's or Pigafetta's accounts, meaning is produced in Columbus's texts by the partial and selective presentation of content. What is apparent is a textual strategy which constructs the New World as a locus of desire, draws attention to resemblance, and effaces difference, particularly in the areas of native sexuality and cannibalism.<sup>80</sup> Columbus represents the New World as Eden, both in its plenitude and its population of innocent people - a vision, one assumes, which would appeal to Catholic sovereigns. To depict native practices which offended conventional European, specifically Christian, cultural values, would undermine this picture, reduce the persuasiveness of Columbus's argument, and, perhaps, jeopardise support for future expeditions.

Pigafetta, meanwhile, identifies himself as the proxy, or 'eyes', of the lords at court in Valladolid who could not undertake the journey themselves. His account constitutes a report to them as well, he hopes, as proving entertaining to a curious and sceptical general readership. Pigafetta states that, immediately upon his return to Valladolid, he presented to 'his Sacred Majesty Don Carlos' (the Emperor Charles V), a book 'written by my hand treating of all the things that had occurred day by day on our voyage'.<sup>81</sup> The surviving manuscript versions are dedicated to a specific aristocratic addressee: 'the most illustrious and very excellent Lord Philippe de Villiers l'Isle-

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<sup>80</sup> For discussion of specific rhetorical strategies identifiable in Columbus's texts, see Mary B Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), particularly Chapter 5: "The end of the East" Columbus discovers paradise'.

<sup>81</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 158.

Adam, renowned Grand master of Rhodes'.<sup>82</sup> The initial addressees of Pigafetta's account included the sovereign and aristocrats, and in this respect it is similar to Columbus's. His account then differs in that it does not demonstrate any desire to persuade in any direction, or promote a particular personal agenda in relation to the New World. There is no evidence of deliberate censorship in the presentation of native practices, or any attempts to stress or efface perceived differences. The narrative voice is one of a curious, energetic and conscientious recorder of matters of interest, whether from his own observations or as reported to him. The wonders and marvels he is told about are repeated with no critical authorial intervention. It is pointless to speculate on whether this was because he believed them or because their inclusion would render his account more entertaining (one of his stated aims for the work).

Vespucci's accounts are framed as letters, and similar to Pigafetta's report, written with the expressed purpose of providing entertainment to their specific addressees. In addition, Vespucci wrote for publication: his 'letters' were printed and circulated widely in his lifetime (and posthumously). His letter of 1504, to his old school-mate Pietro Soderini, Gonfaloniere of the Republic of Florence, which included accounts of all four of his purported voyages, was published in 1507 in Martin Waldseemüller's influential book *Cosmographiæ Introductio*. Vespucci's letter to Lorenzo Piero Francesco di Medici, written in 1503 and covering the third voyage only, was also widely published as the pamphlet *Mundus Novus*. Vespucci's accounts do not, as previously noted, include medieval marvels and wonders. In place of these popular tropes, I suggest, native appearance and practices are positioned as, in themselves, exotic and deserving of readers' wonder. The accounts also excite and titillate readers' curiosity about native sexuality without, apparently, any more than a pretence at not

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<sup>82</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, Frontispiece. All four extant manuscripts have the same dedication (Pigafetta,

offending delicate sensibilities. Vespucci's accounts also include far more speculation about causes and reasons than Columbus's or Pigafetta's, with Vespucci freely adding his own conclusions to his observations (some would argue fabrications).<sup>83</sup>

**They are lascivious beyond measure, the women much more so than the men**

Columbus's letter and *Journal* do not include specific details about native sexual practices. The letter contains only one observation: 'In all these islands, it seems to me that all men are content with one woman, and to their chief or king they give as many as twenty'.<sup>84</sup> This statement of Columbus's impression offers reassurance on several levels. The natives, although not Christian, appear to practise monogamy. Women are passive, the object of male contentment and exchange. There is a recognisable hierarchical power structure, with the king enjoying special treatment. Columbus, then, represents natives as apparently conforming to a set of cultural values similar to those circulating in Europe at the time (though the king's superior status is marked differently).

Columbus does not record any observation of specific sexual encounters between natives, and gives no direct indication that there was any contact between men from his company and native women. However, one entry in his *Journal* suggests that European sexuality was an issue:

And in other places all the men endeavoured to conceal their women from the Christians owing to jealousy, but here they do not. There are

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*Magellan's Voyage*, p.20).

<sup>83</sup> The first voyage is one which historians particularly dismiss as being a fabrication, it being proven never to have taken place. It draws many of its incidents from later voyages, altering and combining them with added fictionalised elements (such as the attack on the island of Iti).

<sup>84</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 198.



some very well-formed women, and they were the first to come to give thanks to Heaven and to bring whatever they had, especially things to eat. [...] He says that the women in other places did the same before they were concealed, and the admiral everywhere ordered all his men to be careful not to offend any one in any way, and to take nothing from them against their will, and so they paid them for everything which they received from them.<sup>85</sup>

Columbus repeatedly notes the generosity of the people he encountered, yet this appears to have been abused, the offence causing the native men to hide their women. Again, women are presented as passive, hidden away, or, as is implied, the object of financial exchange between the native and European men.<sup>86</sup>

One indication that the silence about sexuality in Columbus's account is the result of deliberate omission, rather than there being nothing to record, is that syphilis appears to have been introduced into Europe following this first expedition.<sup>87</sup> It is possible that the death, shortly after the voyage, of Martin Alonso Pinzón, master of the *Pinta*, was due to syphilis contracted in the Indies.<sup>88</sup> More direct proof of the absences in Columbus's account is provided by comparison with Vespucci's and Pigafetta's treatment of the subject.<sup>89</sup> Vespucci's observation of native sexual mores is diametrically opposed to Columbus's:

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<sup>85</sup> Columbus *Journal*, p. 111.

<sup>86</sup> Pigafetta also records sexual jealousy, when, in the Moluccas, he notes that: 'Those men go naked like the others, and are so jealous of their wives that they did not wish us to go ashore with our drawers uncovered. For they said that their women thought that we always had our member in readiness' (Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 126).

<sup>87</sup> See, for example, Francisco Guerra, 'The Problem of Syphilis', in Chiappelli, *First Images of America*, pp. 845-852.

<sup>88</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 211, n. 151.

<sup>89</sup> Additional evidence to support my argument, that the lack of sexual interaction in Columbus's narrative results from a deliberate textual strategy, may be provided by an incident recorded as occurring on the second voyage (1493-6). Michele de Cuneo, an Italian lieutenant on the expedition, records that: 'While I was in the boat, I captured a very beautiful Carib woman, whom the said Lord Admiral gave to me. When I had taken her to my cabin she was naked – as was their custom. I was filled with a desire to take my pleasure with her and attempted to satisfy my desire. She was unwilling, and so treated me with her nails that I wished I had never begun. But – to cut a long story short – I then took a piece of rope and whipped her soundly, and she let forth such incredible screams that you would not have

They do not practise matrimony among them, each man taking as many women as he likes, and when he is tired of a woman he repudiates her without either injury to himself or shame to the woman, for in this matter the woman has the same liberty as the man. They are not very jealous, but lascivious beyond measure, the women much more so than the men. I do not further refer to their contrivances for satisfying their inordinate desires, so that I may not offend against modesty. [...] They showed an excessive desire for our company.<sup>90</sup>

The native cultural values described by Vespucci would, one may assume, have been as scandalous for readers as Columbus's account would have been reassuring. The aspects of sexual conduct Vespucci highlights correspond almost exactly with those Columbus effaces. The natives Vespucci describes do not practise matrimony, nor even monogamy: there is no possible correlation between these relationships and Christian marriage. Both men and women are concupiscent and lewd, not continent and content. Nor does Vespucci depict women as passive objects of exchange: rather, they are active equals in sexual partnerships, at liberty to make their own choices without shame. More outrageously, perhaps, their appetites are reported to exceed those of the men. Their 'contrivances' for satisfying their libidinous desires are, in an affectation of modesty, not described in the extract quoted, though there is no such coyness in the earlier Medici letter:

Another custom among them is sufficiently shameful, and beyond all human credibility. Their women, being very libidinous, make the penis of their husbands swell to such a size as to appear deformed; and

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believed your ears. Eventually we came to such terms, I assure you, that you would have thought she had been brought up in a school for whores' (*The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, trans. and ed. by J M Cohen (London: Century Hutchinson, 1988), p. 139.

<sup>90</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 8 - 9.

this is accomplished by a certain artifice, being the bite of some poisonous animal, and by reason of this many lose their virile organ and remain eunuchs.<sup>91</sup>

The implication is that women's rapacity has the potential to emasculate and frustrate, though Vespucci does not draw such moral conclusions for readers. He does, though, present a society which ignores the most basic European sexual taboo on incest:

Each man [...] having as many wives as they please. The children cohabit with the mothers, the brothers with the sisters, the male cousins with the female, and each one with the first he meets.<sup>92</sup>

Pigafetta's account of sexual practices among the Tupi of Brazil is couched in far less sensational terms than Vespucci's:

For a hatchet or for a knife they gave us one or two of their daughters for slaves. But they would not give their wives for anything at all. The women also would not on any account shame their husbands. As we were told, the women of this place never pay service to their husbands by day, but only by night.<sup>93</sup>

In some respects, this description resembles that of Columbus. Again monogamy is implied, with husbands refusing to trade their wives, and women sexually continent with their husbands. The conjugal debt, a term familiar in Europe, is echoed in 'paying service', and these relations are conducted under cover of darkness. However, unlike the

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<sup>91</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 46. Vespucci's description of this native practice may have brought to mind, for readers familiar with Mandeville's *Travels*, the 'Poison Damsels' who would have their maidenheads taken, on the night of their marriage, not by their husbands, but by one of the young men (called *gadlibiriens*), specifically kept apart and paid for the service, as, 'in ancient times some men had died in that land in deflowering maidens, for the latter had snakes within them, which stung the husbands on their penises inside the women's bodies; and thus many men were slain' (Mandeville, *Travels*, p. 175). The two accounts are dissimilar though, in that native women are presented as actively furthering their libidinous desires, whereas the 'Poison Damsels' appear engaged in the avoidance of sexual relations.

<sup>92</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 46.

<sup>93</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 39.

effacement apparent in Columbus's account, it is clear, from the refusal Pigafetta notes, that European men attempted to obtain native women for sexual relations. That women, as daughters, were objects of trade is also clear, though Pigafetta does not elaborate on the terms of their slavery. That his account is neither as partial as Columbus's nor as sensational as Vespucci's can be seen from Pigafetta's observation of native practice in the Philippines:

Those people go naked, wearing only a piece of cloth made of palm around their shameful parts. They have as many wives as they wish, but there is always a chief one. The males, both large and small, have the head of their member pierced from one side to the other, with a pin of gold or of tin as thick as a goose feather; and at each end of this pin some have a star-shaped decoration like a button, and others, one like the head of a cart nail. Often I wished to see that of some young men and old men, because I could not believe it. In the middle of this pin or tube is a hole through which they urinate, and the pin and the stars always remain firm, holding the member stiff. They told us that this was the wish of their women, and that if they did otherwise they would not have intercourse with them. And when they wish to cohabit with their wives, the latter themselves take the member without its being prepared or rigid, and so they put it little by little into their nature, beginning with the stars. Then when it is inside it stiffens, and remains there until it becomes soft, for otherwise they would not be able to withdraw it. And those people do this because they are of a weak nature and constitution.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 90.

As in Vespucci's account, women are here represented as the dominant sexual partners, dictating the manner of intercourse and employing 'contrivances' to increase their pleasure. Yet Pigafetta's account is disarmingly open (his desire to see exactly how the device worked, for example), and lacks the prurience noted in Vespucci's treatment of similar material.

Columbus's account, as noted, records only his summary impression of native sexual practice. Pigafetta presents sexual relations as an object of enquiry or trade, without any apparent questioning of their significance as cultural practices. Vespucci, while consistently exploiting the sensational aspects of his material, at the same time represents a variety of types of sexual encounter and attempts to contextualise and explain their significance. For example, readers are informed that, at times, females are freely given as a sign of friendship and to convey honour on the giver:

Their greatest sign of friendship is to give their wives or daughters, and a father and mother considered themselves highly honoured when they brought us a daughter, especially if she was a virgin, that we should sleep with her, and in doing this they use terms of warm friendship.<sup>95</sup>

Vespucci personalises such experience, recording his visit to a native village in the interior, where his party are greeted with celebrations:

Here we were received with so many barbarous ceremonies that the pen will not suffice to write them down. There were songs, dances, tears mingled with rejoicings, and plenty of food. We remained here for the night. Here they offered their wives to us, and we were unable

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<sup>95</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 10.

to defend ourselves from them. We remained all night and half the next day.<sup>96</sup>

Vespucci places himself at the centre of events, apparently taking part in the festivities, rather than writing as though observing from a distance. His full engagement with native practice is symbolised by his admission that he could not defend himself from, or, perhaps, resist, the advances of the native women.

Vespucci represents native peoples as aware of their sexual attractiveness to the Europeans, and records an incident where it forms the basis of a well-planned native attack. At one village, he states, the people appear afraid of them and run away. They return in canoes, carrying 'sixteen of their young girls', and proceed to leave four girls on each ship. The men in the canoes talked to them, and, Vespucci states, this was all taken as a sign of friendship. Then, at a signal from an old woman on the shore, suddenly, 'the young girls who were on board jumped into the sea, and those in the canoes came nearer, and began to shoot with their bows and arrows. Those who were swimming had each brought a lance, concealed under the water as much as possible'.<sup>97</sup> Vespucci does not record exactly what the girls on each ship were doing, but clearly the natives correctly assumed that they could wholly engage the attention of the mariners while the attackers got into position.

Readers are presented, in these three accounts, with markedly different versions of sexual conduct among the New World native peoples. Columbus records virtually nothing about native sexual practice, and, in the little he does note, effaces difference, and couches his description in terms familiar to European sensibilities. Pigafetta presents cultural norms which are different from those of Europe, but, as matters of

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<sup>96</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 15. The native ceremonials exceed his ability to convey them in language. This, perhaps, constitutes an earlier example of the 'ravishment' de Certeau identifies in Jean de Léry's account of Tupi ceremonies (Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. by Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University, 1988), p. 213).

<sup>97</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 12-13.

enquiry and curiosity, rather than to condemn them. Vespucci appears to revel in highlighting a different culture's sexual practices, particularly drawing attention to examples of excess and the active, at times aggressive, role of women. The sexual interactions between natives and Europeans are also presented differently in each narrative. From Columbus's account readers could easily conclude that no sex at all had occurred between the two. Pigafetta's account tacitly acknowledges the interaction as it forms part of the depiction of trade with natives. In Vespucci's account the interaction is explicitly, and personally, consummated.

Overall, from Columbus's account, readers might be left with an impression of New World natives as, like Adam and Eve, innocent inhabitants of the Garden of Eden. The plenitude and innocence might, perhaps, evoke a vision of Paradise such as that portrayed on the left wing of the triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by the contemporary artist Hieronymus Bosch.<sup>98</sup> Vespucci's account, on the other hand, would be more reminiscent of the central panel of the painting, where the sexuality displayed is not innocent: in its visibility and excess it represents the sin of lust.

The representation of New World women in these accounts covers a wide spectrum. They are variously: passive objects of exchange; active, equal sexual partners; complicit in violent attacks. At the extreme, in the accounts of Columbus and Pigafetta, women-only societies are described which reinscribe and relocate the Amazons, known from antiquity, to islands in the Caribbean and Indonesia respectively.<sup>99</sup> The women of the island of Matinino, Columbus reports, 'engage in no feminine occupation, but use bows and arrows of cane [...] and they arm and protect

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<sup>98</sup> Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1470-1516), *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1505-10, Madrid, Prado.

<sup>99</sup> For the origins of Amazons in Plinian and Alexandrian literature, and discussion of the continuity of ideas of the noble savage, including their export to the New World, see Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, p. 163-177; and, for translation of Amazons into an American setting, see Magasich-Airola and Beer, *America Magica*, chapter 5, 'The Indomitable Amazons', pp. 99-127.

themselves with plates of copper'.<sup>100</sup> They mate with the Canibali, keeping female babies, and sending boys to the island of the men.<sup>101</sup> Columbus brings together, in textual conjunction, the romance trope of single-sex islands with Amazons and cannibals, figures from antiquity and Alexandrian romance. In the text, the Canibali are closely associated with the anticipated 'human monstrosities': 'Thus I have found no monsters, nor had a report of any, except in an island "Carib" [...] which is inhabited by a people who are regarded in all the islands as very fierce and who eat human flesh. [...] They are no more malformed than are the others'.<sup>102</sup> Columbus himself sees neither the Canibali nor the women of Matinino. As with the dog-headed men, they are reinscribed in his narrative as absent presences. In Pigafetta's account the story of the island of women is related by an old pilot as they sail between Java and Borneo. In this version, the women do not need men at all, as they are made pregnant 'with wind'. They are more savage than the women of Matinino, as they kill male babies, rearing only girls, and, 'if any men come into that island, they kill them if they can'.<sup>103</sup> These women are, as in Columbus's account, reinscribed within the travel narrative on the report of others, not as the result of direct observation. While both Columbus's and Pigafetta's accounts, in this instance, demonstrate continuity with the literary tradition originating with the ancients, Vespucci again includes nothing from their canon in relation to women.

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<sup>100</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 200.

<sup>101</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 152. Islands inhabited exclusively by men or women were also a literary trope, and, John Critchley notes, 'would have been known to anyone moderately well-acquainted with contemporary romance' (John Critchley, *Marco Polo's Book* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992), p. 83).

<sup>102</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 200.

<sup>103</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 151. Magasich-Airola and Beer suggest that the idea that certain women could become pregnant from the wind was a vestige of an ancient Egyptian belief (Magasich-Airola and Beer, *America Magica*, p. 108).





Figure 7 Woodcut illustrating a German edition of Vespucci's voyages

In Vespucci's account the extreme of female agency does not appear in the guise of a women-only island, but in a conjunction of sexuality and the ultimate transgression: cannibalism. One specific incident is described as occurring during the third voyage. Vespucci's ships, he relates, are anchored off the east coast of South America and for several days attempts were made to communicate with the local people who, they assume, were particularly nervous of them. Then, he continues:

On the seventh day we went on shore, and found that they had arranged with their women; for, as we jumped on shore, the men of the land sent many of their women to speak with us. Seeing that they were not reassured, we arranged to send to them one of our people, who was a very agile and valiant youth. To give them more confidence, the rest of us went back into the boats. He went among the women, and they all began to touch and feel him, wondering at him

exceedingly. Things being so, we saw a woman come from the hill, carrying a great stick in her hand. When she came to where our Christian stood, she raised it, and gave him such a blow that he was felled to the ground. The other women immediately took him by the feet, and dragged him towards the hill. The men rushed down to the beach, and shot at us with their bows and arrows. [...] At last, four rounds from the bombard were fired at them, and they no sooner heard the report than they all ran away towards the hill, where the women were still tearing the Christian to pieces. At a great fire they had made they roasted him before our eyes, showing us many pieces, and then eating them.<sup>104</sup>

### **They eat little flesh, unless it be human flesh**

Columbus's account, by contrast, does not record any first-hand observation of cannibalism. What he knew of the Caniba, the cannibal tribe, was largely from the reports of other natives. He believed that he met some representatives of the tribe, but plans to visit both Carib and Matinino islands were abandoned when, due to the poor state of his ships, a course had to be set directly for Spain.<sup>105</sup> The reports were consistent: that the Caniba were a specific race or tribe who lived on one island, Carib. They were generally feared as fierce raiders who took people captive to eat.<sup>106</sup> The first intimation of cannibal inhabitants in the text conjoins them with other monstrosities:

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<sup>104</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 37-8.

<sup>105</sup> Columbus *Journal*, p. 146-152.

<sup>106</sup> Columbus *Journal*, p. 74, p. 92-3, p. 125, p. 146-152, and Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 200.

He considered that the land which he saw to-day [...] was the island which the Indians called Bohio. [...] All the people who have been found up to this time have, he says, the very greatest fear of those of Caniba or Canima, and they say that they live in this island of Bohio, which must be very large, as it appears, and he believes that those of Caniba take these people, since they are very cowardly and know nothing of arms, from their lands and houses. [...] He says that when they saw that he was going in the direction of that land, they were speechless, fearing that they would be eaten, and he could not calm their terror; and they said that the people there had only one eye and the face of a dog. The admiral believed that they were lying, and he thought that they must be under the dominion of the Grand Khan who captured them.<sup>107</sup>

Columbus's understanding of the native response brackets together cannibals with one-eyed people and dog-heads. That he gave the same weight to reports of all of them is not surprising, perhaps, given the textual tradition which reported Cyclops, Cynocephali and Anthropophagi as all variously engaged in man-eating.<sup>108</sup> This apparent scepticism may have had some basis in Columbus's preconception of his location. Las Casas reports Columbus's own words as he attempts to rationalise reports of cannibals:

'And so I repeat what I have said on other occasions', he says, 'the Caniba are nothing else than the people of the Grand Khan, who must be very near here and possess ships, and they must come to take them captive, and as the prisoners do not return, they believe that they have

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<sup>107</sup> Columbus *Journal*, p. 73-4.

<sup>108</sup> See Pliny, *Natural History*, p. 513.

been eaten. Every day we understand these Indians better and they us, although many times there has been misunderstanding', says the admiral.<sup>109</sup>

Columbus's interpretation of reports would have been coloured by his belief that he was sailing between islands off the mainland of Cathay. It is clear, also, from his own admission, that the lack of common language inhibited understanding. The fast pace at which the islands were visited meant that not only was there little opportunity to learn the language, but also, staying to make longer enquiry was not possible.

Columbus gave his conclusion on what he heard of the Caniba in the summation he provided in his letter:

Thus I have found no monsters, nor had a report of any, except in an island 'Carib', which is the second at the coming into the Indies, and which is inhabited by a people who are regarded in all the islands as very fierce and who eat human flesh. They have many canoes with which they range through all the islands of India and pillage and take whatever they can. They are no more malformed than are the others, except that they have the custom of wearing their hair long like women, and they use bows and arrows of the same cane stems, with a small piece of wood at the end, owing to their lack of iron which they do not possess. They are ferocious among these other people who are cowardly to an excessive degree, but I make no more account of them than of the rest.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Columbus *Journal*, p. 92-3.

<sup>110</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 200.

Columbus represents himself as either not believing in the reality of the Caniba, or, if they should exist, confident in his ability to subdue them: 'The admiral told him by signs that the Sovereigns of Castile would order the destruction of the Caribs and would have them all brought with their hands bound'.<sup>111</sup> Whether existing or not, the Caniba may be read as the savage 'other' of the natives Columbus otherwise presents as innocent and timorous, and, at times, 'cowardly'. They form an absent presence, which, together with the women of Matinino, may threaten the paradise Columbus evokes, but, at the same time, offer a named locus for the unpalatable elements of native difference which he continually effaces. Columbus's account also introduced the term 'cannibal' into the European lexicon, where, unsurprisingly, it displaced 'Anthropophagi' as the popular name for man-eaters.<sup>112</sup>

In contrast with Columbus's account which presents no personal encounter with cannibalism, and effectively restricts it to one specific tribe, Vespucci's text puts forward the author's first-hand observation in terms which give the impression that it is a widespread practice in South America. In the letter relating his first voyage, several pages of detailed observations of native appearance, manners and customs conclude with the revelation:

They eat little flesh, unless it be human flesh, and your Magnificence must know that they are so inhuman as to transgress regarding this most bestial custom. For they eat all their enemies that they kill or take, as well females as males, with so much barbarity that it is a brutal thing to mention, how much more to see it, as has happened to

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<sup>111</sup> Columbus *Journal*, p. 125.

<sup>112</sup> The term was first introduced into English by Richard Eden in his *Treatise of Newe India* of 1553, a translation of Sebastian Munster's 1550 *Cosmographia* (OED).

me an infinite number of times. They were astonished at us when we told them that we did not eat our enemies.<sup>113</sup>

The rhetoric of the extract constructs an appearance of the practice as universal: the tribe is generic, unnamed, their location only generally indicated as two days' sailing north of 16° (the Gulf of Honduras). The amount of 'human flesh' eaten appears magnified by the details that it is virtually the only meat they eat (they could eat very little in total), and that 'all' enemies are eaten, men and women. The practice is not described in context or detail, but, constructed in the general pejorative terms 'inhuman', 'bestial', 'barbaric' and 'brutal'. The direct address to the reader, 'your Magnificence', emphasises the shocking nature of the revelation. Finally, the exaggerated claim that Vespucci has himself seen it 'an infinite number of times', and the reported native astonishment that it was not the practice among the Europeans, create an impression of cannibalism as a widespread, commonplace custom.

While appearing to generalise cannibal practice in the account of the first voyage, in the second, Vespucci's account is more specific and gives substance to the savage canoe Indians Columbus only had reports of. Vespucci records that, as they sail along the coast of Trinidad, before entering the Gulf of Paria, they see, heading for the shore, a large canoe containing many men, which they decide to capture. He describes several manoeuvres in the chase, but the canoe evades the ship and its boats, until:

As the people in the canoe saw they were closely pressed by the caravel and the boats, they all jumped into the sea, their number being about seventy men; the distance from the shore being nearly two leagues. [...] Only four boys remained in the canoe, who were not of their tribe but prisoners from some other land. They had been

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<sup>113</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 11.

castrated, and were all without the virile member, and with the scars fresh, at which we wondered much. Having taken them on board, they told us by signs that they had been castrated to be eaten. We then knew that the people in the canoe belonged to a tribe called *Cambali*, very fierce men who eat human flesh.<sup>114</sup>

Despite believing these natives to be warlike cannibals, Vespucci's company land and attempt to develop friendly relations. The natives, it appears, humour the Europeans until they regain possession of their large and 'well worked' canoe, and the prisoners, then they withdraw. Vespucci concludes that they were 'a faithless and ill-conditioned people'.<sup>115</sup> This incident is followed by a friendly and profitable landing nearby:

We departed and entered the bay, where we found so many people that it was wonderful. We made friends with them, and many of us went with them to their villages in great security. In this place we collected 150 pearls, which they gave us for a small bell, and a little gold was given to us for nothing.<sup>116</sup>

Apparently contradicting the impression of generalised cannibal practice presented in the account of the first voyage, here the cannibalism is, as in Columbus's account, confined to a specific tribe, who predate upon a more generally peaceful and friendly population.

This duality is brought together in the account of the third voyage, in the letter to Medici. Vespucci presents himself as, by this time, a narrator experienced and knowledgeable about the place and its inhabitants:

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<sup>114</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 23-4.

<sup>115</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 24.

<sup>116</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 24.

I have known the nature of those people, their customs, the resources and fertility of the land, the salubrity of the air, the positions of the celestial bodies in the heavens, and, above all, the fixed stars, over an eighth of the sphere, never seen by our ancestors, as I shall explain below.

As regards the people: we have found such a multitude in those countries that no one could enumerate them, as we read in the Apocalypse. They are people gentle and tractable, and all of both sexes go naked, not covering any part of their bodies, just as they came from their mothers' wombs, and so they go until their deaths.<sup>117</sup>

That the natives are 'gentle' and 'tractable' appears undermined, as the description continues with details of the 'strange and monstrous' customs of wearing stones in borings in nostrils, lips nose and ears, and the 'shameful' custom, 'beyond all human credibility' of the libidinous women employing the bite of a venomous animal to increase the size of the men's members.<sup>118</sup> Their lack of rulers, and commerce are remarked upon, as is their warfare, waged 'without art or order'. Old men incite youths to fights in which 'they mutually kill with great cruelty'.<sup>119</sup> This representation of the natives then veers further towards depicting the barbaric:

They slaughter those who are captured, and the victors eat the vanquished; for human flesh is an ordinary article of food among them. You may be the more certain of this, because I have seen a man eat his children and wife; and I knew a man who was popularly credited to have eaten 300 human bodies. I was once in a certain city

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<sup>117</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 45.

<sup>118</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 46.

<sup>119</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 46-7.



for twenty-seven days, where human flesh was hung up near the houses, in the same way as we expose butcher's meat. I say further that they were surprised that we did not eat our enemies, and use their flesh as food, for they say it is excellent.<sup>120</sup>

The description spirals downwards from the opening statement that the people are 'gentle and tractable', to the depravity of commonplace cannibalism. Despite the exaggeration, Vespucci places before readers a vision of a culture where not only enemies are eaten, but also family members. The visual image of joints of human meat hanging outside houses as in butchers' shops in a city evokes the horror of widespread cannibalism. Illustrations of cannibal practice, jointed bodies hanging on trees or huts, butchery and cooking recognisable human parts over fires, became representative images of the New World in books and on maps. The illustrations also often presented something of the duality found in Vespucci's account, of friendliness and, to European eyes, bestiality. One example is this sixteenth-century woodcut, where a socialised family group are pictured with a head and limbs hanging from the hut over a fire, and a woman (top left) about to bite into a forearm.



Figure 8 Cannibals. Sixteenth-century woodcut<sup>121</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 47.

<sup>121</sup> This image is reproduced in various sources, for example in Greenblatt's *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 84, in which it is attributed as from Augsburg or Nuremberg c. 1505, in the Spencer Collection, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

Over time these images become commonplace by continued repetition, with many illustrations of the New World, whatever the main subject of the composition, depicting cannibal practice in the background.<sup>122</sup>

Vespucci's voyages, according to his own accounts, extended from the Caribbean to the Gulf of Honduras, along the northern and eastern coasts of South America beyond the Tropic of Capricorn, and, possibly, reached the islands of South Georgia. Following the routes from his text is very difficult as specific places are not named, or if they are, the latitudes given have often been questioned. One effect of this lack of specificity and accuracy is that his accounts leave readers with the impression that cannibalism was a generalised practice in the New World. Pigafetta's account, by contrast, is far more specific, and describes a more limited extent to cannibalism.

Pigafetta's account also offers a cultural context to the cannibalism as practiced by the Tupi of Brazil:

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<sup>122</sup> For example, in one illustration of Jean de Léry's *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, a battle between rival tribes is the main subject in the foreground, with care of the wounded and roasting of the limbs of the vanquished represented in the background (Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, trans. by Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 117). Images of cannibalism, as a New World trope, pervade representations and analysis of the New World into our current moment. For example, a sixteenth-century engraving which depicts a clothed and armed Europe, embodied by Vespucci, encountering a naked woman, representing America, has been analysed by several theorists (America, c. 1580, an engraving by Theodor Galle after a drawing by Jan van der Straet (c. 1575)). For Peter Hulme, who opens his introduction to *Colonial Encounters* with a discussion of the image, it is emblematic of the themes of his study, as the scene represents, for him, a narrative repeated in European discourse from Columbus onwards. He does not, however, remark upon the cannibal scene depicted in the centre of the background of the image, where natives sit around a fire spit-roasting a human leg. Michel de Certeau uses the same image as frontispiece to *The Writing of History*. For him, it represents the beginning of a new function of writing in the West: writing which conquers, a process in which Western desire is written on the New World's blank 'savage' page (Certeau, *Writing of History*, p. xxv). The cannibalistic scene, presumably, functions as a symbol of native savagery. Louis Montrose also discusses the same image (and Certeau's reading of it). He draws particular attention to the cannibal scene, suggesting that it may represent Vespucci's account of the killing and eating of the European youth (previously quoted here, illustrated in Figure 7). Montrose conjoins this episode with Vespucci's description of the practice of native women, who used the bite of a poisonous animal to grossly enlarge the husband's penis, often resulting in emasculation (also discussed previously, p. 70-71), to make a gender-specific observation on the van der Straet image: 'The supposed sexual guile and deceit that enable the native women to murder, dismember, and eat a European man are in a relationship of opposition and inversion to the vaunted masculine knowledge and power with which the erect and armoured Vespucci will master the prone and naked America' (Louis Montrose, 'The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery', in *Representations*, 33, Special Issue: The New World (1991), 1-41, p. 5-6). Such a gender-specific reading of one episode does not, perhaps, reflect the full range of gender roles and European and native interactions depicted in the accounts of Vespucci and Pigafetta discussed here. It does, however, provide an example of the process of selection which foregrounds cannibalism as a New World trope, even when its representation is relegated to the background.

They eat the flesh of their enemies, not as being good for food, but from custom. The origin of this custom is as follows. An old woman of this land of Verzin had an only son who was killed by his enemies, and some days later the friends of this woman took one of the said enemies who had caused her son's death, and brought him to the place where she was. She, seeing the man who was taken and remembering her son's death, ran incontinent upon him like an angry bitch and bit him in his shoulder. But he managed to run away and escape. And he told how they had tried to eat him, showing the bite which that woman had made in his shoulder. After that, those who were captured on one side or the other were eaten. Whence came the custom in this country of eating one another's enemies. They do not eat the whole body of the man taken, but eat it piece by piece. For fear that he be not tasted, they cut him up in pieces which they put to dry in the chimney, and every day they cut off a small piece and eat it with their ordinary food to call to mind their enemies. I was assured that this custom was true by a pilot named João Carvalho, who was in our company and had lived four years in that country.<sup>123</sup>

This representation contrasts with Vespucci's on several points. Firstly, human flesh is not eaten purely as food as Vespucci reports, rather, it is eaten as part of a customary ritual: to 'call to mind their enemies'. Nor do they eat members of their own tribe or family. That the flesh is dried above the fire to preserve it for ritual use offers, perhaps, an explanation for Vespucci's observations of hanging joints, which his text associated with the trade of the butcher's shop, rather than any ceremony. The custom is also

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<sup>123</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 37-38.

provided with an origin and a history, even if apocryphal.<sup>124</sup> Vespucci offers no context or reason for the widespread cannibalism he describes.

Pigafetta's account records only one other encounter with cannibals in the New World. Although he refers to them as '*canibali*' it seems unlikely that the term is used to specify the same tribe Columbus named, as these are much further south (35° south), almost at the southern extent of knowledge of the continent, in the Rio de la Plata (River Plate). Pigafetta observes: 'There we found beside a river men of the kind called *canibali*, who eat human flesh. And one of these men, as tall as a giant, came to our captain's ship to satisfy himself and request that the others might come. And this man had a voice like a bull's'.<sup>125</sup> Pigafetta did not know that these people were cannibal from his own experience, but from reports of the fate of an earlier expedition: 'In time past these tall men called *canibali*, in this river, ate a Spanish captain named Juan de Solis and sixty men who had gone, as we did, to discover land, trusting too much in them'.<sup>126</sup> Reports from the survivors of the de Solis expedition did not offer any explanations for the attack, and Magellan did not linger in the Rio de la Plata.<sup>127</sup>

Pigafetta did not record any other observations of cannibalism in South America. But, during the later stages of the voyage, in the Philippines, he includes the report of another cannibal race, most probably from a local pilot:

On a headland of this island of Butuan and Calagan, near a river, are hairy men, very great fighters and good archers, who have swords a palm in length. For the most part they eat nothing but the raw hearts of

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<sup>124</sup> In Jean de Léry's account, old women are credited as being most eager to eat human flesh, particularly relishing the fat that drips during cooking (Léry, *History*, p. 126).

<sup>125</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 40.

<sup>126</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 41.

<sup>127</sup> A brief account of the fate of the de Solis expedition (October 1515 to February 1516), drawn from Peter Martyr's *Decades of the New World*, is given by Samuel Eliot Morison in *The European Discovery of America: The Southern Voyages A.D. 1492-1616* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 301-2.

men with the juice of oranges or lemons, and these hairy men are called Benaian.<sup>128</sup>

It is characteristic of Pigafetta's text that this report, which describes people very similar in appearance and habits to the traditional Plinian races, is included without any authorial comment.<sup>129</sup>

The three accounts, of Columbus, Vespucci and Pigafetta, construct very different versions of New World cannibalism. Columbus's *Journal* provides the new name by which Anthropophagi become known, but they are no more than reported marginalia in his account. In Vespucci's and Pigafetta's accounts the cannibals are fully present, though very different in character. Columbus's superficial knowledge of the *Caniba* may be due to the speed with which he accomplished his voyage of exploration: moving quickly between the islands, he paused at each only long enough to establish whether there was gold, or other valuable produce. During his first landing he captured natives who were held throughout the voyage, and used as translators and intermediaries. In only a few weeks, the levels of knowledge of the others' language could only have been basic, though Columbus does state that 'Every day we understand these Indians better and they us, although many times there has been misunderstanding'.<sup>130</sup> Vespucci's text lays claim to detailed knowledge of the customs and beliefs of the people encountered, with the implication that he could communicate, either directly, or through interpreters. The impression of sustained interaction and a leisurely pace is provided by the inclusion of details of the number of days or weeks they remain with one tribe or another, for example: 'We remained here thirty-seven

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<sup>128</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 113.

<sup>129</sup> These people, though not specifically mentioned in Pliny, appear to be from the same literary tradition. As Friedman notes 'The literary process by which the races were augmented was rather like cellular division and mutation' (Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, p. 22).

<sup>130</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 93. See also *Columbus Journal*, p. 76.

days, and often went to their village'.<sup>131</sup> However, his detractors argue that he did not have time to develop the sophisticated level of communication required to provide the detail in his accounts, and use the point as further proof of their fictionality.<sup>132</sup>

Translators were available to Pigafetta in Brazil, as the Portuguese had maintained settlements there for twenty years, and his account of Tupi cannibalism draws on a pre-existing corpus of knowledge.

Linguistic capability may contribute to the different presentations of cannibalism between the three accounts, but, I suggest, each reports a version of the native cannibal which accords with their texts' implicit or explicit motives. Cannibalism was, to European sensibilities, a barbaric and unacceptable practice. Columbus, concerned to efface native difference, confines cannibalism to one specific tribe, which he differentiates from the majority, and further marginalises them by including them as second-hand reports alongside the other 'human monstrosities'. Vespucci, by contrast, foregrounds difference, and, in the case of cannibal practice, generalises and sensationalises it to, one may suppose, heighten the entertainment value of his letters. Pigafetta, perhaps assuming a more discerning readership, adopts a dispassionate tone, and proto-ethnographic method, which contextualises cannibal practice within a distinct history and culture, as an interesting object of knowledge. Contemporary readers were presented with a New World which contained natives who were peaceful and innocent, terrorised by one particularly ferocious tribe (who may not even exist); or, natives who would kill and eat anyone, even their own wives and children; or, specific tribes for whom cannibalism was an integral aspect of their culture and history.

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<sup>131</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 18.

<sup>132</sup> Clements Markham notes, in his introduction to Vespucci's *Letters*, that Las Casas makes this point in his disputation of Vespucci's veracity (Vespucci, *Letters*, p. i).

**‘There I found very many islands, filled with innumerable people, and I have taken possession of them all’<sup>133</sup>**

Vespucci commented: ‘As regards the people: we have found such a multitude in those countries that no one could enumerate them, as we read in the Apocalypse’.<sup>134</sup> To the Europeans, this mass of humanity constituted the undifferentiated real, and from it they quickly defined the natives they encountered, who became objects of knowledge, differentiated by location, sometimes tribal name, and different cultures. They were brought into a process which rendered them intelligible to European culture only by identifying their difference from it. These texts do not actively engage with an idea that the natives had their own meaningful cultural reality (for them, the Europeans appeared out of their real). That they did, is glimpsed occasionally, as, for example, when Vespucci notes that the natives came to stare at his whiteness and clothes, and Pigafetta records the native theorisation of his ship’s boats suckling at the mother vessel. What becomes clear is that the natives of the New World, even in the view of these responses to first encounters, did not possess a culture which was assessed as valuable or comparable to European culture, other than as the inferior term in a binary opposition, in which the European was superior. There is limited acknowledgement that the natives have belief systems, to the extent that they can be credited with the self-serving belief that the Europeans had arrived from heaven.

Native social organisation is sometimes apparent, as, for example in the report of Columbus’s own words describing the governance of Española:

The houses and villages are so lovely, and in all there is government,  
with a judge or lord of them, and all obey him so that it is a wonder.

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<sup>133</sup> Columbus, ‘Letter’, *Journal*, p. 191.

<sup>134</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 45.

And all these lords are men of few words and excellent manners, and their method of giving orders is generally to make signs with the hand, and it is understood, so that it is a marvel.<sup>135</sup>

More usually, it is the absence of such order which is commented upon. Vespucci's summary of American social organisation is, perhaps, more representative:

They have no cloth, either of wool, flax, or cotton, because they have no need of it; nor have they any private property, everything being in common. They live amongst themselves without a king or ruler, each man being his own master, and having as many wives as they please.

The children cohabit with the mothers, the brothers with the sister, the male cousins with the female, and each one with the first he meets.

They have no temples and no laws, nor are they idolaters. What more can I say! They live according to nature, and are more inclined to be Epicurean than Stoic.<sup>136</sup>

This description may, on first reading, appear as a somewhat random list of observations. However, on closer consideration, it becomes clear that this image of New World society is constructed out of elements which are the inverse of those of European culture, creating a negative image. The particular aspects of life which, in Europe, are invested with cultural value are specifically identified as absent from the New World. It may be as a result of this textual construction that the interconnectedness of native culture appears clearly as that of its inverse other: there is no cloth as it is not needed for clothing; there is therefore no distinction of rank by clothing. There is no private property, since again personal wealth signifying rank is not necessary, as there are no

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<sup>135</sup> *Columbus Journal*, p. 120.

<sup>136</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 46-7.



kings or rulers. Sexuality need not be constrained as there is no inherited wealth or rank, therefore no primogeniture and no requirement for the purity of blood lines. There is no religion, therefore no forms of religious observance, and, as there is no private property, it needs no protection under the law. By extension, there is no necessity for positions of rank to be validated or guaranteed by religious or secular authority. This form of life is 'natural' rather than cultural or civilised, and, as Vespucci concludes, the people's natural inclination is towards the pleasures of Epicureanism rather than the austerity of Stoicism.

The representation in Europe of this absence of 'civilised' social organisation in the New World was defining. Its consequence was that the European colonisers who followed in the wake of these first explorers knew that they had nothing to negotiate; this was unlike the situation in the East Indies where hierarchical, settled, social organisations necessitated negotiation even to trade (see, for example, Pigafetta's account of the Philippines and trading for cloves in the Moluccas).<sup>137</sup> The absence of recognisable civilisation enabled the Europeans to easily assume a position of superiority. The Indians were credited with religious beliefs insofar as this positioned the Europeans as superior beings who have 'dropped from' a heaven whose existence and significance were, by implication, shared with these otherwise 'uncivilised' peoples. Without social structure, recognisable or written culture, the natives could not achieve a position as equals of the Europeans. In Columbus's account they are represented in terms of their utility: as sources of information, as potential servants, and as ready converts to Catholicism. He notes that:

They should be good servants and of quick intelligence, since I see that they very soon say all that is said to them, and I believe that they

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<sup>137</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 61-143.

would easily be made Christians, for it appeared to me that they had no creed.<sup>138</sup>

The inequality of culture is compounded by a lack of aggression:

They have no arms and are all naked and without any knowledge of war, and very cowardly, so that a thousand of them would not face three. They are also fitted to be ruled and to be set to work, to cultivate the land and to do all else that may be necessary, and you may build towns and teach them to go clothed and adopt our customs.<sup>139</sup>

The power relations assumed here are clear.<sup>140</sup> The position of superiority is made manifest as Columbus takes possession of the islands, as he was commissioned to do, 'for the King and Queen, his Sovereigns, [by] making the declarations which are required'.<sup>141</sup> Often, he erects crosses as symbols of a possession both Christian and Spanish. His imperative is clear: 'It was nevertheless my wish not to pass any island without taking possession of it, although when one had been annexed, all might be said

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<sup>138</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 24.

<sup>139</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 101-2.

<sup>140</sup> Europeans theorised various origins for, and explanations of the characteristics of, the native inhabitants of the New World. The Aristotelian concept of natural slavery, for example, was easily exported and applied to New World natives. Margarita Zamora has argued that Columbian texts represent natives wholly in accordance with its terms. The concept of natural slavery was, as she states, 'the centrepiece of a theory of domination and subjugation that pretended to explain the innate inferiority of certain types of human beings in order to justify the exercise of power by elite males in the subjugation of others. According to Aristotle the natural slave was a physically gifted but intellectually and morally deficient being. He argued that from birth all creatures are marked for either subjugation or domination, and that the rule of those deemed superior over those deemed inferior is both natural and expedient' (Zamora, 'Abreast of Columbus', p. 140). As Zamora demonstrates, and I hope to have illustrated here, Columbus's representation of natives stresses both their physical attractiveness and 'moral' deficiencies, such as their cowardice and lack of religion; all from a clear position of assumed superiority.

There were, as Anthony Pagden states, extensive contemporary attempts to account for the origin of Indian tribes 'in a way that would both establish them as true sons of Adam and yield some causal explanation of their cultural behaviour'. He draws attention to Sigüenza y Góngora's late seventeenth-century publication *Theatro de virtudes politicas* (The theatre of political virtues) which attempted to 'establish a link between the Mexica, the ancient Greeks, and the sons of Noah by means of an interpretation of the name "Neptune"'. As well as providing the Indians 'with an impeccable Old World pedigree' this reasoning also took advantage of the story that 'Moctezuma had donated his empire to Cortés in the belief that he was Quetzalcoatl' to situate the Spanish as natural rulers (Anthony Pagden, 'Identity Formation in Spanish America', in Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds, *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 51-93, p. 72-73). Pagden also notes the attempts of Fray Servando Teresa de Mier to prove that Quetzalcoatl was, in fact, St Thomas the Apostle (Pagden, 'Identity Formation', p. 73 n. 78).

<sup>141</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 23.

to have been'.<sup>142</sup> He has previously recorded that all of these islands are populated. The literal maps drawn by Columbus illustrating the new possessions are also cultural maps: he overwrites the native names with names significant to his culture:

To the first island which I found I gave the name 'San Salvador', in remembrance of the Divine Majesty, Who had marvellously bestowed all this; the Indians call it 'Guanahani'. To the second, I gave the name the island of 'Santa Maria de Concepcion', to the third, 'Fernandina', to the fourth, 'Isabella', to the fifth island, 'Juana', and so each received from me a new name.<sup>143</sup>

The European overwriting of native culture with cultural maps intelligible to its own culture began with Columbus, and the authority he assumes is symbolised by the use of their names: the holy family and the sovereign family.

The partiality of the picture of the New World natives presented in these early accounts is glimpsed in their inconsistencies and contradictions. Native passivity is not universal, as the aggression of the Caniba and the natives of Little Venice and Iti demonstrate. The observation that the natives are quick to learn, while making them suitable servants, also indicates their natural intelligence (Columbus specifically notes their 'very acute intelligence' and navigational abilities).<sup>144</sup> While there is no written culture, there are systems of meaning at work, as Vespucci found when the implication of body painting and feather plumes was explained to him prior to the attack on Iti. The feathers, remarked upon by Vespucci as one of the items they value, are not recognised by him either for their utility as symbolic objects, or for the exquisite craftsmanship of

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<sup>142</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 29.

<sup>143</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 191.

<sup>144</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 196.



featherwork artefacts.<sup>145</sup> The reported absence of civil society and government is undermined as Columbus relates his honourable treatment by the 'king' of Española, whose eating habits, behaviour and cleanliness 'showed clearly that he was of good birth'.<sup>146</sup> These inconsistencies are easily overlooked or dismissed, as the initial, fundamental division between civilised and uncivilised is set in place, perhaps with the first observation and written description: and they all went naked. This was a distinction Montaigne called attention to when he wrote, 'All that is not verie ill; but what of that? They weare no kinde of breeches nor hosen'.<sup>147</sup>

**'And I think there is in the world no more beautiful country or better place than that'**<sup>148</sup>

Columbus, as previously discussed, situated the islands he explored at the 'end of the east', the traditional position of the Garden of Eden:

In conclusion, the admiral says that the sacred theologians and learned philosophers were right in saying that the earthly paradise is at the end of the east, because it is a very temperate place, so those lands which he had now discovered are, he says, 'the end of the east'.<sup>149</sup>

To this geographical placement Columbus adds descriptions which implicitly evoke conventional understandings of Eden as temperate, beautiful, bountiful in its plenitude (as depicted in the Brueghel painting). He presents himself as a reporter who is

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<sup>145</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 9. This lack of recognition may be contrasted with Francis Fletcher's wonderment at the craftsmanship he observed in Tierra del Fuego. See Chapter Two, p. 149.

<sup>146</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 125.

<sup>147</sup> Montaigne, 'Of the Caniballes', *The Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne done into English by John Florio* (London: Richards, 1908), pp. 253-271, p. 271.

<sup>148</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 53.

<sup>149</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 176.

delighted by the increasing wonder of what he sees, to the point where he questions whether his account will be believed:

And he affirms that he has not praised it to the hundredth part of that which might be said, and that it pleased Our Lord always to show him something better, and that continually in his discoveries up to then he had gone from good to better, as well in the matter of the lands and trees, herbs, fruit and flowers, as in that of the people, and always in a different manner, and as this was the case in one place, so it was in the next. The same was true of the ports and waters, and finally he says that if he who has seen it feels so great wonder, how much more wonderful will it be to one who hears of it, and that no one will be able to believe it if he has not seen it.<sup>150</sup>

The specifics of his descriptions, while conveying this sense of wonder, attempt to persuade his readers to believe by presenting the New World in terms of comparisons with Spain: the breezes were like ‘those of Castile in April’ and the ‘nightingale and other small birds were singing as they do in that month in Spain’, and the ‘fish were as those of Spain’.<sup>151</sup> Even when the comparison is presented as incomparable, it is still made: ‘the best lands in Castile for beauty and fertility could not be compared with these’, the plain of Cordoba ‘did not equal’ the valleys here, being ‘as different as day and night’.<sup>152</sup> This textual strategy is repeated throughout, as, for example:

During this time I walked among the trees, and they were the loveliest sight that I have yet seen; they seemed to be as green as those of Andalusia in the month of May, and all the trees are as different from

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<sup>150</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 72.

<sup>151</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 97.

<sup>152</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 96-7. See also Columbus, *Journal*, p. 34.

ours as day is from night, and so is the fruit and the grasses and the stones and everything else. It is true that some trees were of the kind that are found in Castile, but yet there is a great difference, and there are many other kinds of trees which no one could say are like or can be compared with those of Castile.<sup>153</sup>

Columbus presents his wonderment at the increasing levels of beauty and fertility he encounters without any apparent restraint, as in this description of the island of Hermosa:

All the other things and lands of these islands are so lovely that I do not know where to go first, and my eyes never weary of looking at such lovely verdure so different from that of our own land. [...] When I arrived here at this cape, there came from the land the scent of flowers or trees, so delicious and sweet, that it was the most delightful thing in the world.<sup>154</sup>

The description of Española is, perhaps, the most evocative of Eden:

This island and all the others are very fertile to a limitless degree, and this island is extremely so. In it there are many harbours on the coast of the sea, beyond comparison with others that I know in Christendom, and many rivers, good and large, which is marvellous. Its lands are high; there are in it many sierras and very lofty mountains, beyond comparison with that of Tenerife. All are most beautiful, of a thousand shapes; all are accessible and are filled with trees of a thousand kinds and tall, so that they seem to touch the sky. I

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<sup>153</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 34.

<sup>154</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 38.

am told that they never lose their foliage, and this I can believe, for I saw them as green and lovely as they are in Spain in May, and some of them were flowering, some bearing fruit, and some at another stage, according to their nature. The nightingale was singing and other birds of a thousand kinds, in the month of November, there where I went. There are six or eight kinds of palm, which are a wonder to behold on account of their beautiful variety, but so are the other trees and fruits and plants. In it are marvellous pine groves; there are very wide and fertile plains, and there is honey; and there are birds of many kinds and fruits in great diversity.<sup>155</sup>

In describing this land of honey, it would seem, perhaps, superfluous for Columbus to name it as the earthly paradise more than once.

The specificity of Columbus's expression of wonder becomes apparent when compared with Vespucci's descriptions of the natural world as he perceived it:

The land is very fertile, abounding in many hills and valleys, and in large rivers, and is irrigated by very refreshing springs. It is covered with extensive and dense forests, which are almost impenetrable, and full of every kind of wild beast. Great trees grow without cultivation, of which many yield fruits pleasant to the taste and nourishing to the human body; and a great many have an opposite effect. The fruits are unlike those in our country; and there are innumerable different kinds of fruits and herbs, of which they make bread and excellent food. They also have many seeds unlike ours. [...] If I was to attempt to write of all the species of animals, it would be a long and tedious task.

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<sup>155</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 192-4.

I believe certainly that our Pliny did not touch upon a thousandth part of the animals and birds that exist in this region; nor could an artist such as Policletus succeed in painting them.<sup>156</sup>

Vespucci does not present himself as sharing Columbus's overwhelming sense of wonder, nor does he make specific comparisons between the New World and Europe. The natural world Vespucci creates is different, but not marvellous; to describe it fully would be 'tedious'. Vespucci does relate what he sees explicitly to Eden though: 'If the terrestrial paradise is in some part of this land, it cannot be very far from the coast we visited'.<sup>157</sup>

Pigafetta demonstrates little wonderment at the natural world in his text. He mentions new foodstuffs such as sweet potato and pineapples, but does not really elaborate: 'In which place [Brazil] we replenished our provisions, as with fowl and calves' flesh, also a variety of fruits named *battate* [sweet potato], and sweet pineapples of singular goodness, and infinite other things which I pass over that I be not too long'.<sup>158</sup> Brazil, he reports, is larger in size than France, Spain and Italy combined, and 'abounds in all good things', without further specification.<sup>159</sup> Pigafetta's brief descriptions of the land and its animals are interspersed with his descriptions of the people and their trading practice:

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<sup>156</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 48. Vespucci's only other extended description of the natural world is similar in tone: 'This land is very populous and full of people, with numerous rivers, but few animals. They are similar to ours, except the lions, ounces, stags, pigs, goats, and deer; and these still have some differences of form. They have neither horses nor mules, asses nor dogs, nor any kind of sheep, nor cattle. But they have many other animals all wild, and none of them serve for any domestic use, so that they cannot be counted. What shall we say of the birds, which are so many, and of so many kinds and colours of plumage that it is wonderful to see them? The land is very pleasant and fruitful, full of very large woods and forests, and it is always green, for the trees never shed their leaves. The fruits are so numerous that they cannot be enumerated, and all different from ours' (Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 17). The opening of Formisano's translation of this extract differs slightly in sense from Markham's: 'This land is very heavily populated both with many people and countless rivers; few of the animals resemble ours, except for lions, jaguars, deer, hogs, roe deer and does, and even these are somewhat different' (Formisano, *Letters from a New World*, p. 72-3).

<sup>157</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 48.

<sup>158</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 36.

<sup>159</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 37.



The king of this place is called *Carich*. And there are great numbers of parrots there, of which they give eight or ten for a mirror. There are also pretty little cats [possibly monkeys] very like a lion, yellow and beautiful in appearance. These people make bread in round loaves and take the marrow from certain trees of the place, between the bark and the wood. But this is not very good, being like fresh cheese. There are also swine which have their navel on their back, and large birds with spoon-shaped beak and no tongue. For a hatchet or for a knife they gave us one or two of their daughters for slaves. [...] I omit to relate many other strange things, that I be not too prolix.<sup>160</sup>

Pigafetta, characteristically perhaps, describes those elements of the natural world which are of material concern to the voyage, as, for example, when in the Straits of Magellan he notes the availability of good ports and anchorages, water, wood, fish, mussels and wild celery.<sup>161</sup> The rather prosaic Pigafetta does appear affected by the grandeur of the scenery around the Straits as he states: 'And I think there is in the world no more beautiful country or better place than that'.<sup>162</sup>

While the New World appears to affect the emotions of these three writers to different degrees, they all share the same perception of it as a potential resource for exploitation. In the middle of his romantic description of *Hermosa* Columbus notes: 'I believe, moreover, that here there are many herbs and many trees which will be of great value in Spain for dyes and as medicinal spices'.<sup>163</sup> Similarly, as he presents a lyrical picture of marvellous pines, their utility contributes to the sense of wonder:

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<sup>160</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 38-9.

<sup>161</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 53. Wild celery is an effective antiscorbutic, and the fact that this was one of the few plants available to them and they ate it for several days probably prevented many deaths from scurvy during the long Pacific crossing which followed.

<sup>162</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 53.

<sup>163</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 38.

He looked towards the mountain and saw [the pines] so tall and wonderful that he could not overstate their height and straightness, like spindles, thick and slender. From these he realised that ships could be built, and a vast quantity of planks secured and masts for the largest ships in Spain. He saw oaks and strawberry trees, and a good river, and means for constructing saw-mills.<sup>164</sup>

Vespucci, too, notes the potential utility of the woods, and comments on their current lack of exploitation: 'All the trees are odiferous, and some of them emit gums, oils, or other liquors. If they were our property, I do not doubt but that they would be useful to man'.<sup>165</sup>

The plenitude which is apparent to all three voyagers prompts Columbus and Vespucci particularly to believe that there must also be vast quantities of the precious commodities, gold, silver and pearls, which they sought. Columbus repeatedly assures readers that gold will be found, while Vespucci reports that there was an 'immense quantity of gold underground', and 'Pearls abound' (though none were taken back from that particular voyage).<sup>166</sup> The raising of expectations of the spectacular wealth the New World offered was concomitant with the representation of its people as capable of providing no effective resistance. At the same time, there is an implicit Christian validation of the European position: the native peoples did not exploit the God-given resources themselves. If they have gold, pearls or precious stones in their country, Vespucci remarks, 'they do not work to get them'.<sup>167</sup>

The image of the New World as an earthly paradise supporting innumerable people who do not need to work is contradicted in Columbus's account of the islands of

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<sup>164</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 70.

<sup>165</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 48.

<sup>166</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 48.

<sup>167</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 9-10.

the Caribbean. Columbus notes that, while many crops do grow wild, the islands are cultivated with crops which he recognises or describes, as, for example, on the island of Española and neighbouring Tortuga:

In all Castile there is no land which could be compared to this for beauty and fertility; all this island and that of Tortuga is as cultivated as the plain of Cordoba. They have them sown with *ajes*, which are certain slips which they plant, and at the foot of them grow some roots like carrots.<sup>168</sup>

This impression of widespread cultivation of the Caribbean islands undermines both the idea of the natives as idle, and also implies a level of civility and organisation. This industry is not represented in the accounts of Vespucci and Pigafetta. Vespucci spent a little time in the Caribbean, but mainly landed in Brazil where he reports tribes who live from fishing rather than agriculture. Pigafetta, apart from the Tupi of Brazil, only encountered the Patagonian giants who were hunters.

The Edenic picture Columbus constructs lacks natural dangers; the Caniba pose the only threat. Vespucci's account presents a rather more dangerous version of paradise. In his description of the natural world previously quoted, Vespucci warns that, while many of the fruits are pleasant and nourishing, 'a great many have an opposite effect'.<sup>169</sup> The beautiful forests and innumerable animals also present dangers which, Vespucci concludes, frighten the natives:

They are expert fishermen, and the sea is full of all kinds of fish. They are not hunters; I think because here there are many kinds of wild animals, principally lions and bears, innumerable serpents, and other

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<sup>168</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 100. For further references to cultivated land see, for example, p. 82-3, p. 86, p. 90, p. 97-8, p. 100, p. 109, p. 113.

<sup>169</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 48.

horrible creatures and deformed beasts; also because there are vast forests and trees of immense size. They have not the courage to face such dangers naked and without any defence.<sup>170</sup>

These texts' representations of the New World as a type of earthly paradise excited many desires in European readers, for whom, perhaps, the contradictions and inconsistencies would not have registered. The texts' constructions of the New World as Eden presents a frame in which its inhabitants are, at the same time, both naked innocents and naked barbarians.

## **Conclusion**

The New World confounded expectations from the outset. As it was absent from the books of the ancient authorities and medieval travellers, its first European explorers were forced to construct it from their own observations, and, inescapably, from their own cultural materials. The stories their accounts tell contain many of the same elements, but each constructs a different subject position for their readers, dependent on the writer's own cultural expectations, and their anticipated readership. The people are differentiated as timorous or cannibals, friendly or unfriendly, sexually continent or libidinous, but always naked. They are objects of desire as servants, subjects, converts, sexual beings; they are objects of curiosity and knowledge: how do they look, how do they live, what are their customs? They are objects of disgust in their savage barbarity as they eat off the floor and urinate in public. They are objects of wonder as they are so perfectly formed and handsome, so long lived, and so friendly. The land, in its beauty and plenitude, is lyrically represented by Columbus, but curiously absent from much of

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<sup>170</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 47-8.

Vespucci's and Pigafetta's texts. The accounts concur in constructing the New World as an earthly paradise, overflowing with the riches desired by Europeans. Yet the figure of the native which emerges into European culture from the undifferentiated alterity the New World is, from this early stage, multiple and contradictory, but always seen from the position of assumed superiority of the Europeans who controlled the process of representation.

## Chapter Two

### A Measure of Civility: (Re)writing the First English Circumnavigation

Following on from the voyages and accounts of Columbus, Vespucci and Pigafetta, the sixteenth century was a period of intense activity as the New World was quickly conquered and colonised by Europeans. Spain conquered and settled in Peru, Mexico and Central America and the Caribbean, while Portugal consolidated settlement in Brazil.<sup>1</sup> Vast wealth was plundered from the Americas. For example, from Peru, Spain transported Inca treasure and silver from the mines of Potosí north along the west coast of South America to Panama, across the Darien Gap, and, from there, across the Atlantic. English involvement in the region was, by comparison, minimal. Cabot claimed Newfoundland for England in 1497, and, in 1563, John Hawkins led the first English slaving voyage to the Caribbean. English expeditions to the Caribbean during the 1570s were mainly voyages of piracy, carried out as part of the ‘unofficial war of reprisal’ against Spain. For participants such as Hawkins and Francis Drake, rewards

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<sup>1</sup>Contemporary accounts of the conquest of the Americas include: Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, *History of the Incas and the Execution of the Inca Tupac Amaru*, by Captain Baltasar de Ocampo, trans. and ed., with notes and an introduction, by Sir Clements Markham (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1907); Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, *Letter to a King: A Picture-History of the Inca Civilisation*, by Huamán Poma (Don Felipe Huamán Poma de Ayala), trans. and ed. by Christopher Dilke (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978); Garcilaso de la Vega, *The Incas: The Royal Commentaries of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega 1539-1616*, trans. by Maria Jolas from the critical, annotated French edition of Alain Gheerbrant (New York: Orion Press, 1962); Pedro de Cieza de León, *The Incas of Pedro de Cieza de León*, trans. by Harriet de Onis (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969); Pedro Pizarro, *Relation of the Discovery and Conquest of the Kingdoms of Peru*, trans. by Philip Ainsworth Means, 2 vol (Boston: Milford House, 1972, reprint of the 1921 edition); Agustín de Zárate, *The Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, trans. by J M Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968); Hernán Cortés, *Five Letters of Cortés to the Emperor* (New York: Norton, 1969); Bernal Díaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*, trans. by J M Cohen (London: Folio Society, 1974); Diego Durán, *The Aztecs: The History of the Indies of New Spain*, trans. by Doris Heyden and Fernando Horcasitas (New York: Orion Press, 1964); Diego de Landa, *Yucatan Before and After the Conquest, with Other Related Documents, Maps and Illustrations*, trans. by William Gates (New York: Dover Publications, 1978); Juan Rodríguez Freile, *The Conquest of New Granada*, trans. by William C Atkinson (London: Folio Society, 1961); Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, ed. and trans. by Nigel Griffin, with an introduction by Anthony Pagden (London: Penguin, 1992). Among the many scholarly historical accounts of the period see: Hugh Thomas, *The Conquest of Mexico* (London: Pimlico, 2004); John Hemming, *The Conquest of the Incas* (London: Papermac, 1993); J H Parry, *The Discovery of South America* (London: Elk, 1979). For an historical account specifically focussing on the voyages to the region during the period see Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Southern Voyages A.D. 1492-1616* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

were great.<sup>2</sup> Against this background, the first English voyage around the world, led by Francis Drake, between 1577 and 1580, fundamentally challenged Spanish and Portuguese hegemony in the New World when, for the first time, English vessels sailed into the Pacific Ocean.

