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**Representations of North
American 'Place' and 'Potential'
in English Travel Literature:
1607-1660.**

By

Catherine Armstrong

A Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD
in History.

University of Warwick, Department of
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Declaration.

None of the material contained in this thesis has been published prior to the date of submission. This thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

ABSTRACT.

This thesis analyses the representations of North America in English travel narratives between the years 1607-1660. Texts in both print and manuscript format are examined to discover how authors described the geography, climate, landscape, flora and fauna of America, as well as the settlements established there by the English. The thesis is mostly concerned with literature concerning Virginia and New England, although the settlements of Newfoundland, Maine and Maryland are also briefly mentioned. The first chapter describes the methodology of the thesis and locates its place alongside the existing literature. A chapter explaining the pre-history of English involvement in North America in the reign of Elizabeth I follows. Chapter Three describes the connection between printing and adventuring on which the thesis is predicated, explaining how the authors' intentions and experiences affected their portrayal of the New World. The ways in which authors understood the geography and climate of America are explored in Chapter Four, including the influence of European thinking and the writers' experiences in America itself. The landscape, including rivers, mountains and forests are examined next in chapter five, with a special focus on the Englishmen's subduing of the landscape and their reactions to its potential. Chapters Six and Seven deal with the flora and fauna of the New World, tracing how the settlers' initial high hopes of using the diversity of wildlife they encountered gave way to the realisation that familiar crops and animals imported from Europe would prove more useful than those found locally, with a few notable exceptions, such as tobacco. Chapters Eight and Nine analyse the changing representations of the English settlements themselves, by comparing the English experiences in Virginia with those of New England. Again, initial hopes give way to an acceptance of a less idealistic

vision for the plantations. Chapter Ten brings the focus of the thesis back to England, asking how printed information about the New World was transmitted around the country by various practitioners of the printing trade, and who was able to digest this information. The representation of America, not only in travel narratives, but also in other forms of literature such as ballads, poetry and plays, are reviewed more broadly in chapter eleven, and an attempt is made to define the responses of individual and collective readers to the news from the New World that they gathered. In its conclusion, the thesis explores the influence of this literature on the new scientific thinking and on England's relationship with her colonies.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

This thesis will explore the different ways in which the landscape and natural resources of North America were portrayed in promotional literature, sermons, broadsides, ballads, plays, letters, diaries and journals. The intention is not to compare the realities of American geography to these representations, but rather to construct a model of how the dialogue between an author's perceptions, the written word and the readers' reactions created a pattern of cultural exchange across the Atlantic. I will avoid the dichotomy in recent debate over whether the origins of colonial culture were found in English society or born out of the unique conditions encountered in America, by bridging the gap between the continuities of the intellectual backgrounds of Englishmen wherever they lived and the discontinuities created by confronting new environments. The close reading of travel literature to analyse the related themes of 'place' and 'potential' will allow a picture to emerge of the cultural and intellectual tools with which English men and women interpreted the New World. However, I will not write a social history of the ways in which the majority of settlers perceived the New World. Many of those who made the journey were both poor and illiterate, and the details of their lives remain hidden from the historian. This does not devalue the undertaking though; it is still possible to trace the circulation of ideas among those men who did leave a written record of their intellectual development. By comparing diverse sources I can also assess the extent to which ideas about the New World spread across socio-economic boundaries during the seventeenth century.

The thesis will initially examine travel literature using two parameters. First, differences in location; we cannot expect the residents of Virginia or Plymouth, or Englishmen who never left the mother country, to speak with one voice. This is not to say that this work will revert to the exceptionalist analysis of the origins of the colonies, rather it will attempt to create a unified understanding of the ways in which English men confronted the physical and imagined geography of North America. Second, I will consider differences over time. As the colonies became established, and settlers began to see America as their permanent home, their relationship to its resources and dangers was bound to change. The type of document is also significant, specifically whether the text was intended for public or private consumption, and this influences the choice of structures and language that authors adopted to describe America during this period.

The work will be divided into three parts. Part One will examine the historiographical and historical contexts for the study. This involves stating the theoretical position of the thesis in relation to current analysis of primary and secondary source material. In the Prologue I have set the historical scene by examining the cultural and intellectual contact that Englishmen had with America in the reign of Elizabeth I, using the historical techniques that I will employ in the subsequent chapters. In Chapter Three, the thesis will turn to the period in question, 1607-1660, to examine the range of primary source material and the cultural context in which certain source types existed. Part Two represents the descriptive part of the work, the section in which the perceptions and representations of the North American colonies are outlined. This will be done by dividing the physical America into four component parts. First **geography and climate**, in which Renaissance theories of the world, geography and navigation will be examined. I will then ask how authors dealt

with the extremes in heat and cold that they encountered, the rain and storms, and the new diseases that they often associated with the weather. Second, the interpretations of **landscape** will be examined, including harbours, rivers, high and lowland and any natural barriers and oddities noticed by the travellers. Third, **flora**; how did the settlers and commentators deal with the ideas and practicalities of food and famine, crops and trade? Was America a fearful wilderness, or was it a storehouse of potential medicines? And then a chapter on **fauna** that will cover the perceptions of the newly confronted animals and how these creatures fitted into early modern man's ideas about himself and the world. I shall contrast the need for food and fur, and the fear or thrill at abundance of sea creatures. I will then use two chapters to examine the social dimension of the themes of the promotional literature, that is, how authors in first the Chesapeake and then New England represented the settlements and societies they hoped would be established.

In Part Three, I formulate some patterns in the perceptions of readers and authors by examining the distribution and reception of the texts and I ask how historians may assess these, how the texts affected each other and what was the influence of the printing press. I shall conclude by considering what this thesis has contributed to the scholarship of reading and writing in the early modern world and the cultural exchanges between England and her American colonies in the first century of their existence.

II.

Conceptual Framework.

This thesis will be predicated on the idea that, however valid the work of physical geographers and historical geographers may be, any further attempt to analyse the ‘truth’ of English descriptions of America (that is, comparing authors’ representations of the landscape to what we actually know of the seventeenth century landscape) is fruitless. It is the ‘imagined landscape’ which concerns us here, the tools with which an English man, or woman, understood the reality of America and the methods they chose to communicate these perceptions to others, rather than the actual landscape, flora and fauna themselves.¹ It is in this way that historians may re-examine the traditional controversy: how similar or different were the various North American colonies? This thesis will argue that differences in perceptions of North America’s colonies are just as significant as the religious, political and economic differences on the ground. The American regions and their distinctiveness were created as much by authors of texts distributed in England, who might never even have crossed the Atlantic, as the demographics or political structure of the colonies themselves.² This thesis speaks of the ‘invention’ of New England and Virginia and Maryland rather than the discovery and colonisation of them.³ This approach offers an acceptable way

¹ My use of the phrase ‘imagined landscape’ is directly influenced by Joseph Conforti’s use of ‘imagined communities’ in his *Imagining New England* (Chapel Hill, NC., 2001) in which he states that geographic entities do not define themselves, humans define them.

² David H. Fischer’s controversial work *Albion’s Seed* (Oxford, 1989) put regionalism back on the map by examining the cultural and social ways in which groups of migrants created and re-created a social order in their colony of choice. He neglected the ways in which prior knowledge of America’s geography and landscape influenced the choices made by English men and women.

³ It has been recognised by many scholars that the idea of ‘discovery’ of the continents of North and South America is euro-centric and now defunct. Also, I am aware that the use of the terms ‘New England’ and ‘Chesapeake’ are in themselves controversial. There are obvious regional distinctions between the colonies of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Rhode Island and Maine that make up ‘New England’. However I am using that term here because it was understood by contemporaries to be a regional entity, whereas Virginia and Maryland were always understood as separate. The modern

of describing the relationship between America and her colonisers that does not negate the role of the native or slave societies by understanding the cultural and intellectual impact that America had on England rather than vice versa. It also allows us to describe differences between, for example, Massachusetts and Virginia without falling into the trap of having to define one or other of them as 'typically' American or indeed 'typically' English, because it is clear that the climate and commodities in each were different and had various impacts on the authors who described them. It is from this basis that one can go on to examine what effect these representations had on the English understanding of the distinctions between the two regions and of the settlements constructed there.

The role of the written document is central to all historical investigation before the era of sound recording, and outside of living memory. For early modern historians, the written word has a special significance because of the development and popularisation of the printing press as a way of conveying knowledge. Not only do early modernists have to contend with the multitudinous outpourings of a flourishing literary trade, we also must understand a period in which the very nature of intellectual exchange was changing radically. Works written during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were social, religious and economic conduits into which and out of which ideas and beliefs constantly flowed. I will pluck two ideas out of that stream, 'physical place' and the 'potential' of the newly discovered Americas, and use them to analyse how this flow of ideas operated, both from person to person and country to country.

Written documents, then, have a vibrant and complex nature that every historian must understand if he or she is to conduct anything other than a cursory

'Chesapeake' was used only to refer to the bay itself during the seventeenth century and not the region or the colony.

analysis of their role. Historians must also decipher the dialogue had by the document's readers at a specific time by placing the written words into their historical context. Historians are now equipped with the new vocabularies and tools of literary criticism which enable a more flexible reading of a text, while rejecting the extremes of post-modernism which, in allowing for an infinity of meaning, rob a text of any real meaning at all. In recent years, literary theory has attempted to define the role of the author in relationship to the text, and in many cases has negated his or her influence and stressed the power in the semiotics of the writing itself. However, in this thesis, the context of the source material will be defined by the intellectual trends of the day and the author's place within them. So, it is necessary to examine the intentions of these men when they put pen to paper, as well as the contents of the texts themselves. In any literary artefact that conveys knowledge about the newly discovered Americas, the primary objective of an author was to transmit information, as well as to express emotive variables such as hopes and fears, but this process was dramatically influenced by what I will call the author's 'imagined audience'. At its most fundamental level, this audience is either a 'public' or a 'private' one, a distinction which will be examined throughout this thesis, and one for which I will now provide a frame of reference.

All archive material that historians now have at their fingertips is in the public domain because of its availability for our assessment. However, a more precise definition of writing for a public based on an author's intentions and aspirations must be formulated according to the structure and form of a text reflecting the stylistic choices and production methods chosen by author, printer and publisher. I regard a document as 'public writing' if it was intended for consumption by a large number of individuals in order to spread information and opinion. Further, this intention must

have been carried through at the time of production, so that, for example, a document only released for the general public to view centuries after its creation is not public writing. Public writing therefore covers documents such as travel narratives intended for publication, promotional tracts, broadsides and advertisements, and poetry and fictional prose. This material, whether printed or not, would have been somehow reproduced to allow a larger audience to gain access to it. It may have also been subjected to censorship under contemporary law, editing by other parties, as well as constraints introduced by the need to please a patron. The author-readership relationship was very different from that which pervades our current society; the cult of the celebrity and necessities of self-aggrandisement were not present in seventeenth century England to the extent they are today. But authors, then as now, operated within a social and religious climate to which they constantly referred and which they sometimes challenged by revealing their bias, prejudice and fears. It is this relationship that must shine through in a study of man's reactions towards the environment, for in placing man at the heart of his physical world, we must not isolate him from his mental one.⁴

In contrast to this world of public literature in which the author was constrained by forces from within his intellectual make-up and from without in society at large, private writing by my definition seems at first glance to be a liberated form from which a greater truth may be gathered because of the intimate nature of the work. However, a letter or a diary seeming to offer a genuine insight into an individual's innermost beliefs without bias will not usually do so. For example, the private letter of Thomas Dudley about the early years of Massachusetts' history, sent to his patroness the Countess of Lincoln and not published for many years, was

⁴ For more information on the world of seventeenth century print see J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003) and A. Johns, *The Nature of the Book* (Chicago, IL, 1998), ch. 2.

nevertheless written within the constraints forced on Dudley by the deference he owed to the Countess as the son of her steward. He operated within a rigid social hierarchy and this influenced the contents of his letter.⁵ Many diaries or journals, though essentially private undertakings, were also intended by the author to be taken in the future as a public record of the events in which he had been involved. An example of this is the journal of John Winthrop Senior.⁶ A knowledge of intertextuality, that is the effect that the existence of one text has on the contents of another, is one of the most important theoretical tools with which the historian is now armed, and this is as true for private texts as public ones. Enthusiastic authors and readers about the new colonies in the seventeenth century would have read several different types of text on that subject, and the connections between those texts would have aroused their curiosity and informed their opinions.

This brings me to the last of the three areas of emphasis of this thesis: the response of the audience to texts concerning the New World. One of the central questions is: how did seventeenth century writing about America affect people's understanding of it? In this section I will utilise a circular theory of communication, which derives from the histories of reading by scholars such as Robert Darnton. As Darnton has pointed out, the task of constructing a *history* rather than a theory of reader response is never easy because readers are often the 'silent majority'- they are rarely visible within the historical sources they had at their disposal.⁷ However, it is possible to glimpse them occasionally, in marginalia, letters and diaries. Probate records which give an account of individual books and lists of the contents of bookshops also allow a way into a difficult area of research and reveal something

⁵ E. Emerson, ed., *Letters from New England: Massachusetts Bay Colony 1629-38* (Amherst, MA, 1976), pp. 67-82.

⁶ J. Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, ed. James Savage (Boston, MA, 1825)

⁷ R. Darnton, 'History of Reading', in P. Burke, ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 140-167

about the prevalence of a particular text. Just as there are different types of writing, there are also different types of reading. Roger Chartier has been very influential in this field and has brought to our attention several types of reading that influence the reception of a text, such as reading aloud for oneself or an audience, or reading silently; reading inwardly or publicly; religious reading and lay reading; and intensive or extensive reading.⁸

This thesis emphasises the continuous flow of communication through the use of written texts. The author transmits opinions and ideas to his readers through the text and then some of his readers modify their views of the world and in turn become authors of their own texts and so the cycle starts again. It acknowledges that every author is also a reader. Equal importance is given to the roles of the human actors in these communication networks and to the texts themselves, through which representations and perceptions are mediated. Using this methodology, I will seek to analyse the changing nature of Englishmen's beliefs on 'place' and 'potential' of the American colonies between 1607 and 1660.

III.

Review of Literature to date

This section will analyse the many approaches historians have used to describe the *mentalité* of seventeenth century England, as well as their assessment of its effect on

⁸ R. Chartier, 'Texts, Printing, Reading', in L. Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, CA., 1989), pp. 154-176

travel to the New World. I will also examine how historians have reacted to the actual documents of travel themselves, the Anglo-American colonial literature produced by those who had chosen to migrate to the North American colonies. In conclusion, I will try to draw all these strands of historical scholarship together in what historian Jack P. Greene has called ‘the quest for intellectual order’.⁹

European Contact with America

In the last twenty years, historians have realised that, like anthropologists and sociologists, their work must include not only an analysis of ‘what happened’ in the past, but also of how contemporaries understood and ordered their worlds.¹⁰ It is this new strain of history, interpreting perceptions and representations, that dominates much of the study of the early American contact with the New World. There are two areas of analysis: man’s conception of the world and nature, and his ideas and theories about the structure of state and society, and the role of colonies. Several historians have worked on histories of geography and navigation in the early modern period, and have written specifically on the influence of the discovery of the New World, attempting to discern whether this early contact caused a revolution in thought or whether older intellectual certainties prevailed over a longer period.

Anthony Grafton, in *New Worlds, Ancient Texts*, depicted a radical departure from the beliefs of the Renaissance at the turn of the seventeenth century, in which classical authors were the only received authorities, when practical observation superseded library learning as the method of discovery. He cites men such as Galileo

⁹ Jack P. Greene, ‘The Quest for Intellectual Order in Early American History’ *William and Mary Quarterly*, 48, (Oct. 1991).

¹⁰ An example of an earlier sort of history is J. Gillespie, ‘The Influence of Overseas Expansion on England to 1700’, *Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*, XCI (New York, 1920). Gillespie catalogued the economic and political transformations wrought on English society by its contact with America, but neglected to comment on the intellectual and cultural developments.

and Francis Bacon, and later René Descartes as central to this change.¹¹ However, by placing this change as late as 1600, Grafton creates a problem for himself when analysing the contacts with the New World that occurred before that date. He rightly draws our attention to the confusion early explorers felt when the models, based on Pliny and Ptolemy, they had used to describe other cultures and places, conflicted directly with the observations and discoveries they had made in America. Grafton describes the intellectual conflict experienced by those who wrote travel narratives and tried to place them in both the neo-classical sphere and the new pseudo-scientific world.¹² After all, as Grafton pointed out, such a radical thinker as Copernicus was still working with ideas handed down to him by the ancients. The Spanish, French and English explorers of this period also attempted to work within a classical framework, for example by fitting the descriptions of new plants and trees that they discovered into the system originated centuries before by Galen. However, by the end of the sixteenth century, Grafton identifies a change in the intellectual climate, and he believes that by then, the ancient texts on natural philosophy were being read purely for their historical interest.¹³ Thinkers such as Francis Bacon were able to interpret the discovery of the New World as a new model for intelligent ways of seeking knowledge.

However, Stephen Greenblatt, in his book *Marvellous Possessions*, believes that there was no such dramatic change in the intellectual constructs with which men understood the world. He sees continuity throughout the period, in which European man's ideas of superiority and providence were created by his faith in Christianity and classical scholarship. His central thesis is that it was not reasoning that allowed early

¹¹ A. Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts*. (Cambridge, MA., 1992) p. 3.

¹² J.H. Elliott, *The Old World and The New* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 7 also makes the point that Europeans were intellectually ambivalent towards the New World, attempting to impose their own values, but becoming increasingly aware of the challenges posed by the continent and her inhabitants.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

modern man to treat the New World and its inhabitants the way he did, but wonder and imagination.¹⁴ Greenblatt points to the demonisation of native tribes by Jean de Lery and the fear of monstrous natives by Walter Raleigh in Guiana as indications of the influence of a vivid, almost folkloric, world-view. The marvels that authors described were not necessarily 'monstrous', as Columbus' descriptions of the timid natives that he encountered prove. Nevertheless, his journeys were described in a 'marvellous' story of his heroic discovery of the idyllic, almost paradise-like, islands of the Americas. I will show in this thesis, however, Greenblatt's theories do not ring true for English travel literature of the seventeenth century.

Man's Understanding of Nature and Society

Other historians have examined the ways in which early modern man perceived nature, and sought to control and civilise it. Karen Kupperman has written on how the fear of the climate among travellers to the Americas betrayed the Galenic way in which contemporaries analysed their new circumstances across the Atlantic.¹⁵

Kupperman conducts a sophisticated analysis of how reality and perception of the horrors of heat and disease in Virginia and the Caribbean merged into one in the European mind. Migrants were unable to adjust their intellectual world once they reached America and persisted in representing the climate of the New World in the same ways as those who had never made the journey there. Europeans had no idea of how climate varied in different areas of the world; they assumed that locations on the same latitude around the world would have the same climate. However, though little progress was made in understanding the weather, Kupperman reports that the fruits of

¹⁴ S. Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions* (Oxford, 1991) p 13. Earlier, Robert Cawley had also suggested that curiosity, wonder and imagination were the driving forces in Elizabethan representations of America. See his *Unpathed Waters* (Princeton, NJ., 1940), p. 168.

¹⁵ K. Kupperman, 'Fear of Hot Climates in the Anglo-American Colonial Experience' *William and Mary Quarterly*, 41 (April, 1984).

the new climates soon became useful for curing the very diseases thought to be prevalent in hot climes.¹⁶ Migrants learned to use the tools of their environment with the help of the Native Americans and gradually changed the way in which the English feared the heat in the new colonies. In her recent work *Subject Matter*, Joyce Chaplin has explored the impact of European scientific thinking on settlers' subsequent perceptions and treatment of the Native Americans, with a special focus on the understanding of the human body.¹⁷ I hope to show that the European intellectual world had as much impact on the perceptions and uses made of the natural commodities of America as it did on the reaction to the people discovered there. Kupperman and Chaplin have examined the link between representations of the New World in promotional and descriptive literature, and the changing public opinions of the colonies, examining the portrayals of 'potential' in the literature using subtle techniques, not merely distinguishing between the godly wilderness of the New Englanders and the economic goldmine of Virginia. The first scholar to make a serious attempt to do this was Francis Jennings, who described the social and economic consequences of 'first contact' throughout North America.¹⁸ Thomas Scanlon built on this work by examining the significance of the changing portrayal of the Native Americans in English travel literature, emphasising the importance of this literature for the development of English perceptions of America and her people, a point that this thesis will reinforce.¹⁹ It is these geographically integrated approaches

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

¹⁷ J. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier 1500-1676* (Cambridge, MA., 2001).

¹⁸ F. Jennings, *The Invasion of America* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1975).

¹⁹ T. Scanlan, *Colonial Writing and the New World 1583-1671* (Cambridge, 1999). Scanlon's work differs from mine in that he focuses on the way the English attempted to define themselves as a colonial nation by their interactions with the native population of America, whereas I believe that confronting the landscape itself was as influential in shaping the societies built by the English in the New World. Another influential book on the rhetorical strategies interpreting first contact with the natives is G. Mackenthun, *Metaphors of Dispossession: American Beginnings and the Translation of Empire* (Oklahoma City, OK., 1997).

that I wish to build on in analysing representations of the themes of ‘place’ and ‘potential’ in narratives during the first sixty years of English settlement in America.

The dichotomy between the fear and the utility of nature has been explored in the last two decades by a new breed of scholar, the environmental historian. Three books detail the contrasting approaches in this branch of historical inquiry: William Cronon’s *Changes in the Land*, John Stilgoe’s *Common Landscape of America 1580 to 1845*, and Stephen Adams’ *The Best and Worst Country in the World*. Cronon’s groundbreaking history of the ecological impact of the English settlement of New England shows how the transition from Indian to English control changed the plant and animal life of the region.²⁰ Cronon attributes these changes to the English way of perceiving land as property, and the colonists’ involvement in developing international trade. That is not to say that before English immigration New England was a virgin wilderness with the Native Americans living in perfect harmony with nature. But Cronon does see the European invasion as a specific catalyst for change. Similarly, John Stilgoe describes the American landscape and the ways in which it developed after the first attempts at colony-building by the English in the 1580s. However, Stilgoe places man and not the environment at the centre of his historical survey. He examines how European thinking about landscape and the environment influenced the location of farms and towns and the development of trade with the mother country. He believes that landscape was the dominant influence in the design of human communities, agriculture and artifice until 1850.²¹ Stephen Adams has undertaken an equally ambitious project, to track our understanding of the landscape of the current state of Virginia from the pre-historic era to the start of the eighteenth

²⁰ W. Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (New York, 1983) p. viii

²¹ J. Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America 1580-1845* (New Haven, CT., 1982) p. ix.

century.²² Adams' work, like Stilgoe's, encourages the interpretation that landscape determined much of Virginia's history, but though he examines the changing portrayals of that landscape in literature, he does not emphasise the importance of an author's intellectual world in creating that impression. I hope to write an integrated history of early modern man's understanding of landscape, covering a shorter time period, but exploring different geographical regions and the intellectual impulses behind those understandings.

It is possible to get a clearer window on the attitudes and perceptions of early modern Englishmen towards the natural world by turning to Keith Thomas' *Man and the Natural World*. He regards the early modern period as a time of change in which ideas about man's superiority over the animal and plant kingdom were gradually eroded by a belief in man as the steward of the world. A few English intellectuals believed that God had not designated the earth and the animals purely for the use of humans, and they began to understand how nature had an integrity of its own and man had a God-given duty to reduce the cruelty and destruction of it.²³ Authors such as Joep Leerson prefer to stress that during the seventeenth century the majority of Europeans still believed that the natural world represented something untamed and dangerous that must be reduced to civility. He sees this view in operation in Ireland where English colonists divided the land into the areas within and beyond 'the Pale'. The area 'beyond the Pale' was outside the confines of Dublin, wild landscape inhabited by wild Irish, and the subduing of both was the main colonial impulse of those Englishmen who left home to fight there.²⁴ It is these connections between perceptions of nature and colonial theory that I will explore in my thesis relating to North America.

²² S. Adams, *The Best and Worst Country in the World* (Charlottesville, VA., 2001).

²³ K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (London, 1983) p. 67.

²⁴ J. Leerssen, 'Wildness, Wilderness and Ireland', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 55 (Jan 1995) p. 33.

Many historians have explored the practical implications of early modern theories of how society should be structured and operate, and the function of a colony. Historians have often argued over whether the cultural and intellectual origins of English political and economic behaviour in New England were radically different from those in Virginia, the Carolinas and the Caribbean.²⁵ Scholars such as Sacvan Bercovitch have maintained that the Puritan heritage of the New England colony was based on a society derived from Biblical ideals and rejection of the half-reformed Protestantism of the English church, whereas Virginia was built on nothing but a hope for economic gain, and was set up as a semi-feudal colony in which large planters were the only 'stake-holding' members of the community.²⁶ However, this approach neglects the Renaissance humanist theories of society that had an impact on both settlements, theories that drew on Graeco-Roman ideas of the role of the state and jurisdiction over foreign 'barbarian' nations. Perry Miller has said, for example, that Virginian colonisers existed within the same frame of reference as the New Englanders, and therefore their shared heritage must not be ignored.²⁷

The new significance of the imagined America, the understanding by contemporaries of its landscape, people and colonial societies, has coincided with a new interest in America's 'ideal' communities as opposed to the 'everyday' ones, as described by Darrett Rutman.²⁸ He rejects the ahistorical concepts chosen by many twentieth century historians to define the settlements (for example Puritanism, tobacco colony, the antebellum south) and argues for a more focused understanding of contemporary authors' perceptions of the settler society. He says we must

²⁵ Much of the recent scholarship on this topic has to derive from the great colonial historian Samuel Eliot Morison who was the first to outline the importance of understanding the mental world of the settlers in his two books *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Boston, MA., 1930) and *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* (New York, 1956).

²⁶ S. Bercovitch, *Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven, CT., 1975).

²⁷ P. Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 99.

²⁸ D. Rutman, *Small Worlds, Large Questions* (Charlottesville, VA, 1994), p 36.

acknowledge when authors were writing in an idealistic manner, or a prescriptive or proscriptive manner, and not take each of these to be an indication of the degeneracy, or purity of the colony. It is for this reason that the thesis is based on the intentions and attempts of contemporary authors to describe the realities they saw, or the histories they had heard, or the futures they hoped for. In everything, contemporary author (and printer and patron and so on) and contemporary reader (and listener) are central.

Modern historians have shown much interest in the behaviour of Europeans when taking possession of the new American lands. Foremost in this area of scholarship has been Patricia Seed, who examined how conquest, though conducted by military strength, was sealed using language and symbolism.²⁹ She explores how the Roman idea of possession was legally defined as the maintenance of a physical presence and the intention to hold the land. English settlers claimed the land in the name of their monarch because she or he was perceived to be the first Christian ruler with jurisdiction over the area and this authority was a God-given right. The English settlers had conveniently rejected the authority of the Pope, including his grant of the Americas in their entirety to Spain and Portugal in 1493. The English saw themselves as rulers of land in the New World, in contrast with the Spanish conquistadors who believed that they had won it by gaining control over the native populations.

The English in America

The history of English emigration to the New World has been a lively topic in American studies since David B. Quinn began his work in the 1960s linking the practical exploits of explorers and settlers in America with the writing produced at

²⁹ P. Seed, 'Taking Possession and Reading Texts: Establishing the Authority of Overseas Empire' *William and Mary Quarterly*, 49 (April, 1992) p. 184.

home.³⁰ By the time King James I came to the throne, several independent pamphleteers, sailors, prospective colonists and critics had put pen to paper on the subject. Quinn traces the impact of England's colonial theorists from Hakluyt onwards, assessing the arguments put forward to his peers and patrons as to why an English settlement in the New World would be good, both practically, to increase trade and dispose of unwanted citizens, and to enhance the country's honour and international standing. In more recent years, David Armitage has taken up this mantle, describing the impact of both classical and biblical thinking on the authors of early modern England as they described their hopes for empire, not only in America but throughout the Atlantic world.³¹ Andrew Hadfield has gone so far as to say that there was never a single colonial narrative coming out of England at this period, and that interest in America was often bound up with domestic and European political demands, an argument with which this thesis concurs. However, Hadfield concentrates on the political messages within the travel narratives he studies, whereas this thesis will concentrate on the cultural voices.³² David Quinn, by contrast, concentrates on the history of North America and presents the Elizabethans' perceptions of America as an indistinguishable mass, changing in the Jacobean period when English settlements were taking root in different regions of North America. The historical analysis, too, necessarily changes in character, taking on a more regional emphasis. Authors such as David H. Fischer in *Albion's Seed* attempted to write a history of emigration to several colonies in America, but scholarly consensus has been that such a task is too huge for one publication and that such works are inevitably

³⁰ D.B Quinn, ed., *The Hakluyt Handbook* (London, 1974).

³¹ D. Armitage, *Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000).

³² A. Hadfield, *Literature, Travel and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance* (Oxford, 1998), p. 69.

flawed.³³ Most scholars have restricted themselves to writing a history of a particular colony, be it Virginia, Massachusetts Bay or the Carolinas. This regional approach has allowed historians to concentrate in more detail on the unique experiences of colonists in regard to contact with the environment and natives in a particular area, but it tends to result in the exceptionalist approach, ignoring the shared intellectual and cultural background of all English emigrants during this period.³⁴ The regional histories isolate the causes of migration to each colony and separate the religious and economic experiences of all colonists into regional distinctions, a separation for which historians now believe that there is less evidence. The technique of concentrating on a select number of settlers may well have been adopted because sources are extremely vague about the social status of many of those earliest settlers, especially in Jamestown.³⁵ An example of the difficulties of this approach is revealed by the debate in the early 1990s in the *Journal of Southern History* between Virginia Bernhard and Thomas Carnfield, as they attempted to sift through contradictory demographic material available for the years 1607-1610 in order to describe the status and gender of the first settlers in Virginia.³⁶

Understanding Authors and Printers

Alden Vaughan's article on contemporaries' changing treatment of Captain John Smith and his writings suggests that Smith's countrymen would not necessarily have given him or his tales the respect that later historians such as Phillip Barbour have felt

³³ D.H. Fischer, *Albion's Seed* (Oxford, 1989).

³⁴ For example, see J. Horn, *Adapting to a New World* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1994) on Virginia and V. DeJohn Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1991) on New England.

