

# **Adventurers and Authors**

**An Examination of Samuel de Champlain's and Capt. John Smith's Writings  
about the Aboriginal Peoples of North America**

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# Abstract

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This thesis compares the perceptions and observations of the aboriginal people of North America in the writings of Captain John Smith and Samuel de Champlain. Such a study helps to clarify the murky subject of European-North American contact by contrasting the experiences and writings of these two men. At its core it shows that Smith and Champlain occupied an intermediate space between the worlds of Europe and America, on which they could build a foundation for the European outposts of Jamestown and Port Royal. However, not only did they occupy this space physically, but this thesis also demonstrates that they sought to occupy this space rhetorically as well.

In order to show this, the subject has been approached with “absolute simultaneity,” meaning that both the North American and European contexts have been taken into consideration. This approach helps to offset the polemics that some scholars have used in this field by either seeing these men as ‘national heroes’ or couching their discussion in moralistic language. At the most fundamental level in this thesis all parties have been treated as fully human – having been influenced and influencing, having made rational and irrational choices, and defying simplistic categorization.

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## Introduction: The Ebb and Flow of History

### The Historiography of the Contact Period

Gone are the days when historians can study ‘national heroes.’ In the last half century the historical profession has revolutionized its subject matter. No longer are politics a focus for many students of history; ‘important’ individuals have fallen by the way to recognize those people who worked behind the scenes; text has become only one of a plethora of sources. This watershed brought new types of history to the fore: social history, cultural history, cliometrics, ethnohistory, and many other blends based on subject and method. In creating new paths for historians, the flow of historiography has cut off certain topics, such as national heroes and founding fathers, from being significant areas of study.

Many of the above branches of history have thrived specifically because they have become concerned with the condition of their historical actors; their examinations have helped our society to change and become more open. Essentially this recent shift in the historiography has gone hand in hand with the Western social and political climate, and a greater dialogue in the equality of all human beings. Groups traditionally under-represented in society and in the history books have begun to gain greater agency partially because they are now being included in our history, just as they were a part of our past.

With the advent of these new streams of historical discipline an historical oxbow lake has been created. Historians have changed the way that we understand our subject, but many have done so by focusing on areas that were ignored prior to this watershed, and not re-evaluating older subjects. The days of studying ‘national heroes’ and other topics left behind by the historiographical revolution must return. Even if we feel these topics unimportant, the weight given by historians of the past warrants their study in the future. They need to be revisited with greater depth and discussion of methodology. Essentially

that is the goal of this thesis: to examine Samuel de Champlain's and Captain John Smith's writings about the aboriginal people, giving fair balance to all of the major players and the environments in which they lived.

There are many new strategies for studying history since much of the secondary material about Smith and Champlain was published. Some historians seek to "look at cultures in contact with each other in terms of absolute simultaneity,"<sup>1</sup> others call for a complete re-evaluation of how we approach the subject of European-North American contact, and others for a re-evaluation of who can approach European and North American history.<sup>2</sup> In writing this thesis the concept of "absolute simultaneity" has been used in order to retain a balanced view of both the North American and European worlds. To do this, historians need to step out of their own framework and enter into an understanding of the period. This is important because, even with the changes in the historiography, historians have still had trouble removing their modern stereotypes. For example, Karen Kupperman has accused recent historians of having "eliminated the 19<sup>th</sup> century view of the native, but... [having] largely retained the 19<sup>th</sup> century view of the colonist."<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Daniel Richter has emphasized the need for this type of understanding:

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<sup>1</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, "Polarities, Hybridities: What Strategies for Decentring?" in Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny, (eds.) *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective 1500-1700*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 30.

<sup>2</sup> This summary is taken from a conference in 1996 called *Decentring the Renaissance*. The purpose was to look at Canada during the Renaissance period while maintaining a balanced view of the contact between European and Aboriginal. The first section of the conference proceedings provides a diverse overview of methodological issues. In that section Natalie Zemon Davis, Deborah Doxtator, Toby Morantz, and Gilles Thérien have discussed various approaches to this period. It is the work of the first three scholars [their approaches are listed respectively above] that applies most directly to developing an approach to the relationship Samuel de Champlain and John Smith each had with the aboriginal people. Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny, (eds.) *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective 1500-1700*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001)

<sup>3</sup> Karen O. Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640*, (Totowa, N.J., 1980), 114.

Yet outside the ethnohistorical sect the *re-visioning* has barely begun; the hoary 'master narrative' of American history seems distressingly tenacious. Much scholarship remains trapped in what Vine Deloria, Jr., calls "the 'cameo' theory of history," which "takes a basic 'manifest destiny' white interpretation... and lovingly plugs a few feathers, woolly heads, and sombreros into the famous events" without really changing the story line.<sup>4</sup>

These historians have made the accusation clear. If change is going to occur, as many feel it must, then the historian needs to see this period as one in which two distinct but equally valued societies interacted. At its most fundamental level this approach calls for historians to see each subject's humanity.

This opens the history of ethnic relations to more unique approaches, and requires some re-evaluation. Deborah Doxtator elaborated on the need for re-evaluation of how contact and colonial relationships are studied. She wrote, "Rather than trying to fit Native information into Euro-based structures of history, perhaps the interrelationships between Native and European histories need to be more closely examined."<sup>5</sup> Instead of simply attempting to treat all peoples as equals, this calls for an entire reassessment of how the subject is examined. Not only should the scholar attempt to "look at cultures in contact with each other in terms of absolute simultaneity,"<sup>6</sup> but historians should also be evaluating the framework on which absolutely simultaneous history is to be hung. The results may yield another radical departure for history, or a return to the status quo. In either case such a thought exercise would make historians much more aware of the people with whom they have chosen to involve themselves.

Although this thesis focuses on the writings of two Europeans, the historiography of aboriginal communities must also be explored in order to provide an equal understanding of

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel K. Richter, "Whose Indian History?" *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol. 50 (1993), 381. – italics and ellipses in this quotation are Richter's.

<sup>5</sup> Deborah Doxtator, "Inclusive and Exclusive Perceptions of Difference: Native and Euro-Based Concepts of Time, History, and Change," *Decentering the Renaissance*, 46.

<sup>6</sup> Davis, 30.

the people whom these two men encountered and wrote about. Neil Salisbury has provided a window into aboriginal society before the influx of Europeans. Using archaeological methods, Salisbury demonstrated that there were complex trading patterns in pre-contact North America. He noted, "Highly valued materials such as Great Lakes copper, Rocky Mountain obsidian, and marine shells from the Gulf and Atlantic coasts have been found in substantial quantities at sites hundreds and even thousands of miles from their points of origin."<sup>7</sup> Of even greater importance was that Salisbury demonstrated the growth of large and dynamic North American civilizations. These "Mississippian societies" consisted of "fortified political and ceremonial centers and outlying villages."<sup>8</sup> They began to decline because of agricultural failure and increased warfare. This led Salisbury to conclude, "When Europeans reached North America, then, the continent's demographic and political map was in a state of profound flux."<sup>9</sup> In this light the coming of the Europeans takes on less importance than some of the more internal changes that were also happening.

In terms of trade, Salisbury understood the Europeans to have fit into a pre-existing trade network. From this point Salisbury concluded that "Indians as much as Europeans dictated the form and content of their early exchanges and alliances."<sup>10</sup> Gordon Sayre has taken this even further by claiming that "Indians appear to have been more successful at it. In the *Map of Virginia* Smith deplored the traitorous conduct of Dutchmen in Jamestown who traded for extra food without his sanction. Powhatan's people succeeded in breaking

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<sup>7</sup> Neil Salisbury, "The Indians' Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol. 53 (1996), 438.

<sup>8</sup> Salisbury, 439.

<sup>9</sup> Salisbury, 449. Karen Kupperman has given a particular explanation/example of why and how agricultural change impacted European-Aboriginal contact: "These conditions [The Little Ice Age] probably led to the intense drought conditions researchers have found in the Chesapeake and along the Carolina Outer Banks at the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth, which they have labeled the worst conditions in eight hundred years. The early colonial record contains plenty of evidence of drought and competition over the ability to bring rain through supernatural means. The colonists, none of whom produced their own food in the early years, must have created intolerable burdens on native food supplies." *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America*, (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University, 2000), 36.

<sup>10</sup> Salisbury, 454.

the English trade restrictions while maintaining their own..."<sup>11</sup> From this climax of equality claimed by Salisbury, and Sayre who extended the notion, it is clear that the aboriginal people played a key role in their relationships with Europeans, and the unbalanced view of European dominance that existed in the historiography, and still exists in popular memory, is more the product of a later period.

Cornelius Jaenen took a similar approach, but instead of dealing with all of North America before the European arrival, he examined "Amerindian Views of French Culture in the Seventeenth-Century."<sup>12</sup> The tenor of the article is that the Native people with whom the French came into contact were not passive, subdued, or in awe of their new acquaintances. Rather, they saw themselves and their culture and lifestyle as superior, or at least equal, to the intruding Europeans, which is similar to how Salisbury and Sayre understood the relationship. Jaenen added to this understanding by noting the difficulty the First Nations had in understanding many European values. The article is not entirely negative towards the French, since Jaenen also noted areas that brought societies together, such as ceremony and trade,<sup>13</sup> as well as benefits First Nations communities received from the relationship.<sup>14</sup> Despite these benefits, Jaenen demonstrated that rather than feeling awed by their new contacts, the aboriginal people "felt equal to, or superior to, the Europeans."<sup>15</sup>

Although the works of these historians suggest some common themes and traits among pre-contact North American communities, when Smith and Champlain set foot upon

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<sup>11</sup> Gordon Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 14.

<sup>12</sup> Cornelius Jaenen, "Amerindian Views of French Culture in the Seventeenth Century," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 55 (1974), 261-291.

<sup>13</sup> Jaenen, 268-269.

<sup>14</sup> Jaenen, 265.

<sup>15</sup> Jaenen, 290.

American soil they entered into two very distinct worlds. Even though they both encountered peoples from the Algonquian language group, the similarities ended there.<sup>16</sup>

The group of people whom Smith encountered in Chesapeake Bay were highly organized, perhaps a result of the changes Salisbury wrote about. In the years before the English arrival many tribes had been consolidated into an empire/confederacy under the leadership of a man named Powhatan. According to Christian Feest, at the climax of this consolidation the Powhatan group (also called the Virginia Algonquians) was made up of just fewer than 4,000 people; and the whole region was populated by about 9,000 people who belonged to other tribes.

Their villages were strung along the many rivers flowing into Chesapeake Bay and normally were made up of less than 100 people. Only a handful of villages were compact and fortified.<sup>17</sup> These people were agricultural (making up about 25% of their diet) and sedentary although as supplies dwindled during the winter they also subsisted on hunting, fishing, and edible vegetation. During this part of the year these people would move up river to participate in “communal hunts,” which involved using fire to drive deer towards groups of hunters. In the spring the men cleared land and the women tended the corn, gourds, beans, and tobacco that subsequently grew there. This society was highly structured and most daily tasks were assigned to specific groups of people, especially based on gender.

The Virginia Algonquians had some contact with Europeans during the sixteenth century, however in most instances it appears that these encounters frequently ended in violence. This history and the fact that John Smith arrived at the climax of the centralization of these people (as the last of the groups on the James and York Rivers were coming under

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<sup>16</sup> Although this similarity is based on language, the *Handbook of North American Indians* states that the language of the Virginia Algonquians is extinct. Christian F. Feest, “Virginia Algonquians,” in Bruce Trigger, ed., *The Handbook of North American Indians*, (Washington, Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 253.

<sup>17</sup> Feest, 259.

Powhatan's leadership and control) helped to create a tense and rocky relationship during the early days of the Jamestown outpost. In many ways the English – Powhatan encounter was a true meeting of empires, with highly structured hierarchies of power. Further north there was no group of people who underwent this sort of centralization, or were as structured.

Reflecting this key difference is that Champlain encountered a variety of aboriginal peoples on his first voyage to the St. Lawrence River. Like the Powhatan people further south, these men and women spoke an Algonquian dialect, however, rather than being centralized they were much more loosely connected. Further emphasizing their complex connections were their ties and alliances with neighbouring tribes. For example, during Champlain's first voyage he wrote about a number of different aboriginal peoples who interacted with each other, such as the Algonquin, Innu, Etchemin, and Mi'kmaq. Although connected and some allied together, they were not linked by a common power structure – thus retaining their own autonomy.

Generally, these groups relied much more heavily on the natural resources of their respective regions. For the Innu and Mi'kmaq this required seasonal migrations from the coast to the forest, while for the Algonquin the summer months were spent in community and the winter spent much more dispersed hunting. In all cases this migratory pattern did not necessarily hinder agriculture, but rather the climate and geography could not support this as a pillar of aboriginal life. In terms of social structures little is known about seventeenth-century Algonquin culture, however the Mi'kmaq and Innu were loosely structured. The words of Eleanor Leacock further elaborate this statement. She wrote, "Obedience' was owed not to any individual, but to the practical and moral order of the group... The 'captains,' 'sagamos,' or 'chiefs' referred to in the *Relations* and other

accounts were apparently men of personal influence and rhetorical ability.”<sup>18</sup> This structure is important to bear in mind when considering Champlain’s comments regarding aboriginal leadership and how these people interacted with each other.

The most important difference between the aboriginal people with whom these men interacted was the amount of prior contact these people had with Europeans. Although there was contact in the Chesapeake Bay region, there was much more along the coastlines of the modern day Atlantic Canadian Provinces. Fish and furs brought many more men into contact with the native people, thus creating relationships and familiarity on which Champlain’s expeditions could build. With such a foundation, the voyages on which Champlain took part (to Tadoussac in 1603 and the Bay of Fundy from 1604 to 1607) were able to cultivate a more constructive relationship with the people who inhabited the land on which they chose to build their settlements. Although this groundwork did not always prevent violent clashes with aboriginal people, it did provide security in the regions in which the French chose to build.

This last point calls for some clarification on the roles that these men played on their respective voyages. Upon arriving in America, Smith was named to the governing council of the Jamestown settlement. Although in a leadership position there appears to have been enough leeway for him to deviate from the policies advocated by his superiors, an action to which Smith resorted frequently. On most occasions it is clear that Smith’s actions and decisions were not influenced by those around him, and that he acted as he saw fit. Champlain on the other hand had significantly less control over his actions and on a number of occasions it is clear that he was merely following orders. This difference makes it difficult to discern in Champlain’s writings what were his own actions and beliefs and what were

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<sup>18</sup> Eleanor Leacock, “Seventeenth-century Montagnais Social Relations and Values,” *The Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 6, (Washington, Smithsonian Institution, 1981), 191.



those of his superiors. One must continuously remember that first and foremost Champlain was recounting other people's expeditions and policies towards the native people during this period. However, it is clear that although much of what he said and did fits with the policy of his superiors (mainly that of the Sieur de Monts), Champlain also adhered to this policy when he was free to do otherwise – thus taking ownership for those ideas himself. That the actions of both men were overseen on these expeditions must always be remembered when reading this thesis, as not to elevate these men beyond the station they actually occupied at this time in their lives.

In the history of exploration one scholar will examine Cartier, another Champlain, and another John Smith. Even when topics are combined they often deal more with comparison than detailing the entire story. Because of this there is always a need for scholars to take a step back and synthesize the subject matter on a larger scale in order to develop a better understanding of the subject as a whole. David Beers Quinn has done this for the exploration period. In his book *North America from Earliest Discovery to First Settlement: The Norse Voyages to 1612* Quinn displayed the continuity of the European presence in North America from the late fifteenth century to the early seventeenth. Through detailing European activities, including those that did not bring them permanently to the 'new' continent (such as the fisheries), Quinn demonstrated that Europeans had been interacting with North Americans long before Champlain and Smith set foot on foreign shores.

This is an important observation for two reasons. First, Quinn placed North America's earliest settlements into a much more turbulent context. There was nothing separating Jamestown from the failed Roanoke voyages twenty years earlier, nor was Quebec's longevity any more certain than that of Saint Croix, or of Port-Royal in its initial

stages. When founded, both of these settlements would either meet with success, or like all that had been attempted before, be mired in failure. The tentative nature of the settlements made them more fitting with the period Quinn examined than the permanent settlement that had developed by the end of the seventeenth century. Because of this uncertainty this thesis will focus primarily on comparing Jamestown with Port Royal instead of Quebec.

The second reason a prior European-Aboriginal relationship is important lies in the nature of the relationship. Because these settlements were minor extensions of previous relationships it seems likely that the aboriginal people would not have seen them as the sea change in which they are most often associated. Most likely they saw the initial phases of these settlements as an extension of the relationship already developed with fishers and traders. This is the case for Port Royal especially, where the Mi'kmaq had considerable contact with Europeans throughout the sixteenth century.

This process was part of the change that paved the way for the foundation of the outposts at Jamestown and Port Royal. Before Champlain and Smith arrived there had been no successful settlement (for either kingdom) north of Florida. What else had changed during those beginning years of the seventeenth century to make this possible? Was it changes in North America or Europe? Secondly, what made the French more successful than the English in its relationships with the Native peoples (if they were more successful at all)? Scholars have spent much time asking these questions, and it is worthwhile examining some of the conclusions they have reached.

There are numerous proposals as to why France appears to have been more successful in interacting with the native people while England was less so. None of them can stand alone, and most likely all played a significant role in developing a productive relationship between the aboriginal people and the French in Quebec and Acadie. The first

and most significant relationship that took place was through the greater frequency of trade between France and many aboriginal communities in the sixteenth century. Conrad Heidenreich explained that the French were “conditioned by at least twenty years of trading.”<sup>19</sup> According to Heidenreich this experience helped to reshape French attitudes towards exploration into a more flexible worldview that allowed aboriginal culture to be seen in a more positive light.

This transformation allowed Champlain to make two fundamental innovations that revolutionized the French presence in North America. The first was that Champlain used the aboriginal people to gather information about the ‘new’ territory, and the second was his adoption of the canoe which allowed him to bypass the hydrological blockades that had barred Cartier from traveling upriver.<sup>20</sup> These changes were key to French success in North America, allowing Champlain to build alliances and gain important information that was essential to surviving in a much harsher climate than that of Europe. However, this thesis will also show that Smith made very similar innovations, suggesting a greater complexity to this subject.

What also set the French apart on a more fundamental level was the ‘Doctrine of Consent.’ France was unique in requiring that aboriginal people be asked permission to settle on their land. Patricia Seed wrote, “No other Europeans so consistently sought the political permission of the Natives in order to justify their own political authority.”<sup>21</sup> This was necessary for the French because of the European political environment, and should not

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<sup>19</sup> Conrad Heidenreich, “The Beginning of French Exploration out of the St Lawrence Valley: Motives, Methods, and Changing Attitudes towards Native People,” *Decentring the Renaissance*, 246. David Beers Quinn has also espoused this idea in *North America from Earliest Discovery to First Settlement: The Norse Voyages to 1612*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), 488 and 536.

<sup>20</sup> Heidenreich, 238-239.

<sup>21</sup> Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640*, (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 62. This is also discussed in Olive P. Dickason, “The Sixteenth-Century French Vision of Empire: The Other Side of Self-Determination,” *Decentring the Renaissance*, 90-91 and Quinn, *North America from Earliest Discovery to First Settlement*, 489.

be taken as a sign of constructive relations without the support of other explanations. Essentially the 'Doctrine of Consent' was part of the French method of claiming control of North America. It was not done out of respect for the occupiers of the land, but rather to signify French right to the territory among other European powers. Nonetheless, the building of alliances, which often incorporated the transference of people to learn the other's culture, often facilitated consent. This type of cultural exchange and recognition of the need for the aboriginal people that developed out of the 'Doctrine of Consent' is part of what made the French successful in many of their endeavours. However, although the historiography has emphasized these cultural exchanges as a positive reflection of the relationship between the French and First Nations, it will be shown in this thesis that they also existed in John Smith's Virginia – a point not often made in regards to the English.

The third reason given for the French success has to do with geography. In New France and Acadie, the French occupied land that was not used in any significant fashion by the aboriginal peoples. According to Jaenen, New France developed around "what in the seventeenth century was the no man's land of the St. Lawrence Valley."<sup>22</sup> The minimal intrusion of the French during the initial stages of this process no doubt allowed for roots to be developed and helps to explain the relatively peaceful relations in the region. Philip Barbour, the editor of Smith's works, has pointed out that the English were not so lucky, having decided to build Jamestown on Paspahegh territory and therefore inviting attack and poor relations.

Finally, the English and French differed because of their early colonial vision. France was not as involved as England in colony building during the sixteenth century. Although England did not become serious about North American settlement in the

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<sup>22</sup> Jaenen, "The French Relationship with the Native Peoples of New France and Acadia," (Research Branch, Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada, 1984), 6.

sixteenth century, it was involved in Ireland. Nicholas Canny noted, “the involvement in Irish colonisation of men who afterwards ventured to the New World suggests that their years in Ireland were years of apprenticeship.”<sup>23</sup> More specifically Kupperman has pointed to Richard Hakluyt as having “first enunciated the idea that the English could draw on their experience learned in the cruel European and Irish wars when handling the American natives.”<sup>24</sup> In a more tangible fashion C.E.S. Franks has drawn the parallel analytically: “English complaints about the Irish were the same as about the Indians: they lacked shame, went around naked, were polygamous and sexually immoral, and even worse, had no concept of private property, nor did they accept the Protestant religion.”<sup>25</sup> While both countries had their share of pejorative literature towards the North American people, the English also had tangible experience that they could put into practice once having arrived on North America’s shores.

Before an all-too-rosy picture is created by these explanations for the French success, Olive Dickason has given another perspective: “once a colony was secure, the need for compromise would diminish and disappear as the Amerindians recognized the superiority of French ways and became Frenchmen.”<sup>26</sup> The French did not set out to live as a separate culture among the native communities, but instead sought their conversion and francification just as much as other European communities. Nonetheless, in its initial stages the French method of settlement proved successful, and the roots created still exist four centuries later.

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<sup>23</sup> Nicholas Canny, “The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, (1973), 595.

<sup>24</sup> Kupperman, “English Perceptions of Treachery, 1583-1640: The Case of the American ‘Savages,’” *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 20 no. 2. (1977), 267.

<sup>25</sup> C.E.S. Franks, “In Search of the Savage *Sauvage*: An Exploration into North America’s Political Cultures,” *American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 32, no. 4 (2002), 561.

<sup>26</sup> Dickason, 107.

The English, on the other hand, were not as successful in their relationship with the aboriginal people. In 1622 the Virginia Algonquians rose up and seriously threatened the outpost at Jamestown. It was the climax to a number of little battles and skirmishes that had been taking place since the English arrived in North America in 1607. This tension was not based on ethnicity, however. Kupperman has argued strongly that the English did not employ concepts of race in order to justify the subduction of the aboriginal people. The last words of Kupperman's book sum up her perspective well:

It was the effect of unrestricted power, not preconceived racism, which caused the English to treat the American Indians as they did. If, in the period after 1640, the American Indians were the subjects of racism by English people, the conclusion must be that this racism was a product of, not the cause of, the treatment of Indians by colonists.<sup>27</sup>

Kupperman did not believe that this idea hinders those who understand the English to have felt themselves superior, but contended that such an argument cannot be based on race.

Kupperman heartily subscribed to the feeling of superiority among the English. When discussing John Smith's disapproval of intermarriage, Kupperman wrote that English writers were optimistic that the aboriginal people would assimilate to their lifestyle, and "for Europeans to regress to Indian ways would be ludicrous in their view."<sup>28</sup> Here lies the main stumbling block for the English. It was not race, but a feeling of superiority (or civility) based on lifestyle, technology, and culture as developed in England that barred the English from bridging the gap between Europe, Virginia and New England. While the French were intermarrying and sending and receiving both Natives and Frenchmen between communities,<sup>29</sup> the English leadership, for the most part, chose to enforce a separate sphere between their culture and that of the aboriginal people.

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<sup>27</sup> Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians*, 188.

<sup>28</sup> Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians*, 156.

<sup>29</sup> On intermarriage see Naomi Griffiths, "Mating and Marriage in early Acadia," *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, vol. 35 (1992), 109-127. or Heidenreich, 245.

Now that we have gathered the historiographical contexts in which Smith and Champlain have been portrayed, we can explore how historians have viewed their actions regarding the aboriginal people. Developing an understanding of these two men is absolutely essential to grasping the overall scheme that was just discussed, because not only were they products of it, they were also two of its chief proponents. This point is made even clearer when one considers that during this period Smith and Champlain were only two of a handful of Europeans whose boots had touched North America north of Florida.

Much of the historiography of these two men has been entrenched in heroics. Morris Bishop summed up the goal of many of Smith's and Champlain's biographers when he wrote, "The author's chief hope is that it [Bishop's book] may arouse in others an answering admiration and love for the founder and father of Canada, the patron of her spirit, her Hero."<sup>30</sup> Few historians have deviated from this interpretation of Champlain. Only Bruce Trigger has downplayed his role by strongly emphasizing the important position that the fishers and traders occupied during this early period in Canadian history, casting Champlain as a man of circumstance rather than fortitude. The historiography for Smith, too, is entrenched with patriotic writing. Leo Lemay echoed Bishop's words, considering Smith as "not only the greatest colonist and explorer of early America, he was also its greatest visionary."<sup>31</sup> However, Lemay's voice is only one of a few in recent scholarship. Most historians have erred on the cautious side, trying to bring a greater balance to the subject. This is one of the largest discrepancies in the literature. Where Smith has been approached with more balance, Champlain has most frequently been enshrined as the embodiment of a Canadian ethos.

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<sup>30</sup> Morris Bishop, *Champlain: The Life of Fortitude*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), x.

<sup>31</sup> Leo Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 16.

For the most part Smith has been seen as a self-righteous and arrogant man of action. Alden Vaughan has presented a darker view of Lemay's "greatest visionary." Vaughan stated, "Smith had no strong affection for the American Natives. Throughout his dealings with them the captain treated Indians as common adversaries, grudgingly giving them credit for strength or wisdom, but never trusting or cherishing them."<sup>32</sup> But for Vaughan the relationship was reciprocal. "The Indians, in turn," Vaughan wrote, "considered Smith their principal enemy."<sup>33</sup> This opinion was shared by Kupperman, who placed Smith at the bottom of the list in terms of how Englishmen valued the aboriginal culture.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps these are accurate views, but there is some evidence to suggest that how we understand Smith may be more related to continuing a historiographical tradition rather than looking at the evidence in a fresh light.

Consider two stories: The first is about Smith, the second about Champlain. In December 1607 John Smith led a group up the Chickahominy River on a barge. When they got as far as they could go, Smith left the barge and used a canoe to travel further.<sup>35</sup> The second vignette is similar. In July 1603 Champlain was using a small draft boat at the bottom of the Lachine rapids on the St. Lawrence. Having been in North America for about two months he had seen the natives' canoes many times. It was here that he discovered the necessity of this craft in order to further explore the North American interior.<sup>36</sup> The stories are twin images of each other. Both men found themselves in a similar situation and decided to adopt the craft of the aboriginal people. However, Champlain has been credited with making a major in-road for the French, while Smith has

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<sup>32</sup> Alden T. Vaughan, *American Genesis: Captain John Smith and the Founding of Virginia*, (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1975), 35.

<sup>33</sup> Vaughan, 35.

<sup>34</sup> Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians*, 31.

<sup>35</sup> Vaughan, 34.

<sup>36</sup> Heidenreich, 239.



not received the same accolades. These parallel stories show the need to examine these men side by side with full emphasis on their individuality and humanity.

Gordon Sayre has also helped to explain why Smith has been seen in a more negative light by placing him in a Machiavellian framework. However, Sayre also moved beyond the influence of these ideas claiming that Smith's actions can only be understood in light of his relationship with the emperor Powhatan. Sayre explained that "it was Powhatan's Machiavellian cunning more than his despotic rule that served as an effective model for Smith, and it was in the subsequent episode, the one Weraskoyack was warning about, that Smith and Powhatan emerged as psychological doubles, equally resourceful, egotistical, and suspicious."<sup>37</sup> James Axtell has placed Smith in a similar framework claiming, "while Smith was no saint, the colony had prospered briefly under his forceful command... Perhaps his greatest legacy was an Indian policy that respected the natives' military audacity and economic shrewdness while meeting them head-on with daring determination."<sup>38</sup> This is a similar observance to that made by Vaughan, but without the negative implications. Both Axtell and Sayre have taken a more pragmatic approach to Smith's works by balancing the European and North American worlds in which he existed.

Lemay is the only recent historian who has had anything really positive to write about John Smith. However, he has had little positive to write about the historiography. Assaulting the work of Karen Kupperman and Francis Jennings, Lemay wrote: "These writers take pride in understanding and in identifying with the early seventeenth-century Indians but find the early seventeenth-century whites to have been absolute barbarians."<sup>39</sup>

Although one can base such an argument on Jennings' moralistic vocabulary, neither he nor

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<sup>37</sup> Sayre, 66.

<sup>38</sup> James Axtell, *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 202-204.

<sup>39</sup> Lemay, 11.

Kupperman have created such a polar argument in their works.<sup>40</sup> In fact, if anything Kupperman has presented a convincing case that the English were acting in the only way they knew how, by trying to place a previously unknown people into their own worldview. Both historians have presented early North American encounters as both sides acting and reacting to a situation that they did not fully understand.

It appears from the very beginning of Lemay's book that he was attempting to right what he saw as a historical wrong. For him, "within the early seventeenth-century context, Smith's behavior was not only fair, he was surprisingly kind and humanitarian. He treated Indians as he treated whites."<sup>41</sup> Kupperman would both agree and disagree with this statement. She would disagree that Smith was kind and humanitarian, but agree that he treated them "as he treated white people." In fact this is the general thesis of her books. In *Settling with the Indians* she wrote that the aboriginal people "were subject to this form of 'contempt' not because they were racially different or savage, but because they were lumped in the minds of colonial leaders in the same status category as low-born English people."<sup>42</sup> Although he made some valuable points, Lemay rarely had a negative comment regarding Smith's treatment of the aboriginal people, and it would serve his analysis well if he took a more balanced look at those who have written before him.

Lemay's book cannot be written off, however, because it does bring the historian's attention to the fact that the historiography regarding John Smith tends to be based in polarities. He has either been seen as wonderful, as Lemay saw him, or as despised, like Jennings' and Vaughan's writings suggests. However, based on his use of the canoe it seems

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<sup>40</sup> Francis Jennings' *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* can easily distract the reader through a vocabulary based in polemics. However, the basic argument of the book is very similar to many of the themes presented by Kupperman. The language is perhaps too forceful for the argument that he actually makes.

<sup>41</sup> Lemay, 116.

<sup>42</sup> Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians*, 3.

likely that he falls somewhere in between, perhaps alongside Champlain. More balance must be brought to this subject.

Kupperman provided an excellent example for this, and throughout her works Smith is often referred to in more balanced terms than those that have been ascribed to her in this introduction. Although she clearly sees Smith's relationship with the aboriginal people as destructive, she has noted that he understood the necessity of relying on the aboriginal people in order to survive in the colonists' new homeland – placing him much closer to Champlain than he has previously been seen.

Samuel de Champlain had much more experience with Americans prior to his arrival in North America. Unlike Smith who spent his youth fighting in Europe, Champlain spent some time travelling to the Americas before his arrival in Tadoussac in 1603. Samuel Morison described how his early life and his later exploration were interconnected:

He [Champlain] was impressed by the magnificence of the capital, admired the fertility of Mexico, and deplored the cruelty of the Spaniards to the Indians. He evidently resolved to prevent anything of that sort in New France, if ever he were in authority there, and in this he remained consistent. No early European explorer was anywhere near so successful as Champlain in making friends of the Natives, or so humane in protecting them.<sup>43</sup>

Aside from the clairvoyance that Morison ascribed to Champlain (by suggesting that he was making plans for his time in New France while in the West Indies) this quotation outlines the previous contact that Champlain had with peoples from the Americas as well as with other European settlements. Although there is little likelihood that Champlain knew he would be in New France in the coming years, there can be little doubt that this was a formative experience.

This quotation also serves as a great example of things to keep in mind while writing history of Aboriginal-European contact. Morison took a unique approach to writing his biography of Champlain. Instead of just doing academic research, Morison and his wife put

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<sup>43</sup> Samuel Morison, *Samuel de Champlain: Father of New France*, (Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1972), 20.

the canoe on top of the car and spent a summer paddling in Champlain's wake. This approach added a personal touch to his writing but from time to time the historian's rigour has been replaced by romance. The passage above serves as a prime example of the problems with this type of history. The first problem is the clairvoyance that has already been mentioned. There were three years between his supposed voyage to the West Indies and his next voyage to North America.<sup>44</sup> It is highly unlikely that Champlain was even fathoming traveling to North America at the time of this experience. Second, Morison told his readers that Champlain was "humane in protecting them." The question that one must ask is whether they needed protection, or maybe even more importantly, who needed the protection? Although Champlain later allied with the Innu and Wendat (Huron) peoples, it was not an alliance based on protection but rather military support. The end of this quotation is a clear demonstration of the patronizing attitude with which historians have written in the past.

Both Gordon Sayre and Jean Lévesque have attempted to compare Smith's and Champlain's perceptions of the aboriginal people. At the centre of his work, Lévesque supported the idea that both were men of action and goal oriented. Separating Champlain from his contemporaries who traveled in North America Lévesque wrote, "il serait plutôt le représentant d'un point de vue mitoyen, nous dirions le point de vue de l'homme d'action. Comme Smith d'ailleurs."<sup>45</sup> But perhaps more important than this similarity is one that has not yet been discussed but is key to understanding these two men. Lévesque observed, "les

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<sup>44</sup> Champlain mentioned his travels to the West Indies on a number of occasions in his works, however whether those travels are recounted in *Brief Discours* is questionable. For more information see Luca Codignola, "Le Prétendu Voyage de Samuel de Champlain aux Indes Occidentales, 1599-1601," in Madeleine Frédéric and Serge Jaumain, (eds.), *La Relation de Voyage*, (Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, Centre d'études Canadiennes, 1999), 61-80.

<sup>45</sup> Jean Lévesque, "Représentation de l'Autre et Propagande Coloniale dans les Récits de John Smith en Virginie et de Samuel de Champlain en Nouvelle-France (1615-1618)," *Canadian Folklore Canadien*, vol. 17, no. 1, (1995), 105. My Translation: "he was rather the representative of a common point of view, we could say the point of view of a man of action. Like Smith elsewhere."

discours de Champlain et de Smith ont en commun d'utiliser leurs expériences respectives des peuples autochtones pour justifier leurs propres visées coloniales."<sup>46</sup> One must never forget that both of these men had an agenda for writing and that no aspect of their North American experiences can be examined without this in mind. They not only played a role in the development of these communities, but also in forming a European understanding of this 'new' continent.