The voyage of circumnavigation took in the Cape Verde Islands, where a Portuguese ship was taken and its navigator, Nuño da Silva, kidnapped (he was later set ashore in Guatalco, Mexico). After a difficult Atlantic crossing they reached the coast of Brazil and made a short landing at Rio de la Plata, then, sailing further south, they reached Puerto San Julian, in Patagonia, and, during their lengthy stay in the bay, the gentleman, Thomas Doughty, was tried and executed. Subsequently, Drake made a successful passage of the Strait of Magellan, only to meet severe storms as the fleet entered the Pacific Ocean. The *Marigold* was lost, and the *Elizabeth*, after failing to rejoin Drake's ship, returned through the Strait and back to England. Drake's ship, the *Pelican*, was renamed the *Golden Hind*, and continued northwards alone. Along the western coast of South America Drake reconnoitred and attacked settlements and shipping at Valparaiso, Arica (the port for Potosí), and Callao (the port of Lima). Off the Cape San Francisco (Colombia) Drake took his major prize: the Spanish treasure ship *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, nicknamed the *Cacafuego*. Drake then headed north, perhaps searching for a route home via the hypothetical Strait of Anian, but, due to severe weather, he turned south again, landing near San Francisco Bay. He named the land Nova Albion, and claimed it for Elizabeth I. Drake then crossed the Pacific to the spice island of Ternate in the Moluccas where he bought spices and gained promises of

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<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Andrews cites thirteen expeditions to the Caribbean between 1570 and 1577, all without authority or licence. For details of the Caribbean voyages of Hawkins and Drake, and Drake's raids in the region in the early 1570s, see Kenneth R Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 117-133.

future trade from its ruler, who was in dispute with the Portuguese.<sup>3</sup> Following his return to England, after an initially uncertain welcome, Elizabeth signalled her approval by knighting Drake onboard the *Golden Hind* at Tilbury in 1581.

In financial terms the voyage was hugely successful and inspired later gentlemen-adventurers, such as Thomas Cavendish, to attempt its emulation. However, as Kenneth Andrews observes, the voyage 'did not have a decisive effect on international affairs'.<sup>4</sup> Drake's incursions into the Pacific provoked a Spanish demonstration of force which frustrated subsequent English initiatives in South America, and his achievements in this area were not built upon. However, as Andrews concludes, 'Drake's circumnavigation of the globe greatly inflated English maritime prestige and ambition, which [then] took a decisive step towards oceanic power and overseas empire'.<sup>5</sup>

Drake's circumnavigation also constituted the first example of English cultural mapping of the real in the Americas, which will be my focus here. Several first-hand accounts were written during the voyage, each of which, necessarily, constructed a version of the New World from an English perspective, and intelligible to a specifically English readership. However, none of these accounts were published individually at the time, only appearing later in the mediated forms of edited accounts in collections or as sources for compilations. The most important of the first-hand accounts, Drake's own journal, together with maps and coastal illustrations, was surrendered to Elizabeth I on

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<sup>3</sup> For more detailed accounts of Drake's voyage of circumnavigation see the summary provided by John H Parry in 'Drake and the World Encompassed' in *Sir Francis Drake and the Famous Voyage, 1577 - 1580: Essays Commemorating the Quadricentennial of Drake's Circumnavigation of the Earth*, ed. by Norman J W Thrower (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 1-11; and, for a fuller account, Kenneth R Andrews, *Drake's Voyages: A Re-assessment of their Place in Elizabethan Maritime Expansion* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967); and Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, pp. 158-166.

<sup>4</sup> Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, p. 159; and Andrews, *Drake's Voyages*, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, p. 166.



his return to England in 1580.<sup>6</sup> This journal was never published, its content suppressed at the time due to the tense political relations between England and Spain, and it has since been lost. Another account of the complete voyage is that of Francis Fletcher, chaplain to the expedition. It is understood that Drake impounded this journal (and others written on the voyage) on, or before, their return to England.<sup>7</sup> Fletcher's 'Notes' (as they are now referred to) were never published as a single text; the 'Notes' do, however, constitute the major source for the most complete account of the voyage, *The World Encompassed*, which was published in 1628. A manuscript copy of the first portion of Fletcher's 'Notes', relating events from leaving Plymouth in November 1577 to the battle on the Island of Mucho, off the west coast of South America, in December 1578, was made in 1677 by a pharmacist, John Coyner (BL Sloane MS. No. 61).<sup>8</sup> The complete original journal is lost. Two other extant first-hand accounts, written by John Cooke and Edward Cliffe, both mariners on the *Elizabeth*, cover the voyage as far as the western portion of the Straits of Magellan, after which the vessel, captained by John Winter, was separated from the fleet by storms, and returned to England. There is also an anonymous account covering the second part of the voyage, beginning at Mucho Island, where Fletcher's 'Notes' ends.<sup>9</sup>

The first version of the voyage to appear in print was not one of the first-hand accounts, but an edited compilation. Entitled 'The Famous Voyage of Sir Francis Drake

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<sup>6</sup> Evidence that a pictorial record was kept is provided by a contemporary account: 'He also carries painters who paint for him pictures of the coast in its exact colours' (Don Francisco de Zárate, 'Don Francisco de Zárate's Letter', in Sir Francis Drake, *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake*, ed. N M Penzer (Amsterdam: N. Israel and Da Capo Press, 1971 (reprint of *The World Encompassed and Analogous Contemporary Documents Concerning Sir Francis Drake's Circumnavigation of the World* (London: Argonaut, 1926)), pp. 215-220, p. 219).

<sup>7</sup> David B Quinn, 'Early Accounts of the Famous Voyage', in Thrower, ed., *Drake and the Famous Voyage*, pp. 33-48, p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> The Coyner manuscript copy was first published, in an imperfectly transcribed version, by Vaux in 1854 (Sir Francis Drake, *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake, Being His Next Voyage to that to Nombre de Dios*, collated with an unpublished manuscript of Francis Fletcher. With appendices and introduction, by W. S. W. Vaux (London: Hakluyt Society, 1854)). The 1926 edition of *The World Encompassed* included a new transcription of the manuscript by N M Penzer.

<sup>9</sup> 'A discourse of Sir Francis Drakes iorney and exploytes after hee had past ye Straytes of Magellan into Mare de Sur, and through the rest of his voyadge afterward till hee arrived in England. 1580 Anno.' Harleian MSS, No. 280, fols. 83-90. Fol. 23 is reprinted as 'Drake in California' in *The World Encompassed*, pp. 182-187.

into the South Sea, and there hence about the whole globe of the Earth, begun in the yeere of our Lord, 1577', the account was included as additional pages in the first edition of Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* in 1589.<sup>10</sup> A short account, of only fourteen thousand words, 'The Famous Voyage' nonetheless provides a coherent narrative of the complete voyage. David B Quinn states that this text has 'remained since 1589 the basic authority for the voyage, however much *The World Encompassed* (1628) and materials from manuscripts in England and Spain have supplemented it', and that, as the earliest account of the circumnavigation, the account has received 'much critical attention and has inspired much speculation'.<sup>11</sup> Quinn himself speculates upon the identity of sources and compilers, and on the circumstances of the text's publication.<sup>12</sup>

The second, and much fuller, account of the complete circumnavigation to be published was *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake, Being his next voyage to that to Nombre de Dios formerly imprinted*, which appeared in 1628, almost forty years after 'The Famous Voyage'. The frontispiece identifies its major source, stating that it is 'Carefully collected out of the notes of Master Francis Fletcher, Preacher in this employment, and diuers others his followers in the same'. The dedication, to the Earl of Warwick, is signed by Francis Drake, nephew of the circumnavigator, often cited as the compiler of the account.

Quinn's speculations suggest an intimate relationship between these two published accounts. He proposes that the *World Encompassed* was compiled largely

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<sup>10</sup> 'The Famous Voyage of Sir Francis Drake into the South Sea, and There Hence About the Whole Globe of the Earth', *Principal Navigations*, ed. by Richard Hakluyt (London: George Bishop, 1589), p. 643F. This version was inserted as additional pages to the first edition of 1589 (as the pages in the text are unnumbered I have followed Alison Quinn's notation of 643A to 643L to refer to the material (Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations* (1589), ed. by D B Quinn and R A Skelton, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Eng., 1965)). Its sources include John Cooke's narrative (Harleian MSS, No. 540, fol. 93), and the anonymous account (Harleian MSS, No. 280, fols. 83-90).

<sup>11</sup> Quinn, 'Early Accounts of the Famous Voyage', p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Quinn's essay examines the circumstances of production of 'The Famous Voyage' as published in Hakluyt. See Quinn, 'Early Accounts of the Famous Voyage', pp. 33-48.

from Fletcher's 'Notes', and also from Edward Cliffe's narrative, by the Reverend Philip Nichols, under the guidance of Drake himself (the work completed 'in some form before November 1589').<sup>13</sup> Additionally, that this text may have formed the basis of the original, longer, account which Hakluyt states was 'withdrawn' from inclusion in the first edition of the *Principal Navigations* (probably on the instructions of Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth I's principal secretary of state, who may have deemed it too favourable to Drake).<sup>14</sup> Quinn proposes that, from this longer version, together with John Cooke's narrative, and the 'anonymous account', Hakluyt produced the substantially edited-down account, 'The Famous Voyage', which was short enough to be inserted as additional pages in the first edition of *Principal Navigations*.<sup>15</sup>

Henry R Wagner states that *The World Encompassed* was compiled from 'not only the Fletcher manuscript which apparently, and indeed almost certainly, covered the entire voyage, but three publications containing partial accounts: that of Edward Cliffe [...], the relation of Nuño da Silva and that of Lopez Vaz, all published by Hakluyt in 1600'.<sup>16</sup> Also, by contrast to Quinn, Wagner places the date of publication (1628) as 'presumably not much later than its actual make-up'.<sup>17</sup> Wagner provides no thesis as to the identity of the compiler, but states that it 'does not appear that Drake's nephew, Sir Francis Drake, had anything to do with the publication more than to give it the sanction of his name by writing a short Dedication to the Earl of Warwick. Nevertheless it is

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<sup>13</sup> Quinn, 'Early Accounts of the Famous Voyage', p. 41

<sup>14</sup> See Quinn, 'Early Accounts of the Famous Voyage' p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> Quinn states: 'It is a reasonable assumption, though one which does not seem to have been made until now, that *The World Encompassed* was also put together under Drake's auspices before 1595. This work may have been the basis for the discarded account of 1589, and it may even have been used in the account of the later part of the voyage in "The Famous Voyage" narrative' (Quinn, 'Early Accounts of the Famous Voyage', p. 36).

<sup>16</sup> Henry R Wagner, *Sir Francis Drake's Voyage Around the World: Its Aims and Achievements* (San Francisco: John Howell, 1926), p. 287.

<sup>17</sup> Wagner, *Drake's Voyage*, p. 287.

frequently referred to as the 'authorised' version, meaning, I presume, authorized by Drake's nephew'.<sup>18</sup>

Other historians, including John H Parry and N M Penzer, share the opinion that *The World Encompassed* was compiled by Sir Francis Drake, Bart., the Admiral's nephew, at a date roughly contemporary with its date of publication, while Harry Kelsey states that the text was 'extensively revised by the younger Francis Drake'.<sup>19</sup> Without definitive documentary evidence, it is impossible to say which of these historians' opinions is correct.<sup>20</sup> My own speculation is that Nichols and Drake may have provided Hakluyt with the original text (based on Fletcher's 'Notes'), which he substantially edited to become 'The Famous Voyage', and that the same original text, together with other sources already mentioned, may also have been available to Drake's nephew, who made his own compilation and revisions, particularly to eulogise his uncle, prior to publication in 1628.<sup>21</sup> If this opinion is valid, the original 'Notes' written by Francis Fletcher between 1577 and 1580 (and agreed by all historians to constitute the major source text for both accounts) possibly underwent an initial process of revision and incorporation in the mid to late 1580s, followed by a second revision almost fifty years later.

The first section of this chapter examines the personal and idiosyncratic first-hand account written by Francis Fletcher (from the extant manuscript copy covering the

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<sup>18</sup> Wagner, *Drake's Voyage*, p. 286.

<sup>19</sup> J H Parry, 'Drake and the World Encompassed', in *Drake and the Famous Voyage*, pp. 1-11, p. 5; N M Penzer, ed., *The World Encompassed*, p. v; Harry Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake: The Queen's Pirate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p.395.

<sup>20</sup> I have referred to the compiler as Drake's nephew, Sir Francis Drake, throughout, for clarity and consistency, though, as the argument above suggests, there is no conclusive evidence of the compiler's identity.

<sup>21</sup> Kelsey notes that, while Drake was not viewed as a national hero by contemporary English chroniclers, but rather, as one of several adventurous seamen, 'some years after Drake's death, in response to comments at home and abroad, his nephew began trying to refurbish his reputation by publishing a sympathetic version of Drake's exploits. Revised and amplified, this work became the basis for a new type of patriotic book with Drake no longer a pirate but a hero, defending God and queen against a threatening Spain' (Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake*, p. 398-9). For an appreciation of contemporary accounts of Drake, together with a bibliography of works about Drake from 1582-1981 (by Burton Van Name Edwards), see Quinn, *Sir Francis Drake As Seen By His Contemporaries* (Providence, Rhode Island: John Carter Brown Library, 1996).

first half of the voyage) in relation both to the earlier accounts of Columbus, Vespucci and Pigafetta, and to the later compilations, suggesting that new forms of writing emerge in response to the need to render up the real of the New World into intelligible cultural reality. I shall also suggest that between Fletcher's first-hand account and the edited compilation, *The World Encompassed*, the process of transforming eye-witness testimony into 'history' can be seen in operation: the personal and idiosyncratic smoothed and anodised into the narrative flow of the chronicler's history.<sup>22</sup> The second half of *The World Encompassed* provides the focus of the remainder of this chapter, which comprises an examination of the text's constructions of Drake as archetypal English maritime hero, and the conception of a theoretical English form of colonial practice, in relation to other extant source texts, and in contrast to the more neutral presentation evident in 'The Famous Voyage'. What is at stake in my argument is not the 'truth' of the voyage, but the difference in its representation made by the gap of half a century, and the process of transformation from first-hand account into history, between Fletcher's 'Notes' and the younger Drake's published text.

I have suggested that in the cumulative, haphazard process of constructing the New World from first-hand accounts a few texts had immediate fame and far-reaching consequences (Columbus's 'letter', for example), while others were lost completely, and some achieved a level of posterity by incorporation, wholly or as sources, in larger works.<sup>23</sup> Francis Fletcher's 'Notes' provide an instance of a text which did not achieve an independent identity of its own, yet formed the basis of two texts which have, since their publication, been accorded the status of authoritative historical documents, with some of the meanings they construct still current in culture today. Fletcher's 'Notes' provide an example, in practice, of Michel de Certeau's characterisation of textual

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<sup>22</sup> The 'Famous Voyage' could also be used as the primary comparator with Fletcher's 'Notes', however, *The World Encompassed*, being a fuller text, offers more scope for comparison.

<sup>23</sup> Introduction, p. 3.

interweaving: a text re-incorporated into subsequent texts, the source transformed and displaced in the new text, which is 'induced by these fragments (broken mirrors deforming the past they represent), but it [the new text] displaces and transforms them in the fiction it generates by manipulating them'.<sup>24</sup>

*The World Encompassed* relates the same incidents, in the same order, as Fletcher's 'Notes'. However, comparison of the two texts demonstrates that, while there are similarities, there are also significant differences between them. Fletcher's first-hand record, translating lived experience into text, contributes to the initial process of transforming the undifferentiated real of the New World into cultural reality. His text, together with other first-hand sources, then undergoes a secondary process, as the accounts are merged, abridged, amended, and elaborated, by the compilers of 'history', such as Francis Drake.<sup>25</sup> The differences between the texts of Fletcher and Drake reveal, in practice, not only the place where history is produced, 'the frontier of the present' as Michel de Certeau has described it, but also that this frontier is constantly moving. Traceable in these two texts are changing practices in how the *given* of experience is transformed into a *construct* to make a history. The practice of making history, Certeau states, is not content with discovering a hidden 'truth' but rather 'it *produces* a symbol through the very relation between a space newly designated within time and a *modus operandi* that fabricates "scenarios" capable of organizing practices into a currently intelligible discourse – namely, the task of "the making of history"'.<sup>26</sup> This process involves drawing a distinction between past and present, and therefore, Certeau argues, a necessary selection of what is represented to contemporary readers as intelligible to

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<sup>24</sup> Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 139.

<sup>25</sup> My analysis of *The World Encompassed* assumes that the younger Drake compiled the text from sources, including Fletcher, and possibly an account of the voyage compiled by Philip Nichols and Drake himself (as discussed above), making his own textual revisions prior to publication in 1628.

<sup>26</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. by Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University, 1988), p 6.

them. This, states Certeau, 'promotes a selection between what can be *understood* and what must be *forgotten* in order to obtain the representation of a present intelligibility'.<sup>27</sup> The similarities between Fletcher's and Drake's texts, on the other hand, indicate that the process of 'making history' which produces their differences, does not necessarily involve a 'clean break' between present and past. Although written or compiled nearly fifty years apart, these two texts demonstrate a largely shared intelligibility, and are both products of a shared epistemological space.

Michel Foucault's definition of his area of investigation in *The Order of Things*, may illuminate the dynamic relationship between these two texts. At one extreme, Foucault places the fundamental codes, or empirical orders, of a culture; at the other, the scientific theories and philosophical interpretations which reflect upon and explain the existence of those orders. The role of the domain between these two regions, Foucault argues, is intermediary but fundamental. Here, there is 'the pure experience of order and of its modes of being',<sup>28</sup> a location in which a culture, in practice, can deviate from the empirical orders of its primary codes. This initial separation, Foucault maintains, causes the orders to lose their transparency and their 'immediate and invisible powers', revealing 'the fact, in short, that order *exists*' and, therefore, that other orders are possible. Order itself is liberated. Foucault argues that in this domain:

[Order] appears, according to the culture and the age in question, continuous and graduated or discontinuous and piecemeal, linked to space or constituted anew at each instant by the driving force of time, related to a series of variables or defined by separate systems of

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<sup>27</sup> Certeau, *Writing of History*, p 4.

<sup>28</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. xxiii.

coherences, composed of resemblances which are either successive or corresponding, organized around increasing differences, etc.<sup>29</sup>

Foucault's formulation offers a theorisation of the similarities and differences apparent in Fletcher's and Drake's texts: they can be seen as manifestations of the operation of order in the pure realm of experience.

The changes of orders which occur in the theoretical space Foucault identifies may be demonstrated by close reading and comparison of specific texts, paying attention to the process of selection and the changes (sometimes small) in representational practice which lead to the fabrication of different scenarios within them. I suggest that, between these two texts, it is possible to trace emerging ideas and modes of writing, and also, when compared with the earlier texts previously discussed, it may be possible to identify receding ideas and orders of knowledge.

The English circumnavigation took place almost sixty years after that of Magellan, and, between the writing of Fletcher's journal of the voyage and Drake's published account, a period of almost fifty years passed. Close comparison of Fletcher's and Drake's texts, drawing on their differences, as well as their similarities, enables a tracing, from today's perspective, of some of the ways in which the representation of the New World provides a locus for the development of semi-empirical and proto-ethnographic writing, both resulting from necessarily first-hand observation and recording, while medieval wonders and marvels are included less frequently. The New World also constituted a stage on which European rivalries were played out, and offered the younger Drake the opportunity to produce a text which posited desirable

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<sup>29</sup> Foucault, *Order of Things*, p. xxii-xxiii.



constructions of Englishness, a quintessential English maritime hero, and a theoretical concept of English colonial practice.<sup>30</sup>

The opening of Fletcher's account, when compared with that of Drake's, introduces their different rhetorical styles:

All things necessary being provided for so honourable a voyage, wee loosed from the haven of Plimouth in the County of Deuon w<sup>th</sup> 5 shippes, 150 men, & some boyes, the 15 day of Nouember, anno 1577.<sup>31</sup>

This simple statement begins Fletcher's narration of the circumnavigation. Three extracts from the first pages of Drake's version indicate some points of difference in tone and content from Fletcher's text:

Ever since Almighty God commanded Adam to subdue the earth, there have not wanted in all ages some heroicall spirits which, in obedience to that high mandate, either from manifest reason alluring them, or by secret instinct inforcing them thereunto, have expended their wealth, employed their times, and aduentured their persons, to finde out the true circuit thereof.<sup>32</sup>

Published in 1628, 48 years after the event, and 32 years after Drake's death, *The World Encompassed* addressed a new generation of Englishmen, at a time of war with Spain and France,<sup>33</sup> interpellating them in order, as the frontispiece states, and the opening lines of the account reiterate, to stir up their 'heroic spirits, to benefit their cuntrye, and

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<sup>30</sup> A study which also discusses the construction of difference between English and Spanish, in relation to the textual strategies employed in Sir Walter Raleigh's *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Beautifull Empire of Guiana* (1596), is Louis Montrose's 'The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery', in *Representations*, 33, Special Issue: The New World (1991), 1-41. Montrose reads Raleigh's text to analyse the specifically gendered rhetoric it employs to address Elizabeth I; this is not a feature of Drake's text.

<sup>31</sup> Francis Fletcher, 'Notes', Sloane MS. No. 61, in Drake, *The World Encompassed*, pp. 88-142, p. 88.

<sup>32</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> England was at war with Spain and France from 1624 to 1630. Wagner observes of *The World Encompassed*: 'It seems to have been a sort of continuation of *Sir Francis Drake Revived*; most likely both works were issued primarily as a kind of propaganda during the war with Spain which was then in progress' (Wagner, *Drake's Voyage*, p. 286).

eternize their names by like noble attempts'. The impetus for the enterprise, Drake tells his readers, stems from the General's personal resolve and patriotism:

The said Captaine *Francis Drake* hauing in a former voyage [...] had sight, and onely a sight, of the South Atlantik, and thereupon either conceiuing a new, or renewing a former desire, of sailing on the same, in an English bottom; he so cherished thenceforward, this his noble desire and resolution in himselfe, that notwithstanding he was hindered for some yeares, partly by secret enuie at home, and partly by publique seruice for his Prince and countrie abroad [...] yet, against the yeare 1577, by gracious commission from his soueraigne, and with the helpe of diuers friends aduenturers, he had fitted himselfe with fiue ships.<sup>34</sup>

I shall suggest that, while eulogising a family member, the text also constructs Drake as a new type of English hero: one who embodies a range of cultural signifiers which constitute a model of Englishness. Aspects of conduct, such as bravery, civility, the commission of piracy with style and humour, the honourable treatment of European captives and the compassionate treatment of natives, are appropriated both as personal attributes of the General and also as specifically English by the construction, within the text, of a relation of difference between English and Spanish behaviour. A theoretical, perhaps idealised, model for English colonial practice also develops within the text.

In asserting that the Ocean 'by right is the Lord's alone', free for all men to deal in and use and large enough for any man's industry, *The World Encompassed* sets out the maritime challenge the circumnavigation posed to the authority of Spain, Portugal

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<sup>34</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 2.

and the Pope.<sup>35</sup> But there is more, as Drake's description of preparations for the voyage makes clear:

These ships he mand with 164 able and sufficient men, and furnished them also with such plentifull prouision of all things necessary, as so long and dangerous a voyage did seeme to require; and amongst the rest, with certaine pinnaces ready framed, but carried aboard in pieces, to be new set vp in smoother water, when occasion serued. Neither had he omitted to make provision also for ornament and delight, carrying to this purpose with him, expert musitians, rich furniture (all the vessels for his table, yea, many belonging euen to the Cooke-roome being of pure siluer), and diuers shewes of all sorts of curious workmanship, whereby the ciuilitie and magnificence of his natiue contrie might, amongst all nations whithersoouer he should come, be the more admired.<sup>36</sup>

Amid all the preparations, expert musicians, rich furniture, silver tableware, and many finely made artefacts are also loaded. Included on Drake's initiative, the text implies, this 'provision for ornament and delight' will inspire admiration of the 'ciuilitie and magnificence' of England in all the nations Drake will visit. The *World Encompassed*, then, conjoins maritime challenge with cultural embassy, both designed to assert English superiority. However, while the younger Drake ascribes these motives to Drake, the General, his sources make no mention of the cultural dimension. The text of *The World Encompassed* may itself be read as a cultural embassy which represents and promotes English 'ciuilitie and magnificence' and heroism to seventeenth-century Englishmen, who, we may suppose, needed to be reminded of it.

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<sup>35</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 2.

### Mode of address

‘I write of my owne knowledg’, Francis Fletcher tells his readers, ‘not by report or by conjecture’.<sup>37</sup> He dismisses the ‘fetherbedd milkesopps’ who stay at home and hypothesise about the New World, picturing them at the smith’s forge, ‘hamering out a globe to make a childish bragg amongst simple poople’.<sup>38</sup> Fletcher is not himself, of course, one of the ‘simple poople’, nor is he a stay-at-home fantasist. He has seen with his own eyes the things he reports: personal experience validates the authorial voice. His gall at the treatment of hard-won experience by conjecturers is clear. These men, he rails, ‘doe laugh & mock at & say it is a lye to Report’, as Fletcher does, ‘such things of Gods great & marvailous workes’. Such men, preferring their own conjectures over the facts, are, says Fletcher, ‘greenheads w<sup>ch</sup> will belieue nothing but that they paint themselues vpon their Iron hoopes’.<sup>39</sup> Fletcher, then, argues for the primacy of personal experience over supposition.

His experience also, he asserts, contradicts and disproves the opinions of ancient authorities:

We found the vaine gusses & imagined conjectures to be vntrue & false concerning the same & the surmised opinion of the antient & great philosophers to be contrary to appearance & experience. & indeed to Reason: for wheras Aristotill Pithagoras Thales & many others both Greekes & Latins haue taught that Torrida Zona was not habitable for the Exceeding heat & intollerable burneing reflection of the sonn w<sup>ch</sup> suffereth say they no radicall moysture to abyde in nature of creatures to liue we proued the same to bee altogeather false &

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<sup>37</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 91.

<sup>38</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 96.

<sup>39</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 96.

the same Zone to be the Earthly paradise in the world both at sea &  
land.<sup>40</sup>

That Fletcher feels it necessary, as Amerigo Vespucci did at the beginning of the century, to argue for the primacy of eye-witness testimony and experience over conjecture and the written authority of the ancients, suggests that, as a principle, this was still a matter of contention. Writing less than 50 years later, Drake does not rehearse the debate, perhaps indicating that, by then, the argument was won: the real would be mapped accurately on the basis of experience. It may be argued that the discovery of the New World provided an impetus for a fundamental shift from adherence to the authority of the ancients to empiricism: the primacy of observation and experiment. It was during this period that Francis Bacon, in the *New Organon* (1620), took issue with Aristotelian logic, which was based on incontrovertible premises, and set out a reasoning system which advocated the investigation of these fundamental premises. This 'inductive inference' method was based upon a return to the raw evidence of the natural world, using observation and experimentation as the basis for constructing scientific theory. His methodology involved the collection of 'assemblages of data' which would, if taken to their logical extreme, provide a compilation of all the 'phenomena of the universe', from which he envisaged the development of a totalising explanatory system.<sup>41</sup> The explorers of the New World, confronted with new phenomena and material, were contributing their collections of data, however varied in quality, to a growing corpus, in much the way Bacon advocated, though, perhaps, not in the methodical manner he might have desired.

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<sup>40</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 102. Fletcher continues the usage of the term 'earthly paradise' to describe the New World.

<sup>41</sup> Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, ed. by Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. xii.

Emphasising his position as eye-witness, the 'I' of Fletcher's text speaks directly to readers to convey his observations and personal opinions. He constructs a specific position for his readers: that of an educated English Protestant such as himself. His readers' shared understanding of acceptable manners is assumed, as are their specific religious views. This is evidenced by his vehement anti-Catholic sentiments throughout. At one point he refers to 'the Pope & his Malignant Synagogues of Satan'.<sup>42</sup> Such first-person narration is an example of 'discourse', as described by Emile Benveniste, which assumes 'a speaker and a hearer, the "you" and "I" of dialogue'.<sup>43</sup> By contrast, Francis Drake's account, though based on Fletcher's 'Notes', erases Fletcher. There is no insistent 'I' in Drake's version. Drake uses an inclusive, yet unidentified, first-person plural narrative voice, only occasionally using the first-person singular. The use of 'we', 'our', and 'us', gently interpellates readers, eliciting their agreement with the text's views by inclusion. In Benveniste's sense, Drake's version is not 'history' (*histoire*), as the events do not narrate themselves, nor does it seem to be the direct 'discourse' of Fletcher's account. Yet Drake's project, as he specifies it, is to turn discourse, the accounts of individuals, into history:

It shall for the present be deemed a sufficient discharge of duty to register the true and whole history of that his voyage, with as great indifferency of affection as a history doth require, and with the plaine evidence of truth, as it was left recorded by some of the chiefe, and diuers other actors in that action.<sup>44</sup>

Drake cannot claim the authority of the 'I' of the eyewitness for himself; instead, his claims to authority rest on a circular argument that history is true because it is based on the true evidence of those present. This presents two assumptions for readers'

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<sup>42</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 92.

<sup>43</sup> Qtd in Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 66.

<sup>44</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 1-2.

acceptance. Firstly, that histories, including his own, should be impartial. Drake's text attempts to persuade readers of its impartiality by adopting a distanced narrative voice: the personal opinions and prejudices which feature in Fletcher's account are dropped. Secondly, that the source texts, the eye-witness accounts (as Fletcher also asserts), provide the truth of events. This 'given' of experience can then be transformed, to use Certeau's terminology, to 'construct' a 'true' history. Both assumptions are false. Texts are inherently fictions to greater or lesser degree, as they are necessarily partial and selective in what they record. In this sense, texts can never convey the whole truth of lived experience: what remains unassimilable subsists as the unknown real. Also, Drake's assertion of his 'indifferency of affection' is an evasion, as, while asserting the truthfulness of his sources, the younger Drake silently edits them to present an account which, as compared with those sources, is extremely partial in its treatment of his uncle.

### **Marvels, wonders, and God's creation**

Paradoxically, for a narrative which bases its claim to authority on the veracity of the first-person eye-witness, Fletcher's account retains vestiges of marvel and wonder, conventional elements of medieval travel narratives. Pigafetta, in his account of Magellan's circumnavigation, appears to include wonders and marvels as a textual strategy, designed to fulfil reader expectations he has himself defined. He writes, he tells readers, to satisfy curious people about the 'great and marvellous' things seen and suffered during his 'long and perilous voyage'.<sup>45</sup> The wonders and marvels he relates, presumably to satisfy his readers' curiosity, are second-hand, often told to him by a local pilot, and occurring elsewhere, in places Pigafetta cannot himself visit. Fletcher does not

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<sup>45</sup> Antonio Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage: A Narrative Account of the First Navigation*, trans. and ed. by R A Skelton (London: The Folio Society, 1975), p. 27.

provide the same insight into his assumptions about his readers. His text does echo Pigafetta's, though, in that there is a 'marvel' recounted almost at the outset. Pigafetta retells the classical story of the water tree of Hierro in the Canary Islands, though he does not claim to have seen it himself. The marvel Fletcher recounts is not taken from classical sources, which he has repudiated, but from what constituted, for him, a more suitable source text: the Bible. The possible source reference is extremely brief: 'In the early years of their settlement [in Samaria] they did not pay homage to the LORD; and the LORD sent lions among them, and the lions preyed upon them'.<sup>46</sup> Fletcher elaborates the tale substantially:

Whence we continueing along the Land of Barbaria, wee sayled neere to the Citty of Lyons w<sup>ch</sup> somtyme is sayd to haue been a citty of great fame, being frequented w<sup>th</sup> marchants out of many Nations and Kingdoms. but the inhabitants being proud, & exceeding in all other wickednesses. The Lord sent an Army of Lyons upon them, whoe spareing neither man woman nor child. but consumeing all from the face of the Earth. Took the Citty in possession to themselues & their posterity to this day, wherof its named Ciuitas Leonum, euer since.<sup>47</sup>

This evocation of the story of the destruction of the City of Lyons can be read superficially as satisfying readers' (assumed) desire for the marvellous. At the same time, in the first pages of Fletcher's narrative, it alerts readers that the journey leads quickly into dangerous lands. This marvel also interpellates readers as specifically Christian subjects, aware of the Biblical provenance, and complicit with God's right to retribution.

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<sup>46</sup> 2 Kings 17. 25-26.

<sup>47</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 88.



In this way the marvel is reinscribed in another generation's travel narratives, but in this instance it is given a specifically Christian form. What problematises this marvel, and differentiates it from Pigafetta's marvels, is that Fletcher claims to have seen evidence of it with his own eyes: 'the Lyons w<sup>th</sup> great feirceness, came foarth Rageing alongst the shoare w<sup>th</sup> fearfull Roreings, & Cryes, making many offers to enter the Seas, to make a pray of our boate'.<sup>48</sup> They escape attack only because the lions will not enter the water. This inclusion would seem to undermine the eye-witness credibility Fletcher asserts. However, historians suggest that there may have been lions on the shores of West Africa at the time. One could speculate that, on seeing the lions, Fletcher invested them with additional Biblical symbolic meaning.

Drake does not appear to assume that his readers have a desire for the marvellous which needs to be gratified, as his version of this part of the voyage illustrates:

And so sailing with fauorable windes, the first land that we had sight of was *Cape Cantine* in *Barbarie*, *December 25, Christmas day* in the morning. The shoare is faire white sand, and the inland contrie very high and mountainous, it lieth in 32 deg. 30 mi. north latitude and so coasting from hence southward, about 18 leagues, we arriued the same day at *Mogadore*, the Iland before named.<sup>49</sup>

There is no reference to actual lions, or the City of Lyons; all Biblical allusion and symbolism is removed. What readers are provided with instead are facts. Facts about the winds, precise locations including dates, latitudes and distances, observation of the coast and country. Drake's text appears to construct and address a different type of reader to the ones assumed by Pigafetta and Fletcher. These readers do not need to be convinced that the ancient authorities were wrong, nor are they expected to believe that

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<sup>48</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 88.

<sup>49</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 3.

wonders and marvels from antiquity or the Bible actually happen, albeit in places beyond their own personal knowledge. What they do desire - or ought to - we may infer from the text, is detail and facts.

While the marvellous appears banished from Drake's history, natural wonders are not. Both Drake's and Fletcher's texts depict aspects of the natural world to their readers, including several rare wonders. An example of the natural wonder arises early on in the voyage: the volcano on the island of Fogo in the Cape Verde Islands. Both Fletcher and Drake include descriptions of it, but their treatments differ, illuminating their different textual strategies. Fletcher tells readers:

Passed neere to the Iland of Fuego [. . .] w<sup>ch</sup> is so named of the Portugalls because it Burneth continually in a most strange manner farr exceeding Ætna in my opinion, haueing seen them both. so that it may well be sayed to be one of the Rare wonders of the world for in the North part thereof ariseth a great hill the topp by Estimacion reaching into the ayre about som 6 English miles or more & as in forme like a steeples spire being hollow within out of the concauity whereof the root being buried in the depth of the Sea ariseth as out of a chimney first a most gross & thick smoake which filleing the Ayre at noone dayes when the sonn is in his greatest strength & power it might seem within the compass of it w<sup>ch</sup> is great to be Eclipsed that not one point Remained & that no palpable darkenes in the Night is to be compared to it. the smoake being gon such abundance of flames imediatly flash out with that force & violence that it seemeth to peirce the heauens & the light therof is so great that in extreamest

darkenes of the night it seemeth as noone day in the greatest Power &  
light of the sonn.<sup>50</sup>

He then describes the pumice and lava expelled during an eruption and, at the end, includes the reaction of the crew:

This spectacle at the first sight seemed to vs rare and fearefull  
teaching vs the great & incomprehensible power of God whose  
judgments are insearchable All these whereof wee haue harde keep  
their courses orderly one in the Neck of another euery quarter of an  
hour for euer without change or intermission.<sup>51</sup>

The spectacle is also important enough to be sketched by Fletcher, in one of seventeen drawings copied in the manuscript. His illustration is more the conceptualisation of a volcano than a realistic representation. The island is presented in aerial view, while the volcano is shown side on, extending beyond the frame of the island at its base (perhaps to indicate the root originating below sea-level) and the flames of eruption exceeding both the top of the island and the striped frame placed around the composition. Clearly, it is important for Fletcher to convey to his readers exactly what a volcano is, as, presumably, few English readers would have experience of one. Hence its power to evoke wonder. Fletcher also takes the opportunity to add credibility to his authorial voice by asserting his ability to compare such a rare wonder as Fogo with Mount Etna, which he also claims to have seen.

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<sup>50</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 99.

<sup>51</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 100.



Figure 9 Copy of Francis Fletcher's illustration of the volcano on Fogo

Drake's account of the volcano does retain something of a sense of wonder, though the treatment is more prosaic, with the appearance of a quasi-scientific approach:

South-west from Saint *Iago*, in 14 deg. 30 min., about twelue leagues distant, yet by reason of the height, seeming not about three leagues, lyeth another Iland, called of the Portugalls *Fogo*, viz., the burning Iland, or fierie fornace, in which riseth a steepe vpright hill, by coniecture at least six leagues, or eightene English miles from the vpper part of the water; within the bowels whereof is a consuming fire, maintained by sulphury matters, seeming to be of a maruellous depth, and also very wide. The fire showeth itselfe but foure times in an houre, at which times it breaketh out with such violence and force, and in such maine abundance, that besides that it giueth light like the

Moone a great way off, it seemeth that it would not stay till it touch  
the heauens themselves.<sup>52</sup>

Drake concludes by describing the pumice and lava flows. He does not personalise the account with inclusion of the crew reaction. This omission illustrates the way in which readers' reactions are elicited, by rehearsal, in Fletcher's account, almost indicating, 'this is how you react to a volcano'. Fletcher also connects the wonder with God, invoking it as an example of the teaching of 'the great & incomprehensible power of God'. Drake's account, by contrast, gives compass heading and latitude, though it concedes that the details of height and distance are conjectural, only 'seeming', or 'appearing' to be so. Drake leaves readers to decide their own reaction to the volcano, perhaps assuming a readership more sophisticated or sceptical than Fletcher's, who, familiar with the concept of volcanoes, expect 'scientific' data to forestall any doubts. Drake does not explicitly link this natural wonder to the power of God, as Fletcher does, appearing to claim his textual authority from scientific detail (though he does invoke the power of the Almighty at other points in this account).

As Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park describe in *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, Mount Etna served from classical times as one of the prime examples of the wonders of divine creation, along with the sun, moon, stars and the phoenix. Often contrasted with the transitory works of man, these natural wonders, as one early medieval treatise relates, 'do not age, do not decay, and are never attacked by time, until the Lord decides to end the world'.<sup>53</sup> Saint Augustine used the example of Etna, together with the salamander, both of which burned continually without being consumed, as proof that God could make human bodies burn forever in Hell.<sup>54</sup> In his

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<sup>52</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup> Qtd in Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature: 1150-1750* (New York: Zone, 1998), p. 92.

<sup>54</sup> Daston and Park, *Wonders*, p. 39.

evocation of God's power and 'insearchable' judgements, Fletcher appears to re-present these symbolic meanings of the volcano. In Drake's account all symbolic meaning is stripped out, leaving only the bare facts from Fletcher's narrative, with the addition of quantitative data from other sources. The absence of biblical marvels and the lack of symbolism attached to natural wonders in Drake's text provides a point of contrast between the two. However, this does not indicate a fundamental shift in their relative epistemes, as it is clear, even from the opening lines of Drake's account, that both understand the power of God as transcendent.

Saint Augustine's teaching that 'everything created by God was wonderful, including what appeared to be his commonest and most pedestrian works'<sup>55</sup> seems to have been internalised by Fletcher, as it aptly characterises one aspect of his approach to describing the plants and animals he encounters. His description of flying fish is representative:

And because I haue made mencion of flying fishes [. . . ] I haue thought good here to sett downe the stoary, & true report of them to the greater glory of that God w<sup>ch</sup> made them. whoe in all his workes is to be honored among men for whom he made them This good & Excell<sup>t</sup> creature of God I mean the flying fish is of the length & bigness of a Reasonable pilchard haueing 2 finns reaching from the Pitch of the shoulder to the tipp of the Tayle in length & in bredth & forme like to the wing of a swallow & being full of small Barrs instead of quills are knitt together w<sup>th</sup> most thinn, fine, & cleere filme wherwith she flyeth as anny fetherd fowle in the ayre.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Daston and Park, *Wonders*, p. 40.

<sup>56</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 103-4.

Statements placing the report and the fish in relation to God preface the physical description of the flying-fish. Fletcher posits his account of the fish as itself glorifying God; the fish, as a creature created by God, is axiomatically 'good and excellent'; additionally, it is not created for itself, but by God for the benefit of man. Fletcher interprets the plenitude of fish and water during the Atlantic crossing as God making direct provision for them:

God gaue water from Heauen & provided health for vs of body victualls & things necessary for the maintainance of o<sup>r</sup> naturall liues & that in the highest degree of Good things, as if wee had been in the stoarehouse of his blessings that princes could haue desired first the sea in Gods fatherly prouidence did afford vs both aboundance of chang & variety & that daily of most wholsom & rare fishes.<sup>57</sup>

Other signs of God's direct intervention on their behalf, according to Fletcher, are the numerous birds which land on the ships during the crossing and tamely allow themselves to be killed:

The ffowles which naturally lodg & breed at land did com so infinitely to Our shipp [. . .] they sufferd themselues to be strucken dead w<sup>th</sup> Cudgells [. . .] & to be taken w<sup>th</sup> hands without motion or remooueing away as if they had been comanded of God to yeild themselues to be meat for vs.<sup>58</sup>

That this is a deliberate scriptural interpretation of events, and not naiveté, can be inferred if we compare Fletcher's reaction to a similar tameness of birds on an island off Patagonia:

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<sup>57</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 103.

<sup>58</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 103.

Yea the birds was so thick & would not remooue that they were  
enforced w<sup>th</sup> Cudgells & Swords to kill them to make way to goe [. . .]  
The Reason of this boldenes & want of fare I gather to bee because  
they never knew what a man ment before. for no poople euer  
frequenting those partes but onely the Giants the inhabitants they were  
neuer beaten or disquieted to breed in them anny dislike for the Giants  
themselues neuer vse boates or com vpon the water, nor so much as  
Touch water with their feet if they can by anny meanes auoid it.<sup>59</sup>

The empirical explanation he arrives at is that the birds, previously having no  
experience of man or reason to fear him, did not try to escape. Sadly, we see that for  
Fletcher, in the New World, the unquestioned meaning of man is death.

So it may be concluded that a Christian, possibly Augustinian, teaching which  
proposes that all God's creation is marvellous and available for man's use and comfort,  
forms the conception of the natural world evident in Fletcher's account. Detailed  
descriptions of form and habitat are interwoven with praise of God, with no hint of  
distinctions which would later arise between science and theology. Fletcher includes  
descriptions of previously unknown animals and plants of the New World as forming  
part of God's creation: there is no question of them being, in any sense, outside it. That  
Fletcher presents God's solicitude for Drake's company as continuing as they sail from  
the known into the unknown also, perhaps, indicates an implicit assumption of divine  
approval for their enterprise.

Drake's text exhibits similar attitudes, as his evocation of God in his description  
of the Atlantic crossing demonstrates:

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<sup>59</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 114.



During which long passage on the vast gulph, where nothing but sea beneath vs and aire aboue vs was to be seene, as our eies did behold the wonderfull workes of God in His creatures, which He hath made innumerable both small and great beasts, in the great and wide seas: so did our mouthes taste, and our natures feed on, the goodnesse thereof in such fulnesse at all times, and in euery place, as if He had commanded and enioyned the most profitable and glorious workes of His hands to waite vpon us, not alone for the reliefe of our necessities, but also to giue vs delight in the contemplation of His excellence, in beholding the variety and order of His prouidence, with a particular tast of His fatherly care ouer us all the while.<sup>60</sup>

This passage sets out clearly the same framework of beliefs, and he follows Fletcher's text fairly closely, adding 'delight' to the comforts which God's solicitude provides. Drake does not consistently invoke the name of God to the same extent as Fletcher. Compare, for example, Fletcher's previously quoted depiction of the flying fish with Drake's:

Among the many strange creatures which we sawe, we tooke heedfull notice of one, as strange as any; to wit, the flying fish, a fish of the bignes and proportion of a reasonable or middle sort of pilchards; hee hath finnes, of the length of his whole body, from the bulk to the top of the taile, bearing the forme, and supplying the like vse to him, that wings doe to other creatures.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 10.

The fish are classified as strange, their appearance and way of life set out in detail, as in Fletcher's account. What is absent in this version is any reference to them functioning as signs of God's 'excellent works' specifically. We may infer that for Drake's readers the physical description of the animal is sufficient; it is not necessary, at every point, to imbue it with Christian symbolism.

### **Nascent Empiricism**

Fletcher's text displays a lingering interest in wonder and marvel, frequently invokes God as creator, and presents the natural world, in its specifics, as symbolic of God's care and attention to man, and their voyage in particular. At the same time, Fletcher presents clear, functional descriptions of previously unrecorded plants and animals. By comparison, Drake's account demonstrates less interest in wonder and marvel, and includes more factual detail of navigation. While the theological basis appears the same for both Fletcher and Drake, Drake's account invokes God far less frequently, and does not include Fletcher's allegorical allusion. Fletcher's account largely consists of his own first-hand observations, which could be characterised as an example of proto-scientific empiricism, of the form advocated by Bacon. There are descriptions of plants, birds, fishes and other animals, together with various geographical and climatic phenomena which are judged noteworthy. Animals are described in practical detail, and in terms of their utility to man. The seal, for example, is illustrated and accompanied by a utilitarian

written description focussing on how to kill them and directions on how to use their meat, skins and oil. They find seals on a small island near Cape Joy (north of the River Plate):

Whereon did lodg & breed continually that sort of beast w<sup>ch</sup> the Spanyard nameth the sea wolfe! but indeed is Vitulus Marinus the Sea Calfe. Whereof being many wee killed som stoare & found them not onely good meate & specially the young ones, but profitable in Respect of their fatnes yielding abundance of Oyle as allso in Respect of their skinns: w<sup>ch</sup> being thick & spongy may seem to make verry good buff & serue for many other vses if they were in the hands of skillfull men the onely way to kill them speedily is to strike them vpon the Nose w<sup>th</sup> a Cudgell for no other place can hurt them & they be of great strength & caste stones & grauel mightily w<sup>th</sup> their hinder feet at them w<sup>ch</sup> pershein [?] them in their flyeing w<sup>th</sup> great violence they hurle themseues into the sea & often tymes take their young ones one their back w<sup>th</sup> them. they feed altogether in the daytyme in the sea. & Lodg at Land as hath been sayed. their oyle is so subtyll that peirceth through anny substance it is put on: & is a present help for outward inflamacions in anny members whereof diuers of our men had good Experience by my directions to their great confortes.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 109.



Figure 10 Copy of Francis Fletcher's illustration of a seal

Drake's depiction is far briefer than Fletcher's: 'we killed diuers Seales, or sea wolues (as the Spaniard calls them), which resorted to these rocks in great abundance. They are good meat, and were an acceptable food to vs for the present, and a good supply of our prouision for the future'.<sup>63</sup> It is not possible to conclude whether Drake's brevity indicates a desire for narrative economy, or whether seals were a more familiar animal by 1628. Another supposition could be that Drake's account, with its aims of stirring up heroic spirits, is not designed as a practical survival manual for future expeditions (Pigafetta's account, by contrast, frequently records locations where water and tall trees (for replacement masts) were available).

When dealing with plants, Fletcher provides detailed written descriptions, and sometimes illustrations. He makes reference several times to consulting herbals to check whether unfamiliar plants are previously recorded, as, for example:

<sup>63</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 13.

Amongst other the simples we had in this place many being to me  
verry strange & vnknowne because I neither had seen them in other  
countrys in my trauailes nor found them mencioned in anny aproued  
herballs were naturally growing without industry of man.<sup>64</sup>

When describing one new plant (possibly the prickly pear), he notes that it is 'strange to  
all herballs w<sup>ch</sup> I haue seene in anny Language'.<sup>65</sup> He describes its appearance in detail  
and the ill effects the prickles had on the men who collected the fruit: 'raiseing Redd &  
fiery pimples w<sup>th</sup> extreame itching & burneing to the Tormenting of the body'.<sup>66</sup> He  
concludes that the fruit is 'wholsom' and conjectures that poisonous sap from the leaves  
is used by the natives to poison their arrows. He also provides an illustration of the plant  
'see the figure in the next leafe here described'.<sup>67</sup>

Although this treatment appears proto-scientific, it actually follows the schema  
of the traditional herbals (with which Fletcher is clearly familiar), in which a plant is  
described to a level which enables confident identification, then its properties, as they  
are useful or harmful to man, are enumerated.<sup>68</sup> Fletcher departs from the tradition of  
herbals in two particulars. Firstly, he is drawing from life and direct observation. The  
herbals of his time did not do this: illustrations and text were copied and recopied from  
the original classical sources. The ancient authorities are again proved deficient:  
Fletcher is encountering plants and animals outside their knowledge and unrecorded by  
them. Secondly, Fletcher describes only what he sees and does not attach any symbolic

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<sup>64</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 130.

<sup>65</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 110.

<sup>66</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 110.

<sup>67</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 110.

<sup>68</sup> For discussion of the historical development of herbals see Gill Saunders, *Picturing Plants: An Analytical History of Botanical Illustration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

or allegorical meanings to what he observes. In this he differs from the herbals, *historias* and bestiaries of his time, and his own practice, as discussed previously.<sup>69</sup>

Michel Foucault describes the loss of allegorical meanings attached to plants and animals as removing a whole field of their signification, and providing the condition of possibility within which natural history could develop as a science. To illustrate his argument he contrasts Ulisse Aldrovandi's *History of Serpents and Dragons* (circa 1600) with Johann Jonston's *Natural History of Quadrupeds* (1650-53):

[Aldrovandi], in the case of each animal he examined, offered the reader, and on the same level, a description of its anatomy and of the methods of capturing it; its allegorical uses and mode of generation; its habitat and legendary mansions; its food and the best ways of cooking its flesh. Jonston subdivides his chapter on the horse under twelve headings: name, anatomical parts, habitat, ages, generation, voice, movements, sympathy and antipathy, uses, medicinal uses.<sup>70</sup>

While noting the similarities, Foucault draws attention to what is missing from Jonston's account: 'the whole of animal semantics'.<sup>71</sup> He argues that this omission signals a change in basic signifying practice in which the 'words that had been interwoven in the very being of the beast have been unravelled and removed: and the living being, in its anatomy, its form, its habits, its birth and death, appears as though stripped naked'.<sup>72</sup> Foucault proposes that natural history finds its locus in the gap between words and things which this change opens up. He identifies the beginning of the Classical age as the point where the value of the word 'history' changes, with the

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<sup>69</sup> Benjamin P Draper includes a reference, in his collection of Drake bibliographic items, to a small handbook of aromatic plants (written by Charles de L'Ecluse and printed in Antwerp, 1582), stating that it was the first scientific account of the circumnavigation, and that the botanical specimens were obtained by Clusius personally from Winter and Eliot in 1581 (Benjamin P Draper, 'A Collection of Drake Bibliographic Items, 1569-1659', in *Drake and the Famous Voyage*, pp. 173-206, p. 191-2).

<sup>70</sup> Foucault, *Order of Things*, p. 141.

<sup>71</sup> Foucault, *Order of Things*, p. 141.

<sup>72</sup> Foucault, *Order of Things*, p. 141.

historian resuming the role of the 'individual who *sees* and who recounts from the starting point of his sight', as opposed to one who rehearses the accounts of ancient writers.<sup>73</sup> The New World explorers were in the position of seeing novel things, unknown to the ancient sources, which therefore had no pre-existing significations attached to them, and, in the main, they recorded what they saw more in the manner of Jonston than Aldrovandi. Their accounts demonstrate a practice of natural history, similar to that defined by Foucault, which, I would suggest, developed as a result of the particular conditions of their production. As Foucault also notes, change is not necessarily sudden, smooth or continuous, and, while Foucault identifies a process of change, he notes that the different modes of signifying practice overlapped well into the seventeenth century. Such overlapping and change can be noted from examples already discussed here: Pigafetta, in the 1520s, retells the classical story of the water tree of Hierro in the Canary Islands; Fletcher includes, in an episode taking place in 1577, the Biblical story of the City of Lyons, which, by the 1628 publication of *The World Encompassed*, has been edited out.<sup>74</sup> As late as 1653 Jonston illustrates, on the same plate, two versions of a hippopotamus together with a mythical griffin.<sup>75</sup>

What is obvious in Fletcher's account, and largely replicated in Drake's, is a purposeful identification and observation of useful plants and animals. When compared with Columbus's record, written less than 100 years before Fletcher's, the lack of knowledge of flora and fauna in the earlier account is striking. Columbus laments his own deficiency, and regrets that there is no specialist on the voyage to provide botanical or zoological knowledge. Pigafetta attempts to acquire, apply and record knowledge of the natural world, as his depiction of the life-cycle of the clove tree shows. However, he

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<sup>73</sup> Foucault, *Order of Things*, p. 142.

<sup>74</sup> See this chapter, p. 124-5.

<sup>75</sup> S Peter Dance, *The Art of Natural History: Animal Illustrators and their Work* (Middlesex: Country Life Books, 1978), p. 35.

has no scientific method, as illustrated by his 'experiment', which proved that insects he collected lived only on air (until they died of old age, presumably). Fletcher's account, though not as sketchy as Pigafetta's, is not comprehensive, describing those things of interest which present themselves to him, rather than as the result of focused enquiry. In later centuries, voyages included teams of natural historians and artists charged with undertaking specific research (as, for example, the expeditions of Cook in the eighteenth century, and Darwin in the nineteenth). As a consequence, Certeau concludes,

the voyage gradually eliminates the losses: everything must be observed, and everything that is *seen* in faraway places must be able to be *known* in London or in Paris. There must be no 'remainder' marking the exteriority of the voyage in relation to the narrative, allowing an elsewhere outside the place of return to escape.<sup>76</sup>

At the point in the process discussed here, I would suggest that there is still a huge 'remainder'. Fletcher's and Drake's accounts of the natural world represent those things which proved to be of utility to the voyagers at the time, with strange or unknown plants and animals described, but the project is not to observe and record *everything*.<sup>77</sup> As a precursor to future practice, they were beginning to record empirically and present observations in ways which appear proto-scientific, but they are not working to a scientific method, such as proposed by Bacon, or later, by Linnaeus, which required a complete record to enable descriptive classification. In a break with the past, the plants and animals described in both accounts of the circumnavigation signify in terms of their immediate utility, and, while explicitly retaining their signification as elements of Christian creation, no additional symbolic or allegorical meanings are ascribed to them.

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<sup>76</sup> Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 146-7.

<sup>77</sup> It is possible to infer, from Spanish anxiety about their accuracy, that recording coastlines and harbours in drawings and paintings during the voyage was undertaken more systematically and comprehensively. Unfortunately, none are now extant.



The real of the New World, at this point, continued to be rendered intelligible to European culture in an ad hoc, contingent manner.

### **Constructing the native other**

Even before crossing the Atlantic, Fletcher encounters native behaviour which, apparently, outrages his sensibilities, and he begins to define the native 'other' in a relation of difference predicated on the assumed superiority of his own cultural values. However, the assumptions implicit and explicit in his text are, perhaps, unstable. On reaching Cape Blanc, on the west coast of Africa, Fletcher sets out at some length the 'loathsome' behaviour of its 'beastlyke poople':

These therfore without regard of nature or of men either of their owne nation or strangers, eat & drinke & at the same instant & in the action of eating & drinke sitting standing talkeing byinge selling or whatsoeuer they doe performe all necessaryes of Nature in the light of the sonn & sight of all men in the verry place without all shame not remooueing one foote nor turneing about either hinder or fore part, from the eye of the beholders & in Copulation most shameless and brutish which thing so monstrous to vs was so Loathsom that wee inforsed our selues w<sup>th</sup> speed to seperat our selues from the Company of so hatefull a generation of filthy men & women.<sup>78</sup>

It is not clear, from Fletcher's diatribe, whether he objects to the natives performing the 'necessaries of nature' in public, or, specifically, that they are continuous with other activities, or, that they are carried out without shame, or a concatenation of all three.

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<sup>78</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 93.

Fletcher's description of Old World native practice is strikingly similar to Vespucci's account of the New World:

When they empty the stomach they do everything so as not to be seen, and in this they are clean and decent; but in making water they are dirty and without shame, for while talking with us they do such things without turning round, and without any shame. They do not practise matrimony among them, each man taking as many women as he likes.<sup>79</sup>

Both writers, English and Italian, choose to comment on public urination as something which, clearly, they do not expect to happen during the course of a conversation with them. Implicit in both accounts is an expectation that the 'necessaries' are undertaken at some remove from eating, speaking, and commerce. Erasmus's instructive essay 'On Good Manners for Boys' (c. 1530) provides the European apogee of the reported native customs. On urination he advises:

To expose, save for natural reasons, the parts of the body which nature has invested with modesty ought to be far removed from the conduct of a gentleman. I will go further: when necessity compels such action, it should none the less be done with decency and modesty even if there is no observer present. For the angels, from whom derives that most welcome sense of shame that accompanies and protects the chastity of boys, are always near. Modesty requires such things be hidden from sight, much less exposed to contact with somebody else.

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<sup>79</sup> Amerigo Vespucci, *The Letters of Amerigo Vespucci and Other Documents Illustrative of His Career*, trans. by Clements R Markham (New York: Burt Franklin (Hakluyt Society reprint), 1964), p. 8.

To repress the need to urinate is injurious to health; but propriety requires it to be done in private.<sup>80</sup>

The call to privacy when urinating, to be out of sight, is evident, and, clearly, 'contact with somebody else' while performing this 'natural' function is particularly to be avoided. Even when alone, the boy must conduct himself with modesty, or feel his own shame, emanating from the ubiquitous angels. This advice appears to formalise the cultural values on urination which Fletcher and Vespucci bring to bear on native actions in their texts. However, it is possible to assume that the humanist Erasmus was defining an ideal, which Fletcher and Vespucci may have aspired to, but which was not necessarily the norm in practice during the period.<sup>81</sup> Such personal privacy would not have been possible aboard ship, for example.

Native sexual practices may also have been measured against European ideal standards, rather than actuality. Fletcher is outraged by copulation in plain view, while Pigafetta notes with implicit approval that Tupi women only 'pay service' to their husbands at night.<sup>82</sup> Privacy for 'natural' acts again appears to be the desired norm. However, Jean de Léry, writing in 1578, suggests that this was not universal practice in Europe. He contrasts Tupi privacy during sex with that of the 'stinking billygoats that one sees in our time over here [in France], who have not hidden themselves when committing their lustful acts'.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, when Vespucci draws attention to the practice of incest among New World natives it is implicitly understood that such activity would be unusual to his readership.<sup>84</sup> The actual experience of the chroniclers cannot now be known, but on a more general level, one measure of a society's concern

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<sup>80</sup> Erasmus, 'On Good Manners for Boys', *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. by J K Sowards (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1985), xxv, pp. 269-289, p. 277.

<sup>81</sup> During the early sixteenth-century flowering of humanism many ideals were formulated, though many disappeared in the Reformation period.

<sup>82</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 39.

<sup>83</sup> Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, trans. by Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 156.

<sup>84</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 46.

about its citizens' conduct is the laws it enacts. The new government of the Commonwealth published in 1650 *An Act to Suppress the Detestable Sins of Incest, Adultery and Fornication*, which, while not necessarily representative of mainstream society's anxieties, indicates that Puritan legislators thought it necessary to enact such controls.<sup>85</sup> The opening lines read:

For the suppressing of the abominable and crying sins of Incest,  
Adultery and Fornication, wherewith this Land is much defiled, and  
Almighty God highly displeased.<sup>86</sup>

Following this, the Act goes on to define the possible permutations of incestuous relationships, declare them all felonies for which the punishment is death for each offender, with any marriages declared void and children rendered illegitimate and debarred from all forms of inheritance. Death is also the penalty for adulterous wives and their lovers (adulterous husbands are not subject to sanction), while men and women having sex outside marriage are to be jailed for three months, followed by one year's good conduct (against sureties held).<sup>87</sup> The Act does not specifically refer to sex in public, but attitudes to public fornication, at least with prostitutes, may be inferred from the sentences prescribed for the offence of being a 'common bawd', man or woman, or knowingly keeping a brothel or 'bawdy-house'. A first offence was punishable by public whipping and an unspecified period in the pillory; branding on the forehead with a 'B' and imprisonment for three years. A second offence was adjudged a felony, and punishable by death.

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<sup>85</sup> *An Act to Suppress the Detestable Sins of Incest, Adultery and Fornication* (London: Edward Husband and John Field, Printers to the Parliament of England, 1650).

<sup>86</sup> Act to Suppress, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> The Act did allow various exceptions for adulterers: if the husband had been at sea, or absent, or presumed dead for three years; or if the man was ignorant of the woman's marital status. All offences were subject to a twelve-month limitation, after which prosecution could not be brought; no one could be convicted on the confession of another; wives and husbands were not allowed to witness against one another.