³⁵ For example, A. Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA., 1999) examines the ships' lists for vessels leaving London in 1635 only.

³⁶ V. Bernhard, 'Men, Women and Children in Early Virginia' *Journal of Southern History*, 58 (Nov, 1992); Bernhard, 'A Response: the Forest and the Trees' *Journal of Southern History*, 60 (Nov, 1994); T. Carnfield, 'A Can or Two of Worms' *Journal of Southern History*, 60 (Nov, 1994).

they deserved. Vaughan examines a satirical poem, *The Legend of Captain Iones* (1631), and argues that many contemporaries would have recognised it as an attack on Smith.³⁷ His work helps to remind historians that we must avoid adopting a *presentist* attitude to literature and must always locate a text and an author within their own world. Mary Fuller has also focused on John Smith in her later work on contemporary authors' writing about Virginia. I believe that she was wrong to assert that until 1624, the travel literature represents a continuous rhetorical strategy with only Smith a dissenting voice. However, Fuller's work has been very influential, linking in the minds of historians the two concerns of this thesis, printing and adventuring.³⁸

Richard Dunn has worked on John Winthrop the author as opposed to Winthrop the preacher, or Winthrop the leader. Dunn believes that the complexities of Winthrop's text are derived from his changing intentions as an author. For the first ten years he wanted to write a journal, though he never actually called it a journal himself, while later, Winthrop decided that writing a history of the colony would better fulfil his task. This change in authorial intention and style, Dunn believes, should inform every historian's reading of a very complex text, written by a complex individual.³⁹

In the last few decades, historians have become more aware of the significance of the history of printing and the transmission of print culture in the broader history of early modern Europe. Elizabeth Eisenstein's survey of the printing trade and its artefacts concluded that, without print, man's gradually developing understanding of the world around him would have changed far more slowly. In the examples she quotes, printed material allowed consumers of information to learn of the differences

³⁷ A.T. Vaughan, 'John Smith Satirized: the Legend of Captain Iones', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 45 (Oct, 1988).

³⁸ M. Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America 1576-1624* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 102.

³⁹ R. Dunn, 'John Winthrop Writes his Journal', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 44 (April, 1984).

between paradise and Cathay, unicorns and rhinos.⁴⁰ The work of Kevin Sharpe and Tessa Watt has allowed historians to explore the ways these products of the printing trade got into the hands of the men and women of Tudor and Stuart England, and how they interpreted the information found there. Watt's book on the distribution of cheap religious pamphlets has been very influential on this thesis; her model of chapbook networks that reached out to a semi-literate audience has been adopted in Chapter Eight. Watt also concurs with Eisenstein that the impact of print was a gradual and conservative one.⁴¹ Sharpe, using the diaries and notebooks of William Drake, has written about the changing interpretations that one early modern reader applied to the texts that fell into his hands, and the significance of the venue and the number of people involved in an act of reading, ideas which I have adopted in my own work to explore the ways in which printed material became accessible to, and was interpreted by men and women of Tudor and Stuart England.⁴²

In any analysis of Anglo-American colonial literature, then, the historian has to avoid falling into either the post-modernist trap of denying any contextual relevance to a document and thus negating its role as a historical text, or the determinist pitfall of reading a seventeenth century work with one eye on the eventual development of a colony into a state, region and nation. However, I believe that in my 'quest for intellectual order', as Jack Greene puts it, the analysis of authors and their texts from all the early English North American settlements, but especially Virginia, Maryland, Plymouth and Massachusetts, will enable me to provide a specific yet multi-faceted account of the intellectual origins of colonial culture, and also the impact of the development of these outposts on the mother-country. 'Specific' in the

⁴⁰ E. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 227.

⁴¹ T. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 28, 330.

⁴² K. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, CT., 2000).

sense that the authors are the literate few and in that the information was transmitted through restricted readership networks depending mostly on social status but also geographic location. But 'multi-faceted' in that the writings which include not only the histories of the migration to the New World, but also the promotional literature, letters, diaries and ballads that the settlements inspired and which were eagerly consumed by the English reading public, work as texts on many diverse and complex levels. By using this wide variety of sources, it is possible to compare and contrast the literature emerging from different colonies without giving precedence to either the religious New England or the economic Virginian histories of America.

PROLOGUE

In May 1607, three ships, the *Godspeed*, the *Discovery* and the *Susan Constant*, employed by the Virginia Company to take a new group of settlers to America, arrived at the entrance to Chesapeake Bay. This moment has been forever acknowledged as the start of the permanent English presence on the North American continent and as such has achieved a significance not granted to it by contemporaries. The fledgling colony at Jamestown was much less than a success in the first few years of its existence, and in fact in early summer 1610 was almost abandoned after a winter of cruelty and want left barely sixty survivors, a period that these first Virginians came to call ‘the starving time’.⁴³ The bedraggled settlers had decided to abandon the project and embark for England when they were intercepted by a fleet of relief ships led by Lord De La Warr and persuaded to turn back and try again. De La Warr and Thomas Gates, the subsequent governor, were made of sterner stuff and they laid down a law code for establishing a civil society in Jamestown.⁴⁴ Fortuitously, in 1612, experiments in tobacco cultivation began in earnest and the rest is ‘history’. If the beginnings of Jamestown were so inauspicious, why should 1607 be chosen as the date with which to begin a survey of English literature produced on America, and all previous contact with that continent relegated to this prologue? It would be perverse to argue that because Jamestown emerged as a successful colony, it was always destined to be one, unlike Roanoke, or the Brownist attempt in Newfoundland which

⁴³ See C. Bridenbaugh, *Jamestown 1544-1699* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 6-20 for a summary of the history of Jamestown’s early years.

⁴⁴ W. Strachey, ‘Lawes Divine, Morall, Martiall’, P. Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*, vol. 3 (Washington, 1844).

somehow were doomed from the start. This prologue will offer a brief review of the English contact with the New World in the reign of Elizabeth I, while also arguing that it is not anachronistic to divide this period of exploration and settlement from that of James I's reign, which provides the source material for the main body of this thesis.

Elizabethan Travel and Narrative

While English men during Elizabeth's reign failed to establish a permanent settled colony in America, they were certainly not idle.⁴⁵ Traders and privateers were establishing England as a presence to be reckoned with on the high seas and her fishermen were taking a large share of the prizes to be had in the rich cod fisheries of Newfoundland. Explorers were charting the coast and some of the interior while attempting to discover the elusive Northwest Passage that would be so invaluable in transporting goods from Cathay. For just those reasons, Thomas Bavin was instructed to undertake the first English mapping and recording expedition in North America in 1583.⁴⁶ But other visionary English men saw that the Americas held rather more potential than as a mere trading post, or piratical base from which to attack the gold-laden ships of the popish Spaniards. These men, such as Richard Hakluyt, Humphrey Gilbert and Walter Raleigh, recognised that a colony in the New World, possibly run on similar militaristic lines to those in Ireland, would best exploit the wealth and fame that America had to offer the daring Englishman at the end of the sixteenth century. However, Gilbert, having failed in his colonising venture, was to die at sea, and Raleigh was to fall out of favour and be imprisoned and then executed by James, for

⁴⁵ For a comprehensive survey of England's contacts with North America during this period see the many works by D.B. Quinn including *England and the Discovery of America* (New York, 1974).

⁴⁶ W.H. Sherman, 'Stirrings and Searchings: 1500-1720', in P. Hulme & T. Youngs eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 17.

whom such an Elizabethan hero proved a liability in the new political climate of the seventeenth century. In fact, the attempts at settlement made by these men were to fall out of favour too; Raleigh's Roanoke venture was all but forgotten, with many involved becoming disillusioned, and war at home prevented contact with the colony, which was then lost. Gilbert's vision of a military colony, based on his experiences subduing the natives in Ireland, never came to fruition. By 1607 the climate of opinion had changed and many realised that a colonising venture ought to be governed and financed by a civil authority, and the success of Jamestown was due in a great part to the willingness or necessity of the colonists to receive assistance from the natives rather than attempting to subdue them, as Gilbert had tried to do in Ireland.⁴⁷

However, it would be a mistake to conclude that the literature written by Elizabethan explorers, settlers and theorists is of no value to the scholar of England's settlements from Jamestown onwards. The travel journals, promotional tracts, scientific analyses, poems and pamphlets reveal how the idea of America as a place, and of colonising it, became a reality in the *mentalité* of the late Tudor English. It was this awakening of belief that America could be an area in which the English could trade and settle that led to the establishment of a lasting colony in the Chesapeake, and the migration of thousands of willing, enthusiastic people to Virginia and the settlements of New England. This prologue will survey the literature produced by English visitors to the New World and by theorists like Hakluyt who stayed at home to assess what Elizabethan readers might know about America and how they thought England and her people should capitalise on this knowledge. It will also ask how widely this knowledge may have been disseminated.

⁴⁷ Nicholas Canny is the authority on comparisons between Irish and American colonisation during this period; see for example, K. Andrews, N. Canny, & P. Hair, eds., *The Westward Enterprise* (Liverpool, 1978).

The literature produced during the Elizabethan period was not a homogenous whole. Different types of document would have been interpreted differently by contemporary readers, as much as by historians today. So, for example, the nature of a travel diary and all the authorial and printing conventions that accompany that genre must be acknowledged as having an influence on the perceptions of the Elizabethan reader. Several distinctions will also be made regarding authorial intentions, for example between those writing for a public and a private audience, and if for a public audience, between those with an aim to encourage interest and those with an avowed aim to encourage investment or actual migration to America. Second, I will ask how the representations of the landscape of America and opinions about England's role there differ if narrated by an author who had never visited the continent. The role of the eyewitness appears as a very important rhetorical justification for many pieces of writing at this period; how does it change the value of a text about America? It is also important, of course, to examine the readers' role in this process. It cannot be assumed that readers absorbed information in the ways that authors intended, or that all members of a community had access to this information. These cautions must be borne in mind when attempting to create an idea of how English men and women felt about the New World by the end of the reign of Elizabeth I.

The Significance of European Thought

In order to examine the literature produced by English explorers and settlers who went to America in the reign of Elizabeth, we must first define the intellectual influences that had led them to attempt the journey. These influences will be

categorised in three ways, first the knowledge and motivation gained through travel narratives written by French and Spanish travellers and then translated for an English audience from the 1560s onwards. Second, the theories developed by men such as Richard Hakluyt to promote the first tentative steps towards an empire, specifically outlined in his tract 'Discourse of Western Planting' (1584). Lastly, the climate of self-aggrandisement and hero-worship that allowed men such as Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh to believe their exploits would win them both favour and lasting fame.⁴⁸ These three factors combined to create an intellectual and cultural climate favourable to those men who ventured to the New World in the late sixteenth century. That is not to say, of course, that other motivations did not exist; the hope of economic benefit for both country and self and the political and religious rivalries with Spain were both vital in encouraging English overseas exploits around the world, not just in the Americas. However, I am concerned here to establish the origins of the *mental* constructs, the ways of imagining oneself in the world, that allowed the actors in this drama the knowledge of possibilities and potential.

Prior to the 1580s, the only factual writing to appear in English on the Americas comprised translations from originals in other languages. The Spanish and French had both conducted expeditions to the New World, for most of the sixteenth century, and had published various books and pamphlets about their discoveries. There were a few Englishmen in this period, scholars and merchants, who could read such texts in a foreign tongue, but most readers would have become aware of the existence of this material only when translated into English. John Frampton's translation of Andre Thevet's *Antarctike* (1568) and Thomas Hacket's version of

⁴⁸ K. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprises and the Genesis of the British Empire 1480-1630* (Cambridge, 1984) outlines the connection between the famous pirates of Elizabeth's reign and the growing interest in establishing a colonial presence in North America.

Nicolas Monardes' *Joyfull Newes out of a Newe Found Worlde* (1577) gave information to those who were interested about the discoveries being made by other nations. Frampton was a merchant who had spent time working in Spain, and was encouraged to make translations of various travel narratives by Edward Dyer, a powerful member of Philip Sidney's circle who was very close to the Queen and also connected to Walter Raleigh. Peter Martyr's *The Decades of the New World*, initially a Latin text, was translated by both Richard Eden (soldier and friend of Humphrey Gilbert) in 1555, to please Mary's Spanish husband Philip, and later by Richard Hakluyt in 1587. In fact, Eden was a prolific translator; in the late 1570s he converted several other texts to English regarding Spanish explorations in South America, which were then duly published by London printers.

The influential circle of intellectuals who led the way in translating and printing stories of foreign adventures in America was the same group of people who were to engender the idea of English overseas expansion, encouraging both Elizabeth and her nobles to give favour and investment to such projects.⁴⁹ These men, sometimes visionaries and dreamers, sometimes hard-headed realists, did much to create a world in which courtiers and city merchants would be inspired to support Martin Frobisher in his exploratory voyages in search of a North-West passage in 1576, 1577 and 1578, and later to give backing to Raleigh and Gilbert's colonising ventures. One of the first men to dream of a naval empire was John Dee, the Queen's astrologer. Dee was a fascinating man, an alchemist and visionary who, at the same time, was practical enough to realise that where Spain had shown the way across the ocean, the English could surely follow. Dee used the phrase *Thalassokratia*

⁴⁹ As William Sherman has acknowledged, explorers themselves were often not interested in recording their experiences in print, this was done by other members of the party, in conjunction with intellectuals in England. See Sherman 'Stirrings and Searchings' in Hulme & Youngs eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, p. 25

Britannik ■, literally translating from the Greek as ‘the sea power of Britain’. Dee felt that the authority for the British empire (for as a Welshman any empire had to be *British* and not English) derived from the exploits of King Arthur’s time and Prince Madoc hundreds of years before.⁵⁰ These almost metaphysical dreams of Dee were taken on by Richard Hakluyt who saw far more practical justifications for England to join the imperial race. Hakluyt resided in Paris between 1583 and 1588, returning home only briefly to present Elizabeth with his ‘Discourse’. Hakluyt had been very interested, not only in voyages to America, but also in map-making and the new science of geography, on which he had lectured at Oxford. He had gathered together several narratives in a printed volume, *Divers Voyages*, published in 1582. His commission to write a tract for the queen to promote English exploration and colonisation in America was probably given by Raleigh or one of his circle. Raleigh was preparing that summer to send out a reconnaissance expedition to locate a suitable place for his settlement in Virginia, so the timing would have been ideal. Raleigh and Hakluyt did not expect full state funding from Elizabeth, but wanted to appeal to her intellect and gain her support and assistance for this and other ventures. Hakluyt had never been to America and his ‘Discourse’ is full of errors about climate and topography and full of mistaken assumptions about the lives of Native Americans but is nonetheless an impassioned plea for the colonisation of the area and for the English to lay claim not only to possession but also sovereignty over its people. The ‘Discourse’ is one of the most important documents we have from this period for interpreting the early roots of this nascent empire, but a note of caution must be sounded. It was a promotional tract intended for the eyes of the Queen only and was

⁵⁰ The most recent biography of John Dee is B. Woolley, *The Queen’s Conjurer: The Life and Magic of Dr Dee* (London, 2002). See pp. 133-135 for Dee’s attitudes to empire.

written to flatter her into supporting Raleigh and Hakluyt's cause.⁵¹ Very few of Hakluyt's contemporaries ever saw it, though some must have been aware of the currency of the ideas it contained. The intellectuals of Sidney's circle seemed preoccupied with this topic for much of the 1580s. One of Hakluyt's most famous arguments, that the colonies could be used to put to work England's idle poor and to hold criminals and other superfluous members of the populace, was also stated by Christopher Carleill in 1583 in his letter to the people of London to encourage them to colonise America. Carleill says that a colony would provide work for the 'poorer sort' who were currently causing 'great disquiet' to the 'better sort' of people.⁵² But the very limited distribution of the *Discourse* means that it cannot be assumed to have had a wide influence on the thinking of Elizabethans regarding America. The honour of the greatest influence on contemporary thought must go to those hero privateers, men like John Hawkins and Francis Drake.

While small groups of nobles and intellectuals in London and the West country planned settlements and expounded imperial theories, the men most influential in bringing the Americas to the forefront of the English mind were busy leading expeditions around the world. They showed very little interest in establishing a permanent colony in America, and instead engaged in a personal war against Spain and her settlements in Central America and the Caribbean. These sailors inspired a whole generation of Englishmen not only to hate the Spanish and their Catholicism but also to see America as a land of opportunity in which an English sailor could win

⁵¹ D.B. Quinn, ed. *The Hakluyt Handbook* vols. I & II (Hakluyt Soc., 1974). Anthony Payne has also claimed that Hakluyt's importance to imperial theory has overshadowed his pioneering work in the field of geography: A. Payne, "'Strange remote and farre distant countreys': the travel books of Richard Hakluyt", R. Myers & M. Harris, eds., *Journey Through the Market* (Folkestone, 1999), p. 25

⁵² BL Lansdowne MS 100, no. 14, f. 108. Later published by Hakluyt in his *Principall Navigations* (London, 1589). This was an open letter to the merchants of London to encourage investment in America. Several copies are extant in MS form; it was published in 1583 as *A Discourse upon the entended voyage to the hethermost parts of America*, and then reprinted by Hakluyt from that version.

riches for himself and glory for his country and his Protestant God. This was possibly the most significant and lasting achievement of the Elizabethans in America, because it encouraged ordinary English men and women to believe that there were fortunes to be had by everyone in this paradise. The privateers were seen not as rogue pirates but as heroes and their stories were told in taverns across the south coast by sailors who had travelled with them, or who knew someone who had. Written as well as oral networks of communication were employed to spread the stories of Drake, Hawkins and Raleigh. Pedlars travelling from London and the ports into the interior would carry pamphlets and small books describing the exploits of the adventurers. They would transmit the tales by word of mouth to those who could not read, to audiences eager to hear some good news in those times of fear of Spanish invasion, and of deprivation through shortage of food. Of course in reality, England's privateers were usually sailing to the New World for materialistic reasons, and Elizabeth often disapproved of their actions.⁵³ Many young gentlemen who went with them did so because they were in debt and often the ships were manned by sailors who were criminals escaping conviction or sentence. But these men, lured by prizes of Spanish bullion, became heroes to the anti-Catholic populace and also did more than anything in Elizabeth's reign to put America on the map in the minds of ordinary men and women.

Elizabethan Representations

Having examined the methods by which the English came to know something of America during Elizabeth's reign, it is now possible to turn to the literature produced

⁵³ K. Andrews, *Elizabethan Privateering* (Cambridge, 1964) p. 187, reiterates the link between privateering and empire.

concerning the New World. We need to capture the authors' use of descriptive techniques to represent the landscape, climate, geography, flora and fauna of America, and the use of rhetorical style to justify claims of possession, and to invent a history of Protestant glory to reinforce England's power. Many authors discussed the American climate, usually by emphasizing its favourable qualities and emphasizing the fruitfulness of the land. John Hawkins' voyage to Florida in 1565 was reported by John Sparke and first printed by Hakluyt in 1589. He found that in Florida 'the country standeth in so watery a climate for once a day without fail they have a shower of rain which by means of the country is more dry and more fervent hot than ours, doth make all things to flourish therein'. Even an early voyage such as Hawkins' Florida expedition was concerned with the resources and commodities to be found there. Perhaps the most hardened privateer-sailor had the heart of a merchant in him. As Sparke comments, 'the ground yieldeth naturally grapes in great store...the commodities of this land are more than are yet known to any man...woods of cedar and cypress...turpentine, myrrh, frankincense with many others whereof I know not the names'.⁵⁴ Not only trees and plants were flourishing in this fertile land, but also animals and birds supported by them. Arthur Barlowe, reporting in 1584 on the first visit to Roanoke, printed by Hakluyt in 1589, said 'the island has many goodly woods full of deer, conies, hares and fowl...The woods are not such as you find in Bohemia, Muscovia or Hyrcania, barren and fruitless, but the highest and reddest cedars of the world, far bettering the cedars of the Azores or of the Indies or of Libanus, pines, cypress, sassafrass...many others of excellent smell and quality'.⁵⁵ As a result of Barlowe's glowing report, Raleigh sent out a settlement party to Roanoke made up of men, women and children. Even in the cold lands of the north explored by Humphrey

⁵⁴ L.B.Wright, ed., *The Elizabethans' America* (London, 1965) p 45.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

Gilbert in 1583, and reported by fellow sailor Edward Hayes, the explorers observed that 'Nature itself without Art confusedly hath brought forth roses abundantly, wild, but odoriferous and to sense very comfortable. Also the like plenty of raspberries, which do grow in every place'.⁵⁶ These visitors could appreciate the beauty of America's plant life as well as its utility. When Anthony Pankhurst wrote to his friend Hakluyt about what he had found in Newfoundland he confirmed the tales of the 'strawberries, raspis [raspberries] and dewberries', and spoke of forests of 'birch and elder which be the meetest wood for coal'.⁵⁷

Not all the information gleaned by English explorers was derived from their own observations. The initial meetings with Native Americans introduced many new ways of using America's commodities. For example, in Florida, Hawkins' group saw Indians using tobacco when they were travelling around the locality to suppress their hunger, but said that the French, who also used it for this purpose, 'yet do hold the opinion withal that it causeth water and phlegm to void from their stomachs'.⁵⁸ Martin Frobisher also had contact with Indians in the north of the continent and once the initial fear had passed was able to 'have sundry conferences with them'. The natives were welcomed aboard ship and 'brought him salmon and raw flesh and fish and greedily devoured the same before our men's faces...they exchanged coats of seals and bears skins and received bells, looking glasses and other toys in recompense thereof'.⁵⁹ These early voyages were to set the pattern for how the Europeans gained knowledge of the New World. In their curiosity and honest hospitality, the natives taught the English how it would be possible for a colony to survive and flourish in those unknown climes. The Native Americans were not the only source of

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵⁹ R. Hakluyt, *The Tudor Venturers* ed., John Hampden (London, 1970) p. 117.

information. Anthony Pankhurst, while in Newfoundland, spoke to the French fishermen who had regularly been visiting the cod fisheries there. They told him about ‘birds...called penguins’, which could not fly. ‘There is more meat in one of these than in a goose. The Frenchmen that fish near the Great Bay do bring small store of flesh with them but victual themselves always with these birds’.⁶⁰

Martin Frobisher’s three voyages in search of a North West passage in the late 1570s did not generate much interest outside intellectual circles until Hakluyt published part of George Best’s descriptions of the journeys in his *Principall Navigations* in 1589. However, these narratives are extremely useful in revealing the fears and hopes of those men who were the first to record their expedition to this northerly portion of North America, modern-day Newfoundland. As expected, the climate struck Best and his fellow sailors, being unused to such extremes of temperature. Best tells how they ‘durst not approach the same [Greenland] by reason of the great store of ice that lay along the coast and the great mists that troubled them not a little’.⁶¹ The ice restricted the party’s movement and they were only able to continue when ‘he perceived the ice to be well consumed and gone, either there engulfed in by some swift currents or indraughts’. In 1585, when John Davis led three similar expeditions to explore the North West passage, he, too, was troubled by ‘the sea so full of ice as that no shipping could by any means come near the same’.⁶² John Davis did not appreciate the landscape of the part of America to which he travelled, describing the ‘land being very high and full of mighty mountains all covered with snow, no view of wood, grass or earth to be seen...we supposed the place to be waste and void of any sensible or vegetable creatures, whereupon I called the same

⁶⁰ Wright, *The Elizabethans’ America*, p. 80.

⁶¹ Hakluyt, *The Tudor Venturers* p. 116.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 204.

Desolation'.⁶³ Not all the fruits of the New World were as wholesome as Arthur Barlowe had inferred, as this anonymous report printed by Hakluyt reveals. 'Some of our women and men, by eating a small fruit like green apples, were fearfully troubled with a sudden burning in their mouths, and swelling of their tongues so big that some of them could not speak...but after 24 hours it ware away of itself'.⁶⁴ This description alludes to the learning process undertaken by the colonists and reveals that however prolific the promotional literature and information about America, there were significant gaps in the knowledge that men and women needed in America to survive. This was part of the cause of the failure of the Roanoke expedition and the near failure of the colony at Jamestown. However, other authors indignantly challenged negative reports, such as Anthony Pankhurst who commented in his report to Hakluyt, 'you shall understand that Newfoundland is in a temperate climate and not so cold as foolish mariners do say, who find it cold sometimes when plenty of isles of ice lay near the shore; but up in land they shall find it hotter than in England in many parts of the country'.⁶⁵

Though Elizabethans could appreciate the wealth and beauty of the American landscape, what they really hoped to find was gold. The Spanish success and plunder in Peru had inspired the English to search for riches in that part of America they had mapped. This account at the end of George Best's description of Frobisher's first voyage showed how optimistic those early explorers were in seeking for gold where subsequent history proved there was little to be found. Frobisher ordered his company to take a token each from America to offer to the Queen 'that thereby he might justify the having and enjoying of the same things that grew in these unknown parts'. One returned with 'a piece of black stone much like to a sea coal in colour', which on

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁶⁵ Wright, *The Elizabethans' America*, p. 79.

returning home was claimed to be gold ‘and that very richly for the quantity’.⁶⁶ In fact, Captain Christopher Carleill, in the original manuscript version of his exhortation to the people of London to colonise America, commented in the margin ‘the ewre of metal browghte by Mr Frobysher caused a greate supply to be furnished the yeare followinge’.⁶⁷ This search for gold obsessed some of the visitors to the New World; it encouraged many of Raleigh’s schemes, especially those in Guiana, and occupied the minds of the settlers at Roanoke so frequently that many thought the colony nearly failed due to lack of willingness simply to subsist. Pankhurst encouraged Richard Hakluyt to share in this dream when he wrote, ‘I am of the opinion and do steadfastly believe that we shall find as rich mines in more temperate places and climates’⁶⁸. But Pankhurst’s view was one of endless optimism. He did not have a bad thing to say about America, even claiming that though the bears in Newfoundland were ‘bold, I believe assuredly they would not hurt anybody’!⁶⁹

The texts examined thus far, apart from Carleill’s letter to the people of London, have been narrative, linear descriptions of a journey from England to some part of America and the brief stay there. This way of telling a story, using description to allow the audience to build up a mental picture of the world being described, seems most effective when trying to convey new information. The presence of these authors in the New World itself and the personal eyewitness accounts that they provide for the reader also help to create an air of authenticity. However, the next author, though he visited America, decided not to write a narrative of his journey and visit, but employed a more rhetorical approach to convince readers of the authenticity and value of his information. Thomas Harriot wrote the most influential report of a journey to

⁶⁶ Hakluyt, *The Tudor Venturers*, p. 118.

⁶⁷ British Library, Lansdowne MS 100, no. 14, f.108.

⁶⁸ Wright, *The Elizabethans’ America* p. 81.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

America in Elizabeth's reign in 1588. His *A Brief and True Report of the New-found Land of Virginia* was printed in English by Hakluyt in his *Principall Navigations*, also by Theodore de Bry in several European languages and Latin in 1590, and represents the first respected English authority on the New World. Harriot was trained as a mathematician and scientist, and had taught navigation and astronomy to Raleigh's circle and his captains. His commission was to prepare a scientific report of the land surveyed by the expedition of 1585, which was also undertaken by the artist John White whose sketches were also to be reproduced by de Bry, making them the recognised images of New World life for most of Europe. But Harriot had another aim, to defend his patron Raleigh from the accusations made by some of the Roanoke colonists about the hardships and cruelties suffered by the settlers there. However, despite these biases, Harriot's account provided contemporaries with the clearest account yet of the sorts of commodities available in that part of America for trade, for sustaining oneself and one's community and for building and establishing the community itself. The description of the natives together with White's pictures depicted harmless, friendly populations, who would not prove a threat to an English settlement.

The *Report* provided the most detailed account yet of the realities of the American continent and described a clear link between the resources and commodities of the area and the potential benefits to be derived by English settlers there. First, he defended Virginia (and tacitly its sponsor Raleigh) from those who were 'ignorant of the state thereof' and have 'not been ashamed to make absolute denial of that which, although not by them yet by others, is most certainly and there plentifully known'.⁷⁰ He also denounced those travellers who, while not maliciously wanting to discredit

⁷⁰ Wright, *The Elizabethans' America*, pp. 116-7

the project, on finding no ‘old accustomed dainty food nor any soft beds of down or feathers’, decided that America had nothing to offer.⁷¹ Harriot then listed commodities that would be useful for trade, including various plant and animal matter such as pitch, sassafras, wine, furs and deerskins.⁷² He also said that the country’s mineral wealth would provide iron and copper if one was prepared to venture inland to look for it. The second part of his report concerned itself with commodities that would support a colony in America, and here he dealt with crops such as maize, beans and peas, explaining how the natives went about preparing the soil and planting their crops. Harriot obviously had some knowledge of their language as he often referred to the Indian name for certain plants. Indeed when he reported several species of fish as good to eat he remarked that he was not aware of an English name and knew them only by their Indian one. The last portion of his report on commodities focused on building materials such as wood, stone, brick and lime. He compared the lime found by him in America, made of oyster shells, to that made in the Isles of Thanet and Sheppey in England. This was a very important rhetorical technique to enable his readers to identify with his discoveries, and discourage them from reading the report with ‘wonder’, rather encouraging a practical analysis relating the New World to their own experiences of trade and commerce.⁷³ He then proceeded to a description of the natives themselves, their homes, their daily lives, their warfare and their religious beliefs, which are fascinating subjects which do not come under the remit of this thesis. Harriot’s report is important in several ways. Not only does it signal the start of the acceptance of an English literature on the New World outside England, but also

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117

⁷² On sassafras, Harriot referred readers to Nicholas Monardes’ *Ioyfull Newes out of the New Found World* (London, 1577).

⁷³ Stephen Greenblatt in his hugely influential book *Marvellous Possessions*, (Oxford, 1991) has described how the reports of Columbus’ voyages instilled a sense of ‘wonder’ at the New World. I hope to demonstrate that by the last quarter of the sixteenth century, this had been replaced by a far more practical, utilitarian view of the potential of the Americas.

the first detailed description of the ways in which the flora and fauna of America might be used to the benefit of the English nation.