For Sayre the similarities between these two men have developed out of their experience with the aboriginal people. Sayre believes that "Smith and Champlain's foes are alter egos of the leaders who write about them."<sup>47</sup> He went on to claim "the stark contrast between the egotistical Smith and the modest Champlain is an effect of the structure of their narratives and of their motives in relations with the Native Americans."<sup>48</sup> Although there is much truth to the ideas of both Lévesque and Sayre this thesis will show that there was not only much similarity between Smith's and Champlain's interactions with the native people, but also in how they wrote about them. It will demonstrate that they embodied an intermediate space between North America and Europe, and sought to promote themselves as an embodiment of that space in their literature. This interpretation integrates both the 'men of action' interpretation of Lévesque and the influence of the aboriginal people highlighted by Sayre. Neither of their works, however, fully explains Smith's and Champlain's realities because neither fully encompasses both the European and North American experiences of these two men.

There exists, however, a historiographical aura that stigmatizes Champlain and Smith, and there remains a need to examine this subject with a greater balancing of the

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<sup>46</sup> Lévesque, 113. My Translation: "the writings of Champlain and Smith both use their experiences with the aboriginal people to justify their colonial vision."

<sup>47</sup> Sayre, 50.

<sup>48</sup> Sayre, 77.

worlds in which these men existed. By doing this a true assessment can be made as to how these men thought and responded to their contacts with North America's inhabitants. This thesis seeks to meet this need by maintaining a firm footing in the North American environment, while also including Smith and Champlain's European upbringing and worldview.

Therefore this work has been divided chronologically to preserve a balance between Europe and North America. The first chapter examines Smith's *A True Relation* and Champlain's *Des Sauvages*. Smith's work is a letter, which he wrote in 1608, after being in Virginia for a year, whereas Champlain's was derived from a report he made of his first voyage to North America in 1603. Both serve as a first impression of North America. The second chapter draws Champlain and Smith together through the ties of common experience in New England – Champlain from 1604 to 1607 and Smith in 1614. This environmental similarity facilitates the comparison of their impressions and writing styles and leads into the last chapter which examines their *magna opera* and how they reflected upon their earlier experiences, seen in chapters one and two.

By looking at the early period in their careers it is much easier to understand their views than it is to use their later works. This decision runs contrary to the existing historiography of the subject, as Sayre and Lévesque have based their studies on Jamestown and Quebec. At first glance this choice appears to have been the most logical form of comparison, seeing as Quebec and Jamestown were France and England's first successful year-round outposts. However, given the short amount of time Smith actually spent in North America, and the long time Champlain lived along the Saint Lawrence, it seems hardly fair to compare their experiences in this manner. Instead, the three years Champlain spent at Port Royal serve as a much stronger comparison with Smith's time in Virginia, both

chronologically and experientially. To study Smith and Champlain in the light of Quebec and Jamestown is to be blinded by the colonies' subsequent successes rather than dealing with each man's actual experience in these outpost settlements. The parallel between Jamestown and Port Royal in the years before 1610 better facilitates this comparison.

As the study of history changes and more evidence comes to light via the opening of archives, the opening of the earth via archaeology, or the opening of minds to working with other disciplines, we need to revisit the historical subjects of the past. This has not occurred with John Smith or Samuel de Champlain. This thesis attempts to make a limited re-examination of this field and it is hoped will open the door to a greater re-evaluation of many of the men once considered their countries' heroes, and discarded in the light of new historical methods. History is constantly revising itself, and with every new revision we come closer to truly understanding our past and our present.

## Chapter 1: First Encounters

### A Comparison of *Des Sauvages* and *A True Relation*

The world in which John Smith and Samuel de Champlain grew up was one mired in religious conflict. The France of Champlain was a battleground of sectarian violence and political strife; and although less divided, Smith's England was also challenged from within and without. Nonetheless, in both countries the end of the sixteenth century was also a time of exploration and new horizons, a time of uncertainty and possibility. Exploring new lands and finding new wealth was coupled with the negative impact of sectarian violence. All of this intertwined and played a major role in the development of these two men.

For the greater part of the sixteenth century religious conflict had hindered France's overseas exploration. In the opening years of the century France was very active in seeking out new territories. In 1524, for example, Giovanni da Verrazzano coasted much of the Eastern Seaboard of North America; and the 1530s and 40s saw Jacques Cartier explore and attempt to settle the St. Lawrence Valley. However, after the failure of Cartier and Roberval in 1543, religious issues arising from the Reformation quickly swept over France, and the next 60 years were spent in a number of religious civil wars.

This did not mean that all interest in exploration stopped in France. The sixteenth century was an "age of discovery" for Europeans (and North Americans) and it was not difficult for educated French men to learn about the overseas travels of men from other kingdoms such as Spain and Portugal. Furthermore, French and Basque fishers were heavily involved in fishing off the coast of North America, bringing back stories and myths that would have circulated throughout coastal towns.<sup>1</sup> Champlain himself provided an example of the types of myths that would have circulated the wharfs and streets of France, when at

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<sup>1</sup> Quinn, "Henri Quatre and New France," *Terrae Incognitae*, Vol. 22, (1990), 16-17.



the end of *Des Sauvages* he recounted the aboriginal tale of the Gougou. This was a “monstre espouuantable” who “auoit la forme d’une femme... d’une telle grandeur, qu’ils me disoient que le bout des mats de notre vaisseau ne luy fust pas venu iusques à la ceinture... & que souuent il a deuoré & deuore, beaucoup de Sauvages, lesquels il met dedans vne grande poche quant il les peut attraper & puis les mange.”<sup>2</sup> These myths, which existed before and after Champlain traveled to America, would have only become more numerous as Frenchmen began to have greater interaction with the aboriginal peoples. Just as the wars were reaching their end, private exploration, and the tales from those enterprises, was paving the way for France’s official entrance into North America.

When France returned to peace in the late 1590s the push for exploration and colonisation began again. In 1598, at his request, the Marquis de la Roche received papers from King Henri IV granting “authority over ‘Canada, Hochelega, Terresneuves, Labrador, rivière de la grand Baye, de Noremborgue et terres adjacentes.’”<sup>3</sup> After a preliminary voyage in 1597 la Roche decided to build a colony on Sable Island – signalling to Henri (by 1599 according to Quinn) that he was not interested in the development of continental North America.<sup>4</sup> In 1600 Henri tried again by granting a commercial monopoly to Pierre Chauvin. The first winter dealt a heavy blow to Chauvin’s attempt at Tadoussac, thus foiling that endeavour, and by 1603 la Roche’s colonists had mutinied and returned to France.

This was the French overseas world during Samuel de Champlain’s early years.

Although there are few details about his early life it is generally believed that he was born

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel de Champlain, *Des Sauvages ou Voyage de Samuel Champlain, de Brouage, fait en la France nouvelle, l’an mil six cens trois*, in H.G. Biggar, (ed.) *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 186. My Translation: “dreadful monster” who “has the form of a woman... of such size, that they tell me that the top of the masts of our vessel would not reach his waist... and that he often has devoured and still devours many natives. These he puts in a big pocket, when he can catch them, and then eats them.”

<sup>3</sup> Quinn, “Henri Quatre and New France,” 17. Quinn was quoting Marc Lescarbot, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, vol. I, H.P. Biggar, (ed.) (Toronto, 1907), 398-405.

<sup>4</sup> Quinn, “Henri Quatre and New France,” 18.

around 1570.<sup>5</sup> The events surrounding his birth are only known in the wider context of the period outlined on the previous pages. His birthplace, Brouage, was a town inhabited mainly by Protestants, and the Old Testament connotations of his first name suggest that this was the theology with which he was brought up.<sup>6</sup> However, the heavy emphasis of Catholic doctrine in his writings suggests a conversion at some period in his early life, and definitely before he traveled to America. His age and faith raise interesting questions about the impact of the Wars of Religion on Champlain's outlook. How did he perceive issues of faith growing up in the aftermath of the St. Bartolomew's Day massacre, the bloodiest event of the Religious Wars? Answers to these questions are lost to us, but the influence that these tumultuous years may have had on him are questions always worth considering.

Growing up in Brouage would have also exposed the young Champlain to information from fishing vessels returning from the North American coast. Although modern-day Brouage is kilometres away from the coast, in Champlain's day the Atlantic touched the town's walls and its salt marshes were used in the fisheries. A 1601 document demonstrated that Brouage was a port where fishers purchased salt to be used in the cod fishery. The document recorded the *Catherine*, sailing under Robert Enault, was "prest à partir du premier temps convenable qu'il plaira à Dieu envoyer, aller querir son sel en Baye, Brouage ou Espagne pour faire le voiage de la pesche des morues..."<sup>7</sup> That Atlantic fishing boats stopped in Brouage suggests that the town was frequented by people familiar with the North American coast, and probably increasingly with the St. Lawrence valley. The frequency of these sailors' visits may have helped to enlighten an inquisitive young man such

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<sup>5</sup> Marcel Trudel, "Samuel de Champlain," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (hereafter labelled DCB), [www.biographi.ca](http://www.biographi.ca) (January 22, 2004). Jean Liebel has suggested 1580 as Champlain's birthdate; however, all of the sources used in this thesis suggest the earlier 1570 date.

<sup>6</sup> Trudel, "Samuel de Champlain."

<sup>7</sup> Robert Le Blant and René Baudry, eds., *Nouveaux Documents sur Champlain et son époque*, vol. I, (Ottawa, 1967), 40. My Translation: "ready to leave at the first convenient time that it pleases God, go and fetch salt at Baye, Brouage, or Spain for your voyage to fish cod..."

as Champlain about the New World. Morris Bishop has painted a vivid picture of the Brouage of Champlain's youth: "And surely the boy watched the sailors, ritually drunk before affronting the dangers of the Atlantic. He heard strange foreign songs bawled in the streets. He saw the national battles that came tumbling out of taverns. He learned the lingua franca of the sailors, and he listened open-mouthed to the reminiscences of Brouageais who had made the journey to Canada and Brazil."<sup>8</sup> This was pure conjecture on the part of Bishop. However, without direct evidence regarding Champlain's youth, such imaginative descriptions are as close as one can come to understanding his influences during this time. Because of the lack of solid information, it is difficult to speculate much further than this.

The other major issue that developed out of the Wars of Religion was Henri IV's accession to the throne. On this issue Champlain's perspective was much clearer. In fact the first time in which Champlain enters the historical record is in financial documents for military service in the royal army. Of primary importance in this group of records, dated between March and December 1595, is one that states: "A Samuel de Champlain, ayde du sieur Hardy marechal des logis de l'armée du roy en cedit pais, la somme de neuf escuz pour certain voiage secret qu'il a faict important le service du Roy."<sup>9</sup> Being paid for taking a secret voyage suggests that Champlain's affiliation to Henri's cause in Brittany was based on a strong sense of loyalty to the contested monarch. It also suggests – as David Quinn has shown – "we must, from this time onwards, regard him [Champlain] in one of his primary manifestations as Henry's principal overseas intelligence agent."<sup>10</sup> In this light Champlain's

<sup>8</sup> Morris Bishop, *Champlain: A Life of Fortitude*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), 5.

<sup>9</sup> Le Blant and Baudry, 18. My Translation: "To Samuel de Champlain, aid to Sieur Hardy marshal of lodging for the King's army in the said country, the sum of nine 'escuz' for a certain important secret voyage that he made in the service of the King."

<sup>10</sup> Quinn, "Henri Quatre and New France," 19.

first work, *Des Sauvages* can be seen as a publicized version of a royal intelligence report. This interpretation of Champlain gives his role in these voyages much greater importance and helps explain why his suggestions to explore Acadia in 1604 and then return to the St. Lawrence in 1608 were supported by his superiors – a fact that looks rather strange when one thinks of the credence that these men would have given to Champlain if he were considered a mere observer.<sup>11</sup>

By viewing Champlain as a royal informant – a position that would have involved a wide knowledge base of previous experiences and education – it is possible to see how he might have developed his own views towards North America before his travels. Conrad Heidenreich observed that the French successes in colonisation “were the result of a total rethinking of how exploration should be carried out, by a group of men – among them notably Champlain – who were far more flexible in their attitudes and thinking than Cartier and Roberval, who preceded them.”<sup>12</sup> For Champlain this rethinking may have begun at an early age through the fishers who stopped in Brouage. However, his first formal introduction to ‘New World’ life was probably during an early voyage to the West Indies, possibly recounted in *Brief Discours*, but there is little evidence supporting his authorship of this document.

In the West Indies Champlain may have made a number of observations that could have helped him formulate his own philosophy towards the native people. Although the authenticity of *Brief Discours* has been seriously challenged, the work does provide some insight into what Champlain might have seen. For example, when the author arrived at the

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<sup>11</sup> Trudel calls him a “private passenger” in his 1603 voyage – Trudel, “Samuel de Champlain.” And on Champlain’s role in site selection see Quinn, “Henri Quatre and New France,” 25.

<sup>12</sup> Conrad Heidenreich, “The Beginning of French Exploration out of the St Lawrence Valley: Motives, Methods, and Changing Attitudes towards Native People,” in Carolyn Podruchny and Germaine Warkentin. (eds), *Decentring the Renaissance*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 237.

recently sacked Puerto Rico, it was the native people who were rebuilding the walls while the Spaniards remained in hiding.<sup>13</sup> Such an experience may have helped Champlain realize the benefit of aboriginal alliances. Furthermore, in Mexico City the author observed, “Je croy, à ce que j’ay peu juger, qu’il y a en ladicte ville douze à quinze mil Espagnolz habitans, et six fois autant d’Indiens, qui sont crestiens aussy habitans...”<sup>14</sup> Near the end of the reconnaissance he wrote, “du Roy d’Espagne, s’il n’y donnoit ordre, ilz seroient en aussy barbare creance comme les autres.”<sup>15</sup> For the author of this text three things are clear: 1) That the native people could be converted to Christianity; 2) That the native people can outnumber Europeans while maintaining a certain level of peace; and 3) That European settlement brings civility. All three are important observations for someone planning to do what Champlain did. Although none of these observations can be directly linked to Champlain’s actual worldview, as he does not provide us with such personal statements, his experience in the West Indies would have played at least some role in his thinking regarding the people of North America.

The individuals who influenced Champlain help to develop further our understanding of the preconceptions with which Champlain arrived in North America. Samuel Eliot Morison claimed, without much to support the assertion, that Verrazzano’s writings influenced Champlain.<sup>16</sup> Later he pointed out that Champlain had fought under Martin Frobisher during an assault on Fort Crozat near Brest — a connection that makes the

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<sup>13</sup> H.P. Biggar, (ed.), *Brief Discours: Des Choses plus remarquables que Sammuel Champlain de Brouage a reconneues aux Indes Occidentales*, in *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Biggar, *Brief Discours*, 41. My Translation: “I believe, as far as I can judge, there are in the said city twelve to fifteen thousand Spaniards, and six times as many Indians, who are Christian and also inhabitants...”

<sup>15</sup> Biggar, *Brief Discours*, 63. My Translation: “the King of Spain, if he did not provide order, they would also have barbarous beliefs like the others.”

<sup>16</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *Samuel de Champlain*, (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 4. — There is no footnote showing from where the idea developed.

mind wander about the knowledge Champlain might have had coming to North America.<sup>17</sup>

However, these connections are just as vague as many of the other suggestions that have been made in this chapter. The clearest example of knowledge with which Champlain went to North America was that written down by his predecessor, Jacques Cartier.

Yet Cartier's influence was not necessarily valued. Marie-Christine Gomez-Géraud emphasized Champlain's disappointment with Cartier's voyages. In Champlain's view, she suggested, Cartier did not do enough to promote further exploration or colonisation.<sup>18</sup> This opinion sheds some interesting light on how Champlain began *Des Sauvages*: "Monseigneur, - Bien que plusieurs ayèt escript quelque chose du païs de Canadas, ie n'ay voulu pourtant m'arrester à leur dire, & ay expressément esté sur les lieux pour pouuoir rendre fidelle tesmoignage de la verité, laquelle vous verrez (s'il vous plaist)..."<sup>19</sup> Right at the beginning of his work Champlain did not agree with how his predecessors had dealt with the North American situation. Unfortunately he was not specific enough for us to know his grievances with certainty. However, as one progresses through his works a number of references to Jacques Cartier arise which help to flesh out his cryptic introduction. In *Des Sauvages* Champlain only made one reference to Cartier, stating at which point he was going beyond his voyages. However, as the editor points out, Champlain was mistaken in this observation as the point where he made this statement was at the River Jacques Cartier – it was well known that Cartier reached the island of Montreal which is well beyond this point.

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<sup>17</sup> Morison, 17. This co-relation, when combined with Champlain's famous insinuation that the salt sea the natives describe in 1603 was an arm of the Atlantic ocean (Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 124), makes one wonder the extent to which Champlain had become familiar with Frobisher's earlier travels. When he left the north, Frobisher had thought he had found an opening to the Northwest Passage. Instead he discovered the bay that now bears his name.

<sup>18</sup> Marie-Christine Gomez-Géraud, "Le Procès d'une Relation Coupable. De Quelques Interpretations des Recits de Jacques Cartier," *Etudes Françaises*, Vol. 11, no. 2 (1986), 67.

<sup>19</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 85. My Translation: "Monseigneur, - Although many have written something of the country of Canada, I have not been able to stop at what they have said, and I expressly went to the place to bear faithful witness to the truth, which you will see (if you wish)"

This does not discount Champlain's knowledge of Cartier's work. What this observation makes clear is that Champlain was using Cartier as a sort of gauge for his own voyage. Although his motives are unclear as to why he wanted to go beyond Cartier, it is apparent that this was a goal of his. In the account of his 1611 voyage it becomes even more apparent that Champlain had a decent knowledge of Cartier's voyages and had developed some of his own ideas from reading them. Champlain wrote:

Dauantage ledit Quartier au voyage qu'il a fait ne passa iamais ledit grand saut S. Louys, & ne descouurit rien Nort ny Su, dans les terres du fleuve S. Laurès: ses relations n'ē donnent aucun tesmoignage, & n'y est parlé que de la riuere du Saquenay, des trois riuieres & sainte Croix, où il hyerna en vn fort proche de nostre habitatiō: car il ne l'eust obmis nō plus que ce qu'il a descrit, qui monstre qu'il a laissé tout le haut du fleuve S. Laurens, depuis Tadoussac iusques au grand saut, difficile a desouuir les terres, & qu'il ne s'est voulu hasarder n'y laiser ses barques pour s'i aduēturer: de sorte que cela est tousiours demeuré inutile, sinō depuis quatre ans que nous y auons fait nostre habitation de Quebec, où apres l'auoir faite edifier, ie me mis au hazard de passer ledit saut pour assister les sauuages en leurs geures, y enuoyer des hommes pour cognoistre les peuples, leurs façon[s] de viure(s) & que c'est que de leurs terres.<sup>20</sup>

Champlain has made the message quite clear: there was a key distinction between himself and Jacques Cartier. Cartier was not prepared to take risks and use his surroundings to the best advantage, whereas Champlain was determined to learn as much as possible – especially from the people who had been living in that land for millennia. It is clear that to a certain degree Champlain was attempting to step on the shoulders of giants and to learn from both their successes and failures.

Despite all of these possible influences on Champlain's views of the aboriginal peoples, one must never forget that he was entering a world where a system had already

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<sup>20</sup> Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. II, H.P. Biggar, (ed.) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 220-221. My Translation: "Moreover, the said Cartier on the voyage which he made, never passed the said great rapid of S. Louys, and discovered nothing North nor South on the coast of the St. Lawrence River: his relations bear no witness, they only speak of the Saguenay, of three rivers and Saint Croix, where he wintered in a fort near our habitation: for he would not have admitted what he did not describe, he left out all of the upper St. Lawrence, from Tadoussac to the great rapid, difficult to discover the land, and he did not want to take a chance nor leave his boats for adventure: the sort that has since been unused, if not for the last four years that we have made our habitation at Quebec, or after completing it, I took the chance to pass the said rapid to help the savages in their wars, and sent men to learn about these people, their way of life, and their land."

been established. Champlain did not create the fur trade, nor did he make significant modifications to the basic model to which it adhered. The French relied on the aboriginal people to supply the furs before Champlain arrived, as they continued to do once Quebec had achieved a semi-permanent status. It is possible that despite the previous discussion of Champlain's European influences, the existence for at least two and a half decades of fur trading prior to his arrival is what played the most significant role in developing his preconceptions of the aboriginal people. Much of this knowledge could have come from two aboriginal people who were returning to North America on Champlain's ship after a *séjour* in France. During the voyage they may have taught him the basic language that he needed to communicate and instilled in him a sense of the necessity of adhering to the native ways in their land. When combined with the knowledge from French fishers and traders and his own experience, Champlain's knowledge of this 'New World' would have been more balanced than most.

The early life of Captain John Smith was much less turbulent than that of Champlain. Smith was about a decade younger than Champlain, born in the early days of January 1580.<sup>21</sup> He came from a well-off yeoman's family in the Lincolnshire village of Willoughby.<sup>22</sup> During his early childhood England was quickly evolving on the international stage. Queen Elizabeth executed her rival Mary Queen of Scots, ending the possibility of a Catholic coronation in England and therefore bringing on the wrath of the Spanish. As a product of this, in 1588, with the help of the weather, the English navy beat back the Spanish Armada, further paving the way for English colonisation, and foreshadowing the diminution of Spanish power on the Atlantic. In those early years of the 1580's promoters of colonisation such as Richard Hakluyt and Sir Walter Raleigh – who no doubt intellectually

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<sup>21</sup> Philip L. Barbour, *The Three Worlds of Captain John Smith*, (London, MacMillan, 1964), 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ian Beckwith, "Captain John Smith: The Yeoman Background," *History Today*, Vol. 26, no.7 (June 1976), 444.



influenced Smith in the same way Verrazzano influenced Champlain – wrote treatises in support of overseas venture. In 1584 a colony was attempted on Roanoke Island off the shores of modern day North Carolina and not far from the Jamestown settlement. The colony met with little success, the result being that the colonists disappeared completely, being last seen in 1587. Another English venture to plant a Separatist colony in the Gulf of St. Lawrence met with failure as well in 1597.<sup>23</sup> But all of this would have had little affect on Smith until he read the works of these promoters after the turn of the century, and later began to develop relationships with some of them.

Unlike Champlain, who was brought up on the coast, John Smith was raised in rural England. He was well off, and it was his generation that would have most likely shed the family's yeoman heritage by becoming a gentleman.<sup>24</sup> For a boy of his time and place he was well educated in the local town of Louth, and his father's high status (within this small community) is what brought him to the knowledge of the local lord – Lord Willoughby. As early as 1589 Lord Willoughby had wanted to take him on business to France, an experience prevented by Smith's father for scholastic reasons.<sup>25</sup> However, upon his father's death in 1596 Smith seized the opportunity to leave his apprenticeship and head for adventure on the continent. In 1597 he took up arms in France as a mercenary in Henri IV's royal army and once finished in France moved on to the Netherlands, which was still at war with Spain.<sup>26</sup> Unlike Champlain, however, his decision to fight for Henri IV had more to do with being a Protestant and less to do with loyalty to a monarch or a certain sense of national identity. As will be shown below, Smith's religion was only a minor influence in his choice of where and when to fight. First and foremost Smith was out for adventure.

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<sup>23</sup> Quinn, "The First Pilgrims," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol. 23, no. 3 (1966), 359-390.

<sup>24</sup> Beckwith, 450.

<sup>25</sup> Beckwith, 450.

<sup>26</sup> William McPeak, "The Adventures of Captain John Smith," *Military History*, Vol. 19, no. 2, (June 2002), 35.

In 1599 Smith appeared back in England, where he became part of Robert and Peregrine Bertie's (Lord Willoughby's sons) entourage as they went on a 'study-tour' around Europe. The Berties' money ran out and Smith was soon looking for a way home. Despite these details, Barbour reminded his readers, "The years 1596 to 1599 are obscure indeed, but his later activities testify to practical military knowledge gained somewhere, about that time."<sup>27</sup> Upon returning to England Smith "pored over contemporary books on War and honour," and began focusing on military training.<sup>28</sup>

By contrast with his previous military experience in Western Europe fighting Catholics, Smith shed the violence of Christian against Christian and took on the Turks – a much clearer "enemy of the faith." As Alden Vaughan explained in the beginning pages of his book: "Largely indifferent to theological issues, Smith preferred the simpler cause of Christ against the infidels."<sup>29</sup> It was in Eastern Europe where Smith demonstrated his military acumen, although it should be noted that the only record of these events comes from his own hand, thus raising the question as to the accuracy of some of these tales. In his first engagement, at the town of Olimpoc, he demonstrated his extensive military knowledge by teaching the commander how to signal, and to further divert his enemy's attention by lighting a number of strings on the opposite side from where the attack was to come, making it look like matches ready to fire at the besieged town.<sup>30</sup> In another siege Smith fabricated a sort of bomb out of clay pots filled with gunpowder and other volatile substances.<sup>31</sup> This ability to improvise and to think on the spot would become characteristic of Smith's actions in Jamestown a few years later.

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<sup>27</sup> Barbour, *Three Worlds*, 13-14.

<sup>28</sup> McPeak, 35. for a more specific discussion in Barbour, *Three Worlds*, 14.

<sup>29</sup> Alden T. Vaughan, *American Genesis: Captain John Smith and the Founding of Virginia*, (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1975), 6.

<sup>30</sup> McPeak, 36.

<sup>31</sup> McPeak, 37.

It was not until Smith's Protestant army was confronted with a direct challenge from the Turks, however, that Smith truly made a name for himself. During a siege in Transylvania, the Turks issued a challenge to officers for a "Western-style joust" – the loser being declared upon decapitation. Smith took up the challenge and won. However, with characteristic pride, one head was not good enough for him, and he issued a challenge for the Turks to regain the head. Smith won two more duels before the fighting was done.<sup>32</sup> The town was then taken, and Smith received a coat of arms in return.<sup>33</sup> This experience was the high point of his service in Eastern Europe.

After this achievement of 'gentleman' status, Smith was transferred to fight in Wallachia. As he was heading to this new front, his group was ambushed and Smith, wounded, was left for dead. Realizing from his armour that he was not just an average soldier, scavengers took him to a slave market where he was purchased and then given to his owner's brother.<sup>34</sup> Here he was beaten and over-worked. At his first opportunity, he killed his owner while working in some fields and escaped, slowly making his way back to Western Europe. All we know of these heroic tales have come to us by Smith's own hands, making us wonder the extent to which Smith wrote these works for the purpose of self-promotion (a theme of chapters two and three).

These, of course, are very brief summaries of the subjects' early lives and influences, of which we know little. However, their histories illustrate a common trend between both Champlain and Smith. Prior to travelling to North America, both of these men had become accomplished soldiers and had developed skills for living in environments that were quite

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<sup>32</sup> McPeak, 38.

<sup>33</sup> Barbour, *Three Worlds*, 48-49.

<sup>34</sup> McPeak, 39. For details on the Muslim use of European slaves see Robert Davis, *Christian Slaves and Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003). Although Davis was writing about the slave trade on the Barbary Coast, he makes a number of interesting points about the size of the trade around the Islamic world, and the impact that this trade had on Europe.

different from their own. Furthermore, through their early travels, Champlain to the West Indies and Smith to Eastern Europe, both men had also interacted with non-Europeans, people who in post-colonial discourse frequently occupy the term 'cultural others' – a category shared with the original inhabitants of North America. The influence of this interaction is difficult to gauge, but based on Champlain's experience in the West Indies and Smith's lust for adventure rather than ideological warfare, it seems likely that these experiences helped shape their preconceptions of the North American people.

It is also interesting to note that both fought for Henri IV as he battled against Spain in Brittany from 1594 to 1598. Although the relevance of such a fact may never be known completely, as Smith was a mercenary and Champlain's role is not well chronicled, it is clear that the main things that these men had in common was enough military acumen to move through the ranks of their respective armies, and ample psychological preparation for their North American travels. It seems most likely that when these men set foot upon North American soil they were ready to learn from the aboriginal people and do whatever it took to establish settlements across the Atlantic.

Unlike Champlain, who was influenced by many different people and experiences, it is clear that John Smith's military career made the biggest impact on his life. Karen Kupperman has observed how his military training would have influenced him: "When a soldier such as John Smith speaks of Indian treachery he is actually saying that the Indians are worthy opponents."<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, one can see the tactical aspect of John Smith in his first work, *A True Relation*:

sixe or seaven daies we spent only in trayning our men to march, fight, and scirmish in the woods. These willing minds to this action, so quickned their understanding in this exercise, as in all judgements wee were better able to fight

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<sup>35</sup> Karen Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640*, (Totowa, N.J., 1980), 129.

with Powhatans whole force in our order of battle amongst the Trees, (for Thicks there is few) then the Fort was to repulse 400.<sup>36</sup>

Of primary importance to this passage is not that Smith was running his men through drills to prepare for a voyage inland, but rather that he demonstrated the military flexibility, or problem solving, for which he was famed in Eastern Europe. His Eastern European and Protestant military experiences prepared him to take a more flexible approach in North America, both intellectually as Kupperman has observed, and tactically as shown above. This passage also reveals Smith's relationship with the aboriginal people in Virginia, although multi-faceted (as will be shown later in this chapter), it had a strong military component that was drawn from his earlier experience. This parallel is less clear in the life of Champlain. However, as was shown in the introduction, Jean Lévesque drew the comparison of both being men of action: "Champlain n'a pas la sympathie de Lescarbot, la naïveté de Sagard ni le détachement de Cartier; il serait plutôt le représentant d'un point de vue mitoyen, nous dirons le point de vue de l'homme d'action. Comme [John] Smith d'ailleurs."<sup>37</sup> Unlike Smith's record, this view is not clear in *Des Sauvages*.

By the early years of the seventeenth century the trading relationship between the French and North American peoples was already strong and well defined. The Algonquian people around Jamestown, however, had less contact with Europeans than those in Acadie and the Saint Lawrence valley. But it is clear they too had intermittent contact throughout the sixteenth century. The most pertinent example was the failed Roanoke Island colony

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<sup>36</sup> John Smith, *A True Relation of such occurrences and accidents of note, as hath hapned in Virginia, since the first planting of that Collony, which is now resident in the South part thereof, till the last return*, in Philip Barbour, (ed.), *The Complete Works of John Smith (1580-1631)*, vol. I, (Chapel Hill, 1986), 85.

<sup>37</sup> Lévesque, "Représentation de l'Autre et Propagande Coloniale dans les Récits de John Smith en Virginie et de Samuel de Champlain en Nouvelle-France (1615-1618)," *Canadian Folklore Canadien*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1995), 105. My Translation: "Champlain did not have Lescarbot's sympathy, Sagard's naivety nor Cartier's detachment; he was rather the representative of a common point of view, we could say the point of view of a man of action. Like Smith elsewhere."

(1584 - 1587), which was located nearby along the coast south of Chesapeake Bay – the homeland of the Virginian Algonquians. It seems likely that neighbouring nations (those in the vicinity of Jamestown) would have been aware of the presence of these early colonists. This was not the only contact in this region either. Earlier, during the 1560s and 70s, the Spanish also interacted with these people, sending a contingent of Jesuit priests in 1571. It is generally thought that all of these relationships in Virginia were hostile.<sup>38</sup> Although the Virginian Algonquians knew of Europe's existence, nothing existed like the annual contact between seasonal European fishers and traders and coastal North Americans farther North. In some respects, the Virginia environment in 1607 was more similar to Cartier's experience in the St. Lawrence than Champlain's.<sup>39</sup>

This was the world into which Samuel de Champlain and John Smith arrived. Influenced by their upbringing, travels, accounts of North America (both first and second hand), and above all their military experience, these two men arrived on North American soil. It is here their influences can be seen most clearly, and the similarity between them most apparent. However, there were also some major differences that affected how they depicted their North American experiences to a European audience. First, as shown in the previous paragraph, the French and English experience in North America was completely different. This is an important distinction because such previous relationships may have provided an opportunity for Champlain to learn a more specific set of skills. For example, based on his conversations in *Des Sauvages* it appears that Champlain had adequate knowledge of a native tongue, whereas in Smith's account it seems that the language was

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<sup>38</sup> Helen Rountree, *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia Through Four Centuries*, (University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 15-16.

<sup>39</sup> Like the Jamestown Voyage, Cartier entered into a world in which the aboriginal people had contact with Europeans, but not enough to really understand them. The St. Lawrence by the time of Champlain's arrival had extensive contact with the natives in the region. A good example of this took place during Champlain's first voyage in 1603, on which two aboriginal men were returning from a stay in Europe, providing ample time and opportunity for Champlain to become better versed in the new land. (Champlain, *Works*, 98-99)

completely foreign to him. This is seen in Champlain's work in a significant section of his account in which he discussed theological concepts with an Innu leader (see below), whereas Smith illustrated his trouble with the language by telling his readers that he had to communicate, "with the best languages and signes of thanks I could expresse."<sup>40</sup> Second, Smith and Champlain interacted with different people, who had different customs and beliefs, therefore resulting in different observations. This is of foremost importance in any comparison being made – the Virginian Algonquians, Mi'kmaq, and Innu were as different from each other as the French were from the English. Third, and perhaps most important to remember, the two men were writing for different reasons. It seems most likely that Champlain's account was, or derived from, a royal report. The foundation of such reporting would have been accuracy in description – an attempt to bring the St. Lawrence to Fontainebleau. Smith's account is much more of a narrative, in which he plays the central role. Such storytelling forces historians always to bear in mind that perhaps Smith's pen was mightier than his sword. Furthermore, his text was also edited significantly upon its arrival in England in order to serve as promotional material for the Virginia Company. As a result not everything in their writings is comparable. But despite these differences and problems, Champlain and Smith were in similar situations. They were strangers in a strange land, attempting to make that land inhabitable for un-acclimatized Europeans.

There are many factors that come into play that cloud our understanding of these men through the documents attributed to them. Beyond the biases of the authors, the works are also shrouded in a degree of uncertainty. Philip Barbour in his introduction to *The Complete Works of John Smith* reminded his readers that *A True Relation* was published without

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<sup>40</sup>Smith, *A True Relation*, 67.

“knowledge, permission, or supervision.”<sup>41</sup> As a result, Barbour believed that the text was heavily edited, noting “that Smith himself was the independent author of only a relatively small part of all that was published in his name.”<sup>42</sup> He later made the statement: “the 1608 text is clearly corrupt.”<sup>43</sup> There has been an equal amount of discussion, if not more, regarding Champlain’s *Brief Discours*. Historian Luca Codignola, who has studied the authenticity of this document, wrote: “It is my firm opinion that Champlain did not author that manuscript.”<sup>44</sup> Despite Codignola’s conviction on the document, David Quinn told his readers “though he [Codignola] is not prepared (at least at present) to endorse my firm conviction that there was an original, that it was presented to Henry IV and was retained by him as a secret report, while the existing narrative and its illustrations were a substitute only.”<sup>45</sup> Quinn’s feeling on this document is: “Most of ‘Brief Discours’ is made up of some parts of the original (as I think) but much the greater part, including the illustrations, are not Champlain’s, but a narrative and pictures put together from other contemporary sources or invented.”<sup>46</sup> Marcel Trudel pointed out that many scholars doubt that *Brief Discours* is an actual account because of a number of chronological problems, but he also showed that on two separate occasions Champlain alluded to voyages to the West Indies in his other works. Trudel ended his discussion on the reliability of this document by mentioning that the work only began to be published under Champlain’s name in 1859, causing him to conclude: “we have no right to include the ‘Brief Discours’ among Champlain’s works.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Barbour, ed., *The Complete Works of John Smith (1580-1631)*, vol. I, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Barbour, ed., *The Complete Works of John Smith (1580-1631)*, vol. I, lxi.