The harsh punishments defined in this Act appear to suggest that sexual activity, at least among the lower orders, was a matter of great anxiety to Puritans, and needed strict controls to contain it. How stringently this law was enforced and how successful it was is not my particular interest here. What the Act indicates is that, at least in the case of England, sexuality was, perhaps, less continent and contained than Fletcher, Pigafetta or Vespucci appear to allow when judging the 'loathsome' behaviour of Old and New World natives. As with attitudes to public urination, it may be possible to conclude that the cultural standards applied to representations of native practice were those of the ideal, rather than normal practice. The difference between the natives Fletcher judges to be 'degenerate from the course of naturall men' and his own countrymen may not have been all that great.<sup>88</sup>

Drake's account does not mention the same specifics, alluding only to the Cape Blanc inhabitant's eating habits: 'in eating whereof their manner was not onely vnciuill and vnsightly to vs, but euen inhumane and loathsome in itselfe'.<sup>89</sup> Why Drake cut Fletcher's account here is impossible to say; it may be that his readers' sensibilities were assumed to be more easily offended than Fletcher's, or, perhaps, such activities were more prevalent in 1628 than 1580, and therefore less noteworthy. For today's reader, the norms of juridical control of sex have altered. Adultery and pre-marital sex are no longer offences, while prostitution and brothels are still subject to legal constraints. Sex in public remains an offence, and reported as a source of outrage when indulged in by young people on holiday.<sup>90</sup> The laws prohibiting incest, by contrast, appear to have been naturalised as the cultural norm.

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<sup>88</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 93.

<sup>89</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 6.

<sup>90</sup> *The Guardian* newspaper reported a Greek MP's call for the extradition of British tourists committing 'gross public indecency' in Greece, who are 'caught on camera having sex in the bars and beaches of the Greek island of Zakynthos.' Helena Smith, *Guardian*, 26 August 2005.

The Patagonian Giants and Fuegian Indians of South America are presented in proto-ethnographic terms in Fletcher's account (followed fairly closely, though with less detail, in Drake's version), though not in the pejorative tones applied to the Cape Blanc natives. The native 'other', while constructed out of the difference between European expectations and aspiration, and native appearance and behaviour, does not necessarily always fall unproblematically into the framework of stable oppositions between primitive and civilised suggested by Michel de Certeau.<sup>91</sup> At some points in these texts the oppositions appear to deconstruct themselves, apparently outside their authors' conscious textual aims. This is unlike Léry's text, where the explicit project is to draw attention to aspects of 'savage' custom which challenge European cultural values.<sup>92</sup> The Patagonian Giants, for example, conform to the opposition of naked and clothed in that they 'go Naked both men & women', anoint themselves regularly with oil and wear animal skins as protection against cold weather. Also, in the elaborate painting of their naked bodies, they fit within the opposition of ornament as opposed to finery (of European dress). As nomadic hunter-gatherers, they have no settled habitations or rulers, nor do they work the soil. They worship a pagan god, Setebos, and perform ritualised ceremonies in his honour. Their differences, then, are represented in Fletcher's text. On the other hand, he also informs readers that they work co-operatively to perform complex tracking, imitating and trapping of ostriches, and have the ability to make fire 'at their pleasure'.<sup>93</sup> They also delight in dancing and music, making their own instruments from 'Barkes of trees & sewed together w<sup>th</sup> thredds of guttes of Ostriges like lute strings. & little stones put in them & painted ouer are like our childrens rattles in England', which, hung from their girdles, produce 'Noyse or sound'

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<sup>91</sup> Certeau, *Writing of History*, p. 228.

<sup>92</sup> Léry's text is the subject of further discussion in the following chapter.

<sup>93</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 111-121.

to accompany their dancing, so that 'their spirits are rauished w<sup>th</sup> melody'.<sup>94</sup> They also improvise a new instrument from broken glass vials covered with wicker rods, given to them by Fletcher. He concludes: 'they did admire at our still musick. but the sound of the Trumpett noyes of the drum & Especially the blow of a gunn was terrible to them'.<sup>95</sup> The appreciation of music, and the desire to create music, appears to undo a simple binary opposition between civilised and savage. However, the Patagonians are incontinent in their musical appreciation: they dance 'like madmen and cannot stay themseues vnto death if som friend pluck not a way the bables. w<sup>ch</sup> being taken away they stand as not knowing what is becom of themselues for a long tyme'.<sup>96</sup> The new, improvised instrument is used to destruction:

he & his Companions were so ouercom w<sup>th</sup> the sweetnes of the Musick that he shakeing the glass & dancing they all followed & dance after his pipe ouer mountains & vallies hills & dales. daye & night till all the stringes were consumed.<sup>97</sup>

The possibility of a shared sensibility in the appreciation of making and hearing music is itself undone as the representation of native excess provides a defining point of difference. Again, this may represent a measure against aspirations to civility. While fine musicians were aboard, and played their viols as Drake and his officers ate, it is possible to imagine the mariners, filled with rum, dancing to tunes which led them to ravishments similar to those of the Patagonian Giants.<sup>98</sup>

The voyage of circumnavigation was fundamentally about issues of possession: challenging Spain's possession of Western South America, and taking possession of Spanish ships. The New World natives encountered during the voyage are almost

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<sup>94</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 119-120.

<sup>95</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 120.

<sup>96</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 120.

<sup>97</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 120.

<sup>98</sup> As remarked upon by Zárate (Zárate, *World Encompassed*, p. 219).

entirely lacking in possessions, and this constitutes another defining point of difference, which is also undercut within the text. Further south, beyond the region inhabited by the Patagonian Giants, the expedition encounter the native Indians of Tierra del Fuego. Fletcher provides specific evidence of their lack of possessions by providing an inventory of the 'substances & Riches' of one of 'it seemed [...] the cheifest Lords house among them':

- 1 one water pale
- 2 two drinking cupps
- 3 2 boxes of stuff to paint
- 4 2 wooden spitts & one pare of Racks
- 5 2 hatchetts one knife
- 6 one fare floore of earth for a bedd to lay vpon without anny  
Cloathes.<sup>99</sup>

To today's readers this appears an impossible way to live, providing a clear point of difference between civilised and uncivilised. Yet, this may not have been Fletcher's perception. In Europe, as Fernand Braudel points out, the poor had virtually no possessions and, until the eighteenth century when 'rudimentary luxury began to spread (chairs, woollen mattresses, feather beds),' it was common for people to sleep on straw, having no beds or other furniture.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, the gap between rich and poor widened throughout the sixteenth century. Therefore, rather than defining the native other as uncivilised, Fletcher may be universalising the poor, and constructing a point of defining difference between his own class, who possessed things, and the poor of England and the native Fuegians. In Francis Drake's account, the possession of rich

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<sup>99</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 130.

<sup>100</sup> Fernand Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life 1400-1800*, trans. by Miriam Kochan (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), p. 204.



furniture and fine artefacts are cited specifically as signifiers of English 'civilitie and magnificence'.<sup>101</sup>

However, the Fuegian Indians present something of a paradox, undermining the stable opposition between possession and its lack. They have virtually no possessions, as Fletcher has noted specifically, yet their boats, water pails and drinking vessels are of exceptionally fine design and craftsmanship. He describes their canoes in detail (also providing a sketch of one):

Touching their boates they being made of large Barke insted of other Timber. they are most artificiall & are of most fine proportion w<sup>th</sup> a starne & foeship standeing vp semicircler wise & welbecometh the vessell [. . .] in all our trauells in anny nation we found not the like Boates at anny tyme for forme & fine proportion. in the sight & vse whereof princes might seeme to be delighted.<sup>102</sup>

This level of design and workmanship would appear to raise the status of the canoe to that of a desirable luxury item. That such luxury was, for the perceptions of the day, more properly destined for the use of the aristocratic class is clearly stated in Drake's rendering:

This cannowe, or boate, was made of the barke of diuers trees [. . .] the body whereof was a most dainty mould, bearing in it most comely proportion and excellent workmanship, in so much as to our Generall and vs, it seemed neuer to have beene done without the cunning and expert iudgement of art; and that nor for the vse of so rude and

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<sup>101</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 2.

<sup>102</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 131.

barbarous a people, but for the pleasure of some great and noble personage, yea, of some Prince'.<sup>103</sup>

Drake offers readers the general opinion of 'our General and vs', that such a desirable luxury should by right only be used for the 'pleasure' of the nobility or a prince. One may infer that in Elizabethan England the common poor were not expected to be in possession of desirable or artistic objects; that such possessions were reserved for those of the higher classes only. This inference is supported by Braudel, who identifies 'luxury' as changing with the times in its specifics, but always signifying 'an eternal "class struggle"'.<sup>104</sup> The Fuegian Indians, then, constitute a further destabilising moment in both Fletcher's and Drake's account of the native 'other'.

Two further signifiers of native difference appear rather less problematic within the texts: the absence of settled government and a lack of agricultural husbandry. Throughout the whole of the rounding of South America Drake's company did not encounter any peoples who had a settled government, a chief or a prince. The contrast between the highly structured (though in practice unstable) hierarchical organisation aboard ship, and the rigid class structures on land in Elizabethan society, and the native lack of social organisation beyond small family or tribal groups must have provided a defining point of difference.

The hunter-gatherer lifestyle of the Patagonians and, as Fletcher describes here, the Fuegian Indians, are also notable in their difference from expected norms:

Whom wee could not perceiue to haue either sett places or dwelling,  
or anny ordinary meanes of liueing as Tillage breeding of cattell or  
anny other profession but wanderers from place to place & from Iland

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<sup>103</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 29.

<sup>104</sup> Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life*, p. 123.

to Iland stayeing in a place so long as it would naturally yeeld them  
provision to liue without labour saue onely to kill, gather, & eate.<sup>105</sup>

Fletcher identifies tillage and the breeding of cattle as ‘ordinary means of living’, and these would have been understood as the occupations of the majority of people in rural England. The lack of profession and continual wandering would, perhaps, have raised anxiety, as, in England, the possibility of legitimately living off the land by hunting and gathering had disappeared long before. It was only the dispossessed poor, at the margins of society and usually portrayed as vagabonds, who survived in the forests.

Drake identifies the country of southern South America as fruitful, with ‘the soile agreeing to any graine which we have growing in our cuntrye’ and goes on to conclude that it is ‘a place no doubt, that lacketh nothing but a people to vse the same to the Creators glory and the encreasing of the Church. The people inhabiting these parts made fires as we passed by in diuers places’.<sup>106</sup> The hunter-gatherer inhabitants, not engaged in any ‘ordinary means’ of making a living in a country which could support agriculture, do not appear to qualify, in Drake’s account, as being in any sense in possession of the land on which they live.

The combined economic and religious rationale for exploration is clearly identified by Francis Drake when he describes the tractability of the Patagonians, together with his sorrow that they are ‘ignorant of the true and liuing God’.<sup>107</sup> They could easily be made Christian, he observes, and at no real cost:

Hauing, in truth, a land sufficient to recompence any Christian Prince  
in the world, for the whole trauell and labour, cost and charges

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<sup>105</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 130.

<sup>106</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 29.

<sup>107</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 18.

bestowed in that behalfe: with a wonderfull enlarging of a kingdome,  
besides the glory of God by encreasing of the Church of Christ.<sup>108</sup>

Fruitful land, a lack of settled government and no religion could be read as signifying, for Fletcher and Drake, the possibility of possession on both economic and religious grounds.

Both texts present a concern central to the objective of the circumnavigation: the exploration of southern South America to assess the possibility of settling unoccupied lands adjacent to Spanish and Portuguese settlements. This plan, taken up by Hawkins and Drake was, according to Kenneth Andrews, originally proposed by Richard Grenville in 1575, who wrote that 'In the places already subdued and inhabited by the Spaniard or Portingal, we seek no possession nor interest. But if occasion be free and friendly, traffic with them and their subjects', and concludes that 'since Portugal hath attained one part of the new found world to the East, the Spaniard another to the West, the French the third to the North: now the fourth to the South is by god's providence left for England'.<sup>109</sup> The native inhabitants are clearly represented by both Fletcher and Drake as not properly possessing their land, thus they implicitly invoke the Roman Law argument of *res nullius* in their favour.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 18.

<sup>109</sup> Qtd in Kenneth R Andrews, 'Drake and South America', in *Drake and the Famous Voyage*, pp. 49-59, p. 51.

<sup>110</sup> For discussion of *res nullius* in relation to European colonisation of the New World see Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500 - c. 1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 63-102, and Pagden, 'The Struggle for Legitimacy and the Image of Empire in the Atlantic to c. 1700', in *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. by Nicholas Canny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 34-54. On the arguments later used in Virginia, see James Tully, 'Aboriginal Property and Western Theory: Recovering a Middle Ground', in *Facing Each Other: The World's Perception of Europe and Europe's Perception of the World*, ed. by Anthony Pagden (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 53-180.

## The European other

The native other is not the only 'other' defined within the texts of Fletcher and Drake. In view of inter-European rivalries, inroads into the real of the New World give way in these narratives to assaults on the more familiar. Both accounts were composed during periods of hostility between England on the one hand, and Spain and Portugal on the other, and their construction of a relation of difference between themselves, as English, and the Spanish and Portuguese 'other' is clear in both texts.<sup>111</sup> Francis Fletcher, far more than Drake, foregrounds the religious difference between the Catholic Spaniards and Portuguese and the Protestant English. As a starting point, he outlines the pagan practices of the natives of Cape Blanc. They worship the sun, making their religious observances at dawn. Fletcher records that some also 'vse their devotion som tyme as necessity constreyneth offering backwards a Loathsom sacrifice of their Excrements to their God without Remooueing out of the Place'.<sup>112</sup> This 'loathsome' behaviour is used as the basis for an extended anti-Catholic polemic. The vehemence of Fletcher's opinion can be gauged from the following short extract:

And yet I preferr them (in my opinion) before the Papist in their  
Religion for the one following instinct of nature make choise of that  
w<sup>ch</sup> in Reason seemeth to be likelyest to do them good & to giue them  
help as the sonn [ . . . ] But the others I meane the Pope & his  
Malignant Synagogues of Satan who profess themselues not to be the  
onely Spouse of christ & to haue the Keyes of all knowledge and  
Power of life and death, of heauen & hell do against their own  
knowledg & Profession make them Gods of the base worke & vild

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<sup>111</sup> Drake's voyage occurred at a time when Anglo-Spanish relations were deteriorating, eventually resulting in war between 1585 and 1603. Philip of Spain acceded to the throne of Portugal in 1580, further strengthening Spain's position (Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, p. 159). England was at war with Spain and France from 1624 to 1630.

<sup>112</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 92.

[vile] Things of the Earth, & fall downe before them & Worshipp  
them.<sup>113</sup>

The natives can be excused, says Fletcher, as they have no knowledge of the 'Liuing God', while the Catholics have no such excuse. Fletcher's abhorrence of idolatry is evident again in the Cape Verde islands (a Portuguese possession):

In saleing alongst this Iland wee perceiued the inhabitants were to to  
[sic] superstitious accordeing to the popes antechristian traditions; for  
vpon euery cape, & small head land they sett vp a cross: one most  
wherof is ingrauen an euill faced Picture of Christ.<sup>114</sup>

Yet Fletcher's vehement anti-Catholicism is not shared by every member of their company, as he himself acknowledges:

One of the crosses myself & others did breake downe but w<sup>th</sup> great  
dislike as well to som of our owne company being so much addicted  
to that opinion as to the Portugalls themselues.<sup>115</sup>

Religious practice, then, can be read as one signifier of difference which begins to construct Englishness in Fletcher's text, though it is not an uncontested one.

Protestantism differentiates the English both from the pagan natives and from the Catholic Spanish and Portuguese. Around the time of the circumnavigation (1577-1580) there was intermittent persecution of Catholics in England. In both 1587 and 1597, for example, Recusancy laws were tightened. By 1628, when Drake's account was published, the reign of James I was over, and Charles I was recently enthroned. James was anti-Puritan, and Charles not anti-Catholic. James had made peace with Spain in 1604, but England was again at war, with both Spain and France, between 1624 and 1630. Perhaps as a response to this rather more mixed period of religious tolerance,

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<sup>113</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 92.

<sup>114</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 97.

<sup>115</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 97.

Drake's text drops Fletcher's vehement anti-Catholic position. This is not to imply that he is neutral on the matter, and that it does not continue to signify as a point of difference. It does, but not as vehemently as for Fletcher.

Another signifier of difference developed in both texts is the contrast between English conduct towards natives and that of the Spanish and Portuguese. The English circumnavigation literally followed in the footsteps of the Portuguese and Spanish and both texts build a picture of the conduct of their predecessors, characterising them as engaged in bloody and oppressive conquest. Fletcher's summary is one example:

For vnder the heauens is their not a people that exceed them [the Portuguese] & the Spanyards in murthering & insatiable shedding the bloode of all sortes of persons whether infidells or Christians men women & children where they can ouercom by sword or pollicye as daily experience of their abideing euery where teacheth as hereafter we shall heare more at large.<sup>116</sup>

Fletcher does, as promised, provide more examples, specifically of the Portuguese conquests of the Cape Verde Islands and Brazil. He asserts that, as the result of Portuguese actions in Cape Verde, a company of pirates developed who specifically targeted Portuguese ships. On St James Island, a large body of natives and imported slaves escaped from 'bloody cruelty' and fled to the barren part of the island, from where they harassed the Portuguese inhabitants continually and passionately, 'bandeing themselues w<sup>th</sup> great power to pick [the Portuguese] bones neuer thinkeing a Portugall dead as long as he hath scinn vpon his flesh flesh vpon his bones or one joint hanging to another'.<sup>117</sup> In Brazil, Fletcher states, the natural inhabitants who refused to endure the tyranny of the Portuguese moved from their fertile homelands to less hospitable parts,

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<sup>116</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 99.

<sup>117</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 98.

but even there, the Portuguese pursued them. The natives' reaction upon seeing Drake's fleet was to make fires on the shore to call up their devils to curse them. Drake expands on Fletcher's 'Notes' here, detailing the 'bondage and slavery' imposed by the Portuguese and the necessity of escape. His sympathetic and compassionate text continues: 'And supposing indeed that no other had vsed trauell by sea in ships, but their enemies onely, they therefore vsed the same at our comming'.<sup>118</sup> Drake presents the General as understanding the native aggression as it was prompted by the fact that the English looked like the Portuguese.

### **Constructions of Drake and Englishness**

Although it is believed that Francis Fletcher's journal in its entirety was a major source for both 'The Famous Voyage' and *The World Encompassed*, direct comparison from Fletcher's 'Notes' is not possible beyond events of November 1578, where the manuscript copy made by John Coyner ends. In his account of the second half of the voyage, Drake expands upon the signifiers of difference between the English and Spanish particularly, and develops the representation of Drake as a heroic figure. His textual strategies will be analysed in relation to available extant first-hand sources, and the briefer and more neutral compilation published in Hakluyt as 'The Famous Voyage'.

The pursuit and capture of the Spanish treasure ship *The Cacafuego* illustrates various forms of textual representation which, by repetition, develop a particularly literary style of 'English piracy'.<sup>119</sup> The story begins on the west coast of South America, in the harbour of Lima:

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<sup>118</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 12.

<sup>119</sup> Historians have debated, without reaching consensus, whether or not Drake, during the voyage of circumnavigation, was acting as a privateer or a pirate, or seeking reprisal under letters of marque. Janice E Thomson provides the following definitions of the terms piracy, privateering and letters of marque: 'In international law,



At Lima we arrived *Febr.* 15, and notwithstanding the Spaniards forces, though they had thirtie ships at that present in harbour there, whereof 17 [...] were fully ready, we entred and anchored all night in the midst of them [...], and might have made more spoile amongst them in few houres, if we had bene affected to reuenge, then the Spaniard could haue recouered againe in many yeares.<sup>120</sup>

The text suggests that the General is audacious to moor in the middle of such a force. However, the circumstances are not made clear in *World Encompassed*, as they are in ‘The Famous Voyage’, where, it states, the Spanish had no defences in place, as they ‘mistrusted no strangers’ and ‘having never bene assaulted by enemies, [...] at this time feared the approach of none such as wee were’.<sup>121</sup> The audacity, and the challenge, is not the individual assaults, but that the English were in the Pacific at all.

Although the text implies revenge was not exacted, there was piracy in Lima.

The English searched the vessels in the bay, including the ships of ‘one *Mighell Angel*’, on which ‘there were 1500 barres of plate, besides some other things (as silkes, linnen, and in one a chest full of royals of plate), which might stand us in some stead in the

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privateers are defined as “vessels belonging to private owners, and sailing under a commission of war empowering the person to whom it is granted to carry on all forms of hostility which are permissible at sea by the usages of war.” Privateers are usually required to post a bond to ensure their compliance with the government’s instructions, and their commissions are subject to inspection by public warships. In contrast, “piracy may be said to consist in acts of violence done upon the ocean or unappropriated lands, or within the territory of a state through descent from the sea, by a body of men acting independently of any politically organized society.” Acts of piracy are distinguished from other acts of violence on or emanating from the high seas by the fact that the former “are done under conditions which render it impossible or unfair to hold any state responsible for their commission.” Though “the absence of competent authority is the text of piracy, its essence consists in the pursuit of private, as contrasted with public, ends.” Thus, the distinction between a privateer and a pirate is that the former acts under the authority of a state that accepts or is charged with responsibility for his acts, while the latter acts in his own interests and on his own authority. “Most acts of war which become piratical through being done without due authority are acts of war when done under the authority of a state” [...] Letters of marque, which were issued in peacetime, allowed individuals to seek redress for depredations they suffered at the hands of foreigners on the high seas. For example, if an Englishman’s vessel were attacked by a Frenchman, a letter or marque would authorize the Englishman to seize something of equal value from any French vessel he encountered’ (Janice E Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1994), p. 22). *The World Encompassed* uses none of these terms to describe the robberies committed during the voyage. I have chosen to use the terms ‘pirate’ and ‘piracy’ throughout for consistency.

<sup>120</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 44-5.

<sup>121</sup> ‘The Famous Voyage’ reports only twelve ships at anchor, with their sails taken ashore (presumably for repairs). Hakluyt also described a similar situation to that in Lima occurring in the port of Arica, where three barques were anchored with only one person aboard, while everyone else had gone ashore (‘The Famous Voyage’, *Principal Navigations*, p. 643F).

other ships, aboard whom we made somewhat bold to bid our selues welcome'.<sup>122</sup> Here, notions of English courtesy, of making visitors welcome, are invoked and ironically inverted. Such visitors would certainly not have been welcome to the Spanish.

While in Lima harbour, they hear 'intelligence of a certaine rich ship', the *Cacafuego*, 'loaden with gold and silver for Panama', which had sailed fourteen days before.<sup>123</sup> Without hesitation the General sets off in pursuit. That he catches the *Cacafuego* may signify both English brio and superior maritime skills (they towed the ship with rowing boats when the wind failed). A few lines set up the suspense of whether or not they will catch her, then, when they do, the younger Drake's textual strategy is one of understatement:

We past the line the 28, and the first of *March* wee fell with the cape *Francisco*, where, about mid-day, we descried a sayle a head of vs, with whom, after once we had spoken with her, we lay still in the same place about sixe dayes to recouer our breath againe, which we had almost spent with hasty following, and to recall to mind what aduentures had passed vs since our late comming from Lima; but especially to do *Iohn de Anton* a kindnesse, in freeing him of the care of those things with which his ship was loaden.<sup>124</sup>

The capture of the ship is contained within the euphemism 'spoken with her'. The speech was rather harsh, according to the testimony of the *Cacafuego*'s pilot, San Juan de Anton, who describes shouts of 'Englishman! strike sail!' as his ship is grappled, then:

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<sup>122</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 45.

<sup>123</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 45-6. *Cacafuego* was the nickname of the Spanish vessel *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, owned by its captain, San Juan de Antón (Draper, *Drake and the Famous Voyage*, p. 179).

<sup>124</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 46.

a volley of what seemed to be about sixty arquebuses was shot, followed by many arrows, which struck the side of the ship, and chain-balls shot from a heavy piece of ordnance carried away the mizzen and sent it into the sea with its saile and lateen yard. After this the English shot another great gun, shouting again 'Strike sail!' and, simultaneously, a pinnace laid aboard to port and about forty archers climbed up the channels of the shrouds and entered San Juan de Anton's ship, while, at the opposite side, the English ship laid aboard.<sup>125</sup>

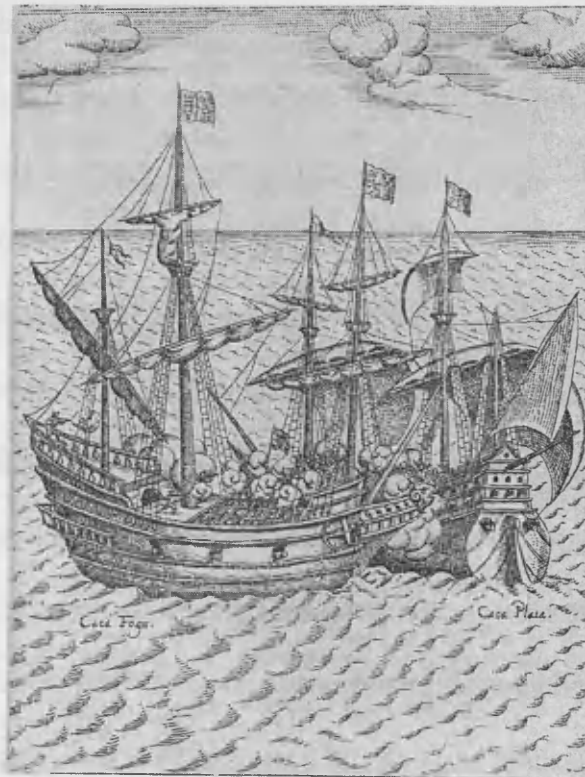


Figure 11 An engraving of the battle between Drake's *Golden Hind* and the *Cacafuego*, from Levinus Hulsius, 1626.

<sup>125</sup> Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, 'San Juan de Anton's Testimony', in Drake, *World Encompassed*, pp. 220-224, p. 221.

The Spaniard provides a lively account of his capture. Yet the English version is silent on the matter. But why, when the episode would serve as an illustration of Drake's military ability? Perhaps the omission could be read as suggesting the ease with which English maritime superiority was effected. Or, perhaps the project was to distance Drake, and the English nation, from the practice of piracy. The effacement also places readers at one remove from the reality of piracy. To read only about the gains of success, and not the violence of its acquisition, would, perhaps, provide a more attractive model for emulation.

The text's construction mirrors the chase: the hasty relation of the pursuit and capture is followed by a more leisurely account of their 'adventures' after leaving Lima. Readers' curiosity about the contents of the *Cacafuego* is suspended as the 'adventures' of taking four other ships during the pursuit are described. All provided more information about the *Cacafuego*, together with various commodities, such as wine, ships' tackle and implements, and finally, parenthetically, 'eightie pound waight in gold'.<sup>126</sup> The gold is mentioned as though an afterthought, and the same method is employed when the contents of the *Cacafuego* are finally described:

We found in her some fruite, conserues, sugars, meale, and other victuals, and (that which was the especiallest cause of her heauy and slow sayling) a certaine quantitie of iewels and precious stones, 13 chests of ryals of plate, 80 pound waight in gold, 26 tunne of uncoyned silver, two very faire gilt siluer drinking boules, and the like trifles, valued in all at about 360,000 pezoos.<sup>127</sup>

The massive haul of treasure follows the fruits and preserves, and the pair of drinking vessels is itemised along with the tonnes of silver. In this way, the magnitude of the

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<sup>126</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 46.

<sup>127</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 46.

capture is made clear, but, in a detached and humorous style. There is no celebration of the acquisition of treasure for its own sake (as might be expected from 'real' pirates); rather, this capture is presented as an example of a 'noble attempt' undertaken for the 'benefit of the nation'.<sup>128</sup> It is a successful attempt, carried out with élan, courtesy, and humour. The anecdote of the *Cacafuego's* ship's boy renaming her the *Cacaplata* (treasure spewer now, as opposed to fire spewer) adds to the festive tone.<sup>129</sup>

The *World Encompassed* presents a fictionalised, idealised English form of piracy, where ships are captured by 'conversation', not armed struggle; treasure is only marginally more interesting as a prize than jam or ropes; jovially, it is not even theft, but trade, fair exchange: 'We gave the master a little linen and the like for these commodities', and a courtesy, doing the Spaniards 'a kindness' by freeing them of the cares of those things which loaded down their ship.<sup>130</sup> And no one suffers: the captured Spanish sailors and merchants are not ill treated, and, 'at the end of sixe dayes we bad farewell and parted', no doubt, from the English perspective, on the best of terms.

These characteristics of representation of English conduct of piracy are repeated throughout the text. Another example is the younger Drake's description of events in the Spanish harbour and settlement of Guatulco. This begins with them having some 'entercourse' (conversation again) with the Spanish 'to the supply of many things which we desired, and chiefly bread, etc'. Having 'reasonably' provided themselves with this, they left, but

not forgetting, before we gate a-shipboard, to take with vs a certaine  
pot (of about a bushel in bignesse) full of ryalls of plate, which we  
found in the towne, together with a chaine of gold, and some other

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<sup>128</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, Frontispiece.

<sup>129</sup> The more accurate, though less polite, translation for *Cacafuego* is 'fire shitter'.

<sup>130</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 46.

iewells, which we intreated a gentleman Spaniard to leaue behinde  
him, as he was flying out of towne.<sup>131</sup>

The ‘intercourse’ is more fully described in ‘The Famous Voyage’: four judges are taken prisoner, the chief judge forced to write a letter to the town commanding all the people to leave, then, the Hakluyt version continues:

Which being done, and they departed, we ransaked the Towne, and in one house we found a pot of the quantitie of a bushell, full of royals of plate, which we brought to our shippe. And here one Thomas Moone one of our companie, tooke a Spanish Gentleman as he was flying out of the towne, and searching him, he found a chaine of golde about him, and other iewells, which he tooke, and so let him goe.<sup>132</sup>

*The World Encompassed* does not use the term ‘ransacked’, nor indeed any adjective to describe how the pot of silver was found. And the Spaniard is ‘intreated’ (again the terminology implies conversation) rather than taken. The younger Drake does retain the humorous visual image of the Spaniard ‘flying’ out of the town, which seems totally in keeping with his mode of expression.

More humour is apparent in two accounts of robberies on shore while searching for water around Tarapacá. In the first, a Spaniard is found sleeping, with thirteen bars of silver lying around him. The English actions are depicted as displaying a customary unselfish helpfulness:

we would not (could we haue chosen) haue awaked him of his nappe:  
but seeing we, against our wills, did him that iniury, we freed him of  
his charge, which otherwise perhaps would haue kept him waking, and

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<sup>131</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 48.

<sup>132</sup> ‘The Famous Voyage’, *Principal Navigations*, p. 643G.

so left him to take out (if it pleased him) the other parte of his sleepe  
in more security.<sup>133</sup>

The elaboration in *The World Encompassed* is obvious when compared with the Hakluyt version, which states simply, 'we took the silver and left the man'.<sup>134</sup> Another example of English concern for Spanish welfare in the Drake version is not even mentioned in 'The Famous Voyage'. Shortly after the episode of the sleeping Spaniard, the Englishmen meet another Spaniard, who is driving eight llamas carrying eight hundred pounds of refined silver. On this occasion, readers are told,

we could not indure to see a gentleman Spaniard turnd carrier so, and therefore without intreaty we offered our seruice and became drouers, onely his directions were not so perfect that we could keepe the way which hee intended; for almost as soone as hee was parted from us, we with our new kinde of carriges, were come vnto our boates.<sup>135</sup>

The text's affectation of boyish helpfulness, ironically masking the actuality of the actions, is particularly English. Similar textual strategies could be identified, for example, in Richmal Crompton's *Just William* stories, where William's accounts of his actions appear equally innocent, while self-justifying, and apparently uncomprehending of their significance. The attitude is also characteristic of the public school cadet class which carried through into the understatement and irony of second World War officers, such as the fictional Biggles.

The younger Drake's representation of English piracy (effacement of violence, humour, irony, innocence even) is maintained throughout the text, and, by consistent repetition, builds a pattern of English behaviour in an attractive, idealised, model of conduct, worthy of emulation. The cumulative positive effect of such repetition on

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<sup>133</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 42-3.

<sup>134</sup> 'The Famous Voyage', *Principal Navigations*, p. 643F.

<sup>135</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 43.

readers may be contrasted with the depressing effect of Francis Pretty's account of Thomas Cavendish's circumnavigation of 1586-88.<sup>136</sup> The frequency of piracy and robbery during this expedition may be similar to that in Drake's account. But, one or two examples should suffice to illustrate the different modes of representation between the two texts. On one occasion Pretty relates that:

Wee came downe in safetie to the towne, which was very well builded, and maruellous cleane kept in euery street, with a towne-house or Guild hall in the middest, and had to the number of two hundred houses at the least in it. Wee set it on fire to the ground, and goods to the value of fiue or sixe thousand pounds: there was also a barke riding in the roade which wee set on fire, and departed, directing our course to the iland of Puna.<sup>137</sup>

There is no humour or irony here. The details provided: that the town is substantial, well-built, clean, and has a civil organisation, make the matter-of-fact account of its destruction appear more wasteful. The detail of 'to the ground' implies solicitous attention, and the firing of the ship on leaving a comprehensive approach.

Pretty's record shares none of the ease of non-violent acquisition seen in Drake's account. The device is not merely textual, however, as the Spanish were by this time prepared for English depredations on the South American coast. Pretty describes an attack on them on the island of Puna by 'an hundred Spanish souldiers with muskets and an ensigne [...] and all the Indians of the Iland with them, euery one with weapons'.<sup>138</sup>

The fighting is related in some detail, mainly focussing on the English difficulties and

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<sup>136</sup> Francis Pretty, 'The Admirable and Prosperous Voyage of the Worshipfull Master Thomas Candish of Trimley in the Countie of Suffolke Esquire, into the South Sea, and From Thence Round About the Circumference of the Whole Earth, Begun in the Yeere of Our Lord 1586, and Finished 1588. Written by Master Francis Pretty Lately of Ey in Suffolke, a Gentleman Employed in the Same Action', in *Principal Navigations*, ed. by Richard Hakluyt, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: George Bishop, 1599), pp.803-825. This version replaced an anonymous account in the 1589 first edition.

<sup>137</sup> Pretty, 'Voyage of Thomas Candish', *Principal Navigations*, p. 812.

<sup>138</sup> Pretty, 'Voyage of Thomas Candish', *Principal Navigations*, p. 813.



losses, such as, 'we skirmished with them an houre and an halfe: at the last being sore ouercharged with multitudes, we were driuen down from the hill to the waters side', where they were rescued by their ship's boat.<sup>139</sup> Pretty lists the names of the twelve English dead, and includes details of how they died ('slaine by the enemye', 'killed with his peece', burnt, drowned, taken prisoner). Regrouping, the English force attack, and this time 'drave [the Spanish] to retire', following which:

wee set fire on the towne and burnt it to the ground, hauing in it to the number of three hundred houses: and shortly after made hauocke of their fieldes, orchards and gardens, and burnt foure great ships more which were in building on the stockes.<sup>140</sup>

Pretty's account represents the violent struggle for (comparatively small) spoils, and the destruction wreaked, in bald terms, without any apparent attempt to incorporate rhetorical devices such as humour or irony. His repeated litany of 'we landed there, and burnt their towne' may be an accurate presentation of facts, but it does not evoke ideas of heroism, or provide admirable signifiers of Englishness. Cumulatively, the tone is dark and depressing.

By contrast, the younger Drake's light, positive, tone presents an attractive image of English piracy. In an understated manner, the treasure captured is also catalogued: it amounts to many tonnes. The taking of such vast wealth during just one expedition indicates to readers the phenomenal quantities plundered by the Spanish in the New World. By robbing Spain, an enemy, of its treasure, the English are effectively distanced from the brutal colonial practices involved in obtaining it in the first place. The twenty-six tonnes of silver the General took from the *Cacafuego* would have cost

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<sup>139</sup> Pretty, 'Voyage of Thomas Candish', *Principal Navigations*, p. 813.

<sup>140</sup> Pretty, 'Voyage of Thomas Candish', *Principal Navigations*, p. 814.

the lives of native labourers in the mines of Potosí, where, it is estimated, between six and eight million died over three hundred years.<sup>141</sup>

*The World Encompassed* creates a particularly English style of piracy. It also draws attention to those of the General's personal attributes which could be considered admirable, enviable, and possible to emulate. It does not repeat any negative views from its sources. The younger Drake presents his uncle as a man of piety, personal cheerfulness and enthusiasm, able to lead by example, and motivate his men in times of difficulty.<sup>142</sup> One example highlights his bravery, hard work and skilfulness:

Our Generall, especially in matters of moment, was neuer wont to relye onely on other mens care, how trusty or skilfull soeuer they might seeme to be; but alwayes contemning danger, and refusing no toyle, he was wont himselfe to be one, whosoeuer was a second, at euery turne, where courage, skill, or industry, was to be employed; neither would hee at this time intrust the discouery of these dangers to anothers paines, but rather to his owne experience in searching out and sounding of them.<sup>143</sup>

Drake's motivational abilities are illustrated when the men, utterly demoralised by freezing weather when searching for a Northwest passage, are encouraged by his speeches and example:

As wel by comfortable speches, of the diuine prouidence, and of God's louing care ouer his children, out of the Scriptures, as also by other good and profitable perswasions, adding thereto his own cheerfull example, he so stirred them vp to put on a good courage, and

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<sup>141</sup> Edardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997), p. 39.

<sup>142</sup> An indication of Drake's bonhomie is provided: 'our General made them great cheere (as his manner was towards all strangers)' (Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 42).

<sup>143</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 14.

to quite themselves like men, to indure some short extremity to haue  
the speedier comfort.<sup>144</sup>

The General's willingness to take the lead personally in dangerous circumstances is demonstrated in the Moluccas, when his ship is grounded and in danger of breaking up. He sets out in the ship's boat to try to find an anchorhold to haul her off. He failed, and the *Golden Hind* was only refloated after being lightened by throwing ordnance and provisions overboard. There appears to have been no question of ditching her tonnes of treasure.<sup>145</sup>

The trial and execution during the voyage of the gentleman Thomas Doughty for plotting mutiny and murder has been, from the time, the major source of textual contestation over Drake's conduct. *The World Encompassed* presents the General as aware of Doughty's plotting before leaving England, but, refusing to believe it, he treats him with enhanced courtesy, 'using him in a manner as another himself'.<sup>146</sup> Drake's leniency does not quench Doughty's 'heat of ambition' and the 'manifold practises' (unspecified in this text) grew daily, until Drake 'thought it high time to call these practises into question'.<sup>147</sup> The Captains and gentlemen are assembled to hear Drake attest to his affection for Doughty, and extol his good qualities, before delivering the proof of Doughty's writings and actions pertaining to the 'overthrowe of the service in hand, and making away of his [Drake's] person'.<sup>148</sup> Drake withdraws, 'not able to conceale his tender affection', leaving the forty or so officers and gentlemen to reach judgement. Their verdict is that Doughty deserved death. The sentence is carried out with the utmost civility and courtesy on both sides: Drake and Doughty famously take

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<sup>144</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 49.

<sup>145</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 77-80. See also 'The Famous Voyage', *Principal Navigations*, p. 643K.

<sup>146</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p.23.

<sup>147</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 23.

<sup>148</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 24.

communion and dine together, 'cheerfully in sobriety', prior to the execution.<sup>149</sup> This presentation of events reflects nothing but honour upon Drake. The version given in Hakluyt, though far briefer, is also unequivocally positive in its presentation of Drake's actions and motives.

By contrast, Francis Fletcher's account praises Doughty's good qualities and repeats his protestations of innocence, and, while not condemning Drake outright, leaves readers to draw their own conclusions on his conduct. Edward Cliffe's account includes a bald relation of facts, with no comment:

The last of June M. *Thomas Doughty* was brought to his answer, was accused, and convicted of certaine articles, and by M. *Drake* condemned. He was beheaded the 2 of July, 1578, whose body was buried in the said Island.<sup>150</sup>

John Cooke's account is vituperative, accusing Drake of bearing a grudge against Doughty and continually looking for faults.<sup>151</sup> He characterises him as quarrelsome and peremptory in his treatment of men (in his dismissal of James Stydye), flying into rages and swearing oaths (in response to Doughty's claims against Drake's brother, Thomas Drake),<sup>152</sup> superstitious and unjust in his accusations against Doughty:

In all [Doughty's] absens ower General nevar ceased to invey agaynst, terminge hym a coniuurer and witche, and, at eny tyme when we had any fowle wethar, he would say that Thomas Dowghty was the occasyoner thereof, and wolde say that it came out of Tom Dowghtys

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<sup>149</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 25.

<sup>150</sup> Edward Cliffe, 'Edward Cliffe's Story', in Drake, *World Encompassed*, pp. 188-200, p. 196.

<sup>151</sup> Cooke was a member of the company of John Winter's ship, which separated from the fleet during storms in the Magellan Straits and returned home across the Atlantic. The editor of the edition quoted here, Richard Carnac Temple, prefaces the account with a statement which, perhaps, reveals his own leanings: 'Though it is signed by John Cooke, it has been at any rate re-drafted by a hand versed in literary controversy in the interests of Drake's opponents. Winter deserted Drake after passing the Straits of Magellan' (*World Encompassed*, p. 142).

<sup>152</sup> John Cooke, 'John Cooke's Narrative', in Drake, *World Encompassed*, pp. 142-168, p. 143 and p. 146.

capcase, and wold avouch the same with greate othes; whiche he at no tyme scanted, they cost hym so lytle.<sup>153</sup>

Cooke describes Doughty's situation worsening, and suggests a tense and suspicious mood among the men:

I must tell yow some whate of Mastar Dowghtyes woes, whiche dyd daylye increase thrughe this tiranycall government, and althowghe the moaste parte, and especially suche as were honeste, dyd lamente his case, yet durst they not to be known there of but to theyr assured friends.<sup>154</sup>

Cooke sums up Drake's actions in dealing with Doughty in damning terms:

One this Iland in porte S. Julyan passed many matters which I thinke God would not have to be concealed, and especially for that they tended to murder, for here he spewyd oute agaynst Thomas Dowghty all his venome, here he ended all his conceyved hatred, not by curtesy or fryndly reconsylement, but by moaste tyranicall blud spillyng, for he was never quyet while he lyved, whiche in wysdome and honest government as farr passed hym as he in tyranny excelled all men. The worlde nevar comytted fact lyke unto this, for here he mordered hym that yf he had well loked into hymself had bene a more sure and stedfast frend unto hym than evar was Pythias to his frind Damon.<sup>155</sup>

In Cooke's account, then, Drake is presented as a tyrannical murderer.

An outsider's view of Drake's relationship with his men is provided by the account of Don Francisco de Zárata, a Spaniard captured with his ship off the coast of Nicaragua. He notes that '[Drake] treats [his men] with affection, and they treat him

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<sup>153</sup> Cooke, *World Encompassed*, p.149.

<sup>154</sup> Cooke, *World Encompassed*, p. 153.

<sup>155</sup> Cooke, *World Encompassed*, p. 154-5.

with respect', and, while he 'shows them great favour' he also 'punishes the least fault'.<sup>156</sup> Among the gentlemen he had no favourite, and 'none of these gentlemen took a seat or covered his head before him, until he repeatedly urged him to do so'.<sup>157</sup> Zárate's overall conclusion was that 'I managed to ascertain whether the General was well liked, and all said that they adored him'.<sup>158</sup>

From the accounts available to the younger Drake, it is clear that Cliffe is neutral, Francis Fletcher implicitly critical of Drake's conduct, and John Cooke vituperative in his condemnation. The 'Famous Voyage' presents events in a neutral manner.<sup>159</sup> From these sources, the younger Drake selected to re-present only positive constructions of the General's character and behaviour, and not to enter into any debate about detractions levelled by others. *The World Encompassed*, then, presents the Doughty affair in terms which only enhance the General's reputation. In total, the younger Drake promotes his uncle as brave, able to lead and motivate men, enthusiastic and cheerful, hospitable and cultured: all qualities which present a model for an English maritime hero.

The 'measure of civility', the pattern for English behaviour, is also constructed in *The World Encompassed* as a relation of difference from Spanish and Portuguese practices, specifically in terms of their treatment of prisoners and New World natives. Contemporary English readers would probably have been aware of the Black Legend, which characterised the Spanish as cruel oppressors, intent, in their championing of Catholicism, on imposing ignorance and superstition, anathema to Protestant sensibilities.<sup>160</sup> More specific tales of alleged Spanish ill-treatment of merchants, such

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<sup>156</sup> Zárate, *World Encompassed*, p. 218 and 219.

<sup>157</sup> Zárate, *World Encompassed*, p. 219.

<sup>158</sup> Zárate, *World Encompassed*, p. 220.

<sup>159</sup> Quinn notes that Hakluyt ignored many of Cooke's criticisms and made his account of the Doughty affair 'as neutral as possible' and neither glorifies nor denigrates Drake (Quinn, *Drake and the Famous Voyage*, p. 43).

<sup>160</sup> On the development of the Black Legend in England see William S Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: The Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558-1660* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1971).

as Thomas Nicholas and John Frampton, also circulated. Both were imprisoned and tortured by the Inquisition on suspicion of heresy during the 1560s. Additionally, in what were termed acts of state piracy, their goods and money were confiscated. William Lithgow, a victim of the Inquisition in the 1620s, wrote a vivid account of his interrogation and torture in Spain. An abridged extract provides a flavour of the presentation of such experiences.

I was by the Executioner stripped to the skin, brought to the Racke,  
and then mounted by him on the top of it: Where eftsoones I was hung  
by the bare shoulders . . .

And notwithstanding of my shivering lippes, in this fiery passion my  
vehement groaning, and blood-springing fonts, from armes, broake  
sinewes, hammes, and knees; yea, and my depending weight on flesh-  
cutting Cords; yet they stroke mee on the face with Cudgels . . .

Thus lay I sixe hours upon the Racke, betweene foure a clocke  
afternoone, and ten a clocke at night, having had inflicted upon me  
three score seven torments: Neverthelesse they continued me a large  
halfe houre (after all my tortures) at the full bending; where my body  
being all begored with blood, and cut through in every part, to the  
crushed and bruised bones, I pittifully remayned, still roaring,  
howling, foaming, bellowing, and gnashing my teeth, with  
insupportable cries, before the pinnes were undone, and my body  
loosed.<sup>161</sup>

Such were the accounts of Spanish tortures circulating during the period. *The World Encompassed* stresses Spanish cruelty in the New World at several points. One example

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<sup>161</sup> William Lithgow, 'Spain', *Rare Adventures and Painfull Peregrinations (1582-1645)* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), pp. 254-287, p. 270-4.

is the fate of twelve English men who were held in Lima just prior to the General's arrival, for, readers are told, 'profession of the Gospell'. Of these, six were 'bound to one stake and burnt', while the remainder were in prison, 'to drinke of the same cup within [a] few days'.<sup>162</sup> In another example, readers are assured that Indians are whipped with cords for Spanish pleasure, and they 'day by day drop their naked bodies with burning bacon, which is one of the least cruelties amongst many which they universally use against that nation and people'.<sup>163</sup> Such descriptions would accord with the expansion of the Black Legend to encompass Spanish atrocity in the New World, as described by Bartolomé de las Casas, in his *Brief History of the Destruction of the Indies*, which was first translated into English in 1583.<sup>164</sup>

The stereotype of the Spaniard constructed by the Black Legend in England comprised, as William Maltby observes, 'most of the vices and shortcomings known to man. [...] When the Spaniard has the upper hand, his cruelty and hauteur are unsupportable', and, in defeat, 'he is cringing and mean-spirited, a coward whose love of plots and treacheries is exceeded only by his incompetence in carrying them out'.<sup>165</sup> *The World Encompassed* appears to employ this stereotype throughout, illustrating it with detail, such as the cruelty and cowardice implicit in the description of Spaniards torturing and desecrating the body of a dead Englishman. The corpse of the only English casualty of a Spanish attack on the shore at Cyppo was 'manfully by the Spaniards beheaded, the right hand cut off, the heart pluckt out; all which they carried away in our sight, and for the rest of his carcasse they caused the Indians to shoote it full

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<sup>162</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 46. The men referred to included John Oxenham, who had led an expedition to Panama in 1575, been captured, and, with several of his men, held by the Spanish Inquisition at Lima. They were later hanged.

<sup>163</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 42.

<sup>164</sup> For discussion of English incorporation of Spanish New World atrocities into the Black Legend, see Maltby, *Black Legend*, particularly Chapter II, 'Tears of the Indians', pp. 12-28.

<sup>165</sup> Maltby, *Black Legend*, p. 6.



of arrowes'.<sup>166</sup> Of this incident, 'The Famous Voyage' merely reports that the Spanish 'slew one of our men with a piece'.<sup>167</sup>

*The World Encompassed* provides no contrasting details of courteous English treatment of Spaniards captured when their ships were taken, though it does make clear that they are set free. Nephew Drake did not, perhaps, have access to the accounts of Don Francisco de Zárate, or of San Juan de Anton, pilot of the *Cacafuego*. Both attest to Drake's courtesy and bonhomie in dealing with them. Zárate relates that 'We talked for a good while before it was time to dine. He ordered me to sit next to him and began to give me food from his own plate, telling me not to grieve, that my life and property were safe'.<sup>168</sup> Zárate also notes that Drake is served 'on silver dishes with gold borders and gilded garlands, in which are his arms', and that he 'dines and sups to the music of viols'.<sup>169</sup> Before setting them free, Zárate continues, the General had all the sailors assembled, and gave each one a 'handful of reals' and the same 'to some other men who appeared to him to be the most needy'.<sup>170</sup> Anton's testimony describes similar treatment. As he was taken from the *Cacafuego* to the English ship he 'saw the Corsair Francis Drake, who was removing his helmet and coat of mail. Francis Drake embraced San Juan de Anton, saying: "Have patience, for such is the usage of war"'.<sup>171</sup> Leaving his own ship to have breakfast aboard Anton's, the General had 'left orders with his chief sergeant to prepare his table for San Juan de Anton, as though it were for himself'.<sup>172</sup> There is also an example of, in this case, rather idiosyncratic present-giving:

Before releasing San Juan's vessel, the Englishman made several gifts to those whom he had robbed. He gave thirty or forty pesos in cash to

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<sup>166</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 41.

<sup>167</sup> 'The Famous Voyage', *Principal Navigations*, p. 643F.

<sup>168</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 217.

<sup>169</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 219.

<sup>170</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 217.

<sup>171</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 222.

<sup>172</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 222.

each. To some he gave pieces of stuff from Portugal, and agricultural implements, such as hoes and pruning-knives; to others, two of his own cloaks adorned with trimmings. To a soldier named Victoria he gave some weapons. [...] To the clerk he gave a steel shield and a sword saying that he did this so that the clerk might appear to be a man-at-arms. To San Juan he gave two casks of tar, six hundredweights of iron from Germany, and a barrel of powder. To a merchant named Cuevas he gave some fans with mirrors, saying that they were for his lady. And to San Juan de Anton he gave a silver-gilt bowl, in the centre of which his name, 'Francisqus Draques', was inscribed.<sup>173</sup>

Even without such testaments to Drake's courtesy *The World Encompassed* presents the English as honourable, in releasing their prisoners unharmed, courteous, in the pretence of 'trading' for the commodities and treasure stolen, and merciful, in declining to exact violent revenge when opportunities arose. By contrast, the Spanish are portrayed as cowardly, barbaric and unnecessarily violent. These contrasting attributions of behaviour signify, within this text at least, different national characteristics. For English readers the cultural signifiers of Englishness would clearly appear admirable, and easy to identify with.

In addition to its presentation of English piracy, Drake as hero, and English civility, *The World Encompassed* also develops a theoretical model of English colonial practice. Its specific characteristics appear to be formed from a combination of reaction against Spanish and Portuguese practices, and the General's own personality and preferences (rather than as the result of political or theological debate). The text again

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<sup>173</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 222-223.

employs the rhetorical strategy of constructing oppositional differences between English and Spanish behaviour, and fixing their meanings by repetition. On every possible occasion the text describes the cruel and oppressive nature of Portuguese and Spanish colonialism, and how it provoked native resistance. At times the English were 'mistaken' for Portuguese or Spaniards, and met with violent native reactions. Drake is presented as unfailingly compassionate and humane in his response to hostile receptions.

Early in the relation of the voyage a history of Portuguese oppression on the Cape Verde island of St Iago is described. The Portuguese use of 'extreame and unreasonable crueltie' over their slaves resulted in their continual escapes to the mountainous parts of the island. Over time, the number of escaped slaves increased to the extent that the Portuguese lived in terror of them, unable to use some of the most productive parts of the island. Francis Fletcher's account adds more colour, describing the escaped slaves as picking over Portuguese bones, 'neuer thinkeing a Portugall dead as long as he hath scinn vpon his flesh flesh vpon his bones or one joint hanging to another'.<sup>174</sup> The same form of Portuguese oppression in Brazil caused natives to leave their fertile homelands for remoter, less hospitable, land. To try to prevent further incursions, any ships seen are discouraged from landing by the lighting of fires on shore. When the English experience this, they interpret it as the natives' attempts to conjure devils to raise storms and tempests to wreck their ships, as was the experience of the Portuguese. The text concludes that Drake's ships are mistaken for Portuguese, as the natives, 'supposing indeed that no other had vsed trauel by sea in ships, but their enemies onely, they therefore vsed the same at our comming'.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 98.

<sup>175</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 12.

The presentation of reactions from natives with no prior experience of Europeans is rather different. The English 'had great acquaintance and familiarity' with one group of Patagonian Indians, 'who rejoiced greatly in our comming, and in our friendship, in that wee had done them no harme'.<sup>176</sup> And, to stress the point, it was 'wonderful to hear, being neuer knowne to Christians before this time, how familiar they became in short space with vs; thinking themselves to be ioyned with such a people, as they ought rather to serue then offer any wrong or iniurie unto'.<sup>177</sup> (The relations of status and power are clearly assumed as shared by the text and its readers, without any need for clarification.) A little further south, in Puerto San Julian, perhaps to illustrate with a direct comparison, Patagonians who are credited with memories of Magellan's visit sixty years earlier, when two 'giants' were kidnapped, greet Drake with violence, killing two of his men.<sup>178</sup>

An attack explicitly cited as a reaction against Spanish treatment occurs on the island of Mucho, off the coast of Peru. The natives' assault leaves the General and several men injured, and its motive is rehearsed:

The cause of this force and iniurie by these Ilanders, was no other but the deadly hatred which they beare against their cruell enemies the Spaniards, for the bloody and most tirannous oppression which they had vsed towards them. And therefore with purpose against them (suspecting vs to bee Spaniards [...]) sought some part of reuenge against vs.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 15.

<sup>177</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 18.

<sup>178</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 22. The Patagonians are said to have been won round by the English treatment: 'seeming by their countenance to repent them of the wrong they had offered us that meant them no harme, suffered vs to doe what we would the whole space of two monethes after this, without any interruption or molestation by them' (Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 22).

<sup>179</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 38.

The General refuses to take any revenge himself, and, while he acknowledges the similarity of appearance of the English and Spaniards, at the same time, he insists upon a qualitative difference:

Our Generall, notwithstanding he might haue reuenged this wrong, with little hazard or danger [...] [wished only this] punishment to them, that they did but know whom they had wronged; and that they had done this iniurie, not to anemie, but to a friend; not to a Spaniard, but to an Englishman; who would rather haue beene a patron to defend them, then any way an instrument of the least wrong that should haue been done vnto them.<sup>180</sup>

These statements set out the principles of an English version of colonialism: friendship, patronage and protection. That this treatment would produce a positive relationship between coloniser and colonised is attested to by the immediate contrast of the Mucho islanders with a single, young, canoe Indian they take aboard, who is described as 'verie gentle, of mild and humble nature, being verie tractable to learne the vse of euery thing'.<sup>181</sup> The implications are spelt out for readers, as

In him we might see a most liuely patterne of the harmelesse disposition of that people, and how grieuous a thing it is that they should by any meanes be so abused as all those are, whome the Spaniards haue any command or power ouer.<sup>182</sup>

The native reaction to brutal Spanish rule is not only demonstrated by their mistaken response to the English. *The World Encompassed* also draws attention to the difficulties this treatment raises for the coloniser. The attack on the English at Cyppo is described as being carried out by one hundred Spanish horsemen, with two hundred Indians,

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<sup>180</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 38.

<sup>181</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 39.

<sup>182</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 39.

'running as dogs at their heeles, all naked, and in most miserable bondage'.<sup>183</sup> The natives, it is noted, use arrows made that same day, not allowed by the Spanish to keep weapons other than for immediate use. The text spells out what this means:

So doth it declare to the world in what miserable feare the Spaniards holdeth the gouernment of those parts; liuing in continuall dread of forreigne inuasion by strangers, or secret cutting of their throats by those whom they kept vnder them in so shamefull slauery, I meane the innocent and harmlesse Indians.<sup>184</sup>

By implication, the English form of colonialism would be preferable for both colonised and coloniser.

These illustrations of Spanish oppression in the New World, and its consequences for both Indians and Spaniards, set the scene for the culmination of the New World section of the voyage: Drake's encounter with Indians in California.<sup>185</sup> The point is made that the Spanish had had no dealings with these people, as their discoveries did not extend so far north. In the encounter between the Californians and the English, described at length in *The World Encompassed*, the idealised model of English colonial practice is enacted. The whole episode is described in terms reminiscent of a theatrical masque, with several tableaux of formal meetings and ritual greetings and orations, with many gestures and signs made by the Indians, as well as songs and dances performed. The significance the English draw from these experiences (given that they do not know the language) is that they are welcome, taken to be Gods, and that the Indians voluntarily wish to hand over sovereignty to Drake (as Elizabeth's

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<sup>183</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 41.

<sup>184</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 41.

<sup>185</sup> For a consideration of Drake's encounters in California in terms of the cloth trade and constructions of productive masculinity, see 'Jack of Newbery and Drake in California: domestic and colonial narratives of English cloth and manhood', in Joan Pong Linton, *The Romance of the New World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 62-83.

representative). Readers are told how the General was asked to sit down before the assembled Indians, whereupon

both the king and diuers others made seuerall orations, or rather, indeed, if wee had vnderstood them, supplications, that hee would take the Prouince and kingdome into his hand, and become their king and patron: making signes that they would resigne vnto him their right and title in the whole land, and become his vassals in themselves and their posterities.<sup>186</sup>

Whether or not the English did understand correctly, before departing, the ‘Generall caused to be set vp a monument of our being there, as also of her maiesties and successors right and title to that kingdome [...] and of the free giuing vp of the prouince and kingdome, both by the king and people, into her maiesties hands.’<sup>187</sup>

Drake’s style of colonialism, encompassing friendship, paternalism, encouragement of the natives’ inherent desire to become subjects, and, not least, the promotion of Protestant Christianity, as opposed to the ‘poisonous infection of Popery’ spread by the Spanish, is presented as being as effective and non-violent as his style of piracy.<sup>188</sup> Whether or not this was a realisable ideal is not tested in California: Drake sails away, never to return. The practical difficulties of settlement would be experienced later, in Virginia. However, the theoretical principles of a colonial practice based on paternalistic control, as opposed to violent oppression, pertained, I suggest, throughout the later British Empire.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 59.

<sup>187</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 62.

<sup>188</sup> Drake, *World Encompassed*, p. 45.

<sup>189</sup> This pattern was, indeed, borne out in settlements in Virginia throughout the seventeenth century, and in later British colonial practice. Pagden makes the point that English settlers in Virginia claimed they had only settled previously vacant land, with native consent, ‘unlike the Spaniards, who had invaded territories rightly occupied by legitimate, if primitive, rulers - it followed that English colonization was mutually beneficial to migrant and native - again unlike the Spanish. [...] In their own self-image the English, then, became not the conquerors of Indians but their potential saviours, not only from paganism and pre-agricultural modes of subsistence, but also from Spanish

What then survived of the heroic pattern conceived in *The World Encompassed*?

Sir Francis Drake's status as English maritime hero was sustained and reinforced throughout the period of the British Empire, not least due to biographers and historians reiterating the younger Drake's account as the 'true and whole' history it claimed to be.<sup>190</sup> The romanticised, humorous, courteous, model of piracy, carried out by a charismatic pirate, has been perpetuated by Hollywood, in films such as *The Black Pirate* starring Douglas Fairbanks, Errol Flynn's *Captain Blood*, and more recently, with Johnny Depp's depiction of Jack Sparrow in *Pirates of the Caribbean*.<sup>191</sup> English cinema during the second world war and throughout the fifties portrayed military and maritime heroes who embodied all of the qualities the younger Drake attributed to his uncle: personal bravery, courtesy, compassion, ability to lead and motivate men (the form of Englishman typified by actors such as Jack Hawkins, John Mills, Kenneth Moore).

These conceptions of what constitutes a particularly male militaristic Englishness also, I suggest, pertain in the actuality of today's world. While the nation was shocked to see evidence of torture committed by American soldiers in Iraq in 2005, there was a wave of disbelief when the same accusations were levelled at 'our boys'. Perhaps the ideal of Englishness and the English hero is a fiction which English people still identify with today, and which protects their sensibilities from what may actually be done in their name.

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tyranny' (Pagden, *Origins of Empire*, p. 52). Bruce McLeod makes the point concisely when he states: 'That the Spanish bloodily imposed "colonies" while the English acquired "plantations" (though they were capable of slipping into Spanish behaviour) became a sort of catechism' (Bruce McLeod, *The Geography of Empire in English Literature 1580-1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 10).

<sup>190</sup> An example of the treatment of *The World Encompassed* as fact, and its reinscription as such, is John Barrow's *The Life, Voyages, and Exploits of Admiral Sir Francis Drake, Knt* (London: John Murray, 1858). Zelia Nuttall's *New Light on Drake: A Collection of Documents Relating to His Voyage of Circumnavigation 1577-1580* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1914) is also unequivocal in its positive presentation of evidence in Drake's favour, against his detractors.

<sup>191</sup> The romanticisation of the pirate can be traced in, for example, Hollywood films starring Douglas Fairbanks (*The Black Pirate*, dir. Albert Parker, 1926), Errol Flynn (*Captain Blood*, dir. Michael Curtiz, 1935), and, more recently, Johnny Depp (*Pirates of the Caribbean: the Curse of the Black Pearl*, dir. Gore Verbinski, 2003).



## **Chapter Three**

### **A True Relation**

In accounts of circumnavigation such as those of Antonio Pigafetta and Francis Fletcher the constant movement of the voyage itself is central throughout, punctuated by a succession of landings in different places, which constitute brief incursions into and mapping of the real of the New World. By contrast, accounts of early settlement of the New World focus on a single location. The voyage is peripheral: the movement of outward and return voyages frames a primarily static picture of place and people in which the real becomes incorporated into more sustained representations of reality.

Circumnavigators' accounts record navigational data (of greater or lesser accuracy), information necessary to maintain the ship and crew (good anchorages, availability of food and fresh water, and trees for replacement masts), and, most importantly, the location and availability of trading commodities, particularly spices. Encounters with native peoples are recorded, but as time ashore was generally brief (apart from over-wintering and substantial refits) these usually appear as quick sketches rather than as developed portraits. As such, the representations tend to be reductive (often the lack of common language limits the depth of understanding possible), depicting the natives as either interesting spectacle (Pigafetta's capering Patagonian giants), potential aggressors (Vespucci's cannibals), or as possible trading partners. The undifferentiated alterity of the New World encountered during exploratory forays and circumnavigations was recorded quickly, (re)named and placed on European cultural and pictorial maps for future reference; locations awaiting return.