Having examined some of the narrative techniques used by authors to outline the benefits of English settlement in America, it is important now to analyse the rhetorical techniques adopted in order to persuade readers to take part, either in person or by providing financial support. It must be remembered that most of the authors of these promotional tracts and travel journals would have been educated at Grammar school and a select few at university where the theory and practice of rhetoric would have been a central pillar of their education.⁷⁴ As the acknowledged aim of the writers in question was to persuade people of the importance of English participation in the race to colonise the New World, it was natural that their rhetorical training should influence their writing style. Three strands of persuasive discourse are apparent; first an appeal to the honour of good men, which would be enhanced by the colonising venture; second, the ways in which England laid claims to possess the lands she visited in America; and finally, the methods of authors to validate English possession by recourse to an imagined, created 'history' of activity in that part of the world.

Though a description of the profitability of settling an area would have aroused the interest of many Englishmen, some authors felt they needed to employ far more subtle reasoning to attract prospective travellers and investors: an appeal to their honour. When George Peckham wrote his tract to encourage settlement in Newfoundland after Humphrey Gilbert's first voyage failed, he declared the project 'as profitable to men: as lawful as it seem honourable: as well grateful to the Savages: as gainful to the Christians'.⁷⁵ This coupling of the motivations of honour, philanthropy and profit would have struck a chord with many of Peckham's readers.

⁷⁴ A. Fitzmaurice, 'Rhetoric and the New World' in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 58, no. 2 (1997) p. 217.

⁷⁵ Reprinted in Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations* (London, 1589).

Classical authors had long debated whether moral and financial benefit could go hand in hand. Quintilian had urged that rhetoricians should appeal to both as they would attract different people at different times. The English authors of travel narratives certainly appreciated this and it demonstrates an awareness of the different classes of person who would read their text and the various methods of persuasion that could be employed to convince them of the justice of the cause.

The rituals of possession of the English colonies were enacted in very different ways from those of the Spanish, though Arthur Barlowe does make an obscure reference to taking possession of Virginia ‘according to the ceremonies used in such enterprises’.⁷⁶ Barlowe felt that the very act of arriving in Virginia activated the grant made by Elizabeth to Raleigh, asserting her sovereignty over the undiscovered lands. The English did not take possession of the people and their wealth, but rather the land itself, and many official documents and grants do not make significant mention of the natives. However, Edward Hayes’ story of the claim to possession of a region of Newfoundland made by Humphrey Gilbert in 1583 makes interesting reading for two reasons. First, he does make mention of an interest in ‘the advancement of the Christian religion in those paganish regions’, and also describes how Gilbert had to show his documents of commission to the English fishermen and ship owners already resident in that area plying their trade. As Hayes said, ‘they were all satisfied when the general had shown his commission and purpose to take possession of these lands to the behalf of the Crown of England...in lieu whereof he [Gilbert] made offer to gratify them with any favour and privilege.’⁷⁷ This passage contradicts the assumption of many historians that the first English colonisers had no interest in spreading Christianity to the pagan Native Americans. However, it must also be acknowledged

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁷⁷ Wright, *The Elizabethans’ America*, p. 85.

that Hayes' claim could also be a rhetorical device to encourage readers back in England to view their expedition as having a godly, and thus more worthy, direction than the mere search for riches.

Another justification for English expansion into America was the use of an imagined history of previous experience on the continent. John Dee, while providing scientific and navigational expertise to Gilbert and Raleigh and others hoping to sail to America, was also responsible for writing a history of English claims to the New World that would be used by authors such as Richard Hakluyt to encourage further contact by appealing to the idea of a glorious past. Dee described contemporary efforts to settle as 'due claim and just recovery' of 'sundry foreign regions discovered, inhabited and partly conquered by subjects of this British monarchy'.⁷⁸ Dee asserted that the English claim covered the entire region from Florida to Greenland and then went on to list the 'famous and rich discoveries' that allowed England to claim such a huge tract of land. He begins in 1170 with the expedition of the Welsh Lord Madoc to Florida, moving on to 1494 when sailors from Bristol discovered Newfoundland, with a brief aside to mention the islands supposedly discovered in 560AD by 'Brandan the learned man', then the Cabots' expedition in 1497 and finally, to bring readers up to date, the journeys by Martin Frobisher in 1576 and 77 in which the land to the south of Labrador was 'more particularly discovered and possessed...and presently is by our people inhabited'.⁷⁹ This document, composed by Dee in 1578, was intended to supplement the travel narratives slowly beginning to emerge from the pens of English authors and to inspire more men to attempt the journey, and projected the idea of a British empire of North America rivalling the extensive holdings of the Spanish and Portuguese in the south. However, instead of being a religious bequest from God's

⁷⁸ L.B.Wright & Elaine Fowler eds. *English Colonization of North America* (London, 1968) p. 16.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

representative the Pope, the British empire was to be based on the history of her subjects' heroic deeds, and the claim was rooted not in the authority of God but the sovereign Queen Elizabeth. Dee, along with Hakluyt, was to symbolise the hopes and ambitions of the expanding English nation at this period, and both men played a central role in the practical development of those hopes, without ever setting foot on the American continent.

America and the Printing Press

It is one of the great coincidences of history that the discovery of the New World coincided with the invention of printing. This had a radical effect on the ways in which information about the Americas reached audiences in late sixteenth century England.⁸⁰ The printing press allowed for the mass copying of books and pamphlets, and effected a change in the way information was presented to the reading public. It is hard to estimate the readership of a single book, but it is helpful to think in terms of the greater number of different books available to the single reader. It is also important once again to acknowledge the debt that readers of the time and historians of subsequent generations owe to Richard Hakluyt in this regard. His influence was threefold. Not only did he encourage the acquisition and translation of foreign travel journals into English, he also solicited manuscript material, and even convinced travellers to write down their stories in order that they might be printed and distributed to a wider readership. The change of medium from pen to printing press was hugely important in ensuring that large numbers of English people could learn about the American voyages, and Hakluyt realised this very quickly. Finally of course, Hakluyt was responsible for the greatest printed collection of travel narratives

⁸⁰ E. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge, 1979).

in the English language, his *Principall Navigations* (1589). This twelve-volume work brought together descriptions of travel not only to America, but all areas of the known world, and it emphasised the English Protestant nature of these expeditions.

It is very difficult to collect statistics on the readership of any book in the sixteenth century. However, there is evidence to show that, in general terms, Elizabeth's reign did witness the development of what Louis B. Wright called 'a middle class culture' in England. This involved not only an increase in literacy but also a development in the taste for the printed word; a literary culture outside the universities was emerging for the first time. Already by this period, culture was being divided by its authors and consumers into the high and low varieties, and their relative merits were debated as they are today.⁸¹ Travel narratives managed to cross the boundaries and were accessible to the educated reader and the lower status listener. The educated man found the narratives satisfied his thirst for knowledge for its own sake, while listeners in the alehouses, especially of port towns and the southwest, could enjoy a heroic tale that aroused their patriotic pride, especially at the expense of the Spanish. Even though many of the narratives written in Elizabeth's reign were of ventures ending in failure, that failure was seen as heroic and tragic, and an inspiration to other Englishmen in the future.

Much of the book trade was based in London. St. Paul's Walk, part of the churchyard of the cathedral, was the centre of this trade and the site of a large number of permanent shops and transitory stalls selling books and pamphlets. Anyone visiting the capital would have been able to find a book he wanted all year round. During this

⁸¹ For information on the current historiographical debates on literacy in the early modern period see L.B. Wright, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (1935) p. 95; D. Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order* (Cambridge, 1980); M. Spufford, 'First Experiences in Literacy', *Social History*, 4 (1979); T. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* (Cambridge, 1991); B. Reay, *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750* (London, 1998).

period, Henry Bynneman, one of the wealthiest men in the Stationers' Company, printed and published many of the translations of European travel narratives. At his death in 1583, an inventory of his printing shop showed that he owned several books on the New World comprising: 45 copies of 'the conqueste of the Weste Indians' valued at 30s, 350 copies of 'portes creekes havens of the W. Indyas' (printed in 1578, this was the earliest information in English on the practicalities of navigation in the New World) valued at 12s 6d, and finally 150 books of 'survey of the worlde', valued at 9 shillings.⁸² As seen by the prices of these books, buying a copy of a travel narrative during this period would not have been cheap. A single copy of Monardes' *Ioyfull Newes* would have cost 1s 1d, and that was for an unbound version. This sort of cost was prohibitive to the majority of England's population at this period, but would have allowed for purchase by the better-educated who, after all, would have been the people able to read these texts.

Literacy and the spread of knowledge in the early modern period are subjects too wide to be tackled here, but by the mid-1580s information about the English in America was being distributed and printed in formats that would not necessarily exclude the poorer people. Smaller books and pamphlets were carried to markets and fairs by itinerant pedlars who would buy their books in London or from packhorse carriers on the road, and would bring news of overseas travel to the lower status people who would have neither the money nor the inclination to buy larger volumes. Large towns often had bookshops of their own, sometimes selling just religious and devotional literature, but often stocking other titles, both ancient and contemporary. Occasionally an inventory on the death of a provincial bookseller will reveal individual book titles. For example, when John Denys of Cambridge died in 1578, his

⁸² M. Eccles, 'Bynneman's Books', *The Library*, vol. XII, 5th series, (1987), pp. 82-87.

shop contained four accounts of Martin Frobisher's voyages, valued at 1d each.⁸³

Roger Ward's shop in Shrewsbury, inventoried at his death in 1585, contained 'one book on the West Indias' and 'one booke in praise of Furbisher', among others.⁸⁴

The price of books during this period remained fairly constant, though illustrated works could be very expensive. The price of a book depended on its length, the printing format (folio, quarto or octavo) and whether it was bound or unbound. Large works such as Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages* cost nine shillings unbound, putting them far out of the price range of all but the wealthier people.⁸⁵ However, far more reasonable was a 1583 edition of *Mandeville's Travels* costing only 6d. Nicolas Monardes' *Joyfull Newes*, and Raleigh's *Discovery of Guiana* both cost one shilling each unbound.⁸⁶ Advertising did not have much influence during this period, though promotions of other books were beginning to form part of the content of almanacs, and occasionally in the introduction, the author directed the reader to similar books in which he might be interested. For example, on the title page of *The Arte of Navigation*, by Martin Cortes, translated by Richard Eden, appeared the following note: 'Whereunto may be added at the wyl of the byer another fruitfull and necessary booke of navigation translated out of Latine by the sayde Eden'.⁸⁷

Conclusion

In conclusion then, what was England's situation in relation to America at the end of Elizabeth's reign? The Roanoke colony had been lost, with seemingly no hope of

⁸³ T. Watt, 'Piety in the Pedlar's Pack' in M. Spufford, ed., *The World of Rural Dissenters* (Cambridge, 1996) p. 258.

⁸⁴ A. Rodger, 'Roger Ward's Shrewsbury Stock', *The Library*, vol. 13, 5th series, (1958) p. 251, 258.

⁸⁵ F. Johnson, 'Notes on English Retail Book Prices', *The Library*, vol. 5, 5th series, (1950-1) p. 92.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-109.

⁸⁷ E. Bosanquet, 'English Seventeenth-century Almanacks', *The Library*, vol. 10, 4th series, (1929-30) p. 375.

finding anyone alive. Walter Raleigh had turned his attention to the jungles of Guiana, but some of the other enthusiasts were still working in favour of a North American settlement, among them Richard Hakluyt, who was part of the coalition of West-country merchants and gentry that in the early years of the reign of James I became the Plymouth Company. English literature on exploration to America had decreased in volume because of the war with Spain, but there was still a great deal of interest in the travel narratives, several of which were reprinted in the 1590s. The networks of distribution were still working at the end of the reign enabling more and more people to have access to information about the New World. While the active participants in the American enterprise were elite members of the educated classes, the scene was set for ordinary men and women to be welcomed into the enterprises; and finally the successful establishment of a colony at Jamestown in 1607 gave the opportunity for people of all social backgrounds to emigrate to America, and establish new correspondence networks by which information about the colonies would be transferred to and from the mother-country.

CHAPTER THREE.

‘PRINTING AND ADVENTURING’:

THE CONVERGENCE OF LITERATURE AND DISCOVERY 1607-1660.

In 1651, in a typical seventeenth century title page, wordy and convoluted, George Gardyner acknowledged that his tract *A Description of the New World* had been written from the comfort of his Peckham home. Nonetheless, Gardyner managed to convey all the motives an Englishman might have for promoting exploration and settlement in the New World during the first half of the century, and coincidentally, the *modus operandi* of this thesis. His subtitle stated that he would discuss:

By what people those regions are now inhabited. And what places are there desolate and without inhabitants. And the Bays, Rivers, Capes, Forts, Cities and their latitudes, the seas on the coasts: the Trade, winds, North-West passage and the commerce of the English nation, as they were all in the year 1649.⁸⁸

Gardyner’s book, an attempt to boost interest in America at a time when events in England were distracting most people from opportunities abroad, is a clear example of the tendency of English authors to combine two themes in their writing on America: that of ‘place’, the landscape, climate, flora and fauna and so on, and of ‘potential’, expansion of commerce and empire- the hope that England would one day be as great, as Gardyner put it, as the ‘Roman, Grecian, Assyrian or Persian

⁸⁸ G. Gardyner, *A Description of the New World, or America, Islands and Continent* (London, 1651), title page.

nations'.⁸⁹ Gardyner took up the themes explored in the prologue of the ambitions of the English empire as voiced by editors such as Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas and re-framed them decades later for a nation in turmoil and anguish and civil war. But since the start of the century many authors had published descriptions of the American landscape, or written private letters to eager relatives who then spread the news by oral, manuscript and printed communication. Gardyner, unlike some of these authors, was making no attempt to describe America as it *really* was but was using the discourse of discovery and settlement to inspire unquiet Englishmen who might seek promotion for themselves and their nation in those difficult times.⁹⁰

This chapter will examine the role of the authors of travel journals, promotional broadsides and pamphlets, histories, letters, diaries and so on, and ask what was the significance of their act of writing, of the stories they told and of their intended readership, and methods of distribution. It will also analyse the role of printers, publishers and patrons. It is important to outline the authors' declared motives for undertaking their enterprise, be it a single letter or a multi-volume work. The reason most often declared for wanting to inform readers about America was that it would benefit the country, the king, his government and his people- as Thomas Morton said, "for the glory of God, honor of his Majesty and the good of the weale publike".⁹¹ Two Elizabethan commentators on empire, John Dee and Richard Hakluyt, whose arguments for England developing as a colonial power were explored in the prologue, still influenced many authors. Authors in the seventeenth century also claimed that increasing the population and wealth of England's settlements in America would benefit England by making her stronger in relation to other European

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. A3

⁹⁰ Recently Alison Games had written that migration created the English empire after 1630. While this is true, I believe that literature created the possibility of empire much earlier than that. A. Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA., 1999), p. 4.

⁹¹ T. Morton, *New English Canaan*, (London, 1632), p. 3.

powers, as well as providing her with raw materials and other staple crops from America's commodities, and would allow some of her surplus population to be removed and put to work for their own and the nation's good. John Hagthorpe, for example, was especially keen to encourage interest in the colonies in 1625 so that England might be victors in the battle for the seas: 'glory and sovereignty at sea hath this day three competitors, the English, Dutch and Spanish nations', and England would increase her power by 'sending forth new colonies into new countries'.⁹² Some writers wanted to encourage investment, others migration, others wanted the public to maintain its faith in difficult early times.⁹³ Another agenda for some writers was to encourage or discourage the development of a particular trade or crop, such as tobacco or silk. For example, James' well known tract *A Counterblaste to Tobacco*, published in 1604, encouraged authors writing throughout the period to follow his lead and suggest that silk become the staple crop of Virginia.⁹⁴

Notably from the 1640s onwards, many authors tried to persuade readers to move to America, particularly New England, to convert the Native Americans, while others urged that people should not be afraid and that rumours of aggressive savages were unfounded.⁹⁵ Others wanted to promote a certain region of North America, often at the expense of another.⁹⁶ Some merely wanted to reassure loved ones and friends,

⁹² J. Hagthorpe, *Englands Exchequer* (London 1625), pp. 7, 14.

⁹³ Anon, *Proportion of Provisions Needfull for such as Intend to Plant Themselves in New England* (London, 1630) was one tract written to encourage migration; W. Alexander, *An Encouragement to the Colonies* (London, 1624) also wrote to encourage investment. W. Crashaw, *A Sermon Preached in London before the Right Honorable the Lord Lawarre...Feb 21 1609* (London, 1610) was one of the many sermons published by the Virginia Company in order to convince Englishmen that the colony had potential despite early difficulties.

⁹⁴ James I, *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604); E. Williams, *Virginia's Discovery of Silke-wormes with their Benefit* (London, 1650) shows that interest in silk was still maintained by English authors despite tobacco being established as a hugely profitable staple in Virginia.

⁹⁵ W. Castell, *A Petition ...for the Propagating of the Gospel in America* (London, 1641) is an example of the new literature during the civil war period that attempted to divert attention to New England, where many were afraid they would be financially abandoned.

⁹⁶ A classic example of this is John Smith's *A Description of New England* (London, 1616) in P. Force, ed., *Tracts*, vol. 2 (Washington, 1838) in which he expresses his disillusionment with Virginia and her settlers and his hopes for the as yet unsettled region of New England.

or a wider audience, that they were safe, perhaps asking for financial assistance or help in resolving their affairs, or explaining that the colony was doing well, or that fears for their danger were unfounded.⁹⁷ Later in the period, some authors wrote to justify their involvement in the development of a colony, or to criticise the leaders for a perceived injustice.⁹⁸ Others wrote, knowing the success of Virginia and New England, trying to encourage migration and investment in their own smaller settlements.⁹⁹ Some tracts reported on the political state of the colonies, with the intention of encouraging either Parliamentary or Royalist sentiment among the settlers. Samuel Maverick's report of 1660, presented to Edward Hyde, argued in favour of depriving New Englanders of self-government because of their Puritan history.¹⁰⁰ Some authors simply wrote to record the origins and early history of the colony for posterity, though often these histories masked an ulterior motive; for example, Arthur Wodenoth wrote his history of the colony of Virginia to defend the actions of his patron John Danvers.¹⁰¹ All of these authors, in the words of John Donne, were attempting to 'make absent and remote things present to your [the reader's] understanding'.¹⁰² Though the reasons behind an author's putting pen to paper could be rich and varied, the results that remain today may be examined as a single body of literature, unified by the authors' motive of 'spreading the word' about North America.

⁹⁷ J. Winthrop, *Life and Letters of John Winthrop 1630-49*, ed. Robert C. Winthrop (Boston, 1869); H. Spelman, 'Relation of Virginia', in E. Arber, ed., *The Travels and Works of Captain John Smith* (Edinburgh, 1910). These are two very different examples of authors who used the medium of the letter to communicate with relatives in England, Winthrop reassuring and Spelman asking for assistance.

⁹⁸ For example, L. Gatford, *Publick Good without Private Interests* (London, 1657) and J. Clark, *Ill Newes from New England or a Narative of New Englands Persecution* (London, 1652) criticised the leadership of Virginia and New England respectively for errors in governance.

⁹⁹ E. Plowden, *A Description of the Province of New Albion* (London, 1648); E. Bland, *The Discovery of New Brittainne* (London, 1651, facsimile edition, 1966).

¹⁰⁰ S. Maverick, 'A Brief Description of New England', preface by J.W. Dean (Boston, 1885), p. 4.

¹⁰¹ A. Wodenoth, *A Short Collection of the Most Remarkable Passages from the Originall to the Dissolution of the Virginia Company* (London, 1651).

¹⁰² Donne, quoted by A. Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 116

II.

The Impulse to Write

During the seventeenth century, the majority of those who took part in the creation and manufacture of manuscripts and books were part of an elite.¹⁰³ Most of those men (and occasionally women) who wrote letters, diaries or works for publication did not need a scribe to copy down their words because their level of education enabled them to write themselves.¹⁰⁴ Apart from Richard Frethorne, a rare literate indentured servant from Virginia who wrote letters to his family in England, most authors were educated to grammar school level and a significant proportion of them attended university. These scholars then joined their literate peers in positions of authority.¹⁰⁵ As the century wore on, literacy became increasingly important for those involved in travel and commerce and the literate elite cemented their place within society, a distinction that went beyond previous status assumptions to do with one's birth.

Authors educated in England wrote most of the literature in this period while those settlers who were educated at the schools and college of Massachusetts studied a curriculum based on that of the Puritan Cambridge colleges at which the elite of Boston and the surrounding area had been educated.¹⁰⁶ The Renaissance humanist education emphasised two roles that an honourable man should undertake: learning

¹⁰³ As Stephen Adams has said in *The Best and Worst Country in the World* (Charlottesville, 2001), p. 8: we can glean no evidence from 'Virginians without writing' as to their understanding of the landscape.

¹⁰⁴ The only woman author that I survey is Anne Bradstreet, a Massachusetts poet active writing in the 1650s onwards. Women were often recipients of letters, for example Margaret Winthrop, or the Countess of Lincoln, but few letters written by them concerning America have survived.

¹⁰⁵ D. Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order* (Cambridge, 1980), p 168; K. Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians* (London, 1980), p 24. Captain John Smith was an interesting case; he came from a Lincolnshire yeoman family and he only attended grammar school intermittently when he could be released from working on the family farm. See L. Paine, *Captain John Smith and the Jamestown Story* (London, 1973), p. 14.

¹⁰⁶ For more information on grammar schools and Harvard College see, J. Axtell, *A School Upon a Hill* (New Haven, CT., 1974).

through reading, especially the classical authors, and learning through doing. Using these he must aim to do good for his government and his person. Both aspects were especially pertinent in regard to the exploration and settlement of the Americas. The action of travel in order to benefit one's country and one's purse, and for the gathering of knowledge with the assistance of geographical and navigational reading, seemed an ideal combination to the Renaissance gentleman.¹⁰⁷ Francis Bacon summarised this theory when he described travel as 'an intellectual act'.¹⁰⁸ Giving an account of one's action through eye-witness testimony was important for early modern travellers who were part of both a humanist culture of proving one's honour and virtue, and the Christian culture of contemplation and self-examination. The writing of letters was also a valued pastime and an important way of exchanging news during this period, forerunners to the belles-lettres of the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁹ Also part of an early modern man's intellectual 'tool kit' was the anthropocentric assumption that man was at the centre of nature, that everything had been put on earth for his use. Every writer would also interpret the settling of new lands in a eurocentric manner, believing that civilised Europeans had the right to colonise North America.¹¹⁰

Although it has long been acknowledged by social historians that a difference in the levels of literacy in Virginia and New England greatly affected their literary culture, parallels can also be drawn because of the shared educational heritage of the elite of both colonies, and of the authors of the literature examined in this thesis. The idea that Virginia was an uncultured wasteland while New England was a religious

¹⁰⁷ The significance of reading the body of literature produced by earlier settlers in the New World must be acknowledged here, many of these works were cultural landmarks. Unfortunately there is not time in this thesis to explore that topic. For more information see J. Carillo, 'The Representation of the Natural World in the Early Chronicles of America: the *Historia General y Natural de las Indias* by Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo' (PhD thesis, Cambridge, 1997).

¹⁰⁸ Bacon, quoted by W. Franklin, *Discoverers, Explorers and Settlers* (Chicago, IL., 1979), p. 9.

¹⁰⁹ For more on this in relation to the Puritan migrants to New England, see P.H. Round, *By Nature and By Custom Cursed* (Hanover, NH., 1999), p. 20.

¹¹⁰ Adams, *The Best and Worst Country in the World*, p. 117.

and scholarly haven has now been dismissed. Authors who visited and settled in Virginia had just as much literary success when their books were published as their counterparts in New England, and they also wrote religious jeremiads and works of scholarly renown, for example George Sandys' translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was completed in Virginia, and was influenced by descriptions he had read of that region, as well as his own impressions.¹¹¹ John Brinsley made a direct link between colonisation and education in his 1622 book explaining the importance of a solid grammar school education. He dedicated the tract to the Company for Virginia and the Summer Islands and not only instructed them to educate and convert the natives to Christianity but also stressed the importance of caring for the souls of the English settlers there.¹¹² It is valid to argue that the majority of Virginia's migrant servants were illiterate and uneducated beyond the age of eight or nine, while a far higher proportion of the settlers in Massachusetts and Plymouth had attended grammar school, but the literary elite in both places shared a common educational background which will be shown to have influenced their understanding and portrayal of North America.

Writers as readers

Not only did literacy grant access to a range of information presented in written form, it enabled readers to record their comments about works they had read and construct their own texts in reply. It is this circular understanding of communication in the early modern period that will be the theoretical basis for the thesis. The authors who wrote to their close friends or a wider literate and semi-literate audience were not only writers but also readers themselves. Those who had visited or settled in America did

¹¹¹ L.B. Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies 1607-1763* (London, 1957), p. 130.

¹¹² J. Brindley, *A Consolation for Our Grammar Schools* (London, 1622), sig. A3.

not draw only on the sights they had seen for themselves but also adapted and plagiarised descriptions from other authors' texts. In many cases this may have been a sub-conscious 'borrowing' of a familiar way of analysing or listing commodities, or a coincidental adopting of similar language to describe, for example, a providential journey across the Atlantic. But in many cases, two texts are so similar that the earlier must have influenced the later. To give just two examples: William Strachey, the secretary of the Virginia Company, was employed by them to write a *Historie of Travaill into Virginia Britannia* in around 1610. He borrowed titles, information or organisational methods from at least seven other authors of either printed or manuscript histories of early Virginia. The anonymous *A Relation of Maryland* (1635) contains nearly identical descriptions of the American landscape to those found in John Smith's *A Description of Virginia* (1612). Many authors acknowledged others who had influenced their writing, with Richard Hakluyt's, Samuel Purchas' and John Smith's texts being the most often cited. William Bullock admitted in 1649 that he had never been to Virginia but that it was not unheard of to write a history gathered from other collections; he hoped to 'take off that odium' that had come to surround the Virginian adventure.¹¹³ However, Edward Plowden in his 1650 promotional tract, *A Description of the Province of New Albion*, not only referred to the three aforementioned authors' works in his section on the history of travel to the New World, but also listed several other works that had influenced him in writing his description of New Albion itself, an area to the North of the English settlement of Virginia. Plowden drew on manuscript journals and reports from Capt. Brown and Mr. Stafford his mate, Capt. Claiborne, Constantine his Indian, and Mr. Robert Evelin, and his work was also influenced by printed works by 'Captain Smith, and

¹¹³ W. Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined* (London, 1649).

other books of Virginia, and by New Englands Prospect, New Canaan, Capt Powells map and other descriptions of New England and Virginia'.¹¹⁴

Few authors were as self-less as Edward Winslow, an early migrant to Plymouth plantation, who in 1624 concluded his report on the providential survival of the colony, *Good News from New England*, by recommending other authors' work to interested readers in England. In doing so, he must have considered he was promoting interest and ultimately settlement in his beloved Plymouth and also coincidentally helping the printer of his tract - John Bellamie happened to have printed the other works recommended by Winslow!¹¹⁵ Authors often felt compelled to reply to earlier works that they considered to be spreading falsehoods. In Winslow's case he portrayed the problem as an oral one, he refers to 'disorderly voices' (my italics) who were a 'staine to old England' and how friends had persuaded him to publish his report to counteract this false information. John Smith, in the 'Description of Virginia' printed in Purchas' collection of travel narratives described the problem as comparable to 'the locusts to the Egyptians', and attributed it to disgruntled, failing settlers returning home to tell lies about Virginia to all who would listen.¹¹⁶ Other authors attributed the spread of lies to printed material itself. Richard Eburne, an English minister who never travelled across the Atlantic, feared that other authors' treatment of the settlement of plantations had been unnecessarily negative and had failed 'to show the benefit and the good, the lawfulness and the ancient and frequent use, the facility and the necessity' of England's having colonies.¹¹⁷ After the disastrous massacre of 1622, which resulted in the colony being taken into royal hands and the subsequent dissolution of the Virginia Company, John Harvey,

¹¹⁴ E. Plowden, *A Description of New Albion* (London, 1650), p 11.

¹¹⁵ E. Winslow, *Good News from New England* (London, 1624), p. 59 (postscript).

¹¹⁶ Winslow, *Good News from New England*, epistle to the reader, sig. A1; S. Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XVIII, (Glasgow, 1951), p. 458.

¹¹⁷ R. Eburne, *A Plain Pathway to Plantations* (1624) ed. Louis B. Wright (New York, 1962), p. 7.

commissioner to the Privy Council, warned his employers not to allow the publication of texts that over-praised Virginia and boasted of her material wealth. He feared that settlers would then rush to Virginia without first considering what commodities and supplies they would require, and on arriving in America would have to be supported by an already weakened colony.¹¹⁸

Authors did not only use the rhetorical device of belittling their fellow commentators to prove that their version of events was the most honest and that their book or manuscript should be held in most esteem. As mentioned earlier, Edward Plowden justified his suitability for the task by acknowledging several sources of information derived from well-known visitors and settlers in the New World. Richard Eburne admitted that he had never been to America, but claimed that a passion for the well-being of his country had motivated him to write his book.¹¹⁹ Thomas Lechford, who wrote his book to clear his name after John Winthrop accused him of religious errors in Massachusetts, used examples of letters between him and his friends in England in the body of his text to confirm his arguments.¹²⁰ John Smith, whose optimistic works on his experiences in Virginia and New England were among the most popular in England, felt little need to prove his capacity to undertake the task of educating Englishmen about America. In *New Englands Trials* (1622), he referred readers at the start of the text to his earlier extensive *Description of New England* (1616) for a more detailed description of the landscape and geography of the coastline and interior of that region.¹²¹ Then, in the conclusion, he reiterated his pedigree for

¹¹⁸ 'A Brief Declaration of the State of Virginia at my comminge from thence in February 1624', *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, vol. 9, series 4, 1871, pp. 60-73.

¹¹⁹ Eburne, *A Plaine Pathway*, p. 4

¹²⁰ T. Lechford, *Plain Dealing, or Newes from New England* (London, 1642), p. 71.