<sup>43</sup> Barbour, ed., *The Complete Works of John Smith (1580-1631)*, vol. I, 8.

<sup>44</sup> Luca Codignola, personal communication. For a more detailed discussion of Codignola’s opinion see: “Le Prétendu Voyage de Samuel de Champlain aux Indes Occidentales, 1599-1601.” in Madeleine Frédéric and Serge Jaumain, (eds.), *La Relation de Voyage*, (Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, Centre d’études Canadiennes, 1999), 61-80.

<sup>45</sup> Quinn, “Henri Quatre and New France,” 19.

<sup>46</sup> Quinn, “Henri Quatre and New France,” 19. The parenthesis is Quinn’s.

<sup>47</sup> Trudel, “Samuel de Champlain.”



What then are we to make of these two accounts? When dealing with the case of Champlain the situation is much easier. The only major concern with his writings lies in the authorship of *Brief Discours*, while the rest of the documents being used for this thesis stand on much firmer ground. Furthermore, although a document that has been used for this chapter has been deemed considerably corrupt, it does not stand in the way of Champlain's claims to have visited the West Indies. Therefore, because most historians believe that Champlain did visit the West Indies in the last few years of the sixteenth century, and that the account does resemble the West Indies of that epoch, a *Brief Discours* can be used to provide insight into the types of things Champlain would have seen, enabling us to use this document to gain insights into the influences this experience would have had on him. Throughout this thesis this work will be used in terms of how such experiences would have impacted Champlain's outlook on the Americas, rather than directly attributing those experiences to him.

The corruption involved in Smith's first work is much more difficult to deal with. How does one decipher Smith's views of the aboriginal people from a text that has undergone heavy editing on the other side of the Atlantic? Being Smith's first work from Virginia, this text is too valuable to discount wholesale. In order to use this text one must understand the goals of the editors and err on the side of caution when touching the issues that were important to them. For the most part the Virginia Company's goal in publishing this document was to dispel many of the negative myths (which were often realities) circulating around England in the first few years of the colony. Barbour claimed that in England, "rumors of disillusionment and dissatisfaction in Virginia were already rife" by the time Smith's letter crossed the Atlantic.<sup>48</sup> One of these rumours was "that the Indians were

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<sup>48</sup> Barbour, ed., *The Complete Works of John Smith (1580-1631)*, vol. I, 5.

far less tractable than early reports had intimated.”<sup>49</sup> This point is of primary importance for this chapter as it calls into question much of Smith’s writing on the aboriginal people. Has the picture handed down to us been painted rosier than Smith intended? Despite this problem, Philip Barbour has endeavoured to note places in the text that he felt were more the writing of the original editor rather than that of Smith himself. With Barbour’s aid, a firm knowledge of Smith’s background, as well as knowledge of his other writings, this work can be used for the purposes of this thesis.

Both the works of Champlain and Smith raise interesting questions about language use when referring to the native peoples. In *A True Relation* the dominant word that John Smith used was *indian*, which appeared forty-two times. However, from time to time he also used the word *salvage*, which appeared twelve times, *people*, which appeared twenty-three times, and *infidel* and *inhabitant*, which appeared once and thrice respectively.<sup>50</sup> The difference in word choice seems to depend on the context. The word *indian* seems to be used most often when the nationality of the aboriginal is not known. For example, Smith wrote, “Our provision now being within twentie dayes spent, the Indians brought us great store both of Corne and bread ready made.”<sup>51</sup> Likewise, the terms *people* and *inhabitant* were most often used when Smith was writing of a defined group, such as “The next day another King of that nation called Kekataugh, having received some kindnes of me at the Fort, kindly invited me to a feast at his house, the people from all places flocked to see me.”<sup>52</sup> Smith used *infidel* to refer to the native people as non-Christians, as the Oxford English Dictionary defines it. But, unfortunately there is little accounting for his occasional use of

<sup>49</sup> Barbour, ed., *The Complete Works of John Smith (1580-1631)*, vol. I, 5.

<sup>50</sup> The word search was done on Edward Arber’s 1910 edition of Smith’s works, found at *Virtual Jamestown*, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/jamestown-browse?id=J1007>, (January 23, 2004).

<sup>51</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, Edward Arber, ed.

<sup>52</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, Edward Arber, ed.

the word *salvage*. When it appears it is often in the same context for which he used either *people* or *indian*. This could be the work of the original editor, or evidence that the word was more of a synonym with *indian* than its more pejorative definition suggests.<sup>53</sup>

If one is to believe Champlain to be the author of *Brief Discours* – or that its author was a contemporary of Champlain’s – then he can be seen as having made a similar distinction between words as well. In this document the difference and reasoning for each word choice is much more clear. In *Brief Discours* the author used both the terms *sauvage* and *indien*. *Sauvage* appeared most often in discussions about natives who were not influenced by the Spanish presence. For example, when the author first made landfall in Guadeloupe after crossing the Atlantic, he wrote, “De ladicte Isle nous feusmes à vnne autre isle nommée la Gardaloupe, qui est fort montaigneuse, habitée de sauuages;”<sup>54</sup> however when discussing the natives of Mexico City, the author wrote, “Quand aux autres Indiens qui sont soubz la domination du Roy d’Espagne...”<sup>55</sup> The difference here appears to be the aboriginal proximity to European development and ‘civilisation.’ The differentiation in this work is important because in *Des Sauvages* Champlain rarely deviated from the term *sauvage*, possibly because of the lack of a permanent European presence.<sup>56</sup>

The variation in terminology for both Smith and Champlain suggests a complex method of understanding and describing the aboriginal people of North America to a European audience, each word having a slightly different connotation. The difference between Champlain’s words reveals a common theme in French colonisation as it relates to the aboriginal people. Olive Dickason explained, “When an Amerindian was converted to

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<sup>53</sup> For fuller discussion of this topic and contemporary definitions please see the appendix.

<sup>54</sup> Biggar, (ed.) *Brief Discours*, 11. My Translation: “From the said island we passed another island named the Gardaloupe, which is very mountainous, inhabited by savages”

<sup>55</sup> Biggar, (ed.) *Brief Discours*, 63. My Translation: “When the other Indians who are under the domination of the King of Spain.”

<sup>56</sup> The appendix shows a clear increase in Champlain’s vocabulary between each work studied.

Christianity, he was legally considered to be a French citizen, with full rights...<sup>57</sup> It seems from the examples above that the author of *Brief Discours* was separating those aboriginal people who were 'civilised,' and therefore equal in the eyes of the French, from those who were not, by using the term *indien* to describe the former and *sauvage* to describe the latter.

What is most interesting is that although this word choice can be seen as hinging on European conceptions of civility, Smith's fits much more into an attempt to describe peoples who fell into various well-defined groups. Smith's word choice demonstrates that he understood the Virginian Algonquians to have been a people divided into towns, villages, and kingdoms; that is, as a people with clearly defined political boundaries – an important observation given that the emperor Powhatan had spent many years consolidating the communities around the Chesapeake into one organization. Based on Smith's previous military experience, the importance of alliances may have been key, making the identification of these types of units of primary importance. Perhaps, Smith's use of *indian*, *people* and *sauvage* fits into Karen Kupperman's observation of English settlement in her book *Settling with the Indians*, where she observed, "they [North Americans] were subject to this form of 'contempt' not because they were racially different or savage, but because they were lumped in the minds of colonial leaders in the same status category as low-born English people."<sup>58</sup> Smith's word choice, however, would need to be studied more thoroughly to come to that conclusion. Basically, Smith and Champlain made similar statements (although Smith also made an interesting political observation) about the aboriginal people with whom they came

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<sup>57</sup> Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage*, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984), 274. Before one gets too rosy of a picture from this quotation, one ought to consider what follows: "...including the privilege of living in France without any further declaration of naturalization. But whatever land he received was granted either by the French crown or by French individuals, and not by mere assumption of aboriginal right."

<sup>58</sup> Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians*, 3.

into contact by grading them on a scale of 'civility' based on both internal and external comparisons.

The "civility scale" was also used in gauging the appearance of the native peoples. There are two areas in which Smith and Champlain made comparable statements. The first common observation was of feasting. Smith wrote that the Virginian Algonquians came across "with such a Majestie as I cannot expresse, nor yet have often seene, either in Pagan or Christian; with a kinde countenance hee bad mee welcome, and caused a place to bee made by himselfe to sit."<sup>59</sup> Like Smith, Champlain sat beside a Grand Sagamore at a feast. Champlain wrote of their table manners, "ils mangent fort sallement: car quand ils ont les mains grasses, ils les frotent à leurs cheueux, ou bien au poil de leurs chiens..."<sup>60</sup> Smith's perception seems much more positive than Champlain's.

The difference between North American cultures is of primary importance here. The Virginian Algonquians were sedentary and agricultural, whereas the Innu whom Champlain was observing were hunter/gatherers. Such a distinction is important because the Virginian Algonquians may have been more concerned with cleanliness than were the Innu, because of the permanence of their location and lifestyle. In such a light it is possible that Smith and Champlain would have made similar comments as each other, had they been in opposite situations. Nonetheless, the contrast helps to reveal the explorers' attitudes towards the people with whom they interacted.

A similar line is drawn regarding nudity, or at least the scarcity of clothing. Smith recorded Powhatan as having: "...such grave and Majesticall countenance, as drave me into

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<sup>59</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 65.

<sup>60</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 102. My Translation: "they are very dirty eaters: because when they have greasy hands they rub them on their hair, or else on the fur of their dogs."

admiration to see such state in a naked Salvage.”<sup>61</sup> Champlain’s description was much less personal, merely recounting the details of an Algonquin ceremony following a military victory: “Aussi tost toutes les femmes & filles commencerent à quitter leurs robbes de peaux, & se meirent toutes nuës monstrans leur nature, neantmoins paree de Matachia, qui sont patenostres & cordons entre-lassez, faicts de poil de Porc-espice, qu’ils teignent de diuerses couleurs.”<sup>62</sup> The distinction between the tales of these men is interesting. One wonders whether Smith’s selections were edited in order to make North America look more positive for settlement, or whether Champlain’s role as a royal informant may have played a part in how he recounted his experiences. As a function of Champlain’s royal task, his account was primarily descriptive, whereas Smith narrated much more of a story. The result being that Smith was more personal, whereas Champlain’s focus was on those surrounding him – an attempt at objectivity.

Despite the stylistic differences between these men, both their comments on the natives’ feast and nudity reveal a separation between narrator and the society that they were observing. In Smith’s comments on nudity he claimed it “druve me into admiration to see such state in a naked Salvage.” This shows that Smith deemed this action to have been uncharacteristic and unusual for the average aboriginal person, that for him they did not frequently attain such a high ‘state.’ However, in contrast to this previous statement, Smith also told his readers that the native leadership, primarily Powhatan, came to the feast “with such a Majestie as I cannot expresse, nor yet have often seene, either in Pagan or Christian.” This suggests that he viewed some aboriginal people in similar terms to Europeans of a

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<sup>61</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 53. The square brackets are Barbour’s. Also, a footnote immediately following this passage informs us “The jerky style of writing here suggests cutting.” (ft. 125)

<sup>62</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 107-108. Author’s Translation: “Suddenly all of the women and girls began to take off their skin robes, and stripped completely naked showing their nature, nevertheless wearing Matachia, which are beads and braided cords, made of Porcupine skin, that is dyed in diverse colours.”

higher social status. Likewise, in noting their eating habits Champlain was inadvertently stating that these were below the European standard, or less civil. In both cases each man has revealed the scale which they were applying to the aboriginal people. This reinforces Kupperman, who was quoted earlier as suggesting that the apparatus for judgement during this period was based on status rather than race or ethnicity. These early works by Smith and Champlain show that being from North America and non-Christian did not necessarily prevent Europeans from seeing in some aboriginal people characteristics which they admired. Whether the image was more sympathetic, as in the case of Smith, or rejected, as in the case of Champlain, at its core the image was fabricated in Europe.

In terms of content in these two documents, a major area in which Smith and Champlain differed was in their interpretation of religion. For the most part Smith did not discuss religious issues in detail. When he did it was often with much more brevity than Champlain. For example, Smith revealed he believed all natives participated in human sacrifice when he told his readers: "so fat they fed mee, that I much doubted they intended to have sacrificed mee to the *Quiyoughquosicke*, which is a superiour power they worship; a more uglier thing cannot be described: one they have for chief sacrifices, which also they call *Quiyoughquosick*."<sup>63</sup> He finished the selection, which only takes up a page, with "they acknowledge no resurrection."<sup>64</sup> In a similar fashion as the previous discussion, this section on religion is more story than description. The passage is very brief and represents Smith's personality well by reinforcing his image as a man of action rather than of theology.

Champlain on the other hand revealed that he was much more concerned with matters of religion (and possibly much more capable of dialogue). In his third chapter of *Des Sauvages*, Champlain chronicled a theological discussion with an Innu leader. In this

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<sup>63</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 59.

<sup>64</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 59.

discussion they shared many stories covering topics such as the creation of the earth, the afterlife, the devil, and redemption through Jesus Christ.<sup>65</sup> Near the end of this discussion Champlain wrote, “Voilà pourquoy ie croy qu’il n’y a aucune loy parmy eux, ne sçauēt que c’est d’adorer & prier Dieu, & vivent la plus part comme bestes brutes, & croy que promptement ils seroient reduicts bons Chrestiens si l’on habitoit leurs terres, ce qu’ils desireroient la plus part.”<sup>66</sup> Despite the negative conclusion at which Champlain arrived, he did reveal that his opinion was primarily based on faith issues rather than an inherent feeling of superiority. Likewise, referring to Adam and Eve, he showed that the Innu were equal in God’s eyes, writing: “Comme Adam sommeilloit, Dieu print vne cotte dudict Adam, & en forma Eue, qu’il luy donna pour compagnie, & que c’estoit le verité qu’eux & nous estiōs venus de ceste façon, & non de fleches comme ils croyent.”<sup>67</sup> This belief that North Americans and Europeans were all sons and daughters of Adam and Eve was common in most Catholic kingdoms at the time – the Pope having issued decrees in 1493 and 1512 declaring the people of America to be descendants of the first man and woman and therefore making them subjects to evangelism.<sup>68</sup> This also supports Kupperman’s argument that Europeans initially viewed the aboriginal people on a scale of status/civility over race/genetics.

The difference in religious observation and commentary can best be explained by looking at each man’s background. Although Smith took part in many military campaigns that found their root in religion, his frequent travels and detours while on route from battle

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<sup>65</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 111-118.

<sup>66</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 117. My Translation: “This is why I believe that there is no law among them, nor know what it is to worship and pray to God, and live most of the time like brutal beasts, and believe that they could quickly become good Christians if we lived on their land, which they desire for the most part.”

<sup>67</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 112. My Translation: “While Adam slept, God took a rib from the said Adam, and out of it formed Eve, who he gave to him for company, and that this is the truth that they and us originated in this way, and not from arrows like they believed.”

<sup>68</sup> Peter N. Moogk, *La Nouvelle France*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2000), 19.



to battle suggest he was more interested in sightseeing and hair-raising adventures than battling the foes of Christendom. This previous experience helps explain why *A True Relation* dealt more with events and feelings than with theology and politics. In a completely different vein, Champlain's background was much more centred on religion. The religious focus probably developed quite early for Champlain, as it is likely that he converted from Protestantism to Catholicism before any of his travels. Such a conversion may have given root to an evangelical tack as it suggests internal theological contemplation. Likewise, in the aftermath of the conversion of Henri IV and the Wars of Religion, religious matters may have been of greater importance to the French crown than they would have been for the business-oriented Virginia Company, and therefore manifested themselves more dominantly in a royal report. It is clear that the differences in religion are firmly based in the environments that produced both men.

Although their general observations differed, the common bond of settling in a new land and overcoming the difficulties encountered also unified many of their opinions. Here again the influence of their military experience played a major role. In his early years, Champlain must have developed the skills necessary to adapt to unexpected situations through the background knowledge he had acquired in the West Indies, and his nautical experiences growing up in Brouage. In North America these skills were used in learning about the land and how to live on it, always needing to be prepared for attacks from other Europeans, unknown peoples of the interior, and most importantly the weather. Similarly, during Smith's time in Eastern Europe he demonstrated the ability to think on his feet and adapt to unexpected and difficult situations. On a number of occasions in Eastern Europe Smith provided crucial skills on the battlefield, helping his side to victory and earning him a coat of arms. Entering a much more tumultuous region in Virginia, these skills were

necessary in dealing with some powerful aboriginal leaders, and an outpost riddled with internal conflict and violence. Through their common military background, and information provided by those who were familiar with travel to the Americas, Smith and Champlain knew the North American peoples would have to play a key role in any European attempt to become more familiar with North America and its interior.

For both men it was clear that if they were to be successful, a productive relationship had to be struck with the North Americans. In Champlain's case this relationship was primarily based on exploration. For example, throughout *Des Sauvages* Champlain made reference to dialogues he had with the aboriginal people he encountered, and information they gave to him. In learning about the geography beyond the La Chine rapids, Champlain consulted with three different native groups at different times to verify his information. Furthermore, he concluded three of his chapters with a sentence similar to: "Voilà au certain tout ce que j'ay veu cy dessus, & ouy dire aux Sauvages sur ce que nous les auons interrogez."<sup>69</sup> Because of the short time Champlain was in North America in 1603, this suggests that before his arrival he decided the help and support of the North American people was necessary to provide a thorough and accurate report for the French monarch.

The situation in Jamestown was considerably different. First, Smith was not in Virginia to write a report, but rather to settle. Second, Virginia did not have the extensive interaction between European and Aboriginal that occurred in the St. Lawrence. Nonetheless, Karen Kupperman has shown that many colonists saw the need for a certain amount of adaptation in North America: "Though the writers believed in the general superiority of English technology, they were clearly aware of the fact that they would have to

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<sup>69</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 157. My Translation: "This is all I could see, or hear from the savages whom we questioned." It should be noted that "& ouy dire aux Sauvages" has been translated to "or hear from the savages" in consultation with the context of the quotation and H.H. Langton's own translation (Biggar was the general editor). Three other chapters end with a similar message, further reinforcing this message.

learn from the Indian in order to survive.”<sup>70</sup> Smith needed the aboriginal people for two reasons: First, Jamestown began to run low on food frequently, requiring them to procure it from surrounding villages. Throughout Smith’s narrative he recounted tales of traveling from village to village trading for corn. It was clear to him that the infant colony would fail disastrously without this sort of aboriginal help. Second, in order to find aboriginal villages Smith also needed to explore. And like Champlain, he used the aboriginal people to learn about this new land.<sup>71</sup> Although Kupperman suggested otherwise in *Settling with the Indians*, John Smith did not feel most Englishmen accepted this approach towards the aboriginal people. Smith wrote:

within three or foure mile we hired a Canow, and 2. Indians to row us the next day a fowling... Though some wise men may condemn this too bould attempt of too much indiscretion, yet if they well consider the friendship of the Indians in conducting me, the desolatenes of the country, the probabilitie of some lacke, and the malicious judges of my actions at home, as also to have some matters of worth to incourage our adventures in England, might well have caused any honest minde to have done the like, as wel for his own discharge as for the publike good:<sup>72</sup>

Smith did not think his fellow Englishmen would have found this kind of interaction with the aboriginal people acceptable. That Smith would make such decisions knowing there were those at Jamestown and in England who thought otherwise, and disapproved, demonstrates that he had come to a conscious decision to rely on the Virginian Algonquians.

The most common tie between Smith and Champlain in this regard was their adoption of the canoe. During the trip recounted in the previous quotation Smith left his men and barge and joined the native guides to travel further upstream. Later that year, he also showed that the English adopted the canoe for transportation on a wider scale. Smith wrote, “Captaine Nuport returned with them that came aboard, leaving me and Maister

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<sup>70</sup> Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians*, 104.

<sup>71</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 45.

<sup>72</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 45.

Scrivener a shore, to follow in Canowes.”<sup>73</sup> Throughout this selection there is no mention of any natives aboard Smith’s or Scrivener’s vessels, suggesting the English had adopted the canoe for their inland travels, abandoning European designs.

Smith, however, did not praise this watercraft half as much as Champlain.<sup>74</sup> Throughout his account Champlain returned to the benefits of this craft: “Se meirent ainsi pres de deux cents Canots, qui vont estrangemēt: Car encore que nostre Chaloupe fut bien armee, si alloient-ils plus viste que nous.”<sup>75</sup> Later he wrote: “Il y a quelques petites riuieres qui ne sont point nauigables, si ce n’est pour les Canos des Sauuages, ausquelles il y a quantité de saults.”<sup>76</sup> And for exploration: “Mais qui les voudroit passer, il se faudroit accommoder des Canos des Sauuages, qu’vn homme peut porter aisement: car de porter bateaux, c’est chose laquelle ne se peut faire en si bref temps comme il le faudroit pour pouuoir s’en retourner en Frâce, si l’on n’y hyuernoit.”<sup>77</sup> Despite all of these comments, it was Smith who most often told his readers he travelled by canoe, whereas Champlain only notified the reader once that he used the North American vessel. Again, the difference in narrative is apparent: Champlain’s account was much more like an instruction book for those who followed, whereas Smith was telling a tale that had much more to do with his own actions. Therefore, whether Champlain paddled a canoe was less important to the purpose of his narrative than were the benefits that the craft provided.

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<sup>73</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 73.

<sup>74</sup> The different types of tree used in canoe construction may have caused this. Birch trees, which were commonly used by the Innu and Mi’kmaq for the hull of their vessels, do not grow south of New England. In Virginia, Smith would have encountered dug out canoes, which would have been much heavier than the craft that Champlain encountered. For more information see *The Handbook of North American Indians* vol. XV: Northeast. – Micmac and Virginian Algonquian entries.

<sup>75</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 104. My Translation: “There came about two hundred canoes, who go strangely: For although our rowboats were well equipped, they went faster than us.”

<sup>76</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 130-131. My Translation: “There are some small rivers that are not navigable, if it was not for the canoes of the savages, in which there are many rapids.”

<sup>77</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 152. My Translation: “But if one wants to pass them, they must use the canoes of the savages, which a man can easily carry: for to carry a boat is something that cannot be done in the short time one has before returning to France, if they do not winter.”

Neither Smith nor Champlain had a completely rosy picture of the North American people they encountered. Their first year in North America was full of fear and distrust towards these people. Although they needed the North Americans, and adapted to some of their ways, these men were not prepared to completely trust what appeared as aboriginal benevolence. This is especially the case with John Smith. Although Smith was quite successful at procuring corn for the settlement, he could never separate himself from a feeling of distrust. On one of his trading voyages Smith wrote, "In my returne to Paspahegh, I traded with that churlish and treacherous nation."<sup>78</sup> On another occasion when writing of Powhatan he noted, "Experience had well taught me to beleieve his friendship, till convenient opportunity suffred him to betray us."<sup>79</sup> Without any evidence Smith expected Powhatan's benevolence to change. It is unclear whether 'the experience' he drew upon in this passage was from previous encounters with the leader of the Virginian Algonquians, or whether he was referring to his past exploits elsewhere. On another occasion, when some Virginian Algonquians helped Smith in a canoe, he wrote, "This kindnes I found, when I litle expected lesse then a mischiefe..."<sup>80</sup> This sentiment was also revealed when he was attacked in the fields outside of the town. On this occasion he wrote: "I knew their faining love is towards me, not without a deadly hatred..."<sup>81</sup> Smith's motivation for this distrust seems to be born out of experience in both North America and in his military service – where the distinction between friend and foe was made quite clearly. Although he was able to see substantial political divisions in the aboriginal societies he encountered, he also saw all aboriginal people as having many negative traits in common.

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<sup>78</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 39. On this occasion his distrust may have been warranted. Barbour informs the reader in the endnotes that Jamestown was built on Paspahegh territory.

<sup>79</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 69.

<sup>80</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 73.

<sup>81</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 87.

Underwritten in this distrust seems to be that friendly aboriginals were more the exception than the rule.

Kupperman also observed this fear and distrust of the aboriginal community in English writing. However, she emphasized that this treachery/distrust was more a product of an English worldview and the situation in which the English found themselves than an overall perception of the native people. She explained:

English expectation of American treachery was a direct result of their own vulnerability, and their assumption that fear is what holds society together. As long as they were dependant on the Indians for food and knowledge, and outnumbered by highly skilled marksmen, they expected treachery in America as they would have done in Europe.<sup>82</sup>

And as will be shown in chapter three, “Treachery in an opponent was not only expected but even in some ways admired. A treacherous foe or rival was capable, one to be taken seriously and not easily dismissed.”<sup>83</sup> In this light then, it appears that although ‘friendly aboriginals were more the exception than the rule’ the same rule held true for Europeans.

Champlain did not emphasize distrust and treachery as often as Smith. Only on one occasion in *Des Sauvages* did he state some of his apprehensions: “Ils ont vne meschanceté en eux, qui est, vser de vengeance & estre grands menteurs, gens en qui il ne fait pas trop bon s’asseurer, sinon qu’avec raison & la force à la main.”<sup>84</sup> Champlain was not very specific as to what governed this belief, but it may have been an over-riding idea that the native people were “priuez de la raison”<sup>85</sup> and “qui est bestiale.”<sup>86</sup> There are three possible influences for why Champlain would have made fewer of these sorts of statements. First, emphasizing treachery and distrust would have undermined his key informants and made his own account

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<sup>82</sup> Kupperman, *Indians and English*, (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University, 2000), 219.

<sup>83</sup> Kupperman, *Indians and English*, 219.

<sup>84</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 110-111. My Translation: “They have one meanness to them, which is they are prone to vengeance and are great liars, people whom you cannot trust without reason and the force of the hand.”

<sup>85</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 63. My Translation: “deprived of reason.”

<sup>86</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 118. My Translation: “who are beast like.”

fundamentally flawed. Second, he was not planning on remaining in the St. Lawrence Valley for any length of time (on this occasion) and such issues may not have been as important. Third, and most importantly, perhaps the cultural conditioning that had occurred between traders, fishers, and the aboriginal people in the years leading up to Champlain's arrival fostered a more trusting relationship. Nonetheless, given Champlain's statement above, it seems likely that opinions of both men were highly influenced by their inexperience in North America (and by contrast their European perspective), and their inability to understand a North American world-view.

Despite this distrust, both Smith and Champlain emphasized the positive relationship that they had fostered with the aboriginal people. Nothing made this clearer than their statements that the local native groups had invited them, or knew that they wished, to stay on their territory. Three passages in which they make this clear are listed below:

At his greatnesse [the king of England] hee [Emperor Powhatan] admired, and not a little feared: hee desired mee to forsake Paspahugh [Jamestown], and to live with him upon his River, a Countrie called Capahowasicke: hee promised to give me Corne, Venison, or what I wanted to feede us, Hatchets and Copper wee should make him, and none should disturbe us. This request I promised to performe: and thus having with all the kindnes hee could devise, sought to content me.<sup>87</sup>

This so contented him, as immediately with attentive silence, with a lowd oration he proclaimed me a werowanes of Powhatan, and that all his subjects should so esteeme us, and no man account us strangers nor Paspahughans, but Powhatans, and that the Corne, weoman and Country, should be to us as to his owne people: the proffered kindnes for many reasons we contemned not, but with the best languages and signes of thanks I could expresse, I tooke my leave.<sup>88</sup>

L'un des Sauvages que nous auions amené commença à faire sa harangue, de la bonne reception que leur auoit fait le Roy, & le bon traitement qu'ils auoient receu en France, & qu'ils s'assurassent que sadite Majesté leur vouloit du bien, & desiroit peupler leur terre, & faire paix avec leurs ennemies (qui sont les Irocois) ou leur enuoyer des forces pour les vaincre.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 57.

<sup>88</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 67.

<sup>89</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, 99-100. My Translation: "One of the natives that we brought began to make a speech about the good reception they had with the King, and the good treatment that they received in France, and that they felt assured that the said Majesty wished them well, and desired to people their country, and make peace with their enemies (who are the Iroquois) or to send forces to vanquish them."

There are some fundamental problems that throw the accuracy of these statements into question. The first was language. In the second passage John Smith noted that in a speech Powhatan had welcomed the English into his community. However, immediately following this presentation Smith demonstrated that neither he nor his companions had the verbal skills to communicate their thanks adequately. How then, we must ask, could Smith be so sure that he had understood the meaning of Powhatan's oration?

The second issue follows from this: These are the only accounts that we have of these events. (Although Patricia Seed has shown that the French colonized by using the "Doctrine of Consent."<sup>90</sup>) In the case of the third quotation, the reader assumes that the aboriginal people who were listening to this speech agreed with the French King's motivation because of the absence of strong opposition to what was being said. But to what extent can this be a basis, either then or now, for assuming that the aboriginal communities with whom these men interacted had welcomed them onto their territory? These selections are probably the most delicate sections of Smith and Champlain's works for historians because their inclusion serves a significant political interest, and the fact that both included similar stories suggests more of a common bond towards European travel writing rather than a universal aboriginal welcome to European society.

The first two written works by Champlain and Smith are completely different in style, but similar in substance. It is clear that although both came with prejudices emerging from a strongly Christian Europe, their military and early lives had helped prepare them for an entirely different world. By being more flexible in their approach and relationship with the native people, their prejudices and biases, although very apparent in their writing, did not

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<sup>90</sup> Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640*, (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 62. This has also been discussed in Olive Dickason, "The Sixteenth-Century French Vision of Empire: The Other Side of Self-Determination," *Decentering the Renaissance*, 90-91 and Quinn, 489.



interfere as much in their interactions. Even though they were in completely different situations, both men demonstrated a desire to adapt and work with local North American communities in order to survive in a new environment. They were able to transcend their fear and distrust of aboriginal people and the wilderness to build new outlets for their European homelands. For a brief pause in history it looked like the Europeans were moving towards a sort of harmony with the North American world.

## Chapter 2: Common Ground

### A comparison of Champlain's and Smith's New England experiences

The preceding chapter dealt with Samuel de Champlain's and Captain John Smith's common experiences of planting a year-round settlement in America. This chapter will move forward some years to consider another common experience that they had. On this occasion, instead of having freshly arrived on North American soil, both men traveled to the same region, Norumbega, or New England as John Smith called it.<sup>1</sup> It is in the accounting of their time in New England that the similarities between their perceptions of the aboriginal people began to change. In this case, instead of purely narrating the chronology of events – a style that Champlain continued – Smith took on the role of colonial promoter by making a point rather than telling a story. This key difference plays a significant role in how these documents depict Champlain and Smith's perspectives of the aboriginal people. For this reason this chapter is broken into three sections. The first section fills in the blank space between their earlier voyages and their trips to New England, including a brief discussion of the aboriginal people. The second section addresses some of the technical aspects of their works. Finally, the third section compares Smith's and Champlain's actual observations and comments in these works.

At the end of the summer of 1603, Champlain sailed back to France to discover that Aymar de Chaste, who held the monopoly for the Saint Lawrence valley, had died while the voyage was away. Conveniently for Champlain a new monopoly was granted to Pierre du Gua, Sieur de Monts, the governor of the town of Pons in Saintonge, which was not far from Champlain's hometown of Brouage. Champlain would have been well known to him;

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<sup>1</sup> Smith is credited with first using the term 'New England.'

not only was de Monts with Champlain during his travels in 1603, but both men had also fought in Brittany for the King at the end of the sixteenth century. That they continued to cross paths proved to be a major advantage for Champlain's future, as in 1604 Champlain traveled with de Monts to the shores of the Bay of Fundy. During the next three years Champlain was able to coast the waters between the Minas Basin and Cape Cod, making maps and meeting the inhabitants.

In all Champlain took three separate voyages down the New England coast. In September of 1604 he traveled down from the Ste-Croix River as far as the western side of Penobscot Bay – approximately the same location where Smith began his own travels a decade later. The next year, after losing half of the men to scurvy at the first French settlement on the Ste-Croix River, Champlain got an earlier start and was accompanied by de Monts as they searched for a place to build a new outpost. They were gone for approximately six weeks, between June and August, and reached as far as Nauset Harbour, Massachusetts – which Champlain called Malle barre on account of a sand bar blocking the harbour. By the end of this trip de Monts decided not to move further south, but instead moved the outpost at Ste-Croix to the previously scouted Port Royal in the Annapolis Basin. From there in September 1606 Champlain took his last voyage down the Norumbegan coast, but covered little new ground on account of his traveling companion, Sieur de Poutrincourt, who was appointed lieutenant-governor of Acadia that year, and wished to see much of what Champlain and de Monts had covered the year before.

The transition between Virginia and New England was not as smooth for John Smith. When Smith wrote *A True Relation* he had only spent one year in Virginia. A few months after sending this letter to England, Smith was elected as President of the colony for

the period of one year.<sup>2</sup> However, the early years of Virginia were mired in internal disputes among the English, which plagued Smith's ability to fully focus on the success of the colony. The situation was only fuelled by poor communication with their homeland, which made it difficult to reprimand some of the more aristocratic antagonists. During this period Smith had two problems on his hands: the first concerned the foul attitudes that had existed towards him from the very beginning of the Virginia venture;<sup>3</sup> the second was the tensions created by seeking food for the colonists from the aboriginal people.

The situation went from bad to worse in 1609 when the Virginia Company received its second charter. This document changed the colony's structure, and in lieu of a president Sir Thomas Gates was appointed Governor, and Sir George Sommers, Admiral. These men sailed with a number of Smith's rivals to Virginia once the second charter had been completed. Unfortunately for Smith his enemies arrived safely in Virginia, and Gates and Sommers were shipwrecked off Bermuda, forming the premise for Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Without official word of this change of leadership (which was with Gates and Sommers), and with an increasing number of influential people pitted against Smith the "remaining weeks of Smith's presidency were... disrupted by what amounted to mutiny."<sup>4</sup> By mid-August it was all over. A spark ignited Smith's gunpowder bag severely burning his

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<sup>2</sup> Smith was elected president after a number of other men proved to be useless in the position. Alden Vaughan has described Smith's presidency in this manner: "From the second week in September 1608, through the following August, John Smith ruled the colony almost single-handedly. According to the royal charter he was bound by the advice of his councillors, but their rapid demise – through departure or death – removed that curb. He was bound too by instructions from the London Company, but the colony's needs and the slowness of transatlantic communications left him free to improvise. That did not mean he had everything his own way: neither company nor Indians nor settlers bent cheerfully to the captain's will." Alden T. Vaughan, *American Genesis: Captain John Smith and the Founding of Virginia*, (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1975), 41.

<sup>3</sup> Philip L. Barbour, *The Three Worlds of Captain John Smith*, (London, MacMillan, 1964), 112. From the ocean voyage forward Smith had created significant enemies. Barbour offered this 1612 account of Smith's ship bound troubles as he traveled to Virginia in 1607: "Now Captain Smith, who all this time from their departure from the Canaries, was restrained as a prisoner, upon the scandalous suggestions of some of the chiefe [leaders] (envying his repute), who feigned he intended to usurp the government, murder the Council, and make himself king;" Whether these were true accusations or whether they were petty jealousies is a mystery. Smith, however, was let off, and therefore we must assume that it was the latter.