The content of early settlers' accounts indicates different concerns with the real which was becoming their everyday reality: their need to identify the means for long-

term survival from the new land, and commodities for trading, as well as to develop some form of relationship with the native inhabitants. These texts focus on the location of settlement: what grows there, or could be introduced; native fish, birds and animals; naturally occurring commodities such as gold, copper, and pearls. The natives were important sources of local knowledge, and, in order to exploit this, there needed to be language acquisition (on both sides). With shared language, understanding and the development of relationships becomes possible.

For this reason, the native presence is more significant in early accounts of New World settlement than in voyage accounts. The nature of the textual representation of the native, at this specific point in time, provoked responses and formed opinions about them in Europe which had consequences both for their future material treatment, and their future textual representation. The specific practices employed to represent the relationship between self (the European narrator) and other (the native), and the different figures of the native which result as a consequence, are explored here in three accounts of early New World settlement. Thomas Hariot's and Ralph Lane's accounts of the first English settlement in America, at Roanoke (1585-1586), and Jean de Léry's 'history' of his voyage to Brazil, published in 1578, which recounts his experience of living for several months with the Tupinamba tribe between 1556 and 1558.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, trans. by Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). Thomas Hariot, 'A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia' (1588), in *The Roanoke Voyages 1584-1590: Documents to Illustrate the English Voyages to North America under the Patent Granted to Walter Raleigh in 1584*, ed. by D B Quinn (London: Hakluyt Society, 1955), pp. 314-388. Ralph Lane, 'Ralph Lane's Discourse on the First Colony, 17 August 1585 – 18 June 1586', in Quinn, *Roanoke Voyages*, pp. 255-294. My focus here is to examine representational practice, rather than to engage in an attempt to uncover or rehearse the historical 'truth' of the various accounts discussed. There are many learned works which approach this material from the historian's perspective; see, for example, on early English settlement and colonial endeavour, various works by D B Quinn, including *The Roanoke Voyages and England and the Discovery of America, 1481-1620: From the Bristol Voyages of the Fifteenth Century to the Pilgrim Settlement at Plymouth* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974); John H Elliot, *The Old World and the New, 1492-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Kenneth R Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Nicholas Canny, ed., *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). For historical contextualisation of Léry's text see Janet Whatley's introduction to the *History of a Voyage*. For a variety of theoretical approaches and readings of the text see, for example, Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. by Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University, 1988), esp. Chapter 5: 'Ethno-Graphy: Speech, or the Space of the

The texts of Jean de Léry, Thomas Hariot, and Ralph Lane are all first-hand relations, and, as in the accounts of Vespucci and Fletcher, their claim to authority is based on their status as eye-witnesses. Each has a different motive driving the production of their text, and, for all three, the main objective is to persuade their readers of the truth of their own relation of events.<sup>2</sup> Each adopts a distinctive authorial voice, and constructs a desired subject position for their readers (that is, the position from which the text ‘naturally’ makes sense). Léry and Hariot develop Fletcher’s line of argument, and preface their texts with analyses of the nature of textual representation, and the conditional status of ‘truth’ claims, while Lane, as will be discussed, uses a completely different tactic. As a consequence of their different motives and textual strategies, each constructs a different New World: Léry’s is a place of wonder; Hariot’s a productive, though static, market garden; Lane’s a dynamic landscape of mobility and exploration. The main focus of each, and the focus here, is the representation of the relationship between the narrator and the ‘*sauvages*’, ‘natural inhabitants’, or ‘savages’ (as they are variously termed in each account). While each narrator must have lived closely with the natives represented, the level of comparison, contrast, correspondence and association between self and other evident in their ‘relations’ varies considerably. These representations, when read from the desired subject position, construct a figure of

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Other: Jean de Léry’, pp. 209-243; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. by John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Penguin, 1992); Frank Lestringant, ‘The Philosopher’s Breviary: Jean de Léry in the Enlightenment’, in *New World Encounters*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 127-138; Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); for readings of texts of both Léry and Hariot, specifically in terms of construction of Protestant identity, see Thomas Scanlan, *Colonial Writing and the New World 1583-1671: Allegories of Desire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Chapter 2: ‘Fear and love: two versions of Protestant ambivalence’, pp. 38-67. Influential works which both historicise Hariot’s account, and situate it within literary contexts, are Mary C Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America, 1576-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Jeffrey Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to The Tempest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Accounts such as these were often called ‘relations’ which includes meanings of ‘a specific narrative’, and making a relation through ‘considering them in comparison or contrast with each other; the particular way in which one thing is thought of in connexion with another; any connexion, correspondence or association, which can be conceived as naturally existing between things’ as well as relation as in ‘relationship’ (OED). Many ‘relations’ also included ‘true’ in their titles, indicating both a claim to truth and also, perhaps, anxiety that among many, often conflicting, accounts, theirs should be accepted as ‘the most true’.

the native which supports the motive and authorial stance of each text. It is possible, however, to read these texts otherwise, and to explore alternative, consequential and perhaps conflicting, constructions of the figure of the native which the texts, unconsciously and necessarily, also present.

### **Relations with readers**

Before looking in detail at the texts, I would like to give an impression of my own initial reactions to the natives they represent. Léry's Tupinamba of Brazil, one might feel, would be fun to spend some time with. Their hospitality, singing and laughter, their humanity, remain with readers, as they did with Léry himself.<sup>3</sup> Léry takes us with him into their houses, we hear them speak and debate with him, laugh with him and at him. The horror of their cannibalism is circumscribed: a threat only to themselves, not to the visitor (Léry's depiction of his misplaced terror when offered a roasted human foot makes the point humorously).<sup>4</sup>

Thomas Hariot's account of the Algonkian Indians of Roanoke, however, does not leave his readers, I would suggest, with lingering feelings of joy or a sense of the humanity of the people. They are worthy, one may conclude, of observation: different enough from 'us' (the text invites readers' complicity) to be interesting, and not, when unmolested, particularly threatening. But readers are never engaged on a personal level: we never enter their houses or participate in their ceremonies. There is a distance between the 'them' and 'us' within the text which the narrator never bridges or enables readers to cross.

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<sup>3</sup> For example: 'During that year or so when I lived in that country, I took such care in observing all of them, great and small, that even now it seems to me that I have them before my eyes' (Léry, *History*, p. 67), and 'Whenever I remember it, my heart trembles, and it seems their voices are still in my ears' (Léry, *History*, p. 144).

<sup>4</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 162-3.

It is hard to reconcile the fact that both Hariot and Ralph Lane are describing the same people at the same moment in time. The disinterested interest in the natives engendered by Hariot's text is completely at odds with feelings provoked by Lane's account. After reading Lane's text one feels the anxiety and desperation inherent in the stranger's position: dependent upon natives for sustenance, while knowing they are plotting one's betrayal and destruction. Unlike the Tupi, the Algonkian Indians Lane represents do not circumscribe their violence and protect the visitor; instead, their violence is directed towards the visitor (their singing, which he thinks signifies welcome, is interpreted by their guide as signalling impending attack).<sup>5</sup> While co-existence with Hariot's version of the Algonkians appears a possibility (with them in a position of fear and obedience in relation to the English), Lane's Algonkians are not a people one would feel safe spending any time at all with.

Also, a reading from today's perspective cannot avoid being tempered by the knowledge that these peoples and their cultures did not long survive their encounter with the Europeans. From our current position of knowledge we, as readers, can make sense, in ways which neither the natives nor the Europeans could, of the unprecedented waves of illness and death which passed in the wake of the newcomers. Also, today, the Tupi elder's questioning of European avarice, as presented by Léry, has continuing resonance. We now know where the path of greed and consumerism has led by our own time, and the continuing site of (uneven) struggle which it represents today between the developed and the developing worlds. The Amazon, home of the Tupi, is a specific locus of contention as illegal logging threatens the existence of the remaining indigenous peoples, habitats and wildlife.

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<sup>5</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 271.

Given that Hariot's and Lane's texts both represent the same people, and Léry's a people inhabiting a similar time and place, it may be concluded that the different readers' responses evoked have little, if anything, to do with what one might term 'truth', and everything to do with representational practice. The focus here will be on the textual strategies employed in each case to construct reader positions from which these responses seem natural, interrogating, in their specifics, the ways in which the texts present the natives and the narrator's (and hence readers') relation with them; at the same time, possible alternative readings will be suggested.

Léry, Lane and Hariot composed their accounts precisely at the time when the meanings and values of the New World, specifically in relation to its possibilities for settlement, were in process of formulation, and their own first-hand accounts transformed the real of the New World into intelligible cultural reality, contributing to a developing canon of New World literature. Such first-hand reports (sites of contested meanings themselves), were printed, translated, illustrated and widely circulated; in the process, their meanings were further differed and deferred. The proliferating number of texts both introduced the New World into European culture and were constitutive of attitudes towards it. In this way, their representational practices, including, for example, the meanings they gave to the term 'native', would form opinions and invade material practice.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Catherine Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 13.

## Motivation and organisation

When considering these three texts in detail, there are several initial questions to consider: what is the motive driving the production of the text (what did it ostensibly set out to achieve)? Who was its addressee? How is it organised?

Ralph Lane ends the introduction to his account of the first English colony in the New World with the statement: 'In the beginning whereof shalbe declared the conspiracie of Pemisapan, with the Sauages of the mayne to haue cutt vs off, &c'.<sup>7</sup> He signals from the outset to his addressee and employer, Sir Walter Raleigh, that the failure of the Roanoke colony was no simple matter of the incompetence of its leader, Lane himself, but was due, in some part at least, to the actions of the native inhabitants. He organises his account into two parts: the first outlines the explorations undertaken, and the second deals with the reasons for their abrupt departure. It is easy to identify the motive driving both sections of Lane's account: self-justification. Therefore, he is, one may expect, primarily interested in the effects of his self-representation in relation to the other actors in his narrative.<sup>8</sup> The difficulties he experienced due to the absence of promised supplies, equipment and men, are dealt with at length, equally balanced by descriptions of what he would have achieved had they been provided. He foregrounds his relations with the native inhabitants of Roanoke, the Algonkian Indians. His register is uniformly prejudicial, using the term 'savage' to describe them throughout.<sup>9</sup> The supposed native 'conspiracie' is a (convoluted) narrative thread running through the account, and Lane presents his frustration of it as masterly. Finally, the decisive factor forcing the colonists to leave is beyond his control: the weather. Lane depicts this as providential, as if 'the very hand of God as it seemed, stretched out to take vs from

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<sup>7</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 256.

<sup>8</sup> Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Lane appears to use the term 'savage' in a sense just coming into usage in English at the time: peoples who are uncivilized; existing in the lowest stage of culture. The term had the existing meanings of being 'in a state of nature, wild' with implications of ferocity and cruelty (OED).

thence'.<sup>10</sup> This is a final flourish to the project of self-justification, as Lane would not, one may suppose, have expected Raleigh to argue against the will of God. Raleigh's response does not appear to have been recorded. D B Quinn speculates that it was Raleigh who passed Lane's account to Richard Hakluyt the younger for publication in the first edition of *The Principal Navigations* (1589).<sup>11</sup>

Thomas Hariot, usually employed in Raleigh's household, was another member of the Roanoke expedition. He was, he writes simply, 'there employed in discovering'.<sup>12</sup> His specific remit was to record that which was different or noteworthy and would be of benefit to subsequent colonists. John White was employed to record similar information pictorially.<sup>13</sup> Hariot's account, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, is dedicated 'To the Aduenturers, Fauourers, and Welwillers of the enterprise for the inhabiting and planting in Virginia'.<sup>14</sup> To aid readers' 'readie view & easier vnderstanding', he tells them, he has organised his 'treatise' into three sections: merchantable commodities, sustaining commodities, and other commodities.<sup>15</sup> The third section concludes with 'a briefe description of the nature and maners of the people of the countrey'.<sup>16</sup> The motive driving Hariot's account, then, is the need to produce a practical guide to help future settlers, but, additionally, to encourage planters and investors. To do this, it exceeds its status as guide by strongly rebutting critical accounts circulated by some of Lane's men on their return. In this respect the *Briefe and True Report* is clearly pro-Virginia propaganda. Hariot's narrative purpose, like Lane's, may be expected to have effects upon his representation of the Indians and his relations with them. The first edition of Hariot's *Briefe and True Report* in English was published in

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<sup>10</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 292.

<sup>11</sup> Quinn, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 318.

<sup>13</sup> For further details of Hariot's task as observer see Quinn, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 37 and p. 51-2, and 'Anonymous notes for the guidance of Raleigh and Cavendish' in Quinn, *Roanoke Voyages*, pp. 130-8.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (London:n.p., 1588), frontispiece.

<sup>15</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 324.

<sup>16</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p.325.



London in 1588. It was subsequently included in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589 and 1600 editions), and, at the same time, Theodor de Bry in Frankfurt printed Latin, English, French and German editions which included the engravings from John White's paintings together with Hariot's commentaries on them.<sup>17</sup>

First published in 1578, seven years before the first Roanoke settlement attempt, Jean de Léry's *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil* chronicles the author's voyages and twelve-month stay in Brazil between November 1556 and May 1558. A French Calvinist, Léry sailed to Brazil to develop a Reformed refuge and mission as part of a French colony founded in 1555 by Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon.<sup>18</sup> Within eight months of their arrival religious tensions split the colony, and Léry and his fellow Calvinists left. For two months, while awaiting a suitable passage home, they lived with the native inhabitants, the Tupinamba (Tupi).<sup>19</sup> Léry never returned to Brazil. He published his account 18 years later, prompted, he states, by a desire to provide a 'true' account of his part in the break-up of the colony. This would contradict the 'lies' written by André Thevet in his *Singularities* (1558), which had been published, in revised and enlarged form, in 1575 as the *Cosmography*.<sup>20</sup> As well as providing this rebuttal, and generally discrediting Thevet on all levels, Léry's account expresses anti-Catholic sentiments, and provides moral instruction by drawing comparisons, usually unflattering

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<sup>17</sup> Quinn, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> For further details of the colony founded by Villegagnon see Whatley, *History*, pp. xx-xxii, and Léry's own Preface, pp. xlv-lix.

<sup>19</sup> A different perspective on living with the Tupinamba is provided by Hans Staden's account of his nine months held captive by them in the early 1550s. Neil L Whitehead summarises the differences 'As a repeated eyewitness to ritual anthropophagy, Staden's account stands apart from other French materials of this period which intellectualised Tupi rituals by analogy with Catholic and Protestant doctrinal disputes. Jean de Léry's far more extensive account of his travels to Brazil in 1556-8, likewise intricately described Tupi culture; but it is his position as captive that invests Staden's account with particular significance (Neil L Whitehead, 'South America/Amazonia: The Forest of Marvels' in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 122-138, p. 127).

<sup>20</sup> Full titles are *Les Singularitez de la France Antarctique* (Paris, 1558) and *La Cosmographie Universelle* (Paris, 1575).

to Europeans, between Tupi and European ways of life.<sup>21</sup> His depiction of the Tupi seems in some senses an incidental by-product of his literary enterprise.

Léry's intended audience was a general readership, and, following initial publication in 1578, the *History* was reprinted in increasingly enlarged editions in 1580, 1585, 1594, 1599-1600, and 1611. It was also incorporated in many collected volumes throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>22</sup>

### Constructing truth claims

The ancient authorities, as Vespucci and Fletcher pointed out, had written nothing on the New World, while popular expectations, as Columbus indicated, were informed by medieval writers such as Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville. The expectations of monstrous races and other medieval marvels inhabiting the boundaries of the world had been, from Columbus onwards, largely disappointed. From this starting point, the previously undifferentiated real of the New World was made intelligible to European readers and incorporated into their cultural reality primarily by the representations of first-hand witnesses. The difficulty for such authors, as commented on by Columbus and Fletcher specifically, was how to communicate unfamiliar, and in some cases marvellous, things in a credible way. The most frequently deployed textual strategy was the insistent asseveration of the authority of the eye-witness: the fact of utmost

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<sup>21</sup> Léry was not the only contemporary writer to compare European and New World cultures, as John H Elliott notes: 'However untypical, it is at least noteworthy that Bernardino de Sahagún, that great Franciscan ethnographer, should have committed himself to the statement that the allegedly barbarous peoples of Mexico were in some respects superior to other peoples with a greater presumption of civility' (J H Elliott, 'Renaissance Europe and America: A Blunted Impact?' in *First Images of America: the Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. by Fredi Chiappelli (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 11-23, p. 13).

<sup>22</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 220-1. For further details see chapter entitled 'Editions and Reception of Léry', *History*, pp. 220-224. Léry's account has been discussed in various works, such as by Michel de Certeau in 'Ethno-Graphy: Speech, or the Space of the Other: Jean de Léry' in *Writing and History*, pp. 209-243; Anthony Pagden in *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Stephen Greenblatt in *Marvelous Possessions*; Claude Lévi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques*.

importance was that the author had been there and seen the New World for himself.

This, as Fletcher asserted so vehemently, was to be valued above any theory or conjecture of those who stayed at home.<sup>23</sup> The argument proceeds that, if readers can be convinced of the truthfulness of the author, they will believe even the apparently incredible; if not, then the authority of the whole of the text is called into question. Two of the three texts discussed here deal, in some detail, with the problems inherent in textual claims to truth, and, while in process of arguing the case for their own textual veracity, fundamentally problematise the grounds of textual truth claims.

In the conclusion to the Preface of his *History*, Léry chooses to set out some possible objections to his eye-witness authority in order to counter them. He engages firstly with what he terms the most obvious: the commonly held view that 'since old people and travellers to distant lands cannot be contradicted, they give themselves license to lie'.<sup>24</sup> His counter argument is not altogether convincing. He dismisses those who choose not to believe some of the 'strange things, indeed' in his account on the basis that they would be the same people who also would not believe his account of the siege and famine at Sancerre, asking, if they will not believe an account of something which happened in France, 'how will they believe what can only be seen two thousand leagues from where they live: things never known (much less written about) by the Ancients; things so marvellous that experience itself can scarcely engrave them upon the understanding even of those who have in fact seen them?'.<sup>25</sup> That readers might be incredulous in response to both accounts does not prove that either is necessarily truthful. Léry continues by stating that he does not condemn, but does 'not endorse' the

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<sup>23</sup> For further discussion of the autoptic text see Pagden, 'The Autoptic Imagination', *European Encounters*, pp. 51-88.

<sup>24</sup> Léry, *History*, p. lx.

<sup>25</sup> Léry, *History*, p. lx. See my Chapter Four for further discussion of Léry's descriptions of European cannibalism.

false fabulous tales found in some books, where hearsay has been believed. He has some fellow feeling, he admits:

Yet I am not ashamed to confess that since I have been in this land of America, where everything to be seen – the way of life of its inhabitants, the form of the animals, what the earth produces – is so unlike what we have in Europe, Asia, and Africa that it may very well be called a ‘New World’ with respect to us, I have revised the opinion that I formerly had of Pliny and others when they describe foreign lands, because I have seen things as fantastic and prodigious as any of these – once thought incredible – that they mention.<sup>26</sup>

Here, L ry clarifies the point that the New World does contain marvels difficult to accept, and allows the possibility that his account may be discounted in the way he himself formerly discounted Pliny. But, he also argues that, with increasing knowledge, the incredible can be brought within the sphere of the known and credible.

L ry then examines his own language and writing style. Some readers, he suggests, may be dissatisfied with his lack of precise technical language, others, because his work is not ‘enriched with stories and examples taken from elsewhere’.<sup>27</sup> He points out that his New World quotations are mainly drawn from one source, the *Histoire G n rale des Indes Occidentales et Terres Neuves*, written by the Spanish historian Francisco L pez de G mara and translated into French in 1569. This is cited, L ry says, as it provides useful comparative information on the Indians of Peru.<sup>28</sup> This restricted use of sources is a conscious decision, he tells readers, as, in his ‘modest judgment’, ‘a history that is not bedecked with the plumes of others is rich enough when it is full of its

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<sup>26</sup> L ry, *History*, p. lx-lxi.

<sup>27</sup> L ry, *History*, p. lxi.

<sup>28</sup> L ry, *History*, p. lxi. Francisco L pez de G mara’s *Histoire G n rale des Indes Occidentales et Terres Neuves*, translated into French by Martin Fum e and published in 1569.

own subject'.<sup>29</sup> This is the aspiration for his own work, we may suppose. There may also be concern that the truth of his own text could be diluted by including the 'plumes' of others, as Léry equates a high style with lies, and implicitly invites an association between his own plain style and that of the language of the Bible, which, to contemporary readers, provided the revelation of the true word of God.<sup>30</sup> A summary paragraph rehearses his claim to veracity as eye-witness, and the novelty of his experience:

If someone finds it ill that hereafter, when I speak of savage customs, I often use this kind of expression – 'I saw', 'I found', 'this happened to me', and so on (as if I wanted to show myself off) – I reply that not only are these things within my own subject but also I am speaking out of my own knowledge, that is, from my own seeing and experience; indeed, I will speak of things that very likely no one before me has ever seen, much less written about.<sup>31</sup>

He goes on to stress the specificity of his account (a statement which provides a contrast to the inclusive non-specificity of Vespucci's text):

I mean this, however, not about all of America in general, but only about the place where I lived for about a year: that is, under the tropic of Capricorn among the savages called the *Tupinamba*.<sup>32</sup>

He then reiterates, in clear terms, the equation of simple language with truth, as the rationale for his use of plain language without digressions and additions:

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<sup>29</sup> Léry, *History*, p. lxi.

<sup>30</sup> For the importance of writing to the Calvinist project see Whatley's Introduction to Léry's *History*, p. xxxi, and her conclusion that 'Léry's Protestantism undoubtedly plays an important part in the value he places on the idea of a pure, uncorrupted written source' (Léry, *History*, footnote 17, p. 249).

<sup>31</sup> Léry, *History*, p. lxi.

<sup>32</sup> Léry, *History*, p. lxi.

Finally, I assure those who prefer the truth simply stated over the adorned and painted lie of fine language, that they will find the things put forth by me in this history not only true, but also, since they have been hidden to those who lived before our age, worthy of wonder.<sup>33</sup>

Léry ends the Preface with a short prayer, and an ‘Amen’.

In the Preface, Léry has presented himself as a credible (rather than credulous) first-hand observer, dealing with a very specific time and place, who transmits his experience as directly as possible to the reader by using plain language and an unadorned style. Paradoxically, he raises the subject of the literary tradition of fabulous travellers’ tales not to dismiss them, as experience and other writers appear to disprove them, but to revalidate some of them as proven by experience and new knowledge. Also, in another apparent paradox, Léry makes the case for the truthfulness of his own text in the conclusion to a Preface which has largely concerned itself with demonstrating how another writer’s text, Andre Thevet’s *Cosmography*, can be a site of inconsistencies and lies (which may be believed).

Léry very specifically undermines Thevet’s claims to the status of eye-witness, quoting him extensively, and using quite close critical reading to demonstrate to his readers Thevet’s subversion and appropriation of the written word.<sup>34</sup> Thevet uses the term ‘us’, Léry states, ‘to include himself’ in a specific episode which he was not involved in. Léry quotes dates to prove that Thevet left Brazil before Léry and his party arrived, so there could not possibly be an inclusive ‘us’. He also draws attention to the fact that Thevet, publishing his *Cosmography* ‘sixteen or seventeen years’ later than his original *Singularities*, is apparently less concerned about slander as, he parenthesises, ‘(perhaps supposing that we were all dead, or that if one of us were still alive he would

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<sup>33</sup> Léry, *History*, p. lxii.

<sup>34</sup> See also Léry, *History*, p. lv.

not dare contradict him)'.<sup>35</sup> Léry uses contradictions in Thevet's own text to rebut him: 'I have taken rather long in this preface to refute him, convicting him by his own writings'.<sup>36</sup> Having demonstrated, to his satisfaction, Thevet's errors and misrepresentations, Léry, while drawing attention to texts as potentially less than truthful, particularly when published so long after the event, admits to no paradox when making absolute truth claims for his own text. He also includes the text of a letter, from Villegagnon to Calvin, to substantiate his argument, offering it as additional proof that 'the original, written in brazilwood ink and still legible, bears witness to the facts'.<sup>37</sup>

A further paradox is Léry's argument concerning the superiority of writing over orality. He describes the amazement of the Indians when they first see writing, and notes the coercive effect it can have: 'they no longer dared to lie to the Spaniards or steal from them'.<sup>38</sup> He also sees the natives as suffering a material loss in not having access to the store of knowledge available from books. Writing, he states, is 'among the singular gifts which men over here [France] have received from God'.<sup>39</sup> Later on in his account, he relates that he has the words of a native song translated, part of which alludes to a great flood ('the closest they come to the Holy Scriptures', he notes). He concludes that this represents a knowledge of the universal flood which occurred in the time of Noah, and must have been passed down from father to son. But, he asserts, such oral transmission is easily corrupted:

In keeping with the habit of men, which is always to corrupt the truth and turn it into falsehood, together with what we have already seen – that, being altogether deprived of writing, it is hard for them to retain

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<sup>35</sup> Léry, *History*, p. xlvi.

<sup>36</sup> Léry, *History*, p. lviii.

<sup>37</sup> Léry, *History*, p. xlvi. This section on Léry's refutation of Thevet is deserving of an essay in its own right – given that it raises many of the issues which problematise texts, and specifically accounts of the New World.

<sup>38</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 135.

<sup>39</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 135.

things in their purity – they have added this fable (as did the poets),  
that their ancestors took refuge in the trees.<sup>40</sup>

Orality cannot then, according to Léry, retain truthfulness; stories are corrupted, slipping into fable. The implication is that the written word retains things ‘in their purity’, so that the truth, once fixed in writing, would remain unchanged through time. Yet Léry has himself demonstrated, at length, that this is not so. The ‘truth’ propounded in Thevet’s texts has come to be treated as ‘history’ (i.e. the truth) in Léry’s society, and it is this ‘corruption’, as he sees it, of the truth in writing, that Léry sets out to correct by presenting his alternative ‘history’. What Léry has demonstrated is that, contrary to his own views, writing is no more a guarantor of truth than are the Tupi’s oral traditions.<sup>41</sup>

Thomas Hariot’s concern is to convince readers of the veracity of his own account over and above that of contradictory accounts. His report is prefaced by an introduction written by Ralph Lane, who vouches for Hariot’s honesty and learning. The content is, Lane writes, assured by his own experience, as he too was there. Indeed, Lane states, the report is so true that he dares to ‘boldly auouch it may very well passe with the credit of trueth euen amongst the most true relations of this age’.<sup>42</sup> Its truth is discernible even amongst the most true, Lane claims.

Hariot addresses at the outset the fact that conflicting accounts of Virginia had been received, and that negative reports resulted in less profit and credit returning to investors than would otherwise have been the case. The contradictory diversity of accounts also undermined confidence, and therefore investment, in future ventures. Hariot terms some of these accounts ‘slanderous and shamefull’,<sup>43</sup> insisting that his

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<sup>40</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 144.

<sup>41</sup> See also Certeau, *Writing of History*, pp. 209-243.

<sup>42</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 319.

<sup>43</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 320.



own 'sequels of events' will put them to 'shame'.<sup>44</sup> He therefore presents his motive as the revelation of truth (though not disguising a reason for partiality), and claims that his knowledge, like Léry's, is based on his particular experience of having been there:

I haue therefore thought it good, beeing one that haue beene in the  
discouerie, and in dealing with the naturall inhabitantes specially  
imploied; and hauing therefore seene and knowne more then the  
ordinarie: to impart so much vnto you of the fruites of our labours, as  
that you may knowe how iniuriously the enterprise is slandered'.<sup>45</sup>

Readers are invited to agree that when they possess the knowledge Hariot is to impart they too will know that the venture has been slandered. Hariot offers two reasons for publishing the account when he does: firstly, so that potential investors will understand 'that there is sufficient cause' for further ventures to 'replant' the colony, and, secondly, to acquaint the reader with the country and the means to make 'profit and gaine; bee it either by inhabiting & planting or otherwise in furthering thereof'.<sup>46</sup>

Hariot, like Léry, raises possible objections to his text in order to refute them. The primary difficulty he identifies is that, among the diversity of other eye-witness accounts available to readers, his version may be doubted. Therefore, he explains the reason for their differences: 'And least that the substance of my relation should be doubtful vnto you, as of others by reason of their diuersitie; I will first open the cause in

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<sup>44</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 321. In the many pamphlets and sermons printed and circulated in support of the Virginia Company, as Kenneth Andrews has noted, there appears to be a 'common assumption that slanderers of Virginia and Doubting Thomases abounded, voicing objection after objection to which the writers felt obliged to reply – not always convincingly' (Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, p. 319). Mary Fuller also takes up this point, observing that the anxiety manifest in these texts concerning unauthorised reports suggests 'that individual colonists and sailors also wrote, and said, a good deal' (Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 90). However, she notes that, as is implicit in Andrews' discussion, 'surviving reports showing the early colonial enterprise in a harsh (read: objective?) light are rare' and that they appear primarily embedded in the authorised accounts of others, as in the example of Hariot's text discussed here (Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 90). One testimony which did survive is George Percy's 'Trew Relacyon', which, according to Fuller, contains 'perhaps the grimmest and most graphic contemporary account of the "starving time" in Jamestown during the winter of 1609-10' (this account was not published at the time, nor at all, until 1922) (Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 187, n. 17).

<sup>45</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 321.

<sup>46</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 321-2.

a few wordes, wherefore they are so different'.<sup>47</sup> Hariot constructs three miniature portraits of those who, even though they are apparently eye-witnesses, are the source, he argues, of incorrect and slanderous reports of Virginia. Firstly, there are disaffected men of 'badde natures' who 'for their misdemeanour and ill dealing in the countrey, haue beene there worthily punished' and have for this reason 'maliciously not onelie spoken ill of their gouernours, but for their sakes slaundered the countrie it selfe'.<sup>48</sup> Secondly, there are those who return among their friends and acquaintance and want to be seen as great travellers, to whom 'it woulde haue beene a great disgrace vnto them as they thought, if they coulde not haue saide much whether it were true or false'.<sup>49</sup> This type of witness, Hariot states, originate erroneous reports for several reasons:

Some haue spoken of more then euer they saw or otherwise knew to bee there; othersome haue not bin ashamed to make absolute deniall of that which although not by them, yet by others is most certainly and there plentifully knowne. And othersome make difficulties of those things they haue no skill of.<sup>50</sup>

Their ignorance, he explains, is due to many of them not leaving, or venturing far from, the island on which they were based, and not looking for anything other than 'to pamper their bellies' once gold and silver were not easily found.<sup>51</sup> Hariot dismisses them as having 'litle vnderstanding, lesse discretion, and more tongue then was needful or requisite'.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 322.

<sup>48</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 322.

<sup>49</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 323.

<sup>50</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 323.

<sup>51</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 323.

<sup>52</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 323.

His third vignette evokes those of ‘a nice bringing vp, only in cities or townes, or such as neuer [...] had seene the world before’.<sup>53</sup> They are miserable because ‘there were not to bee found any English cities, nor such faire houses, nor at their owne wish any of their olde accustomed daintie food, nor any soft beds of downe or feathers’. Made miserable themselves, he proposes, their accounts of the country are correspondingly miserable.<sup>54</sup>

Having offered these descriptions of the origins of the variety of negative accounts, Hariot states that the reports themselves are ‘trifles that are not worthy of wise men to bee thought vpon’ and with which he will not ‘trouble you withall’.<sup>55</sup> Thus, Hariot discredits accounts less favourable to Virginia than his by undermining the authors’ credibility as eye-witness observers, but without rehearsing any of their specific charges (this strategy contrasts with Léry’s tactic of close textual criticism of Thevet’s texts). He also flatters his readers by including them among the company of wise men who need not be troubled with such trifles. Hariot, his readers may presume, personifies the opposite of those he has sketched: not disaffected or ignorant; nor pretending knowledge he does not have for the sake of his reputation; not lazy, or unwilling to experience the country. He presents himself as the only ‘true’ eye-witness (Hariot does not, nor does Léry, cite any other witness accounts in support of his own assertions).<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 323. This description is reminiscent of the ‘featherbedd milksoppes’ so reviled by Francis Fletcher. Francis Fletcher, ‘Notes’, in *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake*, ed. Sir Richard Carnac Temple, (Amsterdam: Israel and Da Capo, 1971), pp. 88-142, p. 96.

<sup>54</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 323. Hariot’s assessment appears justified, by, for example, Kenneth Andrews, who makes the point that, from the beginnings of the settlement in Jamestown, the ‘social constitution’ of the colony was defective, with too high a proportion of gentlemen, ‘many of whom were averse to discipline and hard work’, with too few general labourers (and, initially, no women) (Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, p. 315). The lack of immediate discoveries of gold and the harsher than expected conditions which they experienced would provide an explanation for the miserable reports of such gentlemen. This attitude is one which can be seen, perhaps, voiced by Antonio and Sebastian in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, and in the experiences of the ‘brave gallants’ in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Sea Voyage* (see Chapter Four for further discussion of this point).

<sup>55</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 323.

<sup>56</sup> My focus on this section of Hariot’s text concerns the construction of truth claims. In her discussion of this passage Mary Fuller makes an interesting point on Hariot’s use of language. She draws on her reading of the commodities

In formulating their arguments for the truthfulness of their own texts, Léry and Hariot call into question both the veracity of other texts and the reliability of other eye-witnesses. Between the two, a range of arguments against the authority of the 'I' of the eye-witness account are rehearsed, and the assumption of writing as a site of 'truth' is problematised, with the result that both are demonstrated as unstable concepts. Ralph Lane, by contrast, makes no truth claims. He does not discuss the nature of his account as text at all. He does not acknowledge that his may be but one account among many, nor raise the possibility that his authority as eye-witness and author could be questioned. His truth claim resides solely in an assumption of textual transparency: the self-evident truth of the first-hand account. As a soldier who had served in Ireland, Lane may be assuming the style of a military despatch, purporting to report the transparent facts, in this case, the 'account of the particularities of the employments of the English men left in Virginia'.<sup>57</sup>

Each author, using these different textual strategies, attempts to construct a reader position from which their account will, above all others, be perceived as true. The authority of all three accounts centres on their authors' positions as eye-witnesses. This means, that, as well as living in the New World, they also lived with its native inhabitants. Exactly how they chose to represent their individual relationships with the native Indians can be read as another consequence of the various motives driving their texts, and will be the focus now.

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section of Hariot's account as a catalogue to note a 'polemic opposition of stable, full, referential language [of the catalogue] to language which is idle, empty, or imagined [which] linked them respectively with labor and idleness, as if the failure to labor somehow made one prone to imaginative creation or miscreation' (Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 52).

<sup>57</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 255.

## Making the relation: living with the Tupi



Figure 12 The weeping greeting

This woodcut, from the 1580 edition of Jean de Léry's *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, depicts three figures: a European man (signified as such by his clothing) seated in a native hammock; a naked native man with a bow working on an arrow using a metal knife (a European introduction); a naked native woman, crouching before the European man. That the scene takes place inside a native dwelling is signified by the presence of the hammock and the earthen pot (bottom right), the smooth floor and

absence of growing plants.<sup>58</sup> Both the crouching woman and the European man have a hand over their face. While the content of the illustration is clear, its meaning, the precise activity the actors are involved in, needs the explanation provided by L ry's accompanying text. He will, he tells readers, describe the 'ceremonies that the Tupinamba observe when they receive friends who go to visit them'.<sup>59</sup> The visitor enters the house of the *moussacat*, the head of household,<sup>60</sup> and sits on 'a cotton bed suspended in the air' without saying anything. Women then surround the bed, and 'crouching with their buttocks against the ground' they cover their eyes with their hands and weep in welcome, also saying 'a thousand things in his praise'.<sup>61</sup> In order to please them, the visitor, in response, 'must assume the appropriate expression' and, if not actually weeping, 'he must heave a few sighs and pretend to weep'.<sup>62</sup> During this time the *moussacat* will 'have spent a quarter of an hour or so pretending not to see you', working on his arrows or similar activity. This first part of the ceremony, L ry points out, is depicted in the illustration. When the *moussacat* does approach he uses a set form of words in greeting: "'Ere-joub ?" that is, "Have you come?" and then "How are you? what would you like?" which must be responded to 'according to the forms of conversation in their language'.<sup>63</sup> If the visitor wants to eat, food is brought: 'in fine earthen vessels the flour that they eat instead of bread, as well as meat, poultry, fish, and other food'.<sup>64</sup> Drink too is provided, the native *caouin*, if there is any.<sup>65</sup> The women also proffer small gifts, and expect in return combs, mirrors or beads (presumably only from

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<sup>58</sup> As compared with the other illustrations in the text.

<sup>59</sup> L ry, *History*, p. 164.

<sup>60</sup> The *moussacats* have previously been mentioned as 'the generous householders who give food to people who are passing through' (L ry, *History*, p. 144).

<sup>61</sup> L ry, *History*, p. 164.

<sup>62</sup> L ry, *History*, p. 164.

<sup>63</sup> L ry, *History*, p. 164.

<sup>64</sup> L ry, *History*, p. 164.

<sup>65</sup> *Caouin* is an alcoholic drink derived from fermented millet. L ry describes its mode of production in the text (L ry, *History*, p. 77).

European visitors). Should the visitor wish to stay, a 'fine white bed' is hung up, with small fires kept burning around it throughout the night.

This description of native ceremony is characteristic of Léry's text. He documents a ceremony or custom in some detail, in this case the weeping greeting, representing the scene not from the viewpoint of a detached observer, rather, from that of an active participant, involving readers intimately in the action. Léry represents himself, in words and pictures, as interacting with the natives not on his terms, but on theirs, by conforming to their culture. This form of textual representation validates the others' culture: it is a civil society which can be described, understood and participated in. It demonstrates that, while the culture's signifying gestures are different (the *moussacat's* greeting is 'a blandishment quite contrary to our embraces, hugs, kisses, and handclasps upon the arrival of our friends'),<sup>66</sup> the underlying system is comparable, and a difference of expression does not necessarily signify inferiority.<sup>67</sup>

The literary construction which places Tupi culture as worthy of equation to his own allows Léry to develop the moral instruction, which is central to his text, in a series of examples of contrast and comparison between the two. One point of contrast he selects as significant is that of European avarice against the Tupi's lack of interest in material things. He raises the issue in relation to the Tupi's apparent longevity:

Some of them reach the age of a hundred or a hundred twenty years  
[...]*this clearly shows not only the benign air and temperature of their  
country [...]*but also – for they all truly drink at the Fountain of Youth  
– the little care or worry that they have for the things of this world.

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<sup>66</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 164.

<sup>67</sup> Given my own reading of Léry's representation of Tupi culture, I would disagree with Thomas Scanlan's assertion that Léry 'does not endow them [the Tupinamba] with a fully operational human subjectivity' (Scanlan, *Colonial Writing*, p. 45). My argument here is that a textual strategy which presents the Tupi as fully human social subjects is necessary to Léry's project of providing a valid comparative culture to the European, and specifically Catholic, society which he is critiquing.

And indeed, as I will later show in more detail, since they do not in any way drink of those murky, pestilential springs, from which flow so many streams of mistrust, avarice, litigation, and squabbles, of envy and ambition, which eat away our bones, suck out our marrow, waste our bodies, and consume our spirits – in short, poison us and kill us off before our due time – nothing of all that torments them, much less dominates or obsesses them.<sup>68</sup>

Léry equates the clear waters of the Fountain of Youth and longevity with a lack of care for the ‘things of this world’, while graphically evoking its obverse of ‘pestilential streams’ from which flow avarice and the other wickednesses which poison drinkers and lead to premature death. In this construction of ‘us’ and ‘them’, it is us, Léry and his readers, who are at fault: we drink, not of the Fountain of Youth, but of the pestilential streams; it is ‘our bones’ which are eaten away, ‘our bodies’ wasted; we are the ones tormented, dominated and obsessed. New World reports of extreme longevity were frequent, as were criticisms of European avarice.<sup>69</sup> In this, then, Léry does not appear to be saying anything new. He does not leave the topic there though, returning later in the text to provide the additional detail he promises.

Léry reintroduces the topic following his description of brazilwood, a commodity valuable for the red dye produced from it, and the principal reason for Portuguese and French presence in the country. The Tupinamba, according to Léry, are ‘astonished to see the French and others from distant countries go to so much trouble to

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<sup>68</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 56-7. Whatley notes that New World societies were often seen as ‘survivals of the Golden Age’, with reports of longevity and criticisms of European avarice connected to this (Léry, *History*, p. 238, n. 2).

<sup>69</sup> A New World location for the myth of the Fountain of Youth was promoted in Spain by Juan Ponce de León who claimed to have found it, following the advice of local Indians, in Florida in 1513. See Jorge Magasich-Airola and Jean-Marc de Beer, *America Magica: When Renaissance Europe Thought it had Conquered Paradise*, trans. by Monica Sandor (London: Anthem Press, 2006), pp. 44-51.



get their *araboutan*, or brazilwood'.<sup>70</sup> Léry moves from this general statement to record, in a direct first-person speech, a specific conversation on the subject between himself and a Tupi elder. The old man (himself having drunk of the Fountain of Youth one may suppose) queries why the French and Portuguese travel so far just to get wood to warm themselves. Do they not have trees in their own country, he asks. Ah, yes, Léry replies, they do, but the brazilwood is not to burn, but is used to make dye, as the Tupi do. The elder 'immediately came back at me: "Very well, but do you need so much of it?"'.<sup>71</sup> In response to this question, Léry attempts to explain the rudiments of capitalism using, as his examples, trading commodities the Tupi would be familiar with:

'for there is a merchant in our country who has more frieze and red cloth, and even' (and here I was choosing things that were familiar to him) 'more knives, scissors, mirrors, and other merchandise than you have ever seen over here; one such merchant alone will buy all the wood that several ships bring back from your country'.<sup>72</sup>

The initial response is one of astonishment: "'you are telling me of wonders'" the Tupi is quoted as exclaiming. This wonderment does not last long, as 'having thought over' what Léry has told him, he questions further, wanting to know whether the rich merchant under discussion is mortal:

'But this man of whom you speak, who is so rich, does he never die?'  
'Certainly he does', I said, 'just as others do'. At that (since they are great discourses, and pursue a subject out to the end) he asked me,  
'And when he is dead, to whom belong all the goods that he leaves

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<sup>70</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 101.

<sup>71</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 102.

<sup>72</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 102.

behind?’ ‘To his children, if he has any, and if there are none, to his brothers, sisters, or nearest kinsmen’.<sup>73</sup>

The Tupi elder is given space to voice his, by now informed, opinion on the way of life of the Europeans, and to offer his own, alternative, philosophy:

‘Truly’, said my elder (who, as you will judge, was no dullard), ‘I see now that you *Mairs* (that is, Frenchmen) are great fools; must you labor so hard to cross the sea, on which (as you told us) you endured so many hardships, just to amass riches for your children or for those who will survive you? Will not the earth that nourishes you suffice to nourish them? We have kinsmen and children, whom, as you see, we love and cherish; but because we are certain that after our death the earth which has nourished us will nourish them, we rest easy and do not trouble ourselves further about it’.<sup>74</sup>

The Tupi’s conclusion is, Léry explains, a charitable mocking of Europeans and the dangers they endure to get rich, and indicates the Tupi’s ‘mortal hatred’ of the avaricious. For these, Léry imagines a fitting punishment: ‘I would to God that the latter [the avaricious] might be imprisoned among them [the Tupi], so that they might even in this life serve as demons and furies to torment those whose maws are insatiable, who do nothing but suck the blood and marrow of others’.<sup>75</sup> This echoes Léry’s earlier imagery of the streams of pestilence, but those whose marrow was previously sucked out by the torments of avarice are here pictured as active agents of their obsession: sucking the blood and marrow of others. He concludes: ‘To our great shame, and to justify our

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<sup>73</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 102.

<sup>74</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 102.

<sup>75</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 102-3.

savages in the little care that they have for the things of this world, I had to make this digression in their favor'.<sup>76</sup>

In this 'digression' Léry draws attention to one of the most significant points of difference between the Europeans and many of the New World peoples encountered: the different perceptions of property and wealth acquisition. Most of the native peoples described are presented as having little or no interest in accumulating property beyond that necessary for survival and personal decoration. In trade they generally did not drive what the Europeans considered to be hard bargains. Where the earth was uncultivated it was, to European sensibilities, uninhabited and ripe for possession. It was certainly not considered to be the property of the peoples who lived there as hunters and gatherers.<sup>77</sup>

While these sentiments are variously expressed in other European accounts, here, unusually, Léry stages a literal voicing of an individual native's point of view. He claims that this is 'a brief and true summary of the discourse that I have heard from the very mouth of a poor savage American'.<sup>78</sup> Clearly this claim could never have been verified; what is at issue is the use to which Léry puts the digression. He criticises the Tupi's overriding belief that nature and the earth will provide for them only to the extent that this power should rightly be ascribed to 'the power and providence of God', rather than to nature.<sup>79</sup> The Tupi point of view (whether real or invented by Léry) presents an alternative to the conventional and 'natural' European pursuit of wealth.

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<sup>76</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 103. Bruce R Smith has pointed out that the direct representation of native speech in New World narratives has origins in the classical literature of Herodotus and Thucydides, and has been 'filtered through established models from European historiography and literature'. Smith also proposes that such reporting serves as a means of domesticating native otherness, a significant factor in Léry's text, and, suggestively, that a change of ownership occurs when reported speech, an aural medium, is transcribed into a visual medium: 'At the most fundamental level of all, however, these reported speeches serve as a defense against the Indians' frightening otherness. Through the visual medium of print – a medium of communication to which the Indians themselves did not have access – the speeches no longer belong to Native American speakers: they belong instead to European readers. An aural event has been transformed into a visual event, and in that transformation it has changed ownership' (Bruce R Smith, 'Mouthpieces: Native American Voices in Thomas Harriot's *True and Brief Report of ... Virginia*, Gaspar Pérez de Villagrà's *Historia de la Nuevo México*, and John Smith's *General History of Virginia*', in *New Literary History*, 32 (2001), 501-517, p. 514).

<sup>77</sup> I have noted similar attitudes apparent in the accounts of Antonio Pigafetta and Francis Fletcher particularly, see Chapters One and Two.

<sup>78</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 102.

<sup>79</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 102.

Even if his contemporary readers had no difficulty dismissing the possible alternative culture proposed by the Tupi elder, it would not have been so easy to dismiss the graphic evocation of the extreme and seemingly unavoidable expression of the pursuit of wealth: avarice. Avarice, as one of the seven deadly sins, necessarily invokes its Christian context. In this digression Léry sets avarice in opposition to a 'lack of care for the things of this world' displayed by the Tupi, a stance implicitly evoking the teachings of Christ. The Tupi occupy a fundamentally Christian position (though it is made clear they know nothing of God), and are implicitly those who are having their 'blood and marrow' sucked out in the insatiable maws of the avaricious Europeans. In an inversion of expected norms, the pagan Tupi appears in a Christ-like, evangelising role (expressing New Testament views), while the Christians, guilty of avarice, are pictured as cannibalising the cannibals. The moral import of Léry's digression is clear for Christian European readers to consider.

The textual construction of the digression not only indicates Léry's concern, as a French Calvinist, for the moral rectitude of his own society, it also contributes towards readers' comprehension of the Tupi. In order to make the elder's questioning and critical conclusion on this aspect of European culture credible, the elder himself must be constructed as credible. Léry uses quoted speech (which he must either have translated, though he does not mention this, or, perhaps, invented) to show the elder asking his own questions, and demonstrate the development of the discussion leading up to the elder's conclusion. He twice uses parenthetical comments to direct readers to conclude that the Tupi are mentally agile and capable of constructive debate. Firstly, he asserts that the Tupi are 'great discoursers' who will pursue a subject 'out to the end', and, secondly, he prompts readers to 'judge' that the elder 'was no dullard'. This level of mental

sophistication, and the ‘charitably’ mocking conclusion the Tupi arrives at, is contrasted with readers’ normal expectations of a nation ‘which we consider so barbarous’.<sup>80</sup>

While Léry presents the Tupi as living closer to nature than his European readers (the French term he uses, *sauvage*, means living in a state of nature, not necessarily having cruel or savage connotations),<sup>81</sup> he makes clear that the common European perception of them as ‘barbarians’ is misplaced. The text does not present a simple opposition between nature and culture. Throughout, it is evident that a society is described: a society living according to an intelligible system of customs and practices, which are continually compared with those of Léry’s own society.<sup>82</sup> There are many examples of simple comparison and contrast, where readers’ attention is drawn to differences, without any conclusion made that one is superior to the other (the different modes of greeting, for example). Descriptions which relate the unknown and unfamiliar to the known and familiar are common in accounts of the New World, and this textual device may have been consciously employed by Léry to make his text more understandable to his reader (as he used examples familiar to the Tupi elder to illustrate his explanation of European trade).

On occasion, Léry is more prescriptive in presenting comparisons, directing readers to consider their own customs before condemning a native practice as disgusting. One example, particularly apposite for a Frenchman to consider, is the comparison between the native practice of making their alcoholic drink, *caouin*, and that

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<sup>80</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 102. The Tupi critique of European avarice, and Léry’s fantasy of punishment, is also discussed by Scanlan, who makes the point that, by putting words critical of Europeans in the mouths of the Tupi, Léry is constructing them as allies of a specifically Protestant cause, and, that while Léry authorises the Tupi to articulate this critique of Catholic colonial practices, he ‘stops short of embracing the Tupinamba as human beings. Indeed, they seem to function in the passage, not as human subjects, but as a means by which avaricious Europeans might be made to imagine themselves as victims, if they were to be transported to the colonial scene’ (Scanlan, *Colonial Writing*, p. 48). I concur with Scanlan on the articulation of criticism of Catholic colonial practice, but, as stated previously, would argue that Léry’s presentation of the Tupi precisely constructs them as human subjects, capable of intellectual and moral argument (this textual strategy does not, necessarily, present any objective ‘truth’ concerning Tupi intelligence or debating ability).

<sup>81</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 232, n. 1.

<sup>82</sup> However, while it seems implicit, there does not appear to be explicit statement by Léry of his awareness of the constructed character of culture.

of wine-making. The fermentation process is initiated by women boiling and chewing coarse millet. Léry and his men did try to make the brew themselves 'in a more seemly fashion', that is without the chewing and spitting, but it didn't work. He concludes that he is sure that some will find this nauseating, but:

To allay this disgust, I entreat them to remember what we do when we make wine over here. Let them consider merely this: in the very places where the good wines grow, at the time of grape-harvest the wine-makers get into the tubs and vats, and with their bare feet and sometimes with their shoes, they tread the grapes; as I have seen, they crush them again the same way on the winepresses. Many things go on which are hardly more pleasing than this custom of chewing among the American women. If thereupon someone says, 'Yes, but as it ferments in the vats the wine expels all that filth,' I reply that our *caouin* is purged the same way, and that therefore on this point the one custom is as good as the other.<sup>83</sup>

In this instance, Léry proposes that neither custom is better than the other, but, in practices surrounding the rearing of children he asserts that native practice is superior. His account introduces readers into the most intimate area of Tupi life, relating his attendance at a birth: 'I myself saw the father receive the child in his arms, tie off the umbilical cord, and cut it with his teeth'.<sup>84</sup> Immediately another point of difference is identified:

Continuing to serve as midwife, but unlike ours over here, who pull on the noses of newborn infants to make them more beautiful, he, on the contrary, pushed in his son's nose and crushed it with his thumb; this

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<sup>83</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 77.

<sup>84</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 154.

is done over there with all children, who are thought to be prettier when they are snub-nosed.<sup>85</sup>

Two differing cultural perceptions of beauty are here revealed, and two differing practices of attempting to assure the next generation's conformity with them (a concrete example of culture preceding the individual). No judgements are made on these practices, but, following a close description of the father's initial care of the infant (washing and then painting it, laying it in a hammock with gifts, and naming it), Léry identifies two particular practices which he strongly favours over European custom: feeding with mother's milk and not swaddling the child. He discusses the different climate and conditions as playing a part: 'ladies over here' stay in bed for two or three weeks following childbirth 'on account of our bad air',<sup>86</sup> and 'in the winter it is good to keep our children well wrapped [...]because otherwise they could not withstand the cold'.<sup>87</sup> Yet, air and climate alone do not account for adherence to the customs he criticises. He describes ladies as 'for the most part so delicate', that 'although they have no illness that would prevent them from nurturing their infants as the American women do, as soon as they are delivered of them they are inhuman enough to send them away'.<sup>88</sup> He makes clear that, in his view, such delicacy is mere affectation, as he continues: 'in any case they must be partly grown and old enough to provide some pastime before their mothers will endure their presence'.<sup>89</sup> Children are treated as an entertainment rather than a responsibility in this society, and, in this, Léry argues, custom conflicts with nature, as 'it is up to each species to take care – indeed, to be at pains – to raise its progeny itself'.<sup>90</sup> The swaddling issue is more straightforward: Léry

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<sup>85</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 154.

<sup>86</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 154.

<sup>87</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 155.

<sup>88</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 154.

<sup>89</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 154-5.

<sup>90</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 155.

points out that the belief that swaddling prevents deformity and bowed legs is unfounded. His observation of the unswaddled Tupi provides the evidence: 'Although that custom is by no means observed for American children (who, as I have said, are from their birth held and laid down without swaddling), nevertheless you could not find children who walk straighter than they do'. Léry states his own belief that it is better to allow children to 'caper about freely' than to keep them confined.<sup>91</sup>

Léry's description of the intimacies of Tupi society includes their sexual practices, which he compares with his own culture's mores. Léry observes, as Pigafetta had also noted, that the Tupi, contrary to 'what some people have imagined', are sexually continent: 'the men preserve the modesty of nature by never consorting with their wives in public'. In this respect, Léry maintains, they are preferable to the Greeks, and he quotes the example of a 'base' Cynic philosopher who, when 'caught in the act, instead of being ashamed said that he was planting a man'.<sup>92</sup> Tupi practice is also superior to 'those stinking billygoats that one sees in our time over here, who have not hidden themselves when committing their lustful acts'. Both are, Léry concludes, 'incomparably more disgusting' than are the Tupi. Léry, then, appears to apply the same cultural frame as Pigafetta and Fletcher to issues of sexuality and privacy. He also draws direct comparison between naked native women and clothed European women. The 'crude nakedness' of the Tupi women, Léry argues, is less of an 'enticement to concupiscence' than the 'elaborate attire, paint, wigs, curled hair, great ruffs, farthingales, robes upon robes, and all the infinity of trifles with which the women over here disguise themselves'.<sup>93</sup> These, Léry proposes, are 'beyond comparison the cause of more ills than the ordinary nakedness of the savage women', even though their beauty is

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<sup>91</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 155.

<sup>92</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 156. Léry does not name Diogenes specifically.

<sup>93</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 67.



‘by no means inferior’ to the European.<sup>94</sup> Léry may, as Michel de Certeau suggests, be invoking the Platonic opposition between ‘the *Amor divinus* (nude) and the *Amor humanus* (clothed)’, with the Tupi women representing ‘the sign of theophanies, unveilings of divine Love’ in contrast to the ‘clothed and decorated’ European women who represent ‘earthly Love’.<sup>95</sup>

It is unsurprising that the Calvinist Léry, in addition to his implicit criticisms, makes many direct jibes against Roman Catholicism throughout his text. These often take the form of using Catholic terms to describe the Tupi. Their shamans, for example, are described going from village to village ‘like popish indulgence-bearers’.<sup>96</sup> A Tupi in his full feather headdress and bracelets is ‘in his full Papal splendor’.<sup>97</sup> Today’s readers may suppose that such comparisons would be offensive to Catholic sensibilities. But perhaps the most startling example of propinquity Léry presents is that of Catholicism and cannibalism. Disagreement arose between the Calvinists and Villegagnon on the doctrine of transubstantiation (the Catholic belief that the bread and wine of the Mass are changed to the body and blood of Christ) as opposed to the Calvinist belief in consubstantiation (that the bread and wine are symbolic). Villegagnon’s position is represented as one of confusion, rejecting both, while insisting that ‘the Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ’ were contained in the bread and wine. In this, Léry concludes, they ‘wanted not only to eat the flesh of Jesus Christ grossly rather than spiritually, but what was worse, like the savages named *Ouetaca* [...]they wanted to chew and swallow it raw’.<sup>98</sup> Léry equates Villegagnon, propounding a view close to that of Catholic

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<sup>94</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 67.

<sup>95</sup> Certeau, *Writing of History*, p. 234.

<sup>96</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 140.

<sup>97</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 64.

<sup>98</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 41.

transubstantiation, to the *Ouetaca* tribe, the most fierce and wild cannibals, at war with everyone, including the Tupi, who eat flesh raw, 'like dogs and wolves'.<sup>99</sup>

Unlike the *Ouetaca* manifestation of cannibalism, Léry presents Tupi cannibal practice as an integral part of a social structure shared between neighbouring tribes (excepting the *Ouetaca*); it is not indiscriminate, but the result of enmity between particular tribes. In this respect, Léry's account echoes Pigafetta's, but Léry augments his with additional detail drawn from his personal experience. His report of the ceremonial aspect of Tupi cannibalism follows his description of their methods of warfare, and the specific battle he attended. He relates how prisoners taken in battle by the Tupi are held captive for varying periods, sometimes taking a Tupi wife. At the appointed time, the execution, by a single blow to the head, forms part of an elaborate ceremony during which, immediately prior to death, the captive is allowed to speak: to proclaim his valour and readiness to die. The body is subsequently butchered and shared between neighbours. The roasted meat is not eaten for nutrition, but is symbolic, to 'strike fear and terror into the hearts of the living'.<sup>100</sup> This may constitute, for Léry's readers, an inversion of consubstantiation. Cannibalism is situated in the context of a social structure: it is accepted on all sides, and the condemned has a place from which to speak. In Léry's text the cannibal is present, has a voice, and is, to some extent, domesticated. This is unlike the cannibals of Columbus's text, who are never present, always elsewhere, almost mythical. However, Léry constructs a boundary in his text, locating the *Ouetaca* outside it. Léry's representation of Villegagnon also places him, and by implication Catholicism, beyond the boundary also.

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<sup>99</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 28-9, and p. 236, n 7. Scanlan provides a useful biographical contextualisation of Léry's experiences of cannibalism in the siege of Sancerre, and suggests that Léry connects the 'unassimilable horror' (quoting Frank Lestringant) of cannibalism directly with the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Léry's assertion of his refusal to 'really' eat human flesh is, according to Scanlan, a manifestation of a primarily religious, specifically Protestant, identity, rather than a French identity (Scanlan, *Colonial Writing*, p. 43-4).

<sup>100</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 122-7.

Léry describes European men who have crossed cultural boundaries by living with native women. Throughout his account Léry interacts with men he terms 'Norman interpreters', who live among the natives, some taking Tupi wives. Léry describes them living as atheists, polluting themselves by 'all sorts of lewd and base behaviour'. What is worse, he asserts, is that 'some of them, surpassing the savages in inhumanity, even boasted in my hearing of having killed and eaten prisoners'.<sup>101</sup> This is a level of participation in Tupi society with which, unlike the weeping greeting, Léry will not engage. As with childbirth, however, Léry provides readers with an intimate view of native life. He recounts his first visit to a Tupi village, before he was proficient in the language. A prisoner has been killed that day, and the Tupi are drinking and dancing. He and the Norman interpreter are to stay overnight. The interpreter leaves Léry alone with some natives in their hut. He tries to sleep, but the noise of revelry keeps him awake. Then 'one of them approached me with the victim's foot in hand, cooked and *boucané*' asking if he wants to eat some. Léry does not understand, and thinks he has been betrayed with the proffered foot signalling the threat that he 'was about to be similarly dealt with'.<sup>102</sup> He spends the night terrified and sleepless, surrounded by natives (they are happy that he is there, and stay close as a demonstration of affection). In the morning his interpreter returns, and the misunderstanding is revealed. Léry concludes: 'My one consolation was the hoot of laughter they sent up – for they are great jokers – at having (without meaning to) given me such a scare'.<sup>103</sup> Here Léry manages even to turn cannibalism into a humorous incident, which serves to increase, rather than diminish, the reader's perception of the humanity of the Tupi.

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<sup>101</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 128.

<sup>102</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 163.

<sup>103</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 164.

While Léry appears to domesticate cannibalism in the Tupi environment, it is always, nevertheless, unacceptable to him. However, he does not allow his readers' expected horror to pass unchallenged, as he again draws comparisons with his own society. Describing the metaphorical cannibalism of 'our big usurers', who are 'sucking blood and marrow, and eating everyone alive', he concludes that they are 'even more cruel than the savages I speak of'.<sup>104</sup> Europeans also resort to actual cannibalism, he states, and recalls several examples from Italy and France, drawing specifically on his knowledge and experience of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in August 1572, and the siege of Sancerre, January to August 1573. As Frank Lestringant observes, the 'trauma of this second experience is superimposed on the first'.<sup>105</sup> Léry concludes:

So let us henceforth no longer abhor so very greatly the cruelty of the anthropophagous – that is, man-eating – savages. For since there are some here in our midst even worse and more detestable than those who, as we have seen, attack only enemy nations, while the ones over here have plunged into the blood of their kinsmen, neighbors, and compatriots, one need not go beyond one's own country, nor as far as America, to see such monstrous and prodigious things.<sup>106</sup>

It is possible to speculate that Léry's particularly measured treatment of Tupi cannibalism is another consequence of his textual strategy. To treat cannibalism sensationally (as Vespucci did), as wholly barbaric and horrifying, would undermine his attempts to portray the Tupi as living within a civil society. If he were to do this, his moralising comparisons between Tupi and European society would not be credible. Also, by situating it within ceremony, Léry echoes the link he has made between

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<sup>104</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 132.

<sup>105</sup> Frank Lestringant, *Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne*, trans. by Rosemary Morris (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), p. 74 (qtd. in Scanlan, *Colonial Writing*, p. 42).

<sup>106</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 133.

cannibalism and the Catholic belief in transubstantiation. This invites readers to accept his view of Villegagnon, whose reversion Léry blamed for the failure of the French colony in Brazil.

By taking his readers inside the Tupi houses, Léry puts their customs and practices squarely before the gaze of his European readers, and, should they recoil in disgust, they are encouraged to reconsider, either because they engage in equally disgusting, though different, practices themselves, or, because their own practices are demonstrably less humane, or more disgusting. The dual motives of Léry's text, to describe Tupi society and critique his own, radically undermine the possibility of a stable opposition between primitive and civilised. By using Tupi society as the tool to criticise his own, he necessarily, if unconsciously, reveals it as operating, at a fundamental level, within the same system: what we would today call culture.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> My argument here has primarily concerned the specifics of Léry's textual construction of Tupi culture as a necessary consequence of his motivation to critique his own society, and, in particular, Catholicism. Reading from a perspective enquiring specifically into the genesis of Protestant colonial identity, Thomas Scanlan provides an interesting insight when he proposes that Léry 'went to the New World hoping to discover a *literal* space where Protestantism might flourish, but upon his return to Europe, he would realize that he had instead found a *figurative* space from which he might articulate a compelling critique of Catholic Europe and a powerful new notion of European Protestant identity' (Scanlan, *Colonial Writing*, p. 41).