¹²¹ J. Smith, *New Englands Trials* (London, 1622), p. 7.

any readers still left in doubt: 'If any desire to be further satisfied, they may read my Description of Virginia and New England and peruse them with several maps'.¹²²

All the authors whose motives and justifications have been examined here perceived themselves as Englishmen writing for the good of the country, the colony and only lastly themselves. Whether they lived in America for many years, or had never seen the country at all, they told the stories of its emergence into the English consciousness using similar language and literary tropes. The ways in which they framed their stories will be examined in section III below. First, it is important to explore and emphasise the 'English-ness' of these authors, and not only in a socio-cultural way, though undoubtedly an argument can be made for their literature being part of the tradition of English travel literature that would continue for centuries afterwards. It is the authors' self-perception as Englishmen, writing for the good of their countrymen and the commonwealth itself, that I believe contradicts Samuel Eliot Morison's argument that only the non-Puritan writing about North America may be considered to belong to an English tradition.¹²³ Even the disgruntled settlers in Massachusetts and Plymouth considered themselves Englishmen in exile, who understood their reliance on the mother country in terms of financial support and familial connections, and who showed no desire to cut those ties, even during periods of turmoil, for example the English Civil War, when many of the residents of the New England settlements returned home to fight for the Parliamentary cause. As David Cressy has said, John Winthrop was a Suffolk Puritan as well as the governor of Massachusetts.¹²⁴ Those authors Morison considered to be the founding fathers of Puritan New England are characterised as peculiarly American and at the beginning of

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 23

¹²³ S.E. Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* (New York, 1956), p. 3.

¹²⁴ D. Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication Between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987), p 241.

the tradition of literature of that country. Richard Dunn confirmed this position by claiming that the narratives of American residents such as John Smith, William Bradford, John Winthrop and Edward Johnson were far superior to those produced by authors who never left England's shores.¹²⁵ Not only does this argument appear to be ahistorical, in that authors and readers in the seventeenth century mentioned the differences in authorial experience but did not seem to prefer one or the other, but it is also problematic in that John Smith can hardly be said to be 'resident' in America (as Dunn in fact acknowledges), nor interested only in travel to that part of the world. He also wrote about his many other voyages to foreign climes nearer to England. It seems that the most productive way of defining these authors in the pre-1660 period is as Englishmen.

III.

How America was 'revealed'

Whether an author had visited America or not, the literary purpose and result behind his work was to create an identity, either a personal identity for an individual or group of settlers, or a geographical identity for the colony itself. This section will describe the genres used and the stories told to create an identity for the settlers and for the place itself and the different methods used by the second generation of authors to narrate their stories from 1650 or so onwards.

Perry Miller claims that some of the literature regarding both Virginia and New England used the structure of medieval pilgrimage tales. Contemporaries and

¹²⁵ R.S. Dunn, 'The English Historians of America', in J.M. Smith, ed., *Seventeenth Century America: Essays in Colonial History*, (Chapel Hill, NC., 1959), p 199.

modern historians use the term ‘pilgrimage’ very loosely to describe a spiritual journey, undertaken to establish religious purity or to convert the heathen. Both William Bradford describing Plymouth and John Winthrop describing Boston represented their migrations as forced exiles into the wilderness, with the sea journey understood in providential and cleansing terms. The only difference between the two is that Bradford’s migration was, in Miller’s words, a ‘forlorn retreat’, meaning that it was a second reluctant exile from Holland, whereas Winthrop and his followers left England of their own accord to build the ‘City on the Hill’.¹²⁶ However, Miller also points out that Virginians too portrayed themselves in spiritual terms. Their mission, they said, was to convert the natives, a mission taken very seriously by the first ministers in Virginia, and a few of the settlers. During the ‘starving time’ of 1607-9, the Jamestown garrison dragged themselves to church every Sunday to petition God for some respite, and later Virginia’s soldier-governors like Thomas Gates and Thomas Dale led their men to morning and evening prayer.¹²⁷ Miller claims that these values show that contemporaries understood the Virginia enterprise in the years before tobacco cultivation as a sort of medieval pilgrimage.

In defining much of the literature about America from this period as ‘promotional’ material, historians have failed to acknowledge the complexities in method and purpose behind many of these texts. As Captain John Mason wrote in 1620 regarding the colonial adventure to Newfoundland, some authors were ‘too much extolling it, some too much debasing it’.¹²⁸ However, there were several works that did declare themselves to be purely laudatory, designed to praise the enterprise of colonisation itself and to make heroes of the actors in that drama. One such author

¹²⁶ P. Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness*, (Cambridge, MA., 1964), p. 4.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-7

¹²⁸ J. Mason, *A Briefe Discourse of the New Found Land* (Edinburgh, 1620), ed. C.W. Tuttle & J.W. Dean (Boston, MA., 1887), p. 144.

was Richard Rich, a member of an early voyage to Virginia during which one vessel was shipwrecked in Bermuda. He wrote his poem *The Lost Flocke Triumphant* at Jamestown in 1610, on the arrival of the ship feared lost.¹²⁹ He claimed in his preface, written in London just before publication of his poem, to be using verse as he did not have time to write a long prose account before he departed for Virginia again, and so recorded his experiences in twenty-two stanzas of eight lines each. Rich emphasised not only the worthiness of the Virginia enterprise, but the courage and discipline of Sir Thomas Gates, whom he portrayed sailing from Bermuda just in time to save a colony in a desperate and hungry state. A second poem by Christopher Brooke was written with the aim of creating heroes of Virginia's leaders, this time on the occasion of the massacre of 1622 in which natives killed over three hundred colonists. The author acknowledged that the story of the massacre had already been published but that he wanted to put a more 'tragicall slant' on it, and felt that verse was the best way to express that sentiment.¹³⁰ He selected several of the colony's key figures who died in the massacre and eulogised them, but made the point that they might have died in vain, for want of money to build a more secure settlement.

But live in fame, let time record your zeale
In propagation of Virginias weale
Yet with this blurre: your lives may still have flourisht
But for security in which yee perisht.¹³¹

¹²⁹ R. Rich, *The Lost Flocke Triumphant*, (London, 1610).

¹³⁰ C. Brooke, *A Poem on the Late Massacre in Virginia, with particular mention of those men of note that suffered in the disaster...* (London, 1622), sig. A2.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, sig. B3.

Brooke praised Capt. Thorpe, who died in the massacre but had tried to convert the natives, George Sandys, who he said had conjured up life from ‘a rude heap of things’, and Thomas Dale, ‘father to Virginia’s infancy’.¹³² This theme of hardship in the face of adversity was taken up by many authors attempting to glorify the deeds of the settlers in England’s North American colonies. In the conclusion to his multi-volume collection of travel narratives, Samuel Purchas described the hardships of Virginia after the massacre and how it affected her ‘distracted children and fathers’.¹³³ But he was careful to emphasise that these hardships had not been caused by any defect in Virginia or the settlers themselves, saying that it remained ‘one of the goodliest parts of the earth’, and that King Charles wanted to establish a permanent military garrison there, showing his faith in the enterprise. This conflict between wishing to glorify the heroic sufferings of the settlers and still maintaining that America was a land of opportunity was one that many authors had to confront, especially in the colonies’ early years. The Virginia Company dealt with this difficulty by publishing a promotional pamphlet in 1610 acknowledging that some of the rumours about disorder and food shortages at Jamestown were true, and that these problems were caused by the delay in Thomas Gates’ arrival in the colony; once he reached Virginia, all her problems would be solved.¹³⁴ In a letter to his former parish of Terling in Essex about the Atlantic crossing, Master Wells wrote to his parishioners that ‘in spite of Divells and storms’ many of those on board were very well, and some had even been cured of ailments on the journey. He, like many other voyagers to New England, ascribed to God the providence of keeping the migrants safe and well in the face of great difficulties, showing that faith was the best tool in overcoming the

¹³² *Ibid.*, sig. C.

¹³³ ‘The Conclusion of the Worke with some later advertisements touching his Majesties care for Virginia’, in S. Purchas, *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XX (Glasgow, 1951), p. 132.

¹³⁴ Virginia Company, *A True and Sincere Declaration of the Purposes and Ends of the Plantation begun in Virginia...* (London, 1610), pp. 10-12.

dangers of their new life and allowing them to fulfil the potential of the New World. Aware that his slant on the crossing might seem far-fetched to English readers who had heard terrible stories from other sources, Wells remarked, 'we say to our friends that doubt this come and see and taste'.¹³⁵

Inter-settlement rivalries

Readers in England trying to assimilate the plethora of information would have had considerable difficulty in imagining the physical realities of life in North America. Few printed works were illustrated, partly because of the cost of producing complex engravings, and only the larger works such as Hakluyt, Purchas and Smith came with their own map with which a reader could identify places mentioned and follow the action as it unfolded. However, many authors created an identity for the colony about which they were writing by comparing it and contrasting it with England and places in Europe. These comparisons will be explored in subsequent chapters, as they occur thematically. However, the authors' method of describing the North American colonies in relation to one another is important here because not only was it a technique used to persuade readers, but it also meant that readers absorbed the portrayed identity into their own perceptions, with the result that only in the last few decades have historians started to challenge some of these assumptions. J.F. Fausz has claimed that much of the rivalry between the colonies of Virginia and Massachusetts was caused by their similarities, that is their desire to enter the same economic worlds, rather than their differences.¹³⁶ Thomas Morton claimed that New England was superior in all ways to Virginia, 'for the temperature of the ciment [sic], sweetnesse of

¹³⁵ 'Master Wells to his congregation', in N. Wallington's Letterbook, British Library, Sloane MS 922, fos. 90-91.

¹³⁶ J.F. Fausz, 'Merging and Emerging Worlds', in L.G. Carr, P.D. Morgan & J.B. Russo, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1988), p. 66

the aire, fertility of the soile and small number of the salvadges'.¹³⁷ The anonymous author of 'A Perfect Description of Virginia', in 1649, claimed the opposite: that New England was developing successfully, but 'for matter of any great hopes but fishing there is not much in that land...there is much cold, frost and snow...it is a great pity all those people did not seat themselves at first to the south in Virginia'.¹³⁸ John Smith, who by the end of his prolific career had experience in both Virginia and New England, decided that he preferred the latter, even though it was not so well established, perhaps not surprisingly as he had been all but evicted from Virginia in 1609.¹³⁹ Another famous military author, John Mason, wrote that Newfoundland was preferable to Virginia because the sea crossing was only half as long, and Newfoundland had been central to 'the great intercourse of trade by our nation these threescore years and upwards.'¹⁴⁰ Unusually, John Hagthorpe wrote a tract in 1625 to encourage migration and investment in Virginia, New England and Newfoundland, comparing and contrasting the economic opportunities in each.¹⁴¹ By the time Edward Plowden was writing in 1650 he was able to compare both Virginia and New England favourably to the newer settlement at New Albion: he said that 'for the politique and civill government and justice, Virginia and New England is our president'.¹⁴² In his 1656 tract *Leah and Rachel*, John Hammond also portrayed Virginia in a guiding role in relation to Maryland. He conceded Virginia's reputation as 'an unhealthy place and

¹³⁷ T. Morton, *New Englands Canaan, or New Canaan* (London, 1632), p. 16.

¹³⁸ *A Perfect Description of Virginia* (1649), *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, vol. 9, series 2, (1832), pp. 105-122.

¹³⁹ J. Smith, *Advertisements for the Unexperienced Planters of New England or Anywhere: or the Pathway to Experience to erect a Plantation* (London, 1631).

¹⁴⁰ Mason, *A Briefe Discourse of the New Found Land* (1620), p. 153.

¹⁴¹ J. Hagthorpe, *Englands Exchequer, or A Discourse of the Sea and Navigation with some things thereto coincident concerning Plantations* (London, 1625); Hagthorpe was not alone in hoping for a united colonial enterprise. Over sixty percent of members of the New England company who were also involved in other colonial companies were members of the Virginia Company as well; it is possible to overstate the rivalry between the two. See Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World*, p. 36.

¹⁴² E. Plowden, *A Description of the Province of New Albion*, p. 27.

a nest of whores', but said that that phase was now past. He referred to Virginia as the 'elder sister' of Maryland, inferring that the latter received guidance and support from the former and, given time, would develop the positive attributes of the original colony.¹⁴³

Changes in the 1650s

These last examples show that during the later years of the period, a change took place in the literature distributed in England about America. The nature of the English settlements in North America was changing and the literature was changing with it. A few settlers were beginning to explore the frontiers of their colony and consequently wrote about their experiences. Examples of this are John Winthrop Junior's travel diary and Edward Bland's tract on Southern Virginia (now North Carolina).¹⁴⁴ Many authors spent more time describing religious, political and judicial upheavals within the colonies rather than describing their impressions of the land and the native people themselves.¹⁴⁵ This is only to be expected, when the enthusiasm and novelty of first contact had run their course. Writers such as William Bradford who lived in America sometimes even lost their hope for the integrity of their settlement and foresaw only decline into degeneracy.¹⁴⁶ However, many authors were still visiting America for the first time during the fifties and were struck by its climate, flora and fauna in the same way as commentators nearly half a century earlier. For example, Henry Norwood's report of his horrendous journey and shipwreck on the coast north of the colony of

¹⁴³ J. Hammond, *Leah and Rachel or Two Fruitfull Sisters Virginia and Maryland: Their Present Condition, Impartially Stated and Related* (London, 1656), p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ W. Carlton, 'Overland to Connecticut in 1645: A Travel Diary of John Winthrop Jr.' in *New England Quarterly*, vol. XIII (1940); E. Bland, *The Discovery of New Britain* (London, 1651).

¹⁴⁵ Stephen Adams concurs with this assessment of the literature from the 1650s with regard to Virginia.

¹⁴⁶ *Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation 1606-46*, ed. W.T. Davis (New York, 1964), p. 363. Changes in the representation of English settlements will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

Virginia in 1650 belongs more properly with the exploration narratives of the late sixteenth century.¹⁴⁷ But those authors who had lived most of their lives in America wrote different stories; they felt more at home in that landscape, often they could remember very little or nothing of England, and this security gave them a confidence, a sense of power. As Oscar Handlin put it ‘They could deal with the forest and the savage as their parents could not’.¹⁴⁸ The prime example of this change in attitude is Anne Bradstreet who arrived in Massachusetts in 1630 on the *Arbella* married and just eighteen years old, and lived in Boston till her death in 1672.¹⁴⁹ Her representations of the American landscape will be dealt with in Chapter Three.

In conclusion, it is possible to identify so many stories told about America, by so many different authors, that each one could not possibly be summarised here, even for so short a period as 1607 to 1660. Every book and letter was an artefact recording not only America itself but also what America meant to that particular person. This seems to be the ultimate justification for putting the author at the centre of any survey of literature, as this chapter is aiming to do.¹⁵⁰

IV.

Public and Private, Scribe and Print

The texts often contain signals within them as to the intended audience. This could be signalled either by the genre chosen by the author to convey his message, or by a

¹⁴⁷ H. Norwood, ‘A Voyage to Virginia’ (1650), in P. Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*, vol. 3 (Washington, 1844).

¹⁴⁸ O. Handlin ‘The Significance of the Seventeenth Century’, in Smith, ed., *Seventeenth Century America*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁹ *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. J. Hensley (Cambridge, MA., 1967).

¹⁵⁰ M.P. Conzen, *The Making of the American Landscape* (London, 1990), p. 4.

direct appeal to a readership within the body of the text itself. The texts discussed can broadly be divided into two types, public and private literature. As previously discussed, 'public literature' refers to texts that were intended by the author for distribution among a literate and semi-literate audience and achieved this, during the period covered by this thesis, either through the printed or scribal medium.

Occasionally, the intention of the author was over-ruled by the actions of a printer-publisher or editor who released a text into the public domain that had been intended for a private audience. The main catalyst for this in the early seventeenth century was Samuel Purchas who, in his multi-volume collection, published many letters and diaries that had not originally been intended for public distribution. In the case of William Strachey, authorial intention was not achieved because he failed to get his manuscript 'The Historie of Virginia Britannia' published, even though he had three scribal copies distributed to potential patrons, but it was clearly written with a wider audience in mind and for this reason is included in the category of 'public'

literature.¹⁵¹ In contrast, 'private literature' refers to the sort of text written to or for a more limited audience. Usually it remained in manuscript form throughout this period and was only disseminated later by antiquarians and historians, often from the nineteenth century onwards. Examples include letters such as those between the Winthrops in Suffolk and Massachusetts, and diaries and journals such as William Bradford's history of Plymouth that remained in manuscript form, in the hands of his family, until the eighteenth century.

It is clear from the distinctions drawn above that the choice of the author, patron or publisher to use scribal or printed media is significant and complex. During the first half of the seventeenth century, print culture was undergoing a radical

¹⁵¹ W. Strachey, 'A Historie of Virginia Britannia', ed. L.B. Wright (Hakluyt Soc., 1951), p. xiii.

development. Printed material was becoming available to more people, of the lower social orders as well as the elite, not only because of growing literacy but also because of more comprehensive distribution and a greater public demand for cheap, popular print.¹⁵² News about America appeared in both small books and pamphlets, affordable to all readers, and also large volumes whose price restricted their sale to all but the most dedicated collector.¹⁵³ John Donne recognised the importance of print in his 1622 sermon to the Virginia Company, printed and sold in London only weeks after its delivery. In his introductory letter, Donne declared, ‘now I am an adventurer, if not to Virginia, yet for Virginia, for every man that prints, Adventures’.¹⁵⁴ As Donne’s rhetoric shows, he felt that the job of recruiting new supporters was as important as that of maintaining the colony itself, and that promotion through the medium of print was an integral part of that.

However, this did not bring about the immediate decline of what Harold Love has called ‘scribal publication’. He claims that texts of great political and intellectual weight were often disseminated in manuscript form during most of the seventeenth century.¹⁵⁵ Two examples he gives are the distribution of poetry and of newssheets, which were sometimes produced in batches of two hundred copies at a time. There were communities of scribal readers across the country; many members of the gentry and aristocracy collected contemporary manuscripts for their libraries just as they would collect printed works. Both could be bought alongside each other in London in the churchyard of St. Paul’s Cathedral. Having said that, most of the authors and

¹⁵² For a general discussion of the changes in the distribution and consumption of printed material at the lower ends of the social scale see T. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991).

¹⁵³ For more on this, see my paper on ‘The Bookseller and the Peddler: The Spread of Knowledge of the New World in Early Modern England’, presented to the 25th British Book Trade Seminar, Exeter, July 2002. Publication forthcoming.

¹⁵⁴ J. Donne, *A Sermon Upon the VIII verse of the I Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles* (London, 1622), sig. A3.

¹⁵⁵ H. Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford, 1993), p. vi.

promoters of the American enterprise seem to have believed that the newly flourishing medium of print was the quickest and most profitable way to distribute news about the colonies. The majority of manuscript material that this thesis is concerned with cannot be said to have been ‘published’ at all, as it remained in the hands of an individual or family and no further copies were made for distribution to other readers.¹⁵⁶ The exceptions are the multitude of letters and reports sent to and produced for the English leadership of the Virginia Company, and then later the Privy Council. These reports remained in manuscript until they were published by historians in more recent times, but were distributed in the seventeenth century among members of the Company or the government and occasionally other interested parties. Whether the decision was taken not to print those reports and letters that cast an unfavourable light on the colony or its leadership, or whether scribal distribution was considered valid in its own right, will be explored in subsequent chapters.

Defining an audience

It is important to acknowledge that a single text was often intended to be read by a number of different audiences, as revealed very pertinently by many texts having multiple ‘epistle dedicatories’, which often represented a ‘ritualised tribute’ to a patron.¹⁵⁷ Many printed texts were intended both for a wide public readership and specific private reading by a patron. By studying the prevalence of epistles to the more generally defined reader, Kevin Sharpe has deduced that the power of the ordinary reader, as perceived by authors, was growing throughout the early modern

¹⁵⁶ Love states that a manuscript can be called ‘published’ if it has been disseminated and distributed. I am following his definition. Love, *Scribal Publication*, p. 36.

¹⁵⁷ M. Brennan, *Literary Patronage in the English Renaissance* (New York, 1988), p. 3.

period.¹⁵⁸ Sometimes more than one patron was mentioned, which Sharpe has argued placed each text and author within an established hierarchical framework.¹⁵⁹ Jurgen Habermas claimed that literary patronage during the seventeenth century was merely an exercise in self-aggrandisement through conspicuous consumption but this does not seem to be borne out by evidence of patronage of works on America.¹⁶⁰ John Deacon dedicated his work on the evils of tobacco, the new staple crop in Virginia, to James I, the highest authority in the land, and someone whom he knew to be sympathetic to his dislike of the “noxious weed”.¹⁶¹ Other authors dedicated their works to grandees like George Calvert, Baron Baltimore, the driving force behind the settlement of Maryland, or to the entire governing council of the Virginia Company because they knew that these men would take a serious interest in their texts and realised that their patronage would bring benefit to their own purse and person.¹⁶²

Authors often directed their work to a particular audience and acknowledged they were doing so in the body of the text. Edward Plowden, trying to promote the colony of New Albion in 1650, said that the settlement and its future prosperity would especially appeal to ‘gentlemen in debt’, who could ‘avoid bad company and tempting occasions’; these men could regain their fortunes in America while becoming natural leaders because of their high birth. The colony also needed a good supply of what he called the ‘soldier and gentleman’.¹⁶³ His direct appeal to migrants of a better class was reinforced by the rhetoric used in his introduction. He used Cato’s theory of

¹⁵⁸ K. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, CT., 2000), p. 53.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁶⁰ Habermas quoted in Love, *Scribal Publication*, p. 219. P. Voss has commented that by the end of the sixteenth century, literary patronage was in decline. P. Voss, ‘Books for Sale: Advertising and Patronage in Late Elizabethan England’, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, XXIX (1998), p. 733. This seems to be borne out in books on America in which many were not dedicated to an individual or a company at all, but addressed to a general ‘reader’. See Appendix One.

¹⁶¹ J. Deacon, *Tobacco Tortured, or the Filthie Fume of Tobacco Refined* (London, 1616).

¹⁶² See Appendix One for further information on the patrons and dedicatees of printed works on America.

¹⁶³ Plowden, *New Albion*, p. 31.

plantation to justify and support the establishment and development of the colony in America. Cato, as interpreted by Plowden, prescribed 'a healthy pure ayr' and 'a fresh navigable river' as the most significant factors in the search for a plantation site.¹⁶⁴ Only those readers who had received a grammar school or university education would have understood that reference, so it seems that Plowden (who calls himself Beauchamp Plantaganet to emphasise his own aristocratic heritage) intended his work to be read by educated gentlemen. He instructed each gentleman that it would cost him £10 5s to pay his passage and bring enough provisions to support himself for a year.¹⁶⁵

Alexander Whitaker, a minister who travelled to Virginia in the early years of the settlement, directed his 1613 tract towards rich gentlemen, urging them to help the natives in America and not to spend all their money on 'hawks, hounds and whores' in England. His perception of an elite audience was confirmed in a preface written by William Crashaw who said that Whitaker, had he known it was to be published, would have surely 'otherwise have adorned it for I know he is able to have written it in Latin or Greek'.¹⁶⁶ Authors writing about New England also had a tendency to use classical literary tropes in their work, reflecting their own level or education and perhaps also that of their intended audience. Francis Higginson, for example, structured his tract on the 1629 Atlantic crossing around the four classical elements: earth, fire, air and water.¹⁶⁷ The anonymous tract *A Relation of Maryland*, published in 1634, also called upon gentlemen and wealthy adventurers to invest money in the enterprise. They were encouraged under the 'head right system' chosen by Lord

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. A3.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁶⁶ A. Whitaker, *Good News from Virginia* (London, 1630, facsimile edition, New York, 1937), sig. A3, p. 28.

¹⁶⁷ R. Gildrie, 'Francis Higginson's New World Vision' *Essex Institute Historical Collections* vol. 106 (1970), pp. 183-4.

Baltimore to pay not only for their own passage and provisions, but that of several servants as well. The author goes on to outline the benefits to the gentlemen in land and profit of bringing over a labour force to work for them. Only the elite reader would have been able to consider paying for the passage of dependents, but the colony of Maryland was originally planned as a highly stratified society, based on the medieval manor.¹⁶⁸

Robert Johnson, in the second instalment of his two books on the establishment of Jamestown, directed his text to the governors of the colony. His epistle is dedicated to Sir Thomas Smith, and later in the text he warned the governor of his duty of care towards the ordinary colonist. He also outlined the benefits to those in England who did not adventure to Virginia but who took part in the lotteries in support of the colony. They would be offering employment to the multitudes, helping in the prevention of disease of the mind and body and helping the English to follow in the footsteps of their European rivals.¹⁶⁹ This indicates the diversity in the intended audience for Johnson's work. The fact that the book was also fairly small, only twenty pages, would have allowed readers of the gentry and yeoman classes to buy and read it, and then perhaps be inspired to take part in the lottery. Richard Eburne went further and dedicated his introductory epistle to "the courteous and Christian readers especially the common people of the realm".¹⁷⁰ He used scripture and not classical examples to support his argument that England needed to establish an empire for the good of the commonwealth and the people within it. In the second section of his tract, Eburne appealed directly to his patron Lord Baltimore, suggesting that the colonial enterprise be advertised in every church and market town, implying that it was vital to

¹⁶⁸ Anon, *A Relation of the successful beginnings of the Lord Baltimore's Plantation in Maryland*, (London, 1634), p. 13-14.

¹⁶⁹ R. Johnson, *A New Life of Virginia* (London, 1612), p. 12-16.

¹⁷⁰ R. Eburne, *Plaine Pathway to Plantations*, p. 6.

inform and include the poorer members of society who might also be interested in contributing to the settlement.¹⁷¹ Not only would this benefit the colony but also the idle poor, who might be put to work to improve their lot, and would no longer need to beg or be supported with poor relief. William Bullock, a minister writing about Virginia in 1649, had never visited the New World himself, but he listed the sorts of people who might benefit from reading his tract and then migrating to Virginia: the day labourer, the poor yeoman, the poor gentleman, the merchant, the man of money and the gentleman or elder brothers. Bullock is inferring from this list that almost anyone could learn something to his advantage from reading his work.¹⁷² Eburne and Bullock and their commentaries relating the colonial enterprise to the plight of the poor were part of the sixteenth and seventeenth century tradition of radical sermonising.¹⁷³ Louis Wright argues that ministers and their sermons were very significant in stimulating a public interest in overseas expansion, and two ministers, Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas, collected the most comprehensive editions of English travel narratives ever gathered.¹⁷⁴ The Virginia Company employed ministers from 1606 until it was dissolved in 1624 to deliver sermons to shareholders of the company at the departure of a voyage, or when news was received of the 1622 massacre. These sermons were then printed and widely distributed. Moreover, other ministers spoke about America from their pulpits to a congregation that would have included a cross-section of society. The Bishop of London even encouraged his

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁷² W. Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined and left to publick view to be considered by all judicious and honest men* (London, 1649), p. 44.

¹⁷³ For more information on ministers, their sermons and England's economic problems in general, see L. Ferrell & P. McCullough, eds., *The English Sermon Revised: Religion Literature and History 1600-1750* (Manchester, 2000).

¹⁷⁴ L.B. Wright, *Religion and Empire: The Alliance between Piety and Commerce in English Expansion 1558-1625* (New York, 1943), p. v.

congregation to buy and read the 1622 tract *Discourse on the Discoverie of Newfoundland* and encouraged all the ministers in his diocese to promote it as well.¹⁷⁵

Communities of people from every level of society had access to information about America when the Virginia Company published its broadsides. These were another form of printed literature that was received by a far wider audience than that credited by many historians. Broadsides were a means of carrying printed information to the provinces, as well as around the capital, often arriving in the pedlar's pack, or carried by a sailor or failed colonist, or an interested member of the local elite.¹⁷⁶ Broadsides seem to be the forerunner of poster advertising, and were nailed to church doors, street corners, trees on commons and other public places and encouraged public reading rather than private ownership of the printed word.¹⁷⁷ These Virginia Company broadsides advertised the forthcoming lotteries to be held to raise money for the colonial enterprise, along with details of prizes and the date of drawing, and also advertised for migrants for future voyages.¹⁷⁸ The cost of buying a passage was explained, together with the sorts of provisions needed, as well as the types of labourers and craftsmen most useful to the developing colony. These 'posters' were designed to be seen by as many people as possible, with no limits placed on the social status of the reader they attracted. It is important to acknowledge the merging of the literate and oral traditions, with the literate and semi-literate members of society reading aloud, or memorising and repeating later the contents of a broadside for the benefit of the non-literate members of their household and wider community. The

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹⁷⁶ Margaret Spufford has commented that as well as pamphlets and broadsides, chapmen would also have been selling tobacco by the 1620s: M. Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 120.

¹⁷⁷ For more information on the world of semi-literate rural readers see Spufford, *Small Books*, pp. 32-36.

¹⁷⁸ For example: *For the Plantation in Virginia or Nova Britannia* (London, 1609); *The Inconveniencies that have Happened to Some Persons which Have Transported themselves from England to Virginia* (London, 1622).

importance of oral communication was also indicated in John Winthrop's letters to his family and friends in England. He encouraged them to tell others about the success of the settlement in Massachusetts that he was communicating through his letters, and to persuade them to migrate and to bring provisions useful to the colonists.¹⁷⁹ These examples show that printed and manuscript literature could not only directly disseminate news about America to a reading audience but also trigger a further distribution of information via oral networks.

It has been assumed so far that all material discussed was intended for an English readership. This is because a letter or report was sent back across the Atlantic to a specific reader, or because an item was sent to London to be published (or more often an author wrote and published his work during a visit to England). Using London as a venue for publication was essential for Virginian visitors and settlers as a printing press was not established in that colony until the eighteenth century. The printing press in Boston was set up in 1639, and immediately began producing texts for the information and enjoyment of the colonists, such as books of laws and almanacs giving details of the climate and geography of New England and court sittings in Boston and other Massachusetts towns.¹⁸⁰ So, for Massachusetts residents, the decision to send work to London to be printed or distributed was a conscious decision to appeal to an English readership as opposed to a colonial one. Occasionally a book was a success on both sides of the Atlantic. Copies of John Smith's influential work *A Map of Virginia* (1612) were sent back to Virginia in 1623 to help the remaining settlers communicate with the hostile natives. In 1638 John Powell acknowledged that the same book had helped him in his relations with the Native

¹⁷⁹ John Winthrop to John Winthrop Jr. July 23 1630 and John Winthrop to Rev. John White July 4 1632, both printed in E. Emerson ed., *Letters from New England: Massachusetts Bay Colony 1629-38* (Amherst, MA., 1976), pp. 48, 99.

¹⁸⁰ One such almanac, probably the most famous, was produced in 1649 by Samuel Danforth.