<sup>4</sup> Barbour, (ed.) *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, vol. I, (Chapel Hill, 1986), lx.

legs. With tensions high in the young colony, and Smith injured, the writing was on the wall. He was sent back to England in early October, never to see Virginia again. Between this time and his 1614 voyage to New England Smith published another account of Virginia, entitled *A Map of Virginia*.

Although he remained in England for a number of years his mind never left the subject of America. During this period of repose Smith continuously attempted to return. It was not until 1614 that he found employment with Marmaduke Rawdon, a cloth worker, who, with three associates, was planning to finance a voyage to New England. The purpose of this voyage was strictly economic. The vessels involved were to hunt whales and find gold, and if neither enterprise was successful they were then to resort to fish and furs.<sup>5</sup> This severely limited how much Smith could explore. Nonetheless, on his only voyage to New England, and last voyage to North America, Smith, like Champlain, made it slightly past Cape Cod before needing to return to the vessels left whaling near Penobscot Bay.

Based on the existing evidence of disease and contact it seems that New England had not changed much in the seven years between Smith's and Champlain's visits. Unlike the Saint Lawrence and post-Jamestown Virginia, few Europeans had come into extended contact with the aboriginal inhabitants of this region; however, the sixteenth century, and earlier, saw many intermittent contacts that helped to shape the knowledge and experience of all parties: Champlain, Smith, and the aboriginal people. James Axtell has made the important observation that "no matter how early a European ship is known to have touched upon New England's shores, Indian reactions or possessions suggest that it had already been preceded by others."<sup>6</sup> Smith and Champlain were by no means odd sights to these people,

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<sup>5</sup> Barbour, *Three Worlds*, 305-306.

<sup>6</sup> James Axtell, *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), 82.

and it seems likely that by the time of their arrival Europeans had lost much of their exotic lustre.

Not only were Europeans and the aboriginal people aware of each other's existence, but each party also had enough experience with the other culture to be able to draw parallels between societies. In *Description of New England* Smith occasionally reached back to his experience in Virginia to add the weight of authority to some of his comments. When discussing other people's views of his proposal to live with the natives, for example, he wrote,

And though many may thinke me more bolde then wise, in regard of their power, dexteritie, treacherie, and inconstancie, having so desperately assaulted and betraied many others: I say but this (because with so many, I have many times done much more in Virginia, then I intended heere, when I wanted that experience Virginia taught me) that to mee it seemes no daunger more then ordinarie.<sup>7</sup>

Champlain also appealed to the past, but rather than using it to validate a claim, he used it to aid his description. For example, he described the people of Norumbega (the Penobscot River area) as “fort basannez, habillez de peaux de castors & autres fourrures, cōme les sauuages Cannadiens & Souriquois: & ont mesme façon de viure.”<sup>8</sup> By the seventeenth century it seems that the aboriginal people had also had enough contact in order to make up their minds about the new visitors. Emphasizing the trading relationship between the French and New England natives, and citing Smith's *Description of New England* as evidence, Kenneth Morrison has noted, “Although other Englishmen fished and traded among the Abenaki, they usually noted that the Indians were decided Francophiles.”<sup>9</sup> For the most part

<sup>7</sup> John Smith, *A Description of New England*, in Philip Barbour (ed.), *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, vol. I, 351.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel de Champlain, *Les Voyages du Sieur de Champlain xaintongeois, capitaine ordinaire pour le Roy, en la marine*, in H.P. Biggar (ed.), *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. I, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 298. My Translation: “very tanned, wearing beaver skin and other furs, like the Canadian natives and Mi'kmaq, and have the same way of life.”

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth M. Morrison, *The Embattled Northeast: The Elusive Ideal of Alliance in Abenaki-Euramerican Relations*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1984), 25. Some scholars call the people under study in this chapter the Abenaki. However, there is some debate as to whether the Abenaki lived in the Gulf of Maine at the time. The

the evidence that Morrison used to support this claim was from after the French had established a permanent presence in Acadia. Furthermore, as will be shown throughout this chapter, the native people around the Gulf of Maine were by no means united under a single mindset. One group may have been francophile, while another anglophile, and many probably somewhere in between.

Although not all of the aboriginal groups were united, documented interaction in the sixteenth century helps to explain why many groups may have been francophiles. James Axtell noted that just nine years after Columbus made his famous voyage Gaspar Corte Real kidnapped “fifty-some” aboriginal people “from what sounds like Maine.”<sup>10</sup> In 1524 Estevão Gomes kidnapped fifty-eight aboriginal people while sailing under the Spanish flag. Earlier that year Giovanni Verrazzano had also encountered ‘Norumbegans’ off the coast of Maine. They refused personal contact, preferring to trade via a cord thrown out to Verrazzano’s ship – suggesting prior negative contact. These events cannot stand alone, however, because they occurred nearly a century before Champlain or Smith set foot on New England soil.

After a half century of silence in the documents, the English returned to New England in 1580.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps even more important for our purposes, however, was Bartholomew Gosnold’s (Smith’s good friend) attempt to set up a winter trading post in 1602. He failed when the aboriginal people turned against him after a number of minor incidents between the two cultures. Little was learned from that experience, it seems, as the next year Martin Pring went to Cape Cod and repeated Gosnold’s earlier mistakes.<sup>12</sup> During

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more recent consensus embodied in the work of Bruce Bourque and Emerson Baker believes that the Etchemin occupied this territory at this time. A brief synopsis of this debate follows later in this chapter.

<sup>10</sup> Axtell, *Beyond 1492*, 82.

<sup>11</sup> Axtell, *Beyond 1492*, 86.

<sup>12</sup> Pring’s men went as far as setting their dogs on the native people.

Champlain's second voyage to the region in 1605, George Waymouth also visited the area, and he kidnapped five aboriginal people, one of whom would play a role in John Smith's failed plan to build a colony in New England just over a decade later. And lastly, in 1607 George Popham, representing the Virginia Company of Plymouth, tried to start a settlement at Sagadahoc. Like Smith's later plan, Popham planned on the support of two of Waymouth's captives: Nahanada, who returned in 1606, and Skidwarres, who returned with Popham. The settlement ultimately failed, because of "inadequate planning, factionalism, and weak leadership... [but] poor indian relations also contributed substantially to its demise."<sup>13</sup> Despite these well-documented accounts fishers and traders whose names and experiences have vanished in the winds of time also frequented the waters of the Gulf of Maine, like the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, and it is highly likely that they had both constructive and deconstructive experiences as well.<sup>14</sup>

Despite at least a century of contact with various European kingdoms not all of the aboriginal people had encountered the strangers from across the sea. On at least one occasion, Champlain observed, "Cabahis l'autre chef peu après arriua aussi avec vingt ou trête de ses cōpagnōs, qui se retirēt apart, & se riouirēt fort de nous veoir: d'autāt que c'estoit la premiere fois qu'ils auoient veu des Chrestiens."<sup>15</sup> This statement and the experience of those men who had travelled in New England before, further emphasizes the dynamic context of this period. It also highlights the varying experiences that Champlain and Smith had as they traveled along the coast of modern-day Maine, New Hampshire, and

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<sup>13</sup> Morrison, 24. – The Virginia Company of London was responsible for Jamestown, whereas the Virginia Company of Plymouth oversaw New England (or Northern Virginia as it was called prior to the adoption of Smith's title).

<sup>14</sup> Unless otherwise noted the information in the last two paragraphs came from: Axtell, "The Exploration of Norumbega: Native Perspectives," *Beyond 1492*, 75-96.

<sup>15</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 294. My Translation: "Cabahis, the other leader, also arrived a bit later with twenty or thirty of his companions who kept to themselves and were very pleased to see us, all the more so since it was the first time they had seen Christians."



Massachusetts. How the aboriginal people responded to each man's arrival depended on a variety of different factors, some of which included how the explorers and their companions acted, but much also hinged on the actions of their predecessors.

The image of this time period in popular culture is one of a dynamic European presence encountering a unified aboriginal community. This was not an accurate image. Seventeenth-century New England was a culturally diverse region with many different peoples, both ethnically and politically. This diversity has made deciphering who the original inhabitants of New England were extremely difficult. Nearly 400 years later scholars continue to debate the identity of the peoples these early explorers encountered. Champlain broke them down into three distinct groupings: Souriquois, Etchemin, and Almouchiquois.<sup>16</sup> The Souriquois are considered to have been the people commonly called the Mi'kmaq today, and the Almouchiquois were the first people he encountered using agriculture on a permanent basis. Bert Salwen in the *Handbook of North American Indians* placed their modern-day descendants' territory beginning just south of the Saco River and extending to the modern Connecticut/New York border. This is approximately where Champlain placed them in his *Voyages*. However, Joe Armstrong noted that the Almouchiquois territory began at the Kennebec.<sup>17</sup> He based this statement on the fact that Champlain had a husband and wife with him as interpreters. Panounias, the husband, was Souriquois and his wife Almouchiquois, and it is she who Champlain noted as the interpreter on the Kennebec. Interestingly, Bruce Bourque has observed that the term Almouchiquois "was dropped almost immediately after Champlain left the Gulf of Maine,"<sup>18</sup> leaving one to wonder

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<sup>16</sup> The secondary literature calls the Almouchiquois 'Armouchiquois.' Almouchiquois is how Champlain recorded the name and therefore will be used throughout this thesis.

<sup>17</sup> Joe Armstrong, *Champlain*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1987), 58.

<sup>18</sup> Bruce Bourque, "Ethnicity on the Maritime Peninsula, 1600-1759," *Ethnohistory*, vol. 36 no. 3, (Summer 1989), 274.

whether these people fell victim to disease or if they fell into a different ethnographic category for other European travelers.

The identity of the Etchemin is even more difficult to pin down. Although Champlain used the term Etchemin to refer to the people stretching from the Ste-Croix River to the Kennebec/Saco Rivers, these appear to be a people far from united. Dean Snow, who was following Frank Speck, has suggested that during this period the Eastern Abenaki occupied the Presumpscot, Androscoggin, Kennebec, and Penobscot Rivers; the Etchemin (modern Maliseet-Passamaquoddy) occupied the Saint John and Ste-Croix River valleys.<sup>19</sup> However, Bruce Bourque has objected to Snow's argument and the "river drainage model" made famous by Speck. Bourque believed in taking the early sources at their word, and considered Champlain's observance of three distinct groups to be true. "North of the Western Etchemin and Almouchiquois," Bourque writes, "lived the Abenaki, another horticultural group."<sup>20</sup> Emerson Baker considered this discrepancy to have been caused by Speck's reputation as a thorough scholar, and has claimed that, "so great was Speck's influence that many of his contemporaries and subsequent scholars ignored the Etechemins *sic*."<sup>21</sup> The works of both Bourque and Baker make it clear that it was the Etchemin and not the Abenaki who lived in this region when Champlain and Smith arrived.

Nonetheless, the sources are vague for this period, making a concrete understanding of the aboriginal people difficult. Most likely, however, these Etchemin communities were organized into small groups who were "far from single minded." Kenneth Morrison told his readers: "According to Pierre Biard, Algonkian societies [such as these] hardly extended past

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<sup>19</sup> Dean Snow, "The Ethnohistoric Baseline of the Eastern Abenaki," *Ethnohistory*, vol. 23 no. 3, (Summer 1976), 291, 294.

<sup>20</sup> Bourque, 259.

<sup>21</sup> Emerson Baker, *Trouble to the Eastward: The Failure of Anglo-Indian Relations in Early Maine*, (PhD. Thesis, The College of William and Mary, 1987), 16.

the influence of a single sachem.”<sup>22</sup> However, Baker has painted a much more diverse picture by claiming, “Sometimes they lived in small bands to facilitate their hunting for moose and deer. At other times they gathered on the coast in large groups where they could fish as well as communicate and trade with distant tribes.”<sup>23</sup> Much like the Mi’kmaq further north, the Etchemin seem to have been a politically diverse people, whose society interacted in a dynamic fashion.

Although these societies seem to have been fairly divided, there was also significant evidence of interaction between community groups, a fact most clearly seen through conflict. Baker has explained “that the natives of Maine had fought battles for generations before the arrival of Europeans.”<sup>24</sup> Champlain showed what this type of conflict was like when he told of a battle that Membertou (a Mi’kmaq chief) was going to fight over the death of Panounias, Champlain’s earlier interpreter. In Champlain’s account it is possible to see tribal divisions and alliances throughout the region. As this chapter progresses it will be shown that some of these alliances were recent creations made with the prompting of closer trade connections with the French, and others may have been relationships spanning decades or even centuries. It is possible to get a glimpse at these relationships through Champlain who wrote:

Le 10. d’Aoust arriua de la guerre Mabretou, lequel nous dit auoir esté à Chouacoet, & auoir tué 20. sauuages & 10. ou 12. de b[la]jessez ; & que Onemechin chef de ce lieu, Marchin, & vn autre auoient esté tué par Sasinou chef de la riuiera de Quinibequi, lequel depuis fut tué par les compagnons d’Onemechin & Marchin. Toute ceste guerre ne fut que pour le subiect de Panounia sauuage de nos amis, lequel, cōme i’ay dict cy dessus auoit esté tué à Narembegue par les gens dudit Onemechin & Marchin.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Morrison, 35.

<sup>23</sup> Baker, 34.

<sup>24</sup> Baker, 34.

<sup>25</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 457. My Translation: “On the tenth of August, Membertou returned from the war and told us that he had been at Saco, and had killed twenty men and wounded ten or twelve; and that Onemechin, the leader of that place, Marchin, and another had been killed by Sasinou, leader from the Kennebec River, who was in turn killed by the companions of Onemechin and Marchin. This entire war was only about Panounias, Native of our friends, who I have said above was killed at Norumbega by the people of the said Onemechin and Marchin.”

In this passage Champlain clarified that Onemechin and Marchin were fighting against Sasinou and Membertou over the death of Panounias. What is interesting is that earlier in the work, during the voyage of 1605, Champlain explained that Sasinou and Marchin (assuming that they are the same people) were neighbouring chiefs along the Kennebec River.<sup>26</sup> It appears that within the three years Champlain was in the New England region the relationships between these two groups dissolved, thus showing the complex dynamics at work within aboriginal society.

Although aboriginal society changed over time, the pace at which change occurred became much more rapid in the years Champlain and Smith met the native people in New England. Neal Salisbury has noted that “When Europeans reached North America, then, the continent’s demographic and political map was in a state of profound flux.”<sup>27</sup> In the Saint Lawrence, for example, the Stadaconans and Hochelagans encountered by Jacques Cartier had disappeared before Champlain visited the region in 1603. In the years surrounding Champlain and Smith, New England was also entering a great time of change. Just after Smith traveled through the region, for example, a number of serious epidemics swept through the area. Ralph Pastore credited Dean Snow and Kim Lanphear with discovering “definite evidence of an initial outbreak of smallpox in 1616, and the possibility of limited outbreaks of disease during the period 1604 to 1616.”<sup>28</sup> Although it is difficult to judge just how much of a toll these diseases took on aboriginal communities prior to permanent settlement in New England, David Jones noted that John Smith considered New England, “well inhabited with a goodly, strong and well proportioned people,” but five years

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<sup>26</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 316.

<sup>27</sup> Neal Salisbury, “Indians’ Old World,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol. 53 (1996), 449.

<sup>28</sup> Ralph Pastore, “Native History in the Atlantic Region During the Colonial Period,” *Academics*, vol. 20 no. 1, (Fall, 1990), 209.

later Thomas Dermer observed “some antient Plantations, not long since populous now utterly void.”<sup>29</sup> Likewise in Smith’s 1622 edition of *New England Trials*, he told his readers: “God has laid this Country open for us, and slaine the most part of the inhabitants by cruell warres and a mortall disease; for where I had seene 100 or 200 people, there is scarce ten to be found.”<sup>30</sup> What this shows is that New England was significantly changed in the years immediately after Champlain and Smith visited its shores, and perhaps even before their arrival. With the ‘hit and miss’ dynamics of both disease and contact each of Smith’s and Champlain’s individual experiences could have been very different; and although disease was not addressed in their works it does not preclude such dynamic changes having occurred without their knowing – neither man was in New England for longer than a few weeks at a time. Unfortunately there is no evidence pointing towards any conclusion.

Nonetheless, both of these men did have significant contact with the aboriginal people, and in some cases with the same individuals. By examining their interactions with the native people as they traveled along the coast of New England one can learn much about their attitudes towards the original inhabitants of New England. By examining their purposes for the native peoples, how they communicated, and their general impressions of aboriginal society, the points of contrast and similarity between Smith and Champlain become much more clear.

For this analysis five texts have been used. For Champlain, Book I of his *Voyages* (printed in 1613) provides detailed accounts of all three of his trips from the Bay of Fundy

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<sup>29</sup> David Jones, “Virgin Soils Revisited,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol. 60 no. 4 (Oct 2003), 721. The statements in quotation marks were quoted by Jones but are from Smith and Dermer and are found in Smith, vol. 1, 330, and Samuel Purchas, (ed.), *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625), 20 vols, (Glasgow, 1906), 19:129.

<sup>30</sup> Smith, *New England Trials* (1622), in Barbour (ed.), *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, vol. 1, 428.

to Cape Cod. Although the work includes the events at Ste-Croix and Port Royal, these will not be the primary focus for two reasons: first because Smith did not travel into the Bay of Fundy area, and second because they contain significantly less detail regarding the aboriginal people in comparison to the chapters relating to New England. In order to provide a somewhat comparable body of material, four of Smith's works have been examined. The most important is his *Description of New England*, which was written while he was being held by pirates in 1615, and published in the following year.<sup>31</sup> This work was written just after his final trip to America, and Philip Barbour explained: "Smith seems to have moved in the *Description of New England* to the role of publicist. Although he made a final (and unsuccessful) try at active seafaring life late in 1616, by 1618 he appears to have become at least halfway content with propagandizing for, and pleading the cause of, colonization."<sup>32</sup> The three works following Smith's *Description of New England* basically build upon each other, the first being a letter written to the recently installed Lord Chancellor of England, Sir Francis Bacon,<sup>33</sup> and the next two works built upon each other (almost word for word) in the *New England Trials* of 1620 and 1622. These works have been used sparingly because they are even more in the genre of propaganda than Smith's *Description of New England*. Adding these works to the study is important, however, because in them one can see the evolution of Smith's thinking, for it is in his account of New England in which his writing style took a noticeable change.

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<sup>31</sup> Barbour, *Three Worlds*, 321.

<sup>32</sup> Barbour, *Works*, 374.

<sup>33</sup> The office of the Lord Chancellor of Britain was responsible "for the supervision, preparation and dispatch of the King's letters, which entailed the use of the Sovereign's seal." The role has changed much over time, however one of the main duties of this position has been to hold the Great Seal of the Realm. The Lord Chancellor presided over parliament when the monarch was unavailable. Government of Great Britain, Department of Constitutional Affairs, <http://www.dca.gov.uk/consult/lcoffice/#part5> (May 25, 2004). Bacon took up this post in March 1617.

It is also important to note that unlike the documents studied in the previous chapter, which were published while the experience of America was fresh in the writers' minds, all of these works spanned **at least** two years from experience to publication. Champlain, for example, was not published until the outpost at Quebec was well underway, and Smith never returned to America after his short *séjour* in New England. Both works are rife with hindsight.<sup>34</sup> Champlain's translator, W.F. Ganong, has made these notes pertaining to the creation of *Voyages*:

The collective evidence would imply that Champlain in preparing his narrative for publication greatly condensed his original journals, even to the total omission of some parts. Furthermore, it would seem that his narrative was not written direct from the journals, but from memory aided by notes: and it is probable that the journals themselves were not at the time accessible to him.<sup>35</sup>

The importance of this lies not in the veracity of Champlain's tales, but rather in the precision of his descriptions. One must bear in mind the question of whether Champlain may have mixed experiences that did not occur at the same time, for the sake of an argument or space. This is important to remember for both men. In Smith's work one must evaluate whether his message was more important than his observations; in Champlain's one must remember that he came into contact with many different people, and there is the possibility that some of his descriptions were not as accurate as they could have been.

As in earlier writings, these two writers' styles are completely different. For the most part Champlain has retained the detailed description of his travels. Book I of his *Voyages* is quite successful in demonstrating that Champlain and de Monts met their goal of

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<sup>34</sup> A prime example of how hindsight impacts these sources can be found in Champlain's initial discovery of Saint Mary's Bay, N.S. Champlain wrote, (My Translation) "Some leagues farther there was another river which is dry at low tide, except in its course which is very small and goes from close to Port Royal." However, Champlain had not yet traveled to the Annapolis Basin and therefore had not laid eyes on the future site of Port Royal. This suggests that occasionally Champlain may have infused his account with tales from experiences other than those he was recounting.

<sup>35</sup> W.F. Ganong, "Translator's Preface," in H.P. Biggar (ed.), *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. I, 201.

“reconoistre les terres & les peuples qui y sont.”<sup>36</sup> However, as seen in the last chapter, Smith’s *A True Relation* only accounted for his own travels. It is more of a personal narrative, saving the more general description for his *Map of Virginia* published in 1612. By the writing of *Description of New England* Smith’s style had changed again. Instead of a chronological account like his previous work, this short book is based on a solid argument for colonisation – making it impossible to trace his voyage down the New England coast without consulting external sources. What could not have been shown in Smith’s accounts of Virginia is apparent in his New England writings, and vice versa. In the Virginia accounts Smith told his readers about what he did and saw, but in the New England works he gave a greater sense of his purpose and goals.

By putting Champlain beside Smith it is possible to see two different focuses on colonisation. Champlain, who embodied a long-standing French policy of building trade relationships, focused more on people and places. Smith, on the other hand, has placed his focus on the economic benefits of colonisation. For Champlain colonisation involved learning about the land, peoples, and how to work within that system, whereas for Smith it was comprised “of charity to those poore salvages, whose Countrie wee challenge, use and possesse.”<sup>37</sup> In the 1622 edition of the *New England Trials* Smith refined this statement to give even greater insight into his feelings about North America. He wrote: “God had laid this country open for us, and slaine the most part of the inhabitants by cruell warres and a mortall disease...”<sup>38</sup> The need for challenge was over, and Smith emphasized the fact that it was now an easy task to settle in New England.

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<sup>36</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 230. My Translation: “to explore the land and the people who lived there.”

<sup>37</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 361.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, *New England Trials* (1622), 428.



The language in these documents also reflects changes in these men's writings.

Where Champlain rarely deviated from using the word *sauvage* in *Des Sauvages*, by 1613 he employed a slightly larger vocabulary – although *sauvage* was still dominant. One word that Champlain had significantly increased the use of was *peuple*. It appears that one way Champlain defined this word was based on a concept of civility. This point was made most clearly at the end of his first chapter where he discussed his desires and goals:

meu aussi de l'esperance d'auoir plus d'vtilité au dedans des terres où les peuples s'ont civilisez, & est plus facile de planter la foy Chrestienne & establir vn ordre comme il est necessaire pour la conseruation d'un pais, que le long des riuies de la mer, où habitent ordinairement les sauuaiges: & ainsi faire que le Roy en puisse tirer vn proffit inestimable: Car il est aisé à croire que les peuples de l'Europe rechercheront plustost ceste facilité que non pas les humeurs enuieuses & farouches qui suiuent les costes & les nations barbares.<sup>39</sup>

This seems to be one of the few contexts in which the word *sauvage* is contrasted with an alternative word, making *sauvage* appear to have more negative connotations. However, further complicating matters, *peuple* and *sauvage* appear in the same paragraph later in the work. On one line Champlain wrote, “Ces peuples demonstroient estre fort contents...”<sup>40</sup> and about six lines later described “Ces sauuaiges se rasent le poil de dessus le crasne assez haut...”<sup>41</sup> Interestingly the same paragraph then ends with the statement: “Ceste riuere s'appelle des habitans du pays Chouïacoet,”<sup>42</sup> *habitans du pays* being a phrase that appears only twice in reference to the Native people. In this short paragraph Champlain used three different terms to refer to the aboriginal people living around the Saco River, further reinforcing the need to always place the word *sauvage* into context before making a translation or attempting to draw meaning from a phrase. Although there are some

<sup>39</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 232. My Translation: “he also had the hope of having greater success inland where the people are civilized, and where it is easier to plant the Christian faith and establish an order, as is necessary for the conservation of the country, than by the sea shore, where the *sauvages* ordinarily live. And in this, the king would make an inestimable profit. For it is easy to believe that the people of Europe would rather seek this easily than endure the envious and wild [or perhaps fierce] character which accompany these coasts and the barbarous nations.”

<sup>40</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 325. My Translation: “These people showed that they were very content...”

<sup>41</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 326. My Translation: “These *sauvages* shave their hair high up their head...”

<sup>42</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 327. My Translation: “This river is called the Saco by the inhabitants of the country.”

instances when *savage* has negative connotations in Champlain's work, it was by no means a universal implication of the word.<sup>43</sup>

Champlain does, however, make use of some words that clearly have a pejorative meaning. In one instance, just a day before Champlain and Poutrincourt lost a number of men to an aboriginal attack, Champlain wrote, "le sieur de Poutrincourt demanda si toutes choses estoient en estat pour s'opposer aux desseins de ces canailles."<sup>44</sup> Although this was the only time that Champlain used the word *canailles*, it has clear implications and further adds to Champlain's lexicon of terms for the people whom he encountered. Another word, which only occasionally appears in Champlain's text, is *barbare*. Just after the conflict in which Champlain used the term *canailles*, he wrote, "nous ne nous retirasmes qu'avec le contentement que Dieu n'auoit laissé impuny le mesfait de ces barbares."<sup>45</sup> This extension of Champlain's vocabulary is interesting because of the lack of diversity in his word choice throughout *Des Sauvages*. In that document he had only used *peuple* once, seemingly without reason, and the rest of the time he employed *savage*. It seems logical, from this growing vocabulary, to suggest that for Champlain *savage* was a relatively neutral term, and that these other words were used in order to add implicit positive or negative connotations.

As with Champlain, Smith's language changed significantly from *A True Relation*. Recall, in that work he used *indian* forty-two times, *people* twenty-three times, and *saluage* twelve times. In *Description of New England* he used *indian* only once, *people* thirteen times, *saluage* nineteen times, and *inhabitant* once. Although the two works vary in length it is clear that the emphasis in word choice has changed over the eight years between each publication.

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<sup>43</sup> For an extended analysis of the word *savage* see the appendix.

<sup>44</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 418. My Translation: "The Sieur de Poutrincourt asked if everything was ready to oppose the designs of those scoundrels."

<sup>45</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 432. My Translation: "We did not leave without the contentment that God would punish the misdeeds of these barbarians."

In *Description of New England* the sole use of the word *indian* is in reference to the Spanish, which interestingly is a similar distinction seen in *Brief Discours*;<sup>46</sup> whereas in *A True Relation*, *indian* is the general term used for the aboriginal people.

As with the word *savage* it is difficult to separate the meaning of *people* and *savage* in Smith's text. In one long paragraph, for example, Smith writes, "the River ranne farre up into the Land, and was well inhabited with many people..."<sup>47</sup> and about fifteen lines later states, "but where the Salvages dwelt there the ground is exceeding fat and fertill."<sup>48</sup> Although Smith seems to have been discussing two different groups of people there is little evidence to explain his change of words.

It is possible, however, that Smith used *Salvage* when referring to groups of people he knew intimately. In the example above, Smith's tone suggests that he did not encounter, or learn much about, the people upriver, whereas he had spent more time with those he called *salvages* a few lines later. Reinforcing this interpretation is that he often employed *people* to associate a group of aboriginal people with a specific place, as in "the people of Pawmet."<sup>49</sup> These explanations do not provide a complete answer to the problem. There were plenty of times Smith used the term *savage* to refer to the aboriginal people in general. For example, Smith told his fellow Englishmen that he "durst undertake to have come enough from the Salvages for 300 men, for a few trifles."<sup>50</sup> It is extremely difficult to pinpoint why Smith has used *people* or *savage*. Therefore the reader must always bear in mind that writers, editors, and publishers all have linguistic and stylistic frameworks within which they work. Smith's

<sup>46</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 332. Smith wrote, "the Romanes then using the Spaniards to work in those Mines, as now the Spaniard doth the Indians."

<sup>47</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 338.

<sup>48</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 339.

<sup>49</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 340.

<sup>50</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 334.

word choice may merely be a subconscious choice that he could explain no better than anyone else.

Smith has, however, left one clue in this document that helps to explain his choice of words. Near the end of the text Smith wrote, “Had the seede of Abraham, our Saviour Christ, and his Apostles, exposed themselves to no more daungers to teach the Gospell, and the will of God then wee; Even wee our selves, had at this present been as Salvage, and as miserable as the most barbarous Salvage yet uncivilized.”<sup>51</sup> This understanding of the word does not separate *salvage* from *people*; rather he can be seen as using *salvage* as a more descriptive term based on a notion of social evolution. Being a *Salvage*, then, included aboriginal people within the realm of humanity. However, in terms of a ‘civility scale,’ the *salvage* was a rank far lower than that of the English.<sup>52</sup>

The most important point of this discussion is not necessarily the lexicon of each writer, but rather the differences between their first works and the ones currently under study. In both cases just under a decade had passed between their two publications, and it is clear that during that time both men had changed some of their linguistic preferences and writing ability. In the case of Smith this change may have been reflective of his growing role as a colonial promoter. In the case of Champlain, and no doubt Smith as well, this linguistic shift seems likely to have been more a function of his developing a greater ability to write. Practice makes perfect.

Thus far little has been offered comparing both of these explorers’ perceptions of the aboriginal inhabitants of New England. The rest of this chapter will explore the purpose and goals each man pursued in New England, how they communicated with the various

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<sup>51</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 360.

<sup>52</sup> For more on this subject see the appendix.

aboriginal groups – especially as they traveled outside the range of their interpreters – their general impressions, and how they thought European and North American societies would interact if a permanent settlement were established.

First and foremost, any discussion of people's perceptions must begin with their *raison d'être*. Although both Smith's and Champlain's motives have been briefly addressed in the introduction to this chapter, they need to be explained in greater detail here. On the surface, Smith came to North America to hunt whales, find gold, or if both failed, to bring back fish and furs. Champlain on the other hand arrived as part of de Monts' monopoly with the intention of founding a settlement along the Atlantic coast. However, these reasons are fairly superficial, for it is clear by reading Smith's text that he was interested in creating a colony. Promoting this prospect was the purpose of his *Description of New England and New England Trials*. By meeting people and creating a map while he traveled down the Gulf of Maine, Smith revealed that he was looking for a site to plant another Virginia. Champlain too had other motives thrusting the expedition onward, as de Monts' monopoly had to be economically viable, meaning that resource exploitation was also a primary goal of his. Although the priorities of Smith and Champlain seem to have been different, when the whole picture is examined, the similarity of their tasks is much clearer.

Economic motives cannot stand alone, however. Andrew Fitzmaurice has emphasized that, "The mental world of the early modern English was not, of course, entirely inhabited by dead pagans. When colonisers argued for the pursuit of glory they usually placed the glory of God first."<sup>53</sup> Religion was also a major factor in the work and writing of these two men. Although not as clear in *A True Relation*, Smith's writing about New England placed a greater emphasis on things spiritual. At the end of his call for colonisation Smith

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<sup>53</sup> Andrew Fitzmaurice, *Humanism in America*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003), 3.

exclaimed, “And what have ever beene the workes of the greatest Princes of the earth, but planting of countries, and civilizing barbarous and inhumane Nations, to civilitie and humanitie?”<sup>54</sup> It is significant that Smith ended his work with a call to convert the aboriginal people into Englishmen. By placing this type of statement at the end of his work, Smith revealed that whether he thought it important or not, it was a convincing argument for the powers in England. That conversion was an important part of becoming English can be seen most clearly about twenty pages earlier in the text: “If hee have any graine of faith or zeale in Religion, what can hee doe lesse hurtfull to any; or more agreeable to God, then to seeke to convert those poore Salvages to know Christ, and humanitie.”<sup>55</sup> These statements must be seen as more than just rhetoric. Although it may not have been the main reason for becoming involved in North America, the fact that Smith ended his work with the need for conversion emphasizes its importance in his mind.

Champlain demonstrated that he had similar ideas:

meu aussi de l'esperance d'auoir plus d'vtilité au dedans des terres où les peuples s'ont civilisez, & est plus facile de planter la foy Chrestienne & establir vn ordre comme il est necessaire pour la conseruation d'un païs, que le long des riuies de la mer, où habitent ordinairement les sauuages: & ainsi faire que le Roy en puisse tirer vn profit inestimable: Car il est aisé à croire que les peuples de l'Europe rechercheront plustost ceste facilité que non pas les humeurs enuieuses & farouches qui suiuent les costes & les nations barbares.<sup>56</sup>

It is clear that the facility of conversion was at least a factor in deciding where the de Monts expedition would settle. A plain distinction between Smith's and Champlain's contexts needs to be made. Smith discussed conversion in a general and all-encompassing manner. Yet, Champlain suggested a plan for conversion that was restricted to a limited group of

<sup>54</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 361.

<sup>55</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 343.

<sup>56</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 232. My Translation: “he also had the hope of having greater success inland where the people are civilized, and where it is easier to plant the Christian faith and establish an order, as is necessary for the conservation of the country, than by the sea shore, where the *sauvages* ordinarily live. And in this, the king would make an inestimable profit. For it is easy to believe that the people of Europe would rather seek this easily than endure the envious and wild [or perhaps fierce] character which accompany these coasts and the barbarous nations.”

aboriginal people – those who were ‘civilized.’ What is clear from this discussion is that not just one single factor provided the engine for expansion and settlement. Rather, economy, faith, and civility all intertwined to prompt European activity in North America. For Smith and Champlain Christianity was just as much a reason for involvement in North America as the economics. And it seems that both men felt that it was a way of bringing the aboriginal people into a European framework.

Although they were both looking for a place to settle, their differing goals towards the aboriginal people are quite apparent. While Smith ranged the coast looking for places to build a colony and eventually expand, Champlain searched for a possible place to settle while trying to bring peace to the region. Where Smith told his readers “Virginia is no Ile (as many doe imagine) but part of the Continent adjoyning to Florida; whose bounds may be stretched to the magnitude thereof without offence to any Christian inhabitant,”<sup>57</sup> Champlain explained to Bashabes and Cabahis, two local chiefs along the Penobscot, “que le sieur de Mons m’auoit enuoyé par deuers eux pour les voir & leur pays aussi: & qu’il vouloit les tenir en amitié, & les mettre d’accord avec les Souriquois & Canadiens leurs ennemis: Et d’auantage qu’il desiroit habiter leur terre...”<sup>58</sup> Although both men emphasized Europeans inhabiting aboriginal territory, Smith made no accommodation for the native people who were already using that land. Such an attitude led him to make later statements such as: “God had laid this Country open for us, and slaine the most part of the inhabitants...”<sup>59</sup> Champlain on the other hand has shown a diplomatic policy that did not discount the

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<sup>57</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 325.

<sup>58</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 295. My Translation: “that the Sieur de Monts had sent me to see them and also their country; and that he wanted to remain in friendship, and to put them in accord with their enemies, the Souriquois [Mi’kmaq] and Canadians. And moreover he desired to inhabit their land...”