## Making the relation: observing the Algonkians



Figure 13 'Their manner of prainge with Rattels about te fyer'

The John White painting of Algonkian Indians around a campfire, as engraved by Theodor de Bry, is a comparable image to that of the weeping greeting in Léry's text. Here, the scene takes place outdoors. There is a campfire, with five female and six male natives seated or standing around it. The background depicts water, a river or sound, with fish weirs and natives fishing from canoes. Five of the figures around the fire wield round objects on sticks. As with the image in Léry's account, the accompanying text is

necessary to reveal the significance of the scene. It is, Hariot's commentary informs readers, 'Their manner of prainge with Rattels abowt te fyer'.<sup>108</sup> When the Indians have escaped some danger, or returned from war, they make 'a great fyer' as a token of their joy. The men and women sit around it together, holding 'a certaine fruite in their hands like vnto a rownde pompió or a gourde'.<sup>109</sup> This fruit has had its seeds removed and been refilled with small stones 'to make the more noise'. It is then attached to a stick. It serves to accompany them singing 'after their manner' and making merry. Hariot concludes the commentary: 'as myselfe obserued, and noted downe at my beinge amonge them. For it is a strange custome, and worth the obseruation'.<sup>110</sup>

Unlike the illustrations in Léry's *History* which are (with one exception) fully integrated within the text, the set of engravings for which Hariot wrote commentaries were separate from his account.<sup>111</sup> The images are, in consequence, decontextualised by comparison with those in Léry's text. In this example, readers are told, such a fire would be built following an escape from danger, or a war, but this is general, not specific, information. Readers are not witnessing a particular event, with individuals taking part; rather, it is the staging, or re-presentation, of a type of activity. Also, the activity is not situated within a narrative of social custom or ceremony (compare with Léry's detailed explanation of the Tupi weeping greeting); consequently, readers cannot understand the significance of what the Indians are doing, or why. There are no individuals with whom readers could identify; the only details supplied are the practicalities of how the rattles are made. For Hariot the scene, and the native singing, is 'strange', and readers can make no more of it than he gives them. Hariot writes that he

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<sup>108</sup> Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* published, with engravings, by Theodor de Bry, Frankfurt, 1590, plate XVII. This edition included commentaries on the engravings: Hariot provided the additional text. The images form a separate section following the main text.

<sup>109</sup> Hariot, de Bry edition, p. 54-5.

<sup>110</sup> Hariot, de Bry edition, p. 54-5.

<sup>111</sup> Hariot published his *Briefe and True Report* in 1588 without images.

observed this while he was among them, yet, even though he is there, he does not provide any indication that he participated. The spectators' position which the illustration constructs is directly comparable with the narrative position Hariot constructs for his readers: apart, outside looking in.

Following his didactic introduction, Hariot begins his descriptions of the commodities of Virginia with no further preface. His treatment of all of the commodities in the three sections follows roughly the same format: the commodity is introduced and its appearance briefly described, together with its method of use and any items of interesting information to hand. Commodities in the 'merchantable' section are dealt with first, discussed in terms of their ease of cultivation and potential to turn a profit, for example:

Cedar, a very sweet wood & fine timber; wherof if nests of chests be there made, or timber therof fitted for sweet & fine bedsteads, tables, deskes, lutes, virginalles & many things else, (of which there hath beene prooffe made already), to make vp fraite with other principal commodities will yeeld profite.<sup>112</sup>

Hariot's uniform style of presenting these descriptions has been described, aptly, by Mary Fuller, as taking the form of catalogue entries, which, as well as providing 'an inclusive analysis and of a multitude of things needing to be catalogued', performs a more complicated operation on its components.<sup>113</sup> As a contribution to the project of propagandising Virginia, the commodities are not only carefully described, but, in addition, their future possibilities, as Fuller points out, are hypothesised in 'a future accusative assertion of what those things "in time" will become, the larger shape of expectation standing behind the object itself. The list's items shade from the present to

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<sup>112</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 329-330.

<sup>113</sup> Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 45.



the merely hoped-for, directing the reader on how to multiply its terms'.<sup>114</sup> This textual strategy appears designed to appeal to the aspirations of future investors and settlers.<sup>115</sup>

The commodities to be used for sustenance are divided into those crops which are cultivated, followed by roots, fruits, beasts, fowl, and fish. Hariot makes clear that these are what the natural inhabitants eat, and what the English, while they were there, ate also. The third section contains a variety of items which, Hariot states, are 'things as is behoofull for those which shall plant and inhabit to know of'.<sup>116</sup> This section includes listings for building materials, trees, stone, brick and lime, and concludes with a 'description of the nature and manners of the people of the country'.<sup>117</sup>

Throughout these descriptions Hariot uses a consistent focus and frame for his utilitarian descriptions. There are no digressions for personal anecdote or mention of interesting incidents with the natives. The imperative conveyed to readers is to name and record the commodities themselves. For example, the entry for fowl begins:

Turkie cockes and Turkie hennes: Stockdoues; Partridges: Cranes:  
Hernes: & in Winter great store of Swannes & Geese. Of al sorts of  
fowle I haue the names in the countrie language of fourscore and sixe  
of which number besides those that be named, we haue taken, eaten,  
& haue the pictures as they were there drawne.<sup>118</sup>

This paragraph comprises almost half of the total entry for birds, with the remainder given over to assuring readers that many more have been seen and eaten, and, given a 'better furnished and stored' expedition, these would be pictured and published. The

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<sup>114</sup> Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 50.

<sup>115</sup> The positive impression created by Hariot is undercut, in the same terms, in Lane's account, as discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>116</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 362.

<sup>117</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 362.

<sup>118</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 358.

paucity of visual and personal detail becomes apparent if this passage is compared with a representative extract from Léry's chapter on birds:

The first one, which the savages call *arat*, has wing and tail feathers about a foot and a half long, one half of each feather as red as fine scarlet, and the other half a sparkling sky-blue (the colors are divided from each other along the quill), with all the rest of the body the color of lapis lazuli; when this bird is in the sunlight, where it is ordinarily to be seen, no eye can weary of gazing upon it.<sup>119</sup>

Léry also makes connections for readers between the wildlife and Tupi beliefs, noting, for example, that they will not eat slow-moving birds, beasts and fish, as they believe 'it would keep them from running when they are being pursued by their enemies'.<sup>120</sup> In Hariot's account commodities are described in isolation, with no indication of any which play a part in Algonkian society or have symbolic meanings attached to them. There is one exception: tobacco. The dried and powdered tobacco is described as invested with symbolic meaning, as 'they thinke their gods are maruelously delighted therwith'.<sup>121</sup> Its ritual uses include being cast into hallowed fires, or into the air or water, and:

After an escape of danger, they cast some into the aire likewise: but all done with strange gestures, stamping, sometime dauncing, clapping of hands, holding vp of hands, & staring vp into the heauens, vttering therewithal and chattering strange words & noises.<sup>122</sup>

As with the description of the activities around the campfire, Hariot describes native actions but does not provide any explanation of them. Here, the scene is presented as

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<sup>119</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 87.

<sup>120</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 86.

<sup>121</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 345.

<sup>122</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 345.

inexplicable: the gestures are 'strange' and the Indians chatter 'strange' words and make unintelligible 'noises'. Given that Hariot was familiar with the Algonkian language he could easily have translated (or have had translated) the 'strange words' and suggested an explanation of the ceremony's significance to readers. However, this passage provides a further example of a textual strategy which appears to exclude, rather than include, readers from real cultural understanding.<sup>123</sup>

The natives, while a constant presence in Hariot's descriptions of commodities, are always similarly distanced. They are reported as *having done* things, but any dialogue Hariot may have had with them to ascertain the information is never quoted. A typical example of this treatment is the description of the *Melden*:

There is an hearbe which in Dutch is called *Melden* [...]of the seede thereof they make a thicke broth, and pottage of a very good taste: of the stalke by burning into ashes they make a kinde of salt earth, wherewithall many vse sometimes to season their broths; other salte they knowe not.<sup>124</sup>

This grammatical construction effectively removes both Hariot and the Indians as active voices. While both he and they must have been present to discuss this plant, and throughout its cooking and eating, none of this interaction or activity appears in the text. Throughout Hariot's account he adopts this textual style, with the result that, for readers, the natives remain a curiously absent presence. And, as the scene around the campfire illustrated graphically, Hariot is himself absent.

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<sup>123</sup> Smith makes the general point, in relation to aural experience, that what constitutes 'noise' is culturally defined: noises, as opposed to intelligible sounds, 'are what people in a given culture *hear* as noise' (Smith, 'Mouthpieces: Native American Voices', p. 510). He also notes Hariot's hostility to the initial experience of hearing Indian cries on their first encounter, and he suggests a fundamental difference between vision and sound, which perhaps may explain Hariot's reaction. Vision enables the viewer to remain separate, maintaining the distance between subject and object, whereas, sound is more invasive, as 'a sound physically *overwhelms* me. It compromises my separateness' (Smith, 'Mouthpieces: Native American Voices', p. 504). Hariot's text, *I have proposed*, strives throughout precisely to maintain separateness, to objectify the Indians represented.

<sup>124</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 340.

Another trace of the presence of the natives in the text is the use of their names for commodities (the *Melden* example is rather an exception). Usually Hariot provides the Indian name together with the English equivalent where there is one.<sup>125</sup> This may appear to be an example of Hariot valuing native tradition, as re-naming was an important signifier of the coloniser's possession of a place (compare with Columbus's renaming of all the islands he possessed in the West Indies). However, there is a more pragmatic and prosaic reading: in a handbook for planters, it is sensible to supply both names, as the settlers would, at least initially, be dependent on the natives for help and provisions. They would need to know, therefore, the native names for things required for survival.

In addition to providing English translations of native names for commodities, and information on how to prepare and cook them, Hariot also compares the commodity to the nearest English equivalent. For example when discussing beans:

*Okindgier*, called by vs Beanes, because in greatnesse & partly in shape they are like to the Beanes in England; sauing that they are flatter, of more diuers colours, and some pide. The leafe also of the stemme is much different. In taste they are altogether as good as our English peaze.<sup>126</sup>

The similarity is somewhat approximate in this instance, but as far as possible, Hariot is trying to relate the new things he is seeing to those which would be familiar to his readers, the prospective planters. In this way, Virginia is rendered less strange and threatening. It would be reassuring if one could eat familiar foods, with the added

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<sup>125</sup> Hariot had learnt the Algonkian language in England prior to the expedition, as he taught English to two Algonkians, Manteo and Wanchese, brought to England by Amadas in 1584. They returned with Hariot and worked extensively as translators for the expedition. Wanchese at some point turned against the English (Quinn, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 37).

<sup>126</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 339.

incentive that they taste better, and grow more quickly; Hariot finds commodities which fit the bill:

*Wickonzówr*, called by vs Peaze, in respect of the beanes, for distinction sake, because they are much lesse; although in forme they litle differ: but in goodnesse of taste much, & are far better then our English peaze. Both the beanes and peaze are ripe in tenne weekes after they are set.<sup>127</sup>

Even when Hariot introduces items which do not have any English equivalent, they are described in terms of what is known and familiar. For example the roots *Openauk*, *Okeepenauk* and *Kaishucpenauk*, are described as ‘of the bignes of walnuts’, ‘of the bignes of a mans head’, and ‘about the bignes of hen eggs & nere of that forme’ respectively.<sup>128</sup>

Hariot uses the terms ‘inhabitants’, ‘natural inhabitants’, or ‘people of the country’ throughout his text to nominate the Algonkian Indians. He uses the term ‘savage’ only twice. Again, this may be an example of Hariot’s humanity, or, and perhaps additionally, it may be read as another device of representational practice used in consequence of the motives driving his text. In this case, the term ‘natural inhabitants’ is neutral. It does not have any connotations of savagery, lack of civility, or barbarity (as the term savage does in English). If the project was to write pro-Virginia propaganda specifically to contradict the accounts of Lane and his men regarding the

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<sup>127</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 339.

<sup>128</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 346-8. Andrew Fitzmaurice’s analysis of the use of rhetorical tropes in New World promotional tracts offers additional insight into Hariot’s representational strategy. In order to persuade readers of the positive qualities of Virginia, Hariot’s text must, by implication, ‘seek a change in the audience’s conception of the subject’, and, as Fitzmaurice explains: ‘The desire for such a change is a necessary condition for persuasion. The act of attempting to persuade initiates two impulses. On the one hand, the orator is attempting to stretch the mind of the audience to encompass something they had not previously held to be true. The other impulse is clearly introspective: the thing which is new is presented in terms of what is familiar. The audiences of Elizabethan and Jacobean authors promoting New World colonies either regard that world as alien or are indifferent to it. The change sought in the minds of the audience by those authors is to bring them to the belief that the New World embraces the qualities which they value most in the Old (Andrew Fitzmaurice, ‘Classical Rhetoric and the Promotion of the New World’ in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 58 (1997), 221-243, p. 227).

nature of the Indians, Hariot needed to find terms which did not connote threat or danger to his readers, the prospective planters and investors. The unfamiliar crops and commodities were rendered more familiar by their comparison with items from home. The inhabitants are rendered unthreatening both by the terminology used to describe them, and by their passive presence in the text, as the objects of Hariot's observations, but not speaking directly to readers.

The driving motive of presenting the natives as unthreatening is clearly apparent as Hariot begins the section of his account which deals directly with a description of the 'nature and manners of the people'.<sup>129</sup> He opens with the caveat that he is leaving 'large discourse thereof vntil time more conuenient hereafter', making clear that here his purpose is to tell only so much:

as that you may know, how that they in respect of troubling our inhabiting and planting, are not to be feared, but that they shall haue cause both to feare and loue vs, that shall inhabite with them.<sup>130</sup>

The following paragraphs make the case to substantiate his claims that the Indians will not cause difficulties for the planters. He describes firstly their semi-nakedness (conforming to the conventional initial observation of levels of nakedness), followed by a comparison of their stature, noting they are the same as 'wee in England' (neither prodigious nor monstrous, and not giants). Their weapons are described as clearly inferior to European weapons: only bows and arrows and wooden truncheons with 'targets [shields] made of barks' and 'some armours made of stickes wickered together with thread', with which to defend themselves.<sup>131</sup> The Indians have no edge tools or weapons of iron with which 'to offend'.<sup>132</sup> And, as it is also observed that they do not

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<sup>129</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, pp. 368-382. The final part of the third section of Hariot's account.

<sup>130</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 368.

<sup>131</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 369.

<sup>132</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 369.

have the knowledge to make any, the first paragraph of description effectively disarms the Algonkians, for the present and in the future.

Hariot then describes the nature of their towns: the number and size of the houses, and what they are made of (readers do not enter inside a native habitation). What is given to be of significance is that the towns are small, containing at most thirty houses, and they have no substantial fortification: a further message of reassurance to readers familiar with walled town defences. The system of government is outlined: a 'Wiróans or chiefe Lorde' would govern one or more towns. The greatest chief known of governed eighteen towns. The significance of this becomes clear: even the most powerful chief is only 'able to make not aboue seuen or eight hundred fighting men at the most'.<sup>133</sup> Hariot's readers would also be familiar with the practice of English lords raising armies in times of war, and the numbers figuring here are such that Hariot would expect them to be reassured that large armies could not be amassed against the settlers. A lack of cohesion among the Indians is also signalled by his inclusion of the detail that every 'government' has a different language, the differences increasing with the distance they are apart.<sup>134</sup> The theme is continued as Hariot describes the Indians' internal wars as small-scale, comprising surprise, ambush, or 'some suttile deuises', while set battles are rare. Should the Indians attempt to make war against the English, the overwhelming advantage, given their better discipline and weapons, would be with the English. As experience showed them, in battle, the Indians could do little but retreat quickly: 'the turning vp of their heeles against vs in running away was their best defence'.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 370.

<sup>134</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 370.

<sup>135</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 371.

Having portrayed the Algonkians as no match for the English in terms of manpower, arms or defences, Hariot then presents them as potentially ideal pupils for English tutelage. They are, he says, poor and lacking in knowledge, but they 'seeme very ingenious', as, in what they do, they 'shewe excellencie of wit'.<sup>136</sup> Having set a foundation which implies that the Indians have the capacity to learn, he provides a motive for their wanting to do so:

And by howe much they vpon due consideration shall finde our manner of knowledges and craftes to exceed theirs in perfection, and speed for doing or execution, by so much the more is it probable that they shoulde desire our friendships & loue, and haue the greater respect for pleasing and obeying vs.<sup>137</sup>

The power relations Hariot envisages are apparent here. And he continues with the assumption: 'if meanes of good gouernment bee vsed, that they may in short time be brought to ciuilitie, and the imbracing of true religion'.<sup>138</sup> That the English will take up the position of governors over the Indians follows easily from Hariot's assumption that knowledge is power.<sup>139</sup>

Hariot acknowledges religion as a source of power in society. He follows the reference to 'true religion' with a description of the religion the Algonkians currently follow, which, 'although it be farre from the truth', its existence provides a basis from which 'it may bee the easier and sooner reformed'.<sup>140</sup> He provides quite a detailed account of their religious beliefs (as compared with his other descriptions), starting with their creation myth, and the belief that women were made first. He notes their

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<sup>136</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 371.

<sup>137</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 372.

<sup>138</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 372.

<sup>139</sup> For discussion of Hariot's text in terms of the construction of a specifically Protestant colonial identity, and the representation of the Algonkians as children desiring the paternalistic attentions of the English, see Scanlan, *Colonial Writing*, esp. Chapter two: 'Fear and love: two versions of Protestant ambivalence', pp. 38-67.

<sup>140</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 372.



conception of their gods as having human shape, and the sculptural images they make of them ('The common sort thinke them to be also gods' may contain an implicit reference to Catholic idolatry). They believe in the immortality of the soul, and that after death it goes either to heaven or hell, depending on 'the workes it hath done'.<sup>141</sup> Hariot recounts two stories he has been told 'of two men that had been lately dead and reuiued againe'. One, having been bad, had been sent back from the entrance of *Popogusso* (hell) to 'teach his friends what they should doe to auoid that terrible place of torment'. The other, who had been good, was sent back from heaven by his dead father, 'who gaue him great charge to goe backe againe and shew his friendes what good they were to doe to enioy the pleasures of that place, which when he had done he should after come againe'.<sup>142</sup> The regulatory effect of these two stories is noted as exploited by the chiefs:

What subtilty soeuer be in the *Wiroances* and Priestes, this opinion worketh so much in manie of the common and simple sort of people that it maketh them haue great respect to their Gouvernours, and also great care what they do, to auoid torment after death, and to enioy blisse.<sup>143</sup>

The paragraph is completed with an outline of their system of earthly punishments for wrongdoers, thus linking divine and earthly justice and control.

It may be impossible for today's readers, familiar with Marxist theories of the Church as a major ideological state apparatus, and source of coercive power, not to recognise in Hariot's text exactly the same system at work in the Algonkian beliefs as in Hariot's own religion.<sup>144</sup> However, that is not to say Hariot recognised this. That he could identify stories as used to impose self-regulating order among the Algonkians

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<sup>141</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 373.

<sup>142</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 374.

<sup>143</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 374.

<sup>144</sup> Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)', in *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays* (London: New Left Books, 1971), pp. 121-173.

does not mean that he equated these with his own 'true religion'. He may have maintained a qualitative difference between the two belief systems, or he may have clearly seen how religion could function to impose control.

A further insight into the development of power relations is provided as Hariot describes native incomprehension when faced with the latest English technology (mathematical instruments, compasses, the loadstone, telescope, guns, books, writing and reading, 'spring clocks'). Their conclusion, as Hariot relates, is that the English must either be gods themselves, or, if not, these things 'had bin giuen and taught vs of the gods'.<sup>145</sup> This makes the Indians want to know the 'truth' of the English god (presumably so that they too would be similarly provided for), and elevates the English in native eyes so that 'greater credite was giuen vnto that we spake of concerning such matters'.<sup>146</sup> Hariot makes use of this opinion, by proselytising wherever possible 'in euery towne where I came' (one of the few examples of Hariot alluding to travel in the region), and notes the reaction of 'hungrie desire of that knowledge which was spoken of'.<sup>147</sup> The Algonkian chief, Wingina, appears to recognise that religion could be utilised as a tool of power:

The *Wiroans* with whom we dwelt called *Wingina*, and many of his people would be glad many times to be with vs at our praiers, and many times call vpon vs both in his owne towne, as also in others whither he sometimes accompanied vs, to pray and sing Psalmes; hoping thereby to bee partaker of the same effects which wee by that meanes also expected.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 376.

<sup>146</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 376.

<sup>147</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 377.

<sup>148</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 377.

It is not clear whether Hariot means the special treatment from God in supplying the technology described, or, the greater reverence in which the English were held because of their knowledge of God. Either way, Wingina's actions appear to indicate an understanding that he is observing, and wanting to participate in, the site of creation of power relations.<sup>149</sup>

The position of power in which the superior technology of the English places them, and their status as gods or favoured by the gods, as described by Hariot, is further reinforced by the waves of unexplained deaths among the Indians which follow in the wake of the English. Hariot identifies this as something which only befell Indians in villages where some 'subtile deuisse' had been practised against them, and for which the English had not punished them. The Indians were powerless against the strange disease: 'they neither knew what it was, nor how to cure it'.<sup>150</sup> The losses were substantial:

There was no towne where wee had any subtile deuisse practised against vs, we leauing it vnpunished or not reuenged (because we sought by all meanes possible to win them by gentlenesse) but that within a few dayes after our departure from euerie such towne, the people began to die very fast, and many in short space; in some townes about twentie, in some fourtie, in some sixtie, & in one sixe score, which in trueth was very manie in respect of their numbers.<sup>151</sup>

Added to their other powers, then, is the ability to kill their enemies without using weapons or being near the victims. This ability comes to be conceptualised as shooting invisible bullets. Wingina appears again as wanting to harness this particular English

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<sup>149</sup> Wingina's reaction could be seen as analogous to Claude Levi-Strauss's description, in *Tristes Tropiques*, of the Nambikwara chief's understanding of the power of writing. Jacques Derrida analyses the process: 'The Nambikwara chief learns writing from the anthropologist, at first without comprehension, he mimics writing before he understands its function as language; or rather he understands its profoundly enslaving function before understanding its function, here accessory, of communication, signification, of the tradition of a signified' (Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p.122).

<sup>150</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 378.

<sup>151</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 378.

power to strengthen his own position, requesting that the English pray to their god to destroy his enemies in the same way 'in respect of the friendship we professe them'.<sup>152</sup> This request is refused, yet what he asked for occurs shortly afterwards, and the Indians assume that the refusal had been mere dissemblance. As Hariot concludes: 'although wee satisfied them not in promise, yet in deedes and effect we had fulfilled their desires'.<sup>153</sup>

Hariot puts forward a variety of views which he attributes to the Indians' attempts to understand what is happening. Some believe the English may be gods, as none of them die of the sickness. They are thought perhaps not to be born of woman, as they have no women with them and show no interest in theirs.<sup>154</sup> This gives rise to the theory that they are risen from a past age and are immortal; those waiting to come next are 'in the aire, yet inuisible & without bodies' and are the ones firing the invisible bullets.<sup>155</sup> Others, Hariot suggests, thought that they shot the invisible bullets themselves, while others again believed that it was 'the speciall worcke' of the English God.<sup>156</sup> The Indians were not the only ones trying to make sense of events: the cause of such widespread death was a mystery to the English also. They, Hariot says, had no less cause than the Indians to think it was the work of God on their behalf. Others among them ascribed it to an eclipse of the sun, or appearance of a comet. Hariot concludes, enigmatically, that 'there are farther reasons then I thinke fit at this present to be alleadged'.<sup>157</sup> For today's readers the causes are well known: the spread of European diseases unknown in the New World, against which they had no defences or immunity.

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<sup>152</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 379.

<sup>153</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 379.

<sup>154</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 379. It is difficult to believe that there was no sexual activity at all between the English and the Algonkians. It may be possible that Hariot was referring only to the officer class, perhaps discounting the sailors as not of a significant rank.

<sup>155</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 380.

<sup>156</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 380.

<sup>157</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 381.

Hariot proposes one Indian opinion which, from today's perspective, is poignant in its accuracy:

Some woulde likewise seeme to prophesie that there were more of our generation yet to come, to kill theirs and take their places, as some thought the purpose was by that which was already done.<sup>158</sup>

Hariot states clearly his reason for relating in such detail the Algonkians' thinking:

These their opinions I have set downe the more at large, that it may appeare unto you that there is good hope they may be brought through discreet dealing and gouvernement to the imbracing of the trueth, and consequently to honour, obey, feare and loue vs.<sup>159</sup>

His detailed account of the ways in which the Indians had come to regard the English is included specifically to allay fears which may have been raised by reports from Lane's men. By setting out not only the English superiority in weapons and technology, but also how they have come to occupy a position of awe in the Indian psyche, Hariot argues a persuasive case that the Indians will be brought to 'honour, obey, feare and loue vs'. The power relations Hariot anticipates are explicit in the ordering of this phrase.

Hariot does not leave his account of the customs and manners of the people without including oblique criticism of Lane's actions. By reacting too fiercely, Hariot concludes, Lane's men (though no names are given) provoked the Indians to turn against them:

And although some of our companie towards the ende of the year, shewed themselues too fierce, in slaying some of the people, in some towns, vpon causes that on our part, might easily enough haue bene

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<sup>158</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 380.

<sup>159</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 381.

borne withall: yet notwithstanding because it was on their part iustly  
deserued, the alteration of their opinions generally & for the most part  
concerning vs is the lesse to bee doubted.<sup>160</sup>

Hariot proposes that if good governance is used over them, there 'neede nothing at all to  
be feared'.<sup>161</sup>

Hariot's report concludes with a brief, but his most expansive, description of the  
country further inland, and his belief that it will prove even more fruitful and contain  
more civilised peoples. He compares the possibilities confronting the English to those  
the Spaniards have been seen to take advantage of, and the opportunity for English  
expansion in a land 'where yet no christian Prince hath any possession or dealing', and  
much remains to be discovered.<sup>162</sup> The climate and the food are commended, and a now  
familiar English concern is addressed: the strange food didn't make them ill. The  
voyage, Hariot asserts, is now 'sufficiently experimented' that it can be undertaken  
three times a year with ease (a rather different conclusion from that which readers  
would draw from Lane's account).<sup>163</sup> Virginia is further domesticated by Hariot's text,  
as he advises that English cattle, fruits, roots and herbs could all be easily transported  
and reared.<sup>164</sup> Virginia, as a large conceptual area of previously unmapped alterity, is  
brought within the remit of 'reality' in a textual manoeuvre which effectively delimits  
its possibilities to more of what is already known in England.

Hariot's relation fulfils its remit of providing useful information to prospective  
settlers and investors in Virginia, and it also constructs a persuasive argument that the  
Algonkian Indians are not to be feared, this being, one may assume, the main accusation  
levelled by Lane's men. While his treatment of the commodities appears encyclopaedic,

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<sup>160</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 381.

<sup>161</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 382.

<sup>162</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 383.

<sup>163</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 385.

<sup>164</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 386.

the level of detail initially obscures absences in the text. No one, other than the Weroance Wingina, is named on either side. The people are labelled and differentiated in terms of rank: they are 'natural inhabitants', either Weroances, or people of the 'common sort'; they are 'types'. There is no real sense of events developing in a temporal framework; although there are brief references such as 'last year' or 'while we were here', there is no sense of time passing. There is no development from a position of non-knowledge to knowledge by Hariot over the course of his stay in Virginia. Similarly, there is no real sense of space or distance: Hariot never describes a journey – we do not need to consult a map to follow Hariot's narrative. As previously discussed, the natives are present throughout the text, but, since they never speak directly, they are always at one remove. There are no individual personalities in Hariot's account. This static, distanced, form of reporting has the effect of representing Virginia as constructed from a series of objectified items, decontextualised and timeless.<sup>165</sup>

The Algonkians represented in the paintings and drawings made by John White during the expedition, are, for the most part, pictured individually, with a few group scenes. Most of the pictures do not have backgrounds, so the figures, again, appear on display, as museum exhibits. There are two townscapes pictured, and here the point of view is external and high up, looking down on the scene spread before the viewer. The only people White draws are the Indians; even in the village scenes no Englishmen are included; there are no scenes of interaction.<sup>166</sup> The representation of the Indians as

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<sup>165</sup> Mary Fuller makes a similar observation, noting that Hariot 'strikingly omitted any account of the voyage or even of the passage of time, structuring his account as a taxonomy of things in the New World', with the result that Hariot's Virginia 'floats free, surrounded by unmapped and unrecorded space, the time of going and returning unreported. Despite the unique detail given by the Harriot [sic] text on Virginian botany and ethnography, the synchronic *method* [...] sequesters it from experienced space and time' (Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 40-42). The lack of description of the voyage could be another strategy to domesticate the experience of Virginia, for, as John H Elliott observes, the sea crossing itself created 'a sense of physical and even psychological separation from the mother country', which, by omitting any mention of it, Hariot's text appears designed to attempt to reduce (J H Elliott, 'Introduction', in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. by Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 3-14, p.7.

<sup>166</sup> Scanlan quotes Paul Hulton (Paul H Hulton, *America, 1585: The Complete Drawings of John White* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 9), who accounts for this absence in terms of White's primary duty

exhibits is rather more obvious in the engravings made from White's originals by Theodor de Bry. Here, each figure is shown in both back and front view, and each image is given a title: not as a named individual, but as a type (for example 'a weroance'). Backgrounds are added, and while these give context, they all appear to support Hariot's motives: the scenes are peaceful and pleasant; the foregrounds are conventional and familiar (small plants are illustrated); there is no aggression: warriors are shown hunting only deer, not at war with one another (these images form a contrast with images of warfare and execution found in Léry's text).

This authorial distance Hariot constructs is consistent throughout his account. While he has clearly lived closely with the Indians, learning native names for the commodities he describes, and how they prepare them and cook them, for example, he at no point places himself, in his text, within the Indians' culture. He is always detached, an outsider: observing and noting, not acting. The overriding effect of this textual strategy is the construction of Indians as discrete objects of knowledge, to be studied and observed, like the commodities, for their utility, but not engaged with on a personal, emotional or intellectual level.

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being to record the flora and fauna, including the inhabitants (Scanlan, *Colonial Writing*, p. 60). See also Quinn, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 37 and p. 51-2, as previously cited, for discussion of instructions given to White and Hariot. An interesting contrast is the inclusion of a variety of European figures together with indigenous New World natives and imported African slaves in the roughly contemporaneous *Histoire Naturelle des Indes: The Drake Manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library*, trans. by Ruth S Kraemer (New York: W W Norton, 1996).



## Making the relation: active engagement

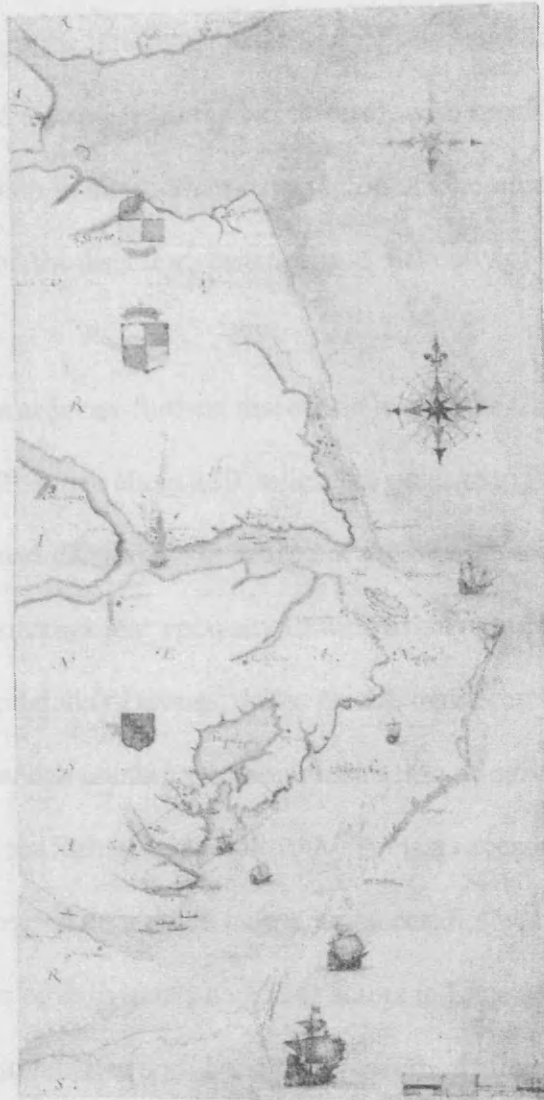


Figure 14 John White's map of the coast of Virginia

Ralph Lane's account, as it was presented to Sir Walter Raleigh, may have been accompanied by maps of the Virginia coast drawn by John White, one of which is reproduced here.<sup>167</sup> If it was not, this would have been an omission, an impediment to the understanding of his text. For, as soon as Lane has introduced his topic, outlined his

<sup>167</sup> 'Ralph Lane's Discourse on the First Colony' was the title assigned to Lane's account in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589), pp. 737-47, also reprinted in the edition of 1600. Reprinted in Quinn, *The Roanoke Voyages*, pp. 255-294.

structure, and implicated the Algonkian Indians in the failure of the expedition, he begins his first section with an account of the extent of the exploration undertaken. Readers are taken first to the ‘uttermost place to the Southward of any discoverie’, then to the furthest extent of discovery ‘to the Northward’, with specific places named at each: the town of Secotan in the south and the region of Chesepians to the north.<sup>168</sup> He provides information on the direction, distance, and difficulty of these journeys. For example:

To the Northwarde our furthest discoverie was to the Chesepians, distant from Roanoak about 130. miles, the passage to it was very shalow and most dangerous, by reason of the breadth of the sound, and the little succour that vpon any flawe was there to be had.<sup>169</sup>

Lane provides specific details of names, dates, places, distances, directions, and travelling conditions, which combine to construct a sense of movement through the landscape, and (albeit confusing) temporality. A map is a necessary adjunct to his text (his progress can be charted on today’s maps), and a cast list would also be useful, given the large number of individuals named as actors in Lane’s narrative.

A major actor in his own text, Lane presents himself from the outset as a man of action, engaging in exploration despite dangerous conditions. He records the ‘sundry Kings, whom they call Weroances’ who reign over ‘the Mandoages, Tripanicks, and Opossians’, territories adjoining the Chesepian lands.<sup>170</sup> He appears concerned to identify those who wield power, and the geographical extent of that power, as for example, in his account of explorations to the north-west:

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<sup>168</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 256-7.

<sup>169</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 257.

<sup>170</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 257.

The Townes about the waters side situated by the way, are these following: Pysshokonnok, The womans Towne, Chipanum, Weopomiok, Muscamunge, and Mattaquen: all these being vnder the iurisdiction of the king of Weopomiok, called Okisco: from Muscamunge we enter into the Riuer, and iurisdiction of Choanoke.<sup>171</sup>

This interest in who wields power is entirely pragmatic:

Choanoke it selfe is the greatest Prouince and Seignorie lying upon that Riuer, and the very Towne it selfe is able to put 700 fighting men into the fielde, besides the forces of the Prouince it selfe.<sup>172</sup>

The number of fighting men, where they are located, and who controls them, is Lane's concern as a soldier. It follows that he is implicitly constructing them as a potential enemy. The greater the potential threat, one assumes, the greater enhancement to Lane's military reputation when (or if) he has to fight them. Lane makes similar assumptions about numbers of available fighting men at other points in his account (most notably, the assertion that Pemisapan's conspiracy raised '3,000 bowes' to attack the colony).<sup>173</sup> Hariot, as already discussed, appeared to downplay the Algonkians' ability to raise fighting forces, while Lane appears to overstate them (historians today conclude his estimates are far too high).<sup>174</sup>

Lane does not construct types, but presents significant individuals. For example, the king of Choanoke is named as Menatonon, and is described as:

A man impotent in his lims, but otherwise for a Sauage, a very graue and wise man, and of very singular good discourse in matters concerning the state, not onely of his owne Countrey, and the

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<sup>171</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 258.

<sup>172</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 259.

<sup>173</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 265. See also Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 261.

<sup>174</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 259, n. 2.

disposition of his owne men, but also of his neighbours round about him as wel farre as neere, and of the commodities that eche Countrey yeeldeth. When I had him prisoner with me, for two dayes that we were together, he gaue mee more vnderstanding and light of the Countrey then I had receiued by all the searches and saluages that before I or any of my companie had had conference with.<sup>175</sup>

Menatonon, though crippled, is particularly knowledgeable in matters which concern Lane: the lay of the country, and distribution of men and commodities. However, Menatonon's abilities are qualified at the outset: 'otherwise for a Sauage'. For Lane, it seems, there is an a priori qualitative difference between himself and the other, the 'savage', which wisdom and knowledge cannot bridge. Also clear are the power relations in operation: Menatonon, the king of the greatest province in the region, is Lane's prisoner, if only for two days.<sup>176</sup> Lane does, however, acknowledge Menatonon as his primary source of information, also revealing less fruitful attempts to find information by searching and questioning other natives. Such personal acknowledgement is totally lacking in Hariot's account, as is any indication of the work, and frustrations, involved in gathering information. Lane also places himself in the company of Menatonon for two days: a detail of proximity and interaction absent from Hariot's text.

Lane, perhaps wanting to demonstrate his ability to utilise intelligence, relates what Menatonon tells him of a king, about seven days' journey distant, who possesses great quantities of pearls. He has so many that 'not onely his owne skins that he weareth, and the better sort of his gentlemen and followers, are full set with the sayd

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<sup>175</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 259.

<sup>176</sup> Although this description is very near the beginning of Lane's account, these events occurred in March 1586, seven months after the expedition's arrival in Roanoke. Menatonon was released on receipt of a ransom, but his son remained captive (see Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 264).

Pearle, but also his beds, and houses are garnished with them'.<sup>177</sup> Pearls were a constant lure of the age, and here Lane sets their possession within a social hierarchy which he represents as exactly the same as his own. From the outset he has identified those he terms 'kings', though he does not describe the practice of their authority in any detail. The assumption may have been, for his contemporary readers, that Algonkian society was structured and operated similarly to their own: strictly hierarchical, where kings and princes ruled, with gentlemen and the 'better sort' as their followers, while others were of no account, each knowing their station. At one point Lane refers specifically to 'the principal Weroances, & followers, (not regarding any of the common sort)'.<sup>178</sup> Apart from rank, Lane does not at any point represent Algonkian culture. While it seems unlikely that the depiction of such a structured society is meant as mockery, perhaps, given Lane's project of self-promotion, he preferred to depict himself in the company of kings, even if they were only kings of savages.

As well as portraying himself as a man of action, and status, Lane also presents himself as a man of vision and ideas. On hearing about the king of pearls (in Chesapeake Bay), he resolved to go there, undaunted by warnings that strangers and meddling with the pearl fishing were both unwelcome, and that this king could raise many good fighting men. Lane could only carry out this resolve, however, 'if your [Raleigh's] supplie had come before the end of April' with enough men, boats and victuals. Had this happened, he 'woulde haue sent' boats by sea to find the bay, while he himself 'would haue gone vp to the head of the Riuer' and gone overland from there, using the guides Menatonon 'would haue giuen' (due to the fact that Lane held his son prisoner). He 'would haue' left his boats and raised a sconse with pallisade there,

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<sup>177</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 260.

<sup>178</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 287. Also Léry: 'You may ask what station of life the children are prepared for' (Léry, *History*, p. 156).

leaving thirty or so men there as guards, while he, with the rest, 'would have' marched for two days and raised another sconce. Leaving another twenty or so men there, he would have continued in this way until he reached the bay described, which 'finding to be worth the possession, I would there haue raised a mayne forte, both for the defence of the harboroughs, and our shipping also, and would haue reduced our whole habitation from Roanoak'.<sup>179</sup> A fine, visionary, plan, but it was only accomplished in Lane's text: the supplies from Raleigh did not arrive when Lane expected them, so the voyage was not even begun. Could this be read, perhaps, as a veiled criticism of Raleigh, implicating him to some extent in the failure of the enterprise?

Still within the first section of his account, Lane embarks on another textual conquest: the search for Chaunis Temoatan. In this instance Lane does actually begin the expedition, but again its accomplishment occurs only in his text. Lane describes the attempt in some detail, as, he says, it is an illustration of the willingness of himself and his men to undertake expeditions of discovery. Chaunis Temoatan achieves an almost mythical status in Lane's text. It is first mentioned to him as an unnamed place some thirty or forty days journey upstream from the town of Morotico (opinion is divided, as is often the case in myth), at the head of the Morotico River, where the river springs violently from a huge rock. At this point in his account, Lane gives no better reason for his resolve to go there than that the natives 'doe report strange things of the head of that River'.<sup>180</sup>

Lane takes two double whirries and about forty men with him. He adds the details that at this point he has 'dismissed Menatonon' as the agreed ransom had been paid, and dispatched his son (still captive) to Roanoke. Lane takes all the supplies he can carry, but expects to meet either Moratik or Mangoak Indians along the river with

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<sup>179</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 261-3.

<sup>180</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 264.

whom he can trade for further supplies. This expectation is disappointed, a situation explained by Lane in a digression detailing the conspiracy Pemisapan has organised against him. This, in part, involves convincing the Moratiks and Mangoaks that Lane intends to kill them as he passes through. They, in response, retire to the interior, taking their corn and women with them. Pemisapan's duplicity is perhaps signalled in the text as Lane notes at this point that he has changed his name from Wingina upon the death of his brother (Wingina is the only individual named by Hariot, who represents him as particularly perceptive in his understanding of the operation of power relations). With only two days' supplies left, and 160 miles from base, Lane demonstrates his leadership qualities by putting the situation to his men (including his assessment that they have been 'betrayed by our owne Sauages'), requesting they consider overnight whether to carry on, or begin the return journey next day.<sup>181</sup> On this occasion the resolution was 'fully and wholly' in favour of continuing (apart from 'not three' found to be of 'contrary opinion'). Their decision in part, Lane informs us, is due to them having two mastiff dogs with them, which 'if the worst fell out' could be stewed with sassafras leaves.<sup>182</sup> Here Lane provides an insight into his own thought processes: he was pleased at the outcome, as it came completely from the men, he himself having 'pretended to haue bene rather of the contrary opinion'.<sup>183</sup> He continues in this reflective vein, stating that he was 'most desirous' of meeting the Mangoaks either 'in friendship or otherwise to haue had one or two of them prisoners'. It appears that for Lane, these are equal alternatives: another indication of his underlying conception of the Indian. Lane then reveals the reason for their expedition: a notorious mine which 'hath a marueilous and

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<sup>181</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 266-7.

<sup>182</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 267. The worst does, for the dogs, 'fall out', the men reduced to survival at last on the 'porridge of dogs'. Mastiffs signify for today's readers in ways not perhaps shared by Lane's contemporaries. Such dogs were extensively used by the Spaniards in the West Indies to hunt down the Arawaks, provoking terror among them, and symbolising, to readers of Las Casas's account, the brutality of the Spanish occupation. The dogs' fate in this account is today somewhat ironic.

<sup>183</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 268.

most strange Minerall'. All of the 'sauages' know of it, on the river, the coast and inland, he concludes: 'the countries name is of fame, and is called Chaunis Temoatan'.<sup>184</sup>

Lane's manipulation of his text appears consummate at this point. The very name 'Chaunis Temoatan' is redolent with mystery. He continues by describing the mineral obtained there which the natives call *Wassador* which means copper, but also 'euery mettall whatsoever', and the 'copper' of Chaunis Temoatan 'is very soft and pale' and obtained by a process of panning in shallow water. It is easily melted down, and used by the Mangoaks to 'beautifie their houses with great plates of the same'.<sup>185</sup> Historians here gloss that there was no particular profusion of copper used in the area, but this seems to miss the point.<sup>186</sup> Lane's description, I would suggest, opens up, to the susceptible reader, the possibility of the greatest prize: gold.

The reality Lane has to report is, sadly for him, less glittering. After two more days' travel they have still not met any Indians, and their supplies are exhausted. On the last day before they must start their return they hear 'certaine sauages call' at about three in the afternoon. Lane and his men are glad of the prospect of contact, and, when a song begins, they take it as a courtesy, a token of welcome. Their joy is short-lived, as the interpreter Manteo 'presently betooke him to his peece, and tolde mee that they ment to fight with vs'.<sup>187</sup> A brief skirmish ensues, but the Indians soon disappear into the woods, and Lane does not follow, as his main concern is finding food. The fact that Lane interprets the song as welcome indicates that he was familiar with singing as a form of greeting in Algonkian culture (or indeed his own culture), but that he did not expect it to have alternative meanings. The possibility of song as a complex form of

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<sup>184</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 268.

<sup>185</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 269-70.

<sup>186</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 269, n. 2.

<sup>187</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 270-1.



communication is indicated here, which is interesting to compare with Hariot's dismissive description of Algonkian singing during the tobacco ceremony as mere 'chattering strange words & noises', and the insight provided to Léry when he has a Tupi song translated.<sup>188</sup>

The next morning the company head back down stream, rowing quickly with the current. They spend the night on an island in the river with nothing to eat but sassafras leaf broth. The following day they cannot move due to bad weather. It is Easter eve, and Lane remarks it 'was fasted very trulie'.<sup>189</sup> The next day is calm, and by late afternoon they reach the village of Chipanum, where, although the Indians are 'fled', there were fish in the weirs. Lane concludes that 'God was pleased not utterly to suffer vs to be lost'.<sup>190</sup> The following morning they reach Roanoake.

This voyage has been recounted in detail to provide specific evidence for Raleigh of the efforts Lane and his men made to make discoveries, and their willingness to do so:

I haue set downe this voyage somewhat particularly, to the ende it may appeare vnto you (as true it is) that there wanted no great good will from the most to the least amongst vs, to have perfited this discouerie of the mine.<sup>191</sup>

Lane is of the opinion that such discoveries are critical for the success of the colony:

For that the discouery of a good mine, by the goodnesse of God, or a passage to the Southsea, or someway to it, and nothing els can bring this country in request to be inhabited by our nation. And with the discouery of any of the two aboue shewed, it willbe the most sweete,

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<sup>188</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 345; Léry, *History*, p. 144.

<sup>189</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 272.

<sup>190</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 272.

<sup>191</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 272-3.

and healthfullest climate, and therewithal the most fertile soyle, being manured in the world: and then will Sassafras, and many other rootes & gummes there found make good Marchandise and lading for shipping, which otherwise of themselues will not bee worth the fetching.<sup>192</sup>

His assessment of the possibility of plantation is less optimistic than Hariot's.

The first section of Lane's account has presented him as a man both of action and vision, a consensual leader who is concerned for the welfare of his men, and conscious of the importance of their mission to the success of the colony. The setbacks experienced, as Lane records them, are not due to him, but, variously, to the lack of adequate men and supplies, or the weather (the hand of God), or the duplicity of the Indians. This self-representation necessarily positions Lane within the landscape, using references to named places to construct his active movement through it, either in the purely conjectural expedition to the pearls of Chesapeake Bay, or the actual attempt to reach Chaunis Temaotan. Lane appears single-minded in his attempts at discovery, an impression created by the textual style he adopts: there is very little description, none of it extraneous or decorative. For example, he records how rivers flow in terms of their ease of navigation; the weather only when it impedes movement; native dress and houses only in terms of their decoration with pearls or copper. The second part of his account deals with the Indian conspiracy, and here Lane presents himself as soldier and tactician.

Lane uses specific place names to indicate action and movement in section one, and in section two he strives to make events comprehensible by naming individuals who are active in the plot. He begins by identifying the major figures in the drama of

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<sup>192</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 273.

conspiracy. Ensenore, according to Lane, ‘the only friend to our nation that we had amongst them’, is father and advisor to the king, Pemisapan, and opposes ‘al matter proposed against vs’.<sup>193</sup> He dies on 20 April 1586. Pemisapan, who changed his name from Wingina upon the death of his brother Grangemoes, is the alleged villain, plotting the ruin of the colony, and formerly held in check by the council of his father and brother. Lane then begins the account of Pemisapan’s conspiracy, opening with a plot he was allegedly ready to execute in March 1586. This involved the Algonkians leaving the island of Roanoke for the mainland. They would not sow any grain before leaving, or build any fish weirs. This, Lane states, would have ruined the colony, as ‘at that time wee had no weares for fishe, neither could our men skill of the making of them, neither had wee one grayne of corne for seede to put into the ground’.<sup>194</sup> The colonists’ level of dependence on the Indians is apparent: the withdrawal of active Indian support would be decisive. Does it also, perhaps, indicate bad management by Lane? Why did he not assign men to learn how to make fish weirs, or obtain their own supplies of grain for sowing? It may be that such occupations were not considered suitable for English ‘men of rank’, and that soldiers would expect food to be provided for them. If so, the application of English social norms in Virginia left the colonists in a highly vulnerable position.

During March Lane is exploring the Morotico river, trying to reach Chaunis Temoatan (or, as Lane represents it here, on his voyage ‘made against the Chaonists, and Mangoaks’).<sup>195</sup> Pemisapan and his supporters start rumours that Lane and his men are ‘part slayne, and part starued by the Choanists, and Mangoaks’, only partially false, as Lane admits. The effect of this rumour is powerful, as the Algonkians revise their

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<sup>193</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 275.

<sup>194</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 276.

<sup>195</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 276.

opinion of the English and their God, turning former reverence (as described by Hariot) to contempt and blasphemy: 'now they began to blaspheme, and flatly to say, that our Lord God was not God, since he suffered vs to sustaine much hunger, and also to be killed of the Renapoaks'.<sup>196</sup> Ensenore and his followers lose credibility with Pemisapan, whose resolve to leave Roanoke was strengthened. The return of Lane and his men (on 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> April) disproves the rumour. Pemisapan receives reports from three of his men who had been on the voyage: 'that is to say, Tetepano, his sisters husband Eracanso, and Cossine' (here Lane names individuals, even including familial detail, for no apparent reason, yet it renders his text immediate and concrete).<sup>197</sup> The outcome is that Ensenore's opinions are respected again, and Lane reports his argument in favour of cooperation with the English, which was, basically, that the English are servants of God, therefore they cannot be destroyed, and those who seek their destruction would find their own. The mysterious sickness is cited as evidence of the English ability to kill at a distance. Lane also briefly rehearses two of the opinions generally held: that if they killed the English they would do 'more hurt' dead than alive; alternatively, that they are already dead men returned to the world. Lane states that these speeches had some effect, but proposes what 'made vp the matter' in their favour was the arrival of Okisko, king of Weopomiok. He has been commanded by Menatonon, to 'yelde himselfe seruant, and homager, to the great Weroanza of England, and after her to Sir Walter Ralegh'.<sup>198</sup> Following this show of allegiance, Pemisapan, according to Lane, again changes his disposition towards them, setting men to build weirs and sow grain; even granting the English a plot of land to cultivate for themselves (Lane does not indicate if this was done). Lane posits a fairly secure future, but only if the Algonkians provide them with

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<sup>196</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 277.

<sup>197</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 277.

<sup>198</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 279. Lane does not provide anywhere near the same level of detail as Hariot does on these Indian views, but he immediately and far more clearly identifies the extent to which they affect relations.

dried food from their own winter stores until the beginning of July when the corn ripens. If not, they would starve.

When Ensenore dies Lane records an immediate change in attitude:

Ensenore our friende dyed, who was no sooner dead, but certaine of our great enemies about Pemisapan, as Osocan a Weroance, Tanaquiny and Wanchese most principally, were in hand again to put their old practises in vre against vs, which were readily imbraced, & al their former deuises against vs renewed, & new brought in question.<sup>199</sup>

The plan to starve the English by not sowing corn had been frustrated by Ensenore, but, Lane insists, 'there wanted no store of mischeuous practises among them'.<sup>200</sup> And he goes on to describe the plan which, he says, they resolved upon. The Weopomioks, the Mandoaks and the Chesepians (paid in copper), altogether about 700 bows, would gather together on the mainland on a specific day, ostensibly to take part in a ceremony to solemnise the death of Ensenore. They would communicate with Pemisapan and his men on the island by 'the signe of fyers, which should interchangeably be made on both sides'.<sup>201</sup> In this way Pemisapan would indicate that he had executed Lane and his principal officers. At the signal, the others would cross to the island to kill the remaining colonists, who, Lane proposes, 'they did imagine to finde both dismayed and dispersed abroad in the Islande seeking of crabs, and fish to liue withall'.<sup>202</sup> Lane graphically describes how he was to be killed:

Tarraquine and Andacon two principall men about Pemisapan, and very lustie fellowes with twentie more appointed to them had the charge of my person to see an order taken for the same, which they

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<sup>199</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 280. Lane does not explain why Wanchese turned against the English.

<sup>200</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 281.

<sup>201</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 281.

<sup>202</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 281-2.

ment should in this sort haue bene executed. In the dead time of the night they would haue beset my house, and put fire in the reedes, that the same was couered with: meaning (as it was likelye) that my selfe woulde haue come running out of a sudden amazed in my shirt without arnes, vpon the instant whereof they would haue knocked out my braynes.<sup>203</sup>

Lane maintains the order was to do the same, at the same time, to 'Master Herriots' house, and all of rest of the 'better sort' who had houses, as well as the fort. This vivid description provides an insight into how the English lived not mentioned elsewhere in Lane's account (Hariot only mentions that when they travelled they slept on the ground in the open air; he does not describe conditions in Roanoke itself). More significantly, perhaps, it is a very convincing account of something which never happened.

Lane continuously blends fiction and his own suppositions with factual actions to construct a seamless narrative of the supposed conspiracy. Having given the fictional outcome of the conspiracy, Lane goes back to its beginning, to demonstrate how the Indians began to put the plan into practice. He states that they agree amongst themselves to refuse to sell food to the English, and rob and break their fish weirs. The objective is to force the dispersal of the colony (they would need to gather shellfish to live on), making them vulnerable to attack (the Indians could only overcome the superior weapons of the English if they were in small groups). This part of the plan appears to have been executed, and Lane disperses the colony (providing very specific detail of who he sends where, and with how many men). They are also given the task of looking out for shipping. Pemisapan at this time goes to Adesmocopeio, on the mainland, ostensibly to oversee a second sowing of crops. But Lane attributes to him other, more

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<sup>203</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 282.

devious, motives: absent from Roanoke, he can ignore Lane's requests for supplies, something Lane says he was afraid to do face to face. Also, it enabled him to send the messengers to the other tribes to elicit their attendance at the ceremony for Ensenore, offering copper as payment (copper probably provided by the English as payment for supplies). Lane is confident of the support of Menatonon and the Chaonists, but the Weopomioks were divided: Okisko (the king who had pledged allegiance to Elizabeth and Raleigh) and his followers retiring inland, the other half joining Pemisapan. The Mandoags also accepted the bribe. The date of the assembly is set for 10 June.

Readers at this point in Lane's text may be wondering how he knows these details of Pemisapan's plans. He reveals that his source is Skyco, the son of Menatonon, whom he has held captive. Menatonon's 'best beloved' son is a presence throughout Lane's narrative, his captivity mentioned casually as the reason why Menatonon offers, for example, his best guides to Lane. Lane explains that, having once tried to escape, he 'laid him in the bylboes, threatening to cut off his head'.<sup>204</sup> Lane accedes to Pemisapan's request to spare him. Then, Lane explains, Skyco, having convinced Pemisapan of his hatred of the English, was taken into his confidence and made privy to all his plans. Lane continues: 'the yong man finding himself as well vsed at my hand, as I had meanes to shew, and that all my companie made much of him, he flatly discovered all vnto me'.<sup>205</sup> As the only evidence readers have of how Lane treated Skyco is his shackling him and threatening his life, this loyalty to Lane is difficult to believe. Yet Lane does not acknowledge any possible doubts. He does, though, state that Skyco's story is corroborated by one of Pemisapan's men the 'night before he was slaine'.<sup>206</sup> A mood of duplicity is created throughout the text (an earlier example is Pemisapan's

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<sup>204</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 285. Bylboes were, according to Quinn, 'a long iron bar fastened by a lock to the floor, along which ran sliding leg-irons. This probably formed part of the gaol which Lane must have had inside the fort enclosure' (Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 285, n. 2).

<sup>205</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 285.

<sup>206</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 285.

disinformation, which convinces the Chaonists and Mangoaks of Lane's intention to destroy them, while telling Lane they had the same intentions towards him).<sup>207</sup> Spying was used by both sides, as Lane states: 'for in trueth they, priuie to their owne villanous purposes against us, held as good espial vpon vs, both day and night, as we did vpon them'.<sup>208</sup> Readers may then accept Lane's account of Skyco's duplicity, but there is also the possibility that Skyco (or Lane) made up the whole conspiracy (Hariot does not admit there is any conspiracy, and indicates that Lane overreacted to events).

Whatever readers' doubts at this point, Lane represents himself as faced with a problem which requires his decisive action:

These mischiefes being al instantly vpon mee, and my companie to be put in execution, stood mee in hand to study how to preuent them, and also to saue all others, which were at that time as aforesaid so farre from me.<sup>209</sup>

Lane conceives his own plot: a simple pre-emptive strike. He attempts to put Pemisapan off-guard by sending word that he is going to Croatoan (an island to the south of Roanoke) as he has heard that the fleet has arrived (he hasn't), and that he wants to meet Pemisapan to buy provisions from him for the journey. Pemisapan delays the meeting for several days, until Lane decides, on 31 May 1586, that he can wait no longer. He believes the arrival of the Weopomioks and Mandoags to be imminent, and that Pemisapan is waiting for them before crossing to Roanoke. Lane begins his attack by sending men on a covert night raid to collect up all the native canoes around a nearby island, to prevent them raising the alarm. However, due to the prevalence of spies, his men are seen, and the alarm raised in the town. As Lane describes it, his Master 'met

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<sup>207</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 265-6.

<sup>208</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 286. This is perhaps reminiscent of the febrile atmosphere of the Elizabethan court.

<sup>209</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 285.



with a Canoa, going from the shoare, and ouerthrew the Canoa, and cut off 2. Sauages heads: this was not done so secretly but hee was discovered from the shoare, whereupon the cry arose'.<sup>210</sup> A small battle ensues, with a few Indians killed, the rest fleeing into the woods. Apparently no word gets through to Pemisapan, as when Lane crosses over to Adesmcopeio and asks (on another complicated premise involving prisoners) to see Pemisapan, they meet:

Hereupon the king did abide my comming to him, and finding my selfe amidst 7. or 8. of his principal Weroances, & followers, (not regarding any of the common sort) I gaue the watchword agreed vpon, (which was Christ our victory,) and immediatly those his chiefe men, and himselfe, had by the mercie of God for our deliuerence, that which they had purposed for vs.<sup>211</sup>

Pemisapan is shot, and thought dead, but, in the confusion, he jumps up and runs away. He outruns Lane's men, even after a shot in the buttocks, but an Irish soldier, named as Nugent, follows him into the woods. He returns some time later 'with Pemisapans head in his hand'.<sup>212</sup> Lane depicts Pemisapan as duplicitous to the bitter end.

So ends the conspiracy of Pemisapan. Lane's narrative has a confusing chronology but it is an energetic, at times graphic, account of Algonkian plots, duplicity, and concerted efforts to destroy the colony. His textual construction has the effect of magnifying the plot by repetition. There is only one plot, but Lane describes it first in section one (p. 265) as it relates to his voyage on the Morotico river, then again, in section two, where it leads to an imagined conclusion in his violent death (p. 281-2), and a third time as he leads readers through 'actual' events. On first reading, it is easy to

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<sup>210</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 286.

<sup>211</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 287.

<sup>212</sup> Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 288. The practice of beheading, and using the heads as trophies or warnings, was commonly employed by the English in Ireland, where Lane had previously served.

mistakenly conclude there were multiple plots. Lane, of course, is positioned to take credit for thwarting the plot(s), his leadership and military skills are demonstrated in the text. This, certainly, is the reader position Lane constructs: one which accepts his self-presentation at face value.

Hariot's account calls into question Lane's actions and his interpretations of Indian intentions. Hariot does not describe any plots or conspiracy in his text, which, given his motives, is to be expected. His only references to the events Lane represents are covertly critical of Lane, and supportive of the Indians. It is his 'good hope' that the Algonkians through 'discreet dealing and gouernement' would be brought to 'honour, obey, feare and loue vs'. This implicit criticism of Lane's indiscreet government is immediately compounded (in a passage previously quoted in relation to Hariot's construction of the Algonkians):

And although some of our companie towardes the ende of the yeare, shewed themselues too fierce, in slaying some of the people, in some towns, vpon causes that on our part, might easily enough haue bene borne withall: yet notwithstanding because it was on their part iustly deserued, the alteration of their opinions generally & for the most part concerning vs is the lesse to bee doubted. And whatsoeuer els they may be, by carefulnesse of our selues neede nothing at all to be feared.<sup>213</sup>

Lane then, according to Hariot, overreacted to provocations which 'might easily enough haue bene borne'.

It is possible to read in Lane's text a picture of Indian attitudes and actions which could be interpreted differently from the conclusions he draws. There is a high

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<sup>213</sup> Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 381-2.

level of interaction between the colonists and the Algonkian and other tribes, who, for most of the time, appear willing to provide information and practical assistance. They trade, share food, their own technology (fish weirs), and knowledge of the country. Ensenore, Menatonon and Skyco are presented as consistently loyal (despite the coercive nature of the relationship), and even Oskiko keeps his pledge of allegiance to the extent that he does not openly oppose Lane. The only evidence of Pemisapan's conspiracy is provided by Lane's interpretation of his actions. Removing to Adesmcopeio to oversee the second sowing and arranging a ceremonial gathering in honour of his deceased father are not, in themselves, threatening actions. In a version of events where the conspiracy is nothing but Lane's misinterpretation and overreaction, his attack on Pemisapan would have been totally unexpected, unprovoked, and horrifying. No further interactions between the colonists and Indians are described, as Drake's fleet arrived within a week of these events, and the colonists returned with him to England. Lane's account concludes with the courtesies of exchanges of letters with Drake, the first storm upsetting initial plans for restocking the colony, the colonists consensual agreement to return with Drake, and a further storm necessitating immediate departure and the loss of most of their belongings.

Lane's textual motive of self-justification by means of very positive self-presentation leads him, I suggest, to give more weight to the aspects of his representations of the Algonkians which portray them as his adversaries: duplicitous, untrustworthy, plotting his destruction, rather than as his allies and supporters. It is the conspiracy which is central to the narrative, not, for example, the relationship with Menatonon. Lane's position relative to the Indians is guaranteed to provoke suspicion: he is superior (in his view), and has superior weaponry and disciplined men; yet he is at the mercy of the Indians, the 'savages' who control his food supply. Lane is both

powerful and powerless. Lane's narrative style means that the Indians only appear in his text when they are in a relation of active involvement with him: agents in his story. He does not describe anything about the Algonkian appearance, habitation, culture and beliefs which does not directly further his narrative. The contrast with Hariot's passive, static, observations, and representations of Indian 'types' is sharp. Lane portrays active individuals, constructing them as credible adversaries, against whom he must prove his military and leadership capabilities.<sup>214</sup> While Hariot and the Indians he represents are silent and curiously absent from his text, Lane and his Indians are constant, active, presences.