Americans and as late as 1650 Henry Norwood was carrying a copy with him when he was shipwrecked between Virginia and Maryland.¹⁸¹

V.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the centrality of the authors writing about early America in constructing its identity among an English readership. It has indicated the importance of the authors' education and the importance of both classical and biblical references to the construction of empire. It has also shown that information was distributed to all levels in society in different ways. The author is both writer and reader, and the texts are sites of intellectual activity that both borrow from other sites, and offer new information for others to borrow. During the 1650s, influences and intentions changed, with some settlers becoming disillusioned and nostalgic about a golden past of the colony, while the new second generation of settlers were able to see America as home. The physical form chosen to present a text was very important in determining its audience and its reception. Only a few members of the recipient's family might have seen manuscript letters, but if that letter passed into the hands of an editor like Samuel Purchas, its readership became much broader. Clues as to the intended audience can be found within the text, most significantly in the epistles dedicatory, but also in the main body of the text. Authors used a different language and literary style to appeal to educated readers than they did to 'the common people', unfamiliar with Greek and Roman history.

¹⁸¹ J. Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: Cultural Origins of North America* (Oxford, 2001), p. 317.

The significance of literature for the early history of English settlement in North America emerges clearly from this discussion. The world of the intellectual elite of England influenced the understanding of visitors, settlers and commentators and this elite produced texts that enabled a range of interested readers to glean information about the English in America. This thesis will now go on to examine the information received by English readers on a number of themes concerning the physical realities of the American landscape and the types of settlements the English hoped to establish there.

CHAPTER FOUR

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE OF NORTH AMERICA

William Strachey in his 'Historie of Travell into Virginia Britannia' of 1612 wrote that 'on the East lyeth the great Ocean or mayne Atlantick Sea: on the South lyeth Florida: on the North Nova Francia: as for the West thereof the limits are unknowne'.¹⁸² Though the Spaniards had been active to the South in the Caribbean Islands and South America, and the French had explored the area to the North that would later become Canada, there was a vast area between the two that remained uncharted territory. The ancient idea of a world centred round the Mediterranean had been shattered by Spanish explorers in the late fifteenth century, who, at first, were unaware of which continent or island they had reached. Columbus based his geographical knowledge on the work of Strabo, written in 10 AD, showing the lasting influence of classical authors and the lack of new geographical knowledge in the intervening centuries.¹⁸³ Many people believed that an extremely popular work of fiction, *The Voyages of John Mandeville*, was a factual travel narrative and the land of Prester John a reality waiting to be discovered, and that this was the identity of the new continent.¹⁸⁴ Some thought the Americas might be Atlantis or Eden, or even Solomon's Ophir, for geography and navigation were disciplines connected not only

¹⁸² W. Strachey, 'Historie of Travell into Virginia Britania' (1612) ed. Louis B. Wright (Hakluyt Soc, 1951) p. 31.

¹⁸³ J. Hale, *The Civilisation of Europe in the Renaissance* (London, 1993), p. 14.

¹⁸⁴ *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, ed. J. Bramont (London, 1928).

with observation and experience but faith and legend.¹⁸⁵ However, the exploration and settlement of the New World changed both the methods of practical navigation and the nature of academic geography. In 1621, Heylyn's *Microcosmus* became the first geographical textbook to incorporate the English settlements in North America with much of the section on the newly discovered areas of the world influenced by the travel narratives collected by Samuel Purchas. The book was so popular that it was published in eight editions up to 1639.¹⁸⁶ The first aim of this chapter is to assess the significance of European theories of geography by comparing them with the actual experience of the explorers and settlers of the New World. Second, this chapter will examine the significance of early modern knowledge of climate and its impact on Englishmen and their understanding of American weather.

I.

Geography in Europe

During the Renaissance, Europeans became somewhat obsessed with the idea of map making, but their efforts bore very little relationship to the science of geography practised by the end of the seventeenth century. Maps were symbolic expressions of man's relationship with God rather than accurate representations of the physical realities of continents and landscapes. Sailors and travellers did not use maps as guides; instead they were intellectual tools used by the sedentary enthusiast.

¹⁸⁵ R. Cawley, *Unpathed Waters* (Princeton, 1940), pp. 33, 43. Later a tract encouraging Scottish readers to invest in the American enterprise would use Solomon's Ophir as a metaphor: *Encouragements for such as shall have intention to bee undertakers* (Edinburgh, 1625), sig. B3. Walter Raleigh claimed that Virginia was on the same latitude as 'paradise', quoted in Edward Bland, *The Discovery of New Brittainne*, (London, 1651) sig. A3.

¹⁸⁶ F. Mood, *The English Geographers and the Anglo-American Frontier* (Berkeley, CA., 1944), pp. 365, 371. Heylyn's *Cosmographie* was re-published in 1652, and in that edition, he included a detailed discussion of England's colonies, though the Episcopalian author was very critical of the Massachusetts settlements and their Puritan government. See pages 187, 214 of this thesis for further information on Heylyn.

Mercator's map of 1569 was the first to challenge the dominance of the classical authorities, especially that of Ptolomy.¹⁸⁷ The commission of maps and representations of the world in map form also formed part of the European power discourse in which the hegemony she aspired to over the continents of Asia, Africa and newly discovered America was put into symbolic form. In the Ortelius atlas of 1572, Europa is depicted as a female figure at whose feet three women sit adoringly: wealthy Asia, half-naked Africa and cannibalistic America.¹⁸⁸ By the seventeenth century, maps were beginning to lose their metaphorical power but were still used to control power discourse by their European creators. To know and define an area and so be able to map it accurately, was to assert control over it. As Marlowe's *Tamberlaine* put it, 'Give me a map and then let me see how much is left for me to conquer all the world'.¹⁸⁹ During Elizabeth's reign, crown officials were the most important commissioners of maps; they were aware how important the information contained within a map might be, and so were very wary of other countries, especially Spain, acquiring this knowledge. According to Ken MacMillan, this may explain why many manuscript maps, intended for use by a restricted audience, were more accurate than the published versions, intended as optimistic propaganda.¹⁹⁰ An example of how significant a map could become is the John Smith map, drawn up initially in 1608 and sent back to England by Captain Newport. Smith also sent a duplicate of his manuscript map to Henry Hudson, who made practical use of it during his own

¹⁸⁷ N. Thrower, 'New Geographical Horizons-Maps', in F. Chiappelli, ed. *The First Images of America*, vol. 2 (Berkeley, CA., 1976), p. 665.

¹⁸⁸ Hale, *The Civilisation of Europe*, p. 11.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁹⁰ K. Macmillan, 'Sovereignty "More Plainly Described": Early English Maps of North America', *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 42, (Oct 2003), pp. 414, 423. While I disagree with Macmillan that maps defined North America's potential more than any other medium, I am convinced by his assertion that the exact geographic details of early explorations were kept secret for strategic reasons, and that therefore maps were subject to censorship.

explorations around the Hudson River.¹⁹¹ When Smith himself returned to England, he engaged the engraver William Hole to make a reproduction of his map that could be printed and widely distributed and this copy was used in his 1612 book, *A Map of Virginia*. It was subsequently included in Smith's *Generall History* of 1624 and Samuel Purchas' 1625 edition of *Purchas, His Pilgrims*.¹⁹² Smith's map, a source for all maps of Virginia for sixty years, drew on both English and Native American knowledge. Each river on Smith's map had a Maltese cross printed on it to show the point at which English exploration stopped. Any information about landscape features and settlement beyond those points had come to Smith from his Native American contacts.¹⁹³

By the end of Elizabeth's reign, a general outline had been traced of the coastline of continental North America; the Stuart explorers' descriptions of their voyages added detail to this sketch. However, even by 1621 some migrants to the New World had little grasp of the geography of the coastline. Robert Cushman, delivering a sermon in Plymouth on the arrival of the first settlers, described New England as an island 'neere about the quantitie of England'.¹⁹⁴ Many of the travel narratives, sometimes referred to as 'first contact' narratives, are full of thick description of sea depths, locations of land and slight indentations of shorelines which the authors believed would become part of the standard geography of the area and this was indeed so until later generations developed more sophisticated instruments and methods of measurement. Christopher Levett's narrative for the Council of New England, of which he was a member, did not include details of the sunrise and sunset,

¹⁹¹ B. McCary, 'John Smith's Map of Virginia', in E. Swem, ed., *Jamestown 350 Anniversary Booklet* (Richmond, VA, 1957,) p. 3.

¹⁹² R. Stephenson, & M. McKee, *Virginia in Maps: Four Centuries of Growth, Settlement and Development* (Richmond, VA, 2000), p. 28.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 28. Smith's map has an even greater significance in that it was cited as evidence in a boundary dispute between Virginia and Maryland in 1873.

¹⁹⁴ R. Cushman, *A Sermon Preached at Plimmoth in New England* (London, 1621), sig. A2.

the elevation of the stars or degrees of latitude because he considered them tedious, and also lacked navigational experience. He plotted his journey rigorously, however, detailing each island he encountered along the shore and each bay and river, giving the distances between them in leagues or miles.¹⁹⁵ Thomas Canner's account of Bartholomew Gilbert's voyage of 1603, printed by Samuel Purchas, does include the sort of navigational information thought needless by Levett. Canner described the moment that his expedition knew they were close to land: 'in the Chesebian Bay...we cast out the lead again and had ground in thirtie fathoms'. The next day, 'wee saw land in the height of forty degrees and odde minutes very fine low land appearing farre off...we saw no Harbour'.¹⁹⁶

As Joseph Conforti has said, the recent revival of regionalism in examining the origins of American culture has been productive, but a subtle analysis of variations within boundaries and domains must also be undertaken.¹⁹⁷ Elizabeth's reign saw a new interest in local as well as national geographical knowledge and this also influenced voyagers and settlers describing America in the seventeenth century. Chorographers such as John Leland in 1546 and William Camden in 1586 examined the landscape and geography of England's regions, and elicited from readers a renewed interest in their county and country. These authors had a declared mission to inspire pride and patriotism in their readers, who related their descriptions of nature to English history, rather than pursuing an interest in geography for its own sake. These books also provided a basis for local pride, and allowed the different counties of England to form their own distinctive identities on the basis of meteorological

¹⁹⁵ C. Levett, *A Voyage into New England. Begun in 1623 and ended in 1624* (London, 1628), sig. A3.

¹⁹⁶ 'A Relation of the Voyage made to Virginia in Elizabeth of London...by Master Thomas Canner', in S. Purchas, *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XVIII (Glasgow, 1951), pp. 330-359.

¹⁹⁷ J. Conforti, *Imagining New England* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2001), p. 4.

phenomena, geology and so on.¹⁹⁸ Settlers and authors introduced this use of geography to America. They described their new homes and defined the settlements and gave them an English identity by cataloguing their locations, boundaries and geographical features. Spanish settlers in South America held that to take possession of an area, one must have it declared in a Papal Bull and erect a Christian marker in the area, usually a cross. However, the English derived their definitions of possession from medieval land law and could not claim an area in this way, instead believing that occupation or settlement was the only true basis for possession.¹⁹⁹ By defining a region and giving it an English name, early explorers and settlers were declaring their intention to take possession and so confirm an area as 'English'. They were also asserting their cultural hegemony over the Native Americans, by rejecting and overriding their names for regions, rivers and settlements. And by describing Newfoundland as halfway between Ireland and Virginia, and on the course of English ships on their way home from the West Indies, Richard Whitbourne symbolically placed Newfoundland at the heart of the nascent empire.²⁰⁰

Authors also defined regions that concerned them by using measurements of latitude, which could then be used as a navigational guide by future sailors, a service Richard Hakluyt had hoped his collection of narratives would provide. In describing Maryland, a settlement then barely a year old, the anonymous author of *A Relation of Maryland* (1635) described it as being between thirty-eight and forty degrees latitude, with New England to the north, Virginia to the south and the western parts yet to be

¹⁹⁸ V. Jankovic, *Reading the Skies* (Manchester, 2000), p. 8. Lesley Cormack has also confirmed the importance of chorography, saying that in the early modern period it complemented the two strands of ancient geography: mathematical and descriptive geography. L. Cormack, 'Good Fences Make Good Neighbours: Geography as Self Definition in Early Modern England' *Isis*, 82 (1991), p. 642.

¹⁹⁹ P. Seed, 'Taking Possession and Reading Texts', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 49 (1992), p. 194. The English used the method of erecting crosses more as navigational markers. For example, in John Smith's *A True Relation*, (1608) he described his party's erecting of a cross because 'further we would not goe'. p. 5.

²⁰⁰ R. Whitbourne, *A Discourse and Discoverie of the New Found Land* (London, 1620), p. 1.

discovered. The publisher of the *Relation* also provided readers with a map with which to supplement the written text.²⁰¹ John Smith's *A Map of Virginia* may well have influenced the author of the *Relation* as Smith employed almost identical language in describing the location of that colony: 'it lyes between 34 and 44 latitude between Florida and New France, its western limits not known'.²⁰² John Pory, a Virginian resident sent to explore the English settlement to the North, described the location of Plymouth Plantation to his superior, the Earl of Southampton, in 1623 as '41 degrees and 48 minutes'. Pory also used latitude to locate the boundaries of the Dutch colony- 'Flemings made title from 40 to 44 degrees they call Hudson his river'.²⁰³ Thomas Morton used latitude to describe the location of New England to his readers but also situated the colony half way between the 'torrid zone' and the 'frigid zone', thus making it ideal for human settlement; he thought it 'doth participate of heat and cold indifferently'.²⁰⁴ The Torrid Zone was dreaded as a most dangerous region, especially by superstitious sailors who wanted to find a route to Virginia without having to go so far south. In a letter of 1609 written by Gabriel Archer and published by Samuel Purchas, the sailors encountered a ship in Jamestown sent out by the Virginia Company specifically to find a route that avoided the Torrid Zone.²⁰⁵ As the seventeenth century wore on and knowledge of navigation increased, the journey to America became easier. Most ships leaving for the settlements from the 1630s onwards took the northerly route, which was not only quicker but avoided the winds that often blew vessels into the Caribbean, as happened to Sir Thomas Gates' ship,

²⁰¹ *A Relation of Maryland, together with a map of the country* (London, 1635), p. 13.

²⁰² J. Smith, *A Map of Virginia* (Oxford, 1612), p. 1.

²⁰³ *Three Visitors to Early Plymouth*, ed S.J. James (Plymouth Plantation, 1963), pp. 5, 15.

²⁰⁴ T. Morton, *New English Canaan* (London, 1632), pp. 13-15.

²⁰⁵ 'Letter of M. Gabriel Archer touching the Voyage of a fleete of ships...' in *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p 3. For more information on the routes of early voyages, see M. Jackson, 'Ships and Sea Voyaging to the Chesapeake', in D.B. Quinn, ed. *Early Maryland in a Wider World* (Detroit, MI., 1982), pp. 37-39.

wrecked in Bermuda for several months before reaching Jamestown after the crew had entirely re-built it.

II.

Experiencing the Sea

Crossing the Atlantic Ocean with the maritime technology available to seventeenth century sailors and migrants was a tall order. The journey could take from five to ten weeks, sometimes longer, and was fraught with danger, with the risk of storms, pirate attack and even mutiny by the sailors, who often had a fractious relationship with the human cargo they carried. Henry Norwood's 'A Voyage to Virginia', written in 1650 but not published until the nineteenth century, described a disastrous voyage that seemed more akin to an Elizabethan exploration tale than to the familiar, usually less dangerous mid-century voyage. Norwood and his fellow passengers suffered everything: drunken sailors, violent storms that damaged the ship and spoiled their provisions, leading to hunger and thirst, and being washed up in an unknown region, forced to rely on assistance from local natives and even having to resort to cannibalism.²⁰⁶ Not surprisingly, Norwood's report was seen as extremely negative propaganda for the colony and was not one of the texts printed and published for the information of a wider audience. Sailors lived in dangerous conditions, with very poor pay, and relied on superstitions as well as drink to keep their spirits up. Many believed that their ship's name was a charm against evil spirits, and that the presence of certain passengers on board, especially priests, helped to prevent storms. Various birds and fish were also thought to be good or bad omens, as shown in Chapter

²⁰⁶ H. Norwood, 'A Voyage to Virginia', in P. Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*, vol. 3 (Washington, 1844), pp. 3-50.

Five.²⁰⁷ Lord De La Ware's fleet lost several anchors in rough seas and 'spoiled divers of their men in seeking to weye them'.²⁰⁸ John Pory, reporting a story he was told by the residents of Plymouth, described the ineptitude of the pilot during the Atlantic crossing that caused the Pilgrims to miss Virginia altogether, and only the grace of God brought them in safety to an abandoned Indian town, the future site of Plymouth.²⁰⁹ Thomas Dudley, writing to his patroness and kinswoman, the Countess of Lincoln, told her that many ships arriving in Massachusetts had had encounters with pirates, making those undertaking the crossing extremely fearful.²¹⁰ In her poetry, Anne Bradstreet referred to the power of the ocean itself and the fear of pirates. Though she only made the crossing once, her husband and son returned to England several times and the powerful feelings the experience produced is revealed in her language:

From angers great thou did him free
Of pirates who were near at hand
And order'st so the adverse wind
That he before them got to land.²¹¹

Even Emmanuel Altham, an adventurous younger son seeking his fortune at Plymouth, did not much enjoy the crossing. He wrote to his brother saying that 'I have learned by this voyage that God hath made the seas more for use than for

²⁰⁷ Cawley, *Unpathed Waters*, p. 201.

²⁰⁸ Lord De La Ware, 'The Starving Time', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 14 (1906-7), p. 380.

²⁰⁹ *Three Visitors to Early Plymouth*, p. 6.

²¹⁰ Thomas Dudley to Lady Bridget, Countess of Lincoln, March 12-28 1631, in E. Emerson, ed., *Letters from New England: Massachusetts Bay Colony 1629-38* (Amherst, MA., 1976), p. 76.

²¹¹ 'On My Son's Return out of England July 17 1661', *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. J. Hensley (Cambridge, MA., 1967), p. 263.

pleasure'.²¹² Many authors reported that they suffered ill health at sea. Henry Filmer was still in the English Channel when he wrote his letter to Mr. Young saying that 'my kinsman, my cooke and ye little boy were a little stomacke sicke'.²¹³ These factors meant that authors often portrayed the ocean as a malign influence while the land of America, seeming more certain and knowable, was understood as benign.²¹⁴ Though Englishmen living in coastal regions were used to sailing short distances around the coast, most English men and women had no idea of the challenges and difficulties they would face when setting out for America, and their descriptions and explanations of the often traumatic journeys are very revealing of the intellectual make-up of the English traveller during this period.²¹⁵ Writers with little experience of the sea sometimes described it as if it were a land-bound scene. Both Richard Mather and Francis Higginson spoke of the 'mounteynes', 'valleyes' and 'meadows' of the ocean.²¹⁶ Most migrants had a genuine fear of the sea, which was exaggerated as very few actually died on the crossing.²¹⁷ The ocean was the greatest barrier to travel, as many people believed that rivers and even mountains existed to be crossed and shared and travellers felt unrestricted by political boundaries.²¹⁸ When William Bradford's party of Pilgrims arrived at Cape Cod and was searching for a suitable place for permanent habitation, Bradford recorded his melancholy feelings, viewing 'the mighty ocean...as a main barr and goulfe to separate them from all the civill parts of the world'.²¹⁹

²¹² E. Altham to Sir Edward Altham, Sept. 1623, *Three Visitors to Early Plymouth*, p. 23.

²¹³ Virginia Historical Society, Filmer MSS: U120 08/1. Letter dated March 13 1652.

²¹⁴ W. Franklin, *Discoverers, Explorers, Settlers* (Chicago, IL., 1974), p. 36.

²¹⁵ The development of an 'oceanic world' among traders, while most scholars still saw the sea as a barrier, is explored by H.B. Johnson in Chiapelli, ed., *The First Images*, p. 625. Englishmen living in southern coastal towns often gathered to watch a ship depart for the New World and to wish it well for the journey: C. Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen* (Oxford, 1968), p. 127.

²¹⁶ V. De John Anderson, *New England's Generation* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 80

²¹⁷ D. Cressy, *Coming Over* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 147

²¹⁸ Hale, *The Civilisation of Europe in the Renaissance*, p 33

²¹⁹ W. Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, ed. W.T. Davis (New York, 1964), p 96

A defining experience for many visitors and settlers during the sea crossing was suffering a storm. A large number of the authors reported this, and many of those who did not surely experienced bad weather at some point during a journey of over a month. These extremes of weather had varying results; William Strachey's vivid prose story of his ship blown off course to Bermuda in 1609 was printed by Samuel Purchas and also influenced William Shakespeare when writing *The Tempest*.

Strachey described how:

A dreadfull storme and hideous began to blow from out the North east which swelling and roaring as it were by fits some houres with more violence then others at length beate all light from heaven, which like an hell of darkenesse turned blacke upon us so much the more fuller of horror.²²⁰

Bad weather at sea caused Henry Norwood and his fellow passengers some terrible dilemmas. Norwood's disastrous crossing in 1650 witnessed some of the worst weather described in any travel narrative. When he arrived off the coast of America, adverse winds forced his already battered ship away from shore. By this time, provisions were already very low and the passengers and crew had to resort to collecting rainwater in order to survive. Norwood and his companions recognised the irony that 'whilst the westerly wind [blowing them further from their destination] held, we had rain water to drink, whereas at east the wind blew dry'.²²¹ The effect of the sea crossing was often so intense that the memory stayed with those who undertook it for the rest of their lives. The account of the storm 'which the Americans are wont to call an Hircano' suffered by Richard Mather's ship in 1635 was so vivid

²²⁰ W. Strachey, 'A True Repertory of the Wracke and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates...', *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 6.

²²¹ Norwood, 'A Voyage to Virginia' (1650), p 16.

that it was recounted by his son, Increase, in a published account of his father's life. Increase quoted directly from his father's unpublished journal, saying that the storm had destroyed the ship's cables, anchors and sails and 'we seemed to drive with the full force of wind directly upon a mighty rock, standing out in sight above water'. However, the Lord directed them past the rock at the last moment, saving the ship and her passengers and delivering them safely to do their work in New England. Increase Mather went on to describe the drowning of a minister heading for America, a Mr. Avery, but quickly added that 'this which hath been mentioned is the onely vessel which miscarried with passengers from Old England to New; so signally did the Lord in his Providence own the Plantation in New England'.²²²

Many authors used metaphors of storms at sea and shipwrecks to describe the turmoil of the soul. Patrick Copland, a preacher in the employment of the Virginia Company, who had never been to America but had travelled extensively in the Far East (and said he imagined Virginia to be similar to Japan), compared the elemental storms travellers suffered at sea to storms within the soul.²²³ Roger Williams, who was exiled from Massachusetts to Rhode Island, corresponded extensively with his former neighbours regarding Indian relations and wrote several letters in which he spoke symbolically of seafaring. In the first, written to the town of Providence in August 1654, he compared his own religious dilemmas to a shipwreck: 'I am like a man in a great fog. I know not well how to steere. I feare to run upon the rocks at home'.²²⁴ The following January, he wrote his famous 'ship of state' letter, again to the authorities at Providence. This time he used the metaphor of a ship riding upon the

²²² I. Mather, *The Life and Death of Mr. Richard Mather of Dorchester in New England* (Cambridge, 1670), pp. 20-23.

²²³ P. Copland, *Virginias God Be Thanked: or a Sermon of Thanksgiving for the Happie Successe of the Affayres of Virginia this last yeare*. (London, 1622). Ironically, Copland's optimistic sermon was published just before news of the massacre reached England.

²²⁴ R. Williams, *Correspondence*, ed. Glenn LaFantasie (London, 1988), vol. II, p 399.

ocean to explore his views on religious toleration.²²⁵ All of the adult members of his audience would have experienced the Atlantic crossing, making his use of symbolism even more pertinent than it would have been to a collection of land-locked English residents.

Another religious radical to take his mission to America at the very end of the period was Robert Fowler, a Quaker from Burlington in Yorkshire, whose record of the journey was published in 1659 as *The Quaker's Sea Journal*. His was a small expedition, with only two men and three boys besides himself on the ship, but the experience that he recorded was one of the most spiritually charged of all the crossing narratives. Fowler saw himself as a second Noah seeking Mount Ararat. Throughout the journey, Fowler reported visions such as, 'the sea without rose up against me', and 'I saw anchors swimming above the water'.²²⁶ The ship eventually landed, by accident, near the Dutch plantation on Manhattan Island. Fowler did not seem to regret this error, and 'began work' among the Dutch instead. There his narrative ended abruptly, because his text is the story of his sea crossing alone. His experiences at sea were no doubt intended to provide inspiration and spiritual meditation for fellow Quakers in England at a time when they had few allies among either the English or American authorities.

Many authors did not want to give readers the impression that the crossing was too daunting to be undertaken, or that they themselves had been frightened on the voyage. Albert Stone, in his examination of the New England minister Thomas Sheperd's writing as a 'displaced person', claimed that though the journey was a significant part of Sheperd's narrative, he did not allow himself to be overawed by it, instead focusing on how his life in Old England would frame his experiences in New

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p 423.

²²⁶ R. Fowler, *A Quakers Sea Journal: Being a True Relation of a Voyage to New England* (London, 1659), p. 5.

England.²²⁷ Just after he had arrived in New England in 1633, Master Wells claimed, in a letter to his parish in Terling in Essex, that he and his wife felt better at sea than on the land, ‘sea sicke but one day in XI weekes, at sea my children never better in their lives. They went ill into ye ship but well there and came forth well as ever...’.²²⁸ Other writers emphasised that the crossing would be easier if migrants brought the correct provisions. William Wood encouraged readers to bring sufficient bedding and apparel and medicinal foods to help cure scurvy and seasickness. But he reassured nervous travellers that ‘a ship at sea may well be compared to a cradle rocked by a carefull mothers hand’.²²⁹ William Crashaw, who never made the crossing, symbolically likened the Atlantic Ocean to a bridge, though it is questionable whether or not early modern sea travellers would have agreed.²³⁰

The most common literary technique for describing and containing the horrors of the Atlantic crossing was to frame it in a providential narrative; that is, to show how the ship had survived the dangerous journey because God was on her side. Edward Johnson indeed claimed that the dangerous crossing was used by the Lord to make sure that those who arrived in New England were prepared for the challenges ahead. He also claimed that it was the fear of repeating the journey that encouraged many of the early settlers to persevere and not return to England at the first sign of hardship.²³¹ There were dangers not only in the Atlantic crossing, but also in migrating from one settlement to another in North America. In 1635, Anthony Thacher described to his brother Peter, living in England, the journey undertaken by a

²²⁷ A. Stone, ‘The Sea and the Self: Travel as Experience and Metaphor in Early American Autobiography’, *Genre*, VIII (1974), p. 286.

²²⁸ ‘A Letter from Master Wells from New England to Old England...1633’, in Nehemiah Wallington’s Letterbook, British Library, Sloane MS 922 f. 90.

²²⁹ W. Wood, *New Englands Prospect* (London, 1635), p. 43.

²³⁰ Crashaw quoted by A. Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA., 1999), p. 215.

²³¹ E. Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence 1628-51*, ed. J.F. Jameson (New York, 1910), pp. 56, 147.

group of settlers moving from Ipswich, Massachusetts to Marblehead, near Salem. They had just set sail when ‘it pleased God to send so mighty a storm as the like was never felt in New England since the English came there nor in the memory of any of the Indeans...we solemnly recommended ourselves to God...expecting with every wave to be swallowed up and drenched in the deep’. The storm was so fierce that only Thacher and his wife survived, and were picked up by a passing boat after being marooned for several days. Thacher mourned the loss of his friends, but attributed his own survival to the will of God, which strengthened his faith when he eventually arrived at his destination of Marblehead.²³²

The authors’ understanding of their voyage and the ideas they communicated about their passage appear to have had a major impact on their perceptions of the land.²³³ As mentioned earlier, the sea was often seen as malign and the land as benign in comparison, though realistically life on land could be just as dangerous and traumatic as at sea. A difficult crossing often meant that a settler’s first reaction upon reaching the land was relief. In 1608, John Smith wrote of his joy at entering ‘the mouth of a verie goodly Bay’ off the coast of Virginia, while decades later, in 1650, Henry Norwood’s party, though not nearing the end of their ordeal, were relieved to be finally on dry Virginian land.²³⁴ There were a few striking exceptions. Lord De La Ware, even though he had been on board ship far longer than expected after being blown off course for several weeks and then prevented from landing at Virginia by contrary winds, on arrival in Jamestown reported it to be a ‘verie noysome and

²³² Anthony Thacher to Peter Thacher, Sept. 1635, in E. Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England*, pp. 168-174.

²³³ For information on how the sea affected early American literary efforts see: R. Stein, ‘Seascape and the American Imagination’ *Early American Literature*, vol. 7 (1972).

²³⁴ J. Smith, ‘The Description of Virginia’, in *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XVIII, p. 422; Norwood, ‘A Voyage to Virginia’, *Tracts* vol. 3, pp. 19-20.

unholosome place'.²³⁵ Cecilia Tichi has claimed that the tendency of New England authors to write spiritual biographies rather than travel reports meant that their understanding of the crossing was distinctive. Thomas Tilliam's poem 'Upon the First Sight of New England', written in 1638, vividly captured the horrors of the Atlantic crossing and the relief at arriving on land, which for the spiritually driven Puritans held out the promise of becoming a new Jerusalem. Tilliam instructed those weary travellers who 'hazarded your lives o'th raging floods' to 'possess this country'.²³⁶ In his *Wonder-Working Providence*, Edward Johnson described not only the harrowing journey he had undertaken, but also the joy on arriving successfully. He thought of the new land as a ship and his life there as a continuing voyage, and realised that the spiritual journey he and his fellow colonists were taking together would not be easy. But he believed that the difficult journey across the Atlantic had strengthened him for the adventures ahead.²³⁷ These dangers on the voyage may have prepared settlers somewhat for the situations they would encounter in the New World, for example, the strange climate. However, the intellectual preconceptions about climate held by early modern Englishmen were also important to them, as shown by the authors' comparisons of the climatic differences between Virginia and New England and England herself.

²³⁵ W. Billings, J. Selby & T. Tate, eds., *Colonial Virginia* (New York, 1986), p. 24; Lord De La Ware, 'The Starving Time', p. 381.