<sup>59</sup> Smith, *New England Trials* (1622), 428.

aboriginal people, but rather attempted to incorporate them into the French economic system.

In fact throughout Champlain's three voyages he repeatedly made attempts at building alliances between warring aboriginal groups. Word about this goal spread quickly as well, and over the time that Champlain was in the region many aboriginal people tried to bring peace among traditional enemies. An example of this can be seen during his first voyage, just after he left the Penobscot: "Nos sauvages nous quitterent, d'autāt qu'ils ne vollurent venir a Quinibequy: parceque les sauvages de lieu leur sont grands ennemis."<sup>60</sup> Although it is not clear whether Champlain meant his two guides or the chief Cabahis, this demonstrates that there was reluctance for peace among some members of the native community. Interestingly, during the voyage of the following year, Champlain and de Monts were approached by a chief on the Kennebec who, "Aprochant près de nostre barque, il fit vne harangue, où il faisoit entendre l'aise qu'il auoit de nous veoir, & qu'il desiroit auoir nostre alliance, & faire paix avec leurs ennemis par nostre moyen..."<sup>61</sup> On the third voyage one can see this peace making in action when Secondon and Messamouet "qui vindrent iusques à Chouacoet dedans une chaloupe, où ils vouloient aller faire amitié avec ceux du pays..."<sup>62</sup> In the fragmented world of tribal relations in New England, de Monts and Champlain's policy of alliance building can be seen as a tactical manoeuvre in order to facilitate greater trade and exploration. There were no alliances in New England like those in the St. Lawrence, where the Algonquin, Innu, and Huron would later band together to

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<sup>60</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 299. My Translation: "Our natives left us, as they did not want to go to the Kennebec, because the natives of that place were their great enemies."

<sup>61</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 316. My Translation: "Approaching near to our boat, he made a speech where he made his pleasure at seeing us heard, and that he desired our alliance, and to make peace with their enemies by our means."

<sup>62</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 394. My Translation: "who only came to the Saco River in a rowboat, where they wished to make friends with those of this country..."



fight the Iroquois. The French clearly felt that they could not be successful in New England without peace among the native inhabitants.

However, despite this peace, by 1607 Champlain wrote of a war that occurred in New England over the death of his earlier Mi'kmaw interpreter Panounias. This was the battle described earlier in this chapter. That the French were unsuccessful in attempting to bind the region together can also be seen in Smith's writing. There he wrote: "to inhabit, and defend them against the Terentynes; with a better power then the French did them."<sup>63</sup> Where Champlain sought to consolidate the peoples of the Atlantic region, Smith sought to divide. Certainly part of this has to do with a strong French relationship created by European traders and fishers, encouraged by Champlain and his companions at Port Royal, and maintained after the English sacked that settlement in 1613 by Charles de Biencourt and Charles de la Tour at Cape Sable. Although part of Smith's goal had to do with developing a single alliance, he may have also been taking sides in a quickly developing conflict. Bruce Bourque and Ruth Whitehead have suggested that "when their role as middlemen in the fur trade declined, the Tarrentines resorted increasingly to raiding voyages along the New England coast."<sup>64</sup> In this light then, Smith may have seen the battle as one between the natives of New England and their aboriginal trading partners rather than a more internal fight like the one in 1607. Taking this policy of building an alliance with one side in a conflict aligns Smith much more with Champlain's later policy in Quebec; there Champlain took the Algonquian side in a conflict with the Iroquois. What is clear from both

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<sup>63</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 351. The Terentynes [or Tarrentines according to Bourque and Whitehead] were a mixture of Souriquois [Mi'kmaq] and some Etchemin who acted as middlemen in the fur trade between Europeans and the aboriginal people of New England. These native people are best known for having mastered sailing European shallops.

<sup>64</sup> Bruce Bourque and Ruth Whitehead, "Tarrentines and the Introduction of European Trade Goods in the Gulf of Maine," *Ethnohistory*, vol. 32 no. 4, (1985), 337.

Champlain's *Voyages* and Smith's works is that both men still felt a strong need for a relationship with some aboriginal groups.

The dynamics of how each man saw this relationship differ considerably. For Champlain, one can only learn of his immediate need for the aboriginal people. At no point did he consider (in writing) how the Aboriginal and European people would live together on a long-term basis. What is most clear from his writing is that Champlain sought a relationship to pursue his goals of exploration and survival. In the same manner as in *Des Sauvages*, Champlain took every opportunity to learn geographical information from the New England natives. On one occasion a native told him of a large village where they used cotton thread. Although Champlain responded, "Je m'assure que la pluspart de ceux qui en font mentiō ne l'ont veue..."<sup>65</sup> this selection still shows that from time to time during his travels he would try to glean information about places he could not go from the people who knew the area best. These types of events occurred twice more: the first time after his meeting with Bashabes and Cabahis, and the second at Cape Ann.<sup>66</sup> Further cementing the relationship with the aboriginal people was his leaving a man with the aboriginal people in the Saco Bay area and taking one of their people with him.<sup>67</sup> Champlain does not tell us the outcome of this trade, or even whether these two men returned to their communities. However, based on Champlain's later decision to send people like Étienne Brûlé to live and learn from aboriginal people it seems likely that this was the purpose of the exchange, and that both men would have returned to their comrades.

Apparently Champlain had at least one advantage over Smith, which came in the form of an aboriginal man who was familiar with Europe. In his biography of Champlain,

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<sup>65</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 285. My Translation: "I am sure that most of those who mention it never saw it..."

<sup>66</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 297, 335. Respectively.

<sup>67</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 323.

Armstrong wrote, "Like the Indian emissary at the great conference at Tadoussac in 1603, Messamouet had been to France for indoctrination in European ways. This native seemed likely to prove useful as he dazzled audiences with tales of great chateaus and carriages drawn by strange-looking 'deer.'"<sup>68</sup> Whether this is true or not is uncertain as Armstrong, like many biographers of these traditional 'heroes,' has included neither footnotes nor bibliography in his tome. This information is not found in Champlain's *Voyages*, making it difficult to verify Armstrong's statement. However, it is an interesting parallel between these men, if true, as Smith planned on making similar use of one of George Waymouth's captives if he were to return after his visit in 1614. Smith explained his plan:

The maine assistance next God, I had to this small number, was my acquaintance among the Salvages; especially, with Dohannida [Nahanada], one of their greatest Lords; who had lived long in England. By the meanes of this proud Salvage, I did not doubt but quickly to have gotte that credit with the rest of his friends, and alliants, to have had as many of them, as I desired in any designe I intended... With him and diverse others, I had concluded to inhabit...<sup>69</sup>

Philip Barbour explained Smith's plan in further detail in *The Three Worlds of Captain John Smith*:

Tahanedo [Nahanada] had been kidnapped by George Waymouth in 1605, was one of the five Indians whose part in the final colonization of America is unquestioned, and had been returned to his native shores by the Popham colony in 1606. He had last been seen or heard of in 1607, but the absence of news did not deter John Smith. Unless the man was dead Smith would use him.<sup>70</sup>

What this shows is that although Champlain most likely did not plan on meeting Messamouet (if the tale be true), and neither was Smith likely to have encountered Nahanada had he come again to New England, both men not only used the natives in North America, but also North American men who had visited Europe, and perhaps knew the European language.

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<sup>68</sup> Armstrong, 79.

<sup>69</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 351.

<sup>70</sup> Barbour, *Three Worlds*, 316.

Smith did not make as much mention as Champlain of using the aboriginal people to learn about the surrounding area; though based on the extensive detail and accuracy on his map and in his account it seems likely that he too traveled with aboriginal help. However, for the most part one needs to read between the lines in order to see how Smith does this. For example, occasionally Smith made statements such as, “the Salvages say there is no Channell...”<sup>71</sup> which are similar to Champlain’s statements, but do not occur as frequently. In a similar manner, one gets the impression through his descriptions of the people and land that Smith had aboriginal aid. For instance, Smith wrote of encountering “Bashabes of Pennobscot” while writing of the various aboriginal people and place names.<sup>72</sup> This is one of the few times in which the same figure is found in both Champlain’s and Smith’s works. “Bashabes of the Pennobscot” was the same as “Bessabez” “de la riuere de Norembegue.”<sup>73</sup> That both Smith and Champlain encountered the same person should not come as a significant surprise. What is surprising is how accurate both were in naming him. Knowledge of such things as names requires some oral contact with the native people. Considering that it appears Smith visited a number of villages it seems likely that he had aboriginal accompaniment to make the job easier. Philip Barbour (who has also shied away from using a lot of footnotes) suggested: “There is some evidence that he [Smith] had with him an Indian who had been brought to England the year before.”<sup>74</sup> This would help explain how he was able to learn so much in such a short amount of time, and bring his and Champlain’s experiences closer together.

Yet before Smith is mistaken as Champlain’s English counter-part, one must also know where the two explorers part company. Where Champlain only made his immediate

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<sup>71</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 341.

<sup>72</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 328-329.

<sup>73</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 293. On the significance of Bashabes see Snow, 293.

<sup>74</sup> Barbour, *Three Worlds*, 308.

intentions known (but has a record with the natives for the years that followed), Smith left only intentions for the future, which were never carried out. In these plans his true motives are very difficult to understand.

As in Virginia, where he used the Virginian Algonquians to help supply Jamestown's dwindling food supply, Smith had a similar plan to employ the work of the New England natives. "I durst undertake to have come enough from the Salvages for 300 men, for a few trifles;" Smith wrote, "and if they should bee untoward (as it is most certaine they are) thirty or forty good men will be sufficient to bring them all in subjection, and make this provision; if they understand what they doe: 200 whereof may nine monethes in the yeare be employed in making marchandable fish, till the rest provide other necessaries, fit to furnish us with other commodities."<sup>75</sup> Smith made similar statements on at least two other occasions in this work as well.<sup>76</sup> But what is uncertain is what this might mean for the aboriginal people if it were carried out. On one occasion Smith explained: "the assistance of the Salvages... may easily be had, if they be discreetly handled in their kindes..."<sup>77</sup> This comment suggests a mutual type of assistance, rather than the subjection which appeared in the earlier comment. This idea is reinforced by criticism he offered of Master Thomas Hunt, who commanded another boat that went to New England with Smith. Here he laments, "after my departure, hee [Hunt] abused the Salvages where hee came, and betrayed twenty seaven of these poore innocent soules, which he sould in Spaine for slaves..."<sup>78</sup> Again, using the word *betrayed* suggests that Smith felt he, and his countrymen, had an established relationship with these people. Essentially Smith was lamenting the poor treatment of the people he earlier suggested were "untoward" and easily brought in to subjection. Whether Smith would

<sup>75</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 334.

<sup>76</sup> See Smith, *A Description of New England*, 337 and 343.

<sup>77</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 337.

<sup>78</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 352.

advocate such harsh conditions as forced labour, or whether he would take a soft approach, it is clear that Smith saw the aboriginal people as the economic engine on which an English colony, settlement, or outpost would thrive.

Although this is a difference between Smith and Champlain, it can also be seen as a similarity, as both men saw the aboriginal people as facilitating their plan for North America. It is easy for people to overlook this similarity because Smith sought to use the native people to serve the English directly, whereas Champlain understood the aboriginal people to serve the French economy indirectly by supplying furs. Although the French concept may appeal more to the modern reader, it placed the aboriginal people as the foundation to French success. There is also one instance where Champlain did mention obtaining the service of the aboriginal people as one of his goals. When discussing the merits of Ste-Croix, Champlain wrote:

Qui est le lieu que nous iugeâmes le meilleur: tant pour la situation, bon pays, que pour le communication que nous pretendions avec les sauvages de ces costes & du dedans des terres, estans au milieu d'eux: Lesquels avec le temps on esperoit pacifier, & amortir les guerres qu'ils ont les vns contre les autres, pour en tirer à l'aduenir du service: & les reduire à la foy Chrestienne.<sup>79</sup>

However, based on the broader context of Champlain's other voyages, both before this trip and after, it seems likely that the service that he planned to obtain from the aboriginal people was based on the fur trade, the supply of information, and friendship – the key distinction between he and Smith. Although their understanding of European-Aboriginal relations differed, both John Smith and Samuel de Champlain were well aware that they could not accomplish their goals without the help of North America's original inhabitants.

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<sup>79</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 271-272. My Translation: "Which is the place that we judged the best. So much for its situation, the fine country, and for the communication that we were maintaining with the natives of these coasts, and of the interior, since we were in the middle of them. With time we hoped to pacify them, and end the wars which they have, one against another, in order to put them in service in the future, and reduce them to the Christian faith."

Since Smith and Champlain saw the aboriginal people as necessary to carrying out their plans, and since they used the aboriginal people as guides and sources of information while they traveled New England's waters, it is necessary to also examine how these two cultures and languages communicated. Smith provided very little information in this regard. It is assumed that he communicated with the aboriginals who said there was no channel,<sup>80</sup> the people who told him Bashabes' name, and, if Barbour is correct about there having been an aboriginal who had spent the previous year in England, then we can also assume he communicated through that person. As Smith provided little specific insight in this area, one is left to only imagine how these encounters might have taken place. That he would have been at a disadvantage, however, seems more than likely since he only remained in New England for one summer.

Champlain on the other hand was better equipped, in this context, to meet new people. The year before his arrival in the Bay of Fundy he had been in the Saint Lawrence, during which time a group of explorers, headed by Sieur Prévert, had ventured into the maritime region; and furthermore the Mi'kmaq also had extensive contact with fishers and traders who may have taught Champlain something about the region.<sup>81</sup> More importantly, on these voyages down the coast Champlain always took translators with him. However, this plan failed once the expeditions reached the territory of the Almouchiquois, who spoke differently from the Etchemin and Mi'kmaq. Upon arriving on the Saco River Champlain lamented, "Nostre sauuage ne pouuoit entendre que quelques mots, d'autant que la langue

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<sup>80</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 341.

<sup>81</sup> Prévert was a "silver tongued promoter" and trader from Saint-Malo who explored what would soon become Acadia during the summer of 1603. Armstrong saw Prévert as "an experienced and well-connected trader who had logged considerable mileage along the Acadian coast." Most importantly he was deemed responsible for feeding Champlain the tale of the Gougou (recounted in Chapter One), and telling of substantial mineral deposited along the shores of the Bay of Fundy. (Armstrong, 42).

Almouchiquoise... differe du tout de celle des Souriquois & Etechemins.”<sup>82</sup> This meant that he had as much of a chance as Smith at understanding the native people once his boats ventured past the Saco and down into Massachusetts. Thankfully for the historian, not only was Champlain able to come up with innovative techniques to assist communication, he also recorded them in his account. There are two encounters that give insight to the communication between these two groups of people. In the first case Champlain received geographical information about the coast down to Cape Cod:

Après leur auoir depeint avec vn charbon la baye & le cap aux isles, où nous estions [Cape Ann], ils me figurerent avec le mesme creon, vne autre baye qu'ils representoient fort grande [Massachusetts Bay], où ils mirent six cailloux d'esgalle distance, me donnant par là à entendre que chacune des marques estoit autant de chefs & peuplades...<sup>83</sup>

Champlain did not mention if he believed the information that he received. That it was included in this work shows that he felt it was important enough to warrant being re-told, suggesting its accuracy. Further south at Nauset Harbour Champlain had a different type of encounter. This time instead of asking about geography he asked about climate, a necessary question for those looking for a place more hospitable than Ste-Croix:

Nous leur demandasmes s'ils auoient leur demeure arrestee en ce lieu, & s'il y negeoit beaucoup; ce que ne peusmes bien sçauoir, pour ne pas entendre leur langage, bien qu'ils s'y efforçassent par signe, en prenant du sable en leur main, puis l'espendant sur la terre, & monstroient estre de la couleur de nos rabats, & qu'elle venoit sur la terre de la hauteur d'un pied.<sup>84</sup>

Although this process may have resembled a game of charades, the information had life-and-death importance. After visiting Tadoussac and Ste-Croix, both Champlain and de Monts were well aware of the perils of North America. Any advice they could get was of key

<sup>82</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 325. My Translation: “Our native could not understand some words, all the more so since the language of the Almouchiquois...completely differs from that of the Mi'kmaq and Etchemins.”

<sup>83</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 335. My Translation: “After having drawn for them with charcoal the bay and the cape of islands, where we were, they drew for me with the same charcoal another bay which they represented as very big, where they put six pebbles an equal distance apart. Thereby giving me to understand that each of these marks represented so many chiefs and tribes...”

<sup>84</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 352. My Translation: “We asked them if they had a permanent residence in this place, and if it snowed a lot. We could not understand well, for their language was incomprehensible, although they made an effort by sign, by taking sand in their hand, and then spreading it on the ground, and showing it to be the colour of our bands, and that it came a foot off of the ground.”



importance to planning future activities. One must also remember that Champlain and de Monts were critical of those who had traveled to North America and did not take the time to learn about the people and places. These were important reasons both for the inclusion of these tales, and Champlain's own actions. These examples of his communicating without the use of language reinforce the importance Champlain attributed to constructive relationships with the local inhabitants.

For the most part these relationships were cultivated by the European adapting to the aboriginal way of life. For the French this almost always involved gift giving. For example, when Champlain met with Bashabes a gift exchange took place: "Bassabez nous voyant à terre nous fit asseoir, & commença à petuner avec ses compagnons, comme ils font ordinairement auparauant que faire leurs discours. Ils nous firent present de venaison & de gibier... Apres qu'il eut acheué sa harangue, ie leur fis present de haches, patinostres, bonnets, cousteaux & autres petites ioliuetés."<sup>85</sup> This reciprocal act of giving was an essential part of building relationships between groups in this region of North America. Every time Champlain encountered native people he nearly always pointed out in his writing that they gave them gifts. Smith, contrarily, did not include this information in his text. Instead, Smith alluded to gift giving, but did not come out and tell his readers whether this was what he meant. For example, he advised his readers that "the assistance of the Salvages, which may easily be had, if they be discreetly handled in their kindes."<sup>86</sup> It seems likely that by writing this Smith meant the kind of meetings that Champlain undertook, but it is difficult to be certain.

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<sup>85</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 295-296. My Translation: "Bashabes, seeing us on shore, asked us to sit, and began to smoke with his companions, like they usually do before they begin their speeches. They made us a present of venison and game... After he had finished his speech, I made them presents of hatchets, rosaries, hats, knives and other small trinkets."

<sup>86</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 337.

From these types of encounters both Smith and Champlain developed their own conceptions of the aboriginal people and their character. In Champlain's case a parallel was often drawn between the Mi'kmaq and Innu whom he had met earlier. This can be seen in Champlain's observance of the aboriginal people at Stage Harbour in 1606: "Pour ce qui est de leur police, gouuernement & creance, nous n'en auons peu iuger, & croy qu'ils n'en ont point d'autre que nos sauuages Souriquois, & Canadiens, lesquels n'adorent n'y la lune n'y le soleil, ny aucune chose, & ne prient non plus que les bestes."<sup>87</sup> It appears that for Champlain there existed a universal aboriginal, even though he noted that the people south of the Saco River (such as those at Stage Harbour) were agricultural, and those to the north more nomadic. Despite the similarities between these natives and the more northern Mi'kmaq and Innu, this one agricultural difference would have been grounds enough to reject such an all-encompassing mould. That he did not make such an observation reveals much about his mindset.

Champlain very rarely discussed the character of the people whom he met. Perhaps this has been left out from most of the narrative because of his apparent universalizing attitude, but this is merely conjecture. In any case, the only time that he addressed the issue was when the situation turned sour. This occurred twice in his account. On the first occasion, a man had recently been killed while filling a kettle on a beach. Champlain wrote: "Si peu de frequentation que l'on ait avec eux, les fait incontinent cognoistre. Ils sont grands larrons ; & s'ils ne peuuent attraper avec les mains, ils y taschent avec les pieds, comme nous l'auons esprouué souuentefois... Il se faut donner garde de ces peuples, & viure en

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<sup>87</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 412. My Translation: "Regarding their police, government, and beliefs, we could not judge, and believe that they have nothing other than our natives the Mi'kmaq and Canadians, who adore neither the moon nor sun, nor anything else, and pray no more than beasts."

mesfiance avec eux, toutefois sans leur faire appercevoir.”<sup>88</sup> It seems that the attack had coloured his view of these people, which required him to highlight their character. In a similar situation the next year Champlain also indulged in making a character assessment. After the conflict at Stage Harbour, which ended his third trip, Champlain told his readers, “nous ne nous retirasmes qu’avec le contentement que Dieu n’auoit laissé impuny le mesfait de ces barbares.”<sup>89</sup> Again, after the French suffered some loss, and the bodies of the deceased Frenchmen were disinterred, Champlain unusually indulged in some characterization. That he did this suggests that he felt the need to highlight the deviation from his previous experiences and expectations, perhaps so that anyone looking to build a settlement would be aware of difficulties that might occur at these places.

John Smith took a different approach, which is very confusing, and can only be explained by his mixing of experience and propaganda into a single work. When Smith visited a village just north of the future site of the Plymouth colony on Massachusetts Bay he claimed: “We found the people in those parts verie kinde; but in their furie no lesse valiant. For, upon a quarrell wee had with one of them, hee onely with three others crossed the harbor of Quonahassit to certaine rocks whereby wee must passe; and there let flie their arrowes for our shot, till we were out of danger.”<sup>90</sup> This is a remarkable story to follow a statement claiming that the people were kind, as it appears that they were chased out of the harbour! How could anyone in that situation draw an association with kindness? To answer this question, one must return to Smith’s exploits before traveling to America. As

Kupperman demonstrated in chapter one’s discussion of treachery and distrust, seventeenth-

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<sup>88</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 357. My Translation: “The smallest meeting one has with them, at once makes them known. They are great thieves, and if they cannot get something with their hands, they will with their feet, like we have experiences often... One must be on guard with these people, and live in mistrust with them, all of the time without them knowing.”

<sup>89</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 432. My Translation: “We did not leave without the contentment that God would punish the misdeeds of these barbarians.”

<sup>90</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 340.

century English authors often saw the native people as they saw each other. Kupperman explained that, “a treacherous foe or rival was capable, one to be taken seriously and not easily dismissed.”<sup>91</sup> In this light Smith can be seen as demonstrating a balanced perspective – one that was helpless to act otherwise, but sympathetic (in a militaristic and adversarial way) to the actions of those assaulting him. However, it also seems more than likely that Smith’s propaganda machine sought to soften the harsh reality of New England life by paying lip service to the docile nature of the aboriginal people, without attempting to completely corrupt the truth. After all, some of Powhatan’s people were hostile and yet Smith was still able to procure corn and carry on a relationship, so perhaps he thought a similar situation could be struck here. Whatever the situation, Smith had to make it look workable.

The mixing of propaganda and fact also poses a problem in other situations. Writing of the people in the Cape Cod region (near where Champlain had both of his negative encounters) Smith wrote that the region was “so planted with Gardens and Come fields, and so well inhabited with a goodly, strong and well proportioned people...”<sup>92</sup> And yet just south of the harbour of “Quonahassit” Smith claimed that Accomack (presumably a native village) had “an excellent good harbor, good land; and no want of any thing, but industrious people.”<sup>93</sup> Smith clarified these views a little earlier in the work when he made a general statement suggesting, “young boyes and girles Salvages, or any other, be they never such idlers, may turne, carry, and return fish, without either shame, or any great paine: hee is very idle that is past twelve yeares of age and cannot doe so much...”<sup>94</sup> According to this line of reasoning the native people in Massachusetts Bay were “a goodly, strong and well

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<sup>91</sup> Kupperman, *Indians and English*, (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University, 2000), 219.

<sup>92</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 330.

<sup>93</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 340.

<sup>94</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 335.

proportioned people” who were at the same time not very industrious, idle, and unproductive.

Most likely this depiction had to do with the division of labour in many aboriginal communities. In native villages women would be responsible for tending the gardens and fields, while the men were responsible for hunting and fighting. For Smith, a yeoman’s son, such a division would probably have been difficult to understand. However, this is perhaps too gentle of an explanation. His mixed bag of statements can also be seen as meeting the needs of his message. Remember that Smith was suggesting that the English build a colony and “bring them all in subjection.”<sup>95</sup> With this argument in mind he would have wanted to make the inhabitation of New England look easy, while at the same time showing that labour could be had from the local inhabitants. And lastly, given the short period he was in New England, it is also likely that there was a certain degree of ambiguity for Smith – a combination of his background, his motives, and his uncertainty about what he saw around him.

This type of propaganda can be seen in Smith’s attitude towards aboriginal resistance as well. When writing to pacify the fears of England, he claimed that for him “it seemes no daunger more then ordinarie” to undertake such travels.<sup>96</sup> Smith rarely stated in this work that he took precautionary measures when interacting with the natives. It seems more than likely that he continued to act as he had in Virginia, and remained armed at all times, especially given the numerous occasions in the *Description of New England* in which he tells us of brief skirmishes. The absence of such statements suggests that Smith attempted to downplay the violence he encountered.

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<sup>95</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 334.

<sup>96</sup> Smith, *A Description of New England*, 351.

In contrast, on Champlain's first voyage up the Penobscot River he wrote: "Quelque temps après ie fus à terre avec deux de mes compagnons & deux de nos sauuages, qui nous seruoient de truchmêt: & donné charge à ceux de nostre barque d'approcher près des sauuages, & tenir leurs armes prestes pour faire leur deuoir s'ils aperçeuoient quelque esmotion de ces peuples contre nous."<sup>97</sup> Likewise just before the attack at Stage Harbour Champlain noted that Sieur de Poutrincourt went out walking to survey the landscape with ten to twelve musketeers.<sup>98</sup> This was before the conflict arose – or perhaps why the conflict arose. In any case Champlain appeared to be quite honest about his vigilance, and for good reason. After all, they were in a strange land trying to interact without verbal language. The climate was ripe for miscommunication and violence on both sides. Whether his party instigated the conflicts that he noted in his account is uncertain, but what is clear is that whatever the cause some native groups did not appreciate the European presence.

This discussion highlights the difference between these two men after their voyages to New England. Both men were interested in promoting colonization. However, Champlain was much more a realist and a man of reconnaissance. With a firm base in the St. Lawrence, and a somewhat stable outpost at Port Royal, the economic possibilities were already a reality. The French had already set up shop, and the voyages from 1604-1607 were merely hunting for a better location. Mainly because of this situation, Champlain could be as vivid, descriptive, and as truthful as possible. The French did not want a high maintenance and high-cost enterprise. Champlain was the eyes and ears for Henri IV and he was to be as objective as possible. Smith on the other hand had no relationship with royalty, but he was

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<sup>97</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 294-295. My Translation: "Sometime after I landed with two of my companions and two of our natives, who served us as interpreters, and gave orders to those in our boat to draw near the natives [those who Champlain was meeting not the interpreters], and to keep their arms ready to do their work if they perceived some emotion of these people against us."

<sup>98</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, 415.

in league with the likes of Bartholomew Gosnold, Richard Hakluyt, and Samuel Purchas, some of the period's best-known colonial promoters. In other words, Smith was quickly becoming more promoter than explorer. Clearly Smith thought New England would be profitable, and instead of needing reconnaissance to make his point he needed an argument much more. Hence why *Description of New England* and the two editions of *New England Trials* do not follow chronology or geography, but rather stick together to make a point: that New England should be colonized.

Placing Smith's and Champlain's descriptions of New England side by side emphasizes the particularities of each document. Through seeing how Champlain presents his narrative the reader becomes aware of the relationships with the aboriginal people that Smith must have had. The absence of many tangible encounters in his work forces the reader to confront the argumentative nature of Smith's work – a clear departure from his earlier narrative of Virginia. The nature of this type of propaganda will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter, where Smith has fully taken on the mantle of colonial promoter. This argumentative nature in Smith is also important because it underscores the absence of such persuasion in Champlain's writing. This complementary distinction stresses each author's background and context in the sense that for Champlain, and perhaps the French in general, a year-round outpost required a well thought-out plan – nothing emphasized that more than the winter spent at Ste-Croix. Yet for Smith, and perhaps the English, the colonial venture was something that could overcome North America and its inhabitants, as in Virginia. There was no message more clearly presented in the *Description of New England* than this.

The overall division of New England into loosely knit political units also helps to further emphasize this point. Although Smith felt that a colony would be successful, the

diversity of aboriginal responses makes it clear that much was still up in the air. This is especially the case given that both of Champlain's negative encounters occurred in the neighbourhood of Cape Cod, where Smith's attention seems to be focused.<sup>99</sup> What this political disunity really highlights is the ideal situations both found on their earlier trips to Virginia and the Saint Lawrence. Although Jamestown was rife with problems and difficulties (80% of the population died in the first year – more than Ste-Croix),<sup>100</sup> the colonists there encountered a well-unified political group. This facilitated building a relationship, regardless of how tenuous or tumultuous. For the French the disunity of the New England nations, which resulted in some being violent and others wishing alliance, highlights the importance of the strong trader/fisher relationship with the aboriginal people in the Saint Lawrence and Acadie. This did not exist to the same extent in New England, and in fact those aboriginals involved with Europeans (i.e. the Tarrentines) may have reciprocated their trading relationship with the aboriginal people in the Gulf of Maine.<sup>101</sup> Although there was most likely some contact with Europeans, it did not bear the same fruits as that along the Saint Lawrence. Nonetheless, Smith's and Champlain's experiences in New England played a significant role in developing their ideas and beliefs about the European role in America, and more importantly further developed them as writers – the role in which they are cast in the next chapter.

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<sup>99</sup> It should be noted that only six years after Smith visited the region the Plymouth settlement began and survived in this region. However, between 1614 and 1620 epidemic swept through the region perhaps blunting the opposition of the original inhabitants of the region.

<sup>100</sup> James Axtell, *Beyond 1492*, 228.

<sup>101</sup> See Bourque and Whitehead.



## Chapter 3: The Final Word

### Smith's Virginia and Champlain's New England retold

As Smith and Champlain grew older their writing changed. Until this point the works looked at in this thesis have recorded tales that were still recent and vivid in the explorers' memories. However, as Smith and Champlain reached the twilight of their careers their work also became more reflective and argumentative. This chapter examines how each man recounted the events of his early travels in America: in Virginia for Smith, and New England for Champlain. By making such a comparison with their earlier works it is possible to not only see how their views and emphasis have changed, but also the merits of each man's writing style.

In the midst of John Smith's publishing and re-publishing of *New England Trials*, a call went out in England for a history of the North American settlements. In April 1621 another John Smyth (of Nibley) – also an adventurer with the Virginia Company – suggested that the Virginia Company commission a comprehensive history of its endeavours. By this point both Pocahontas and her father, Powhatan, had died (1617 and 1618 respectively) and Smith's direct involvement in the Virginia enterprise had long since ended, making this the perfect opportunity for him to regain a stake in the North American project. Passing the age of forty, however, Smith was entering into the twilight of his life, thus restricting him to reliving the adventures of the past through writing. Being a colonial promoter was now the closest he could come to involving himself in overseas settlement. With the encouragement, and perhaps tutelage, of his friend and well-known colonial promoter, Samuel Purchas, Smith's *Generall Historie* was born.

Aside from being Smith's *magnum opus*, the *Generall Historie* quickly took on added importance. Events conspired with chronology to make Smith's book an important tome for the time. Just a year after John Smyth of Nibley's call for a history, and as Smith began to put pen to paper, an aboriginal uprising in Virginia shocked English society, both on the island and in North America. On Friday, March 22, 1622, Powhatan's brother Opechancanough – now chief – led a co-ordinated attack on the many plantations outstretched along the banks of the James River. One-third to one-quarter of the English population perished, prompting Captain Smith, who believed only he could resolve the threat, to try once again to travel to America. If he had gone, there would have been a significantly different version of his history today. Although he did not go, the idea of Smith as saviour of Virginia still rings clearly through the *Generall Historie*. As if the trouble in Virginia was not enough, the company was also seriously short on funds and plagued by internal division on the other side of the Atlantic. On May 24, 1624, after much investigation, the Virginia Company folded and the king took direct control of the colony. Smith rushed his work to press to meet this decision. Although the death knell for the Virginia Company, these events breathed a life into Smith's works of which most authors can only dream.<sup>1</sup>

It was a tragedy of a different sort that sparked Champlain to write his lengthy *Voyages*. Instead of an aboriginal uprising, Champlain was attacked by France's more traditional, and more frequent, enemy: the English. On July 22, 1629, the Kirke brothers, who had unsuccessfully attacked in 1628, raised the English flag over supply-starved Quebec. Champlain packed his bags for home. After having repelled the English the previous year, Champlain was in no position to defend his outpost without supplies from

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<sup>1</sup> Philip L. Barbour, *The Three Worlds of Captain John Smith*, (London, MacMillan, 1964), 350-369.

France. Although the horizon did not look good for the French, Quebec's future was far from being guaranteed to the English. Compounding the issue was that England and France had made peace nearly three months before Quebec was sacked. While it was clear in Europe that the English would not keep the outpost, it took three years to return Quebec to the control of Louis XIII. It was during this time that Champlain finished his own *tour de force*, which like Smith's work covered the exploration and colonisation of North America from what they saw as the beginning of their countries' claims to the 'new world,' up to the most recent dispatch from across the Atlantic.<sup>2</sup>

Thus both of these men were in similar situations: they wrote in a climate in which not only their involvement with, but the very existence of, Jamestown and Quebec was in jeopardy. Hindsight may create the illusion that the existence of these colonies was always secure, but, in the context of a culture of colonial failure, it seems most likely that for Smith and Champlain the future of Jamestown and Quebec was far from certain. Although never suffering total defeat, like in Quebec, Virginia's population was also fragile. Despite the fact that the colony was expanding in the years leading up to 1622, the population at that time was only 1400, a number easily vanquished if England had not sent support from across the Atlantic.<sup>3</sup> The uncertain climate around these places united their works under a common theme. It is clear that Smith and Champlain were using the *Generall Historie* and *Voyages* to demonstrate their key roles in the development of each outpost, and more specifically regarding their dealing with the aboriginal people. Both texts were tools to advance the prospects and roles of these two men in the settlements that they helped to found. Today

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<sup>2</sup> Joe Armstrong, *Champlain*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1987), 226-256.

<sup>3</sup> National Park Service, "Growth and Settlement Beyond Jamestown," *Jamestown Historic Briefs*, <http://www.nps.gov/colo/jthanout/GrowthJt.html>. (June 28, 2004)

they are considered by many to be the founders of Jamestown and Quebec, but in these documents those reputations were more being sought after than achieved.

Champlain's *Voyages* (1632) and Smith's *Generall Historie* are both very lengthy tomes, and therefore this chapter deals only with the first three books of the *Generall Historie* and the first two of *Voyages*. Primarily this choice was made in order to examine only the areas of the *Generall Historie* that Smith knew intimately, and to avoid examining Champlain's reflections on the two decades he spent at Quebec, an experience Smith never had. By doing this, the focus of the chapter is on comparable experiences that each man had at the initial stages of North American exploration.

As a consequence, this chapter has a much heavier focus on John Smith. This is a result of the historiography and Smith's own editing. Although both of these works are fundamentally cut and paste editions of their authors' earlier writings, the quantity of changes in Smith was considerably greater. This can best be explained by Champlain's tendency to leave out stories and events; Smith, on the other hand, was equally liberal with the pen as he was with the scissors, inserting stories and sentences that had never appeared in any of his earlier works. This difference in their editing style also seems to be in keeping with the stylistic differences seen in the first two chapters of this thesis.