### **Alternative readings**

While Lane attempts to demonise the Algonkians, to devalue their human status with consistent use of the term 'savage', and to ignore whatever culture and civil society they may have, he is forced, as a consequence of his need to portray them as credible adversaries, to represent them as possessing several positive attributes. Their society is ordered in a way which Lane (and by extension his readers) finds recognisable: he can apply the same terms of social rank used in his own society. They must have a reasonable level of intelligence and mental acuity in order to plan a multi-stage conspiracy which takes time to execute. An effective system of communication between different, and geographically dispersed tribes is demonstrated, even though they may speak different languages or dialects. Though they do not have writing, as well as spoken communication, they also use song as a signifying medium, and to communicate

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<sup>214</sup> The motivation apparent in Lane's representation of his Indian adversaries may have similarities to the mindset Anthony Pagden ascribes to the Spanish conquerors of Mexico and Peru: 'The overbearing ambitions of men like Cortés and the Pizarro brothers, who were highly sensitive to the belief that the greatness of a man is to be measured by the quality of the things he can command, required the subjugation not of a race of inferior barbarians but of a people whose rule would redound to their conqueror's own glory' (Pagden, *Colonial Identity*, p. 67).

over distance, smoke signals. The various tribes demonstrate they are able to work collaboratively, coming together to fulfil common purpose: in this case to destroy invasive forces (or, to mount a large-scale ceremonial event, if Lane is wrong). Their understanding of trade is clear, and Pemisapan uses the copper he has obtained from the English to pay other tribes for their support. All of these attributes indicate an understanding of themselves as distinct, identifiable, peoples who are in possession of the land, to the extent that they are prepared to fight to remove potential threats, such as the English.<sup>215</sup> Lane depicts the Algonkians as possessing a level of political agency and resistance, which Hariot totally effaces. This reading is not one which would arise from reading the text from its desired subject position.

While Hariot's account may be interpreted as demonstrating his humanity, it is also essentially paternalistic. His dispassionate descriptions maintain his distance from the Algonkians. He classifies the natives according to rank and function, as he does the commodities (this is particularly clear in the engravings and their commentaries). In this way the Indians are deindividualised, presented as types, not real people. Hariot observes and records, but does not participate in the other's culture. This creates a distance between him, and consequently his readers, and the Indians, who consequently appear, to today's readers, as exhibits. His concern to portray them as unthreatening leads him to efface their agency as a people, and their potential for political resistance. The reader never has to meet Hariot's Algonkians on equal terms; they do not have to be addressed directly, unlike Lane's Algonkians who demand interaction, even if it is violent.

Léry actively promotes his readers' intimacy with the Tupi. He even attempts to provide the means for them to speak directly to his readers in a colloquy of greeting

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<sup>215</sup> Even if Pemisapan's conspiracy was totally fabricated by Lane, there is Menatonon's report of the potentially aggressive response of the king of the Chesepeans (Lane, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 260).

which provides direct speech in Tupinamba with French translation. There is also a basic grammar and vocabulary, though he does not attempt a pronunciation guide.<sup>216</sup> Léry often leaves readers to draw their own conclusions from his descriptions, but his use of Tupi culture to draw unfavourable comparisons with Catholicism in particular, and European culture in general, has the result of eliciting a positive reaction to the Tupi. This is particularly noticeable in his treatment of their cannibalism. It also suits Léry's motives to depict the Tupi elder rejecting European culture, or at least its avaricious extreme. However, Léry is less understanding of the Tupi's rejection of clothing, providing several examples, most notably that of the women who, slave labour at the fort, are forced to wear dresses during the day, but revel in removing them and 'promenading' around naked at night.<sup>217</sup> There is the possibility, in Léry's text, for Tupi women to become Europeanised by accepting the sacrament and marrying. This too is rejected, as not one Christian convert or Christian marriage takes place. What can, therefore, be read in Léry's text is a fundamental rejection of European culture, and perhaps the European presence, by the Tupi.

It is possible, then, to read these accounts from positions other than the ones which appear most 'natural', and to suggest meanings not necessarily apparent to the author or his contemporary readers.<sup>218</sup> Yet these texts would, at the time of their production, most probably have been understood, by the majority of their readers, from the desired subject position each text constructs. Léry was motivated, he states, to write his *History* to contradict Thevet's account of the breakdown of the French colony in Brazil (and, in support of this, to discredit Thevet's natural history generally). Central to his text, however, is the expression of anti-Catholic sentiment and the promotion of his

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<sup>216</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 178-195.

<sup>217</sup> Léry, *History*, p. 66.

<sup>218</sup> Catherine Belsey makes the point in these terms: 'We read the documents of the past in order to produce the possible range of their meanings, which is not the same as the range of meanings that could consciously have been identified at the time' (Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden*, p. 10).

specifically Protestant moral teaching. The information about Brazil, its people and natural history, appears almost incidental. Given these motives, the most natural position for readers of Léry to adopt is one which agrees that he is more qualified to write on events in Brazil than Thevet; that the settlement failed because of Villegagnon's reversion, with the Calvinists as blameless victims (some even martyrs). Additionally, to agree that Catholics are far more unpleasant than the Tupinamba, and that Europeans could learn a lot from the Tupi way of life. The natives constructed are civil, but different, people you could live with, and, indeed, even contemplate marrying (under certain circumstances).

The driving motives of Hariot's text are primarily to fulfil his job description to record that which is useful or different, to provide practical information to prospective colonists and investors. His text brings the New World before the gaze of potential planters and investors and makes it familiar by pointing out specifically any similarities with England. He is also motivated by a need (for economic reasons) to produce a text which gives a positive impression of Virginia: propaganda to counter the negative reports circulated by some of Lane's men. As a consequence of this, Hariot both criticises Lane's actions (portraying his violence as overreaction), and presents the natives as peaceable and unthreatening, only responding negatively to the English as a result of Lane's ill-treatment. The desired reader subject position Hariot's text appears to construct is one which accepts his account as factual and authoritative ('true'), and, consequently, that the New World can profitably be settled. Also, essentially, that the natural inhabitants are not to be feared, but rather, have the potential for conversion to Christianity, and to come to 'love honour and fear' English colonists.

Ralph Lane's motives appear clearly personal: to present himself in his text in ways which justify (to Walter Raleigh initially) his actions against the natives, the

relatively poor level of exploration, and the abrupt abandonment of the colony. The very specific reader position one assumes he hoped to construct is one which accepted that, had the promised equipment, men and supplies been available, the venture, under Lane's leadership, would have been successful; also, that the abandonment of the colony was unavoidable due to the weather (the relief ships and supplies were forced back to sea and could not land). From his representation of the natives, readers would be expected to agree that they were devious and untrustworthy, dangerous opponents against whom it was totally justifiable to use extreme violence.

In summary, these different motives construct specific reader positions from which the 'natives' are viewed as either different, but people you could co-exist with; uncivilised, but tame: people you could colonise, but with whom there is no question of an equality of power relations; or a savage and potentially violent people who will conspire to destroy you if you are not vigilant. In these foundational texts figures of the native emerge from the previously unmapped real, and, named or unnamed, they enter European culture as constituting a reality which has to be negotiated if settlement is to proceed. From these early texts, it may be possible to trace textual pathways which lead on to, variously, the romanticised 'noble savage' found in numerous fictions; the 'scientific' study of man in anthropology and ethnography, employing an objectification which enables colonisation and exploitation, and finally, the Red Indian of Hollywood, waiting behind a rock to ambush and scalp you.



## Chapter Four

### No Where and No Body: Fictionalising the New World

As Europe's knowledge of the New World increased it became a locus of material desire: empires could be founded upon wealth drawn from its natural resources. To exploit these resources vast spaces of (for the European) uncultivated real had to be charted. This process was one of empirical cartography (where the places are, what commodities are there) and also of cultural mapping: the New World had to be assigned 'its place' in the European cultural order. Only then could Europe know how to respond to it, and, ultimately, formulate strategies to exploit it. Its place was radically different from that of the Orient in relation to Europe. In that encounter, as Kenneth Parker has pointed out, the imperial power was Ottoman, with Europeans going there 'not as dispossessors or settlers, but as supplicants for permission to ply their trade'.<sup>1</sup>

Europeans had to acknowledge the Orient's co-existence with Europe in biblical and classical literature, and treat its culture with at least superficial respect. The New World had no comparable written history: firstly, it was not part of the biblical or classical tradition; secondly, it did not have its own written history and culture with which to define itself to others. Lacking cultural self-definition in a form intelligible to the Europeans, the New World peoples had no defence against the process of European cultural overwriting which came to be performed upon it.<sup>2</sup> There was no respect for their culture, then, and their weapons were largely ineffective against those of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Early Modern Tales of Orient: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Kenneth Parker (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> This is not to ignore the Aztec, Maya or Inca civilisations. However, I would argue that European attitudes to the New World were largely formed in the initial encounters in the Caribbean and east coast South America. By the time the conquistadors encountered the Incas and Aztecs, lust for gold was pre-eminent. Monumental architectural achievements were viewed not primarily as expressions of civilised culture, but as fortified impediments to conquest, while the highly sophisticated Aztec codexes would have been unfathomable and irrelevant to the often illiterate conquistadors.

Europeans. As a result, this encounter became one between dispossessor and dispossessed.

That New World cultures were effectively non-literate had significance beyond the material limitations as, to European Christians, particularly Protestants, it distanced their peoples from the word of God.<sup>3</sup> An extreme example of these convictions can be seen in the writing of George Abbot, one of the translators of the King James Bible. His argument, as summarised by Adam Nicolson, was that non-literacy was the work of the devil, as the non-literate were 'shut out from the truth' of the word of God as written in the Bible.<sup>4</sup> In his *A Briefe Description of the Whole Worlde* (London, 1605) Abbot describes the natives of the New World as

naked, uncivill, some of them devourers of mans flesh, ignorant of shipping, without all kinde of learning, having no remembrance of historie or writing among them: never having hard [sic] of any such religion as in other places of the world is knowne: but being utterly ignorant of Scripture, *Christ* or *Moses*, or any God: neither having among them any token of crosse, Church, temple, or devotion, agreeing with other nations.<sup>5</sup>

Such European beliefs materially affected the treatment of native peoples in the New World. Though the Papal bull of 1537, *Sublimis Deus*, gave judgement that these

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<sup>3</sup> This differs from the situation in, for example, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England where, while many individuals could not read, society was basically literate. As Adam Fox has pointed out, the 'consequences of illiteracy were substantially mitigated by the fact that no one in sixteenth-century England lived very far away from someone who could read a manuscript writing or a printed work for them. [...] Far from it being the case, as was once assumed, that some people lived out their lives without ever encountering documents or books, letters or broadsides, this was a period in which nobody could avoid them in one context or another'. He concludes that 'Early modern England may not have been a wholly literate society, but it comprised a fundamentally literate environment' (Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 36-37). The Bible, in particular, was a text read aloud in churches (in the vernacular, since the time of Henry VIII), and at home, and, 'given the scale of production', by the end of the seventeenth century the family Bible was becoming a more common possession (Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, p. 38).

<sup>4</sup> Adam Nicolson, *Power and Glory: Jacobean England and the Making of the King James Bible* (London: Harper Collins, 2003), p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Nicolson, *Power and Glory*, p. 161.

peoples were indeed human, some Europeans, such as Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, argued that it was God's will that they should live in subservience and slavery.<sup>6</sup> Countering this view, most famously, was Bartolomé de las Casas who, in his *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1542), chronicled the atrocities of the Spanish in the New World, and argued for more humane treatment.<sup>7</sup> That Sepúlveda's was the opinion most widely adhered to in practice is indicated by the almost total annihilation of the native Caribbean peoples by the mid-sixteenth century.

As the New World did not provide its own cultural script for Europe to read, no encyclopaedias, histories, plays or books, this space was filled by scripts written by Europe: empirical accounts and fictions. The writers of empirical accounts, such as those previously discussed here, converted chunks of the real into digestible pieces of cultural reality; the creative writers, in Lacanian terms, produced cultural narratives to encircle the emptiness introduced by the discovery of the New World into the undifferentiated continuity of the real.

Late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century authors of fiction used the new, virtually blank canvas constituted by the New World as a ground on which to inscribe their own culture, or play creatively, projecting onto it wholly idealised societies, alternative social structures and comical inversions, all without any necessary reference to the actuality of the New World. The texts and plays considered here are typical in that the 'realities' they construct do not draw their material wholly, or in an unmediated fashion, from the empirical accounts available to them, though some, like *The Tempest*

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<sup>6</sup> Sepúlveda cited the Aristotelian concept of natural slavery to support his argument. See Anthony Pagden's introduction to Bartolomé de las Casas's *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, ed. and trans. by Nigel Griffin, with an introduction by Anthony Pagden (London: Penguin, 1992), and Margarita Zamora, 'Abreast of Columbus: Gender and Discovery' in *Cultural Critique*, 17 (1990/1), 127-149.

<sup>7</sup> The argument between the two was fought out in a debate at Valladolid in 1550. See Anthony Pagden's Introduction to Las Casas's *Short Account* for details of the terms of the debate.

and *The Sea Voyage*, may take a single incident as one of their sources.<sup>8</sup> Rather, they seem to function in a similar way to Brunelleschi's cut-out,<sup>9</sup> except that, rather than offer a scene of truth which matched the actuality it depicts, these fictions take the place of the actuality of the New World in all its difference, materiality and violence, which are deferred by the European signifier. That fictional texts did not transcribe their plots directly from such accounts provides evidence for my suggestion that the New World constituted a space for textual experimentation, the working out of possibilities for European culture and society, with the real of the New World kept at a safe distance by cultural play.

### **Eden reinscribed**

This is not the whole story, though. As previously noted, first-hand accounts of the New World were not 'objective', nor could they possibly be free from cultural mediation and intertextual references; nor were they, in the generally understood sense, fictions. Also, as suggested above, the exploits of explorers were not directly transcribed from their first-hand accounts into fictions which engaged the popular imagination (unlike potatoes and tobacco which entered readily into the mainstream of English culture). In John Layfield's account of Puerto Rico<sup>10</sup> we can examine one example of a first-hand experience of the New World which made its way into one of the most widely read

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<sup>8</sup> These writers had no reason to be ignorant of (albeit problematic) accounts which reported on the New World. Collections of New World histories and first hand accounts of voyages were widely published throughout Europe, and available in English and Latin from the early translation of Peter Martyr's *Decades of the New Worlde* (by Richard Eden, 1555) onwards, including Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589-1600) the de Bry family's *Grandes Voyages* (first published in 1590), and Samuel Purchas's *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625), as well as numerous individually published accounts.

<sup>9</sup> For discussion of Brunelleschi's perspective painting see Catherine Belsey, *Culture and the Real: Theorizing Cultural Criticism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), pp. 81-99.

<sup>10</sup> John Layfield, 'A Large Relation of the Puerto Ricco Voyage', in *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, ed. by Samuel Purchas (London: William Stansby, 1625), pp. 1155-1176.

literary productions of the age: the King James Bible. The association between the New World, specifically the Caribbean, and the Garden of Eden, the earthly paradise, began with Columbus's first reports. The island he first lands on, which he names '*Española*', he describes as extremely fertile, with rivers, sierras and 'lofty mountains', which are filled with trees of a thousand kinds and tall, so that they seem to touch the sky. I am told that they never lose their foliage, and this I can believe, for I saw them as green and lovely as they are in Spain in May, and some of them were flowering, some bearing fruit, and some at another stage, according to their nature. The nightingale was singing and other birds of a thousand kinds, in the month of November, there where I went.<sup>11</sup>

The population of this island is 'without number' and while the people are 'well built and of handsome stature' they are 'marvellously timorous'.<sup>12</sup> Such descriptions, typical of the letter and *Journal*, were given heightened significance when he added, towards the end of the *Journal*, that 'the earthly paradise is at the end of the east' and the lands 'now discovered are [...] "the end of the east"'.<sup>13</sup> Throughout his account Columbus repeatedly stresses the possibility for material gain from gold and spices in the islands, and he takes possession of both islands and people for the Spanish crown.<sup>14</sup> The goal of converting these otherwise uncommitted souls to the Catholic faith is inextricably linked with their subjection: 'They should be good servants and of quick intelligence,

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<sup>11</sup> Christopher Columbus, 'The Letter of Christopher Columbus', in *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, trans. by Cecil Jane (London: Anthony Blond & The Orion Press, 1960), pp. 191-202, p. 192.

<sup>12</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 194.

<sup>13</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 176.

<sup>14</sup> 'There I found very many islands, filled with innumerable people, and I have taken possession of them all for their Highnesses, done by proclamation and with the royal standard unfurled, and no opposition was offered to me' (Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 191).

since I see that they very soon say all that is said to them, and I believe that they would easily be made Christians, for it appeared to me that they had no creed'.<sup>15</sup>

Columbus is effectively exciting material desire at the same time as the pious Christian desire to evangelise. Is it possible that the association of the Caribbean with Eden excited a deeper-seated psychological desire, that of the possibility of a re-entry to the earthly paradise for fallen man? For a Christian, the lure of the possibility of a negation of original sin implied by re-entry into Eden, with all its associations of ease, innocence and eternal life, must have been deeply seductive. It is, of course, a flawed and unattainable desire, as Eden is ineluctably lost. Paradise, like the real, cannot, once left, be re-entered except in death. This is not to say that the desire, once excited, could be rationalised out of existence. In Lacanian terms, the consequence of the subject's loss, its alienation from the real, is desire. At the same time, the compensation for that alienation is culture, the space where wishes and dreams are named and renamed. New World accounts such as Columbus's play to those wishes and dreams.

The duality of material and spiritual desire may also be traced in John Layfield's account of his voyage to Puerto Rico and his subsequent invocation of this experience in his contributions to the translation of Genesis for the new King James Bible.<sup>16</sup> Layfield, a cleric and Cambridge fellow, acted as chaplain and assistant to George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, during his 1598 expedition to Puerto Rico. This was not a voyage of discovery but of aggression. At the height of England's sea war with Spain, Cumberland's mission was to take Puerto Rico from the Spanish and install an English presence there.<sup>17</sup> The island occupied a strategically important position: from a base

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<sup>15</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 24.

<sup>16</sup> I am indebted to Adam Nicolson for identifying the link between Layfield's Puerto Rico account and his work on the King James Bible.

<sup>17</sup> Andrews suggests that this was only contemplated as 'a base that would confer on the holders a temporary strategic advantage' and possibly shorten the war by diverting Spanish forces from Europe (Kenneth R Andrews, *Trade*,

here the English could mount raids on Spanish bullion fleets sailing between Mexico and Spain. Additionally, the island was reputedly rich in gold, as well as the trading commodities of ginger, sugar and hides. Layfield sets out Cumberland's stated motives, only revealed once the English were in possession of the island:

His Lordships honorable resolution and intendment was, not to come so farre from home, to take onely or spoile some place in this other world, and then run home againe: but hee had determined (by the leaue of god) to keepe *Puerto Rico*, if it pleased God to giue it into his hands. That was the place he meant to carry, whatsoever it might cost him, being the very key of the West *Indies*, which locketh and shutteth all the gold and silver in the Continent of *America* and *Brasilia*.<sup>18</sup>

But God, as it transpired, 'had otherwise disposed'.<sup>19</sup>

As Layfield's reason for being there was to take part in a military action, it is no surprise that his account includes a lot of military detail. His treatment of the battle for the fort at Puerto Rico town is of particular interest as it demonstrates his literary style, and, taken with his description of the physical nature of the island, provides a textual example of the duality of treatment of the Caribbean, and the duality of desires the islands provoked. The battle for the fort is an adventure narrative, written in a lively, vigorous style, which combines realistic incident and detail with, at times, poetic use of language. Readers are encouraged to feel that they are 'really there'. It begins with the landing. The troops, over one thousand of them, have disembarked and marched all day to the fort at San Juan de Puerto Rico, not reaching it until nightfall. Layfield sets the scene:

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*Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 281).

<sup>18</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1166.

<sup>19</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1166.

His Lordship in person with Sir *John Barkley* went as quietly as they could to take view of the place; which they found to be narrow and a long Cause-way leading to a Bridge reaching from the one Island to the other. The Bridge they perceived to be pulled up, and on the other bank was there a strong Barricado, a little beyond which was a fort with Ordnance. But how much or what we could not learn, nor by how many men it was held, yet perceived they it absolutely not to be passed but at a low water.<sup>20</sup>

The time of the ebb can only be ascertained by a continuous watch, so the army fall back to rest. They sit or lie down on 'a great Lawne' and refresh themselves with water from a stream in a nearby wood, and bread provided by Cumberland ('no niggard of that he had', Layfield advises).<sup>21</sup> Before dawn the troops are ranged for battle, and 'every man had forgotten how weary he had bin the last night, so forward they were to be in service'.<sup>22</sup> Not only are the troops eager for battle: the gentlemanly rivalry of 'who should have the point that day' is debated for readers. It is decided that Barkley will command, but Cumberland will also fight in person. Armour is donned by those of rank who have it.

The battle rages for two hours, with the English, despite their best efforts, unable to breach the gate. The soldiers choose to wade beside the causeway, rather than cross upon it, as it has been made deliberately rugged. Cumberland stumbles over his target bearer, and, face down in the water, is unable to get up because of his heavy armour. After several attempts, a sergeant major manages to drag him from the water before he drowns. Recovering on the periphery, he is still in danger. Here, Layfield is poetic in his

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<sup>20</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1160. Barkley is Cumberland's Lieutenant General.

<sup>21</sup> Does the image of the green lawn, the forest and river perhaps echo the Edenic landscape?

<sup>22</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1161.



evocation of the noise and tumult of battle: 'the bullets made him threatning musicke on every side', and the thousands of musket bullets flying from both sides are personified as 'heavy leaden messengers of death'. Despite this hail of musket fire and heavy shot, the soldiers

came to the very gate, and with Bils, some two or three that they had, wanting other fitter instruments, began to hewe it. At their ports and loope holes they were at the push of the Pike, and hauing broken their owne, with their naked hands tooke their enemies Pikes, and perforce brake them.<sup>23</sup>

Here, then, Layfield uses both poetic language and vigorous style to evoke the noise and danger of battle. He takes readers right into the thick of the fighting: through the hail of fire up to the hand-to-hand combat of the front line. Readers also experience the frustration of failure, for, as the tide races in, the force must retreat. They fall back to the previous night's lawn, where the injured lie, tended by surgeons. The losses are counted: fewer than fifty injured, and fewer still killed. No commanders are injured or lost, but two dead Lieutenants named: Chomley and Belings.<sup>24</sup> The enemy losses are also estimated. One final detail, offering comfort, ends the day for exhausted readers and soldiers alike: 'from this place our Companies marched to the Sea-side, whether his Lordship had appointed victuals to meete them'.<sup>25</sup>

The battle is won on the following day, after Cumberland has recovered sufficiently to design and execute a cunning plan.<sup>26</sup> The fort taken, the army move in to

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<sup>23</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1161.

<sup>24</sup> This recalls the opening of *Much Ado About Nothing*: the Messenger is asked by Leonato how many men have been lost in the action, to which he replies 'But few of any sort, and none of name' (I.i.5-7). Cumberland is described by Layfield, in this action, as 'growne exceeding niggardly of the expense of any one mans life' (Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1163).

<sup>25</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1161.

<sup>26</sup> Layfield's text is always deferential to Cumberland.

the town, which is eerily empty,<sup>27</sup> except for the injured and women; the fighting men have withdrawn to a second, more distant fort. Rather than undertake another battle, Cumberland decides to besiege this fort. Layfield underlines the English command of the island, by detailing how Cumberland imposes law and order, and dispenses justice fairly to the occupied peoples. One of his men is charged with using violence against a woman, while robbing her of her jewels, and another with defacing a church. The first is hanged, the second, though sentenced to death, is reprieved.<sup>28</sup>

The Spaniards finally agree to surrender the fort at Mora and leave the island. Layfield is then free, it seems, to explore a little, and he provides a brief description of the town of St John de Puerto Rico and the island in general. It is at this point in the narrative that Cumberland's aims are revealed (as quoted above). At the moment it becomes clear that he wishes to hold Puerto Rico, the force is overwhelmed by sickness: over 400 die, with many more sick and unlikely to recover.<sup>29</sup> Layfield describes the course of the illness in graphic detail:

It was an extreme loosenesse of the body, which within few dayes would grow into a flux of bloud, sometimes in the beginning accompanied with a hot Ague, but alwayes in the end attended by an extreme debillitie and waste of spirits: so that some two dayes before death, the armes and legs of the sicke would be wonderfull cold. And that was held for a certaine signe of neere departure. This sicknesse vsually within few dayes (for it was very extreme to the number of

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<sup>27</sup> This is similar to Layfield's description of the empty town encountered on Lanzarote during the outward voyage to Puerto Rico, and, while perhaps seeming eerie to readers, must have been familiar to invading armies (Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1155).

<sup>28</sup> The execution takes place in the town square, and the Spaniards are encouraged to attend.

<sup>29</sup> The sickness was probably Yellow Fever.

sixtie, eightie, and an hundred stooles in an artificiaall day) brought a languishing weaknesse over all the body.<sup>30</sup>

As the result of these losses, Cumberland resolves, given a respectable ransom, to give back possession of Puerto Rico to the Spanish. Those who can, leave. Sickness and death, as so often in the New World, provide an instance of the irruption of the real into the fragile reality which invaders and settlers precariously tried to construct from it. The cause of the sickness is outside their frameworks of knowledge, though Layfield reports some speculation. The physical cause may not have been understood, but by attaching symbolic meaning to the sickness (it is the will of God) such incursions of the real could be partially contained and brought within the bounds of cultural reality.<sup>31</sup> The expulsion of the English from Puerto Rico is God's will: they could not stay as 'God had otherwise disposed'.<sup>32</sup>

It is only when Layfield is aboard Cumberland's ship bound for the Azores that he has some leisure to write a fuller description of the island of Puerto Rico. His writing style is no less engaging than when narrating events, and he presents to the gaze of readers a highly visual and sensual version of Puerto Rico. His text, though, invites a more complex reading than the quest for an obvious 'transparent realism'. Previously in his account, Layfield touched on the natural wealth of the island, its fruits 'so strange as would pose the professors of the skill in *England*' and the 'secrets of the Gold Mines'.<sup>33</sup> His fuller version is a vivid evocation of an eminently desirable physical environment, worthy to be thought of as Eden in its plenitude. As with his version of Eden in Genesis, Layfield creates an unattainable locus of desire: that which is already lost.

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<sup>30</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1167.

<sup>31</sup> What 'passes understanding' is by definition, for the Christian, the will of God. Note the similarity with Hariot's treatment of the illness which strikes the Algonkian Indians.

<sup>32</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1166.

<sup>33</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1165.

He begins by making clear that his description is at one remove: his report is compiled from the reports of others rather than his own first hand experience. He seeks to assure readers of his editorial conscientiousness: 'I will not tell you any thing, which (mee thought) my selfe did not first see reason to beleeve'.<sup>34</sup> He could not explore the island, he says, as he always needed to be close at hand, in case Cumberland required his services. We could describe Layfield's situation as one of loss and doubled distancing: he could never experience Eden (or its simulacrum) for himself, it was always at second hand, and he is reporting on these reports while on a ship heading away from the island. He begins with a relation of the size and orientation of the island. He names its principal regions, towns and rivers, harbours and 'sea-faring' towns. He makes no reference to any inhabitants. The abundance of rivers may in itself be an attractive attribute; however, Puerto Rico has more to offer:

Now, in euery one of these Rivers which I haue named is there gold found ordinarily before it be sought. And (I know it to bee true) when the *Spaniards* perceived by his Lordships manner of leauing the Citie of *Puerto Rico*, that hee went not away without purpose to returne, one of them told his Honor in plaine termes, that he could not thrust his spade into any of these named Rivers, and many other besides these, but hee should finde gold. This certainly is true, and I haue seene the experience, that some of the gravell of one of these Rivers being brought to his Lorship because it looked rich, when triall was made, onely by washing away the sand and gravell, there was cornes

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<sup>34</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1169.

of very good gold found in it, and that for the quantitie and proportion  
in great measure.<sup>35</sup>

The island is so excessively rich in gold that one cannot help but find it, even without exerting the slightest effort. This would, of course, provoke material desire in the English at personal and national levels: for the gold itself, and to acquire for England the Spanish-held territories which provided them. One may imagine how Layfield's careful, geographical description of the island would be seized upon by prospective adventurers in England (evoking, for today's readers, the trope of the pirate's treasure map from popular literature). However, Layfield does not allow an unproblematic interpretation of his intelligence. He relates the 'certaine truth' of a Spaniard made rich to excess by the gold of Puerto Rico. On his death, his sons are left extremely rich, and the youngest, in Spain at the time, is married to the daughter of a Marquess. All would seem perfect, the fulfilment, no doubt, of many readers' desires and aspirations, yet, Layfield cautions:

But see how nothing will last where God with his preseruing blessing  
doth not keepe things together. For at this day, scarce is there any  
remainder left of all his riches, and this now most poore though great  
Lady, not being able to proportion her selfe to the lownesse of her  
fortune, and besides vexed with her husbands ill conditions, hath by  
authoritie left him, and having entered religious profession, is at this  
present in a Nunnerie in Saint *Domingo*.<sup>36</sup>

By this moral tale, readers are alerted to the possibly dire consequences of the acquisition gold in excess, and its (inevitable?) loss. The theological message is simple:

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<sup>35</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1170.

<sup>36</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1170.

what God grants, He can just as easily take away. This was also amply demonstrated by the will of God at work in the expulsion of the English expedition force from Puerto Rico.

Layfield reports what he has been told of soil and grass types, and their suitability for grazing animals; of the many hills and a principal mountain, each containing seams of gold waiting to be mined; many valleys, wooded with mature trees, ideal for making masts and building ships. Prompting readers to conclude how propitious such a combination was, Layfield digresses to relate how a great bullion ship, after a storm, took refuge in Puerto Rico harbour and replaced her broken masts. She was subsequently sunk there by Sir Francis Drake.<sup>37</sup> The many wide plains are covered by vast herds of cattle (large, like English oxen), and the champaign has damp areas near rivers, ideal for growing and milling sugar-cane, and drier areas more suitable for cultivating ginger.<sup>38</sup> There are also many types of domestic animals such as sheep, goats, pigs, hens and turkeys, not to mention interesting wild ones such as parrots and parakeets. Fruit is present in abundance, and the staples of cassava, maize and rice are all grown (as corn could be, given a little effort). Layfield fills the previously blank canvas of Puerto Rico for his readers with an idyllic landscape brimming with everything a prospective investor or settler could ask for.<sup>39</sup>

Layfield's description is, however, curiously devoid of any mention of people.

That they are, or were, there is evident, as, apart from the towns named, the open

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<sup>37</sup> Embarked upon a privateering mission, Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins attempted to take the *Bougonia*, Admiral of the Spanish bullion fleet, in Puerto Rico harbour. Layfield does not make it clear whether they were successful in taking her four and a half millions of treasure (they were not, it was a disaster, and Drake's last voyage). The wreck can still be seen, as Layfield states 'Some of the ribs of this great Beast we found here, but the marrow and sweetness of her was gone' (Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1171).

<sup>38</sup> Ginger and sugar-cane were two of the principal trading commodities of the island (the third being hides), and it is not clear in Layfield's account whether these were naturally occurring, or introduced by the Spanish formerly cultivating them.

<sup>39</sup> Compare this broad-brush approach to the detail of Hariot's account. Hariot must work far harder to present Virginia as a desirable place to settle.

country of the champaign is dotted with '*Stancies* and *Ingenios*'. He describes in some detail the type of position and workings of each: the *ingenios* produce and mill sugarcane; on the *stancies* ginger is grown. *Stancies* are more numerous, as they can be sited anywhere and are easier to set up. For these reasons 'therefore the poorer may more easily come by them'. Layfield does not indicate which poor he is referring to: Spanish settlers, or indigenous natives. However, the Spanish names and the concern with ease and costs of setting up would strongly suggest he means Spanish settlers. Layfield does not refer to any indigenous peoples on Puerto Rico. One mulatto, *Chereno* ('halfe borne a slave'),<sup>40</sup> is named as holding land and cattle, and Negro slaves are referred to on two occasions. The landscape is presented to readers as empty both of its original inhabitants, and of the Spanish settlers, and, therefore, eminently suitable for settlement and development of trading commodities by the English.<sup>41</sup>

Layfield names many of the fruits of Puerto Rico, and provides quite detailed descriptions of some of the more exotic ones. The fruits are 'abundant in number and measure, very excellent'.<sup>42</sup> There are pines, mammeis, guavas, plums, papayas, grapes, plantains, coconuts, palmeto [palm heart?], dates, figs, pomegranates, muske-millions [muskmelon], pome-citrones, limes, oranges, pepper. Potatoes are 'ordinary', unlike in England presumably. Layfield states that the 'pine' takes its name from its similarity to the pineapple, yet in each detail of appearance and taste it is wholly different. Layfield's description conveys the sensuousness of eating it: 'The taste of this fruit is very delicious, so as it quickly breedeth a fulness. For I cannot liken it in the palate to any (me thinks) better then to very ripe Strawberries and Creame'.<sup>43</sup> Other fruits are also

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<sup>40</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1173.

<sup>41</sup> Layfield does describe their encounter with the indigenous people of Dominica (Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1157-1159).

<sup>42</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1172.

<sup>43</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1172. I don't think I would go as far as Nicolson who describes Layfield's language here as 'ecstatic' (Nicolson, *Power and Glory*, p. 104).

delicious: guavas taste 'like to a very ripe great white Plum'; the stones of the wild grapes are 'of a delightfull saporous taste'; while the oranges are 'full of most delicate and taste-pleasing joyce' and the peppers are 'hotter and stronger' than the black pepper in England. Layfield's appreciation is not confined to the sensuous pleasures of taste though; guavas, plums and the wild grapes are all cited as offering 'a remedie against the flux'.<sup>44</sup> Sadly, the remedy was not effective for the many hundreds who died on Puerto Rico. The abundance and sensuous tastes of the fruits is compounded to the point of excess by the fact that this bounty occurs naturally, with little or no cultivation, and it is continual: 'These fruits and many more grow upon trees, and common to them all it is, and I thinke to all the fruits of the Iland, that the same tree at once beareth buds, greene fruit, and ripe fruits, and often withall seedeth'.<sup>45</sup> The fruit has only to be plucked from the trees, as in Eden.

Layfield's account of Puerto Rico evokes a type of the Garden of Eden with which his readers would be familiar. Eden, the earthly paradise, had a location and had been represented on Christian maps for centuries. Its position, at the top of the map, often just below the representation of Christ, was beyond the east, or, as Columbus put it 'at the end of the east'.<sup>46</sup> Three examples are the Spanish Beatus world map of 1109, the English Psalter map (after 1262) and the Hereford Mappa Mundi (c. 1280). Illustrations of the narrative of Genesis in picture bibles and books of hours are conventional, with striking similarities of detail: there is usually water (either a river or fountain, sometimes the four rivers leaving Eden); various animals roam free on the plains or hillsides, with birds flying above; there are trees (usually several, but at the least the Tree of Knowledge, often also the Tree of Life), bearing, of course, fruit. God,

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<sup>44</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1172.

<sup>45</sup> Layfield, *Purchas*, p. 1173.

<sup>46</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 176.



Adam, Eve, the serpent, the Angel with a sword, are variously present depending on the particular incident illustrated. The *Holkham Bible Picture Book* (circa 1320-1330, produced in England, with French language script, BL MS Add. 47682) provides some fine examples of the genre. The story from creation to the loss of paradise is told in four images: 'The Creation of the Animals', 'Temptation of Adam and Eve', 'The Fall and the Expulsion' and 'Adam and Eve outside Paradise'.<sup>47</sup>

The Creation image teems with animal and vegetative life: the sky is full of flying birds, the tops of the trees with perching birds. The trees themselves are in leaf and fruit. Many animals roam freely on the plain around the figure of the Creator. At his feet, water birds are on the river in which fish are swimming. Even the background to the image is covered, with a repeating pattern of trellis and flowers. Clearly, unlike in the later painting by Brueghel, none of the animals or plants depicted are from the New World, but the mood of teeming abundance is here, just as in Layfield's Puerto Rico account, in which there are also close echoes of the rivers, trees, plains and animals seen in the creation image.

The Temptation scene depicts God pointing to the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and holding up his other hand in admonition to Adam and Eve. Six trees are illustrated, all bearing brightly coloured leaves and large, brightly coloured fruits of different types. The Tree of Knowledge appears to bear apples, and another has pears, while the other fruits are not clearly identifiable. If God withholds the fruit of one specific tree, it is clear that there is an abundance of fruit ready to be picked from the other trees. Brightly coloured birds sing in the treetops. Again, Layfield may draw on this familiar image in describing the abundance and ease of taking fruit in Puerto Rico.

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<sup>47</sup> For discussion of visual imagery of the Reformation version of the story of Adam and Eve see Catherine Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).



Figure 15 'The Creation of the Animals'



Figure 16 'Temptation of Adam and Eve'



Figure 17 'The Fall and the Expulsion'



Figure 18 'Adam and Eve outside Paradise'

In the Fall and Expulsion scene Adam and Eve are seen eating the forbidden fruit, aided by the serpent, and also being driven out of the enclosed garden by a sword-wielding angel. The inherent sensuousness of eating ripe fruit is implicit in this scene, whereas it is explicit in Layfield's account. However, for Adam and Eve the eating of fruit leads to expulsion and mortality. Conversely, Layfield advises eating certain fruits to protect against the flux, to stave off death.<sup>48</sup>

The final image, of Adam and Eve outside Paradise, is, by contrast, much darker in tone and colour. The high walls and closed gates of the garden deny even the most tantalising glimpse inside. The richly clothed angel stands on steps leading to the gates, sword in hand, barring the way. A stunted oak is the only tree, and it has no birds in it to sing. Four sheep are the only animals to be seen on the dark and stony-looking ground. Naked, Adam digs while Eve spins. The stark contrast between the first three images and the final one is clear: inside the garden, in the presence of God, there is light, colour, abundance of animals and fruit, and no need to work. Outside, it is dark, dreary, food is hard to come by, there is work. And also death.

Layfield's account of Puerto Rico has many points of similarity with the conventional images of the interior of the Garden of Eden. Following his return to England, Layfield was engaged as one of the many clerics and divines who translated the text of the King James Bible. Adam Nicolson identifies Layfield as having 'a hand in' writing:

And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow euery tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the tree of life also in the

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<sup>48</sup> The image of a sword bearing angel was also used to symbolise the scourge of plague in Europe.

midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and euill. and a  
riuer went out of Eden to water the garden.<sup>49</sup>

He suggests that Layfield would have had the forests of Dominica in mind when he wrote this, and concludes that ‘the seventeenth-century English idea of Paradise, a vision of enveloping lushness, was formed by the seduction of an almost untouched Caribbean’.<sup>50</sup> While not in a position to know what was in Layfield’s mind, I would argue that given the similarities in Layfield’s account to received, conventional, images of Eden it is equally likely that his response to and description of Puerto Rico and Dominica were formed by pre-existing cultural understanding of Eden taken from earlier bibles and biblical illustration, and church imagery in general.<sup>51</sup> His text is, I maintain, highly intertextual, and this intertextuality is doubled in his translation of the book of Genesis. Eden becomes the Caribbean, which becomes Eden. This circularity is an instance of the way in which texts, as cultural artefacts, contribute to the process of reinscription and reinforcement of cultural values.

From the time of Columbus onwards, the link made between the physical similarities of Eden and the Caribbean, when magnified through the prism of a Christian cultural understanding, projected onto the Caribbean the identity of Eden, exciting a desire impossible to fulfil: the possibility of a return to Paradise, the site of otherwise irrevocable loss. But perhaps the Caribbean was always viewed as only the nearest substitute. The physical attributes may be there, but the European who views the Caribbean is no pre-lapsarian Adam. Layfield, like Columbus, cannot see the mountains without seeing the gold, the trees without thinking of masts, or the beasts without thinking of their value as hides. It is fallen man who returns, bringing with him the

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<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Nicolson, *Power and Glory*, p. 104.

<sup>50</sup> Nicolson, *Power and Glory*, p. 104.

<sup>51</sup> See Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden* for discussion of conventional church imagery.

knowledge and culture he has created around himself since the Fall, in all its creativity, avarice and violence. The possible sons and daughters of Adam and Eve in this parallel Paradise, the native Arawaks, crowding around Columbus, innocent of their nakedness, were, in that moment biting into the fruit of knowledge, and from then on, their fall was inevitable. It was also swift and violent. It is not a sin of omission that Layfield does not describe the natives of Puerto Rico; it is simply that there were none left.

### **An unpopular location?**

John Layfield's first-hand experience appears to have permeated his description of Eden, thereby making its way into the English literature of the period. While the idea of the New World may have fired the imaginations of literary writers in England during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the New World as a physical setting for dramas and fictions appears less popular.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps this may be accounted for by the general lack of first-hand experience of the new lands among writers and the audiences they wrote for. It is not that authors would have been unaware of exploration and settlement of the New World, as there were many published accounts available. In addition, there were major collections of first hand accounts, including both those written in English, and translations from other European sources: Richard Eden's

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<sup>52</sup> Jeffrey Knapp alludes to the 'blunted impact' of the New World as he quotes J H Elliott's observation that 'the apparent slowness of Europe in making the mental adjustments required to incorporate America within its field of vision' is 'one of the most striking features of sixteenth-century intellectual history' (Jeffrey Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to The Tempest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 18). He notes that Columbus's first letter, widely circulated in Europe by 1494, was not published in England, and that Richard Eden's *Treatyse of the Newe India* seems to have been the only 'English work devoted to America' to be printed in the sixty years between 1494 and 1553 (Knapp, *Empire Nowhere*, p. 18). Knapp proposes that 'the first references to the New World printed in England occur not in economic, political, or even geographical tracts but in imaginative literature', citing Alexander Barclay's translation of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (1494) – *The Ship of Follys* (1509) and More's *Utopia* (1516) as the two earliest examples (Knapp, *Empire Nowhere*, p. 20). John Parker also notes that the 'impression is unavoidable that between 1520 and 1540 most Englishmen were but little interested in the new discoveries and resulting opportunities' (John Parker, *Books to Build an Empire*, qtd in Mary C Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America, 1576-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 11).

*Decades of the New World* (1555); Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations of the English Nation* (first edition 1589, second edition 1598-1600); Samuel Purchas's *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625); the de Bry family's *America* series, published mainly in Latin and German, and including many engravings made from first-hand sketches, drawings and paintings, as well as verbal descriptions (from 1590). The case has been made that Hakluyt was 'first and foremost a propagandist for long-distance trade and colonisation', a fact 'obvious to his contemporaries', as illustrated by Sir Philip Sidney's description of Hakluyt's first work, *Divers Voyages*, as 'a very good trumpet' for exploration and settlement.<sup>53</sup> The same observations are applicable to Eden, Purchas and de Bry.

However successful or otherwise such collections were in encouraging actual exploration and settlement, they do not appear to have excited many creative writers to colonise the new space with fictions which used the New World as a physical location. The earliest English fiction ostensibly set in the New World is Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), which makes direct reference to accounts of Amerigo Vespucci's voyages. While many fictional works make allusion to the New World (Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* and the poems of John Donne offer familiar examples), the *Annals of English Drama 975-1700* indicates that only a relatively small number of plays written and performed during the period were actually set in the New World.<sup>54</sup> While not representing an exhaustive list, the following brief survey provides an indication of the relevant plays. What appear to be the two earliest examples, *The New World's Tragedy* (1595) and *The Conquest of the West Indies* (1601), have not survived. Shakespeare's

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<sup>53</sup> Pamela Neville-Sington, "A Very Good Trumpet": Richard Hakluyt and the Politics of Overseas Expansion', in *Texts and Cultural Change in Early Modern England*, ed. by Cedric C Brown and Arthur F Marotti (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 66-79.

<sup>54</sup> Alfred Harbage, *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*, revised by Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (London: Routledge, 1989).

*The Tempest* (1611) is an early instance of a drama which incorporates various New World references. Ben Jonson's short masque, *News from the New World Discovered in the Moon* (1620), is interesting for what it indicates about the status of news, printers and chroniclers, but, while it satirically transposes contemporary society to another place, that place is not the Americas. John Fletcher's *The Island Princess* (1621) is set in the East Indian Molucca Islands. Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Sea Voyage* (1622) concerns piracy and settlement, in an indeterminate New World setting.<sup>55</sup> A lost tragedy, *The Plantation of Virginia* (1623), may have dealt directly with the 1622 massacre of settlers in Virginia. Thomas Heywood's *The English Traveller* (1627) and Richard Brome's *The Antipodes* (1638) focus on travel itself, with the New World as a possible destination which is never reached. Four later plays, William Davenant's *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* (1658), and *I Sir Francis Drake* (1658), Howard and Dryden's *The Indian Queen* (1664) and Dryden's sequel, *The Indian Emperor, or the Conquest of Mexico* (1665), appear to be the first clear attempts to present, as history plays, the discovery and conquest of the New World. Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), like *Utopia*, gestures towards a New World setting, while addressing more domestic issues.

It seems reasonable to assume that, given the number of available non-fiction works about the New World, the comparative lack of interest in translating them into fiction or onto the stage is due not to ignorance, but to choice. English interests in the New World were negligible prior to Francis Drake's circumnavigation (1577-80), which challenged Spanish and Portuguese hegemony in the region. There was little cultural interaction between the English and New World native peoples, with only a small

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<sup>55</sup> Harbage credits authorship of *The Sea Voyage* to Fletcher and Massinger, but, the latest edition of the work, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, ed. by Anthony Parr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), attributes authorship to Beaumont and Fletcher (though noting Massinger as a collaborator or reviser), and I have used this attribution throughout.

number brought to England during the period.<sup>56</sup> The realities of Spanish colonial activities in the New World, as disseminated by Bartolomé de las Casas in his *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1542),<sup>57</sup> were not addressed until quite late works, such as *The Cruelty of the Spaniards* (1658). Playwrights of the period appear to have looked more often to the east for their settings; perhaps its more developed culture and audiences' greater familiarity with the east meant that it offered greater dramatic potential. For example, Peter Holland examines several plays from the period in terms of their articulations of confrontations between opposing cultural groups within eastern and western cultures.<sup>58</sup>

J H Elliott has characterised as 'a blunted impact' the effect of 'the discovery of America on the sixteenth-century European consciousness'.<sup>59</sup> He suggests that, rather than a 'linear advance' in European appreciation of the New World, there was a process which comprised changing angles of perception, with some aspects coming into focus while others became distorted.<sup>60</sup> If the impact of the New World on English literary production was blunted, it may be that, as Catherine Belsey states, 'sometimes difference is synonymous with indifference', that the Renaissance was 'a period when knowledges that were self-evident in one genre of writing might well be entirely ignored in another'.<sup>61</sup> While English fictional writers did not entirely ignore the efforts of the chroniclers, there does appear to have been a measure of indifference. Of the

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<sup>56</sup> See Alden T Vaughan, 'Trinculo's Indian: American Natives in Shakespeare's England', in *The Tempest and its Travels*, ed. by Peter Hulme and William H Sherman (London: Reaktion, 2000), pp. 49-59, which provides details of some of the thirty-five or more American natives brought to England during Shakespeare's lifetime.

<sup>57</sup> First published in Spanish, the book was 'immediately translated into every major European language and for three hundred years established the image of the Spanish conquest of America in the eyes of Europe' (Casas, *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, frontispiece).

<sup>58</sup> See Peter Holland, "'Travelling Hopefully': The Dramatic Form of Journeys in English Renaissance Drama", in *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michèle Willems (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 160-178.

<sup>59</sup> J H Elliott, 'Renaissance Europe and America: A Blunted Impact?' in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. by Fredi Chiappelli (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp.11-23, p. 22.

<sup>60</sup> Elliott, *First Images of America*, p. 15-16.

<sup>61</sup> Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden*, p. 16.



fictions mentioned so far, it is only the later plays which attempt to put the New World and its peoples on the stage. The earlier texts use the New World as a nominal setting in which to place Europeans in scenarios which dramatise English concerns with either domestic governance or colonial settlement. I shall discuss three such texts here:

Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516),<sup>62</sup> Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611),<sup>63</sup> and Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Sea Voyage* (1622),<sup>64</sup> with reference to the first-hand accounts on which they draw.

### **Utopia: the no where in the New World**

In his hyper-realist fiction, *Utopia*, Thomas More locates the hyper-civilised Utopians on an island somewhere in the New World. Its location is as non-specific as many of those already discussed in the accounts of Amerigo Vespucci, with whom the fictional witness to Utopia, Hythloday, had supposedly travelled. In More's fiction, Hythloday stays behind in Brazil when Vespucci returns to Portugal in 1504. Setting out from the fort at Cape Frio, Hythloday travels north, beyond the Equator, into regions never before visited by Europeans.<sup>65</sup> At the furthest point of his travels he reaches Utopia.

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<sup>62</sup> Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. by Paul Turner (London: Penguin, 1965). For a detailed study of English utopian fictions written between 1516 and 1688 see Amy Boesky, *Founding Fictions: Utopias in Early Modern England* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), especially chapter one, 'Founding the "Best State of the Commonwealth": The School of Thomas More', pp. 23-55.

<sup>63</sup> References to *The Tempest* are to William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).

<sup>64</sup> References to *The Sea Voyage* are taken from *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, ed. by Anthony Parr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995). For readings of *The Sea Voyage* see Claire Jowitt, *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics 1589-1642: Real and Imagined Worlds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), especially chapter five, 'New worlds and old worlds: gender performance and social allegory in travel drama', pp. 191-213; and Gordon McMullan, *The Politics of Unease in the Plays of John Fletcher* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), chapter six, 'Discovery', pp. 197-256; Teresa Walters, "'Such Stowage as These Trinkets': Trading and Tasting Women in Fletcher and Massinger's *The Sea Voyage* (1622)", in *Consuming Narratives: Gender and Monstrous Appetite in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy and Teresa Walters (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), pp. 67-80.

<sup>65</sup> Cape Frio is located on the Brazilian coast at 23° South, just north-east of Rio de Janeiro. Vespucci stayed there for five months in 1503-4 at the end of his fourth voyage. A fort was built and garrisoned with twenty-four men, who were left with provisions for six months (Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Southern*

It is perhaps with intentional irony that More based his realist fiction on a fictionalised reality: Vespucci's published letters were intended as entertainment for the general reader, and many of his contemporaries disputed various claims he made in them.<sup>66</sup> The *Four Voyages*, which Peter Gilles claims were read by 'everyone', never appeared in print, though in his published letters, Vespucci refers several times to his intention to write a full account of his travels with that title.<sup>67</sup> More incorporates into Utopian society some aspects of basic social structure which appear in Vespucci's accounts of native life, such as communal ownership, the absence of social hierarchies, lack of commerce and no interest in what Europeans judge to be riches (the practices of cannibalism, nakedness and sexual licentiousness dwelt upon by Vespucci do not appear in Utopia). Another of More's sources, 'The Rule of St Benedict', has a social organisation similar to that of the New World, in that there is common ownership, with no personal property, and each provided for according to need.<sup>68</sup> The Utopian society More presents appears to follow and exceed the monastic code set down by St Benedict in more particulars than it resembles the actuality of the New World, as, for example, in the requirement of daily manual labour.<sup>69</sup>

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*Voyages A.D. 1492-1616* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 288; Amerigo Vespucci, *The Letters of Amerigo Vespucci and Other Documents Illustrative of His Career*, trans. by Clements R Markham (New York: Burt Franklin (Hakluyt Society reprint), 1964), p. 55).

<sup>66</sup> This is not to suggest that Vespucci was More's only New World source. He would probably have been familiar with Columbus's 'Letter' and Peter Martyr's *Decades of the New World*, for example, but Vespucci is the only source he names, and the examples I cite closely echo Vespucci's text.

<sup>67</sup> More, *Utopia*, p. 38; Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 11, 16, 55.

<sup>68</sup> St Benedict, *The Rule of St Benedict*, trans. by Justin McCann, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Sheed and Ward, 1976), p. 40, 60-1, 41.

<sup>69</sup> Amy Boesky draws attention to More's interest in the development of St Paul's school, established by John Colet in 1509, and the many similarities between the school's regime and the utopian society More represents. She notes that in Utopia 'the domestic and pedagogic are [...] conjoined' as 'household and school are conflated in *Utopia*, with its appointed hours for waking and sleeping, working and eating, even for periods of relaxation or play; both house and school are supervised and controlled by the state (Boesky, *Founding Fictions*, p. 33). Boesky proposes that secular grammar schools in the late fifteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries reflected 'burgeoning nationalism' and provided a different form of regulation than that of previous monastic or religious schools. Ecclesiastical timetables which demonstrated 'mastery over the body or the will or as an enactment of one's duty to God' were replaced by timetables which ensured productivity; where discipline 'was no longer seen as the final product of labor, maintained for its own sake, but rather for the sake of service, self-improvement, and duty to the state' (Boesky, *Founding Fictions*, p. 27).

The republic of Utopia is the final destination, and More describes Hythloday's travels through previously unknown regions on his way there. The journey resembles an ambassadorial progress, with the local 'king' supplying a guide, food and money, carriages and boats, and letters of introduction to other kings. This type of travel and the New World societies which More depicts Hythloday visiting had nothing in common with the actuality of exploration nor the small village settlements which Vespucci described.<sup>70</sup> On either side of the hot desert region spanning the equator, uncultivated and home only to wild humans and wild beasts, More imagines large towns and densely populated areas. Local and international trade is conducted and there is 'quite a high standard of political organization'.<sup>71</sup> These kingdoms are only noted in passing in the text, but Hythloday, readers are told, noticed the 'sensible arrangements' in various 'civilized communities' and was able to answer More's detailed questions on them.<sup>72</sup> More concludes his account of Hythloday's journey before he reaches Utopia by remarking that while 'he saw much to condemn', he also 'discovered several regulations which suggested possible methods of reforming European society'.<sup>73</sup> In many respects the civilization More hypothesises for the New World is similar to Europe and the Orient or Cathay. He clearly does not envisage that the continent as a whole would consist solely of the type of small settlements Vespucci described, with no political organisation, and no trade.<sup>74</sup> In other words, More creates a New World in the image of the Old World.

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<sup>70</sup> Compare, for example, Ralph Lane's later graphic account of exploration where they were reduced to eating their dogs, and the small villages reported throughout the region by Columbus, Léry and Hariot.

<sup>71</sup> More, *Utopia*, p. 39-40.

<sup>72</sup> More, *Utopia*, p. 40.

<sup>73</sup> More, *Utopia*, p. 40-1. It is possible to speculate that the sights Hythloday would have condemned were the cannibalism and sexual freedom Vespucci described and which More did not include. The idea that the New World might offer examples for the reform of European society would be realised in later accounts such as that of Jean de Léry previously discussed.

<sup>74</sup> At the time More wrote *Utopia* the sophisticated civilisations of the Aztecs and Incas were unknown in Europe.

In Utopia itself, beyond the New World, More magnifies some of the cultural practices described in Vespucci's accounts and adds elements from the Rule of St Benedict, together with his own inventions. The native practices More appropriates for Utopia are direct inversions of some of the driving forces of European societies: egalitarian structures, no private property or trade. Utopian egalitarian principles, and republican practices, are a more developed version of the native lack of social order or hierarchy, with no kings or rulers, each man living 'in freedom'.<sup>75</sup> Neither Utopian nor native societies support a leisured class: everyone works (inasmuch as the natives work at all). There is a clear contrast with the contemporary English culture, which was structured by class and social rank, with, at its apex, a leisured class and a single sovereign. The lack of private property, with communal ownership, also a fundamental rule of St Benedict, is the inverse of European primogeniture and familial inheritance. Vespucci describes a society where there is no trade or commerce, and gold, pearls and precious stones hold no value; native wealth is in birds' feathers and fishes' fins, and people are content with 'with what nature has given them'.<sup>76</sup> In Utopia, gold and silver are not valued, rather, they are used as signifiers of shame: 'they do everything they can to bring these metals into contempt'.<sup>77</sup> Again, this presents a stark contrast to the European desire (Léry termed it avarice) for gold, silver and pearls which drove colonising projects in the New World.

These may be the aspects of New World culture which Hythloday concluded could provide examples to reform European society. However, the text does not allow a simplistic reading. In Utopia these cultural basics are elaborated upon, so much so, that their meanings become equivocal. For example, the supposed free time available to

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<sup>75</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 69.

<sup>76</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 46 and p. 7.

<sup>77</sup> More, *Utopia*, p. 87.

Utopians due to everyone working for limited hours is, in effect, illusory, as the only alternative activities are to attend pre-dawn lectures, or voluntarily continue to work.

Stephen Greenblatt, in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, summarises this effect as a 'crucial characteristic of Utopia: the steady constriction of an initially limitless freedom'.<sup>78</sup>

Utopia may, then, be read as an oppressive society, not one which enjoys the supposed freedom of native cultures.<sup>79</sup>

Greenblatt argues the case that society in Utopia appears organised to 'reduce the scope of the ego', as, for example, in the uniformity of clothing and housing, and that communal ownership, formalised as the abolition of private property in Utopia, has negative consequences for individuality. He proposes that More 'propounds communism less as a coherent economic program' than as a 'weapon' against 'certain tendencies in human nature: selfishness and pride, to be sure, but also that complex, self-conscious, theatrical accommodation to the world which we recognize as a characteristic mode of modern individuality'.<sup>80</sup> Individuality, negated in Utopia by the lack of personal names, is, Greenblatt argues, inextricably linked to private property as 'private ownership of property is causally linked in *Utopia* to private ownership of self, what C B Macpherson calls "possessive individualism"; to abolish private property is to render such self-conscious individuality obsolete'.<sup>81</sup> The cost of communal, communist life is, then, the loss of the self, a consequence which, Greenblatt suggests, More was alive to. The 'loss of the self' may, perhaps, be identified as a desirable outcome of the

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<sup>78</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 39-40.

<sup>79</sup> The bureaucratic form of utopian society, with the resulting limitations on personal freedom discussed here, appears to become a characteristic of utopian fiction following More's *Utopia*. As Amy Boesky has observed: utopias emphasise 'system as the best means for reorganizing populations and ensuring their improvement', setting forth 'a belief in reform through routine, through a bureaucratization of the ideal. No other world is ordered as scrupulously as the world of the utopia' (Boesky, *Founding Fictions*, p. 16). Successful utopian fictions, according to Boesky, always include a 'dystopia' which points to the contradiction that, while the state may be 'an organ for reform', its institutions may prove to be 'the enemies to freedom' (Boesky, *Founding Fictions*, p. 16-17).

<sup>80</sup> Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 36-7.

<sup>81</sup> Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 38.

monastic rule of St Benedict. In *New World* accounts the presentation of natives who, to European eyes, were undifferentiated in their nakedness, indiscriminate sexuality, common habitations and property, may construct for readers an impression of peoples with no sense of self. That such an impression would be a misrepresentation may be inferred from, for example, the comparison of the accounts of Ralph Lane and Thomas Hariot.

The fictional More's chief objection to Utopian society is exactly the 'grand absurdity' of 'communism minus money' on which the society is based, but he does not extrapolate to draw the same conclusion as Greenblatt. The fictional More's conclusion, that such proto-communism would 'mean the end of the aristocracy, and consequently of all dignity, splendour, and majesty, which are generally supposed to be the real glories of any nation'<sup>82</sup> is perhaps closer to the real More's immediate concern: whether or not to accept an appointment in Henry VIII's court.<sup>83</sup> Does the qualification 'generally supposed' suggest something of an equivocation? Or, perhaps, it is possible to conclude that in constructing the particular fictional *New World* which he does, More demonstrates that he cannot conceive of a world consisting only of the basic level of civilisation and social complexity which the first-hand accounts of the *New World* depicted and which, in his analysis, lacked any of the glories of nation?

### **No body in the New World**

Thomas More questions contemporary social structure and forms of government in an exchange of views on the subject between More and Hythloday in Book 1 of *Utopia*. In

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<sup>82</sup> More, *Utopia*, p. 132.

<sup>83</sup> For discussion of More's personal circumstances see Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Chapter 1, 'At the Table of the Great: More's Self-Fashioning and Self-Cancellation', pp. 11-73.

Book 2, Hythloday presents his experience of a society which, outside the monastery, was unlike any with which More's readers would have been familiar. The propinquity of two such very different social organisations invites readers to draw comparisons. In *The Tempest* and *The Sea Voyage* the questions are similar, but posed in a different form. Rather than present a model for comparison, these plays deposit microcosms of contemporary English society in situations where there are no people and no pre-existing civilisation. When marooned on a desert island, what fills the initial social vacuum? Does the old order unproblematically reassert itself, or are there challenges? Can alternatives be imagined? Can they work?

The factual inspiration for dramatic exploration may have come from William Strachey's account of the wreck of the *Sea Venture*, the marooning of the ship's company on Bermuda, and their eventual arrival in Virginia. The full title of Strachey's account is 'A True Reportory of the Wracke, and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates Knight; upon, and from the Ilands of the Bermudas: His Coming to Virginia, and the Estate of that Colonie then, and after, under the Government of the Lord La Warre, July 15, 1610. Written by William Strachy, Esquire'.<sup>84</sup> Strachey's description of the storm which wrecked the *Sea Venture* is generally taken to be one source for the opening scenes of *The Tempest* and *The Sea Voyage*. His presentation of events which took place on the island, and the situation they found in Virginia, demonstrates concerns with governance similar to those acted out in the dramas. While the fictions do not necessarily draw directly from these aspects of Strachey's account, consideration of this text in conjunction with the dramas may reveal shared representational priorities, indicative of interrogation of the same range of cultural values.

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<sup>84</sup> William Strachey, 'A True Reportory of the Wracke, and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates Knight; upon, and from the Ilands of the Bermudas: His Coming to Virginia, and the Estate of that Colonie then, and after, under the Government of the Lord La Warre, July 15, 1610. Written by William Strachy, Esquire', in *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, ed. by Samuel Purchas (London: William Stansby, 1625), pp. 1734-1762.