²³⁶ Stein, 'Seascape and the American Imagination', p. 23.

²³⁷ C. Tichi, 'Spiritual Biography', in S. Bercovitch, ed. *The American Puritan Imagination* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 64.

III.

America and Renaissance Meteorology

Classical literature familiarised readers with debates about the weather and how it related to the life cycle of ordinary men in both a literary and pseudo-scientific context. Virgil used poetry in *The Georgics* to show how common people such as farmers rather than the philosophers could interpret weather signs. Authors such as Aristotle and Seneca commented on the characteristics of the air and the wind, trying to explain the causes and effects of their fluctuations, and university scholars studied these ancient authorities well into the seventeenth century.²³⁸ Understanding of climate during this period was based on three approaches, any of which might be adopted by an individual author. First, interpreting weather signals as a sign from God, with unusual, dangerous weather seen as either a direct punishment from Him, or as a portent of bad times to come. Second, seeing weather as part of the astrological system in which heavenly bodies influenced the climate on the earth. The sun for example was seen as the masculine sphere with his strength drawing out the feminine earth's fertility. These ideas were very influential during the early modern period; many people feared to challenge the word of astrologers. Not only the literate elite paid heed to astrologers, and the lower orders had a great interest in planetary predictions relating to crop growing, animal rearing and so on. Information was disseminated in small, easily affordable almanacs, in which the calendar was published alongside detailed astrological information and predictions about, what Jankovic terms, 'strange weather'.²³⁹ Third, as the seventeenth century progressed,

²³⁸ Jankovic, *Reading the Skies*, pp. 17-22.

²³⁹ Elizabeth I rarely doubted the word of her influential astrologer John Dee. For information on almanacs see B. Capp, *English Almanacs 1500-1700* (New York, 1979). An almanac was among the first books to be printed on the Boston printing press. One of the most famous was *Danforth's Almanac*

weather patterns came to be seen as an observable phenomenon for the first time, with local studies the cornerstone of this approach, both for individual scholars and the Royal Society when it was established. The Baconian idea that knowledge could be gained by viewing and recording something ‘in the field’ was gaining ground, and by mid-century was replacing the classical canon in the university curriculum, encouraged by authors such as Samuel Hartlib.²⁴⁰ These three ways of interpreting the weather operated simultaneously during the early modern period, though by the end of the seventeenth century the first two approaches had been abandoned in favour of the third. Alongside the new interest in observable weather came the realisation, again cemented by Francis Bacon, that sin was no longer a direct cause of disease and that climate might be a possible trigger. It was thought that heat was extremely bad for the health because it not only removed sweat but also other natural juices, though the body could be acclimatized to extreme heat given time. Autumn was also thought an unhealthy season because of the sudden cooling of the weather which was not good for the body.²⁴¹

The settlers took these intellectual frameworks to America and used them to interpret the climates and diseases they found there. The weather was certainly of great interest to the settlers. Every day, John Guy’s journal was filled with details about the climate he encountered in Newfoundland; on some days he made no other entry than to record his climatic observations.²⁴² According to Karen Kupperman, authors believed not only that extreme heat caused disease, but that the very act of

of 1649, which printed astrological charts for each month alongside weather predictions and court dates.

²⁴⁰ Jankovic, *Reading the Skies*, p. 23. See also C. Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626-1660* (London, 1975), pp. 27-30.

²⁴¹ F. Sargent, *Hippocratic Heritage: A History of Ideas about the Weather and Human Health* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 124-5.

²⁴² ‘A Journal of a Voyage to the Newfoundland’, Nottingham University Library, Middleton MS, Mix 1/66.

moving from place to place unbalanced the humours and could lead to ill health.

Montaigne believed that men were like plants and would assume entirely new characteristics if they migrated from their native land. It was also thought that Englishmen were particularly susceptible to the extremes in temperature in the New World because of their delicate constitutions and the moderate weather encountered in England. As shown later in this chapter, this theory was used by authors promoting interest in Massachusetts and Plymouth as a justification for settling in temperate New England as opposed to the warmer Virginia and the Carolinas.²⁴³ These ideas of English uniqueness led on to pseudo-scientific explanations of the cultural distinctiveness and superiority of the European that dominated discourse for several centuries.²⁴⁴

The reason why the weather in America was so different from England and why different settlements on that continent experienced such varying temperatures was assumed to be variations in latitude. People believed that the climate would be the same in every country at a given latitude, so comparisons were often made between familiar European countries and the New World on the false assumption that they would benefit, or suffer, from the same weather. John Smith's extensive descriptions of the climate of both Virginia and New England helped to change this understanding but it persisted well into the seventeenth century.²⁴⁵ For example, Patrick Copland wrote in 1622 that as Virginia was on the same latitude as Japan, it would have the same climate and support the same commodities.²⁴⁶ Often the weather

²⁴³ K. Kupperman, 'Fear of Hot Climates in Anglo-American Colonial Experience', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 41 (1984), pp. 214-15; C. Glacken, *Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA., 1967), p. 450.

²⁴⁴ For a comprehensive survey of the English understanding of their ability to cope with the American climate better than the natives see J. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier 1500-1676* (Cambridge, MA., 2001), pp. 120-140.

²⁴⁵ K. Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians* (London, 1980), p. 99; G. Dunbar, 'Analogies in Explorers' Preconceptions of Virginia', *Virginia Journal of Science*, vol. 9 (1958), p. 323.

²⁴⁶ P. Copland, *Virginias God Be Thanked* (London, 1622), p. 12.

in America was compared to that of the Mediterranean, though John Brereton exploring the north of Virginia before a permanent settlement had been established wrote that it was not as hot as France or Italy because ‘the suns heat is qualified in his course over the Ocean, before he arriveth on the coasts of America attracting much vapour from the sea’.²⁴⁷

Negative Reports of New World Weather

The negative reports of American weather are complex and diverse. John Winthrop and Thomas Lechford, two authors writing very different texts on the New England settlements, both told stories of horrific weather but did not want to discourage settlement. Thomas Lechford went to America for four years, and on his return wrote a tract defending his name from English accusations of religious errors, exhorting the English to adopt the New England system of government and religion. Lechford described the nature of the settlement built by the English, some of the commodities to be found there and the unusual wild animals they encountered. But, even though he had never visited Maine himself, he had heard that the winters there became so cold that men often froze to death.²⁴⁸ The climate of Maine shocked English visitors because they calculated that it sat south of England’s latitude, and so they expected the weather to be much warmer than it was.²⁴⁹ Visitors and settlers in the New World also misunderstood the nature of the seasons; their boats often arrived in Spring or Summer and they negligently made no attempt to prepare for a harsh winter, assuming that if the summers were warmer than in England, then winters would be too.²⁵⁰ John

²⁴⁷ J. Brereton, *A Briefe and True Relation of the Discoverie of the North Part of Virginia* (London, 1602), p. 15.

²⁴⁸ T. Lechford, *Plain Dealing or Newes from New-England* (London, 1642), p. 48.

²⁴⁹ E. Churchill, ‘Mid Seventeenth Century Maine’, E. Baker, ed., *American Beginnings* (Lincoln, NA., 1994), p. 295.

²⁵⁰ W. Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (New York, 1984), pp. 35-6.

Winthrop and his band of travellers were not prepared for the cold of the Massachusetts Bay, as he reported in his journal. On their arrival in America in June 1630, Winthrop was happy to describe 'fair sunshine weather and so pleasant a sweet air as is much refresh us' [sic]. But by Christmas Eve the same year the colonists were suffering: 'the wind came N.W. very strong and some snow withal, but so cold as some had their fingers frozen'.²⁵¹ The cold was not only causing discomfort, it also caused them major problems in their travels around Massachusetts Bay. In 1634 Winthrop wrote to his son, who was still in England, saying that 'winter hath begun early with us, the bay hath been frozen all over'.²⁵² Because much of the early traffic between towns along the coast would have been undertaken by boat, the weather meant that, until a road network was developed later in the seventeenth century, the Massachusetts towns were effectively cut off from each other for several winter weeks. However, in 1641, according to Edward Johnson, the Bay froze so hard that for five weeks it could be crossed using horses, carts or oxen.²⁵³ Even in Virginia bad weather could disrupt travel, though for different reasons. Edward Bland, exploring an uncharted region to the south of Jamestown, reported difficulties crossing 'many rotten Marrishes and Swamps' because of heavy rain.²⁵⁴

For the most religious migrants, such as Winthrop and Roger Williams, the cold weather seemed to reflect their own spiritual torments and bleak doubts. Williams wrote in a letter to Winthrop's son that he was suffering a 'sad and gloomie, sharp and bitter winter', and was also feeling the isolation of his Rhode Island exile.²⁵⁵ There were other problems that settlers encountered connected with the

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²⁵² 'John Winthrop to John Winthrop Junior, Dec 12 1634' in E. Emerson, ed *Letters from New England*, p. 135.

²⁵³ Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence 1628-51*, p. 205.

²⁵⁴ E. Bland, *The Discoverie of New Brittain* (London, 1651, facsimile series, 1966), p. 3.

²⁵⁵ R. Williams, *Correspondence*, ed. Glenn LaFantasie (London, 1988), vol. II, p. 439.

weather, other than heat and cold. John Hull reported in his diary (covering the period to 1660 and unpublished during his lifetime) that Boston had suffered a ‘great wind hirocaine’ in September 1634. Hull believed that this storm was a warning from God against the errors that were already developing in New England, specifically the seditions of the Hutchinson group.²⁵⁶ Hull sometimes showed himself a pragmatic and successful merchant but like many of his contemporaries, he attributed sudden weather and astrological phenomena as signs from God, usually indicating His displeasure at the sinfulness of his people. Monstrous births that occurred around the time of Anne Hutchinson’s expulsion were also understood as indicators of her errors. Later in his diary Hull described a comet that passed exactly as the minister John Cotton died in 1652, and an eclipse in 1659, both of which were interpreted as portents of difficult times to come.²⁵⁷ Metaphors of the weather were sometimes used to describe the turbulent political situation in early Massachusetts. Robert Baillie believed that there were downsides to the ‘free aire’ of New England: the Scot thought it encouraged Anne Hutchinson and her followers in religious rebellion against the Massachusetts authorities.²⁵⁸ Roger Williams also reported strange phenomena in a providential way. In 1638 he wrote to John Winthrop that the Rhode Islanders had suffered an earthquake, which he described as ‘that audible and sensible voice’- that is, the voice of God.²⁵⁹ Vladimir Jankovic has attributed providential interpretations of weather to times of national stress, citing the example of their prevalence during the English civil war, or prior to that, times of harvest failure. It can be argued that this providential understanding of weather signs was mirrored and

²⁵⁶ Massachusetts Historical Society Manuscripts, Hull MS, ‘Diary of John Hull of Boston’, MS copy made from original in 1849.

²⁵⁷ For a study on the influence of providence on the thinking of early modern Englishmen of all levels of society, see A. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999).

²⁵⁸ D. Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World* (Cambridge, MA., 1985), p. 66.

²⁵⁹ Williams, *Correspondence*, ed. Glenn LaFantasie (London, 1988), vol. I, p. 159.

encouraged in the colony of New England where the first generation of settlers faced the difficulties of establishing towns and watched as the social order they had constructed slowly changed beyond their control.²⁶⁰

It was not only the northern colonies where cold could be a problem for settlers. In Maryland, Leonard Calvert reported to his brother that bad weather had hindered his progress in trying to apprehend agents of Calvert's rival, William Claiborne. 'The windes were so cross and the weather so fowle in the bay', that Calvert had to abandon his mission.²⁶¹ It was January when Henry Norwood's party was shipwrecked north of the Virginia settlement and they had very little food or shelter other than the occasional succour offered by friendly local natives. Norwood described the 'excessive cold with frost and winds blowing very fresh upon my face it almost stopped my breath'.²⁶² The cold was not only a problem for the health and comfort of men. People also feared that fewer mineral resources would be available in the parts of America where the sun shone with less intensity. It was thought that the sun increased the amount of gold and silver produced in the ground and also brought it to the surface.²⁶³ George Abbott advised that though fishing opportunities in Newfoundland were good, there was no point searching for gold in that region as it was too cold for the sun 'to breed and work such a mettall within the ground'.²⁶⁴ John Hagthorpe believed that to find gold the English must look south, nearer to the Spanish areas, which he saw as an example to all English adventurers. Further south the sun would bring more chance of precious minerals, though there was also 'a

²⁶⁰ Jankovic, *Reading The Skies*, p. 37.

²⁶¹ L. Calvert, 'Letter of Governor Leonard Calvert to Lord Baltimore 1638', in C. Hall, ed., *Narratives of Early Maryland* (New York, 1910), p. 151.

²⁶² Norwood, 'A Voyage to Virginia', p. 42.

²⁶³ Kupperman, 'Fear of Hot Climates in Anglo-American Colonial Experience', p. 218.

²⁶⁴ G. Abbott, *A Description of the Whole World* (London, 1634), p. 291.

corruption of creatures' there.²⁶⁵ People feared that hot weather also led to an abundance of dangerous animals. This will be explored further in chapter five.

Pacifying the Weather Extremes

It is clear that many authors tried to correct the spread of false information about the colonies instead of reporting weather actually experienced in America. There is no correlation between the date a narrative was written and whether it offered a positive or negative commentary, but rather, writers offered an intermingling of portrayals throughout the period 1607 to 1660. There is a no obvious difference in understanding between authors who had visited America and those who had not, although authors who had not crossed the Atlantic always claimed that they had the backing of someone who had. Richard Eburne, who never left England, claimed that Newfoundland was 'healthy and temperate, very agreeable to the constitution of our English bodies...encumbered with no noisome beasts or vermin whatsoever'.²⁶⁶ Eburne also explored the notion that the extreme heat constituted a natural habitat for all sorts of dangerous beasts that were a threat to man. In denying these reports, Eburne used similar language to the travel narratives and sought to contradict some of the negative rumours circulating about the colonies. Captain John Mason tried the same thing and could use his wide experience of travel to justify claims that Newfoundland winters were not much colder than that of 'the Hebrides and the Orcades wherein I have twice wintered'.²⁶⁷ Roger Heaman claimed in his verses, the *Quodlibets*, that 'winter is there [Newfoundland] short, wholesome, constant, cleare,

²⁶⁵ J. Hagthorpe, *Englands Exchequer* (London, 1625), p. 36.

²⁶⁶ R. Eburne, *A Plaine Pathway to Plantation* (1624), ed. L.B. Wright, (New York, 1962), p. 136.

²⁶⁷ J. Mason, 'A Briefe Discourse of the New-found-land', in C.W. Tuttle & J.W. Dean, eds., *Capt. John Mason- The Founder of New Hampshire* (Boston, MA.,1887) p 146.

Not thicke, unwholesome, shuffling as tis here [England]'.²⁶⁸ The idea of the passing of winter was used symbolically by Edward Johnson to describe the improvement in conditions for settlers in New England after the first few difficult years. He wrote 'the winter is past, the raine is changed and gone'.²⁶⁹ The reputations of other northern settlements also suffered from people's fears that they would be too cold or exposed to the elements. John Pory described Plymouth, in his report to friends in Virginia, as a very secure settlement because of its site on a hill, and also because it enjoyed a protected and sheltered harbour down below.²⁷⁰ John Winthrop Junior did not deny that New England winters were very cold, but wrote that this helped the settlers travel around the area, because frozen streams could be crossed more easily.²⁷¹

John Smith listed the moderate New England climate as one of the positive attributes of the colony, but with the caveat that 'some tender plants may miscarie because the summer is not so hot and the winter is more colde in those parts we have tried nearer the seaside'.²⁷² Smith showed a sophisticated awareness of the effects of different climates on different vegetation that the English might experiment with in New England, and was one of the few authors to acknowledge differences in climate within a single region, pointing out that the weather nearer the coast would be cooler than that inland. Smith confirmed that his initial positive impressions of the weather of New England had been correct and after two years of settlement in the area, it was still proving to be 'pleasant and temperate' and very good for the health of English settlers.²⁷³ In 1637, Phillip Vincent went a stage further, claiming that the air was not

²⁶⁸ R. Heaman, *Quodlibets, Lately come over from New Britaniola, old Newfoundland* (London, 1628).

²⁶⁹ Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, p 59. Johnson is quoting the bible: Song of Solomon, ch.2 v10.

²⁷⁰ J. Pory, 'Lost Description of Plymouth', *Three Visitors to Early Plymouth*, p 37.

²⁷¹ W. Carlton, 'Overland to Connecticut in 1645: A Travel Diary of John Winthrop Jr.' in *New England Quarterly*, XIII (1940), p. 503.

²⁷² J. Smith, *A Description of New England* (London, 1616), pp 6, 9.

²⁷³ J. Smith, 'New Englands Trials' (1622), in Force, ed., *Tracts*, vol. 2, p 17.

only good for the health of Englishmen, but also that it encouraged the fast growth of the population. He said that families were producing more offspring in New England because ‘the aire of New England and the diet equall if not excelling that of Old England, besides their honour of marriage and punishing of furtive congression giveth them...a multitude of subjects’.²⁷⁴

Virginia experienced a very different climate from the temperate one of the northern colonies, being hotter and wetter in the summer and more susceptible to storms during the autumn hurricane season. Authors writing about Virginia had a different agenda in trying to prove her suitability for English migration, and their ultimate aim was to correct reports about the extreme and violent weather encountered there. John Brereton, writing in 1602 before a permanent settlement was established in Virginia, claimed that ‘the holsomenesse and temperature of this climat’ had led to the development of an industrious, yet friendly tribe of natives who would prove very useful should the English want to settle there.²⁷⁵ Edward Bland argued that the climate was so good to the south of Virginia that it was the reason so many natives had long beards, that is, they lived to an old age.²⁷⁶ In his sermon of 1610, William Crashaw directly challenged those who claimed that Virginia was too hot for the English. He said that people complained of storms and excessive heat, but ‘neither sea nor winde are in the hand or power of the divell or the pope’ and that ‘it falls out it is not so hot as Spayne’.²⁷⁷ Crashaw went on to say that everyone he had spoken to who had visited Virginia did not believe it too hot. Crashaw also revealed the assumptions of early modern man regarding the weather and ethnicity: he claimed that he had heard a

²⁷⁴ P. Vincent, *A True Relation of the Late Battell Fought in New England between the English and the Salvages* (London, 1637), p. 22. Joyce Chaplin explores the idea that the American climate made the English more fertile in her book *Subject Matter*, p. 141.

²⁷⁵ Brereton, *A Brief and True Relation*, p. 11.

²⁷⁶ Bland, *The Discovery of New Brittain* (1651), p 13.

²⁷⁷ W. Crashaw, *A Sermon Preached in London Before the Right Honorable the Lord LaWarre* (London, 1610), pp. 34-5.

report that a native Virginian had been seen whose skin was not nearly black, as if to say, this proves that the climate is not as hot as rumour has stated.²⁷⁸ An anonymous report received in 1613 from Henrico, Virginia, printed by Samuel Purchas, confirmed the temperate nature of Virginia's climate, stating that 'the extremity of summer is not so hot as Spaine nor the cold of winter so sharp as the frosts of England'.²⁷⁹

Robert Johnson emphasised the healthiness of the region in both volumes of his history of the colony, describing 'the ayre and climate most sweete and wholesome', and when talking about the new settlement begun by Thomas Dale outside Jamestown, 'a good air, wholesome and clear, unlike the marshy seat at Jamestown'.²⁸⁰ Johnson conceded that the choice of Jamestown with its marshy woodlands and brackish water supply had been a grave error by the early leadership. Confirming this assessment of Jamestown, Arthur Wodenoth in his history of the Virginia Company wrote that Thomas Smith and Thomas Gates, whose leadership had ensured Virginia's survival and success, would not hear of the colony's early problems being blamed on poor leadership but insisted that it was the fault of 'unhealthfulness of that countrey'.²⁸¹ William Bullock agreed in his history of Virginian settlement in 1649, observing that 'the ayre is very wholesome especially to those that are seated above the flowing of the salt water', and that those living near the salt water suffered from similar illnesses to those on the English salt marshes.²⁸² Others too complained of the unhealthy air of Jamestown. George Gardyner, whose

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35

²⁷⁹ 'A tractate written at Henrico, Virginia 1613', in *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 113

²⁸⁰ R. Johnson, *Nova Britannia* (London, 1609), p. 13; R. Johnson, *The New Life of Virginia* (1612), *American Colonial Tracts Monthly*, vol. I (1897-8), p. 8.

²⁸¹ A. Wodenoth, *A Short Collection of the Most Remarkable Passages from the Originall to the Dissolution of the Virginia Company* (London, 1651), p. 3.

²⁸² W. Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined* (London, 1649), p. 4. For more information on the biological impact on the settlers of the choice of the site at Jamestown see C. Earle, *Geographical Inquiry and American Historical Problems* (Stanford, CA, 1992), ch. 1.

intention was to encourage the expansion of English settlement abroad and the increase of trade with the New World, went into great detail describing the horrible conditions that migrants faced. Their fate, he said, was ‘much sicknesse and death for the air is exceeding unwholesome in so much as one of three scarcely liveth the first yeare at this time’. The reason for this was not latitude, as many had thought, but ‘changeableness of the weather’ and ‘swamps, standing water and marishes’ as well as syphilis, euphemistically called ‘Country Duties’, that colonists allegedly caught from the natives. Gardyner was more positive about the potential for trade and settlement in New England, which is obviously where he felt England’s colonial future lay.²⁸³ However, as late as 1656, John Hammond still felt it necessary to persuade readers that the problems faced at Jamestown by the Virginians in the first few years were not extremes of weather and sickly air. He claimed that Virginia was ‘wholesome, healthy and fruitfull’ and that it was not the poor air that caused sickness but the ‘want of such diet as best agreed with our English natures’. He went on to admit that the climate is ‘somewhat hotter in June, July and August then here but that heat sweetly allayed by a continual breeze of wind’.²⁸⁴

Several writers describing American weather took the opportunity to make comparisons between the weather in two different regions. This not only allowed them to draw a more vivid picture of the severe or temperate nature of the climate in a particular area, but also to make a rhetorical point about the relative merits of each region. An author who had a particular interest in one colony could promote interest in it by comparing it favourably to another less pleasant climate, while the opposite was also true with authors criticising one region to the advantage of another.

Occasionally a comparison was made with England’s other colony, Ireland, as in

²⁸³ Gardyner, *A Description of the New World*, pp. 99-100.

²⁸⁴ J. Hammond, *Leah and Rachel: or Two Fruitfull Sisters Virginia and Maryland* (London, 1656) pp. 6-9.

Lochinvar's tract to encourage the Scots to get involved in trade and migration to America, in which he described the climate of America as far more temperate than Ireland.²⁸⁵ In the 1630s Virginia became the victim of a campaign to boost interest in and migration to the newly settled northern colonies. Authors claimed that these new areas would be far better for settlers' comfort and profit than Virginia, which until then had dominated the English discourse on America. Some authors claimed that New England was especially suitable for English settlement because none of the extremes of heat and cold found in Newfoundland, Virginia or the Caribbean were in evidence. Thomas Morton, though critical of some aspects of New England life, notably the leadership of the society established by John Winthrop, praised the climate as 'a golden meane betwixt the hote and the cold' in which 'the creatures that participate of heate and cold in a meane are best and holsomest'.²⁸⁶ Edward Plowden praised New England as half way between hot Virginia and cold England. To demonstrate his worldly knowledge and provide a reference point for the better travelled among his readers, he further elaborated and claimed that his own proposed settlement of New Albion had the climate of Italy 'between too cold Germany and too hot Barbary'.²⁸⁷ William Wood, writing about his beloved New England, claimed that its climate was far more suitable than Virginia, and better than Old England itself. 'Both summer and winter is more commended of the English there... Virginia having no winter to speake of but extreame hot summers hath dried up much English bloud'. Wood went on to claim that coastal locations in New England were not unwholesome as they were in Old, and that the air was very good for the health: 'in publicke assemblies it is strange to hear a man sneeze or cough as ordinarily they doe in Old

²⁸⁵ Lochinvar, *Encouragements for such as shall have intention to bee undertakers in the plantation of Cape Briton in New Galloway in America* (Edinburgh, 1625), sig. B3.

²⁸⁶ T. Morton, *New English Canaan* (London, 1632), pp. 11-12.

²⁸⁷ E. Plowden, *A Description of the Province of New Albion* (London, 1650), p. 10.

England', and 'not very many being troubled with inflammations or such diseases as are increased by too much heate'.²⁸⁸ Thomas Morton told the story of how a sickly group of Virginian sailors had been almost too weak to reach the much healthier New England coast, where 'there is no boggy ground from whence the sunne may exhale unwholsom vapors', and how when they arrived at Boston they could 'smell the sweet aire of the shore where they have suddenly recovered'.²⁸⁹

Newfoundland was also compared favourably with Virginia, for similar reasons, with Virginia dismissed as comparable to the sweltering climate of England's Caribbean island possessions. John Hagthorpe, who wrote to encourage planting in all of England's colonies, claimed that 'the ayre it is pleasant and as temperate as summer here [in Newfoundland], whereas Virginia and Bermudas are very hot'. Hagthorpe went on to describe the perils of adventuring to the over-hot areas of America: 'catarrhs and distillations, schirrosities of spleen and liver, fluxes, scurvies and dropsies.'²⁹⁰ This contradicted John Brereton's early report; he branded Newfoundland a 'cold and intemperate place' and encouraged settlement further to the south in the area he explored around Martha's Vineyard, which became the New England settlement several decades later.²⁹¹ Rumours about the excessive heat in Virginia continued into the 1650s when George Gardyner insisted that Virginia's neighbour Maryland had a 'more wholsome' air and was better for the English crops.²⁹² Authors who wanted to promote Virginia recognised this problem and conceded that in the earliest years of the settlement, commentators had over-exaggerated the pleasantness of the Virginia climate, and that the criticism she

²⁸⁸ W. Wood, *New Englands Prospect* (London, 1635), pp. 4, 7.

²⁸⁹ Morton, *New English Canaan*, p. 92.

²⁹⁰ Hagthorpe, *Englands Exchequer*, p. 32.

²⁹¹ Brereton, *A Brief and True Relation*, p. 18.

²⁹² Gardyner, *A Description of the New World* p. 102.

suffered in the middle years of the century represented a backlash.²⁹³ John Hammond made an attempt to redress this balance in his comparative tract *Leah and Rachel*, in which he described Virginia's weather in more tempered terms, and the country as a real place rather than some sort of paradise. He acknowledged that 'Virginia [was] favouring not handsomely in England, very few of good conversation would adventure thither.'²⁹⁴ Others emphasized that though it took each English migrant a year or so to acclimatise to the heat of Virginia, once they had done so it was a healthy place in which fertility was greater than England's other colonies or indeed England herself. This was how John Smith characterised the climate of Virginia, saying it 'doth well agree with English constitutions being once seasoned to the country'.²⁹⁵ However, the difference in climate meant that the food and drink available were unfamiliar, and settlers were exposed to new diseases, so this only helped to spread rumours about Virginia's alien climate.²⁹⁶ The effects of climate on the food consumed by the English will be examined in chapter four.

IV.

Conclusion

In examining the various ways in which Englishmen understood the geography and climate of the New World, this chapter has shown the impact of European religious and humanist ideas on their way of presenting life in America to their readers. It is

²⁹³ For the changing nature of representations of Virginia as the seventeenth century progressed see S. Adams, *The Best and Worst Country in the World* (Charlottesville, VA., 2001), ch. 8.

²⁹⁴ Hammond, *Leah and Rachel*, p. 5.

²⁹⁵ J. Smith, *A Map of Virginia* (Oxford, 1612), p. 1.

²⁹⁶ Kupperman, 'Fear of Hot Climates', p. 220.

important to recognise how different the processes of navigation, geography and meteorology were in the early modern period and how little these disciplines had changed since classical times. However, the knowledge from the New World and newly discovered regions in the East allowed for the development of more accurate maps and globes, and a better understanding of the arts of navigation and weather prediction. Seafarers kept more detailed records, and as knowledge grew about the best way to undertake the Atlantic crossing, the easier it became. Even so, there was a tendency amongst the majority of commentators who had not taken a special interest in these new sciences to employ religious explanations, particularly providential ones, of unusual phenomena, encompassing all the dangers encountered on the journey to America and the trials and tribulations experienced once the destination had been reached.

Many authors sought to reassure their readers about the Atlantic crossing, aware that negative representations could upset relatives and dissuade other potential migrants from making the journey. Similarly the impulse to reassure the English readership was a driving force behind many of the portrayals of America's varying climates. Misunderstandings about climate, especially in relation to different latitudes, meant that the authors often made faulty assumptions about the weather settlers should expect. Other authors felt the need to respond to what they saw as deliberately misleading representations of climate and to reassure readers that the American colonies enjoyed temperate weather. Comparisons between weather in England and Europe and the New World assisted readers to assimilate these new ideas. Authors also made comparisons between different American colonies to persuade readers that investment in and migration to one colony was more desirable than another. Another

aspect of this authorial manipulation concerned the landscape of America, which will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE

In his study of early modern England, Michael Reed described landscape as ‘the autobiography of society’.²⁹⁷ However, when English travellers to America reported the landscapes they encountered, they did not describe a society operating within the natural world; authors wanted to encourage settlement and investment, and portrayed America’s landscape as one of potential and future wealth for the individual and for the commonwealth as a whole. Authors displayed a variety of attitudes towards the natural world of woodland, river and mountain to justify man’s incursion into that landscape, while their own lowland English origins also played a part in their perceptions of the new landscape across the Atlantic. Occasionally authors offered a very different discourse on American landscape, voicing disappointment at the dangers or difficulties presented. But many of those who acknowledged hardships and failures tried to reassure readers by insisting that these problems could be, or already had been overcome. Though it is not possible for the historian to know the ‘truth’ about the landscape in the past unless he employs the tools of the archaeologist or biologist, it is possible to examine the ways early modern settlers interpreted and represented what they found in America.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ M. Reed, *The Age of Exuberance 1550-1700* (London, 1986), p. 171.

²⁹⁸ S. Adams, *The Best and Worst Country in the World* (Charlottesville, VA., 2001), p. 7. Adams’ aim is similar to mine, though he attempted to trace man’s understanding of Virginia from prehistoric times to the mid-eighteenth century. My focus is much more specific, and I contrast Virginia with Maryland, New England and Newfoundland.