Another reason for focusing on Smith is the abundance of secondary material produced on his writings and his life. Unlike Champlain, Smith has had a significant amount of literature written about his works, ranging from post-colonial discourse to mere summaries of the original text. If there is any area in Champlain scholarship that requires more attention, and there are many (including his biography), it is the study of his writings. Until such time as Champlain's writings have been studied in depth and for their own merit – rather than as a resource for chronology or biography – he will always pale in comparison

to other colonial figures, such as Captain Smith. This does not serve as a bright prospect for this chapter. However, it is only by conducting such studies that the dearth of analysis pertaining to Champlain's writings will ever be rectified.

The first two books of Champlain's *Voyages* essentially present a brief summary of events from the beginning of French exploration to de Monts' abandonment of Port Royal in 1607. Book I of the work is basically a summary of French travels from 1504 until his own arrival in Tadoussac in 1603. Such an overview is basic and goes into little detail; *Des Sauvages* has been reduced to a cursory chapter, which reveals nothing more than the bare facts of his first visit to North America. Book II, however, was completely dedicated to his time in Port Royal and more specifically his travels down the New England coast. Although this chapter draws from both Books I and II, it is the second that provides the foundation for its analysis. As this chapter will show, the changes that occur in this book, from his earlier *Voyages* of 1613, reinforce Gordon Sayre's opinion. In his study of these two men Sayre wrote: "in his [Champlain's] 1632 work he presents himself more like Smith, as the man on whom the fate of the colony depended."<sup>4</sup> The consolidation of facts highlighting Champlain's credentials that occurs in these books was clearly pointed towards making Champlain the lynch pin of success in Quebec. Unfortunately for Champlain, the work was not as successful as Smith's at making an impact among those in power. Joe Armstrong suspects "that only as a last resort was Champlain brought back into service" in 1632.<sup>5</sup> By the time of the writing of this book the most important parts of Champlain's career and his influence were behind him.

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<sup>4</sup> Gordon Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 62.

<sup>5</sup> Armstrong, 259.

This was clearly not the case for John Smith, whose *Generall Historie* took off in popularity after its timely publication. It was Smith's most famous work, and perhaps it won his place in history. Philip Barbour has claimed: "The *General History* suddenly brought John Smith back into the colonial limelight. If he was not yet a made man as a promoter, he was certainly no longer a broken, forgotten one, if indeed he had ever really been broken."<sup>6</sup> The success of the *Generall Historie* was surprising. Like the *Voyages*, Smith's work was merely an anthology of colonial ventures and in some ways merely represented an addendum to the works of Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas. Alden Vaughan noted that the most original part of the work was in Book III, which is merely a heavily edited version of the 1612 *Proceedings*.<sup>7</sup>

It is on this editing that modern scholarship feasts. In his edition of Smith's works, Barbour highlighted Smith's failures: "He was careless with figures, prone to exaggeration, and too self-centred to regard events objectively, yet patently sincere, and passionately dedicated to 'his' colonies, Virginia and New England. In fact the book came into being almost in spite of John Smith."<sup>8</sup> And yet the book was still a success! Part of this success came from the climate created by the dissolution of the Virginia Company. However, adding fuel to its fire was the tradition in which it was written.

No person involved in the settlement enterprises surrounding either the London or Plymouth Companies could avoid the work of both Richard Hakluyts (cousins) and Samuel Purchas. These men would have been known to anyone in Smith's position and their successful work would have at least been read, if not emulated, by those writing about the Americas. Smith had the added benefit of having a friendship with Purchas. Coincidentally,

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<sup>6</sup> Barbour, *Three Worlds*, 370. Barbour has edited Smith's title to fit with modern spelling.

<sup>7</sup> Alden T. Vaughan, *American Genesis: Captain John Smith and the Founding of Virginia*, (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1975), 179.

<sup>8</sup> Barbour (ed.), *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580-1631)*, vol. II, (Chapel Hill, 1986), 30.

when Smith began to ruminate about writing his *Generall Historie* Purchas had recently finished a lengthy tome in honour of Hakluyt, which no doubt influenced the content and style of Smith's works. "Like Smith's earlier writing," wrote Alden Vaughan, "the *Generall Historie* followed the nationalistic tradition of Hakluyt and Purchas: it sought to inspire all Britons to join cause for the glory of the empire."<sup>9</sup> Essentially, Smith was writing to save the colonies,<sup>10</sup> but perhaps more importantly, he was also writing to ensure his place in the history of the New World and a role in the decision making for Virginia.

To do this, Smith added the work of others to his own and created a summary of English colonisation from Madoc, Prince of Wales, who supposedly peopled an 'unknown land' in 1170, to the foundation of the New England colonies in the early 1620s. Essentially this work was written in a similar style to that of Champlain. Book I is a voyage-by-voyage overview of Atlantic endeavours from 1170 to the foundation of Jamestown, followed by a slightly altered reprint of the *Map of Virginia* (original published in 1612), which is a descriptive (as opposed to chronological) account of Virginia. Book III is a significantly edited version of the *Proceedings*, and serves as a narrative companion to Book II. The rest of the work is made up of reports from North America that were written once Smith had returned to England, with the exception of Book VI, which contains *A Description of New England*.

Despite the appearance and the title, this is not a work of history recognizable to the modern scholar. Barbour expanded on this point by emphasizing that "the *General History* is not a history; it is not even a journalistic narrative. It is John Smith's Memoirs, his Apologia, and his defense, rounded out with information from others bearing on what he considered

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<sup>9</sup> Vaughan, 177. The term empire is somewhat misleading, as it does not appear in any of Smith's writings, and may not have been used at all in this sense during this period.

<sup>10</sup> Karen O. Kupperman, "Brasse without but golde within: the writings of Captain John Smith," *Virginia Cavalcade*, vol. 38 no. 2, (Autumn 1988), 68.

his colonies.”<sup>11</sup> As argued in the previous chapters, the difference between Smith and Champlain was highlighted by Smith’s subjectivity and intimacy. Where *Voyages* is only an account of events Champlain experienced, the *Generall Historie* blurs the line between verifiable fact, secondary accounts, and, as will be suggested in the following pages, fiction. Although both men can be seen as promoting themselves and their own vision of colonisation, the leeway that Smith took was significantly different from Champlain. This makes the two works remarkably similar in purpose and overall message, but completely different in content and style.

In separate articles Myra Jehlen and David Read have highlighted a key difference between Champlain and Smith. Although neither article addresses Champlain, their work on Smith highlights an aspect of the *Generall Historie* that does not appear in *Voyages*. Basically, both of these scholars sought to explain internal problems in Smith’s *Generall Historie* that arise by reading the work through a post-colonial lens. They have done this by pointing out that in the *Generall Historie* the voice of the ‘cultural other,’ in this case Powhatan, can be heard resisting English encroachments. Jehlen explained this by suggesting, “Smith is uncertain about his situation, meaning that he is neither sure what the story unfolding around him is, nor how to tell it, nor even how he wants it to come out.”<sup>12</sup> Read made a similar comment by writing, “Smith’s writing resists our desire to understand the process of colonization as itself a coherent phenomenon.”<sup>13</sup> With these ideas in mind, Jehlen has termed Smith’s work “history before the fact,” as opposed to “history as the past.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Barbour, *Three Worlds*, 368. Emphasis is Barbour’s.

<sup>12</sup> Myra Jehlen, “History before the Fact; or, Captain John Smith’s Unfinished Symphony,” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 19, (Summer 1993), 688.

<sup>13</sup> David Read, “Colonialism and Coherence: The Case of Captain John Smith’s *Generall Historie of Virginia*,” *Modern Philology*, vol. 91 no. 4, (May 1994), 429.

<sup>14</sup> Jehlen, 690.



What she meant by “history before the fact” was that Smith’s *Generall Historie* was not a history (as Barbour noted earlier) but rather it *is* history in the making, without a clear message or voice to be conveyed to contemporaries. In other words, it should be seen as a history written without the knowledge of the future, in a climate where many of the major players were still alive, and with a policy towards the native people that was far from cemented. Rather than being a tool to mine for facts, then, Jehlen believes that this work is a window into the tumultuous days around the dissolution of the Virginia Company, providing more than one perspective. She explained the idea in this manner: “history before the fact is uncertain, apparently redundant, and contingent; only retrospectively does it take on direction and determination.”<sup>15</sup> When looking at the *Generall Historie* from a timeline perspective, in which every event has a knowable past *and future*, Smith’s masterwork appears incoherent and frequently contradictory because too much was still uncertain. However, if one attempts to understand the work from Smith’s point of view – not knowing the future – the *Generall Historie* can be seen as truly attempting to verbally capture North America, contradictions and all.

Read has taken this point slightly further by suggesting that Smith was attempting to create a history which accurately portrayed life in the Americas. He wrote: “The *Generall Historie* appears weighted heavily toward comprehensive mastery; it is not that the signs of critical mastery disappear altogether but that they are subsumed within Smith’s effort to embrace the whole history of the Virginia enterprise in his writing.”<sup>16</sup> Smith was pragmatic. His indecision is representative of his desire to return to Virginia. In the aftermath of the 1622 uprising there were those who wanted to continue to attempt peaceful relations with the native people, and those who did not. And there were certainly many people still alive

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<sup>15</sup> Jehlen, 690.

<sup>16</sup> Read, 441.

who knew the players in Smith's stories. Smith had to write in such a way as to please those who controlled the outcome of the Virginia company, and there was no knowing which vision towards the aboriginal would win out: conquest, accommodation, or a continuing of the policy of blending these two.

The work of Jehlen and Read emphasized both the dynamic nature of life in Virginia as well as the humanity in Smith. By creating a work in which the voice of the 'cultural other' can be heard so clearly, Smith has demonstrated how he viewed the aboriginal people. By giving the aboriginal people a voice, Smith has declared that they were people whose interests were worth considering. As in New England, where Smith told his readers of both the aboriginal friendship and violence in the same story, this stylistic decision shows that although Smith did not embrace aboriginal culture, it was not a factor that he could neglect. As with Champlain, there was some leeway in the tales he could recount, but still the *Generall Historie* had to remain true to the tenor of the North American environment if Smith were to be taken seriously.

This "comprehensive mastery," "uncertainty," and general lack of coherence is a feature unique to Smith. Champlain's work is not plagued by these problems. Certainly the reasons for this are numerous, having to do with the types of aboriginal people encountered, the economic make-up of the outpost and the structure of government in the homeland. However, there are some major differences that can help to explain why two men who had similar experiences and sought to do similar things with their largest works turned out two completely different documents. First, by 1624 the English colonial enterprise was getting under way. England had settlements in Virginia, Bermuda, and New England. France was still focused primarily on Quebec. By following in Hakluyt's and Purchas' footsteps Smith sought to write a history of all the Atlantic settlements instead of the one with which he was

intimately familiar. Having only been in North America for a handful of years, he used second-hand knowledge to build much of the work, perhaps limiting the time he could spend editing that which was already written. Second, based on the evidence England was fertile ground for writing on colonisation, whereas in France it appeared to be merely the affair of merchants and some noble officials. Although this meant it was much more profitable for Smith, he also had much more at stake than Champlain. He needed to offer his readers an account unlike all those that had gone before, and one that would stand up to the scrutiny of those who actually participated in the tales of which he wrote. Last, Smith primarily dealt with a handful of aboriginal leaders, most importantly Powhatan. Champlain, on the other hand, never came into the same type of sustained contact with the same individuals in these early years. In order for Smith to put himself at the centre of his dialogue he was required to emphasize Powhatan and his subordinate chiefs, because the relationship with them was central to the survival of the settlement. Also the very nature of the Powhatan empire required that they have a voice in such a narrative. No single aboriginal group wielded as much power further north.

Despite the voice Smith gave to the Virginian Algonquians in the *Generall Historie*, his word choice became even more restrictive. In the previous chapter it was noted that Smith was beginning to consolidate his vocabulary towards a heavier use of the word *salvage*. This is even clearer in the *Generall Historie*. In this work Smith used *salvage* (or its more modern counterpart, *savage*) two hundred two times, *people* seventy-nine times, and *indian* (which was used most frequently in *A True Relation*) seven times. Before judgement is passed on the number of times *salvage* was employed, the reader must remember that the *Generall Historie* is significantly longer than both *A True Relation* and *Description of New England*. However, the difference between the *Description of New England* and the *Generall Historie* appears to be for

every single use of the word *indian*, Smith employed *salvage* nineteen times in the *Description of New England* and twenty-nine times in the *Generall Historie*. This suggests a significant linguistic shift towards a more homogenous vocabulary; especially considering that in *A True Relation* Smith only employed the word less than 1/3 of the time for every use of *indian*.<sup>17</sup>

Smith's growing fondness for the term *salvage* is clear but the reason for such a shift is difficult to fully understand. There are a variety of possibilities that help to clarify the issue. First, it is important to remember that *A True Relation* was edited and published while Smith was in Virginia and that the language used therein may be more reflective of editorial decisions in England than Smith's own usage. But this does not account for the continuing change between *Description of New England* and *Generall Historie*, and therefore cannot stand alone. Second, in light of the Virginia uprising and the struggles of the colony, it is possible that Smith's views had hardened towards the aboriginal people. With the English still in a weak position, Smith may have sought to project a more uncivilized and wild-like manner on the natives than he had previously. However, this explanation does not account for his clearly-emphasized point deriding many of the English in the colony. For him, the challenges of this relationship were not entirely a North American problem. The third possibility reflects this. Perhaps Smith's peers in England began to have an increasing amount of influence on him. Karen Kupperman has observed, "It is only writers who stayed in England who assign the Indians to a place outside the ranks of full humanity."<sup>18</sup> If most of the more pejorative literature emanated from writers who never traveled to the Americas, it is possible that these types of ideas increasingly influenced Smith once he ceased to have first-hand experiences across the Atlantic. This would explain why his word choice

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<sup>17</sup> Word count was done on: John Smith, "The Generall Historie of Virginia," *American Memory*, site managed by the Library of Congress, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbcb:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(lhbc0262a\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbcb:@field(DOCID+@lit(lhbc0262a))): (June 28, 2004)

<sup>18</sup> Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians*, (Totowa, N.J., 1980), 106.

became more restrictive over time. However, it is also possible that the changes in Smith's vocabulary are reflective of a general shift in the vocabulary of all Englishmen. This is difficult to prove, but were it the case, such changes would reflect little on Smith's own perceptions of the Powhatan empire.

The language that Smith used was not limited, however, to the vocabularies discussed in the previous chapters. Like Champlain's growing vocabulary – shown in the previous chapter – Smith too increased his lexicon for the aboriginal people. Although he seldom deviated from his regular three-fold vocabulary, from time to time he also employed words such as *infidel*, *inhabitant*, *fiend*, and *barbarian*. *Infidel* appeared only once and, not surprisingly, in terms of religion. Smith wrote “that which is most of all, a businesse (most acceptable to God) to bring such poore Infidels to the knowledge of God and his holy Gospell.”<sup>19</sup> This is the same context in which the word was used in *A True Relation*, and the same context seen in Champlain's use of the word. *Inhabitant* was used thirteen times. A good example of its use can be seen in phrases such as the “Inhabitants of Warraskoyac.”<sup>20</sup> *Fiend* appeared twice in a general sense. On one occasion Smith wrote, “round about him those fiends daunced a pretty while, and then came in three more as ugly as the rest.”<sup>21</sup> The scarcity of the word's usage suggests that Smith deliberately intended on using the word, but there is little within the text to betray his reasoning behind this decision. If he thought *fiend* was a synonym for *salvage* one would expect it to occur more often. It seems likely his exact meaning will never be known. Finally, *barbarian* was also used twice. Like in Champlain's New England travels, *barbarian* was used in terms of violence and war. On both occasions

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<sup>19</sup> John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles with the names of the Adventurers, Planters, and Governours from their first beginning An: 1584 to this present 1624*, in Barbour (ed.), *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, vol. II, 114.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 103.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 149.

Smith used it while being held in captivity by the Powhatans. The connotations that it holds appeals more to their being enemies than savage.<sup>22</sup>

For the sake of historical accuracy it should be highlighted that the *Generall Historie* is significantly longer than, and in fact includes much of, the documents examined in the previous chapters of this thesis. As a result, these occasional digressions from Smith's status quo may not mark as much of a change as they initially suggest. Nonetheless, given Smith's increasing stakes both as author and promoter, these linguistic differences are important, as they represent a growing vocabulary and thus increase the precision of meaning implicit in each word Smith used. With the addition of *fiend* and *barbarian* to his lexicon, one must hesitate to attach these connotations to his use of the word *salvage*. Clearly by having employed these words selectively in his text, Smith meant something different from the generic *salvage*. If he did not, one would expect to see *barbarian* and *fiend* in use much more frequently. In the grand scheme of things Smith chose to refer to the aboriginal people as *salvages* hundreds of time in his works, and yet only used these other words sporadically. Although all of these words may have shared some common connotations, the diversity in Smith's lexicon requires that scholars not consider these words to have been synonymous.

The word choice in the *Generall Historie* brings Smith even more in line with Champlain. Little has changed in Champlain's vocabulary since writing the *Voyages* of 1613. *Sauvage* still dominated his lexicon, followed by *peuple* (which is used in the same sense as Smith uses *inhabitant*), *barbare*, and *habitans*. Champlain also added *infidel* to his word choice, which he used three times in the same context as Smith. That there is little difference between the *Voyages* (1632), *Des Sauvages* and *Voyages* (1613) is no surprise, as the 1632 publication was mostly a reprint of these two documents. This once again highlights a key

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<sup>22</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 146 and 152.

difference between Smith's and Champlain's texts. Where Champlain mainly cut elements out of his previous accounts to create a large but manageable tome, Smith reorganized and rewrote much of his third book.

To emphasize this point more clearly, a word count was done of the *Proceedings* in order to compare Smith's word selection in the edited version of *Proceedings* found in Book III of the *Generall Historie*. By comparing the two works it is possible to see how the documents shifted in respect to the aboriginal people. Book III of the *Generall Historie* used *salvage* one hundred sixty-four times, whereas the *Proceedings* only used the word one hundred seventeen times. This amounts to the word being used forty-seven more times in the later work. Likewise, *people* appeared fourteen times more in the *Generall Historie* than in the *Proceedings*, and use of *indian* remained the same between the two versions. This contrast reveals little change in Smith's attitude (especially because of the convoluted authorship of the *Proceedings*) but it does facilitate an understanding of what he sought to emphasize in the *Generall Historie*. This change in the number of references to the aboriginal people represents an increase of approximately forty-three percent in the 1624 work.<sup>23</sup> Further exaggerating this change is that by taking the length of each work in the Barbour anthology, one notices that there is actually a seventeen percent decrease in the overall size of the *Proceedings* between their original publication and Smith's *Generall Historie*. In other words the number of references to the native people increased while the page count decreased, suggesting that Smith made some significant changes between 1612 and 1624.

There is, however, a significant problem with comparing the *Proceedings* and the *Generall Historie*. In the *Proceedings* Smith is only a character, rather than the central author. There is little evidence that he had any control over the writing of the 1612 edition. In terms

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<sup>23</sup> This assumption is based on the fact that the use of the word *salvage* increased by forty percent and *people* forty-seven percent. This averages out to approximately forty-three percent.

of Book III of the *Generall Historie*, in which it is clear that Smith was the editor, one must question whether Smith influenced the original creation of the ideas, or rather was only influential in perpetuating them. Most historians (such as Barbour) have met this problem pragmatically and concluded that whether he wrote it or not, Smith had complete control over the content of the *Generall Historie* and therefore, although some of the ideas might not have been his originally, he has taken on the role of a surrogate parent to them. As a result of the questionable authorship and uncertainty about Smith's exact role, it is necessary to make some comments on the changes Smith made to the *Proceedings* in the *Generall Historie*.

First, though, there are three things that remained in the *Generall Historie* from the *Proceedings* that are quite valuable to understanding how Smith perceived the aboriginal people. First, the 'apotheosis' of Captain Smith; second, a demonstration of how Smith communicated with the aboriginal people; and third, a sentence suggesting that Smith saw the native people as a commodity rather than as people with whom a relationship must be created.

The possible deification of European explorers by aboriginal populations has long been a contentious issue in the secondary literature of this period. Some, such as Gananath Obeyesekere, say that these stories are fabrications based on European myth. Others, like Marshall Sahlins, claim that this was an actual experience that many Europeans encountered. This issue arises thrice in Smith's *Proceedings*. The first occasion occurred after Powhatan had held Smith prisoner. Smith claimed in the *Generall Historie*:

So he [Smith] had enchanted these poore soules being their prisoner; and now Newport, whom he called his Father arriving, neare as directly as he foretold, they esteemed him as an Oracle, and had them at that submission he might command them what he listed. That God that created all things they knew he adored for his God: they would also in their discourses tearme the God of Captain Smith... But the President and Councill so much



envied his estimation among the Salvages, (though we all in generall equally participated with him of the good thereof)...<sup>24</sup>

This passage is revealing in that it contains significant support for the words that Smith has written. By stating that the president and council were envious of Smith, and that everyone participated in the benefits of such deification, the authors were suggesting that the residents of Jamestown were aware of his apotheosis. Furthermore, neither *Proceedings* nor *Generall Historie* were written in a vacuum, and there were plenty of people in England who could have challenged this story.

The next account begins to blur the lines. It took place after the English had finished worshipping their God. In this case the reader learns,

they began in a most passionate manner to hold up their hands to the Sunne, with a most fearefull song, then imbracing our Captaine, they began to adore him in like manner: though he rebuked them, yet they proceeded till their song was finished... stroking their ceremonious hands about his necke for his Creation to be their Governour and Protector, promising their aydes, victualls, or what they had to be his, if he would stay with them, to defend and revenge them of the Massawomeks.<sup>25</sup>

Although couched in a naïve parallel story of religion, this type of deification renders the reader much more suspicious of Smith's motives. This is accentuated by the claim that Smith was invited to be their leader. However, there is no way to prove whether this event happened, or whether Smith correctly interpreted it. Such claims force the sceptical mind into action: one must ask whether Smith used this story as a vignette of reality or instead one of rhetoric. Given the frequent verbatim voice of historical actors in his writings it seems likely that some elements of this story were fiction.

The last example of Smith's deification happened much later in his account, and it is this story that serves to best clarify the issue:

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<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 154. also *The Proceedings of the English Colony of Virginia, taken faithfully out of the writings of Thomas Studley Cape-marchant, Anas Todkill, Doctor Russell, Nathaniel Powell, William Phetiplace, and Richard Pot, with the laboures of other discreet observers, during their residences*, in Barbour (ed.), *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, vol. I, 215.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 171-172. also *Proceedings*, 232.

The poore Salvage in the dungeon was so smothered with the smoake he had made, and so pittiously burnt, that wee found him dead. The other most lamentably bewayled his death, and broke forth into such bitter agonies, that the President to quiet him, told him that if hereafter they would not steale, he would make him alive againe: but he little thought he could be recovered. Yet we doing our best with Aqua vitae and Vinigar, it pleased God to restore him againe to life, but so drunke and affrighted, that he seemed Lunaticke, the which as much tormented and grieved the other, as before to see him dead. Of which maladie upon promise of their good behaviour, the President promised to recover him: and so caused him to be layd by a fire to sleepe, who in the morning having well slept, had recovered his perfect senses... they went away so well contented, that this was spread among all the Salvages for a miracle, that Captaine Smith could make a man alive that was dead.<sup>26</sup>

This story serves as the most likely explanation for the other instances where Smith was deified as well. In this story Smith held complete control. He had the *Aqua vitae*, he saw a chance to gain loyalty from the natives, and he had nothing to lose if it did not work.

Perhaps Smith had been using these types of sleight of hand in all his experiences with the natives during his time in Jamestown. If so he would have fit into a long tradition of quasi-magic shows such as the mind reading “magic” of reading and writing, and the magnetized sword used to impress the natives on Waymouth’s voyage along New England in 1605.<sup>27</sup>

Although it is clear that we will probably never know whether the natives actually believed Smith was a god, it is obvious that he played an active role in cultivating this idea among the aboriginals he encountered. Instead of Europeans misinterpreting the aboriginal beliefs, then, it may have been that they tried to cultivate those beliefs through abusing the cultural chasm between each society. Perhaps even more importantly Smith wanted to ensure that his readers were aware of his exalted standing in the New World. After all, who better to relate with the aboriginal people than one of their own gods?

But the *Generall Historie* and the *Proceedings* are not that simple. Although the emphasis is placed heavily on Smith’s interaction with the native people, the picture is much more shaded than Smith at first makes it appear. If Champlain’s *Voyages* (1613) provided the

<sup>26</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 211. also *Proceedings*, 262.

<sup>27</sup> James Axtell, *Beyond 1492*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), 91.

best insight on the difficulties of communication with the native people for him, it is the *Proceedings* that do the same for Smith. The discussion of communication in the *Proceedings* reveals that Smith's self-promotion was still regulated by reality. For example, during one encounter with the Massawomeks, Smith disclosed, "We understood them nothing at all, but by signes, whereby they signified unto us they had beene at warres with the Tockwoghes, the which they confirmed by shewing us their greene wounds, but the night parting us, we imagined they appointed the next morning to meete, but after that we never saw them."<sup>28</sup> Not only did Smith emphasize the difficulty in communication, but also the passage indicated that he was prone to misinterpretation. Such a story would not bode well for a man attempting to 'save' Virginia. Given the above statement, just how much Smith knew about the Virginian Algonquians is questionable. Having only had two years in the colony, he could not have been the expert he claimed to be.

But perhaps Smith did not need to be an expert. Given some of the statements he made in his *Description of New England*, it seems that intimate interaction, such as building relationships, may not have been a priority for him. In New England Smith had a vision for using the aboriginal people that involved subduing and subjecting them. This idea was also suggested in the *Proceedings*. When writing about resource exploitation the reader is informed, "and what other mineralls, rivers, rocks, *nations*, woods, fishings, fruites, victuall, and what other commodities the land afforded."<sup>29</sup> By grouping nations with all of these other commodities, Smith was reinforcing the policies he more clearly outlined in *Description of New England*. It is clear that Smith's vision of a colony involved the aboriginal people helping Europeans survive and thrive, whether they wanted to or not.

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<sup>28</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 171. also *Proceedings*, 231.

<sup>29</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 168. also *Proceedings*, 227-228. The emphasis on nations is my own, not Smith's nor the original authors' (if there was one)

Although Smith chose to leave these elements in his edited version, much had changed in his *Generall Historie*. Some of these changes were minor and amount to Smith placing an increased emphasis on himself, and other changes are quite significant and play a major role in our understanding of Smith and his interaction with the Virginian Algonquians. Champlain also made a number of similar changes, though his changes were much less significant. Basically, these alterations to the original texts of both writers amount to a self-aggrandisement of their role in North America by painting a rosy picture of their own encounters with the aboriginal people.

The first area in which this is made clear is in how each man referred to himself when dealing with the native people. In these edited works their superiors have frequently been omitted, making themselves the focus of attention. For example, on at least four occasions Champlain has removed de Monts from his narrative; where in 1613 Champlain had written, "Le lendemain le sieur de Mons fut à terre pour veoir leur labourage sur le bort de la riuere..."<sup>30</sup> he has now written, "Je fus à terre pour voir leur labourage sur le bord de la riuere."<sup>31</sup> It is clear that Champlain intentionally wrote de Monts (who had died in 1628) out of key stories, thus making it appear that he played a greater role than he actually did.

Smith also marginalized his superiors. Rather than omitting their names, however, Smith would most often place his name first within a list of names.<sup>32</sup> Although this might seem insignificant, the technique would have increased Smith's reputation by increasing the chances of inattentive readers seeing his name. On one occasion, however, he went beyond

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<sup>30</sup> Samuel de Champlain, *Les Voyages du Sieur de Champlain xaintongeois, capitaine ordinaire pour le Roy, en la marine*, in H.P. Biggar (ed.), *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. I, 327. My Translation: "The next day Sieur de Monts went on shore to see their labour along the river bank."

<sup>31</sup> Champlain, *Les Voyages de La Nouvelle France Occidentale, dicte Canada, faits par le S<sup>r</sup> de Champlain Xaintongeois, Capitaine pour le Roy en la Marine du Ponant, & toutes les Descouvertes qu'il a faites en ce país depuis l'an 1603. jusques en l'an 1629*, in H.P. Biggar (ed.), *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. III, 374. My Translation: "I went on shore to see their labour along the river bank."

<sup>32</sup> For examples see Smith, *Generall Historie*, 137 and 138.

reordering the text and omitted the actions of Captain Christopher Newport, his superior – with whom he did not have good relations. The *Proceedings* state that “Upon this Captaine Newport sent his presents by water, which is neare 100 miles; with 50 of the best shot, himselfe went by land which is but 12 miles, where he met with our 3 barges to transport him over.”<sup>33</sup> However, in the edited version Smith recorded, “Upon this the Presents were sent by water which is neare an hundred myles, and the Captains went by land with fiftie good shot.”<sup>34</sup> In the earlier version it is clear that Newport was going to recognize Powhatan as ruler of the Virginian Algonquians. In the 1624 version of this story, Newport’s name is seldom mentioned, and, although he is shown to be present, it is Smith who played the more important role.

Not only did Smith slightly tweak the narrative in his favour, but he also placed himself as the key intermediary between these two societies. Just after he had been released from captivity, and just before he claimed the natives made him a god, Smith has inserted: “Captaine Smith. To whom the Salvages, as is sayd, every other day repaired, with such provisions that sufficiently did serve them from hand to mouth: part alwayes they brought him as Presents from their Kings, or Pocahontas; the rest he as their Market Clarke set the price himselfe, how they should sell.”<sup>35</sup> These types of changes by Smith and Champlain serve as some of the strongest evidence that these publications were not solely to serve as general histories or to make money, but they were also to re-open the doors that both men feared had been closed forever.

Captain Smith made even more significant changes. His text is full of added paragraphs, stories, and opinions about the native people not seen in his earlier works. The

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<sup>33</sup> Smith, *Proceedings*, 237. The context of this quotation suggests that “himselfe” is referring to Smith rather than Newport. This makes sense seeing as Newport was a ship’s captain.

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 184.

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 154.

most famous of these additions was the celebrated intervention of Pocahontas. Although *A True Relation* and the *Proceedings* record Smith's captivity by Powhatan, it is not until *Generall Historie* that the story begins to revolve around Powhatan's daughter, Pocahontas. The change in the story of Smith's captivity is dramatic and significant. In *A True Relation* Powhatan released Smith after what amounted to a trade negotiation. Smith recounted the tale with these words:

Hee promised to give me Corne, Venison, or what I wanted to feede us, Hatchets and Copper wee should make him, and none should disturbe us. This request I promised to performe: and thus having with all the kindnes hee could devise, sought to content me: hee sent me home with 4. men, one that usually carried my Gowne and Knapsacke after me, two other loded with bread, and one to accompanie me.<sup>36</sup>

This is an interesting selection because it gives the reader a sense of the building of a productive relationship – similar to Champlain's policies in Quebec. However, in the *Generall Historie* any pretence of such a relationship has disappeared. Not only that, but sixteen years later there does not even appear to have ever been a chance for a productive relationship. Smith wrote:

Being ready with their clubs, to beate out his braines, Pocahontas the Kings dearest daughter, when no intreaty could prevaile, got his head in her armes, and laid her owne upon his to save him from death: whereat the Emperour was contented he should live to make him hatchets, and her bells, beads, and copper; for they thought him as well of all occupations as themselves.<sup>37</sup>

Which account is true and which is false is anyone's guess, as there is no way of verifying the story.

Leo Lemay and Karen Kupperman have suggested that the account in the *Generall Historie* was a 'ritualistic killing' in which Smith was "reborn, he was adopted into the tribe, with Pocahontas as his sponsor. But Smith, of course, did not realize the nature of the

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<sup>36</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, vol. I, 57.

<sup>37</sup> Smith, *General Historie*, vol. II, 151.

initiation ceremony.”<sup>38</sup> To support this idea Lemay appealed to a letter that Smith claimed to have written to Queen Anne regarding Pocahontas.<sup>39</sup> However, at this time, an original has not been found, meaning that the letter only appears in the *Generall Historie*, thus forming a circular use of evidence. Even if this letter did exist in 1616, the lack of comment does not provide any veracity to the story. There is no way of knowing whether John Rolfe, Pocahontas, or any of her entourage knew anything about Smith’s letter.

Kupperman went into greater detail explaining her view of this story. She believes Smith to have been telling the truth because, when it was over, Powhatan attempted to bring Smith into the aboriginal worldview by offering “the Country of Capahowosick” for him to govern as a sub-*werowance*.<sup>40</sup> Later Kupperman added to this notion by suggesting, “The idea that Smith had gone through something like the black-boy ceremony and had been reborn as a member of Powhatan’s family is supported by Pocahontas’s addressing him as father when they met... in London.”<sup>41</sup> Although this puts greater weight on the veracity of this story, it does not render it authentic. It is questionable whether Powhatan, who had spent the years prior to the English arrival consolidating his empire, would have offered any territory to the English who were numerically weak. Secondly, *A True Relation* reveals that on a number of occasions Smith used the term *father* to refer to his superiors, such as Christopher Newport.<sup>42</sup> Given the sense in which Smith used the word, it is at least possible that Pocahontas used *father* because of her past experience with Smith’s own language use. The evidence that most historians have used to support the Pocahontas story requires many tenuous links and must be taken lightly.

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<sup>38</sup> Leo Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 52. Kupperman makes a similar point in *Indians and English*, (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University, 2000), 114.

<sup>39</sup> The letter may be found in Smith, *Generall Historie*, 258.

<sup>40</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 151.

<sup>41</sup> Kupperman, *Indians and English*, 114.

<sup>42</sup> For example see Smith, *A True Relation*, 55. There are a handful of other instances scattered throughout the text.

Beyond these explanations there are other issues that cast more doubt on Smith's tale. First, Pocahontas would have just become a teenager when she was credited with saving Smith, and it seems unlikely in a society strictly divided by sex that she would have served to sponsor a much older man.<sup>43</sup> Second, Smith occasionally mentioned men who did not have a young heroine like Pocahontas to save them from having their heads beaten in, suggesting this was more than a symbolic ceremony. Further compounding this is that there is no evidence of such a ritual among the Powhatan people at this time in history.

In this light there is no significant evidence to support either story. *A True Relation* was heavily edited to produce a positive spin for the Virginia Company, suggesting that it might have included a sanitized version of this tale in order to promote the interests of the colony. However, Pocahontas was also left out of this story in the *Proceedings*, thus suggesting that perhaps the editing has greater significance in the *Generall Historie*. Alden Vaughan explained the difficulties with falling on either side of the debate:

Although Pocahontas had died several years earlier, she had become a legend: the savage princess who converted to Christianity, married an Englishman, visited England and met the royal family. There was no need then to suppress the story of her aid. Critics of Smith have seen the matter less generously: with Pocahontas and Powhatan dead, no restraints prevented the captain from inventing an attractive anecdote... The truth lies buried with the captain and his indian captors.<sup>44</sup>

Given that Smith was successful at procuring corn from Powhatan and his *werowances*, without much actual bloodshed, it seems likely that the first account might be the more truthful. Although the *Generall Historie* suggests a harsher relationship, and that Smith did not shy away from violence, the 1622 uprising demonstrates that the Virginia Algonquians had the ability to threaten and attack the English. The fact that they did not suggests there was at least an uneasy truce.