### **The ship's company**

To reach the New World in actuality one had to cross the Atlantic, a hazardous business, as Strachey's account testifies. In 1609 he sailed on the *Sea Venture*, flagship of a fleet of seven ships filled with prospective settlers bound for the newly established Jamestown colony in Virginia.<sup>85</sup> He deals with the crossing in a few opening sentences, then describes, at length, the storm which eventually wrecks the ship in Bermuda. *The Tempest* and *The Sea Voyage* also open with storm scenes aboard ships. The ship constitutes a confined and inherently unstable container for the microcosm of society represented by the ship's company and supernumeraries. To open with a tempest is both unusual and exciting, and the chaos propels the audience immediately into the questions of social order and hierarchy which are central to the dramas.<sup>86</sup>

A ship's complement included mariners, onboard tradesmen such as carpenters and coopers, and, in ascending order of authority, boatswains, master's mates, and a ship's master. An admiral or captain would have command of the fleet, and could lead the expedition, as in the cases of Columbus, Magellan and Drake. Alternatively, there might be a civil or military overall commander, such as Sir Thomas Gates, aboard the *Sea Venture*, on his way to take up his post as Governor of Virginia. The working complement was often supplemented by supernumeraries, drawn from all levels of society on land. The *Sea Venture's* supernumeraries included Strachey, secretary to the Virginia colony, as well as other prospective settlers, both gentlemen and agricultural 'land-men', together with women and children. In all, the company numbered around one hundred and fifty.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Established following the abandonment of the Roanoke settlement.

<sup>86</sup> For discussion of various methods of staging voyages, and movement between spaces in general, see Holland, *Travel and Drama*, p. 160 ff.

<sup>87</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1737, l. 25, l. 54.



The ship's company in *The Sea Voyage*, while smaller in number, has a similar composition to that of the *Sea Venture*, as both ships transported prospective colonists. There is a difference, though, as this vessel is a pirate ship, captained by a French pirate named Albert. The working complement of mariners, boatswain and ships' master are supplemented by a surgeon and three 'gentlemen' settlers. Also aboard are Albert's friend, Tibalt, and the woman Albert has recently abducted, and professes to love, Aminta. The vessel in *The Tempest* differs, in that it does not carry prospective settlers. The supernumeraries on this ship include some from the highest ranks of society. Together with the usual company of mariners, boatswain and ships' master, are the King of Naples, a duke, several lords, a jester and a butler.

In theory, among a ship's crew, everyone knew their place in the hierarchical structure, and authority could not be questioned. In practice, discipline must have proved more difficult to impose, given the severe punishments meted out for insubordination and mutiny. On shore, there was also clear delineation between different classes and ranks. When the two roughly parallel social systems were placed together onboard ship, the supernumeraries could present an additional threat to the stability of naval authority, particularly if they were of a higher class. For example, during the circumnavigatory voyage, Francis Drake accused Sir Thomas Doughty, by far his superior in social rank, of plotting a mutiny against him. Whether this was true or not, the threat posed by this type of intrigue provoked such anxiety in Drake that he made an example of Doughty. Drake used Doughty's execution as a point at which to

reassert his own authority.<sup>88</sup> In a speech where he called for an end to the ‘mutinies and discords’ and ‘controversye betwene the saylars and the gentlemen’, he also made clear his expectation that they would all work together: ‘I must have the gentleman to hayle and draw with the mariner, and the maryner with the gentleman’.<sup>89</sup>

This example demonstrates that naval order and authority could prove difficult to maintain and was subject to destabilisation. Order among the cross-section of society which constitutes the supernumeraries in the dramas may appear stable, yet, from the outset, possible instabilities are intimated in both plays. The list of characters in *The Tempest*, includes both the ‘the right Duke of Milan’ and ‘his brother, the usurping Duke of Milan’. The *Sea Voyage*’s characters include a ‘French pirate’, an equivocal figure, as both foreign and a pirate.<sup>90</sup> The three potential planters are characterised as a

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<sup>88</sup> John H Parry makes the same point: ‘Doughty, like many others at that time, found it hard to take orders from a social inferior. Hew was an educated man, clever, carping, essentially destructive. The sailors in the company disliked him and accused him of “conjuring”: he had books in foreign languages with him which, they said, he conjured up bad weather. Whether Drake believed this, who can say? Doughty was sacrificed, perhaps necessarily, to the principle of unified command – and no one thereafter questioned Drake’s authority’ (John H Parry, ‘Drake and the World Encompassed’ in *Sir Francis Drake and the Famous Voyage, 1577 - 1580: Essays Commemorating the Quadricentennial of Drake’s Circumnavigation of the Earth*, ed. by Norman J W Thrower (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 1-11, p. 6).

<sup>89</sup> Sir Francis Drake, *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake*, ed. N M Penzer (Amsterdam: N. Israel and Da Capo Press, 1971 (reprint of *The World Encompassed and Analogous Contemporary Documents Concerning Sir Francis Drake’s Circumnavigation of the World* (London: Argonaut, 1926)), p. 164. Magellan had also executed or marooned alleged plotters at the same place, Port St Julian, sixty years earlier.

<sup>90</sup> State attitudes towards piracy in England changed significantly between the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. James’s peace with Spain in 1604 brought a formal end to state sponsored licensed privateering, and James himself demonstrated a profound hatred of pirates. As David Hebb has clearly outlined, during the early years of his reign James used his prerogative powers to suppress piracy, making numerous pronouncements against pirates, such as, in 1603 ‘A Proclamation concerning Warlike ships at Sea’ and ‘A Proclamation to repress all Piracies and Depredations upon the Sea’; in 1604, ‘A Proclamation for the search and apprehension of certaine Pirates’; in 1605, ‘A Proclamation for revocation of Mariners from forreine Services’ and ‘A Proclamation with certaine Ordinances to be observed by his Majesties subjects toward the King of Spain’; in 1606, ‘A Proclamation for the search and apprehension of certaine Pirates’, and, in January 1609, ‘A Proclamation against Pirates’ was promulgated (David Delison Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government, 1616-1642* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), p. 10).

There were several important differences between English and French piracy during the period, as described by Janice Thomson: ‘French privateering differed from its British counterpart in two respects. First, while England allowed privateers to attack neutral commerce, France did not. Second, for England, privateers were auxiliaries to the navy; for France, they were the navy. [...] Sixteenth-century French “privateers” were largely individuals acting on their own initiative. One French merchant, for example, sent seventeen ships to blockade a Portuguese port when one of his ships was seized by a Portuguese vessel. When Spaniards killed the leader of a French colonizing expedition in 1562, a French “gentleman” sent three vessels that made bloody reprisals against Spain. Like their British counterparts, French privateers committed great depredations in the New World during the seventeenth century and were rewarded with letters of nobility. French *filibustiers*, under the direction of Santo Domingo’s governor, ransomed and pillaged Spanish towns. They also drove the English out of Hudson Bay’ (Janice E Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1994), p. 24). For both French and English pirates the position was

'usuring merchant', a 'vainglorious gallant', and a 'shallow-brained gentleman'; each representing the less admirable facets of their classes. The plays open, then, with scenarios which present social organisations familiar to their audiences. But these structures are immediately thrown into chaos.

### **The tempest**

The tempests, which engulf all three vessels, force sudden and catastrophic ruptures in the established orders represented. The sheer power and ferocity of the wind and waves is ultimately beyond representation, though Strachey makes an attempt which he, or Purchas, terms a 'terrible storme expressed in a pathetical and retoricall description'<sup>91</sup>:

A dreadfull storme and hideous began to blow from out the North-east, which swelling, and roaring as it were by fits, some houres with more violence then others, at length did beate all light from heauen; which like an hell of darkenesse turned blacke vpon vs, so much the more fuller of horror, as in such cases horror and feare vse to ouerrunne the troubled, and ouermastered sences of all, which (taken vp with amazement) the eares lay so sensible to the terrible cries, and murmurs of the windes, and distraction of our Company, as who was most armed, and best prepared, was not a little shaken.<sup>92</sup>

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equivocal: depending upon political exigencies, they could either be executed as criminals, or ennobled. Examples of the 'noble' pirate are provided in the drama by Albert, while, in reality, Sir Francis Drake was publicly knighted by Elizabeth I in 1581.

<sup>91</sup> A suggestive reading of the rhetorical strategies employed in Strachey's text, particularly in relation to his representation of the tempest, is provided by Andrew Fitzmaurice in 'Classical Rhetoric and the Promotion of the New World' in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 58 (1997), 221-243, particularly p. 234-7.

<sup>92</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1735.

The chaotic disorder created by such a violent irruption of the real is characterised in similar ways in all three texts. Each demonstrates that tempests are no respecters of social class, and endanger all lives equally. Perhaps the opening scene of *The Tempest* represents this most succinctly.<sup>93</sup> When Alonso and the other nobles appear on deck, the Boatswain states the case tersely: ‘What cares these roarers for the name of king?’ (I.i.16). Clearly, in their current situation, he does not care for the name of king either, as, when Gonzalo cautions him to ‘remember whom thou hast aboard’ (I.i.18) he counters that there are ‘None that I more love than myself’ (I.i.18).

The exchanges between the Boatswain and the courtiers in this scene dramatise not only the abnegation of the superior status of the supernumeraries, but also of their authority. In this situation, their skills and knowledges are of no practical application. The Boatswain invites Gonzalo to use his authority to ‘command these elements to silence’ (I.i.20-2), and, if he cannot, to return to his cabin, as the courtiers’ presence hampers the mariners’ efforts (I.i.13-14). When Sebastian, Antonio and Gonzalo return to the deck, the Boatswain berates them again, and his only response to Sebastian’s and Antonio’s curses and continued presence is ‘Work you, then’ (I.i.39). In *The Tempest*, the courtiers do not take up the offer. Strachey’s text goes further, and gives physical embodiment to the disruption of social order. In the desperate fight for survival against the tempest, and faced with numerous leaks, everyone works, with pumps or buckets, to bale out the ship:

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<sup>93</sup> While *The Tempest* appears to reference Strachey’s account of the tempest which marooned his company in Bermuda, the setting for Shakespeare’s play is nominally the Mediterranean, though, as I demonstrate here, simultaneously, at times, the New World. Jeffrey Knapp also notes this duality, observing that: ‘Shakespeare places his American-sounding island in the Old World’s Mediterranean, far distant from “the still-vex’d Bermoothes” (*Tempest* 1.2.229) it appears to represent’ (Knapp, *Empire Nowhere*, p. 19). The ambiguity of location is also alluded to by Knapp as he proposes that the ‘most striking similarity’ between *Utopia*, *The Faerie Queene* and *The Tempest* is their setting: ‘in each case they combine otherworldly poetry and nation, and then direct them both toward the New World, only by placing England, poetry, and America – or rather by displacing them – Nowhere’ (Knapp, *Empire Nowhere*, p. 6).

Then men might be seene to labour, I may well say, for life, and the better sort, euen our Gouvernour, and Admirall themselues, not refusing their turne, and to spell each the other, to giue example to other. The common sort stripped naked, as men in Gallies, the easier to both to hold out, and to shrinke from vnder the salt water, which continually leapt in among them, kept their eyes waking, and their thoughts and hands working, with tyred bodies, and wasted spirits, three dayes and foure nights destitute of outward comfort, and desperate of any deliuerance, testifying how mutually willing they were, yet by labour to keepe each other from drowning, albeit each one drowned whilest he laboured.<sup>94</sup>

Strachey's text suggests that the 'better sort', including the Governor and Admiral, volunteer to work, when they could have refused, to provide an example to the rest. Even though they all work, Strachey chooses to note that social distinctions are maintained, by a difference of dress, with the 'common sort' identifiable by their nakedness. That the level of equal labour is limited to situations of extreme desperation is indicated by Strachey's observation that:

One thing, it is not without his wonder [...] there was not a passenger, gentleman, or other, after hee beganne to stirre and labour, but was able to relieue his fellow, and make good his course: And it is most true, such as in all their life times had neuer done houres worke before (their mindes now helping their bodies) were able twice fortie eight houres together to toile with the best.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1736.

<sup>95</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1736, l. 57-62.

The levelling of social hierarchies by the tempest is not absolute, then, and the distinctions between whether to work or not, to be clothed or not, provide markers of rank even in perilous circumstances. However, the tempest does precipitate a situation in which questions about what appear to be the 'natural' attributes of rank, and the 'natural' response to it, are raised by the presentation of alternatives.

Tempests also exacted a material cost, as, in increasingly desperate attempts to keep the ship afloat, virtually everything would be thrown overboard. Mariners, with few possessions, would lose food and drink, and any small goods they had for personal trade. But for the gentlemen and prospective settlers the losses could be greater. Strachey relates that, in trying to hold their course and stay upright, they had unrigged the ship and thrown overboard

much luggage, many a Trunke and Chest (in which I suffered no meane losse) and staved many a Butt of Beere, Hogsheads of Oyle, Syder, Wine, and Vinegar, and heaved away all our Ordnance on the Starboord side, and had now purposed to haue cut downe the Maine Mast, the more to lighten her.<sup>96</sup>

In *The Sea Voyage*, the losses are comically intensified by being personalised: the 'vainglorious gallant', Franville, loses all the 'clothes and necessaries' for which he sold his lordship; Lamure, the 'usuring merchant' loses the goods he had bought with money he has 'racked by usury to buy new lands and lordships in new countries' (I.i.117-8). Albert's character and leadership qualities are connoted by the decisive

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<sup>96</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1737, l. 22-26.

statement 'Take mine and spare not' in response to the Master's instruction 'Over with the trunks too' (I.i.128-9).<sup>97</sup>

As these two examples demonstrate, the overwhelming power of the tempest can, at a stroke, devour wealth amassed over a lifetime, and obliterate the goods necessary to settle in new lands.<sup>98</sup> In response to such evidence of their own frailty, humans attempt to establish causes. Mariners' well-known superstitions against women aboard ship provide a context for the accusations the Master levels at the hapless Aminta in *The Sea Voyage*:

We have ne'er better luck

When we ha' such stowage as these trinkets with us,

These sweet sin-breeders. How can heaven smile on us

When such a burden of iniquity

Lies tumbling like a potion in our ship's belly? (I.i.65-68)

Strachey mentions women, among the other passengers, as participants in the experience of the storm, who, 'not used to such hurly and discomforts, [...] looke one upon the other with troubled hearts, and panting bosomes'.<sup>99</sup> He does not, however, attribute blame to them.

Aminta, by contrast, fixes blame squarely on Albert. His abduction of her and murder or scattering of her family and friends is the cause, she asserts, of what she terms a heavenly retribution:

And whether they are wandered to avoid ye,

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<sup>97</sup> The losses threaten to spark violence when the company reach shore, as the gallants are aggrieved, arguing that their goods were lost as the result of malicious intent, or that the losses could have been avoided, had the Master anticipated the changed weather conditions. Tibalt argues that they should be grateful to have survived at all (I.i.25-93).

<sup>98</sup> In different circumstances, as previously discussed, Francis Drake did not, apparently, consider jettisoning treasure to lighten his grounded vessel (Chapter Two, p. 167).

<sup>99</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1735, l. 38.

Or whether dead and no kind earth to cover 'em -  
Was this a lover's part? But heaven has found ye,  
And in his loud voice, his voice of thunder,  
And in the mutiny of his deep wonders  
He tells ye now ye weep too late. (I.i.89-94)

No causation is attributed to God or the heavens in *The Tempest* or Strachey's account, but, in all three texts, there is a resort to prayer as the end appears imminent. In *The Tempest* the Mariners exclaim 'All lost! To prayers, to prayers! All lost!' (I.i.49), and Gonzalo resigns himself to assist 'the King and Prince at prayers' (I.i.51). The mariners' resort to prayer is treated humorously in *The Sea Voyage*, as the Master chastises a seaman for praying too precipitately:

Thou rascal, thou fearful rogue! Thou has been praying,  
I see't in thy face. Thou has been mumbling  
When we are split, you slave. Is this a time  
To discourage our friends with your cold orisons? (I.i.22-25)

Tibalt assigns the task of praying to Aminta: 'Go, take your gilt prayer book and to your business' (I.i.55), while Albert attempts to reassure her: 'Be comforted. Heaven has the same power still, and the same mercy' (I.i.62-3). As the storm worsens, she and Albert go inside to pray (I.i.108). Strachey relates how the company are all but resolved to commend their 'sinful soules to God' and commit the 'Shippe to the mercy of the Sea', but then, as land is sighted, they 'see the goodnesse and sweet introduction of better hope by our merciful god given unto us'.<sup>100</sup> The orthodoxy that God's will constitutes the final arbiter of life and death is unquestioned in these texts. However, Strachey's and Beaumont's texts also place emphasis on human agency: everyone works together

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<sup>100</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1737, l. 42-5.



to try to reach land. For example, in the *Sea Voyage*, while Albert and Aminta are inside, praying for 'heaven's mercy', the others are desperately throwing everything overboard. Finally, with the Master's resolute cry of 'Come, gentlemen, come captain – ye must help all. My life now for the land!' (I.ii.145-6), they make a final attempt to reach harbour. The first scenes of both plays end in dramatic tension, the audiences not knowing who, if anyone, will survive.

### **Marooned!**

In these examples, in life, as in comedy, everyone survives. Cast up on island shores, the various members of the ships' companies are all marooned. Strachey's ship ran ashore in shallows three quarters of mile off an island of the Bermudas; the whole company, men, women and children, were ferried ashore by ship's boat. These 'hideous and hated' islands were feared and avoided by seafarers, Strachey relates, because 'tempests, thunders, and other fearefull objects are seene and heard about them'. Uninhabited by men, but 'given over to Devils and wicked Spirits', they were commonly called '*The Devils Ilands*'.<sup>101</sup> Strachey's experience contradicts this reputation. The islands, he assures readers, are as 'habitable and commodious as most Countries of the same climate and situation', and if access to the shore were easier, he contends, they would have been inhabited long before.<sup>102</sup> In terms of the various meanings of the word, Strachey's company are 'marooned' in the senses that they are lost and separated from the rest of their fleet, and that they are left in a position from which they cannot easily escape, their ship reduced to an unseaworthy wreck.

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<sup>101</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1737, l. 58-64.

<sup>102</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1738, l. 1-4.

The two islands on which the fictional characters find themselves are also uninhabited by autochthonous natives. The only people there, in both plays, are earlier castaways. The tempest through which Albert's company battle, to finally reach harbour with their ship intact, is witnessed from the island by Sebastian and Nicusa. The uncle and nephew, two Portuguese, were themselves marooned following a shipwreck many years before, while attempting to escape from pirates (I.II.36-46).<sup>103</sup> This island does not have a name, but it is not as hospitable as Strachey's *Devils Ilands*, appearing desolate and unproductive. Albert's party are marooned there when Sebastian and Nicusa take their ship while the pirate company fight over the division of Sebastian's treasure.

The struggles of Alonso and Antonio's party are also observed from the shore, in this case, by Prospero and Miranda. This island is also inhabited only by earlier castaways. The first, Sycorax, was marooned there specifically as a form of punishment. Ariel, her servant, was marooned with her. He was then doubly marooned: confined by Sycorax in the cloven pine, a place from which he could not escape. Caliban, born on the island, could, with the caveat that he had to fend for himself, be defined as a maroon in the sense of being one who 'idles' or 'hangs about'.<sup>104</sup> Prospero and Miranda are cast away in an unseaworthy 'rotten carcass of a butt' (I.II.146), and only reach the island by 'providence divine' (I.II.160). It may be argued that Prospero is marooned as a form of punishment, brought upon himself by his neglect of his duties of governance as rightful Duke of Milan.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> John Nicoll's *An Houre Glass of Indian News*, a relation of the tribulations of a supply voyage to Guiana in 1605, is cited by McMullen as a source for the sequence of events surrounding the marooning of Sebastian and Nicusa. Nicoll's account relates the discovery, on the Isle of Mayo, of 'five Portugals, which had been robbed by the French, and there set ashore' (Nicoll, p. 49, qtd. in McMullen, *Politics of Unease*, p. 244). The English themselves become marooned, discover Spanish goods on the island, and later rejoin their original vessel. McMullen notes that the same sequence of events is adhered to in *The Sea Voyage* (McMullen, *Politics of Unease*, p. 245).

<sup>104</sup> OED, second edition, 1989.

<sup>105</sup> See Philip Edwards, 'Tragic form and the voyagers', in *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michèle Willems (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 75-86.

The situation for castaways appears, in many respects, different from that of the planter or coloniser. Subject to the vagaries of storms, voyagers are thrown off-course, and do not reach their planned destination. The survivors may or may not know where they are, and could even find themselves on a previously uncharted island. At home, their loss could remain unknown for many months. Even if the loss was immediately apparent, no one would know exactly where to look for survivors. Other ships from the fleet could mount a search (as Drake did for the missing *Marigold* in the Magellan Straits), but there was no certainty of rescue. Failing this, there was the off-chance of discovery by a passing ship, as happens to Sebastian and Nicusa in *The Sea Voyage*. Left to their own devices, the maroons may not have ready means of escape, as their ship would be disabled at best, if not completely destroyed. If the island had timber, and the castaways had tools, it was conceivable they could build a boat. Strachey's expedition was famous for building boats on Bermuda in which they eventually completed the voyage to Virginia.

The definition of 'maroon' does not specify any particular type of location, but, in practice, for voyagers, the place will be an uninhabited island. If not on an island, the maroons could conceivably walk to escape.<sup>106</sup> If the location is inhabited, there is the possibility of assistance, or, alternatively, a quick death. In practice, then, there will be no pre-existing social structure on the island for the castaways to fit into. To be marooned alone, or with one or two others, constitutes a test of individual character, as the challenge, particularly in poor conditions, is survival. Ingenuity and strength of will are required. It would be a feral existence, of the type Caliban describes himself living prior to Prospero's arrival, and similar to the experience of Sebastian and Nicusa. To be

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<sup>106</sup> See, for example, the 'Relation of Peter Carder of Saint Verian in Cornwall [. . .] which went with Sir Francis in his Voyage about the World, begun 1577' in *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, ed. by Samuel Purchas (William Stansby: London, 1625), pp. 1187-92.

marooned in a larger group, as Strachey was, necessitates the development of some sort of order to ensure survival and escape. Consequently, the island provides a blank stage on which social order has to be imposed on the company by the company itself. What, then, is proposed or constructed to provide governance in these situations? Is the order which pertained on ship prior to the tempest reasserted among the maroons? Are challenges made to it and alternative structures proposed?

### **Mandeville Island?**

As islands go, the one on which Prospero is marooned appears comfortable: it has fresh water, fertile ground, fish, and plenty of wood (I.ii.341; II.ii.159-160); survival is not in question. The fictional island, unnamed and imprecisely located, is doubly fictionalised, as the types for the mythical or monstrous maroons, Sycorax, Caliban and Ariel, are drawn from the wonders and marvels reported in medieval travel accounts, such as those of Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville. Also, as in the books, on this island, magic happens. The origins of the magic practised by Sycorax and Prospero are lost, but, throughout literary history magic recurs, including in travellers' tales. A location peopled by exotic figures, drawn from medieval travel literature, seems an appropriate setting in which to maroon a Duke usurped as he neglected his responsibilities as ruler to study books. Here, Prospero may practise the 'magic' he learnt from those books. In light of the medieval, eastern and exotic literary origins of its characters, and its magical mode of operation, I have nominated the island 'Mandeville Island', but it could also be considered as another type of Utopia. In this non-place a literary other world is evoked, peopled by mythical figures who are directed by other-worldly magic.

A legendary episode related in Mandeville's *Travels* is closely mirrored in *The Tempest* as Prospero and Ariel retell the tale of Sycorax and the birth of Caliban. Sycorax, born in Algiers, and characterised as a 'foul witch' (I.i.259), was marooned on the island for committing 'mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible' (I.ii.258-307). The banishment was an alternative to execution, mitigated as she was 'with child'. The child, Caliban, was 'got by the devil himself' (I.ii.322), and 'littered' on the island, a 'freckled whelp' (I.ii.284). Mandeville's account relates how the world is divided between Noah's sons: Shem taking Europe, Japheth Asia, and Ham Africa. Then, in the time of one of Ham's descendants, the king Nimrod, it happened that

many devils came in the likeness of men and lay with the women of his race and begat on them giants and other monsters of horrible shape – some without heads, some with dog's heads, and many other misshapen and disfigured men.<sup>107</sup>

Here, then, African women are impregnated by devils, and produce 'monsters', just as happens to Sycorax. Given the canine vocabulary used to describe her offspring, I suggest it is possible to infer that the type of monster Sycorax bore was one with a dog's head.

The Cynocephale, dog-headed monster, described as one of the monstrous races by Pliny (in his *Natural History*) was a familiar literary figure in the period.<sup>108</sup> Various examples of the Plinian monstrous races were pictured in bestiaries, on maps, and appeared in many texts, including the medieval travel accounts of Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville, and the New World accounts of Columbus, Antonio Pigafetta and Sir

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<sup>107</sup> Sir John Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, trans. by C W R D Moseley (London: Penguin, 1983), p. 145. For further detail on Ham's descendants see John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 101.

<sup>108</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. by H Rackham (London: Heinemann, 1942), vol II, p. 521.

Walter Raleigh.<sup>109</sup> As a Cynocephale, Caliban can be read as a plural figure, originating in the Old World, yet, at times, given the speech of natives of the New. This reading would suggest a particular form to Caliban's monstrosity (a subject of much debate), and also distance him physically from the figure of the New World native.<sup>110</sup> There is, indeed, no evidence to link physical deformity with the autochthonous peoples of the New World, as all reports described them as having fine physiques. Columbus, for example, wrote: 'In these islands I have so far found no human monstrosities, as many expected, but on the contrary the whole population is very well formed',<sup>111</sup> and specifically, 'they were very well built, with very handsome bodies and very good faces'.<sup>112</sup> In addition, as Leo Salinger has pointed out, 'there is no evidence that anyone connected Caliban with American Indians for almost three hundred years'.<sup>113</sup>

Following the death of his mother, and with Ariel imprisoned in the pine tree, the young Caliban, literally puppy-headed, was alone on the island. He would have led a feral existence, finding his own food, developing a physical closeness with the island. This stage of his life appears to be recalled in his lyrical descriptions of the natural world, which demonstrate his intimate knowledge of the island, necessary for survival, as in:

I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow,

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<sup>109</sup> Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. by Ronald Latham (London: Penguin, 1958), p. 258; Mandeville, *Travels*, p. 134; Columbus, 'Journal of Christopher Columbus' in *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, trans. by Cecil Jane (London: Anthony Blond & The Orion Press, 1960) pp. 3-187, p. 52; Antonio Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage: A Narrative Account of the First Navigation*, trans. and ed. by R A Skelton (London: Folio Society, 1975). A similar race to the Plinian Blemmyae is described by Raleigh in Guiana: they are those 'whose heades appeare not above their shoulders' called *Ewarpanoma*, who 'are reported to have their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middle of their breasts' (Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana* (London: Robert Robinson, 1596), p. 69-70).

<sup>110</sup> Caliban's 'monstrosity' has been discussed as resisting any particular form by both Mark Thornton Burnett in *Constructing 'Monsters' in Shakespearean Drama and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) p. 134, and Julia Reinhard Lupton in 'Creature Caliban', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 51 (2000), 1-23.

<sup>111</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 200.

<sup>112</sup> Columbus, *Journal*, p. 24.

<sup>113</sup> Leo Salinger, 'The New World in *The Tempest*', in *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time*, pp. 209-222, p. 211.

And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts,  
Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how  
To snare the nimble marmoset. I'll bring thee  
To clust'ring filberts, and sometimes I'll get thee  
Young seamews from the rock. (II.ii.166-171)

As well as this detailed knowledge, there is also a sense of Caliban's organic wholeness with the island's natural environment:

The isle is full of noises,  
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.  
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices  
That if I then had waked after long sleep  
Will make me sleep again. (III.ii.138-143)

When Prospero and Miranda enter Caliban's feral world they attempt to humanise him.

First, they teach him 'language'. As Miranda states:

I pitied thee,  
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour  
One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,  
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like  
A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes  
With words that made them known. (I.ii.356-361)

The text leaves open the possibility that Caliban may not have acquired language (if Sycorax died before he learnt to speak), or, that Miranda dismissed his language as 'gabble' as she did not understand it. This echoes a similar slippage of meaning in Columbus's record of first encounters in the New World, where he proposes he will

teach the natives 'to talk' when they clearly can already speak. As Stephen Greenblatt pointed out, Columbus's use of this idiomatic phrasing took on 'a life of its own', implying that 'the Indians had no language at all'.<sup>114</sup> He argues that this is an example of linguistic colonialism, in which 'to speak is to speak one's own language'.<sup>115</sup> In *The Tempest*, the possibility is left open of reading this exchange between Miranda and Caliban literally, as it could be that, prior to her teaching, Caliban did not know his own meaning, for, as a feral being, alone on the island, he would have no need of language, which is consensual and social, not individual. His response:

You taught me language, and my profit on't

Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you

For learning me your language! (I.ii.366-8)

also slips between the general 'language' and specific 'your language'.

If Caliban is read as a Cynocephale, rather than a New World native, the question also remains an open one between teaching 'language' or teaching 'a language'. It is entirely possible to conclude, from the literary sources, that dog-headed monsters could speak, as in some textual versions they do have language. Mandeville, for example, describes the Cynocephali of Natumeran, in the China Sea, as reasonable and intelligent, indeed having a king whose prayer beads and ruby of office were coveted by the Great Khan himself. Marco Polo's dog-heads of the Andaman islands are rather less civilised, living like beasts.<sup>116</sup> In medieval writing on missionary activity, the Cynocephali were often described as a particularly popular target for conversion to Christianity. There is

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<sup>114</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, 'Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century', in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. by Fredi Chiappelli (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp.561-580, p. 563.

<sup>115</sup> Greenblatt, *First Images*, p. 563.

<sup>116</sup> Mandeville, *Travels*, p. 134; Polo, *Travels*, p. 258; Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, p. 62-4. Friedman also provides examples of dog-headed figures appearing in Pentecostal miniatures, possibly to represent Islam and the line of Ishmael. He states that there was widespread connection of Cynocephali and Saracens in the Middle Ages, with Moslems often called dogs by Christians.



even a dog-headed version of St Christopher. The Cynocephali of literature could, then, learn language, and constitute an object of missionary and humanising endeavours.

As well as teaching him their language, Prospero's attempts to humanise this Plinian monster, Caliban, also include treating him 'with human care', and living with him: lodging him, as Prospero says, 'in mine own cell' (I.ii.350). Caliban describes a close early relationship: 'when thou cam'st first, thou strok'st me and made much of me' (I.ii.335-6). Stroking is a term more comfortably applied to a puppy or a dog than a child, and Prospero and the young Miranda may be imagined petting a 'puppy-headed monster' (II.ii.154). A puppy's cuteness does not necessarily continue into adulthood, often ceasing, as apparently in the case of Caliban, upon sexual maturity. In *The Tempest*, at this point, he tries to rape Miranda, and efforts to humanise him are abandoned. It could be construed that Caliban's desire to people 'this isle with Calibans' (I.ii.353) relates as well to the propagation of his race, the Cynocephali, as to himself personally.<sup>117</sup> While a reaction of revulsion is understandable following any rape attempt, how might our perceptions of this attack be altered if the perpetrator was not fully human? It would not represent a simple case of miscegenation, as the monstrous races question the limits of what it is to be human. The races include the Blemmyae whose faces are in their chests, the Panotii, whose ears reach to their feet and serve as blankets, and the Sciopods who have one leg with a very large foot.<sup>118</sup> They were included in creation, on the *mappa mundes* for example, but always depicted on the margins, and, despite their appearance, they are referred to as 'people'. Pliny uses the term, and Mandeville's reports describe islands 'peopled' with 'folk' of male or female gender. Yet, if Caliban, as a Cynocephale, attempts to rape Miranda, this would,

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<sup>117</sup> The name 'Caliban' could be read as synonymous with that his race, of Caliban, or Cynocephale.

<sup>118</sup> Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, p. 12-18.

perhaps, present more complex questions than if he is a clearly human New World native, however misshapen. Although he may have been 'humanised' to a degree, Caliban is still the progeny of a devil and a witch.

An extreme reaction to any attempt to violate Miranda's virginity is understandable within the logic of the text. However, Miranda's vehement denunciation of him appears to focus on Caliban's innate racial, rather than personal, deficiencies. She terms him an 'abhorred slave, which any print of goodness wilt not take, being capable of all ill!' (I.ii.354-6), and, after reminding him that she taught him to speak, continues

But thy vile race,  
Though thou didst learn, had that in't which good natures  
Could not abide to be with. (I.ii.361-363)

Miranda could, perhaps, be referring to his race as an Algerian African, but, I would suggest that, taken together with language which stresses that Caliban has been treated 'humanely' and with 'human care' it seems more precise if applied to the different, semi-human race of the Cynocephali. Her vehemence may also be an indication of the unspoken horror of the prospect of impregnation with a monstrous progeny.

When Prospero and Miranda were marooned on the island, the feral Caliban was young enough to learn their language, and to appear to them to have the potential, given humane treatment, to become 'civilised'. However, on reaching sexual maturity, his desires were not contained by civility, he used the language he learnt to curse, and was no longer willingly amenable to Prospero's control. The failure of the humanising project is one which Prospero appears to lament:

A devil, a born devil, on whose nature  
Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,

Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost,  
And, as with age his body uglier grows,  
So his mind cankers. (IV.i.188-92)

In his maturity, Caliban is, to Prospero, 'as disproportioned in his manners as in his shape' (V.i.294-5).

The arrival of Prospero and Miranda precipitates a double loss for Caliban. He loses his sovereignty, as he says: 'I am all the subjects that you have, which first was mine own king' (I.ii.344-4), and, in Lacanian terms, he also loses the organic wholeness of his connection with nature, with the island. As he acquired language he necessarily entered the symbolic order, irrevocably leaving the real. It is the symbolic order of Prospero's society in which he is subjected by language, but this society will never fully accept him. And, while he now knows the words to eloquently describe his island, following Prospero's departure, we must assume that he will not be able to regain the wholeness of his previous relationship with it.

Shakespeare's use of the names Caliban and Setebos associate Caliban with the New World, but, I will argue, does not identify him definitively as a Carib Indian, nor do these names preclude a reading of him as a Cynocephale. It is true that Caliban can be taken as an anagram of cannibal, and that the word entered into usage from reports of Columbus's first voyage to the Caribbean. Though Columbus did not use the term 'canibales' in his published letter, it was introduced into the English language in the fifteen-fifties in Richard Eden's translations of Sebastian Munster's *Treatyse of Newe India* (1553) and Peter Martyr's *Decades of the New World* (1555). The sixteenth-century New World accounts of Antonio Pigafetta and Jean de Léry describe the cannibal rites of the Tupinamba of Brazil, while Amerigo Vespucci provides a

sensationalised account of New World cannibalism.<sup>119</sup> However, unlike the potato, cannibalism was not a new phenomenon brought back from the Americas. These *Canibales*, ‘accustomed to eat mannes flesh’ were, as Eden notes, ‘called of the olde writers *Anthropophagi*’ and date back to antiquity. For example, Pliny describes the *Anthropophagi* (as well as the *Cynocephali*) among his ‘monstrous races’, and Homer relates Odysseus’s violent encounter with the ferocious giant cannibals the Laistrygones (*Odyssey* x.80-132). In Othello’s travel tales, used to woo Desdemona, the two terms are conjoined: ‘the cannibals that each other eat, the *Anthropophagi*’ (*Othello*, I.iii.142-3). Cannibalism alone would not, therefore, situate Caliban as a New World native. Moreover, cannibalism was often one of the descriptors used in representations of the *Cynocephali*. While Pliny describes them as living on ‘the produce of hunting and fowling’, both Polo and Mandeville refer to the *Cynocephali* as cannibals in their accounts.<sup>120</sup> In a thirteenth-century illustration, from the Sion College Bestiary (see illustration below), a *Cynocephale* and an *Anthropophagus* are both depicted practising cannibalism. There is no suggestion in *The Tempest* that Caliban indulges in cannibalism.

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<sup>119</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*; Léry, *History*; Vespucci, *Letters*.

<sup>120</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, vol II, p. 521; Polo, *Travels*, p. 258; Mandeville, *Travels*, p. 134.

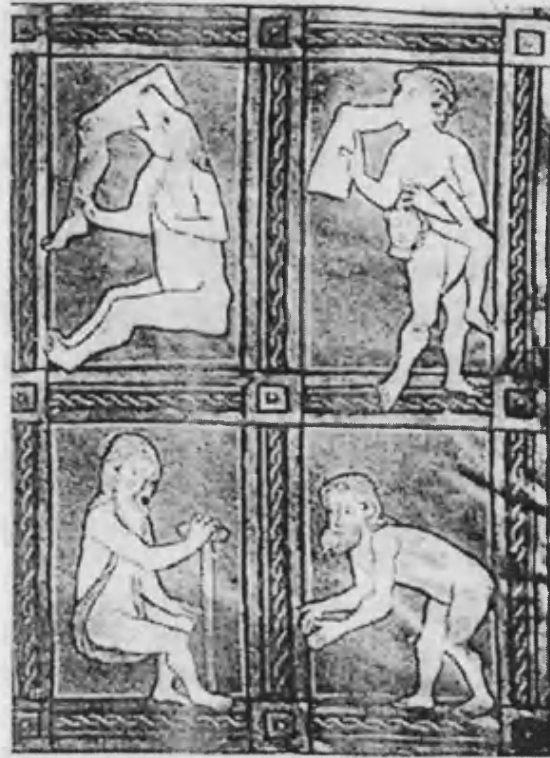


Figure 19 Cynocephale, Anthropophagus, Himantopode, and Artibatirae

The name 'Setebos' appears to be first recorded by Antonio Pigafetta in his account of the first circumnavigation under Magellan (1519-22), as the name given by the Patagonian natives to their chief god. While this may be a wholly New World reference, it is situated within an account which includes many intertextual links to the medieval travel literature of Polo and Mandeville, as well as descriptions of several of the Plinian races, and elements from eastern sources such as the *Arabian Nights*. Pigafetta's text sets out to entertain, and, to this end, incorporates elements of wonder and marvel which had proved popular from medieval times.<sup>121</sup> Perhaps Shakespeare's use of these two New World names signals a text which, like Pigafetta's, alludes to Old World and eastern literary traditions, while also looking forward to New World

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<sup>121</sup> See Chapter One.

possibilities. The use of these two names, then, does not necessarily situate Caliban as a New World native, but opens the text to plural readings.

The Old World and the New appear to merge in the interactions between Caliban, Stefano and Trinculo. The butler and jester express a desire to settle the island on which they are marooned, and to invert existing power structures, placing themselves at the top. In this they echo the machinations of the 'common sort' shipwrecked in Bermuda on their way to settle in Virginia, as reported by William Strachey in his 1610 account of the wreck of the *Sea Venture*, an often cited source for *The Tempest*.<sup>122</sup> Caliban's reaction on meeting Stefano and Trinculo represents a burlesque version of accounts of New World native responses to European voyagers. Caliban asks 'Hast thou not dropped from heaven?' (II.ii.136), a question, and belief, which was ascribed to natives, with little justification, from Columbus's first report onwards.<sup>123</sup> Also, accounts of native reaction to alcohol, and their supposed willingness to hand over sovereignty and embrace servitude are presented in comic extreme, as a drunken Caliban immediately begs Stefano to be his god, and swears to be his subject, kneeling to kiss his foot in subjection (II.ii.147-156). While this representation of a native response mocks reported native wonderment at Europeans, it may also contain an ironic comment on the actuality of native and English relationships in Virginia at the time, where, rather than being shown 'every fertile inch o'th' island' (II.ii.147), and having berries, fish and wood collected for them (II.ii.159-60), the settlers were murdered by the local Algonkian Indians whenever they left their compound.

While Caliban, Stefano and Trinculo are engaged in actions and plots which allude quite clearly to New World events, Caliban's Old World origin appears to be

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<sup>122</sup> Strachey's account appeared in Samuel Purchas's *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (London, 1625), pp. 1734-1762.

<sup>123</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 196. This belief is also reported in the accounts of Antonio Pigafetta and Amerigo Vespucci.

reiterated throughout. What Stefano and Trinculo see, from their first encounter, is not a New World native; it is, as they say repeatedly, a ‘monster’, and specifically a ‘puppy-headed monster’ (II.ii.154). Throughout, this is, apart from ‘moon-calf’, their descriptive term when addressing or referring to him: he is, in Act II scene ii, for example, a ‘shallow monster’, a ‘weak monster’, a ‘poor, credulous monster’, a ‘most perfidious and drunken monster’, a ‘puppy-headed monster’, a ‘scurvy monster’, an ‘abominable monster’, a ‘ridiculous monster’, a ‘howling monster’, a ‘drunken monster’, and a ‘brave monster’ (II.ii.143-6; II.ii.154-7; II.ii.164-71); and in Act III scene ii he is ‘servant monster’, ‘man-monster’, ‘Monsieur Monster’, ‘poor monster’, and, just plain ‘monster’. I suggest that it is possible to read these lines literally, as indicating to the audience that what is before them is, indeed, a member of a monstrous race, and, specifically, a Cynocephale.<sup>124</sup> In Columbus’s account of the New World, while he does not claim to have seen human monstrosities himself, he records reports that dog-headed men exist in the region. In Shakespeare’s play, I suggest, as in Columbus’s account, the dog-headed monster steps across from the Old World into the New.

The spirit, Ariel, like the Cynocephale, has antecedents in antiquity and in medieval travel literature. Pliny notes briefly that ‘In the deserts of Africa ghosts of men suddenly meet the traveller and vanish in a moment’.<sup>125</sup> In Marco Polo’s *Travels*, the spirits of the Desert of Lop use various methods to lure travellers away from the correct path, getting them lost, sometimes leading them to death. The spirits are described as voices in the night, ‘talking in such a way that they seem to be [the traveller’s] companions’ and they ‘even hail him by name’ or, sometimes, they make ‘a noise like

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<sup>124</sup> Eric Brown, in a short article, discusses Caliban in terms of the etymological connection between ‘cannibal’ and ‘canine’, and, while he mentions the ‘reduction’ of Caliban to a dog-headed monster, he does not develop the idea further. Eric C Brown, ‘Caliban, Columbus, and Canines in “The Tempest”’, *Notes and Queries*, 47 (2000), 92-5.

<sup>125</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, p. 527.

the clatter of a great cavalcade of riders', or they appear as 'a host of men coming towards them' like robbers. 'Even by daylight' men 'hear these spirit voices, and often you fancy you are listening to the strains of many instruments, especially drums, and the clash of arms'.<sup>126</sup> Throughout *The Tempest* the spirit, Ariel, uses voice or music to lead characters around the island. For example, Ariel guides Ferdinand into Miranda's sight with a song (in a neat inversion, she initially takes him to be a spirit) (I.ii.378-415). Also, as 'the picture of Nobody' (III.ii.127-155), Ariel plays the tabor and pipe to entice Stefano, Trinculo and Caliban 'through toothed briars, sharp furzes, pricking gorse, and thorns', leaving them finally floundering in a 'foul lake' (IV.i.180-183). Ariel also assumes various visible forms: as the 'fine apparition' of a water nymph (I.ii.320), as a harpy (III.iii.53), as Ceres (IV.i.76), and, as the 'flamed amazement' of St Elmo's fire during the tempest (I.ii.196-216). This last is a natural phenomenon well-known to mariners, and was described in the accounts of both Pigafetta and William Strachey.

In the reality of Milan, Prospero was unable to practise the magic he learnt from books. But, once marooned on Mandeville Island, he makes full use of it. He uses magical powers to impose the same hierarchical and patriarchal social order as in Milan, though on a minuscule scale. He does not propose any new forms of governance: it is only magic, as his means of maintaining order, which is novel. Magic enables Prospero to constrain his daughter and secure Ariel and Caliban as his servants. Ariel is bound by gratitude for his earlier release from captivity, and by an apparently agreed term of service after which he will be released.<sup>127</sup> However, the fundamentally coercive nature

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<sup>126</sup> Polo, *Travels*, p. 84-5. Further along the road to Cathay there are more spirits: 'when the traveller leaves Kan-chau, he journeys eastward for five days through a country haunted by spirits, whom he often hears talking in the night, till he reaches a kingdom called Erguiul' (Polo, *Travels*, p. 103).

<sup>127</sup> For discussion of the relative positions of Ariel and Caliban as servants to Prospero, see Andrew Gurr, 'Industrious Ariel and Idle Caliban', in *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time*, pp. 193-208.



of the arrangement becomes clear when Prospero, in an assertion of authority, threatens to use his magic power to impose further imprisonment upon Ariel:

If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak,  
And peg thee in his knotty entrails till  
Thou has howled away twelve winters. (I.ii.296-8)

Similarly, Caliban, following his attempted rape of Miranda, is forced into subservience by the threat of magically inflicted physical torture, for example:

For this be sure tonight thou shalt have cramps,  
Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up. Urchins  
Shall forth at vast of night, that they may work  
All exercise on thee. Thou shalt be pinched  
As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging  
Than bees that made 'em. (I.ii.328-333)

As well as using his magic as a means of control of his subjects, throughout the play Prospero uses magic to initiate and direct events to his own advantage (as in the manipulations of Ferdinand and Miranda's relationship, and of Alonso's company). Within the drama, then, magic can be seen to offer a simple, absolutist, solution to the difficulties of sovereignty and political manoeuvring. This mode of government is far more straightforward than rule in the 'real' world.

Magic, while constituting Prospero's power, also has a great potential to entertain. Prospero the ruler is also Prospero the conjurer, clothed in magic robes. His magical powers are used to create and direct spectacles which mystify and entertain, such as the mock banquet which tantalises Alonso and the courtiers (III.iii.18-22); the spirit masque of goddesses and nymphs for Ferdinand and Miranda's betrothal

entertainment (IV.i.60-138),<sup>128</sup> and the ‘divers spirits in shape of dogs and hounds’ set on to hunt Stefano, Trinculo and Caliban. These spectacles, I suggest, are similar in character to illusions provided by enchanters at the court of the Great Khan, as described by Mandeville:

Then in come jugglers and enchanters and do many marvels; for they make it appear that the sun and moon are coming to do reverence, and these shine so brightly that they cannot be looked at. And they make such darkness that it seems night; afterwards they make it light again. Then they make it seem that damsels come in, singing and dancing. Then they make other damsels come in, bringing cups of gold full of mares’ milk, offering it to lords and ladies to drink. After this they will make an appearance of knights jousting in the air, fully armed; and they strike so with their spears that the pieces from them fly about the tables in the hall. And when this is done, they make harts and wild boars come in with hounds hunting them. These and many other marvels they do, until the emperor has finished eating.<sup>129</sup>

The visions of ‘cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples’, (IV.i.152-3) which Prospero conjures up out of thin air, also closely echo the images of the Great Khan’s sumptuous, bejewelled palaces, as described by both Mandeville and Polo.

Prospero, then, can be viewed as both European ruler (though temporarily unseated) and eastern conjurer. In a further allusion to the literary lineage of the island, magic is not natural to Prospero, but acquired from books. By contrast, Sycorax is born

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<sup>128</sup> There are other, classical, allusions, which are discussed by Marina Warner in “‘The Foul Witch’ and Her ‘Freckled Whelp’: Circean Mutations in the New World’, in *The Tempest and its Travels*, pp. 97-113.

<sup>129</sup> Mandeville, *Travels*, p. 152.

a 'foul witch' (I.ii.259), her magical powers presumably innate. Prospero differentiates qualitatively between their forms of magic: his is white and stronger; hers is black and weaker. For example, when he frees Ariel from the cloven pine, Prospero removes Sycorax's spell, something she failed to do herself. His superior powers are acknowledged by Caliban: 'I must obey. His art is of such power it would control my dam's god Setebos, and make a vassal of him' (I.ii.375-377). The two opposing terms, white and black, cannot be held entirely apart, however, as Prospero's magic also has malign potential. He does, after all, threaten to re-imprison Ariel in an even stronger tree: an oak rather than a pine (I.ii.296-8). However, the tortures he promises remain largely unfulfilled, while Sycorax appears to have committed the 'sorceries terrible' for which she was banished.

I have argued that magic, the spirit figure of Ariel, and the dog-headed monster Caliban, have a lineage traceable in medieval travel literature, and that the island constitutes a specifically literary setting for Prospero's marooning. Such a medieval context would have been recognisable to the contemporary audience as one within which spirits, monsters and magic could be expected. The continued popularity during the period of editions of *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* provides evidence of the continued literary tradition.<sup>130</sup> While on the stage, it was perpetuated in such plays as *The Cynocephali (The History of the Cenofalles)* (anon, 1577), and *Sir John Mandeville* (both now lost), as well as Richard Brome's comedy of travel, *The Antipodes* (Richard Brome, 1638).<sup>131</sup> In *The Tempest*, Alonso's party express their renewed belief in travellers' tales, as they view the spirit banquet Prospero provides for them. As Antonio states, 'travellers ne'er did lie, though fools at home condemn 'em' (III.iii.26-27).

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<sup>130</sup> See Chapter One, p. 41, n. 13.

<sup>131</sup> Anthony Parr cites the play *Sir John Mandeville* as being staged around 1599 (*Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 3). *The Antipodes*, perhaps signalling a shift in popular perception, attributes Peregrine's debilitating delusions to his obsession with Mandeville's account, as opposed to those of contemporary explorers.

On the island, then, these tales appear to come to life. In actuality, the well-known medieval travel tales were not supported by sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century reports from the New World. Monsters, as Thomas More wrote as early as 1516, had ‘ceased to be news’.<sup>132</sup> But they had not disappeared from the popular imagination. By 1638, when Brome’s play *The Antipodes* was performed, Mandeville’s travel tales provide the material for comedy, as the focus for Peregrine’s obsession with travel. One may infer that, while still familiar and popular during the period, medieval travel tales were no longer considered to be authoritative guides to the world. Prospero’s island, with its monsters and magic, would have appeared marvellous and exotic, but, perhaps, rather antique.

At the end of the play, as Prospero prepares to return to the ‘real world’ of Naples and Milan, he renounces rule by magic, and frees Ariel to the elements (V.i.321). The future for Caliban remains unspecified, but appears bleak. He could remain alone on the island, but irrevocably distanced by language from his former organic, feral, relationship with it. Or, as an impossible alternative, he might accompany Prospero to Naples and be exhibited as monstrous evidence of the truth of medieval travellers’ tales.

### **A New World in an Old World**

While Prospero and his island are located in the literary past of the Old World, this is not to say that *The Tempest* does not engage with the possibilities of the New. The castaways of Alonso’s company, although brought to the island magically, are firmly rooted in the play’s European ‘here and now’, and, at several points, appear to comment upon contemporary New World issues. Of these, the speech made by Gonzalo positing a

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<sup>132</sup> More, *Utopia*, p. 40.

'commonwealth' is perhaps the most cited example (II.1.153-173). Another occurs in the earlier part of the scene, when discussion of the physical characteristics of the island may, as John Gillies suggests, provide specific topical comment on the situation in Virginia.<sup>133</sup> Adrian and Gonzalo survey what they can see of the island. While the audience already know that this island does, indeed, support life and has 'fresh springs, brine-pits, barren places and fertile' (I.2.341), Adrian's opening comment 'Though this island seem to be desert' (II.1.37) indicates they are in one of the barren areas. He describes the island as 'uninhabitable, and almost inaccessible' (II.i.40), yet concludes that the climate 'must needs be of subtle, tender, and delicate temperance' (II.i.44). Adrian and Gonzalo's optimistic interpretations of what they see are interposed with the contradictory, pessimistic views of Antonio and Sebastian:

ADRIAN (*to Gonzalo*) The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.

SEBASTIAN (*to Antonio*) As if it had lungs, and rotten ones.

ANTONIO Or as 'twere perfumed by a fen.

GONZALO (*to Adrian*) Here is everything advantageous to life.

ANTONIO (*to Sebastian*) True, save means to live.

SEBASTIAN Of that there's none, or little.

GONZALO (*to Adrian*) How lush and lusty the grass looks! How green!

ANTONIO The ground indeed is tawny.

SEBASTIAN With an eye of green in't.

ANTONIO He misses not much.

SEBASTIAN No, he doth but mistake the truth totally. (II.i.49-62)

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<sup>133</sup> John Gillies, 'Shakespeare's Virginian Masque', in *The Tempest*, pp. 215-232, p.218.

John Gillies suggests that these exchanges would have been understood by the contemporary audience as commenting specifically on Virginia, and that

characteristically Virginian paradoxes – ‘plentie and famine’, the lush paradise which is also a desert, the temperate land of pestilential fens, the inaccessible place which is just around the corner - are wonderfully parodied.<sup>134</sup>

Such equivocal views of Virginia appear to be represented by, on the side of ‘plentie’, Gonzalo and Adrian, and, on the side of ‘famine’, Antonio and Sebastian.

The passage also, I suggest, raises questions not only about the actuality of the New World, but also its textual representation. In these exchanges the same new land is subject to the same cursory degree of observation, yet two contradictory views are presented in the text: one optimistic, one pessimistic. From the perspective of Gonzalo and Adrian, the island appears pleasant, the air sweet; it offers everything necessary for survival and, perhaps, settlement. Gonzalo’s subsequent speech suggests that founding a new colony is in his thoughts. It could be argued that Gonzalo and Adrian are naïve in their optimism; however, the text makes clear that the island is habitable and comfortable. For Antonio and Sebastian the prospect is bleak, there is nothing which, for them, constitutes the ‘means to live’, and even the air is foul. Antonio and Sebastian may, then, appear as overly cynical in their judgements, though for the courtiers they are, the ‘means to live’ constituted by the court, power and riches, are absent.

The pair present attitudes characteristic of ‘gentlemen’ who found settlement in the New World impossible, as portrayed in the accounts of Fletcher, Hariot, and Strachey. Kenneth Andrews characterises them as ‘averse to discipline and hard work’, the cause of many of the difficulties experienced in the settlement of Jamestown,

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<sup>134</sup> Gillies, *The Tempest*, p. 225.

Virginia.<sup>135</sup> Hariot describes men of ‘a nice bringing vp, only in cities or townes’, who, not finding the fine food and ‘soft beds of downe’ they are accustomed to, become miserable, and return to England with correspondingly pessimistic reports of Virginia.<sup>136</sup> The origins of conflicting accounts of Virginia, though more complex in actuality, appear schematically represented in these exchanges between courtiers. When Sebastian concludes that Gonzalo ‘doth but mistake the truth totally’, the mistake may not concern the physical attributes of the island, but may rather indicate a fundamental difference of understanding between the two of what constitutes the ‘means to live’ (II.1.62).

Following these exchanges, the conversation changes direction, but Gonzalo returns to the possibilities offered by the island, apparently in an attempt to change the subject following Sebastian’s speech casting the blame for events upon Alonso. He begins by musing, ‘Had I plantation of this isle’ (II.1.148), and continues with the specific question: ‘And were the king on’t, what would I do?’ (II.1.151). What he goes on to propose is drawn, as many have noted, almost verbatim from Montaigne’s account of New World society in his essay ‘Of the Caniballes’:

It is a nation, would I answer *Plato*, that hath no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of Letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superioritie; no use of service, of riches or of povertie; no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle; no respect of kinred, but common, no apparell but naturall, no manuring of lands, no use of wine, corne, or mettle. The very

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<sup>135</sup> Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, p. 315.

<sup>136</sup> Thomas Hariot, ‘A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia’ (1588), in *The Roanoke Voyages, 1584-1590: Documents to Illustrate the English Voyages to North America under the Patent Granted to Walter Raleigh in 1584*, ed. by D B Quinn (London: Hakluyt Society, 1955), pp. 314-388, p. 323. This description is reminiscent of the ‘featherbedd milksoppes’ so reviled by Francis Fletcher (Francis Fletcher, ‘Notes’, in *The World Encompassed*, p. 96).

words that import lying, falshood, treason, dissimulations,  
covetousnes, envie, detraction, and pardon, were never heard of  
amongst them.<sup>137</sup>

Both in this extract from Montaigne's essay and in Gonzalo's speech, the culture is characterised in terms of what it does not have as compared with European society.<sup>138</sup>

Montaigne continues with a brief description of what native life *does* consist of, including a measured account of cannibal rites. He concludes that, while 'we may then well call them barbarous, in regard of reasons rules', Europeans 'exceed them in all kinde of barbarisme'.<sup>139</sup> Montaigne's essay is comparable to Jean de Léry's *Histoire*, in that native culture is described in all its apparent savagery, yet when European culture is held up for comparison, it can be seen as even more barbaric. From a standpoint which accepts cultural difference, and employs cultural comparison, native culture can serve, both maintain, as an example to Europeans. Montaigne appears to indicate in his concluding sentence that it would be futile to expect Europeans to take any notice: 'All that is not verie ill; but what of that? They weare no kinde of breeches nor hosen'.<sup>140</sup> The implication is that a European society, in which clothing signified civility and rank, would, mistakenly, feel itself superior to one which went naked, and would not accept its inhabitants as exemplars in anything.

After invoking Montaigne, Shakespeare does not follow him further. He does not connect Gonzalo's proposals specifically with the actuality of the New World. Rather, Gonzalo's speeches develop the association between the New World and Eden, by this time conventional, and, as discussed here, in the accounts of Columbus and

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<sup>137</sup> Montaigne, 'Of the Caniballes', *The Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne done into English by John Florio* (London: Richards, 1908), pp. 253-271, p. 259.

<sup>138</sup> Neither Montaigne nor Shakespeare refer to religion, or the lack of it, in their summations of an idealised native society. Compare with George Abbot's description of New World natives previously quoted, p. 262.

<sup>139</sup> Montaigne, 'Of the Caniballes', p. 264.

<sup>140</sup> Montaigne, 'Of the Caniballes', p. 271.



Layfield. He links the purity and innocence of 'his' people with the fertility of nature to provide for them:

All things in common nature should produce  
Without sweat or endeavour. Treason, felony,  
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,  
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth  
Of it own kind all foison, all abundance,  
To feed my innocent people. (II.1.165-170)

This Edenic image, with its New World allusions, also connects to the Old World and Classical literature, as Gonzalo proclaims that his rule of such a 'commonwealth' would 'excel the Golden Age' (II.1.172).

While Gonzalo's idealised society has many negative aspects of European society removed, it does not, unlike Montaigne's account, include any of the unappealing facets of native culture, such as cannibalism. These proposals for governance, with their Edenic and classical allusions, together with the reference to contemporary literature on the New World, constitute a stark contrast both to the type of order Prospero has imposed on the island, and to that which Alonso, King of Naples, and Antonio, now Duke of Milan, follow in their territories. They are also very different from any type of colonial government in the New World to that point, and to conditions current in England.<sup>141</sup> That this order is fundamentally alternative to that current in Europe is clearly stated by Gonzalo: in his 'commonwealth' he would 'by contraries execute all things' (II.1.153-4).

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<sup>141</sup> A Spanish cleric, Vasco de Quiroga, applied Utopian rules to a native community in western Mexico in the 1530s, and, according to Carlos Fuentes, is remembered with affection even today. Carlos Fuentes, *The Buried Mirror: Reflections on Spain and the New World* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1992), p. 134.

The 'by contraries' leads to consideration of the way in which Gonzalo's proposals may be undermined within the play. He is mocked and ridiculed unrelentingly by Sebastian and Antonio throughout this scene. As well as poking fun at his age and manner of speech, they also question his judgement, in relation to his view of the island, and his rational thinking, as Antonio points out that 'The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning' (II.1.163). Though his authority may appear diminished by the ease with which the two younger men make fun of him, he maintains his dignity when responding to them. Gonzalo's honour and charity has also been attested to by Prospero, who describes him to Miranda as the 'noble Neapolitan' who provided, among other things, Prospero's books, when they were cast away (I.2.160-168). The audience may, though, question whether positing oneself as ruler of a commonwealth to a grief-stricken current ruler is diplomatic, particularly as Gonzalo has just checked Sebastian for 'rubbing the sore' when he should be 'applying the plaster' (II.1.143-4). Also, specifically pointing out that Gonzalo's proposals are 'by contraries' may encourage the audience to associate them with familiar conventions of comedy and satire, where humour was often constructed by the inversion of known and accepted norms.<sup>142</sup>

The play, then, seems to ridicule Gonzalo's proposals for an alternative form of governance. The mockery, though, comes from two cynical courtiers, who would prefer to dismiss him and any of his ideas as unworthy of serious consideration. That their position is false is subsequently revealed, as Antonio persuades Sebastian that Gonzalo must be killed, as he could not be persuaded, unlike the other courtiers, to agree to their proposed actions. The play, then, appears to hold open the question of whether New

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<sup>142</sup> Two slightly later examples of this convention are Ben Jonson's *News from the New World Discovered in the Moon* (1620) and Richard Brome's *The Antipodes* (1638).

World societies could be of real interest as examples to European culture, in ways suggested by Montaigne and Léry. It proposes an idealised society partly based on a New World model, but appears to call into question its credibility by undermining confidence in its proponent. However, the main sources of this undermining are two corrupt members of European society, ripe for reform, and to whom the 'very words that import lying, falshood, treason, dissimulations, covetousnes, envie, detraction' are eminently applicable.<sup>143</sup>

Gonzalo, then, posits an idealised New World social order as a possible form of governance for the island, different from that of Naples or Milan. His vision of innocent people relying on the beneficence of nature's provision is not interpreted by Sebastian and Antonio as the embodiment of a pre-lapsarian state; rather, it represents the idleness of 'whores and knaves' (II.1.172). It seems that they see the world through the prism of their own corruption. As Gonzalo and the others sleep following the discussion of the commonwealth, Antonio leads Sebastian to consider the possibilities the shipwreck provides to further their ambitions, resulting in the resolve to kill Alonso and Gonzalo. These exchanges provide a dissection of the operation of power in the 'real world', as opposed to the idealised commonwealth proposed by Gonzalo (or the magically controlled world of the island). Here, rule is decided by primogeniture, and the restrictions this places on a figure such as Sebastian are clearly stated. As a member of the ruling family, but third in line behind his brother's children, Sebastian has idleness forced upon him: 'to ebb hereditary sloth instructs me' (II.1.227-8). This makes reference to the lack of occupation of the leisured classes, as indicated in Strachey's account, and in exchanges aboard the ships at the beginnings of both plays. It also, perhaps, suggests the impotence of Sebastian's position: close to the centre of power,

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<sup>143</sup> Montaigne, 'Of the Caniballes', p. 253.

but having no personal control of that power. His situation is little better than that of other courtiers. Antonio spells out the position before and after his usurpation of Prospero: 'My brother's servants were then my fellows; now they are my men' (II.1.278-9).

What has not been given to him by birth, Sebastian can take by violence. Antonio argues that with Fernando dead, and Claribel far removed, Alonso could be murdered in his sleep, leaving Sebastian as the sole heir. He is himself an example of similar action, as Sebastian recalls: 'I remember you did supplant your brother Prospero' (II.1.275-6). The success of his actions is, to Antonio, clearly obvious, and he has no doubt that he fills the role well, using the robe of office as metonym: 'And look how well my garments sit upon me, much feater than before' (II.1.277-8). The sole reservation Sebastian voices to oppose the murders concerns his conscience. Antonio dismisses this as insubstantial compared with power:

Twenty consciences

That stand 'twixt me and Milan, candied be they,

And melt ere they molest. (II.1.283-285)

The impotent and self-serving position of courtiers in this form of government is also indicated: Gonzalo, who might speak out against them, is to be murdered; Adrian and Francisco are expected to be amenable to whoever wields power. It is Sebastian's judgement that 'They'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk; they'll tell the clock to any business that we say befits the hour' (II.1.292-4).