Intellectual Roots

The understanding of landscape in the seventeenth century was influenced by three strands of thought: northern European pagan, classical Greek and Roman and biblical.²⁹⁹ These dealt with the uncertainty that man felt about whether he was in control of his natural surroundings or not. Was his place working within the landscape, or did the powerful, chaotic forces of nature exclude him? Were wild places fearsome or did they offer future wealth? Could God be seen at work in these wild places, or was He only visible in landscapes upon which man's influence was undeniable? Much of early seventeenth century English thought about man's control over the forces around him was derived from Renaissance continental thinking of men such as Da Vinci and Agricola. They argued that God had ordained that man should be in control of nature, and that the divine plan had put animals and minerals on earth for man's use.³⁰⁰ Alongside that, however, came a responsibility: man had to accept his role as steward of the landscape in order to be justified in claiming its spoils. This belief was especially prevalent during the 1640s and 1650s, when Puritan natural philosophers such as Samuel Hartlib argued that the exploration and cataloguing of America's resources would herald the beginning of a new religious and scientific age.³⁰¹ Later in this chapter it will become clear how an interpretation of this role of stewardship allowed settlers to dispossess the native tribes by depicting them as negligent stewards of the region. During this period there was only admiration for a landscape shaped and improved by man, in contrast to later Romantic admiration of

²⁹⁹ For a detailed exploration of this using various case studies see S. Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London, 1995), p. 16.

³⁰⁰ G. Davies, *The Earth in Decay: A History of British Geomorphology 1578-1878* (London, 1969), p. 2; K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (London, 1983), pp. 18-24.

³⁰¹ See C. Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626-1660* (London, 1975) for a comprehensive exploration of these ideas using the Hartlib archive.

wild and untamed nature.³⁰² A gradual filtering through of information about other areas of the world from the sixteenth century onwards emphasised the Englishman's sense of dominion over the natural landscape. Confident that he could modify the land in the New World, he carried European ideas of clearing and drainage around the globe. However, the English had long asserted their dominion over the natural landscape in which they lived. From the twelfth century, English woodland had been cleared and fens reclaimed to make way for cultivation and royal parks.³⁰³ And in more recent times Englishmen, like their European counterparts, had begun to take charge of their rivers, diverting their courses and bringing water to hitherto dry areas with the use of complex water mechanics.³⁰⁴ As the population of England grew from the mid-sixteenth century, marginal lands vacated after the Black Death were reclaimed. Memories of this transformation of the landscape would prepare Englishmen for the challenges that would confront them in America. However, contact with different races furthered the debate over the roles of the human and the divine within new landscapes. Many explorers and settlers had had experience of England's military occupations in Ireland, but commentators were dissatisfied with the progress of the subjugation of the country and her inhabitants.³⁰⁵ In America, however, the central role of the white Europeans was reinforced when their ideas on the use of the land were implemented with very little resistance from Native Americans.³⁰⁶

³⁰² For more information on the development of the Romantic idea of the empty landscape see R. Williams, *The Country and The City* (London, 1973), p. 120.

³⁰³ The most comprehensive survey of changes to the English landscape from Roman times to the present is W. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1955).

³⁰⁴ Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, p. 278.

³⁰⁵ N. Canny, 'The Permissive Frontier', in K. Andrews, N. Canny, & P. Hair, eds., *The Westward Enterprise* (Liverpool, 1978), p. 17.

³⁰⁶ C. Glacken, *Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA., 1967), pp. 358-9.

However, a less positive view of the natural landscape was also prevalent in England in the early seventeenth century. People were fearful that Europe's sinful Catholic history had polluted the world and caused the land to go into decline.³⁰⁷ Man's corruption was leading to a corruption in nature, and particular flaws in the natural world revealed this, for example, deformed children or animals.³⁰⁸ Opponents disagreed, saying that God would not allow his creation to become ruined, but no authors before the end of the century challenged the idea of divine agency. Only among later generations, who had not known England and were first and foremost American residents, would this perspective change and the natural landscape peculiar to America become a source of national pride.³⁰⁹

I.

Vacant Land

Many commentators on America described it as an empty landscape. This was for some authors a source of fear or disappointment, as they had hoped to find recognisable civilisation already established, or to find a land of plenty, ready for them to cultivate with little effort. However, other authors saw this emptiness as a positive attribute that would allow the English to claim the land for their own, because no one else was making proper use of it, and it was their duty to undertake the

³⁰⁷ Davies, *The Earth in Decay*, p. 6.

³⁰⁸ V. Harris, *All Coherence Gone: A Study of the Seventeenth Century Controversy over Disorder and Decay in the Universe* (London, 1966), pp. 2-61.

³⁰⁹ This became especially important during the break with England in the late eighteenth century. Some literary critics have felt that Anne Bradstreet is an early example of an American poet interpreting the landscape using American eyes and words. But her nostalgic memories of England sometimes impinged on her descriptions of American landscape, for example, the frolicking of lambs described in *Four Seasons* in *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. J. Hensley (Cambridge, MA., 1964), p. 66.

stewardship of the natural resources of America. In particular, the Puritan settlers of the northern areas emphasised the belief that these were vacant lands, which they were able to take possession of and cultivate as God had obviously intended.³¹⁰ In verses written in 1654, towards the end of his life, William Bradford lamented the decline of the colony of Plymouth, but reiterated that their mission had the backing of the Lord and that Plymouth had been chosen for them by God:

But them a place God did provide,
In wilderness and did them guide.³¹¹

Conveniently for the English, disease brought to America by sixteenth century French and English fishermen had already wiped out a large proportion of the natives in the New England area, leaving a weakened local population unable to undertake their usual subsistence practices. This meant that fields they had once cultivated were now left unattended, allowing the arriving Englishmen to believe that a divine hand had prepared the area for them.³¹² A letter written in 1634 by John Winthrop to Sir Simonds D'Ewes followed this theme, describing the small pox epidemic with which 'God hath hereby cleared our title to this place'.³¹³ However, Winthrop realised that there were also negative repercussions caused by the loss of the native populations; as he wrote in his journal entry of the same year, 'the small pox was gone as far as any

³¹⁰ Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness*, p. 13. Later seventeenth century authors who wanted to create the myth of the Puritan exiles arriving in the American wilderness would reinforce this idea. See J. Conforti, *Imagining New England* (Chapel Hill, NC., 2001), p. 41.

³¹¹ W. Bradford, 'Verses', *Proceedings of Massachusetts Historical Society*, II (1869-70), p. 478.

³¹² It can be argued that the presence of natives rather than their absence in the area was a necessity, as they were able to teach settlers about gathering and growing food, possible mineral resources and guide them through difficult terrain. For an expansion of this argument see K. Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians* (London, 1980), pp. 83-98 and J. Axtell, 'The Scholastic Philosophy of the Wilderness', *William and Mary Quarterly* (1972), pp. 335-66.

³¹³ 'John Winthrop to Sir Simonds D'Ewes', E. Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England: Massachusetts Bay Colony 1629-38* (Amherst, MA., 1976), p. 119.

Indian plantation was known to the west and much people died of it, by reason whereof they [the English] could have no trade'.³¹⁴ John White, minister of Dorchester, who never visited America himself but organised an early migration to New England, believed that 'nature hath as much force and founds as strong a relation between people and people as betweene person and person' but that this relationship between colony and mother-country was only made possible by the providential 'defoliation' which had left the landscape of America 'void' for the Englishmen.³¹⁵ In the 1580s, Virginia had been named for the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth, and from then onwards we find references to it as a virgin land. This carried the double meaning of a land as yet untouched, and also containing much for the settlers to take as their own, as a husband would take his virgin bride. William Symonds argued that Virginia could legitimately become English because the natives 'do live like deer in herds' and did not manage the land properly. Symonds claimed that 'we shall have a Virgin or Maiden Britaine, a comfortable addition to our Great Britaine'.³¹⁶ Thomas Morton also described the land as a virgin, ready for the settlers to make use of her commodities. Breaking into verse, he described New England as 'like a faire Virgin longing to be sped, And meete her lover in a Nuptiall bed', and later remarked that her 'offspring now shewes that her fruitfull womb, not being enjoyed is like a glorious tombe'.³¹⁷

³¹⁴ J. Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, ed. James Savage (Boston, MA., 1825), vol. I, p. 123. The theme of God's providence was also taken up by John Mason in *A Brief History of the Pequot War* (Michigan, 1966) when describing the English victory over the Indians, and by the anonymous author of 'Mourt's Relation' printed in Purchas, ed. *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 319 describing the Plymouth residents' providential discovery of Indian corn which they then 'borrowed' in order to stay alive.

³¹⁵ J. White, *A Planter's Plea or the Grounds of Plantations Examined and the Usual Objections Answered* (London, 1630), p. 25

³¹⁶ W. Symonds, *A Sermon Preached at Whitechappell in the Presence of Many Honourable and Worshipful, the Planters and Adventurers for Virginia 25 April 1609*, (London, 1609), pp. 3, 18

³¹⁷ T. Morton, *New English Canaan or New Canaan*, (London, 1632), p. 10

However, some disappointed settlers who had expected to find a land of plenty depicted the emptiness of the American landscape in a more negative way. Bearing in mind that much of the literature that reached an English readership focused on the riches found in Spanish America and stated that America was comparable to Eden or paradise, it is no wonder that some settlers were disappointed on finding a landscape far more challenging. Colonial propagandists in England feared this sort of criticism might discourage migrants, and passed over the difficulties in silence, but some letters from colonists to their relatives did reach England, and their experiences were surely spread among interested parties by word of mouth. An example of this is an undated letter in the Filmer family papers from Francis Berkeley of Virginia writing to his friends in England. He acknowledged that reports of the ‘nakednesse’ of their country had reached England, and consequently the ships that had been scheduled to follow them to bring supplies and more colonists had not yet set sail.³¹⁸ Settlers who undertook an aborted attempt to establish a colony in Newfoundland, under the leadership of John Guy, described their disappointment on arriving there in the letters they wrote to inform the company and financiers in London of their progress. Bartholomew Pearson wrote in August 1612 that ‘the higher ground is all rockes and stones and the low ground standeth contentilly [sic] with water’.³¹⁹ Pearson wrote again in April 1613, worrying about the quality of the ground, but reported they had found some interesting wild beasts. Thomas Cowper, Edward Gorton and John Harrington, members of the same expedition, wrote in August 1612 complaining ‘we dislike the land...our usage far woorse then we expected...withall beinge dubtfull of the goodness of our land’.³²⁰ Complaints of barrenness were rare, however, even in

³¹⁸ Virginia Historical Society, Filmer MSS, U120 C14, Francis Berkeley letter, undated.

³¹⁹ Nottingham University Library, Willoughby Family Papers, Middleton MSS: Mix 1/11.

³²⁰ Middleton MSS: Mix 1/14.

unpublished letters and diaries, whether because of self-censorship by promoters of the colonies or because of the enduring hopes in the bounty of the New World.

Forests and Mountains, Fear or Potential

The seventeenth century understanding of the wilderness was that the word referred to any landscape not touched by human cultivation, agriculture, transport networks and so on. 'Wildness' was set as a direct opposite to the landscapes that had been influenced by man. This idea was derived from the Greeks and Romans, for whom the pastoral scene represented a golden ideal in contrast to their own turbulent, often violent rural world. The pagan tradition of the barely human wild man of the woods, which originated in Germanic folklore, also contributed to the northern Europeans' fear of the forest.³²¹ The Bible contrasted God's garden of Eden, cultivated by Him for the satisfaction of humans, with the wilderness in which outcasts wandered and spiritual battles were fought.

Early American settlers felt threatened by the woods and mountains they discovered in the New World partly because of the cultural baggage brought over from Europe, but also because of threats specific to America. Some authors believed that Native Americans lurked within the deep woods and other inhospitable places. English men and women who lived within forests were thought to be uncouth and dangerous, and this fear reinforced nervousness about American natives. In 1638 John Underhill described the Pequot tribe, then enemies of the Connecticut community, as being 'retired into swamps'.³²² John Smith claimed that it was the sheer size of the forests and rivers that intimidated settlers in Virginia, and that this prevented them from entering these areas to seek food: 'the woods are so wide, the rivers so broad and

³²¹ R. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (4th edition, New Haven, CT., 2001), pp. 9-12.

³²² J. Underhill, *Newes from America* (London, 1637, facsimile edition Amsterdam, 1971), p. 7.

the beasts so wild and wee so unskilled to catch them'.³²³ The Virginian settlers never really managed to hunt their own food, apart from on a few occasions when starvation was imminent. They mostly relied on the local natives to do this for them. Captain John Mason identified another threat that lurked in the 'rottenes of the ruined wood' in Newfoundland, small flies that would emerge from dense woodland and pester the colonists in the summer months. He had also visited Russia and claimed to have observed similar unhealthy woods in that country.³²⁴

The forests were thus feared not only because of traditional folk attitudes brought over from Europe but also because of real dangers encountered in America. Dense woodland hindered settlers' ability to explore their surroundings and travel from one area to the next, because anyone who ventured too deeply into the forest was likely to become lost.³²⁵ H. Mumford Jones has argued that early migrants' fears of the wild nature of North and South America was due to lack of concrete information about the continents.³²⁶ By the seventeenth century, as information was distributed at court and especially among those interested in the New World, they cannot have been short of information on America, but still travellers were unable to suppress the indoctrinated view of the huge, alien forests of America.

Not all settlers were so alarmed by the forests. Some were able to set aside fears learned through European folktales, a classical education or bible study and assimilate their new landscape quickly, perceiving it as useful and therefore not to be feared. Edward Bland, travelling through an unexplored section of what would become North Carolina, described a forest of trees that were 'a hundred foot...which

³²³ J. Smith, *Adverts for Unexperienced Planters* (London, 1631), p. 6. Also see L.B. Wright, *Everyday Life in Colonial America* (London, 1965), p. 44.

³²⁴ 'A Briefe Description of the New Found Land', in *Capt. John Mason: The Founder of New Hampshire*, ed. C. W. Tuttle & J. W. Dean (Boston, MA., 1887), p. 146.

³²⁵ Wright, *Everyday Life in Colonial America*, p. 49.

³²⁶ H. Mumford Jones, *O Strange New World* (London, 1965), pp. 68-9.

will make twenty cuts of board timber a piece'.³²⁷ William Bullock, who had never been to America, but drew on explorers such as Thomas Harriot and John Smith, claimed that Virginia's forests were superior to England's because they were 'cleare from underwoods', meaning it was easy to travel through them and to gain access to the timber, and that they were also less likely to hide wild animals and men.³²⁸

It was not just in Virginia that settlers tried to overcome their fears of the new landscape, and to see the potential in their new home. Migrants to the Plymouth and New England colonies revealed a particularly religious way of interpreting the landscape. Their reactions were conditioned by their beliefs brought with them from England, by the promotional literature that they had read there and by their spiritual education, as well as the realities of the landscape itself.³²⁹ Though it is now accepted by historians that these northern settlements were not peopled by uniformly Puritan individuals, it is still possible to see in their writing concerns about America's wild landscape that differed from those of most settlers in Virginia. Puritans saw the American landscape as wild and out of control, symbolic of the people who lived there, as well as representing their fears about their own spiritual degeneration if they were not strong in their faith and strong in the creation of a moral community.³³⁰ They feared that the devil was lurking in the forest, both allegorically in a religious sense, and symbolically, referring to the corrupt natives who appeared to the settlers to be at home in the forests.³³¹ Edward Johnson, whose history of New England was published in London in 1654, described the bravery of the migrants who forsook a 'fruitfull land, stately buildings, goodly gardens, orchards, yea dear friends and neere relations

³²⁷ E. Bland, *The Discovery of New Britainne* (London, 1651, facsimile edition, 1966), p. 7.

³²⁸ W. Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined* (London, 1649), p. 3.

³²⁹ This understanding is confirmed by Peter Carroll in his book *Puritanism and the Wilderness* (Columbia, NY., 1969), p. 5.

³³⁰ J. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness* (Chapel Hill, 1988), p. 22.

³³¹ Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness*, p. 11.

to goe to a *desart wilderness* [my italics] thousands of leagues by sea, both turbulent and dangerous'.³³² However, by the time he composed his entry for 1645, Johnson claimed that the settlers had tamed the landscape and caused 'the wild and uncouth woods to be fil'd with frequented ways and the large rivers to be overlaid with bridges passable'.³³³ Interestingly this shift in perception was ignored by Ferdinando Gorges, who published Johnson's work, unacknowledged, as part of his 1658 book, *America: Painted to the Life*. Gorges still referred to America in his epistle to the reader as 'a desart country'.³³⁴ The contrast that Johnson made in his initial remarks between 'goodly gardens' and 'a desart wilderness' was an important one. Man felt himself to be in control of the natural world once he had transformed the landscape into ploughed fields or, increasingly during the early modern period, formal gardens. The garden was no longer only somewhere to grow medicines and food, but also a place where pleasure may be had and authority over nature may be asserted.³³⁵ John Winthrop described the scent of the New England shoreline, before disembarking from the *Arbella*, as 'like the smell of a garden'.³³⁶ Winthrop was emphasising to his readers that on his arrival, he felt sure that New England was a safe place where man would be able to live in harmony with nature. In 1629 Francis Higginson, another Puritan observer, caught his first glimpse of the trees of New England and described them as 'fine woods and green trees', in an optimistic letter designed to counter the fear and anxiety suffered by his fellow Puritan migrants.³³⁷ The promoters of Virginia also realised the symbolic importance of taming the wild forest by cultivation. As

³³² E. Johnson, *Wonder-working Providence 1628-5, 1* ed. J.F. Jameson (New York, 1910), p. 21

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

³³⁴ F. Gorges, *America: Painted to the Life* (London, 1658), sig. A2.

³³⁵ J. Hale, *The Civilisation of Europe in the Renaissance* (London, 1993), p. 520.

³³⁶ J. Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, ed. J. Savage (Boston, MA., 1825), p. 23.

³³⁷ 'Letter from Francis Higginson to his friends in England, July 24 1629', in Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England*, p. 21.

early as 1609, the Virginia Company claimed in a promotional broadside that ‘they [the settlers] shall have houses to dwell in with Gardens and Orchards’.³³⁸

The mountains too were often perceived to be full of danger for early settlers. Europeans before the eighteenth century thought mountains were hideous and frightening, and this must have been especially true of the Englishmen who migrated to America, who mostly came from the flat regions of southern and eastern England.³³⁹ However, for most of the migrants in the first half-century of settlement, the American mountains were merely a dangerous rumour; the coastal area from Maine to the Carolinas is relatively flat, and although settlers met many natives who told them stories of vast mountain ranges inland, where minerals and holy sites were located, most settlers did not see the mountains for themselves. Perhaps unexpectedly, some of the Englishmen who went to America overcame their concerns and portrayed the mountains described to them by natives using the language of future potential rather than superstitious fear. In 1608, John Smith described being led through a mountain range towards his first meeting with the local native chief Powatan. He told his readers that ‘the south side is plaine low ground and the north side high mountains, the rockes being of a gravely nature, interlaced with many vains of glistening spangles’.³⁴⁰ Later, Thomas Yong, who explored the Delaware River area in 1634, told of erecting the King’s coat of arms on the rocky outpost where his expedition ended and of meeting a tribe of natives who told him of a mountain range further up the river, upon which was to be found ‘great store of elkes’.³⁴¹ He hoped to capture them for their skins and meat, but had to retreat down river as his resources were running low.

³³⁸ *For the Plantation in Virginia or Nova Britannia* (London, 1609).

³³⁹ Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p. 258.

³⁴⁰ J. Smith, *A True Relation of such occurrences and accidents* (London, 1608), p. 4.

³⁴¹ T. Yong, ‘Voyage to Virginia’, *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, vol. 9, series 4 (1871), p. 122

II.

There were two approaches used by settlers and commentators to understand, control and pacify the landscapes they encountered in North America. First, by defining it in their own terms, using English intellectual tools, and describing it in a way other English readers could understand, they were claiming the land as their own and attempting to dominate it. Second, they used practical methods to stamp the mark of civilisation upon the wild landscape, by trying to recreate the symbols and realities of an ordered society, such as the one they had left. This section will analyse the ways authors tried to use both of these methods to tame the landscape.

Subduing the Landscape: Literary Means

English authors had three distinct ways of trying to bring the landscape within the understanding of their readers and so reducing it to civility. The first was to define it in terms of its usefulness to man in general and specifically to the English people.³⁴²

Almost every author who visited the country during the period until 1660 employed this method of cataloguing the natural resources of America, by commodifying her rivers, forests and mountains. Every natural phenomenon was related to how many people could take advantage of it. For example, a marsh could become a meadow, and a forest was no longer the fearful place of myth, but a storehouse of useful foods, medicines and building materials. The woods were metaphorically cut down and turned into timber for ships' masts. These representations of the American landscape began with the earliest settlers, and by the time authors such as George Gardyner

³⁴² Stephen Adams supported this argument in *The Best and Worst Country in the World*.

wrote their surveys of the New World, the commodification of the landscape was deeply entrenched.³⁴³ Father Andrew White, a Jesuit priest describing the proposed site for Lord Baltimore's Maryland colony, offered assurances that 'the woods moreover are passable not filled with thorns or undergrowth but arranged by nature for pasture for animals and for affording pleasure to man'.³⁴⁴ A more obvious statement of early modern man's anthropocentrism would be hard to find. Rivers too, which might seem alarmingly wide and forceful, were defined in terms of their navigability. As early as 1605, James Rosier, reporting on a visit to Virginia by Captain George Waymouth, claimed that there was 'no better riding for infinite number of ships' than the river they were exploring, which was full of 'very gallant coves where the ground is excellent soft oaze with a tough clay under for anker hold'.³⁴⁵ Later, Edward Winslow reported from Plymouth plantation that Governor Bradford visited Manomet in 1622, which was 'upon a fresh river which runneth into the Bay of Nanohigganset...it will bear a boat of eight or ten tunne to this place'.³⁴⁶

Another technique writers employed to allow readers to associate with America (and hence possibly imagine themselves within that landscape) was to compare American landscape features to English ones, much as they likened the climate to that of Europe or England itself. Alexander Whitaker heaped praise on the rivers of Virginia, 'the least whereof is equall to our river of Thames'. He said that it was easier to travel in Virginia than in England because navigable creeks linked the large rivers.³⁴⁷ When John Davies was exploring the New England coast, he described

³⁴³ G. Gardyner, *A Description of the New World* (London, 1651), in which the author defines the landscape of the Americas purely in terms of its use to the English.

³⁴⁴ A. White, 'An Account of the Colony of the Lord Baron Baltimore', in C. Hall, ed., *Narratives of Early Maryland* (New York, 1910), p. 9.

³⁴⁵ 'Extracts of a Virginian Voyage made in 1605' in Purchas, ed. *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XVIII, p. 350.

³⁴⁶ E. Winslow, *Good Newes from New England* (London, 1624), p. 21.

³⁴⁷ A. Whitaker, *Good News from Virginia* (London, 1613, facsimile edition, New York, 1937), p. 37

the landscape next to the Penobscot River as ‘makinge show a far of allmoste lyke unto the Dover Cleeves’.³⁴⁸ John Smith described Cape Henry in Virginia as ‘a white hilly sand like unto the Downes’.³⁴⁹ Historians have claimed that the landscape of the New England area was not significantly different from that which the settlers had known in England.³⁵⁰ This seems to be missing the point; more significant is whether the colonists reacted to the American landscape with fear and suspicion or by trying to assimilate it to the familiar landscapes of old England.

Finally, authors used metaphors of the human body to define the unusual landscape they encountered. This metaphor was common in early modern England, its most prominent use being the image of the ‘body politic’ to describe the hierarchical commonwealth of which the king was portrayed as the head and his subjects the limbs. Samuel Purchas likened Virginia to a man’s body when reviewing the letters he received from that colony, and he used that image in trying to persuade readers that if the settlers behaved well, the colony would be successful: ‘if we amend ourselves, Virginia will soon be amended. The body there is sound; to cut the hare, avoid the excrements, paire the nails, wash away sweate and dust and to cure other like accidents of negligence’ would be sufficient to restore the body to perfect health.³⁵¹ The body of the world was also seen as a larger symbol for the body of man himself. Rocks were likened to bones, soil to flesh, grass to hair and the tides to pulse. Mountains were seen as imperfections on the surface of the earth just as boils rose up to spoil the face.³⁵² Walter Raleigh had extended the metaphor to geographical features in what Simon Schama has called the first great river narrative, Raleigh’s

³⁴⁸ ‘The Relation of a Voyage unto New England...’, in G. Winship, ed., *Sailors’ Narratives of Voyages along the New England Coast 1524-1624*, (Boston, MA., 1925), p. 161.

³⁴⁹ J. Smith, *A Map of Virginia* (Oxford, 1612), p. 2.

³⁵⁰ For example see T. Breen, ‘Creative Adaptations: People and Cultures’, J. Greene, & J. Pole, eds., *Colonial British America- Essays in the new history of the Early Modern era* (Baltimore, 1984), p. 207

³⁵¹ ‘Brief Intelligence of Virginia by letters’, Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 211.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 19

History of Guiana. Raleigh's description of the mythical Orinoco as 'a maydenhead never sackt' was later subverted as the power and size of the river began to overwhelm the sailors.³⁵³ Describing the opening of a river on to the sea as the 'mouth' was very common and we still use that term today. John Smith went into more detail, describing the streams that flowed into the Powhatan River, allowing the hinterland to be explored, as emerging from the river 'as doe the vaines of a mans body'.³⁵⁴ This idea was not unusual; the Thames was also thought to bring the lifeblood of London into the city, so it was not a uniquely American understanding. It was also possible to describe the interior of the country as the insides of a man's body. For example, a tract published by Samuel Purchas concerning the initial exploration of the New England region described the visitors' intention 'to dyve into the bowels of the continent, there to search and find out what port or place is most convenient to settle our mayne Plantation in'.³⁵⁵ This understanding of nature clearly reveals itself in the literature written by travellers to America; authors used metaphors of the body to describe rivers and harbours in the same way they referred to the body politic.

Subduing the Landscape: Practical Means

It was generally accepted that the best way to achieve dominance over the landscape was to leave marks of man's influence upon it. This could happen haphazardly or by design. Samuel Argoll had barely arrived in Virginia in 1613 when he set his sailors to 'the felling of timber for the building of a frigate', while he went exploring up the

³⁵³ Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, p. 311.

³⁵⁴ Smith, *A Map of Virginia*, p. 4.

³⁵⁵ 'A Briefe Relation of the Discoverie and Plantation of New England', in Purchas, ed., *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 283.

Pembroke River in order to ‘discover the head of it’.³⁵⁶ It is obvious that the Virginian forests had not overawed this experienced sea captain. It appears that much of the man-made landscape in America, created in the seventeenth century, emerged haphazardly. For example, there were very few surveyors or cartographers at work in the area during this period.³⁵⁷ However, conscious attempts were made in localised ways to establish an ordered working landscape in which man would be dominant. One of these was by road building, the technique that had opened up the European wild spaces during the fifteenth century, though a very slow start was made in the period to 1660, both Virginians and New Englanders preferring to move around their localities by rivers and tracks used by natives. Another way was to create an ordered settlement in which the social hierarchy and order would be symbolically represented and reinforced by the structure of the town. In Virginia after the 1622 massacre, the construction of a neighbourhood with more closely-knit community ties was seen as important for the safety of the colonists. John Harvey’s report on the state of Virginia in 1624 stated that public works had been neglected and must be looked to: ‘guest house, bridge, storehouse, munition house, publique granary, fortification and church’ were all seen as important structures in the construction of a community.³⁵⁸ These factors will be examined further in chapter six.

Even the building of individual houses represented a triumph over the wilderness. To be homeless was to be outside the societal norms and at risk from the spiritual and practical perils of the wild areas.³⁵⁹ Even a temporary home, on land

³⁵⁶ ‘A Letter of Samuel Argoll touching his Voyage to Virginia and Actions there: written to Master Nicolas Hawes, June 1613’ in Purchas, ed. *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 92.

³⁵⁷ J. Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America 1580-1845* (New Haven, CT., 1982), p. 4. Joyce Chaplin claimed that the English were ambivalent as to whether they would be able to control the landscape: *Subject Matter*, p. 42. My reading has shown that many authors managed to overcome their fears in order to describe the potential within the landscape of America.

³⁵⁸ J. Harvey, ‘A Brief Declaration of the State of Virginia’, *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, vol. 9, series 4 (1871), p. 73.

³⁵⁹ Stilgoe, *Common Landscape*, p. 51.

cleared out of the wooded landscape, represented some sort of triumph over nature. Samuel Purchas emphasised this when describing the activities of the Virginia settlers at Cape Henry during the first few days after their arrival. 'Now falleth every man to worke, the councell contrive the fort, the rest cut downe Trees to make a place to pitch their tents'.³⁶⁰ Purchas excitedly reported that later, in 1621, the English built a house 'of our fashion' for Opecanough, the local chief, and that he was especially proud of the lock and key. The settlers must have thought this a very significant step in their efforts to subdue and control the landscape and natives of North America, little knowing that within a year, the natives would fight back.³⁶¹ The building of fences was important to define one's territory and to prevent livestock from straying into cultivated areas.³⁶² But it was also a symbol of civilisation, man's taking control over that particular area of wild ground and bringing it within the jurisdiction of the settled society. In early Virginia, on Thomas Dale's arrival in the colony he found the planters bowling in the streets with chaos all around them and so Dale's first task was to immediately set them to work 'felling of timber...providing pales posts and railes to impaile his purposed new towne'.³⁶³ John Pory was impressed by the protective fencing at Damaris Cove, the Gorges' plantation in present day Maine: 'they have fortified themselves with a strong pallisado of spruce trees of some ten foote high'.³⁶⁴ Fencing as well as building a house was also a priority in New England. John Masters told Lady Barrington in his letter how busy his neighbour Richard Saltonstall had been fencing his property. A few months later, Saltonstall himself wrote a letter to

³⁶⁰ 'Account of proceedings at Virginia', Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XVIII, p. 461.

³⁶¹ 'Newes from Virginia in Letters sent thence 1621', Purchas, ed. *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 153.

³⁶² D. McManis, *Colonial New England: A Historic Geography* (Oxford, 1975), p. 94.

³⁶³ R. Hamor, *A True Discourse of the Present Estate of Virginia and the Successes of the Affaires there till the 18th of June 1614* (London, 1615), p. 26.