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<sup>43</sup> However, if this interpretation is true it serves as an interesting parallel with Champlain who married the twelve year old H  l  ne Boull   in 1610.

<sup>44</sup> Vaughan, 37.



Based on the tenor of the *Generall Historie*, it seems most likely that Smith employed the Pocahontas story as a gimmick to increase his readership. By appealing to the popularity of history's most famous aboriginal woman, he was hoping that more people would pick up his book. Contrary to the critics about whom Vaughan wrote, Smith does not seem to have been the sort of man who would have been concerned with what Powhatan or Pocahontas thought about his writings. Rather, he seems to have written what he pleased – within the approval of the king. The inclusion of Pocahontas, who had visited England, appealed to the public and no doubt adding her to the narrative would have enhanced Smith's fortunes.

There is another explanation for the inclusion of Pocahontas in this edition, which is somewhat tangential to the overall purpose of this thesis, but significant nonetheless, and that is the role of gender. It is possible that the story was included for the sake of its greatest financial supporter, for it was one of the most important women in England who financed the first edition of the book. Lady Frances, the Duchess of Richmond and Lennox, was most likely introduced to Smith through her first husband the Earl of Hertford – an earlier supporter of Smith from about 1609. By the time Smith began to think about writing the *Generall Historie* Frances had remarried to Ludovic Stuart, Duke of Lennox and Richmond, to become England's highest-ranking noblewoman.<sup>45</sup> Following from her late husband's previous support she financed the printing of *Generall Historie*. In his dedication to her at the beginning of the work Smith ranks her with his many other female saviours:

Yet my comfort is, that heretofore honorable and vertuous Ladies, and comparable but amongst themselves, have offred me rescue and protection in my greatest dangers: even in forraine parts, I have felt reliefe from that sex. The beauteous Lady Tragabigzanda, when I was a slave to the Turkes, did all she could to secure me. When I overcame the Bashaw of Nalbrits in Tartaria, the charitable Lady Callamata supplied my necessities. In the utmost of many extremities, that blessed Pokahontas, the great Kings daughter of Virginia, oft saved my life. When I escaped the crueltie of Pirats and most furious stormes, a long time

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<sup>45</sup> Barbour, *Three Worlds*, 362.

alone in a small Boat at Sea, and driven ashore in France, the good Lady Madam Chanoyes, bountifully assisted me.<sup>46</sup>

Whether all these women played the role attributed to them, or even whether they existed, is questionable. However, the important role that Smith ascribes to these women in this passage suggests that he was appealing to Lady Frances' sex. Perhaps the story of Pocahontas was added to Smith's text to ascribe agency to the Powhatan women in honour of his grand patroness; and if there actually was a 1616 letter to Queen Anne that also may have been shaped by an appeal to the sex of those in powerful positions.

In terms of Smith's perception of the aboriginal people, this paragraph is also interesting because it treats all of these women as equals. Regardless of creed, ethnicity, politics, or technological advancement Smith considered them all honourable and virtuous. It is clear that Smith had at least some conception of equality both in terms of gender and ethnicity. A Turk, a North American, a Muslim, a French woman, and England's highest ranking noblewoman were all seen as equals for Smith, suggesting that the same can be said for the people they represent. This helps to reinforce Kupperman's idea that early English perception of the aboriginal people had more to do with status than race.<sup>47</sup>

The inclusion of the Pocahontas story is just one example of additions Smith has made to his text. There are two others that are less important in terms of the overall understanding of the *Generall Historie*, but take on greater importance when examining Smith's changing perceptions of the native people. In *A True Relation* Smith observed that a feast he attended during his captivity was conducted "with such a Majestie as I cannot expresse, nor yet have often seene, either in Pagan or Christian; with a kinde countenance hee bad mee welcome, and caused a place to bee made by himselfe to sit."<sup>48</sup> In the *Generall*

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<sup>46</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 41-42.

<sup>47</sup> Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians*, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 65. see chapter 1 for greater discussion.

*Historie*, however, Smith's tone changed completely. Powhatan, who in 1608 had a "Majesticall countenance",<sup>49</sup> was now considered by his people "as he had beene a monster."<sup>50</sup> The feast in which he participated had also downgraded from an occasion where the Powhatan's "feasted him after their best barbarous manner they could..."<sup>51</sup> The difference in narrative does not need great explanation here because all of this forms the lead-up to Pocahontas' interjection discussed earlier in the paper, and is fitting with the changes discussed earlier. However, Smith's change of heart is interesting in terms of the discussion in chapter one. Smith's new perspective corresponds more with Champlain's interpretation in *Des Sauvages*, where he wrote: "ils mangent fort sallement: car quand ils ont les mains grasses, ils les frotent à leurs cheueux, ou bien au poil de leurs chiens..."<sup>52</sup> The two men's views have fallen in line with each other, in that they found the native eating habits revolting. In light of the difficulty in knowing which account is true, this change of heart seen in *Generall Historie* brings Smith's and Champlain's initial impressions of aboriginal cultures much closer together.

Smith parts company with *A True Relation* in another way as well. During Smith's captivity he was well fed. It seems that his captors continued bringing him food to the point where he could not keep up with their service. This theme is present in both narratives. However, in *A True Relation* he revealed that he feared he would be sacrificed. Smith wrote: "so fat they fed mee, that I much doubted they intended to have sacrificed mee to the *Quiyonghquosicke*, which is a superiour power they worship; a more uglier thing cannot be

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<sup>49</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 53. The square brackets are Barbour's. Also, a footnote immediately following this passage reads, "The jerky style of writing here suggests cutting." (ft. 125)

<sup>50</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 150.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 151.

<sup>52</sup> Champlain, *Des Sauvages*, in H.P. Biggar (ed.), *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. I, 102. My Translation: "they are very dirty eaters: because when they have greasy hands they rub them on their hair, or else on the fur of their dogs."

described: one they have for chief sacrifices, which also they call *Quiyonghquosick*.<sup>53</sup>

Although this earlier fear of sacrifice was extinguished, Smith rekindled the flame in the *Generall Historie* by suggesting that he was being fattened for the purpose of being eaten.

“They brought him as much more,” Smith wrote, “and then did they eate all the old, and reserved the new as they had done the other, which made him thinke they would fat him to eat him.”<sup>54</sup> There is little to account for what prompted Smith to include this in his lengthy tome, as there is no evidence that the Virginian Algonquians were ever cannibals. It seems that this change of heart had much more to do with a private decision Smith made than any fact that Smith may have come across. It is possible, although still highly questionable, that Smith included cannibalism as a way of justifying the ‘civil’ English presence in North America. His true motives will never be known.

If Smith had really wanted to write a masterwork solely justifying the Virginia experience, its shape would have been significantly different from the *Generall Historie*. As Read and Jehlen have shown, there is a plurality of voices in Smith’s work which is completely absent in Champlain’s writing. One of the strongest voices other than Smith’s in the *Generall Historie* was that of Powhatan. One explanation for this voice of resistance can be found in Kupperman’s, *Settling with the Indians*: “English colonists assumed that Indians were racially similar to themselves and that savagery was a temporary condition which the Indians would quickly lose. The really important category was status.”<sup>55</sup> Smith saw Powhatan as an equal. There is much to support this. On one occasion Smith wrote, “Now all their plots Smith so well understood, they were his best advantages to secure us from any trechery, could be done by them [Dutchmen living with Powhatan] or the Salvages: which

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<sup>53</sup> Smith, *A True Relation*, 59.

<sup>54</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 148 and *Proceedings*, 219.

<sup>55</sup> Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians*, 2.

with facility he could revenge when he would, because all those countryes more feared him then Powhatan...”<sup>56</sup> Although this passage suggests that Smith wished to bring the natives into subjection by fear and that he felt they could not be trusted, he demonstrated that Powhatan was the main challenge to his success. This passage also shows that though many of the aboriginal people bowed to Smith’s demands, Powhatan’s loyalty remained beyond his grasp, a fact Smith could have easily disregarded.

There seems to have been an inherent respect between Smith and Powhatan, despite their vying for the loyalty of the same groups of people. Later in the text, when Powhatan was dealing with Dutch workers, whose loyalty frequently shifted between the settlement and the natives, Smith further emphasized the parallels between the two leaders: “But the King [Powhatan] seeing they would be gone, replied; You that would have betrayed Captaine Smith to mee, will certainly betray me to this great Lord for your peace: so caused his men to beat out their braines.”<sup>57</sup> Regardless of whether Powhatan actually wanted Smith betrayed, this statement makes it clear that in Smith’s eyes Powhatan stood above those who would be so treacherous. Although Smith saw many native people and groups as being treacherous, Powhatan would not stoop so low. Furthermore, this passage shows that Powhatan may have actually refused their betrayal of Smith, adding an interesting subtext to the two leaders’ complex relationship.

This parallel between Smith and Powhatan runs clearly throughout the whole text and again raises questions about the veracity of some events. Sayre has observed, “every quality of civil and military life that he ascribed to and admired in Powhatan and his people – bravery, cunning, obedience – Smith prized in himself and expected from his

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<sup>56</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 217.

<sup>57</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 226.

subordinates.”<sup>58</sup> Given the parallels between these two men one must question the extent to which the *Generall Historie* is factually-based. As demonstrated in the discussion of Pocahontas, the issue is not clear. However, through reading the text, Smith and Powhatan appear in an archetypal relationship of protagonist and antagonist – both being essential to a good story. Essentially in Powhatan Smith may have emphasized certain characteristics, while downplaying others in order to portray himself as Powhatan’s greatest adversary. This interpretation of Smith’s relationship with Powhatan fits with other tales in the *Generall Historie* as well. For example, five women had rescued Smith, yet never a man; he happened to enter a world in which the leading aboriginal leader shared a similar worldview as himself, and in every case he overcame adversity by using his own skill and muscle. These happy coincidences, and other differences between *A True Relation* and *Generall Historie*, make for a good story, and this factor must always remain at the back of the reader’s mind.

These fictive elements may reveal more about Smith’s perceptions of the aboriginal people than his own substantiated observations. By paralleling himself with Powhatan, Smith was ascribing agency to him, and demonstrating that there was resistance to the English presence in Jamestown. Although it is not clear whether the above events occurred or not, Smith did provide a number of occasions in which it is clear that he was using fiction to spread a message. Throughout the *Proceedings* and the *Generall Historie* Smith recorded conversations with various historical actors verbatim. Given the difficulties with language and the time that had lapsed between the events and their transcription, it is clear that these speeches could not have occurred as recorded, though this does not discount the general tenor of the dialogues.

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<sup>58</sup> Sayre, 73.

It was in these speeches that Smith most often provided the voice of resistance examined by Read and Jehlen earlier in this chapter. For example, Smith quoted a Mannahoack warrior as telling him, “they heard we were a people come from under the world, to take their world from them.”<sup>59</sup> In retrospect, this was fairly close to what was happening in North America. That Smith would include such a comment by an aboriginal person raises significant questions about his own motives, and how he felt towards these people. Myra Jehlen has called these instances in Smith’s narrative “textual ruptures” in which the recent post-colonial interpretations of oppression and cultural naivety in colonial writing are ripped open by the clear voice of the subaltern.<sup>60</sup> This historiography was noted earlier in this chapter. However, it is mentioned here to demonstrate that Smith clearly did understand many of the aboriginal events taking place around him.

Some historians, such as Leo Lemay and Francis Jennings, do not subscribe to this interpretation of ‘textual ruptures.’ Perhaps this is because Smith could not have recorded some of the contents of the *Generall Historie* with complete accuracy. The speeches that Smith recorded verbatim are a good example of this. As a result, historians such as Jennings have accused Smith of being utterly clueless, claiming that he “took the same eyes to the holy war against the Turks and the invasion of America. In Virginia Smith unsurprisingly found native religion to be devil worship. With his preconceptions and utter lack of self-doubt, he described an initiation ceremony for adolescent boys by turning it into a ‘solemn sacrifice of children’ and portrayed other Indian rituals with more contempt than confirmability.”<sup>61</sup> Given Read and Jehlen’s argument about the *Generall Historie* being

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<sup>59</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 175.

<sup>60</sup> Jehlen, 687.

<sup>61</sup> Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*, (Chapel Hill, N.C. 1975), 46.

“comprehensive” and “uncertain” this statement of Jennings’ must be addressed, especially given the strong voice of resistance running between the lines in Smith’s text.

Jennings, whose *Invasion of America* is known for its “moral style,” has allowed his “strong, even angry” approach to European-Aboriginal relations to snowball out of control in his critique of Smith.<sup>62</sup> Laying blame on historical actors for considering the native people to be devil worshipers vastly simplifies the European context. The historian of ethnic relations must always remember that for a devout Protestant of Smith’s time, devil worshipers, or infidels, also consisted of Catholics, Muslims, other sects of Protestantism and many other religious groups. Modern scholars cannot blame Smith and Champlain for not embracing the religious pluralism of the late twentieth century. However, if those beliefs were so dogmatic that they were blinded to other aspects of aboriginal society, such sentiment must be factored into the analysis. The current discussion hopes to show that this was not the case for either Champlain or Smith.

In terms of Jennings’ perception on Smith’s ‘solemn sacrifice of children’ it seems that Jennings may have interpreted events in a similar manner as his own accusations of Smith, letting his preconceptions interfere with his interpretation. A comparison with recent ethnohistorical work demonstrates that Smith’s interpretation is not very different from modern scholars’ conceptions of the ceremony. According to Smith, this ceremony began with children being tied to a tree and guarded by a group of men, then a gauntlet was formed in which five men rescued the children; all the while the women mourned their losses.

Smith continues by writing:

What els was done with the children, was not seene, but they were all cast on a heape, in a valley as dead, where they made a great feast for all the company. The Werowance being demanded the meaning of this sacrifice, answered that the children were not all dead, but that the *Okee* or Divell did sucke the bloud from their left breast, who chanced to be his by

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<sup>62</sup> The quotations are from Axtell, *After Columbus*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 26-27.



lot, till they were dead, but the rest were kept in the wilderness by the young men till nine moneths were expired...<sup>63</sup>

Now, bearing this story in mind, read ethnohistorian Helen Rountree's explanation of this annual event: "Some time before puberty, boys were expected to go through a harrowing ordeal of several months' duration called the *buskanaw*, in which they were ceremonially 'killed,' isolated, and fed a 'decoction' that sent them mad and gave them amnesia, and then were 'reborn' and retrained by men, away from women's influence. Some boys did not survive."<sup>64</sup> Smith was only one of many sources that Rountree used to explain this rite of passage. In the light Rountree shed on this ceremony it seems that it actually was a sort of 'solemn sacrifice of children.' Whether the children were actually sacrificed or not, the meaning for the Virginian Algonquians was that the children had symbolically died in order to be 'reborn.' Although Smith may not have accurately perceived everything that took place, nor was he there long enough to do so, it appears that he understood the basic elements of the ceremony. With the help of more recent scholarship it appears that his account was not as naïve as Jennings suggests. Although Smith was far from a perfect ethnographer of Powhatan society, he was not as blind to the events he witnessed as Jennings and other scholars have suggested.

Many historians like Jennings have developed their perception of Smith from his harsh policies towards the aboriginal people. It is clear that both Smith and Champlain did advocate the use of violence and subjection against the native people to secure their tenuous hold on North America; however, this does not necessarily mean that their views of the aboriginal people fell into a set of preconceived biases, or were excessively negative. In terms of Smith's oft-repeated statements about aboriginal treachery, Kupperman told her

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<sup>63</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 124-125.

<sup>64</sup> Helen Rountree, *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia through Four Centuries*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1990), 12.

readers that these were “deeply rooted in the English view of human relations,” regardless of which side of the Atlantic one lived.<sup>65</sup> Nothing emphasizes this point more than the tumultuous relationship between Smith and some of the leadership at Jamestown. This ragtag band of gentlemen and idlers often provided a stark contrast to the Virginia Algonquians in Smith’s writing. At one point in his work he took a shot at the settlers by claiming “there was more hope to make better Christians and good subjects, then the one halfe of those that counterfeiter themselves both.”<sup>66</sup> “Like Prospero,” Andrew Fitzmaurice explained, “Smith is between two Tacitean worlds; he can trust neither the ‘savages’ nor his European rivals for power, each reflects on the other.”<sup>67</sup> The harshness of these policies ought not to be seen as an attack on the original inhabitants of North America based on race or ethnicity, rather they must be seen in a broader light that encompasses both the situation in North America and in Europe.

Just how harsh were some of the policies Smith and Champlain inserted into the *Voyages* and the *Generall Historie*? Smith told his readers that he used threats of utter ruin to procure corn from the Powhatan villages, and Champlain advocated ‘just war’ as a form of conversion. At first glance these appear to have been policies more closely resembling the Spanish conquest than either French or English forms of settlement. But although they were neither light policy nor humane, both men made it clear they would have been conducted against Europeans in similar circumstances. Smith explained, “peace we told them we would accept, would they bring us their Kings bowes and arrowes, with a chayne of pearle; and when we came againe give us foure hundred baskets full of Corne, otherwise we

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<sup>65</sup> Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians*, 128.

<sup>66</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 215 and *Proceedings*, 265.

<sup>67</sup> Andrew Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003), 179.

would breake all their boats, and burne their houses, and corne, and all they had.”<sup>68</sup> A similar statement is made on page 144 of the work. These types of statements, however, do not necessarily reflect Smith’s actual perceptions of the aboriginal people as much as they represent the dire straits in Jamestown. Cast in a volatile leadership role, Smith had to procure food for the settlement, whose sloth and inexperience prevented them from doing it themselves. This does not mean that scholars should ignore the occasions when Smith undertook such policies, but rather that balance must be taken when one reads such accounts. Barbour emphasized this point by highlighting that “nowhere does Smith mention *exterminating* the Indians.”<sup>69</sup> Although he took a harder approach than some of his contemporaries it is still clear in *Generall Historie* that Smith needed Powhatan and his comrades to survive on the fringes of the North American world.

Champlain on the other hand revealed a considerably more severe program, which may be taken as suggesting violent annihilation. However, his comments are far from clear and leave room for much interpretation. The second chapter of the first book opens with:

Ce qu'ils ne peuuent faire plus vtilement, qu'en attirant par leur trauail & pieté vn nombre infiny d'ames sauuages (qui viuent sans foy, sans loy, ny cognoissance du vray Dieu) à la profession de la Religion Catholique, Apostolique & Romaine. Car la prise des forteresses, ny le gain des batailles, ny la conqueste des pays, ne sont rien en cōparaison ny au prix de celles qui se preparent des coronnes au ciel, si ce n'est contre les Infideles, où la guerre est non seulement necessaire, mais iuste & sainte, en ce qu'il y va du salut de la Chrestienté, de la gloire de Dieu, & de la defense de la foy...<sup>70</sup>

Champlain wrote this passage when his time in Quebec was over. At no point in his thirty years in North America did he employ “just and holy” war against the aboriginal people.

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<sup>68</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 179.

<sup>69</sup> Barbour, *Three Worlds*, 353. The emphasis is his own.

<sup>70</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, vol. III, 258-259. My Translation: “This cannot be more usefully accomplished than by attracting by their work and piety an infinite number of aboriginal souls (who live without faith, without law, and without awareness of the true God) to the profession of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion. For neither the taking of fortresses, nor the winning of battles, nor the conquest of countries, have anything in comparison, or price, of those that prepare crowns in heaven, if it is against the Infidels, where war is not only necessary, but also just and holy, in that here it is about the salvation of Christianity, for the glory of God, and the defense of the faith...”

The only type of religious warfare for which Champlain was responsible was spiritual warfare, and this was being fought by the Jesuits among the Innu and in the Huron villages in the *Pays en haut*. There was no Spanish-style conquest in New France, no matter how similar Champlain's statements. As the study of history is never perfect, there is the possibility of this passage referring to a 'just and holy' war with France's enemies the Iroquois. However, there is no evidence to support this conclusion, and it should be remembered that France's alliances with the Huron, Innu, and Algonquin were what mainly sparked France's turbulent relationship with the Iroquois.

The most likely explanation is that Champlain has projected the political-religious climate of France onto New France. When Louis XIII took the throne from his regent, Marie de Medici, France began to swing back towards the dogmatic grounds of the religious wars. In 1624 the young king appointed a strict anti-Huguenot, Cardinal Richelieu, as first minister. Two years later the Protestant stronghold of La Rochelle was under siege, and the city surrendered two years after that. Although Protestants still had privileges provided under the Edict of Nantes, the siege at La Rochelle began a regression of those liberties until 1685, when the Edict was revoked. When Champlain returned from Quebec in 1630, then, he was entering a kingdom that was once again toying with the notion of 'just and holy' war against the 'infidel' Protestant population. This explanation is even more likely when one considers that the *Voyages* of 1632 are dedicated to the *dévo*t first minister. It seems most probable that this whole passage served as rhetoric to persuade the Cardinal of the benefits of settlement, and to bring Champlain into the Cardinal's favour, rather than as an aggressive policy of conversion to be manifest in New France.

To further emphasize the benefits of settlement, and his role in such endeavours, Champlain, like Smith, edited his earlier works. For the most part this editing involved the

removal of certain parts of his earlier narratives. These editorial decisions help to show the changing role of his writings. The best example of this is in the account of his last voyage down the New England coast. During the retelling of this voyage Champlain removed two important stories. In both cases the aboriginal people had killed Frenchmen; on the first occasion a man was killed filling up a kettle, and on the other a number of Champlain's companions were ambushed while baking bread. The first story is not mentioned at all in the 1632 publication and the second is relegated to one sentence: "Il fut nommé le port Fortuné, pour quelque accident qui y arriua."<sup>71</sup> Such an editorial decision is understandable if Champlain was trying to attract colonists. But this does not seem to have been the case, because Champlain did not sanitize every detail, complicating the matter considerably. One occasion that he did not sanitize took place on their return to France. On that trip Champlain recorded the name of some islands off the coast: "qu'auons nommées les Martyres, pour y auoir eu des François autrefois tuez par les Sauvages."<sup>72</sup> Why, one must ask, would he pacify his trip to New England but mention that the aboriginal people had killed Frenchmen only a few pages later. There is no simple answer, but it seems likely that this is another example of Champlain emphasizing the importance of his own role. By removing the two violent encounters that occurred during the New England voyage it appears to the reader that Champlain did not have any negative encounters with the native people between 1604 and 1607, therefore increasing his reputation as an intermediary between Europe and North America.

John Smith did exactly the same thing. In contrast to Champlain, however, Smith's whitewashing could not have been nearly as successful. This is because Smith chose to

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<sup>71</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, vol. III, 409. My Translation: "It was called Port Misfortune, for some accident that happened there."

<sup>72</sup> Champlain, *Voyages*, vol. III, 412. My Translation: "which we named the Martyrs, for there Frenchmen had been killed by the natives sometime ago."

whitewash his harsher treatment by linguistics rather than cut and paste. On numerous occasions in Smith's narrative he mentioned that he and the Virginian Algonquians were friends. The problem with this is that such statements often follow harsh action from the English. Take his relationship with the people at Chickahamania for example:

But arriving at Chickahamania, that dogged Nation was too well acquainted with our wants, refusing to trade, with as much scorne and insolency as they could expresse. The President perceiving it was Powhatans policy to starve us, told them he came not so much for their Corne, as to revenge his imprisonment, and the death of his men murdered by them, and so landing his men and readie to charge them, they immediately fled: and presently after sent their Ambassadors with corne, fish, foule, and what they had to make their peace, (their Corne being that yeare but bad) they complained extreamely of their owne wants, yet fraughted our Boats with an hundred Bushels of Corne, and in like manner Lieutenant Percies, that not long after arrived, and having done the best they could to content us, we parted good friends...<sup>73</sup>

The statement "we parted good friends" appears, in a similar fashion as here, at least four times where it did not in the *Proceedings*. It is difficult to take Smith at face value that they parted as "good friends" when it appears that he had forced the natives into supplying the settlement. Like Champlain it seems that Smith was trying to blunt the impact of some of his statements. He was caught in a paradox, however. In Virginia Smith had to be harsh at times – such was the nature of dealing with an emperor who had successfully consolidated the tribes around him – but he could not be too harsh for fear of the opinion of those in England. The Spanish style of conquest might have gained support in some circles, but in many others it would only invite criticism.

This paradox between good and bad, fair and unfair, is how most scholars see the overall treatment of the aboriginal people in the *Generall Historie*. David Read has written: "Smith's account of Jamestown in the *Generall Historie* suggests that the advance of colonization on this continent, with all its attendant and enduring agonies, is less a matter of the 'evil' in people's hearts than of the confusion in their minds."<sup>74</sup> Smith was stuck between

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<sup>73</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 186. For another example see 179 which is part of the story found in footnote 63.

<sup>74</sup> Read, 448.

needing the aboriginal people's support to make Jamestown a viable colonial outpost, and on the other hand avoiding making the English the most recent acquisition to Powhatan's growing empire.

This made his job much more complex than Champlain's. For the most part Champlain was attempting a cloak and dagger trick with his 1632 *Voyages* by trying to take credit for some of the policies founded by his predecessors, such as de Monts; whereas Smith was frequently the odd man out of the Jamestown leadership – most of whom wanted to meet as many of the aboriginal people's desires as possible. Smith felt the English needed to be respected and had to retain their autonomy. He encapsulated this vision when he wrote, "Newport seeking to please the unsatiable desire of the Salvage, Smith to cause the Salvage to please him."<sup>75</sup> This was not an issue with Champlain. At no point in Champlain's experience did either the French or the aboriginal people appear subservient to the other.

Smith and Champlain set out to do very similar things and yet they ended with considerably different results. This was partly reflective of how the French and English approached the original inhabitants who surrounded their outposts. The French entered North America with a long tradition of seasonal relationships and a clear cut plan, which went back at least to de Monts and perhaps even earlier. The English, on the other hand, had a variety of ideas on how to deal with the native population, from Spanish-style conquest to the French style of alliance-building, and were therefore much more divided. There was no stable policy towards the native people in the early years of Jamestown. Smith had many options from which to choose, whereas Champlain had little choice.

Even though their experiences and works later in life were considerably different, common themes still emerged. For example, both men clearly saw their approach to

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<sup>75</sup> Smith, *Generall Historie*, 156.

building a relationship as the most realistic way to accomplish their goals, and secondly, both felt that they were the people to continue that relationship. As a result of this type of thinking both firmly believed that European and Aboriginal could live side by side in America. Aside from conversion to Christianity, neither man called for the aboriginal people to assimilate into the European population. In fact, both models put forward by these men required that the aboriginal way of life be maintained. For Smith this lifestyle provided food for settlers in times of want, and for Champlain the native people were essential to supplying the fur trade. What is most clear is that by 1624 and 1632 Smith and Champlain as individuals paralleled the colonies to which they dedicated their lives; first and foremost, *Generall Historie* and *Voyages* are treatises written to promote the continuation of settlement at Jamestown and Quebec, with Smith and Champlain as their respective champions. In this sense they were both successful.



## Conclusion: A Web of Interconnectivity

### Assessing Champlain's and Smith's roles in the meeting of Continents

"We attempted to catch them with a frying pan, but we found it a bad instrument to catch fish with. Neither better fish more plenty or variety had any of us ever scene... but they are not to be caught with frying-pans."<sup>1</sup> This statement is found in Walter Russell and Anas Todkill's contribution to the *Proceedings* of 1612, and took place during the early days of settlement at Jamestown. It illustrates the vulnerability of the outpost. With a limited work force and set of tools even the most common tasks, such as fishing, appear to have been extremely difficult. Although there is no comparable vignette emphasizing French troubles, the terrible fight with scurvy in the first year at Ste-Croix emphasizes the many surprises that early French settlers had to face. Even though the first chapter of this thesis emphasized the knowledge that Smith and Champlain must have had before traveling to North America, these types of stories highlight that there was still much to be learned.

It is in light of this partial knowledge that Champlain and Smith have been assessed. By balancing their European roots and the North American context, the position in which these men occupied becomes much more clear. They were not representatives of the period of first contact – Europe and America had been interacting for at least a century – nor were they symbols of the sweeping domination that occurred in later years and frequently appears in popular memory. Rather these two men are representative of a temporal, and by consequence cultural, interstitial space.

This interstitial space fits into a view of history that focuses on contact between cultures, and derives from taking an 'absolutely simultaneous' approach to the subject. In this case the prime existence of this space occurred at the frontier and moved west with the

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<sup>1</sup> John Smith, *Proceedings*, in Philip Barbour (ed.), *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, vol. I, 228.

boundary between European and Aboriginal worlds. Essentially this is a modified view of Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis, and is based on the work of James Axtell, Daniel Usner, and Richard White. All three of these historians have suggested in one way or another that it was this spatial, temporal, and cultural boundary that played a key role in the development of North American identities on either side of modern day Canada and the United States. Axtell was the first of these scholars to present this idea. He suggested that without the native people the Spanish (and others who followed) would not have been as interested in America, and if Europeans had come they would have moved West much more quickly, as there would not have been a frontier created by the meeting of cultures.<sup>2</sup> Essentially, the picture painted by Axtell placed the aboriginal people in a central role to the development of American states. Usner followed a similar direction by developing the concept of a 'frontier exchange.' For Usner "'Frontier Exchange' describes intercultural relations that evolved within a geographical area in a way that emphasizes the initiatives taken by the various participants. Indians, settlers, and slaves had separate stakes in how the colonial region evolved. But in pursuit of their respective goals, they found plenty of common ground upon which to adapt."<sup>3</sup> In a number of ways these ideas are similar to the concept of the 'middle ground' that has been championed by Richard White, whose book by that title examined the French relationship with the aboriginal people after 1650 in the *pays d'en haut*. White explained to his readers that, "The middle ground itself, however, did not originate in councils and official encounters; instead, it resulted from the daily encounters of individual Indians and Frenchmen with problems and controversies that needed immediate

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<sup>2</sup> James Axtell, *After Columbus*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 222-243.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 8.

solution.”<sup>4</sup> Despite the similarity between White, Usner, and Axtell, White’s concept of the ‘middle ground’ is one step beyond the cultural negotiation of Smith and Champlain. For White, the ‘middle ground’ was typified by people who more or less abandoned traditions of both cultures. In the period that this thesis examines, neither European nor Aboriginal persons were able to fully embrace the other’s culture; yet they were able to learn from each other to create a shared space within which both societies could operate.

To use this concept properly, however, one must abandon simplistic notions of viewing this period through a moralistic lens of positive/negative and right/wrong, and instead embrace the historical reality of necessity versus facility. To be more specific, one must place greater emphasis on the actual European-North American situation in which these individuals found themselves rather than the cultural baggage with which they *might* have come. Actions of individuals must take into account the situation in which an historical actor is placed. One must ask, for example, whether John Smith had any option, other than the death of his countrymen, for feeding the Jamestown settlers with aboriginal food stocks. By asking such questions the arbitrary moral grounds of assessing actions based on judgements of right and wrong, which often reflect more on the historian than the source material, are removed; but the role of the historian to draw conclusions and even to assess historical actors is retained. By examining the subject in terms of necessary actions and free choices, the views of historical actors are more accurately reflected, while at the same time allowing the reader to assess the more personal aspects of the historical actor’s policies. Such an approach is part of the ‘absolute simultaneity’ written about in the introduction. Taking this approach helps to remove some of the polemics of the subject, while still maintaining the integrity of the historical actors and the balance of the historical researcher.

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<sup>4</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, empires and republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 56.

What has been shown in the previous chapters is that Smith and Champlain helped to bridge the gap between Europe and America by recognizing the absolute necessity of aboriginal people to their settlement plans. Being men of action, both proved remarkably adaptable to living in a new land, and both realized that their societies (both outpost and homeland) had to embody this characteristic if they were to succeed. To provide one example, Karen Kupperman has offered a reminder that “when things were at their worst under his [Smith’s] governorship, he sent out colonists to live with the ‘Salvages’ in order to learn how they utilized the natural products of the area.”<sup>5</sup> Champlain, who after the founding of Quebec sent Étienne Brûlé to live among the aboriginal people, seems to have developed a comparable policy around the same time. In a similar manner Gordon Sayre believes that the aboriginal people played a role in fostering Smith and Champlain’s place in this shared space. Sayre considered that “each [Champlain and Smith] pursued a policy that made sense in the context of how he understood Native American culture and power and what his colonists needed for their survival; each portrayed himself as a colonial leader in a manner consonant with his image of Native American leadership.”<sup>6</sup> This can best be seen through Smith’s parallel relationship with Powhatan in the *Generall Historie*. Whether a historical reality or a function of their narratives, the influence of the native people on both men can be seen clearly running through all of their texts.

This appearance given by their writings also furthers the concept of an interstitial (or bridged) space by showing its duality. It can be seen as either representative of actual *métissage culturel*, as was shown in Chapter 1, or evidence of aboriginal influence in their rhetoric, as emphasized most strongly in Chapter 3. In either case it shows that Smith and Champlain left North America profoundly influenced by their interactions with the North

<sup>5</sup> Karen O. Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians* (Totowa, N.J., 1980), 173.

<sup>6</sup> Gordon Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 78.

American people. When David Quinn wrote that Champlain had “an exceptional capacity for adjusting himself to the borderland between France and America, between Indians at one cultural level and Frenchmen at another, and rendering both commercial and cultural exchanges possible,” he could just as well have replaced Champlain by Smith.<sup>7</sup> Both men adjusted to a new and foreign land, and both made that a cornerstone of their writing.

There are those who do not see Champlain in this light. The best-known scholar to take a critical view of Champlain is Bruce Trigger. He believes that Champlain lacked curiosity, and that he was “temperamentally incapable of understanding the Indians on their own terms.”<sup>8</sup> According to Trigger, Champlain’s “successes therefore appear to be attributable more to the situation than to the man.”<sup>9</sup> Trigger’s work implies that the common spaces described throughout this thesis were more a function of the situation than the historical actors. Although there are few flaws in his analysis, Trigger has not turned his argument on its head and looked at it from another perspective. By doing so one can conclude that if Champlain’s successes were more attributable “to the situation than to the man,” then the situation can be seen as having thrust Champlain into an environment where he had to make ‘frontier exchanges.’ Whether one sees Champlain as in control, like Quinn, or as controlled, like Trigger, his role as a bridge between France and North America was the same. In either scenario Champlain still had to make decisions, and most often these involved learning how to live in America from the aboriginal people.

Secondly, Trigger has used Champlain’s Quebec experiences to draw his analysis of Champlain’s “Indian Policy.” Doing this inadvertently projects the situation in Quebec onto

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<sup>7</sup> David B. Quinn, *North America from Earliest Discovery to First Settlement*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), 474.

<sup>8</sup> Bruce Trigger, “Champlain Judged by His Indian Policy: A Different View of Early Canadian History,” *Anthropologica*, vol. 13, (1971), 89-90.