While Gonzalo uses Montaigne's words to suggest the beginning of a new society on the island, with a novel form of government, Antonio and Sebastian appear to embody the corrupt extent of the existing social order. They do not seem to consider the possibility that their marooning may be permanent, and envisage a new start like

Gonzalo. Rather, their plans are predicated on a swift return to Naples.<sup>144</sup> Antonio recognises, in the chaos of the aftermath of the tempest, an opportunity not to change the fundamental order of society, but simply to replace one ruler with another, of his choosing. The system of primogeniture is revealed, in this corrupt extreme, as a form of government easily destabilised by chance, as in the apparent drowning of Ferdinand, or by violence, as in the usurpation plotted, and the one successfully effected by Antonio.

The system is further undermined by the proposition, voiced by Antonio, that there is nothing inherently 'kingly' in an individual ruler: 'There be that can rule Naples as well as he that sleeps' (II.1.267-8). In his analysis, albeit from his corrupt perspective, a ruler can be reduced to one who inherits power, or who takes it by force, and is identifiable not by some innate quality, but by his clothing. In contrast to Antonio's robes of office, Prospero wears a robe which confers magical, not earthly, power. Clothing, then, carries particular signification in the play, as it did in wider society: dress indicated rank. That the system of power relations and governance is to be, in the end, unchanged for these maroons is perhaps indicated to them, and to the audience, by the magical freshness and dryness of their clothes. As Gonzalo points out, 'our garments being, as they were, drenched in the sea, hold notwithstanding their freshness and glosses, being rather new-dyed than stained with salt water' (II.1.66-69).<sup>145</sup> In a society where rank was marked by dress, the levelling of classes remarked on during the tempest can be seen, by this transformation, as a transient moment onboard ship, not a situation to be continued on land, where the old order, the clothes imply, will be reasserted.

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<sup>144</sup> This is indicated by the discussion on Claribel's location: 'How shall that Claribel measure us back to Naples?' (II.i.263-4).

<sup>145</sup> As arranged by Ariel: 'Not a hair perished. On their sustaining garments not a blemish, but fresher than before' (II.1.218).

The scene which follows the foiled murder plot (II.ii) introduces two comic characters, who are also the only representatives of the 'common sort' in the play: Trinculo the jester and Stefano the 'drunken' butler. Their meeting with Caliban and each other presents a burlesque version of written accounts of native responses to European voyagers. Caliban asks Stefano, 'Hast thou not dropped from heaven?' (II.ii.136), a question which may have amused the audience, as they would immediately have located the social positions of the servants by their dress and speech. Caliban, having seen only Prospero and Miranda, has no such cultural knowledge on which to draw; he cannot place them in a social hierarchy. The specific terms of Caliban's question may also have been familiar, and originated in the earliest communication about the New World, Columbus's letter, where he states:

They all believe that power and good are in the heavens and were very firmly convinced that I, with these ships and men, came from the heavens, and in this belief they everywhere received me after they had mastered their fear. [...] At present, those I bring with me are still of the opinion that I come from Heaven, for all the intercourse which they have had with me. They were the first to announce this wherever I went, and the others went running from house to house, and to the neighbouring towns, with loud cries of, 'Come! Come! See the men from Heaven!' <sup>146</sup>

Columbus's insight into native beliefs must be questionable, as his knowledge of their language, and theirs of his, could have been, at best, rudimentary at this point. <sup>147</sup>

Columbus concludes that this belief is not due to any lack of intelligence on the part of

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<sup>146</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 196.

<sup>147</sup> See Chapter One for discussion of this issue.

the natives. Rather, it is because 'they have never seen people clothed or ships of such a kind'.<sup>148</sup> This is a situation similar, then, to Caliban's. Pigafetta, in 1519, encountered the same reaction from the Tupi in Brazil, though his response is more laconic than Columbus's:

Know that it chanced that there had been no rain for two months before we came thither, and the day when we arrived the rain began, so that the people of the place said that we came from heaven and had brought the rain with us. Which was a great simplicity. And certainly these people would be easily converted to the Christian faith.<sup>149</sup>

Pigafetta conjoins simplicity and ease of conversion with no obvious irony. In both of these examples, the belief is presented as originating with the natives. However, Vespucci's account suggests an alternative origin: 'They asked us whence we came, and we gave them to understand that we came from heaven, and that we were travelling to see the world, and they believed it'.<sup>150</sup> Whether or not the idea that the Europeans came from heaven originated with the natives, clearly some Europeans encouraged and perpetuated it, as it suited their purposes.<sup>151</sup>

The exchanges between Caliban, Stefano and Trinculo caricature these accounts, exaggerating the native response and debasing the actions and positions of the Europeans involved. Under the influence of alcohol, Caliban sees Stefano as 'a brave god' who 'bears celestial liquor' to whom he will kneel (II.ii.115-6), and whose subject he will swear, on the bottle, to become (II.ii.124-5). Caliban's almost immediate

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<sup>148</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 1296.

<sup>149</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 39-40.

<sup>150</sup> Vespucci, *Letters*, p. 17.

<sup>151</sup> The supposition that 'heaven' signified to New World societies similarly to Europeans appears supported by Thomas Hariot's account of the beliefs of the Algonkian Indians of Virginia (see Chapter Three, p. 229). In that society the presumption of a heavenly origin for the Europeans continued, albeit in modified form: either the English were gods themselves, the Indians believed, or the technology they had, Hariot states, had 'bin giuen and taught vs of the gods' (Hariot, *Roanoke Voyages*, p. 376).

inebriation is an early example of what has become a trope of autochthonous peoples' weakness for alcohol, which has persisted through Hollywood Western movies, and also colours relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Australians, and Maoris and other New Zealanders. One source may have been Francis Fletcher's rather comical account of a Patagonian 'giant's' reaction:

Att the same tyme another of the Giants standeing with our men  
takeing their morneings draughts shewed himself so familiar w<sup>th</sup> vs  
that he allso would do as they did who takeing the glass in his hand  
(being strong canary wine) it came not to his lipps when it tooke him  
by the nose & so sodainly enterd into his head that he was so drunke  
or at the least so ouercom w<sup>th</sup> the spirit of the wine that he fell flatt  
vpon his buttocks not able [to] stand anny longer so that his company  
began to startle as if we had slaine the man but yet he holding the  
glass fast in his hand without shedding of the wine thought to trye  
again when he came to himselfe if hee could haue any better luck  
sitting, then standeing. he smelled so long & tasted so often that at the  
last he drew it to the bottom from wh<sup>ch</sup> tyme hee tooke such a likeing  
to wine that haueing Learned the word he euery morneing would com  
downe the Mountaines w<sup>th</sup> a mighty crye Wine, Wine, Wine, till he  
came to our tent & would in that tyme haue deuoured more wine at a  
tyme then 20 men could haue done Neuer ceasing till he had his  
draught euery morneing.<sup>152</sup>

Here the native is shown as initially less able to 'take' drink than the, no doubt, habituated Europeans, and also as quickly succumbing to excess and addiction. While

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<sup>152</sup> Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, p. 117-8.



this example is not connected to a belief in the Europeans as gods, later in the account of Drake's circumnavigation, the Californian Indians are depicted as also sharing the belief, and voluntarily handing sovereignty over their lands to Drake as Elizabeth's representative.<sup>153</sup> Caliban's reaction, both to alcohol and in his willingness to embrace servitude, is nonetheless, comically extreme. He begs Stefano to be his god, and offers to show him 'every fertile inch o'th'island' (II.ii.147) together with the 'best springs' (II.ii.159). He will provide their food, fish for them and collect wood (II.ii.159-60).

While this representation of a native response mocks the reported native wonderment at Europeans, it may also contain an ironic comment on the actuality of native and English relationships in Virginia at the time. Caliban's song, which closes the scene, begins with the line, 'No more dams I'll make for fish' (II.ii.179): a very clear reference to one of the important sources of food, and sites of interaction between the settlers and natives of Virginia. As has been discussed previously, in relation to the accounts of Ralph Lane and Thomas Hariot, the native ability to construct fish weirs, and the planters inability to replicate them, was a source of insecurity: when the natives left, destroying the fish dams, the colonists' survival was seriously jeopardised.<sup>154</sup> The situation had worsened by the time of Strachey's 1610 report on conditions in Virginia. The Algonkians no longer provided assistance, and were actively hostile: 'it is true, the *Indian* killed as fast without, if our men stirred but beyond the bounds of their Block-house, as Famine and Pestilence did within'.<sup>155</sup> Strachey reports that for some time there were no fish to be found: 'the River (which were wont before this time of the yeare to

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<sup>153</sup> See Chapter Two, p. 178.

<sup>154</sup> The of importance of fish weirs in relations between natives and planters, and their significance for survival have been discussed previously (see Chapter Three, p. 247 and p. 250).

<sup>155</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1749, l. 7-9.

be plentiful of Sturgeon) had not now a Fish to be scene in it',<sup>156</sup> and, when the fish finally appear,

it pleased not God so to blesse our labours, that we did at any time take one quarter so much, as would giue vnto our people one pound at a meale a peece [...] notwithstanding the great store we now saw daily in our Riuer: but let the blame of this lye where it is, both vpon our Nets, and the vnskilfulness of our men to lay them.<sup>157</sup>

This situation is in stark contrast to the one proposed in the drama, where Caliban offers willing subjection and the promise of ample food. While the scene mocks native misconceptions, showing a drunken butler taken for a god, it also pillories, in its comedic excess, any illusions prospective settlers may have held about their reception, and possibilities for social advancement in Virginia.

Stefano and Trinculo, albeit through an alcoholic haze, view the marooning as an opportunity to begin a new settlement, with themselves in radically changed social positions. In response to Caliban's pleadings for Stefano to accept him as a subject, Stefano comes to believe in the possibility, which he puts to Trinculo: 'the King and all our company else being drowned, we will inherit here' (II.ii.174-5). While their path to inheritance is clear of their former superiors, so they think, there remains Prospero and his daughter, currently in possession of the island. Caliban assures Stefano that Prospero can easily be disposed of, while Miranda 'will become thy bed' (III.ii.105). Stefano is convinced: 'Monster, I will kill this man. His daughter and I will be king and queen – save our graces! – and Trinculo and thyself shall be viceroys' (III.ii.107-9). The plan is foiled, as, despite Caliban's warnings, Stefano and Trinculo are diverted by the

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<sup>156</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1751, l. 41-2.

<sup>157</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1755, l. 7-10.

'trumpery' of 'glistening apparel' (III.ii.186, 193) hung on a lime tree by Prospero and Ariel. In their stupidity, Stefano and Trinculo mistake the robes for the office, thus producing a neat parody of the significance of the other robes of office within the play. The mistake they make, unlike Antonio, is that they don the clothing before they perform the deed. Antonio proposed that there was no difference between Sebastian and Alonso, and himself and Prospero, in terms of their suitability to rule (II.i.267-8). He, of course, ignores issues of virtue and legitimacy in proposing this interchangeability, yet even so, within the logic of the play, the ability to successfully appropriate the robes of office appears reserved for only one stratum of society: those who currently rule.

At the end of the play order is restored, and assured in its continuance with the 'correct' marriage of like with like: Ferdinand and Miranda. The authority of the world of the current moment of the play is reasserted. Prospero, to return to this world, and his proper place as an active ruler, decides to leave behind his books of magic. He also leaves behind the figures from that Old World: Ariel and Caliban. At the same time, the New World is acknowledged as a presence, but the play's attitude towards it appears sceptical: it may not be all that it seems. Gonzalo presents an idealised version of it; Antonio and Sebastian are scathingly sceptical; the common sort are presented as deluded if they think it will offer social advancement and unequivocal native assistance. Overall, the drama appears to convey a politically conservative message: stay in Europe and govern properly while viewing the possibilities of colonial enterprise with the same scepticism as that applied to medieval travel tales.

## Devils' Islands

While Stefano and Trinculo's aspirations are presented as ridiculous delusions and comic inversions in *The Tempest*, the reality of events in Bermuda, as related by Strachey, indicate that the comedy may be alluding to serious anxieties. In Bermuda, factions of the marooned company staged three attempts to remain there and settle the island, rather than continue to Virginia. In the first case, the more favourable conditions in Bermuda form the basis of the argument. In the following two, allied to this, is an argument that, following the tempest, Sir Thomas Gates, their commander and the prospective interim Governor of Virginia, no longer held any authority over them. Gates had imposed order ashore, and, as described by Strachey, directed the company in work necessary for their survival and means of removal from the island. The work included fishing, salting of the catch, and the felling, carrying and sawing of cedar as material for the carpenters to build two pinnaces. Gates himself worked, as he had during the tempest, to provide an example to the company. Strachey is clearly impressed with Gates's qualities of leadership:

And sure it was happy for vs, who had now runne this fortune, and were fallen into the bottome of this misery, that we both had our Gouvernour with vs, and one so solicitous and carefull, whose both example (as I said) and authority, could lay shame, and command vpon our people: else, I am perswaded, we had most of vs finished our dayes there.<sup>158</sup>

Strachey's characterisation of their position as so miserable is contradicted by his preceding lengthy description of the natural bounty of the islands and their surrounding seas. That his stated opinion was not the one generally held becomes plain as he

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<sup>158</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1743, l. 15-18.

describes the first of three ‘mutinous conceptions’.<sup>159</sup> The first began among the ‘major part of the common sort:’ the sea-men, who converted many of the land-men to their cause, and, Strachey admits parenthetically ‘perhaps [...] some of the better sort’ too.<sup>160</sup> The proposition was that they should settle in Bermuda, given that the conditions were better there than in Virginia. The argument, as Strachey reports, it sounds persuasive:

*in Virginia, nothing but wretchednesse and labour must be expected, with many wants, and a churlish intreaty, there being neither that Fish, Flesh, nor Fowle, which here (without wasting on the one part, or watching on theirs, or any threatning, and are of authority) at ease, and pleasure might be enjoyed: and since both in the one, and the other place, they were (for the time) to loose the fruition both of their friends and Countrey, as good, and better were it for them, to repose and seate them where they should have the least outward wants the while.*<sup>161</sup>

This echoes Edenic plenitude and Gonzalo’s commonwealth, but Strachey interprets the desire to remain in Bermuda as indicating lack of restraint: ‘Loe, what are our affections and passions, If not rightly squared? how irreligious, and irregular they expresse us?’. Also, in his opinion, it appeals to the idle: ‘and what hath a more adamantine power to draw unto it the consent and attraction of the idle, untoward, and wretched number of the many, then liberty, and fulness of sensuality?’<sup>162</sup> These are sentiments which can, perhaps, be heard echoed, in coarsened form, in the responses of Antonio and Sebastian to Gonzalo’s proposed commonwealth.

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<sup>159</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, marginalia, p. 1743.

<sup>160</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1743.

<sup>161</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1743, l. 27-32.

<sup>162</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1743, l. 21-2, 34-6.

The six ringleaders of the 'conspiracy' had planned to refuse to work on building the boats, and to persuade the smith and a carpenter to join them in possessing another island for themselves. Strachey seems pleased at their discovery, and that their sentence appeared to fit the crime: 'but this happily found out, they were condemned to the same punishment which they would have chosen (but without Smith or Carpenter) and to an Iland farre by it selfe, they were carried, and there left'.<sup>163</sup> Their marooning did not last very long, as the conspirators, expressing remorse, petitioned for their readmittance. In describing the reception and outcome of these petitions, Strachey makes further comment on the positive qualities Gates exhibits: 'upon which our Governour (not easie to admit any accusation, and hard to remit an offence, but at all times sorry in the punishment of him, in whom may appeare either shame or contrition) was easily content to reacknowledge them againe'.<sup>164</sup>

It is Gates's authority as Governor which is specifically challenged in the second of the 'mutinous conceptions'. The case is argued, by one Stephen Hopkins, that the shipwreck released the company from Gates's control. He put forward substantiall arguments, both ciuill and diuine (the Scripture falsly quoted) that it was no breach of honesty, conscience, nor Religion, to decline from the obedience of the Gouvernour, or refuse to goe any further, led by his authority (except it so pleased themselues) since the authority ceased when the wracke was committed, and with it, they were all then freed from the government of any man.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1735, l. 48-50. Strachey makes reference to the devout religiosity of the chief conspirator, but notes that his devotions were not often made in public, and that he was 'suspected by our Minister for a *Brownish*'.

<sup>164</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1735, l. 61-64.

<sup>165</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1744, l. 7-11.

Having set aside Gates's authority, Hopkins's case continues in similar vein to that of the first conspirators. Now free from all government, it is each man's duty, he argues, to provide for himself and his family, and why should they not remain in Bermuda where there was 'abundance by Gods prouidence of all manner of good foode' and the possibility of building a boat to enable them to leave 'when they might grow weary of the place'.<sup>166</sup> Hopkins further supports his argument by pointing out that if they did go to Virginia they would not have good food, and that 'they might well feare to be detained in that Countrie by the authority of the Commander thereof, and their whole life to serue the turnes of the Aduenturers, with their trauailes and labours'.<sup>167</sup> This challenge to Gates does not, according to Strachey, get very far, as Hopkins is reported to the Governor by the two men he tries to win over. Gates appears to use this case, similarly to Drake, to make a show of his authority: 'it pleased the Gouvernour to let this his factious offence to haue a publique affront'.<sup>168</sup> Hopkins is court martialled, in manacles, before the whole of the assembled company. He is found to be 'both the Captaine, and the follower of this Mutinie' and Gates passes a sentence of death, 'such as belongs to Mutinie and Rebellion'. However, following more penitence from Hopkins, and petitions from 'the better sort' to the Governor, Gates again demonstrates his compassion, and pardons Hopkins.<sup>169</sup>

The third plot is the most extreme: Gates is to be murdered, and the company's store-house plundered. Strachey again characterises the plotters as basing their argument on an assumption that Gates no longer holds a position of authority over them:

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<sup>166</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1744, l. 11-14.

<sup>167</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1744, l. 18-21.

<sup>168</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1744, l. 23-24.

<sup>169</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1744, l. 23-35.

[they] conceiued that our Gouvernour indeede neither durst, nor had authority to put in execution, or passe the act of Iustice vpon any one, how treacherous or impious so euer; their owne opinions so much deceiuing them for the vnlawfulness of any act, which they would execute: daring to iustifie among themselues, that if they should be apprehended, before the performance, they should happily suffer as Martyrs.<sup>170</sup>

Strachey's own attitude to Gates's authority is stated unequivocally: 'In these dangers and diuellish disquiets [...] thus intraged amongst our selues, to the destruction each of other, into what a mischiefe and misery had wee bin given up, had wee not had a Gouvernour with his authority, to haue suppressed the same?'.<sup>171</sup> While Strachey, with hindsight, is clear that the mutiny will not be successful, commenting that 'all giddy and lawlesse attempts, have alwayes something of imperfection', he evokes the pervading mood of mistrust by relating how every man was commanded to wear his weapons, as 'his next neighbour was not to be trusted'.<sup>172</sup>

The events of this plot are brought to a head in a scene reminiscent of Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Strachey names a 'Gentleman', Henry Paine, as one of those plotting the 'piracy', and engaged in stealing various weapons and utensils in preparation. When Paine is ordered to take his turn as part of the doubled night watch, he refuses, uses 'euil' language, and strikes the captain. He scoffs at the increased guard ordered by the Governor. Upon this, Strachey tells his readers, 'the Watch telling him, if the Gouvernour should vnderstand of this his insolency, it might turne him to much blame, and happily be as much as his life were worth', Paine's

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<sup>170</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1744, l. 44-48.

<sup>171</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1744, l. 35-39.

<sup>172</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1744, l. 55, and p. 1745, l. 3.



defiant reply (which Strachey does not quote fully, as it would ‘offend the modest ear too much’) was that ‘*the Governour had no authoritie of that qualitie, to iustice vpon any one (how meane soeuer in the Colonie) an action of that nature, and therefore let the Governour (said he) kisse, &c.*’.<sup>173</sup> Hopkins, unlike previous plotters, was a gentleman and this appears to count against him when the offence is related to Gates. As Strachey comments parenthetically: ‘(the transgression so much the more exemplary and odious, as being in a dangerous time, in a Confederate, and the successe of the same wishtly listened after, with a doubtfull conceit, what might be the issue of so notorious a boldnesse and impudency)’.<sup>174</sup> Following a public hearing, Gates sentences Hopkins to immediate hanging. Hopkins requests that, as he holds the rank of gentleman, he be shot instead. This request is granted, as Strachey notes poetically: ‘he had his desire, the Sunne and his life setting together’.<sup>175</sup> Gates, it seems, would not allow a challenge to his authority from a member of the higher social orders.

The execution of Hopkins did not bring an end to the plot. The co-conspirators, living on a nearby island under the command of Sir George Summers, fearing their identities revealed, withdrew from work and ‘like Out-lawes betooke them to the wild Woods’.<sup>176</sup> From here they sent a petition to Gates, ‘subscribed with all their names and Seales’,<sup>177</sup> requesting not only that they be allowed to stay there, but also that Gates keep his promise to provide them with two suits of clothing each and meal for a year. Gates’s response is a letter to Summers (quoted at length by Strachey) which sets out that the promise was made when it was assumed that it would not be possible to construct vessels large enough to remove all of the company at once. Those who would

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<sup>173</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1745, l. 16-18.

<sup>174</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1745, l. 20-23.

<sup>175</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1745, l. 28.

<sup>176</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1745, l. 37.

<sup>177</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1745, l. 41-2.

be left behind until relief ships arrived would not, Gates vowed '*out of his Christian consideration*', be left there '*like sauages*', but would be given what provisions could be spared, at least enough for their survival for one year. This situation no longer obtained, as the pinnace and the barke were now built, and would transport the whole company at once. Gates requests that Summers advise his 'revolted company' of this if he can contact them. Gates makes it clear to Summers that the petition cannot be met, as the loss of so many of the king's subjects and loss to the Adventurers would reflect badly on their own reputations:

*what an imputation and infamy it might be, to both their owne proper reputations, and honours, hauing each of them authoritie in their places, to compell the aduersant and irregular multitude, at any time, to what should bee obedient and honest, which if they should not execute, the blame would not lye vpon the people (at all times wauering and insolent) but upon themselves so weake and vnworthy in their command.*<sup>178</sup>

He urges Summers to apprehend the mutineers 'by any secret practice'.<sup>179</sup> The letter indicates the Governor's view: that obedience and honesty are the priorities of behaviour to which the people should be compelled; compulsion is necessary as it is in the nature of people to be 'wavering and insolent'. He also makes it clear that the mutineers are not only bound to continue to Virginia out of obedience and honesty, but also that each one is committed to him by their debt to the Adventurers:

*and in the businesse for which they were sent out of England: for which likewise, at the expence and charge of the Aduenturers, they*

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<sup>178</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1746, l. 3 -7.

<sup>179</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1746, l. 7.

*were to him committed, and that the meanest in the whole Fleet stood the Company in no lesse then twentie pounds, for his owne personall Transportation, and things necessary to accompany him.*<sup>180</sup>

It would appear that the anxieties expressed in Hopkins's argument for avoiding Virginia may well have had their foundation in this form of indenture. The text makes clear that the imperative for Gates to maintain his authority over the company is not only a matter of reputation, but also of financial obligation: it is his responsibility to deliver the number of settlers the investors had financed to undertake the voyage. Summers' efforts proved successful, and all but two of the potential mutineers were recovered.

The marooned company of the *Sea Venture* found themselves in a very fortunate position: the island upon which they sought refuge provided an abundance of food and water; they knew where they were; wood was available to build ships to enable them to leave. Also, they had the necessary range of tradesmen and tools to make settlement sustainable. The company also included women and children, making it possible to envisage the formation and perpetuation of a new settlement. Perhaps as important as these practicalities, the prospective settlers had made up their minds already that they would be starting again somewhere new. The seamen too, according to Strachey, were keen to stay ashore. Why not, then, settle in Bermuda? It offered a far more comfortable standard of living than Virginia, and without indenture to the Virginia Company. Readers can conclude for themselves from Strachey's account that Bermuda provided a very attractive place to settle, particularly when they read, towards the end of the account, just how disastrous conditions were in Virginia. This cannot be denied, even though Strachey's text demonstrates clearly that, as a functionary of the Virginia

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<sup>180</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1746, l. 10-13.

Company, he is a partial witness. Strachey focuses closely on the arguments of the plotters, and their specific challenges to Gates's authority, and Gates's attempts to reassert his control. What Strachey does not admit in his account is any discussion of the type of settlement the mutineers planned for the future. While it may be too romantic to suppose that, given the Edenic setting of Bermuda, something similar to Gonzalo's commonwealth might have been envisaged, it is not so fanciful to see the aspirations of the 'common sort' in Bermuda as played out comically by Caliban, Stefano and Trinculo. This parallel has been drawn by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, who argue that these mutinies were 'more varied, complex, sustained, intelligent, and dangerous than Shakespeare allowed', but that he was perhaps prohibited from treating them more weightily by recently introduced laws banning the discussion of divinity, and thereby dissension, on stage.<sup>181</sup>

**'Dreames of Mountaines of gold, and happie Robberies'**<sup>182</sup>

The New World constituted a locus of desire both in its pseudo-Edenic plenitude and as a source of material riches. The potential to achieve wealth quickly was an alluring driving force for English settlement in Virginia, for settlers and their backers, and both *The Tempest* and Strachey's account make reference to this. Caliban recounts to Stefano and Trinculo his 'dream' in which the island itself seems to reveal the riches it contains, though these are tantalisingly untouchable:

The isle is full of noises,

Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.

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<sup>181</sup> Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (London: Verso, 2000), p. 29. Linebaugh and Rediker state that Shakespeare was himself an investor in the Virginia Company.

<sup>182</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1757, l. 16.

Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices  
That if I then had waked after long sleep  
Will make me sleep again; and then in dreaming  
The clouds methought would open and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked  
I cried to dream again. (III.ii.138-146)

The image of the island containing riches ready to rain down from the heavens may serve a dual purpose: as an appeal to Stefano's avarice, to reinforce his resolve to kill Prospero; and as an ironic comment for the audience, implying that the expectations of ready wealth held by prospective settlers in Virginia were unrealistic. That these settlers harboured such dreams, if not expectations, may be inferred from several points in Strachey's account. In his description of the flora and fauna of Bermuda, he states that there were spiders, and elaborates by including their symbolic significance: 'Spiders, which as many affirme are signes of great store of Gold'.<sup>183</sup> Also, when he describes the retreat of Paine's confederates into the woods, Strachey suggests one of their motives is greed and the hope of easy riches: 'whether meere rage, and greedinesse after some little Pearle (as it was thought) wherewith they conceiued, they should for euer inrich themselves, and saw how to obtaine the same easily in this place, or whether, the desire for euer to inhabite here'.<sup>184</sup> If the island itself did not provide the anticipated wealth, another option was piracy, and Strachey includes a specific instance in his account. Around thirty men were dispatched in the *Swallow* to trade with the Indians for corn for the colony. When they had a large quantity,

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<sup>183</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1739, l. 19.

<sup>184</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1745, l. 37-40.

*they stole away the ship, they made a league amongst themselves to be professed Pirates, with dreames of Mountaines of gold, and happie Robberies: thus at one instant, they wronged the hopes and subuerted the cares of the Colonie, who depending vpon their returne; fore-slowed to looke out for further prouision: they created the Indians our implacable enemies by some violence they had offered: they carried away the best ship (which should have beene a refuge in extremities) they weakened our forces, by subtraction of their armes and succours.*<sup>185</sup>

Strachey makes clear the immediate consequences of the piracy for the colonists, but he also alleges that when their piratical expectations were disappointed they returned to England, having mutually agreed, in their own mitigation, to denounce conditions in the colony: ‘*to agree all in one report to discredit the Land, to deplore the famine, and to protest that this their coming away, proceeded from desperate necessitte: These are they, that roared out the Tragical Historie of the man eating of his dead Wife in Virginia*’.<sup>186</sup> For these Virginia settlers, as for Caliban, riches remained an unattainable dream.

Piracy, and the driving desire to acquire treasure, are fundamental to the plot structure of *The Sea Voyage*, and provide the drama with a topicality and general New World location which *The Tempest* appears to lack. *The Sea Voyage* also explores types of social organisation, including pirate society, colonial settlement, and the all-women ‘commonwealth’. It also, much more clearly than *The Tempest*, uses the device of marooning to present a range of individual responses to the challenge it represents to

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<sup>185</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1757, l. 15-20.

<sup>186</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1757, l. 24-26. Strachey inserts Sir Thomas Gates’s account of the murder at this point.

survival, from the heroic to the base. The first generation of maroons on the island were once Portuguese settlers in more productive lands, forced out by raiding French pirates, a situation which, Parr states, would have been familiar to the contemporary audience.<sup>187</sup> Pursued by the pirates, the Portuguese colonists embark on a voyage 'to seek new fortunes in an unknown world' (V.iv.30). A tempest splits the small fleet, one ship carrying 'all the able men, / Our treasure and our jewels' and the other carrying the women (V.iv.31-33). The Portuguese men, the text appears to imply, were more protective of their treasure than their women. The text also presents the lust for treasure as cyclical and destructive: it is the initial reason for the Portuguese voyage (to escape the French pirates), and, once the Portuguese are marooned, it is the cause of internecine violence which leaves all but Sebastian and Nicusa dead (I.iii.175-186). Sebastian cautions Albert's company with this tale, but he is ignored, and the pirates exit the stage, fighting over the treasure, while Sebastian and his nephew create a second generation of maroons by taking their ship (I.iii.186-195).

Conditions on the island are extremely inhospitable. Sebastian describes it in terms which are the inverse of the usual Edenic plenitude: it is barren, with no useful animals or rivers, birds do not fly over it, and its only wildlife are 'serpents and ugly things, the shames of nature' (I.iii.133-147). Sebastian and Nicusa present pathetic figures, with Sebastian describing their diet of sea-root, with the occasional addition of a rat or toad, and Nicusa revealing that, although they know the adjacent island to be inhabited, they cannot find a way to cross the river which separates them: 'not able to achieve that hazard', they return to their 'old miseries' (I.iii.155). The river does not deter Albert, who swims across, even though injured. The audience may well have wondered how the two managed to survive for so many years. The image is conjured up

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<sup>187</sup> Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 21.

of the wraith-like uncle and nephew, their beards grown like 'horse-tails' (I.iii.97), sitting miserably on their heaps of treasure. To Sebastian the treasure hoards now 'seem hard, ragged quarries' (I.iii.162), reminiscent of Strachey's 'mountains of gold'. This treasure is of no use to them now, a trite enactment of the adage that wealth does not necessarily bring happiness.

Sebastian does attempt to use the treasure to purchase passage with the pirates; it has no other purpose for him. The revelation of the treasure leads the ship's company to 'mutiny' (I.iii.219), each fighting for his share of the booty. Here it is the pirate social structure which is parodied. Among pirates each would receive a set share of the prize, and while this system was not necessarily democratic, it ensured an agreed, equitable, distribution of profit. In the play, the scramble by all of the crew to obtain their shares resulted in the ship being left unmanned, with the ship's boat ashore, ready for Sebastian and Nicusa to take it. The Boatswain's disgust is palpable:

*Master.*           Where are the sailors that kept her?

*Boatswain.*                 Here, here in

    The mutiny, to take up money; and left

    No creature. Left the boat ashore too! This gold,

    This damned enticing gold! (I.iii.218-221)

It is the three 'gentlemen' prospective settlers, Morillat, Lamure and Franville, who appear to precipitate the situation by attempting to take what they consider to be their shares first, shares which, in their minds, they are owed in recompense for the losses they suffered during the tempest. The pirates are presented ambiguously in the text, with the fathers of Albert and Raymond conforming to Sebastian's characterisation as 'ye that plough the seas for wealth and pleasures, / That outrun day and night with your ambitions' (I.iii.160-161). Their lust for treasure is apparent in their pursuit at sea of the



Portuguese settlers, to 'ravish from 'em / The last remainder of their wealth' (V.ii.95-

6).<sup>188</sup> Not finding them provoked violence and enmity, as described by Raymond:

After a long pursuit, each doubting other  
As guilty of the Portugals' escape,  
They did begin to quarrel like ill men  
(Forgive me, piety, that I call 'em so).  
No longer love or correspondence holds  
Than it is cemented with prey or profit,  
Then did they turn those swords they oft had bloodied  
With innocent gore upon their wretched selves,  
And paid the forfeit of their cruelty  
Shown to Sebastian and his colony  
By being fatal enemies to each other. (V.ii.97-107)

By contrast, the sons are presented as accepting that they are to be punished for their fathers' crimes:

Though we have many faults to answer for  
Upon our own account, our fathers' crimes  
Are in us punished. O Albert, the course  
They took to leave us rich was not honest (V.ii.82-85)

Albert and Raymond speak the language of gentlemen, not pirates. This inversion is maintained throughout the play, with the pirates, Albert, Tibalt and the ship's Master,

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<sup>188</sup> This calls to mind Francis Fletcher's description of pirates plaguing the Portuguese of the Cape Verde islands.

provided with honourable motives and actions, in direct contrast with the base motives and actions of the gentlemen settlers Lamure, Franville and Morillat, and the surgeon.<sup>189</sup>

The play, then, contrasts pirate society with that of the gentlemen prospective settlers, and represents the pirates as far more honourable. While this may be a comic inversion, it gestures towards a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards piracy at the time: as Parr notes, the audience would have known ‘that by 1620 pirate ships had an important (and popular) function in supplying the Atlantic colonies with commodities, often undercutting the prices set by the official companies’.<sup>190</sup> Another indication of a mood of ambivalence may be the publication in 1628 of *The World Encompassed*, a record of Drake’s circumnavigation, which, as previously discussed, included details of his state-licensed privateering, and a call to ‘rally heroical spirits’ in his emulation.<sup>191</sup> The pirate has maintained his ambivalent status, as criminal and heroic, romantic figure, to the present day.<sup>192</sup> The gentlemen settlers are described by Parr as ‘modelled on the younger sons of minor gentry who hoped to find in the colonies the wealth and status denied them at home, and who proved in many cases to be maladjusted and work-shy’.<sup>193</sup> These seem to be the type of men who Strachey charges with the ‘misery and misgouernance’<sup>194</sup> they found when they finally arrived in Virginia, and which prompted the new Governor, Lord La Warre, to deliver ‘some few words vnto the Company, laying many blames vpon them for many vanities, and their Idlennesse, earnestly wishing, that he might no more finde it so, least he should be compelled to draw the sword of Iustice, to cut off such delinquents’.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> For example, II.i.26-30, where Aminta describes the honourable treatment she has received from Albert, although it follows a violent abduction.

<sup>190</sup> Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 21-22.

<sup>191</sup> See Chapter Two.

<sup>192</sup> See Chapter Two for further discussion of the romanticisation of the figure of the pirate.

<sup>193</sup> Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 21.

<sup>194</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1749, l. 2.

<sup>195</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1754, l. 21-23.

The plotting which maroons the pirates and gentlemen on such an inhospitable island provides scope for comical presentation of the gentlemen's abject baseness. Their reaction to the challenge of survival is both hilarious and sobering, as they are depicted so quickly abandoning social proprieties. The gentlemen talk of nothing but their hunger: 'My belly's grown together like an empty satchel' (II.i.13-14) moans Morillat. They have searched the island and found only 'some mud' to eat. They lament the profligacy of their former lives, where they scorned mutton and threw out the dregs from their glasses, which now they would lick up. The entrance of the Surgeon provides new scope for their fantasies of food, and, in a spiral of increasing grossness, they enquire whether the surgeon has 'an old suppository' or its paper wrapper, the cover from a glister-pipe (a tube for inserting enemas or suppositories), bandages or poultices (whether used or not), finally asking, 'Where's the great wen thou cutt'st from Hugh the sailor's shoulder? That would serve now for a most princely banquet' (III.i.47-49). The Surgeon suggests eating their shoes. At this moment the beautiful Aminta enters, bemoaning her own hunger and nearness to death. As she sleeps the gentlemen firstly blame her for their current situation 'This thing hath been our overthrow, and all these biting mischiefs that fall on us are come through her means' (III.i.80-2), and then decide to kill and eat her, dividing her up, 'every man his share' (III.i.112). Aminta wakes, and is told what's planned for her. She asks whether they are Christians, and chides them for their impiety. She is saved as Tibalt, the Master and sailors, arrive in response to her cries for help. This is shortly followed by Albert's return from the adjacent island with food and drink.

While the descriptions of what the castaways were reduced to eating appear gross, they are not without precedent, as several contemporary accounts of marooning

and famine at sea illustrate.<sup>196</sup> For example, Jean de Léry recounts in some detail in his *Histoire* the lengths to which he and his shipmates were driven to survive the last leg of their voyage home. After all normal foodstuffs were exhausted, they ate all the monkeys and parrots they had, they cut up their leather shields, boiled or roasted them, ate lantern horns, tallow candles, and all the leather on the ship, including the covers of their trunks. When all these were gone, they caught the ship's rats and mice. Léry recounts a particular example, 'to show that nothing was wasted':

One day our master's mate had prepared a big rat for cooking, and had cut off its four white feet, which he threw on the deck; a certain fellow instantly swooped them up, put them to grill over the coals, and, as he ate them, said that he had never tasted partridge wings more savory.<sup>197</sup>

Léry compares this famine with the siege of Sancerre during 1573, which he also endured, concluding that the famine at sea was worse, because there was so little water. In the end, they gnawed on the brazilwood from their cargo, a wood which he notes had 'less moisture than any other'.<sup>198</sup>

Léry admits that he experienced the ferocity of feeling 'mad with hunger', that towards the end of the voyage they could barely speak to one another without getting angry, and although the 'fear of God' restrained them from it, they could not help 'glancing at each other sideways, harboring evil thoughts regarding that barbarous act'.<sup>199</sup> The barbarous act, of course, was cannibalism. Léry quotes the word of God on

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<sup>196</sup> Examples of maroons surviving in extremely inhospitable circumstances include Pedro de Serrano in the Pacific (1540), Peter Carder in Brazil (he was lost from Drake's circumnavigation, in 1577-8), and the 'Poor Englishman' marooned off the coast of Scotland (1615). For anecdotal accounts of these maroons see Edward Leslie, *Desperate Journeys, Abandoned Souls: True Stories of Castaways and Other Survivors* (London: Macmillan, 1988). Parr cites an account of two Portuguese survivors of a shipwreck on the 'Illand of Rats' off Bazil, who lived on 'Rattes, Birdes, and other beastes' in André Thevet's *The New Found Worlde* (1568). Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 23.

<sup>197</sup> Léry, *Histoire*, p. 211.

<sup>198</sup> Léry, *Histoire*, p. 212. Léry also wrote an account of the siege and famine in Sancerre: *Histoire Méorable de la Ville de Sancerre*, published in 1574.

<sup>199</sup> Léry, *Histoire*, p. 213.

the subject, who, in the Book of Deuteronomy says that in the extremity of famine even the most gentle and benign man will 'become so denatured that he will look with an evil eye upon his neighbor, even his wife and his children, and desire to eat them'.<sup>200</sup> In his history of the siege of Sancerre he 'recounted the examples of the father and mother who ate their own child, and of some soldiers who tasted the flesh of human bodies that had been killed in war, and who have confessed since that if the affliction had continued, they would have hurled themselves upon the living'.<sup>201</sup>

While *The Sea Voyage* does not draw directly from this account, the situation would have been one that the audience could have read about. Also, there is a more topical reference in the plight of the Virginia settlers during what became known as 'the starving time'. Over the winter of 1609-10 the population fell from about five hundred to about sixty due to starvation and disease, and, by June 1610, Jamestown was on the point of being abandoned. The arrival of Strachey's party, followed by the new governor, Lord de la Warr, with a supply fleet, saved the remnants of the colony.<sup>202</sup> As Lamure recounts some examples of cannibalism from the 'thousand' he and Morillat have read of, such as 'excellent women that have eat their children, men their slaves; nay their brother', he stresses, 'But these are nothing' continuing with 'Husbands devoured their wives (they are their chattels)' (III.i.93-98). This may be an allusion to the recent stories put about by the returning 'failed pirates' as Strachey described them, who he accused of being '*they, that roared out the Tragical Historie of the man eating of his dead Wife in Virginia*'.<sup>203</sup> The comedy, and the horror, of the gentlemen's resort to cannibalism is that they reach the point so swiftly.

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<sup>200</sup> Léry, *Histoire*, p. 212.

<sup>201</sup> Léry, *Histoire*, p. 212-3.

<sup>202</sup> Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, p. 115.

<sup>203</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1757, l. 24-26.

### **The Amazon commonwealth: ‘a paradise inhabited with angels’ (III.i.183)**

‘A paradise inhabited with angels’ is how Albert describes the island he has just returned from. ‘Are they all women?’ queries Aminta. ‘All, and all in love with us’ is Albert’s response (III.i.183-190). Here Aminta is introduced to an idea with which the audience is already familiar: the Portuguese women’s Amazon-modelled commonwealth, and the tensions inherent within it. The details of how this society of women came into existence are not fully revealed until the final scene of the play, where Rosellia recounts their Portuguese origins and shipwreck on this ‘pleasant island’ (V.iv.35).<sup>204</sup> The sailors dead, and their husbands apparently lost, the women ‘took a solemn oath never to admit / The cursed society of men’ and learned to survive on their own:

#### Necessity

Taught us those arts not usual to our sex;  
And the fertile earth yielding abundance to us  
We did resolve, thus shaped like Amazons,  
To end our lives. (V.iv.41-44)

The separation of the Portuguese men from the women in the storm and ensuing shipwrecks sets up dramatic possibilities for comparisons and inversions. The men, apparently more concerned with their treasure than their women, are cast up on a barren island, and, with Sebastian unable to assert his authority, social order disintegrated, and they died fighting over the treasure (I.iii.175-186). This left only two survivors, Sebastian and Nicusa, to suffer the consequences of the lack of order. The women, by

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<sup>204</sup> Joseph Hall’s *Mundus Alter et Idem* (1604; translated by John Healey as *The Discovery of a New World* in 1609), is discussed by Gordon McMullan as a source for *The Sea Voyage* particularly the second book ‘The Description of *Shee-landt, or Woman-decoia*’, which presents ‘a dystopian adaptation of classical accounts of the Amazons’. The *Sea Voyage*, McMullen notes, ‘draws on Hall’s Amazonia for the commonwealth of women’, its ‘central interest’ (McMullen, *Politics of Unease*, p. 238-9).

contrast, are furnished with a pleasant, fertile island, and, rather than social order breaking down, a new order is imposed by a strong leader: Rosellia. Shaken by the loss of her husband, and convinced of the 'falsehood and the perjuries of men' (II.ii.187) by the actions of the French pirates (V.iv.39), she leads the women in 'execrable oaths never to look / On man but as a monster' (II.ii.201-2). The women cultivate the island and learn to hunt. Thus, through their own agency, they live pleasantly, in contrast to the miserable existence of Sebastian and Nicusa. The women's society is presented as pastoral, self-sufficient, requiring no trade or money; it is thus very different from the actuality of colonial settlement.<sup>205</sup>

The Amazon model which the women adopt originated in classical literature. Amazons were described as one of the Plinian races: 'warlike women who live without men and sear off the right breast in order to draw the bow more powerfully'.<sup>206</sup> Later Sir John Mandeville saw them as women who 'live by themselves with no man among them'.<sup>207</sup> Pigafetta also mentions an island of women 'who become pregnant with the wind'.<sup>208</sup> The New World location is set by Columbus though, who describes in his letter the island of Matinino on which there are no men, only women who 'engage in no feminine occupation, but use bows and arrows of cane' and have intercourse with the men of the island of Carib, the fierce cannibals of the Caribbean.<sup>209</sup> The model, then, provides both an easily recognisable female-only society and a New World location. Rosellia appears to indicate that the original Amazons either were still on the island, or had been there, when they arrived:

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<sup>205</sup> Parr notes that European colonists 'rather than enjoying Edenic peace and simplicity [...] were part of a scramble for new-found land that usually involved great hardship and insecurity' (Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 25). A situation demonstrated in Strachey's account, as the plenitude of Bermuda is followed by the dreadful conditions of Virginia.

<sup>206</sup> Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, p. 9.

<sup>207</sup> Mandeville, *Travels*, p. 111.

<sup>208</sup> Pigafetta, *Magellan's Voyage*, p. 151.

<sup>209</sup> Columbus, 'Letter', *Journal*, p. 200.

Did fortune guide –

Or rather destiny – our bark, to which

We could appoint no port, to this blest place,

Inhabited heretofore by warlike women,

That kept men in subjection? Did we then,

By their example, after we had lost

All we could love in man, here plant ourselves

With execrable oaths never to look

On man but as a monster? (II.ii.194-202)

On the absence of the original Amazons, Parr suggests that the many claims by sixteenth-century explorers to have discovered them in ‘remote corners of the world’ led to their ‘fame as a vigorous colonising power [beginning] to look more like a reputation for nomadism’.<sup>210</sup> He argues that, in *The Sea Voyage*, Rosellia’s resort to the Amazonian model of breeding, as a response to their lack of ‘proper means’ to secure their continuity, draws a parallel between the Amazon situation and the early Virginia settlements, where women had to be shipped out in 1620-2 as ‘maids for wives’ to encourage the men to become more settled.<sup>211</sup> It also, I would suggest, illuminates the severity of the challenge to the authority of the Virginia Company which the proposed mutinous settlement of the Bermudas offered. There they had all means necessary for settlement, survival, and perpetuation.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 27.

<sup>211</sup> Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 26-7.

<sup>212</sup> An Amazon society may also have recalled, to a later audience, some of the anxieties attendant on the question of the succession of Elizabeth I. Following his discussion of the representation of Amazons in Sir Walter Raleigh’s *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Beautifull Empire of Guiana* (1596), Louis Montrose provides an observation which may, perhaps, point to continuing interest for the contemporary audience of the *The Sea Voyage*: ‘the centrality that had been given to such matters of state [the succession] from the very inception of Elizabeth’s reign predisposed Englishmen to take a keen interest in the ways in which other actual or imagined societies might structure the processes of political succession and social reproduction’ (Louis Montrose, ‘The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery’, in *Representations*, Special Issue: The New World (1991), 1-41, p. 27).



The *Sea Voyage* is a comedy though, and the need to perpetuate the colony appears secondary to the frustrated sexual appetites of the three women, Crocale, Juletta and Hippolita, which are demonstrated to comic effect. Crocale's view of their situation as one of subjection to tyrannical rule is clearly expressed:

The strictness of our governess that forbids us  
On pain of death the sight and use of men  
Is more than tyranny! (II.ii.21-3)

The sexual fantasy which she then relates (II.ii.46-68), immediately preceding the arrival of Albert, sets the scene for a challenge to Rosellia's authority. In response to Rosellia's argument that they should not easily give up their sovereignty and liberty (II.ii.184-203), Clarinda puts the measured case that they must give up the 'obstinate abstinence' Rosellia forces upon them, otherwise the 'world would be peopled / Only with beasts' (II.ii.204-208). Hippolita and Crocale are far more direct:

*Hippolita.*                                We must and will have men!

*Crocale.*                                Ay, or we'll shake off all obedience. (II.ii.209-  
210)

Faced with the prospect of revolt, Rosellia resorts again to the Amazon model, allowing the women to chose a husband each, to 'enjoy his company / a month' (II.ii.237-8), and if they 'prove fruitful' the female children will be kept, the males returned to the men. The sexual unions are deferred, though. Rosellia, unimpressed by the men, the 'jewels you run mad for' as she describes them (III.i.217), is enraged when she and the other women are presented with their own jewels. Again, the treasure functions to disrupt order and produce deferment of the fulfilment of desire. More fun is extracted at the ladies' expense, as, in another inversion, the sexual advances of Juletta and Crocale to

Tibalt and the ship's Master are rebuffed (IV.iii.1-72). The 'angels', as Albert described them, are more sexually predatory than hardened sailors.



Figure 20 Aztec human sacrifice

While following the Amazon example may imply that the women have 'gone native', they do not appear as savage, at least, not until the final scene of the drama. Here the play draws directly on New World accounts and imagery to present a scene of human sacrifice. The image of Aztec human sacrifice engraved by Theodor de Bry and published in *America*, Part III (1592) would be well known, and, as Parr points out, its staging would 'create an exotic version of the revenge charade that closes so many Jacobean tragedies'.<sup>213</sup> As with the proposed cannibalisation of Aminta, so the sacrifices are avoided by the timely intervention of other characters. On this occasion it is Juletta, who, by bringing in Sebastian and Nicusa, precipitates the reunions, pairings and resolution which swiftly ends the play.

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<sup>213</sup> Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 28.

## Virginia

When Strachey's company finally arrive in Virginia they are confronted by demoralised and starving settlers, in open conflict with the local Algonkian Indians. Faced with 'finding all things so contrary to our expectations, so full of misery and misgovernment'<sup>214</sup> Strachey again credits Gates with imposing order quickly and efficiently. To replace the previous 'misery and misgovernment', Gates published 'Orders' setting out 'Articles for Pietie, Loyaltie and Politie conuenient to the Colonie'; with injunctions for strict adherence to them.<sup>215</sup> Order is enacted publicly in the pageant of Sunday observance:

Every Sunday, when the Lord Gouvernour, and Captaine Generall goeth to Church, hee is accompanied with all the Counsailers, Captaines, other Officers, and all the Gentlemen, and with a Guard of Holberdiers, in his Lordships Livery, faire red cloakes, to the number of fifty both on each side, and behinde him: and being in the Church, his Lordship hath his seate in the Quier, in a greene Veluet Chaire, with a Cloath, with a Veluet Cushion spread on a Table before him, on which he kneeleth, and on each side sit the Counsell, Captaines, and Officers, each in their place, and when he returneth home againe, he is waited on to his house in the same manner.<sup>216</sup>

Order and ceremony are also observed in the exchanging and reading of commissions which takes place when the new Governor, Lord La Warre arrives to take command.<sup>217</sup>

As already quoted, the Lord La Warre reinforces the ceremony with a speech which threatens delinquents who fail to comply with the 'sword of justice'.

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<sup>214</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1749, l. 1-2.

<sup>215</sup> Strachey, *Purchas*, p. 1749.

<sup>216</sup> Strachey, p. 1753, l. 11-18.

<sup>217</sup> Strachey, p. 1754.

While Strachey provides this evidence of the restoration of order in the colony, he cannot disguise the bad relations between the Algonkians and the settlers. The two societies live completely separately, with the Indians killing the settlers at every opportunity. La Warre sends an embassy to Powhatan to discuss terms for peace, but Powhatan's uncompromising response is for the settlers to either leave the country or stay within Jamestown: otherwise they will be killed. He further demands that if they wish to speak to him again, they should bring him a coach and three horses, as he has been told, by Indians who have visited England, that 'such was the state of great *Werowances*, and Lords in *England*, to ride and visit other great men'.<sup>218</sup> These reported words provide another example of cultural scripting as a two-way process.

## Conclusion

While Strachey's text attempts to convince readers that order is restored and will be maintained in Virginia, it does not altogether succeed. Strachey leaves the colony at a point where relations with the natives appear to be worsening, with captives taken in an attempt to deter Powhatan. As Strachey admits, 'What this will worke with him, wee know not as yet, for this was but the day before our ships were now sailing [...] for *England*'.<sup>219</sup> While there is cultural interaction between the settlers and the native population, it takes the form of apartheid and aggression.

This limited and negative interaction between Europeans and New World native peoples is not represented in the dramas discussed. There is no cultural interaction in these plays, as no New World inhabitants are depicted. The plays' settings are non-

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<sup>218</sup> Strachey, p. 1756, l. 10-11.

<sup>219</sup> Strachey, p. 1756, l. 32-3.

specific, and while both look towards the New World, in their different ways, it is very much the limited English experience which they address, even though the *Sea Voyage* has nominally French and Portuguese protagonists.<sup>220</sup> *The Tempest* appears to look backwards, to medieval travel and interests (wonder and marvel), and suggest that these have to be left behind, while at the same time looking forward to the New World to suggest that it constitutes a very uncertain future. What should be the main focus of attention, it seems to imply, is good governance in the here and now (of Italy, as substitute for England), as that may be problematic enough.

*The Sea Voyage* puts forward alternative social structures: pirates, Amazons, colonisation, but all are presented as comical distortions, and each proves problematic or unworkable. The underlying driver of colonial expansion, symbolised in the drama by treasure, is presented as that which may be possessed, but only delivering an empty illusion of what it is supposed to provide. Sebastian possesses it but cannot use it; the pirates acquire it, but cannot keep it; the women they give it to, recognise it as their own, and also recognise how empty of value it is in comparison with the loss of their men. Strachey's account of Virginia ends with the imposition of order by Lord La Warre, custom and pageantry are reintroduced; the misrule is replaced by proper governance. In this analysis, all three narratives are comedies: in the end order is restored.

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<sup>220</sup> My intention here is to foreground questions of English social constructions in the texts discussed. Another possible reading of *The Sea Voyage* could focus on the constructions in the drama of Portuguese and French identities, their interaction with an emerging English colonial identity and possible references to Drake, as, for example, in Shankar Raman's reading of Fletcher's *The Island Princess* (Shankar Raman, 'Imaginary Islands: Staging the East', in *Renaissance Drama*, 26 (1995), 131-161).

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion

I have proposed that the New World constituted an example of the process by which the real becomes incorporated within cultural reality. Attested to by Lacan as that which ‘does not depend on my idea of it’, the real is a terrain of unmapped alterity which exists outside the symbolic order and has no cultural script.<sup>1</sup> The point of first encounter with the New World could be termed an irruption of the real into European cultural reality. Like the realm of death, another instance of the real, this New World could have contained anything. Unlike death (as far as we know at present), the New World offered travellers the possibility of return and revelation. Once experienced, the actuality of the New World had to be articulated. The early explorers charted seas and landmasses and, in addition, their narratives brought the New World into existence for Europe. Emerging from these inaugural texts was a ‘world of things’ whose ‘separate entities, objects, colours, sounds’ were thrown into relief by language: reality was constructed.<sup>2</sup> The encounter with this previously unsuspected continent and peoples constituted a unique moment in the cultural history of the Old World, when one culture could, on a massive scale, construct another from its own cultural materials, with little counter-cultural opposition. This is not to say there were not battles at local levels; there were, but there was no commensurable written culture, no histories or literature, with which the New World could oppose and resist its varied cultures’ appropriation by the European other.

I suggested at the beginning of this work that the early New World explorers had much in common with Adam naming the animals in Eden, and that the process was analogous to that of language acquisition in general. When we learn the names of

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Belsey, *Culture and the Real: Theorizing Cultural Criticism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p. xii.

<sup>2</sup> Belsey, *Culture and the Real*, p. xii.

things, we recognise them as constituting our reality, as they stand out from the otherwise undifferentiated mass of the real. In learning language we enter into the symbolic order, learning the associated meanings and values of our particular culture at a specific time. However, the early explorers differed from Adam, or children, in that they arrived in the New World with their European cultural scripts already in place. What they saw, and then described, was necessarily interpreted in relation to what they already knew; in this sense, the degree of newness they could find in the New World was limited.

Our language delimits what we can know, and we can never know what these voyagers were blind to; that, perhaps even today, escapes into the real. The cultural knowledge these explorers brought to bear on the infinite possibility of the unknown was generally, perhaps disappointingly, prosaic. Each of the travel narratives discussed here purports to convey the 'truth' of an experience of the New World. These offer, like television documentaries today, only the 'fantasm of taking possession of reality', as they can only ever provide a simulacrum, the representation of lived experience, to the viewer or reader.<sup>3</sup> The illusion of mastery provided by such texts did produce material consequences, as subsequent colonial history demonstrates. As I hope I have illustrated, each of the travel narratives discussed here was driven by its own particular motivations, which affected the 'truths' constructed, whether their concerns were economic, personal advancement, national interest, or audience expectations.

Columbus's first voyage, to search for gold in the East Indies, in effect constructed the New World as a locus of European material desire even before it was recognised as a new continent. His general expectations, informed by earlier travel tales, prompted him to look for monsters, which he did not find. Perhaps unexpectedly,

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<sup>3</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, 'Answer to the Question: What is the Postmodern?', *The Postmodern Explained to Children: Correspondence 1982-1985* (London: Turnaround, 1992), pp. 9-25, p. 25.

though, he found that the actuality of the New World accorded with another text, the Bible, and his narrative articulates his experience in its familiar terms. Consequently, the New World becomes Eden, and, in addition to its material desirability, it is created as a locus of unrequitable spiritual desire (perpetuated in subsequent works, such as John Layfield's account of Puerto Rico). From the dual foundation of material and spiritual desire laid down by Columbus, the real of the New World was variously converted into reality in the texts of later explorers.

The correspondence between the New World and Eden was, however, paradoxical and contradictory, as appears in the accounts of Columbus, Vespucci, Pigafetta and subsequent writers: the innocent naked people were innumerable, unlike the singular couple Adam and Eve; they were also, paradoxically, godless. Their nakedness was variously innocent or bestial; their sexuality continent or concupiscent; their societies familial or abhorrently cannibalistic; they were helpful, or plotting the Europeans' destruction. The land itself was occasionally barren, more usually, overflowing with produce, the result of organised native agriculture, or no native labour at all; the fruits could be exquisite, or they might poison you; the animals were beautiful and bountiful, but the forests harboured terrifying beasts; there were gold, pearls and other precious materials in abundance, but repeatedly, riches were elusive, tantalisingly elsewhere. These first-hand narratives did not, then, present a coherent picture, despite their many similarities in representational practice. Often their reports focused on the pragmatic: Pigafetta's concern with matters of trade; Drake's constructions of Englishness against a backdrop of Spanish colonial practice; Lane's self-justification; Hariot's project of domesticating Virginia for settlement; the struggle over how and where to settle evident in Strachey's account. Yet there was also wonderment, for example, in Columbus's letter and *Journal*; throughout Léry's evocative account of



Brazil; and in Layfield's reinscriptions of paradise. This diversity of representation appears to have been accommodated within European culture, and, in a pictorial analogy, the New World and Eden merge in Brueghel's *Garden of Eden* of 1600 with which we began. Here, animals of the Americas, absent from the 'Creation' of the *Holkham Bible Picture Book*, appear as constituent members of the profusion of paradise.

I proposed that for the writers of the fictions discussed here, the New World constituted a space for textual experimentation, the working out of possibilities for European culture and society, with the actuality of the New World in all its difference, materiality and violence deferred by the European signifier, held at a safe distance by cultural play. While *Utopia* and *The Sea Voyage* both allude to the New World, it is *The Tempest* which echoes specifically some of the issues introduced at the beginning of this study. Medieval travellers' tales combine with contemporary accounts of exploration in *The Tempest*, as they did in the narratives of Columbus and Pigafetta. Prospero privileges books as primary sources of knowledge and power over lived experience, then, finally, relinquishes them. The movement is similar to the overthrow of the authority of the ancient written authorities and the assertion of the primacy of personal observation evident in Vespucci's letters. The play also problematises the authority of contemporary accounts, staging the type of disputation of authorial credibility which Harriot sets out to quash in the introduction to his *Briefe and True* account.

In placing, as I have argued, medieval and contemporary travel accounts side by side on the stage, *The Tempest* calls both into question: how far can either be discounted or believed? This undecidability recalls Léry's admission that his experiences in the New World forced him to rethink his previous dismissal of Pliny and others, as he has 'seen things as fantastic and prodigious as any of these – once thought incredible – that

they mention'.<sup>4</sup> The reinscriptions of monstrous races in the accounts of Columbus and Pigafetta would initially seem easy to discount; while the persistence of giants in the texts of Vespucci, Pigafetta and Fletcher appear more resistant to dismissal. Yet, there is evidence for a type of the Cynocephale. From as early as 1638 there are records of people with a rare genetic condition, *hypertrichosis lanuginosa*, who have excessive hair growth over the whole body, including the face.<sup>5</sup> Three generations of one family from Burma, all suffering from the condition, were exhibited in London and Paris in 1886.<sup>6</sup> The spirits of the Desert of Lop, a source for the spirit Ariel, have, in part, a scientific explanation: the phenomenon of 'singing dunes' is caused by dunes emitting loud sounds as they avalanche.<sup>7</sup> The discovery of the fossilised remains of what may prove to be a new human species, the three-foot high *Homo Floresiensis*, on the Indonesian island of Flores, may, in the future, provide scientific evidence to support the existence of one of Pliny's short monstrous races.<sup>8</sup> Strachey, referring to stories about the Bermudas, appears to concur with Léry as he states: 'Thus shall we make it appear, *That Truth is the daughter of Time*, and that men ought not to deny every thing which is not subject to their owne sense'.<sup>9</sup> He was, it now seems, somewhat prescient.

Why does it matter now how the part of the real which became the New World was incorporated into the reality of Europe? One reason, I suggest, is because of the assumption of superiority on the part of the writers, apparent in all the first-hand accounts I have discussed, over those whom they wrote about (even including Léry). In

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<sup>4</sup> Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, trans. by Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. lx-lxi; qtd. in my Chapter Three, p. 164.

<sup>5</sup> Abby Van Voorhees, 'Congenital Hypertrichosis Lanuginosa', June 21, 2005, <http://www.emedicine.com>, accessed 29 11 05.

<sup>6</sup> John Ezard, 'Mutant Study Wins Guardian Book Prize', *Guardian*, 2 December 2004.

<sup>7</sup> B Andreotti, 'The Song of Dunes as a Wave-Particle Mode Locking', *Physical Review Letters*, 93 (2004), 238001-4.

<sup>8</sup> Robin McKie, 'Strange World of Island Species', *Observer*, 31 October 2004, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> William Strachey, 'A true reportory of the wracke, and redemption of Sir Thomas Gates Knight; upon, and from the Ilands of the Bermudas: his coming to Virginia, and the estate of that Colonie then, and after, under the government of the Lord La Warre, July 15, 1610. written by William Strachy, Esquire', *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, ed. by Samuel Purchas (William Stansby: London, 1625), pp. 1734-1762, p.1738.

part, this may be ascribed to the general religious episteme, and technological superiority. I would suggest, however, that this apparent superiority is also an effect of language and culture at work in the production of these texts. Meaning arises from the marking of difference, and, while difference is not of itself positive or negative, the cultural values associated with those meanings are. To define the other is always to identify how it differs from oneself, a process in which the unknown is compared against the familiar and valued, and, as is evident in these texts, the known, familiar term is generally privileged over the unfamiliar. The material consequence of not having their differences valued by the European, for the indigenous natives of the Caribbean, was annihilation. In today's world, assumptions of superiority of various cultures over others are readily apparent, and continue to materially affect peoples' lives. On a more speculative level, if, at some point in the future, we encountered another inhabited planet, a second massive irruption of the real, is there any possibility that the operation of language and weight of cultural expectation could be evaded, and its inhabitants comprehended on equal terms? Or, if we were to be discovered, how might the language and culture of that world render us intelligible?

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