<sup>9</sup> Trigger, 93.

the experiences recounted in *Des Sauvages* and *Voyages* (1613). However, Champlain's perspective most likely changed between 1603 and 1632. With every passing year he would have learned more about how to survive in a harsher climate, aboriginal life, and operating in the French political world – all of which would have affected his relations with the aboriginal people. Furthermore, such experiences would have solidified his views and made many elements of aboriginal life seem more commonplace, perhaps diluting the evidence of 'frontier exchanges' from the later historical sources. To fully understand Champlain and his policy towards the native people one must begin with *Des Sauvages* and read chronologically, giving careful consideration to the accounts one uses when the chronology between works overlaps and observing the changes as they take place. Karen Kupperman has made a similar observation regarding Smith's writing. She has noticed, "as his views hardened and simplified, Smith provided what amounted to a caricature of his earlier views; the respect he had formerly shown for Indian culture and technology had evaporated. He was out of touch with American realities."<sup>10</sup> If Trigger and Kupperman are correct in their analysis of Smith's and Champlain's later lives (a subject beyond the scope of this thesis) then another bridge can be built between them.

The discussion in the previous two paragraphs can be added to another aspect of the shared space these men inhabited with the aboriginal people. Once they were out of North America (events that they could only have assumed were permanent) both men made themselves appear as a bridge between the cultures. Jean Lévesque has emphasized this point by writing, "les discours de Champlain et de Smith ont en commun d'utiliser leurs expériences respectives des peuples autochtones pour justifier leurs propres visées

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<sup>10</sup> Kupperman, "‘Brasse without but golde within:’ the writings of Captain John Smith," *Virginia Cavalcade*. Vol. 38 no. 2. (Autumn 1988), 75.

coloniales.”<sup>11</sup> Through their self-serving *magna opera*, both took on the mantle of promoting themselves as the only people who could massage both sides and ensure permanent settlement for their respective kingdoms. This rhetorical position was just as important to Smith and Champlain as the actual space that they occupied at the beginning of their careers.

In a more general sense this exchange was created not just by these two men, but also by the coming together of two continents of people – the ‘situation’ to which Trigger alluded earlier in this conclusion. Although the French and English took different approaches to settling in North America, the shared experience of European contact with North Americans helped to develop a common space at this early stage. This can be seen most clearly from the Western shores of the Atlantic, by providing a contrast to the evidence presented from a European perspective in the previous chapters of this thesis.

Looking east from the rocky coast of North America, the ‘frontier exchange’ was equally favourable for the aboriginal people. Neal Salisbury has observed: “While much of the scholarly literature emphasizes the subordination and dependence of Indians in these circumstances, Indians as much as Europeans dictated the form and content of their early exchanges and alliances.”<sup>12</sup> This can be seen clearly within all of the aboriginal societies with whom Champlain and Smith came into contact. If the aboriginal communities had avoided European contact once Jamestown and Port Royal were settled, these outposts would have had little to sustain them. Almost certainly they would have followed in the footsteps of Roanoke and the Cartier/Roberval expedition. Likewise, James Axtell noticed that in these early years of settlement the Europeans could not have appeared very threatening. “The

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<sup>11</sup> Jean Lévesque, “Représentation de l’Autre et Propagande Coloniale dans les Récits de John Smith en Virginie et de Samuel de Champlain en Nouvelle-France (1615-1618),” *Canadian Folklore Canadien*, vol. 17 no. 1, (1995), 113. My Translation: “the writings of Champlain and Smith both use their experiences with the aboriginal people to justify their colonial vision.”

<sup>12</sup> Neal Salisbury, “The Indians’ Old World,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol. 53 (1996), 454.

Powhatans of Virginia could not have been too alarmed by the initial wave of English settlers and soldiers,” Axtell wrote, “because 80 percent of them died of their own ineptitude and disease.”<sup>13</sup> There is little doubt the French presented a similar image to the Mi’kmaq in the initial years at Port Royal, and perhaps to the Innu at Tadoussac as well. Despite the large number of deaths within the English community at Jamestown, the Virginian Algonquians also saw the English as useful. H.C. Porter noted: “It is important to realise, first, that Powhatan saw the English settlers as potential allies in his task of consolidating, extending and protecting his Empire. The English could be *used*.”<sup>14</sup> That this was the case with the Innu can be seen best in Champlain’s later travels when he describes joining a war party against the Iroquois in 1609. In this beginning stage of settlement, the balance of power lay firmly within the North American communities, despite European statements regarding their own superiority.

This was not a fact missed by the aboriginal people either. Cornelius Jaenen has demonstrated that the North American people with whom the French came into contact felt superior to the Europeans. Jaenen noted the difficulty the First Nations had in understanding the value the French placed on concepts such as private property, French culture, Catholicism and missionary life, poverty, and the use of handkerchiefs and other aspects of personal hygiene. For the Innu and Huron these systems and facts of European life were illogical and inferior compared with their own. In many ways this was a true clash of cultures in which both sides could not comprehend the ways of the other. One of the clearest examples of this was shown by Jesuit Paul LeJeune who reported in the *Jesuit Relations*, “I heard my host say one day, jokingly, *Missi picoutau amiscou*, ‘The beaver knows how to make all things to perfection: It makes kettles, hatchets, swords, knives, and bread; in

<sup>13</sup> Axtell, *Beyond 1492*, (New York: Oxford University, 1992), 228.

<sup>14</sup> H.C. Porter, *The Inconstant Savage: England and the North American Indian, 1500-1600*, (London, 1979), 286.



short, it makes everything.' He was making sport of our Europeans, who have such a fondness for the skin of this animal..."<sup>15</sup> For the Innu the beaver was of little value, and European goods of high value, and vice versa for the Europeans. In aboriginal eyes the Europeans were the ones holding the short end of the stick.

This passage also emphasizes the benefits that came across the Atlantic for the North American peoples. Francis Jennings has noted that "trade was possible because of compatible traits in the two cultures. Europeans seeking wealth and dominance in America found peoples there who already understood and practiced division of labor and exchange of commodities."<sup>16</sup> Iron tools quickly replaced the aboriginal people's traditional tools, made of natural and often more fragile materials. Likewise, metal pots completely changed the method of cooking, allowing food to be heated directly over the fire.<sup>17</sup> Just as Champlain and Smith were adopting aboriginal technology, such as the canoe, North Americans were adapting European technology to their purposes as well. There was only common ground if both Europeans and North Americans were prepared to interact with each other.

However, there was a darker side to this 'reciprocal' relationship. Although there were people from both sides of the Atlantic who wanted, and benefited from, the introduction of Europeans into the aboriginal trading system, there were also people who did not benefit and who may have opposed interaction with the Europeans. Carol Devens has shown that much of the contact between Frenchman and Aboriginal had a negative impact on aboriginal women. Although there are many differences between the Virginia and

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<sup>15</sup> Alan Greer, ed., *The Jesuit Relations*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 26.

<sup>16</sup> Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*, (Chapel Hill, N.C. 1975), 85.

<sup>17</sup> Peter N. Moogk, *La Nouvelle France*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2000), 23.

New France contexts, the effect of trading was most likely the same for each society.

Devens believes:

Items whose manufacture had previously constituted some of women's most important productive activities were being replaced with European merchandise... [making] it possible for women to spend more time instead readying furs for market. As a result, the significance of woman's direct contribution to the community welfare diminished as their relationship to the disposal of furs changed.<sup>18</sup>

Although the Virginian Algonquians were not as involved in the fur trade, it seems likely that the introduction of manufactured goods would have had a similar impact on the lives of women by changing how certain tasks were managed.

Directly in terms of the Virginia Algonquians, Smith's dealing with the male *werowances* to procure corn may have created problems among the women of that community who were responsible for raising the crops.<sup>19</sup> Helen Rountree believes that "any unravaged corn that the fields produce will be harvested and processed by the women; also allocated for cooking by the women; and apparently owned by the women."<sup>20</sup> Smith's policy of 'ask first and take later' could not have gone over well with the women who worked so hard on the fields. Whether along the shores of the Saint Lawrence or Chesapeake Bay it seems most likely that the loudest voice of discord in the aboriginal societies came from the women whose lives were significantly changed by the coming of the Europeans. Although European technology changed the lives of both men and women, the patriarchal system that the Europeans introduced favoured interaction with men, and therefore many of the changes that occurred in aboriginal communities may have taken place without the agreement of women.

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<sup>18</sup> Carol Devens, "Separate Confrontations: Gender as a Factor in Indian Adaptation to European Colonization in New France," *American Quarterly*, 1986, 472.

<sup>19</sup> Helen Rountree, "Powhatan Indian Women: The People Captain John Smith Barely Saw," *Ethnohistory*, vol. 45 no. 1, (Winter 1998), 3.

<sup>20</sup> Rountree, 10.

Nonetheless, there were some remarkable similarities between the European and North American responses to permanent contact, which created fertile soil for a constructive relationship. To begin, each group was conditioned by the century of contact and the internal trading systems respective of each continent. These contacts allowed for those who came to settle to come well prepared, having developed a plan on how to succeed in a new land; this contact also gave the aboriginal people the experience they needed to respond, bringing Europeans into their trading patterns, and as allies in inter-national conflicts. This helps to explain why newcomers were not expelled in these early years. Similarly, North Americans and Europeans wanted something from each other. In the case of Europeans, it was the resources to survive in a new land, and raw materials to meet European commercial demands. For the North Americans, European tools improved the quality of life in many ways, and their trade quickly became part of a pre-existing North American trading system.<sup>21</sup> In this way, each group entered the permanent relationship between Europe and North America with similar goals and desires, and some of them were met while others quickly became abused. But at this initial stage of contact much of the outcome of this contact still lay in the future. At the most fundamental level, then, North American-European relationships were built out of need – the European need to fuel a merchant capitalist economy and compete with other kingdoms; and the North American need for alliances, trade, and technological improvements. This was where Champlain, Smith and their aboriginal acquaintances began a ‘frontier exchange’ and tried to work together building a productive relationship.

These last paragraphs help to show the difficulty with understanding European-Aboriginal relationships during this stage in the development of North America. As David

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<sup>21</sup> Salisbury, 458.

Read has written: "Smith's writing resists our desire to understand the process of colonization as itself a coherent phenomenon."<sup>22</sup> Too often the subject of settlement has involved the simple and dualistic model of Europe and North America (or more refined: England or France and North America) without taking into consideration other European kingdoms who were active in North America at the same time, the variety of aboriginal groups with which Europeans interacted, or the fundamental role of individuals acting of their own volition. This type of thinking has locked many people, and some scholars, into viewing this period through a polemical and moralistic lens of black and white, or positive and negative, rather than seeing the complexity that existed at the time. Studying the writings of Champlain and Smith reveals the necessity of approaching this subject with 'absolute simultaneity' and looking at it through a lens of complexity. In terms of John Smith, David Read has emphasized this by writing, "we cannot say that Smith's attitude toward the natives is sensitive and respectful or, on the other hand, that it is bigoted and intolerant; it seems, strangely enough, to be both."<sup>23</sup> The same dichotomy exists for Champlain. This calls for a return to a more balanced view in the historiography of those once considered 'great men' – a moving away from hero worship and pejorative moral statements towards a more humane approach to history which offsets positive/negative and right/wrong, and frames those judgements in a wider context.

Many historians have already begun to broaden the scope of their research. Karen Kupperman has called for the European-Aboriginal relationship to "be visualized not as steadily, though unevenly, growing knowledge of a constant reality, but rather as a many-

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<sup>22</sup> David Read, "Colonialism and Coherence: The Case of Captain John Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia*," *Modern Philology*, vol. 91 no. 4, (May 1994), 429.

<sup>23</sup> Read, 442.

stranded spiral of discourse that transformed all participants.”<sup>24</sup> To begin this one must abandon dualistic (and fatalistic?) models that ignore the complexity of the European and American backgrounds from which the historical actors come, and instead embrace a model that is more a web of interconnectivity, with each group being linked through another – both influencing and being influenced through everyday experience in whichever environment historical actors find themselves.<sup>25</sup>

The study of Smith’s and Champlain’s writings emphasizes this web of European-North American interaction well. Clearly the exchange-based interstitial space created directly through Smith’s and Champlain’s interactions with the aboriginal people (or vice versa) generated part of this web. However, through the roles they created for themselves in their later writings, the rhetorical position that Smith and Champlain took also linked the aboriginal people of North America with literate Europeans who never traveled across the Atlantic. In a similar manner, the connection between North American groups such as the Virginia Algonquians, Mi’kmaq, and Innu found in Salisbury and Bourque/Whitehead’s work serves to show that news about Europeans may have travelled far inland via North American trading patterns long before Europeans moved past the tidal estuaries along the East coast.

This model of a web reveals the complexity and the humanity of the first decade of the seventeenth century. It shows Smith and Champlain to have been more than national heroes who could do no evil and who only cared about the survival of ‘their’ colonies, by also showing their weaknesses and failures. This type of model reveals that they were influenced by many factors – not just torn between their European upbringing and the American reality, but also by the power of rhetoric and the plurality of alternative choices

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<sup>24</sup> Kupperman, (ed.), *America in European Consciousness: 1493-1750*, (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 1995), 5.

<sup>25</sup> This idea was also presented by Jennings, ix, 173.

that they could have made. Francis Jennings has highlighted this interaction by writing:

“Europeans went through a far more complex historical process than just fighting their way into the New World. What they did was to enter into symbiotic relations of interdependence with Indians (and Africans), involving both conflict and cooperation, that formed the matrix of modern American society.”<sup>26</sup>

With a web-based model it is possible to see that Smith and Champlain were two leaders on the cusp of two converging worldviews. For them, and the aboriginal leaders with whom they interacted, life together would be a series of trials and errors. As in all relationships there were successes and failures. Some were caused by necessity, such as a lack of food, and others by ignorance or vengeance; some deliberate and some accidental; some problems caused by Europeans and others by aboriginal people. What is most clear, however, is that through these interactions all parties influenced and changed because of the other. For a brief pause in history, then, it looked like the Europeans were moving towards a sort of harmony (as opposed to a melody in which they sang the same tune) with the North American world, and right up until their deaths it appears that Smith and Champlain wanted to be the ones to make that happen.

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<sup>26</sup> Jennings, 173.

## Appendix: Salvaging *Savage* and *Sauvage*

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Countless people have grown up around this adage. Its purpose is to teach children to let meaningless things, like name-calling, roll off their backs. Unfortunately, as we become older we learn that words are not meaningless. Names can hurt more than sticks and stones, and the consequences of that hurt can be far deeper than a few scrapes and bruises. To name equals being in control, which is a power that can quickly be abused.

In twentieth-century western culture the issue of naming is black and white. However, when we look at this subject in the past the clear distinction seen in modern society becomes much more grey. The temptation for modern scholars and students of European-American contact is to read these types of words in primary documents and employ their modern definitions. By doing this the historian is essentially parachuting a document from the past into the present – reviving historical actors to an age totally foreign to them – and putting their words in the present-day political rhetoric. Sometimes this can be done without consequence, but most often such successes have more to do with luck than the historian’s rigour.

For the historian, every word in a document must be suspect, no assumptions made, no modern context employed without substantial reason. A word, or in this case a name, must be deconstructed. First, the historian must search for definitions in the historiography and primary material. Then (s)he must look at what other synonyms have been used to convey the same idea, or type of people, to the reader. Once the direct usage of the word has been considered it is also important to learn its background. What types of notions are these writers appealing to when using the word? What was the contemporary definition in dictionaries and other published works? The historian must also look at the context in

which various authors have used the word. What was their purpose in writing and the message that they were trying to get across? With this kind of analysis the historian can then begin to understand how a word was used in the past and its general meaning at that time.

Olive Dickason has written, "during the seventeenth century, French and English writers were calling all the inhabitants of the New World savages, whether they were descended from the court poets of the city-states of Central and South America, or were nomadic hunters..."<sup>1</sup> Each chapter of this thesis has countered this statement by showing the variety of titles, other than *sauvage* and *savage*, that Champlain and Smith used to refer to the North American people. In order to add greater understanding to this discussion this appendix provides two charts representing vocabulary used to refer to the aboriginal people, the contemporary definitions of each of those words, and a brief historiographical discussion of the terms *sauvage* and *savage*.

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<sup>1</sup> Olive P. Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, (Edmonton, University of Alberta, 1984), 65.



## 1. Smith and Champlain's Vocabulary

### A. NUMBER OF NOUNS REFERRING TO THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

	Des Sauvages	True Relation	Voyages (1613)	Desc. New Eng.	Voyages (1632)	Gen. Hist.
Sauvage/Salvage	94	12	133	19	83	202
Indien/Indian	N/A	42	1	1	1	7
Peuple/People	4	23	16	13	18	79
Habitant/Inhabitant	N/A	3	2	1	2	13
Barbare/Barbarian	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	1	2
Infidele/Infidel	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	3	1
Other	3	N/A	23 <sup>2</sup>	N/A	14	2
Total	101	81	176	34	122	306
Length of Text (pg) <sup>3</sup>	49	35	123	38	86	166

### B. NOUNS REFERRING TO THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE BY PERCENT

	Des Sauvages	True Relation	Voyages (1613)	Desc. New Eng.	Voyages (1632)	Gen. Hist.
Sauvage/Salvage	93	15	76	56	68	66
Indien/Indian	0	52	0.5	3	1	2
Peuple/People	4	28	9	38	15	26
Habitant/Inhabitant	N/A	4	1	3	2	4
Barbare/Barbarian	N/A	N/A	0.5	N/A	1	1
Infidele/Infidel	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	2	N/A
Other	3	N/A	13	N/A	11	1
References per pg. <sup>4</sup>	2.1	2.3	1.4	1	1.4	1.8

<sup>2</sup> This entry is so large because of the size of the text and also because of greater word vocabulary. Included here are the words *nation*, *compagnons*, and *gens*, which are often used in reference to a term listed elsewhere on this chart.

<sup>3</sup> The page count for Champlain's work has been divided in two because Biggar's edition splits the page into French and English.

<sup>4</sup> These numbers do not accurately portray the amount of space given to the aboriginal people, but rather this presents a rough estimate of how frequently the author needed to clarify about whom he was speaking. Most often these words were only employed at the beginning of a discussion and then pronouns replaced each word in the rest of the text.

## 2. Seventeenth-Century Definitions<sup>5</sup>

### A. SAUVAGE/SAVAGE

**Fr:** Of certain people who ordinarily live in the woods, without religion, without law, and without fixed abode, and are more beasts than men. (*Les peuples sauvages de l'Amerique, de l'Afrique &c.*) In this sense, it is also a noun. (*Les Sauvages de l'Amerique. il a vescu long-temps parmi les Sauvages, un Sauvage.*)

**Eng:** 1) A person living in the lowest state of development or cultivation; an uncivilized, wild person.

2) A cruel or fierce person. Also, one who is destitute of culture, or who is ignorant or neglectful of the rules of good behaviour.

### B. INDIEN/INDIAN

**Fr:** Not in Dictionary

**Eng:** A member of any of the aboriginal races of America or the West Indies; an American Indian. Also, examples of *American Indian*.

### C. PEUPLE/PEOPLE

**Fr:** Collective term. Multitude of men from the same country, who live under the same laws. (*Le peuple Hebreu. le peuple Juif. le peuple d'Israël. le peuple Hebreu a esté appelé le Peuple de Dieu. le peuple Romain. les peuples d'Orient. les peuples Asiatiques. les peuples du Nord. les peuples de Provence, de Dauphiné, &c. Tous les peuples de la terre.*)

**Eng:** 1. A body of persons composing a community, tribe, race, or nation;

2) The persons belonging to a place, or constituting a particular concourse, congregation, company, or class.

3) The common people, the commonalty; the mass of the community as distinguished from the nobility and ruling or official classes.

### D. HABITANT/INHABITANT

**Fr:** It is also a noun and has many more uses than the adjective. (*Les habitants de la campagne. on assembla les habitants de la ville. les habitants de ce bourg. habitants d'un tel pays.*) One says poetically. (*Les habitants des forests. les habitants de l'air, pour dire, Les bestes sauvages, les oiseaux.*)

**Eng:** One who inhabits; a human being or animal dwelling in a place; a permanent resident.

### E. BARBARE/BARBARIAN

**Fr:** In every sense, *Sauvage*, who has neither law nor good manners. (*C'est un peuple barbare. l'irruption des barbares. les Tartares, les Yroquois sont de vrais barbares.*) It also signifies cruel, inhuman. (*Ame barbare. n'attendez aucune misericorde, aucune grace de ces gens-là, ce sont des barbares.*)

**Eng:** 1) *etymologically*, A foreigner, one whose language and customs differ from the speaker's.

2) *Hist.* a. One not a Greek. b. One living outside the pale of the Roman empire and its civilization, applied especially to the northern nations that overthrew them. c. One outside the pale of Christian civilization. d. With the Italians of the Renaissance: One of a nation outside of Italy. 3) A rude, wild, uncivilized person.

<sup>5</sup> The French definitions have been translated by myself and are from the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 1st Edition (1694) found at *The ARTFL Project*, The University of Chicago, <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicos/> and the English definitions are from the online version of the Oxford English Dictionary. ([www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com))

## F INFIDELE/INFIDEL

**Fr:** Not available in dictionary

**Ing:** 1) One who does not believe in (what the speaker holds to be) the true religion;  
2) A disbeliever in religion or divine revelation generally; especially one in a Christian land who professedly rejects or denies the divine origin and authority of Christianity; a professed unbeliever. Usually a term of opprobrium.

### 3. Historiography of *Sauvage/Savage*

There is a general consensus among historians that the French word *sauvage* alludes to the European folkloric image of the “wild people of the forest.” Peter Moogk has described the image to be one of a people who are “physically powerful, yet ignorant of religion, government, and civil society.”<sup>6</sup> Olive Dickason added to this picture by describing these ‘wild people’ as living “away from society, beyond the pale of its laws, without fixed abode, by analogy, one who is rude and fierce.”<sup>7</sup> C.E.S. Franks wrote that it seems “quite likely in 1600 ‘savage’ in English was closer in connotations to the ‘uncivilized’ of the French ‘sauvage’ than it is today, though even then its English usage often included connotations of ferocity and brutishness.”<sup>8</sup> These definitions are fitting with the definitions provided in section two of this appendix. However, this term has also taken on more negative connotations. Later in her book Dickason went beyond this traditional definition by suggesting that this image was also “a folk version of Antichrist,”<sup>9</sup> and that Europeans of the Middle Ages and Early Modern period believed ‘wild people’ could turn into apes.<sup>10</sup> And Francis Jennings has noted, “The word *savage* thus underwent considerable alteration of meaning as different colonists pursued their varied ends... One aspect of the term remained

<sup>6</sup> Peter N. Moogk, *La Nouvelle France*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2000), 17.

<sup>7</sup> Dickason, 63.

<sup>8</sup> C.E.S. Franks, “In Search of the Savage *Sauvage*: An Exploration into North America’s Political Cultures,” *American Review of Canadian Studies*, vol. 32 no. 4 (2002), 549.

<sup>9</sup> Dickason, 72.

<sup>10</sup> Dickason, 73.

constant, however: the savage was always inferior to civilized man.”<sup>11</sup> What is interesting about these interpretations, no matter how negative the connotations, is that they all appeal to European folklore before Europeans ever travelled to America. They are firmly based in Natalie Zemon Davis’ first strategy, outlined in the introduction. This fact should give impetus for historians to dig deeper into how *savage* and *sauvage* were applied in America, by heeding her call for “absolute simultaneity” in the approach to this subject.

Before coming to the North American situation, however, one must look deeper into the European background of the word. Both Cornelius Jaenen and Peter Goddard have found some connection between Europe and North America in their research. Jaenen has noted, “the concept of civility derived from the urban *civitas*, implying that the rural or forest dwellers were beyond the influence of the arts and learning of the towns.”<sup>12</sup> Goddard has shown that the patterns of Jesuit evangelism mirrored that of the French countryside, “The pattern of mission among the Montagnais – the work of instructing, reshaping, and reforming this pagan community – differed little from the blueprint suggested for the re-christianization of the French countryside.”<sup>13</sup> This parallel has led many scholars to draw the conclusion that at least the face value of the word, as applied to the aboriginals of North America, “meant not French and not Christian, and not much more.”<sup>14</sup>

This is a rather limited approach, and a number of scholars have sought much more meaning from these early modern words. The main stumbling point for these seventeenth-century words is their link to the modern English *savage*. Franks has shown that at the most fundamental level these words were not synonyms, and he chastised those historians who

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<sup>11</sup> Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*, (Chapel Hill, N.C. 1975), 59.

<sup>12</sup> Cornelius Jaenen, “‘Les Sauvages Amériquains’: Persistence into the 18<sup>th</sup> Century of Traditional French Concepts and Constructs for Comprehending Amerindians,” *Ethnohistory*, vol. 29 no. 1 (Winter 1982), 46.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Goddard, “Converting the Sauvage: Jesuit and Montagnais in Seventeenth Century France,” *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 84 no. 2 (April 1998), accessed online without page numbers.

<sup>14</sup> Franks, 551.

have replaced *sauvage* with *savage* in English translations of French documents. To make his argument, Franks went back to the root of the word, *salvaticus*, or *silvaticus* in classical Latin, meaning from a tree, woodland, or wild.<sup>15</sup> From this root, Franks suggested, “the French word *sauvage* designates something not cultivated by human intervention, from outside of civilized society, or wild as in wild flowers, or deep woods.”<sup>16</sup> With similar issues in mind Allan Greer, in his recent anthology of the *Jesuit Relations*, has noted: “The most problematic term proved to be *sauvage*, which the Thwaites team rendered as ‘savage.’ I decided that the English term *Indian* gives a better sense of the connotations of *sauvage*, except in a few cases where the Jesuits wanted to emphasize savagery.”<sup>17</sup> Again, these types of observations and decisions reinforce the folkloric roots of the word *sauvage*, and suggest that the early European arrivals to North America employed the word for lack of a better descriptor.

Further compounding this issue is that not everyone agrees with this soft interpretation of *sauvage*. Mi’kmaq author and columnist Daniel Paul has written:

The word ‘savage’ (*sauvage* in French)... is a reflection of the racial biases that Europeans harboured at the time. The word was not then and is not now a fitting description... we must assume that the early writers used the term because of their belief in the superiority of their own race. In other words they were racist. Their belief that European civilization was the most superior in the world prevented them from forming unbiased opinions about civilizations that clearly had certain human values superior to their own.<sup>18</sup>

Paul’s words are important for historians to bear in mind, as he wrote not only of the use of the word in the past but also of its legacy in the present. How aboriginal communities feel about the use of the word is just as important to this discussion as the historiography.

The well-respected historians Cornelius Jaenen, Francis Jennings, and Bernard Sheehan hold similar views. While acknowledging the issues that Greer and Franks have presented, Jaenen does not feel that they should be used as excuses for French action or

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<sup>15</sup> Franks, 548.

<sup>16</sup> Franks, 548.

<sup>17</sup> Allan Greer, (ed.), *The Jesuit Relations*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000), vi.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel N. Paul, *We were not the Savages*, (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2000), 41.

diction. Jaenen explained, "In whatever way Amerindians were viewed, the consensus was definitely that they were unpolished savages, and therefore presented a challenge to Frenchmen to civilize them and impart to them religion, arts and culture of Europe's leading civilization."<sup>19</sup> Likewise, Jennings and Sheehan have observed that the fundamental use of *savagism* was in opposition to civility.<sup>20</sup> In comparison with Franks, who does not adhere to this harder definition, these scholars, although most likely agreeing with Franks' statement, would think that such a definition still involves a negative projection of the aboriginal people. To make them European and Christian was culturally destructive and therefore part of the overall negative effect of a foreign presence on the aboriginal population. Both groups, then, use the same evidence and yet have drawn different conclusions from it. Franks tends to be softer, perhaps because his work was comparative, whereas Paul and Jaenen are harsher but look mainly at a single European projection and its impact on the indigenous population of North America. It is the purpose of this discussion to sort through this fundamental disagreement in the scholarship.

Perhaps the principal problem for most scholars, however, is that the vast majority of people who interacted with the native people of North America wrote nothing of their experiences. Most *coureurs de bois*, *donnés*, and fishers did not record their impressions or interactions with the aboriginal people, and yet these were the men who came into closest contact with the First Nations. Although their voices are continuously absent from all discussion of early modern vocabulary, Gordon Sayre believes that these men were essential players in creating the image that people saw in France. According to Sayre, *truchements* (boys who stayed in aboriginal communities) and *coureurs de bois* "were responsible for the wealth of

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<sup>19</sup> Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 190.

<sup>20</sup> Jennings, 59 and Bernard Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia*, (Cambridge, 1980), 1-3.

accurate observations of the Amerindians by French writers because they forged the contacts, even if they did not write many of the narratives, and they set the pattern whereby knowledge of Indian cultures and customs was considered essential to the success of the colony.”<sup>21</sup> Although we know little about how these people understood the aboriginal people, it is important to note that for them the *sauvage* or *savage* was most likely just a name – as these were people who in some cases shared their lives together – its meaning merely a geographic representation. However, their importance to this subject should not be underestimated and more work needs to be done in this area.

Of those who wrote most positively of the aboriginal people was Marc Lescarbot. Lescarbot, a fairly well known lawyer in Paris, was classically educated and well read. Throughout his *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* he made statements that few Europeans, from any kingdom, parallel. For example, Lescarbot wrote, “c’est à grand tort qu’on dit d’eux que ce sont des bestes, gens cruels, & sans raison.”<sup>22</sup> With this reasoning in mind Lescarbot recorded a few pages later that “en consideration de l’humanité, & que ces peuples desquels nous avons à parler sont hommes comme nous, nous avons dequoy estre incités au desir d’entendre leurs façons de vivre & mœurs...”<sup>23</sup> What is most interesting about his work is that despite his positive statements, he continually employed the word *sauvage* – suggesting that there were few alternatives for writers to use. However, he also provided some insight that on top of the geographic considerations discussed earlier in this appendix, his definition of *sauvage* also included an element of physical depiction. A few lines after the previous quotation he wrote, “par la consideration de leur déplorable condition nous venions à

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<sup>21</sup> Gordon Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 7.

<sup>22</sup> Marc Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, W.L. Grant and H.P. Biggar (eds.), 3 vols, (Toronto, 1907-1914), 3. My Translation: “it is a big lie when one says they are beasts, cruel men, and without reason.”

<sup>23</sup> Lescarbot, 7. My Translation: “in consideration of their humanity, and that these people of whom we speak are men like us, we are incited with desire to learn their way of life and morals.”

remercier Dieu...’’<sup>24</sup> However, rather than an implicit value judgement, it appears that Lescarbot was making a physical observation of the aboriginal standard of living rather than an overall statement of the civility of a group of people. The First Nations remain for him “autant d’humanité, & plus d’hospitalité que nous.”<sup>25</sup>

There does not seem to have been an exact definition for *sauvage* or *savage* in the early modern period. James Axtell emphasized this when he wrote, “the key term of reference [to *savage*] is *civilize*, which by circular definition means ‘to bring out of a state of barbarism’... and *barbarous* is defined no more helpfully as ‘rude, savage,’ the opposite of ‘civilized.’ In other words, the meanings of all these terms depend on an imaginary construct, a social-evolutionary hierarchy in the speaker’s mind which has no objective or historical reality.”<sup>26</sup> Civility and savagery were not, and are not, entrenched in positive and negative connotations. As the historiography of the Renaissance has made clear, there were plenty of people in Europe who were disenchanted with civilization as it appeared in Europe.<sup>27</sup> Rather, Axtell was highlighting the respect that historians must give to their historical subjects, by treating them as individuals whose vocabulary varied pending on education and circumstance.

The bulk of this appendix has sought to show that for both people living in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the historians who have written about them, there existed many different connotations of the word *sauvage*. In this way both the historical context and the historiography are intertwined. Thus creating the need for each image/definition and historiographical understanding to be braided together in order to

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<sup>24</sup> Lescarbot, 7. My Translation: “by the consideration of their deplorable condition we come to thank God...”

<sup>25</sup> Lescarbot, 3. My Translation: “equally human, and more hospitable than us.”

<sup>26</sup> James Axtell, *After Columbus*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 39.

<sup>27</sup> See Andrew Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003).



understand the full meaning of each word. This is an image that serves the end of this discussion well.

The braided approach to understanding the words *savage* and *sauvage* provides for a dynamic synthesis of all these different perspectives. A complete understanding of the subject cannot be had without the realization that people can change and that actions do not always reflect opinion. Cornelius Jaenen has shown the dangers of basing any analysis merely on the vocabulary of various historical actors. "Those who held favourable views of Amerindian qualities might still justify their enslavement, their segregation, or their exclusion from holy orders," Jaenen wrote; "so also, those who had a very low opinion of Amerindians' intellectual capacity and character might advocate humane treatment and equitable political and economic accommodations."<sup>28</sup> An evolving relationship with, and therefore evolving perspective of, the aboriginal people caused part of this situation. Later in his book Jaenen wrote, "the opinions of the French were circumscribed by three factors: tradition, experience, and expectations... Tradition and expectations, while influencing their comments, were shaken by sustained contact which brought a realization of the divergence between their image of the New World and the reality of that world."<sup>29</sup> By constantly evolving, the image of the *sauvage* remained for some people steeped in the tradition of European folklore, while for others it was more negative – based on the standard of living – and for others it was more positive – most often involving the moral situation in Europe. Although at some times one of these images would dominate more than others, all of these images existed at the same time among English and French adventurers.<sup>30</sup> Karen Kupperman put this concept best when she wrote, "The European-American relationship

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<sup>28</sup> Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, 34.

<sup>30</sup> For a greater discussion see the introduction.

must be visualized not as steadily, though unevenly, growing knowledge of a constant reality, but rather as a many-stranded spiral of discourse that transformed all participants.”<sup>31</sup> There was never any one definition of *sauvage* or *savage* that was universally accepted during this period in Europe and North America’s history.

The braided understanding of *sauvage* complicates this subject. Jaenen wrote, “Even within the works of a single author, or of a single book, contradictory images and interpretations abounded. The reality was greater than the cadres employed to render it intelligible.”<sup>32</sup> This statement holds true for the *sauvage*. Through examining the issues surrounding the use of the word, it is apparent that one cannot merely define *sauvage* by appealing to the folkloric image, but rather one must look at the term during this period as one synonymous with “the inhabitants of North America.” To make this point C.E.S. Franks took his readers through a linguistic exercise removing *sauvage* from the text. What he found was that many of the negative connotations associated with the text fell away. Daniel Paul has reached the same conclusion. After chastising historical actors for using *sauvage*, Paul wrote, “The glimpses of the Mi’kmaq offered by Lescarbot, Biard, Denys, and Le Clerq do not reveal an uncultured, uncivilized and barbarous people. Instead, they show a sensitive, generous, caring and progressive people who had not developed their technologies as fast as they had developed the social fabric of their societies.”<sup>33</sup> It appears that for many the early modern use of this term is a stumbling block preventing readers from seeing a clearer picture of the relationship between the French, English and Aboriginal peoples.

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<sup>31</sup> Kupperman, (ed.), *America European Consciousness*, (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 1995), 5.

<sup>32</sup> Jaenen, “Les Sauvages Amériquains,” 46.

<sup>33</sup> Paul, 42.

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