³⁶⁴ J. Pory, 'Lost Description of Plymouth' (1623) ed. Champlin Burrage (Boston, MA., 1918), p. 49.

friends at home professing himself now satisfied with his property and so ready to turn his attention to trade.³⁶⁵

Even authors for whom nature was not something to be feared and dominated understood that the work of nature could be improved upon by the activities of man. For example, as Robert Johnson remarked in his 1609 story of the initial arrival of settlers in Jamestown, ‘what may we hope when Arte and Nature both shall ioyne and strive together to give best content to man and beast’.³⁶⁶ The landscape itself determined much of the human artifice that was undertaken within it, so ironically these symbols of dominance over nature were defined by it. For example, sawmills and gristmills, which often gave a community pride and coherence, could only be located near running water. The iron forge and furnace at Saugus in Massachusetts run by John Winthrop Junior was situated there because of its proximity to a water supply, ore from nearby bogs and charcoal for burning from local forests.³⁶⁷ Winthrop followed both theoretical and practical developments in the science of mining, and argued, like Agricola, that quarrying did not destroy nature, for ores had been placed within the earth to further the development of man.³⁶⁸ He was also very interested in both the theory and practice of alchemy, undertaking practical experiments in his home in New London, Connecticut. Alchemy was considered the highest of all the arts in which it was possible that man could become a creator. This alchemical impulse is another example of the Englishman’s attempts to release the perceived potential that God had locked up in the natural world for his benefit.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁵ ‘John Masters to Lady Barrington’, ‘Richard Saltonstall to Emmanuel Downing Feb 4 1632’, Emerson ed. *Letters from New England*, pp. 84, 92.

³⁶⁶ R. Johnson, *Nova Britannia: Offering Most Excellent Fruites by Planting in Virginia* (London, 1609), p. 14.

³⁶⁷ McManis, *Colonial Geography*, p. 127.

³⁶⁸ Glacken, *Traces in the Rhodian Shore*, p. 468.

³⁶⁹ For more information on the scientific and alchemic interests of John Winthrop Jr. see C. Browne, ‘Scientific Notes from the Books and Letters of John Winthrop Junior’, *Isis*, XI (1928), pp. 325-41.

III.

Potential for Easy Settlement and Instant Wealth

Many authors wrote in order to promote or advertise English navigation and exploration, and consequently emphasised the potential of the land for immediate settlement by English migrants and the possibility of making a fortune once they arrived. Christopher Levett's mission was one of exploration. He was concerned with finding a suitable site for a settlement in New England, though he found some areas more suitable for quick settlement building than others. By the River Aquamenticus 'a good plantation may be settled for there is a good harbour for ships, good ground and much already cleared fit for planting of come and other fruits'. Six leagues away at Cape Porpas, a good plantation may be built 'but will require some labour and charge'. Later in his journey, he dismissed the area surrounding an unnamed river because 'there is no good coming in either for ship or boat, by reason of a sandy breach which lyeth along the shore'.³⁷⁰ Other documents reveal the features of the American landscape considered the most significant by English visitors and observers. Henry Dunster, a New England resident, kept a notebook in which he made a copy of the charter for the Massachusetts Bay Company in 1628. It defined the important things to observe on the initial voyages of reconnaissance: 'firme lands, soyles, grounds, habers, ports, rivers, waters, fishings, mines and mineralls as well Royall mines of Gold and Silver'.³⁷¹ Richard Hakluyt also emphasised the importance of discovering a good, long navigable river with a sheltered entrance suitable for a

³⁷⁰ C. Levett, *A Voyage Unto New England. Begun in 1623 and ended in 1624* (London, 1628), pp. 1,2,7.

³⁷¹ 'A Coppie of the King's Maties Charter for incorporating the company of Massachusetts Bay in New England in America', Massachusetts Historical Society, Henry Dunster's MS Notebook (unnumbered).

port. If there was a choice between two rivers, the one whose course bent most towards the north-west should be chosen because that would enable the explorers to find the north-west passage more easily.³⁷²

John Smith is the classic example of a man who never spent more than a few years in America but whose writing formed a central part of the promotional drive to encourage investment and emigration to both Virginia and New England. His narratives and the maps he commissioned outlined the coast, islands and continent, while his books taught settlers how to communicate with the native tribes. His descriptions of the landscape and commodities of the New World formed the key parts of his work on Virginia and later New England. However, his promotional writing on the colonies is more complex than one might at first think. In his first tract in 1608, the unknown author of the epistle to the reader, 'I.H', claimed he did not know anything about Virginia except that it was 'excellent and pleasant...the ground fertill and good, the commodities to be expected many'.³⁷³ This much he had learned from Smith's text itself. Smith attempted to describe the terrain in the language of a scientific observer, influenced by the work of Thomas Harriot. But he could not resist noting that 'the rockes being of a gravelly nature [are] interlaced with many vains of glistering spangles', no doubt hoping that the 'glistering' would turn out to be gold!³⁷⁴ During the early years of the Jamestown settlement, many adventurers and settlers hoped to find gold in Virginia to parallel the good fortune of the Spanish in Mexico and Peru. In 1606, Richard Hakluyt instructed the first voyage of the Virginia

³⁷² R. Hakluyt, 'Instructions by way of advice, for the intended Voyage to Virginia', E. Arber, ed., *Works of Captain Smith* (Edinburgh, 1910), pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.

³⁷³ J. Smith, *A true Relation of such Occurrences and Accidents of noate as hath hapned in Virginia* (London, 1608), p. 2.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Company to explore ‘high lands or hills...to try if they can find any minerals’.³⁷⁵

However, riches were not to be found so easily in Virginia. Ralph Hamor summed up the colonists’ disappointment in his tract of 1615 when he indicated that they had abandoned the idea of finding gold altogether and they now hoped for lesser minerals, such as iron and allum.³⁷⁶ Ten years later, this hope too had gone as Samuel Purchas in *Virginias Verger* tried to convince potential investors and migrants that it did not matter that Virginia contained no mineral resources as it was so rich in other commodities, and anyway, paradise had contained no minerals.³⁷⁷

By the time Smith wrote *A Map of Virginia* in 1612 he had had time to explore the interior of Virginia further, and his technique of verbally mapping the landscape was very influential to subsequent travellers and authors. He defined each area in terms of the river that fed it, naming the river and associating it with the tribe that dominated the ground on its banks, such as the Kecoughtan tribe who lived on the Chickahominy River.³⁷⁸ Smith’s willingness to see the natives living and working within the landscape mirrored the work of John White and Thomas Harriot in Elizabeth’s reign, and reflected the knowledge he gained while held captive by the natives. It may also silently speak of the alienation that Smith felt from the band of English settlers in Virginia whom, by that time, he had come to mistrust. By 1631, Smith felt that settlers had thought too much of instant wealth, and by ‘so doating of mines of gold...bring us to ruin’.³⁷⁹ He saw the future of England’s colonial enterprise in New England where ‘you may shape your orchards, vineyards, pastures, gardens,

³⁷⁵ R. Hakluyt, ‘Instructions by way of Advice for the intended Voyage to Virginia’, in Arber, ed *Travel and Works of Captain Smith*, p. xxxv.

³⁷⁶ Hamor, *A True Discourse*, p. 34.

³⁷⁷ S. Purchas, ‘Virginias Verger’ in *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 234. Some historians have claimed that all authors following Walter Raleigh discounted his dreams of finding gold. The truth, however, is not so clear cut, as shown by Purchas’ concern in 1625. See M. Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America 1576-1624* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 85.

³⁷⁸ Smith, *A Map of Virginia*, pp. 5-9.

³⁷⁹ J. Smith, *Advertisements for the Unexperienced Planters of New England* (London, 1631), p. 5.

walkes, parkes and corn fields'.³⁸⁰ These extracts show the change in Smith's thinking from his initial enthusiastic interpretation of Virginia's landscape as a mineral resource to his realisation that subsistence and tradable commodities were the key to colonial success.

Potential for Subsistence

There were some writers keen to encourage the settlement of a colony who were interested not in making instant riches but in the opportunities for individual subsistence offered by the continent. John Rolfe's *Relation of the State of Virginia* was an example. It was intended as a private letter to the King, in which Rolfe outlined the suitability of Virginia for settlement, denying negative reports about the colony's healthfulness and potential, and trying to encourage further migration.

However, the letter was so eloquent that it was published in 1616 and distributed to a wider audience. Rolfe described the 'soil most fertile to plant in...water most wholesome and verie plentiful...fit for buildings and fortifications', all of which were directed at the furthering of the welfare of the colony itself, rather than the fortunes of the individual or the mother-country.³⁸¹ Thomas Dudley highlighted the dilemma among contemporaries as to whether profit or subsistence ought to be sought in the colonial enterprise. He wrote to the Countess of Lincoln that 'if any comes hither to plant for worldly reasons...he commits an error of which he will soon repent him'.

Dudley emphasised the importance of planting America for the right reasons, which would result in material comfort:

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁸¹ J. Rolfe, 'Relation of the State of Virginia' (1616) in *The Virginia Historical Register*, I (1848), p. 103.

materials to build, fuel to burn, ground to plant, seas and rivers to fish in, a pure air to breathe in, good water to drink until wine or beer can be made which together with the cows, hogs and goats brought hither already may suffice for food as for fowl and venison they are dainties here as well as in England.³⁸²

As this passage shows, it was not only a man's educational, religious and folkloric heritage that coloured his understanding of the landscape. Equally important was the spirit with which he approached the plenty of America, which would determine whether he found potential or disappointment. The perceived importance of settling America with the correct intentions will be explored further in chapter six.

Agricultural land was not always won by honest hard work, however. In 1638, John Underhill told how the English success in the Pequot War, more accurately described as a massacre, had removed natives from prime agricultural land in Connecticut for settlement by the English. He described with glee the 'very good soyle, good meadow, divers sorts of good wood' that had been opened up to the colonists, and the rivers to which they would now have access, including the River Connecticut itself, which was navigable for sixty miles.³⁸³ When Edward Bland organised a peaceful expedition to explore the area to the south of the English settlements at Virginia, he then returned to England to organise a group of settlers to move into the area. He narrated his journey, undertaken in 1650: 'the land generally in this town is champion...well timbered and watered'.³⁸⁴ The expedition was offered assistance by the local natives, who guided them through the swampy areas after a particularly heavy rainfall. Bland used the same justifications for colonising as his

³⁸² T. Dudley, 'Letter to the Countess of Lincoln, March 1631', in Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England*, p 75.

³⁸³ Underhill, *Newes from America*, pp. 18-19.

³⁸⁴ E. Bland, *The Discoverie of New Brittain* (London, 1651, facsimile edition, 1966), p. 2.

predecessors, that God's glory would be gained by converting the natives, and that this would further the cause of the English nation. However, this time the exploration was being undertaken from within Virginia, it was organised and manned by men living within the colony and it utilised the expertise they had learned there. American settlers were beginning to look beyond the boundaries of their settlements to the wider landscape of America and to see potential, not for dramatic increase in wealth through the acquisition of minerals or through lucrative trade, but for the construction of settlements based on subsistence agriculture.

However, these commentators recognised that the landscapes of North America would not be able to provide settlers with everything they would require for a safe and healthy life. The New England terrain was not going to be without its difficulties, with stony areas and marshland found alongside the fertile meadows. William Hammond, in a letter to Sir Simonds D'Ewes, described the variety in the landscape that he encountered in Massachusetts: 'champaign ground, many hills which are rocky, much marsh ground with fresh rivers, many great ponds two or three miles about'. Hammond's interest was in how these features might be used by the colonists for their own benefit, rather than either to catalogue them, or to search for commodities to trade.³⁸⁵ John Rolfe acknowledged that the residents of Virginia would have to establish a 'magasin' there, a sort of English trading post and storehouse that would be used to sell goods brought in yearly by ship from Europe.³⁸⁶ This was confirmed by the Virginia Company broadside, *The Inconveniencies that Have Happened to Some Persons*, printed in 1622 to discourage settlers from arriving with no provisions to sustain them in the first year while waiting for their seeds to

³⁸⁵ 'William Hammond to Sir Simonds D'Ewes Sept 6 1633', Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England*, p. 110.

³⁸⁶ Rolfe, 'Relation of the State of Virginia' (1616), p. 108.

come to fruition.³⁸⁷ In New England too, John Winthrop, less than a year after he arrived in America, sounded a warning to his son that he would need to bring many items with him from England, including food, pitch, tallow and cloth. The reality of the colonists being able to subsist using the fruits of the American landscape was a long way off in both Virginia and New England.

Potential for Trade

Many authors' purpose was to promote trade in commodities for the mother country, trade between colonies in the New World, and to promote economic links between England and her European neighbours. Robert Johnson suggested as early as 1609 that England would be able to assist the 'Netherlanders' who 'have not a stick of wood nor any for sowing'.³⁸⁸ By the mid-seventeenth century authors, even those writers who had never made the journey across the Atlantic, were beginning to understand the true potential of the commodities of the New World. George Gardyner, for example, published a comprehensive descriptive geography of 'America, islands and continents', which focused primarily on land, resources and the profitable commodities to be found there.³⁸⁹ So, in Plymouth one could find 'pipe staves, clabbord, fish, English grains and fruits...and iron works', while in Virginia 'their only commodity is tobacco...the best sort is the sweet scented which is not inferior to the Spanish'.³⁹⁰ Roger Heaman hoped his readers might be encouraged by the labours of his pen to invest in the potential trade deriving from Newfoundland, which had been under his governorship. Heaman wrote in a poem to Mr. John Poyntz that:

³⁸⁷ *Inconveniencies which have transported themselves from England to Virginia* (London, 1622).

³⁸⁸ Johnson, *Nova Britannia*, p. 23.

³⁸⁹ G. Gardyner, *A Description of the New World* (London, 1651), sig. A3.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 99.

Tis said wise Socrates look'd like an Asse
Yet he with wondrous sapience filled was
So though our Newfoundland look wild, savage
She hath much wealth penn'd in her rustie cage.³⁹¹

Heaman's message not to judge rugged Newfoundland by its appearance was echoed by authors writing about other colonies, as they tried to persuade readers that given time, America would prove very profitable for the English nation and for individuals who dared to adventure their purse or person. William Brewster, a resident of Virginia, in his letter to Dudley Carleton, took up this theme when he described the hidden potential waiting to be revealed in the desolate hilly regions of the American interior. He described the 'rokes and mountaynes that promyseth infynyt treusuer', that would mean that 'you yet maye lyve to see Inglad moore riche and renowned then anye kingdom in all Euroope'.³⁹² John Winthrop showed that the New Englanders were interested in establishing trade relations. In a letter to Charles I in 1634, Winthrop promised that they would supply England with 'cordage, cables, sails, canvas, pitch and tar...and likewise good masts'. In return he asked for their right to transport necessities back to New England.³⁹³

In the past historians have taken one group of authors and presented their motivations as typical of all. For example, Carl Bridenbaugh claims that commercial considerations, that is, opportunities for trade and communication within a productive countryside, were the most important factors when early modern settlers were trying

³⁹¹ R. Heaman, *Quodlibets, Lately come over from New Britaniola, old Newfoundland* (London, 1628), p. 34.

³⁹² 'A Part of a Letter of William Brewster, Gent, from Virginia', Brewster MSS (unnumbered), Virginia Historical Society.

³⁹³ 'The planters of New England to King Charles I 1634', Emerson, ed., *Letters from New England*, p. 122.

to evaluate the American landscape and decide the best location for a new town.³⁹⁴ By contrast, D. McManis claims that the settlers, particularly of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, did not look at the New England landscape in terms of potential profitability, but of how it might sustain the colony.³⁹⁵ It seems clear that many writers were influenced by both motives to varying degrees, but it is not possible to say that one was more significant or typical than the other. Each author worked within a complex structure of intentions and perceptions.

IV.

Conclusion

In subsequent centuries America's landscape came to be admired for its beauty and its wildness, and it became a metaphor for the grand mission of the American nation after she had gained independence. However, in literature up to 1660, very little appreciation was shown for the aesthetic qualities of the landscape. This is partly because the Romantic tradition as a way of understanding and representing mountains, rivers and fields would not become prominent until the eighteenth century, in England or America.³⁹⁶ The chaos of frontier life meant that authors did not want to assess the landscape for its aesthetic qualities but wanted to know if colonists in America would be safe and the investors in England would make a profit. The only hint of the beginnings of changes in perception was a passing remark made by

³⁹⁴ C. Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness* (2nd edition, Oxford, 1969), p. 3.

³⁹⁵ D. McManis, *Colonial New England: A Historical Geography* (Oxford, 1975), p. 28.

³⁹⁶ In England in the 1660s John Evelyn began appealing for the conservation of forests, relating their glory to that of the Restoration.

Edward Williams in 1650 when he wrote of Virginia that ‘nor is the present wilderness of it without a particular beauty’.³⁹⁷

The early modern Englishman’s understanding of his landscape was derived from religious, folkloric beliefs and humanist influences. These often induced him to approach the American landscape with fear, but also to feel that the world and its resources had been placed at man’s disposal and could be used to fulfil his wants and needs. Authors who acknowledged the wildness of the American landscape had several different rhetorical techniques for bringing it within their readers’ frames of reference in order to prove they could safely settle there. Depending on their personal intentions in putting pen to paper, they might choose to present the landscape as a virgin land waiting to be explored, a suitable place to establish a permanent colony, or a source of commodities for trade.

³⁹⁷ Taken from E. Williams, *Virginia Richly and Truly Valued* (1650) quoted in R. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (4th edition, New Haven, CT., 2001), p. 25.

CHAPTER SIX

COLONISTS AND THE FLORA OF AMERICA

Nothing in English travel narratives revealed the authors' sense of America's plenty better than the descriptions of plant life encountered there. From 1602 when John Brereton listed the berries to be found on an island off the Virginian coast, to Patrick Copland's 1622 description of 'corne, wine, oyle, lemons, oranges, pomengranats', authors emphasised the plenty and diversity of the flora they found in the New World.³⁹⁸ However, visitors such as Brereton, and armchair commentators such as Copland, never had to deal with the realities of settled life in America, so they did not explore the difficulties in exploiting native plants or introducing crops from England. This was left to other writers, as we shall see later in the chapter. In trying to understand early modern interpretations of flora in North America, it is important to analyse the intellectual assumptions with which the writers approached plant life and the categories into which they divided it. This chapter will assess three different groups of flora cultivated in the colonies: first, the agricultural crop cultivated on a large scale as a staple for profit within a colony; second, the subsistence crops grown for food or medicine by and for settlers in America; and third, wild plant life and the ways in which it could be used and 'tamed'. After assessing an English settler's understanding of plants and his prior experience of crop-growing, this chapter will compare the themes of fertility, hard work and plenty in the literature. It is important also to consider why many of the early visions were not fulfilled, and why it was that

³⁹⁸ J. Brereton, *A Briefe and True Relation of the Discoverie of the North Part of Virginia* (London, 1602), p. 5; P. Copland, *Virginias God be Thanked* (London, 1622), p. 12.

many native plants were not grown successfully. Was it because of economic constraints, a lack of enthusiasm or local knowledge, or practical difficulties? This chapter will also ask how the different agricultural experiences of the Chesapeake colonies and New England changed over time. Finally it will investigate how the botanical discoveries in America changed perceptions of plant life in England itself through the work of such men as John Parkinson and the Tradescants.

I.

Intellectual Origins

Explorations of the background of various groups of migrants to North America, as far as can be deduced from family records and ships' passenger lists, are normally left to social historians, but a brief analysis of this material is useful here because it throws light on the different levels of knowledge and different assumptions that the settlers brought with them.³⁹⁹ The origins of the Virginia migrants of the first decade were very similar to those of the settlers moving to Ireland around the same time. They were young single men who were either younger sons of the gentry wanting to make their fortunes, or poor displaced workers who had often travelled from town to town seeking work in England before crossing the Atlantic. There is also some evidence of forced migration, both of unwanted children and convicted criminals.⁴⁰⁰ These factors meant that early settlers in Virginia were not only unfamiliar with the landscape and the plant life they encountered, but also had little first hand experience

³⁹⁹ See for example: J. Horn, *Adapting to a New World* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1994) and, more controversially, D.H. Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford, 1989).

⁴⁰⁰ D. Souden, 'Rogues, Whores and Vagabonds? Indentured Servant Emigrants to North America and the case of Mid-Seventeenth century Bristol' *Social History*, vol. 3 (Jan 1978).

of agriculture in England.⁴⁰¹ This explains why the Virginia Company, in the early years of settlement, advertised for experienced agricultural labourers as well as craftsmen in its broadsides. In 1609, for example, a broadside was distributed pleading for ‘planters, vinears [sic] and plowmen’ to migrate to Virginia in order to receive ‘houses to dwell in with gardens and orchards’.⁴⁰² While some settlers in New England lacked experience in agriculture, they were willing to turn their hand to it in the tough frontier conditions of North America. Men like John Winthrop, who belonged to the East Anglian Puritan gentry, were unlikely to have toiled in their own fields in England, but had experience of estate management and were prepared to work hard to help to feed the community. Promoters of the Massachusetts Bay colony were keenly aware of the mistakes of their Virginian counterparts and while confident that ‘the corne of the countrey is apt for nourishment’, the Reverend John White emphasised the importance of employing ‘fit persons’ in the colony, who were not only morally upstanding, but were able and willing to work hard.⁴⁰³

The settlers in both New England and the Chesapeake may not have had much experience in tilling the soil but they were not completely ignorant about plant life and its practical and economic usefulness to man. Early modern English men were aware of the connection between establishing a settled agriculture and the achievement of social and political order.⁴⁰⁴ As shown in previous chapters, the interest in classical authors and their theories formed much of the thinking in intellectual circles during the early seventeenth century and the same was true of ideas

⁴⁰¹ N. Canny, ‘The Permissive Frontier’, in K. Andrews, N. Canny, & P. Hair, eds., *The Westward Enterprise* (Liverpool, 1978), p. 21.

⁴⁰² *For the Plantation in Virginia or Nova Britannia* (London, 1609): Virginia Company broadside. This form of publication would later be used by the Virginia Company to suggest that the colony’s concentration on tobacco growing and not a diverse agricultural economy was to the detriment of all concerned.

⁴⁰³ J. White, *The Planter’s Plea* (London, 1630), pp. 23, 33. More will be said about the sort of people encouraged to emigrate in chapters six and seven.

⁴⁰⁴ M. Braddick, ‘Civility and Authority’, in D. Armitage, & M. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World 1500-1800* (London, 2002), p. 100.

on the cultivation and classification of plant life. This meant that settlers were interested in New World flora in order to feed the colony and to discover new medicines and perhaps even develop a lucrative commercial trade. The use of plants in medicine, deriving from the writings of Galen, remained unchallenged during this period. Plants were the key tools in the physician's armoury, both for use on a sick patient, internally and externally, and for the prevention of illness. Pliny's work on plants was also very influential; he tried to categorise them for the first time into a sort of natural history, though this work would not come to complete fruition until Linnaeus' divisions of the botanical kingdom in the early eighteenth century.⁴⁰⁵ Louis Wright claimed that since the publication in English of Nicolas Monardes' tract on the New World in 1577, English men were obsessed with searching for new plants abroad to cure ills at home.⁴⁰⁶ R.H. Stearns has argued that the writing of Monardes, who never went to America, along with that of Oviedo and Acosta who did, were the foundation stones upon which all New World botany was built.⁴⁰⁷

II.

The Fertility of America: Initial Enthusiasm and Later Caution

Stephen Adams has said that commentators, writing of the flora and fauna of Virginia in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, tended to reduce their descriptions to mere lists of the commodities showing no other appreciation of the landscape and wildlife that they encountered.⁴⁰⁸ While it is true that they showed little aesthetic

⁴⁰⁵ A. Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts* (Cambridge, MA., 1992), p. 165.

⁴⁰⁶ L. Wright, *The Dream of Prosperity in Colonial America* (New York, 1965), p. 42.

⁴⁰⁷ R.H. Stearns, *Science in the British Colonies of America* (Urbana, IL, 1970), p. 21.

⁴⁰⁸ S. Adams, *The Best and Worst Country in the World* (Charlottesville, VA., 2001), p. 72.

interest in the new land, their accounts were far more than simple lists. They offered a detailed analysis of the potential uses of the plant life in America, and that which might be imported to the New World from Europe. This analysis can be divided into four themes. First, they assessed the fertility or barrenness of the soil, often comparing the vigour of native plants with that of common plants in England. Second, they commented on whether hard labour would be required to clear the land, till the soil and grow the crops that would feed the community or be useful for trade. Third, they related the conditions found in America to botanical life in Europe, encouraging the exchange of species between the two continents. Finally, they emphasised the plenty and diversity of plant life supported by the land in their region, assigning to each crop and wild plant a purpose to assist human health or comfort.

Hopes and Disappointments of the Fertility of the Soil

Some historians have argued that early settlers wrote very low-key accounts of the fertility of their region. Once the first enthusiasm of explorers such as John Brereton and John Smith had subsided, commentators, according to some, often expressed disappointment in the fertility of their ground.⁴⁰⁹ Examples of this can be found in the letters, from John Guy's Newfoundland expedition, to the company in England cited in the previous chapter. Many of Guy's settlers seem to indicate that they had been wrongly led to expect that Newfoundland would be a more fertile region than it was found to be. Most settlers recorded the fertility of the soil with great excitement, and even those groups who suffered high mortality in the first few seasons of residence did not criticise the fertility of the soil. George Percy's tract concerning the difficult

⁴⁰⁹ V. DeJohn Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1991), p. 36. However, others such as David Cressy disagree with this assessment. See D. Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987).

first few years of the Virginia settlement was unable to fault the flora he discovered there. He wrote, 'we past through excellent ground full of flowers of divers kinds and colours and as goodly trees as I have seen'.⁴¹⁰ Unfortunately, though, those early settlers were unable to harness the fertility of the region, and within a few months had begun to starve. In 1620, William Bradford commented that the settlers of Plymouth immediately traded with the natives for seeds to plant for next year 'or els they might have starved.' As is well known through the story of the first Thanksgiving, the natives kept the English alive in that first harsh winter until the residents of Plymouth were able to support themselves. However, Bradford did not blame the poor fertility of the region for their hunger. It was often the case that expeditions arrived at the wrong time of year to grow corn immediately; Bradford complained soon after his arrival of the cold winter, and lamenting that the 'ground [was] now all covered with snow and hard frozen'.⁴¹¹ Due to weather conditions, ships usually left England in the late spring and by the time they arrived in America it was too late to begin planting and another year had to go by before the colony could support itself.⁴¹²

William Wood's tract of 1635 on the Massachusetts Bay colony contained a whole chapter on the nature of the soil. He emphasised its goodness not only for growing food for the settlers, but also for fodder through which a man's herd might 'increase into thousands'.⁴¹³ Wood was claiming that, unlike in England where animals had to be slaughtered in the autumn as it was hard to find enough fodder for them, in America it was possible to feed a large herd throughout the winter, ever expanding the owner's herd and profits. Wood also compared the soil of New

⁴¹⁰ 'Observations gathered out of the Discourse of the Plantation of the Southerne Colonie in Virginia by the English in 1606 written by that Honourable Gentleman George Percy', Purchas, *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XVIII, p. 408.

⁴¹¹ W. Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-47* ed. W.T. Davis (New York, 1964), p. 100.

⁴¹² E.A. Bergstrom, 'English Game Laws and Colonial Food Shortages' *New England Quarterly*, XII (1939), p. 683.

⁴¹³ W. Wood, *New Englands Prospect* (London, 1635), p.10.

England with that of old England, so that his readers could make comparisons to aid their understanding of life in the New World. He went on, 'for the naturall soyle, I preferred it before the countrey of Surey or Middlesex which if they were not inriched with continuall manurings would be lesse fertile than the meanest ground in New England'.⁴¹⁴ John Underhill, a resident of Connecticut, wrote about the plenty, 'a soyle that beares good corne, all sorts of graine, flax, hemp the countrey generally will afford'. Underhill was using the potential held within this soil to justify the violence of the Pequot War in which a native tribe was removed from this fertile land and massacred.⁴¹⁵ Later, Edward Johnson wrote that the fruitfulness of New England had surpassed all expectation, and though initially other colonies had been preferred above her, she had shown her true value: 'they [New Englanders] have not only fed their elder sisters, Virginia, Barbados and many of the Summer Islands that were prefer'd before her for fruitfulness but also the grandmother of us all, even the fertile isle of Great Britain'.⁴¹⁶ Andrew White claimed that, in Maryland, the native crop of peas they had planted on arrival had grown ten inches in ten days.⁴¹⁷ Virginian settlers also thought it important to emphasise the fertility of their region to readers in England. Ralph Hamor, writing in 1614 of the land near Bermuda City, where Thomas Dale and other leaders had their homes, felt able to assert 'by mine own experience that the corne and garden ground...is as fertile as any other we have had experience and trial of'.⁴¹⁸ It must be acknowledged that in describing the fertility of the soil many authors exaggerated for propaganda purposes, to encourage settlement

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴¹⁵ J. Underhill, *Newes from America* (London, 1638, facsimile edition Amsterdam, 1971), p.21.

⁴¹⁶ E. Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-working Providence 1628-51*, ed. J.F. Jameson (New York, 1910), p. 247.

⁴¹⁷ A. White, 'An Account of the Colony of the Lord Baron Baltimore 1633', in C. Hall, ed. *Narratives of Early Maryland* (New York, 1910), p. 10.

⁴¹⁸ R. Hamor, *A True Discourse of the Present Estate of Virginia and the Successes of the Affaires there till the 18 of June 1614* (London, 1615), p. 32.

in their colony, in preference to others in mainland America, or the Caribbean. Those writers who claimed that the soil was barren and unable to support food often did so in private letters away from the gaze of the public.

The unknown author of *A Relation of Maryland* claimed that the soil of that region was very rich, just like in 'Cheesweeke' (Chiswick), near London. In fact he thought the soil too rich, and he encouraged the planting of maize, tobacco and hemp to drain off this excess so that English corn could be successfully planted there. He believed that 'you shall either find it here do grow naturally or industry and good husbandry will produce it.'⁴¹⁹ Maize was one of the most significant native crops to be cultivated by the settlers, but as this quotation implies, it was mostly grown as a substitute for English corn. In the first few years, maize was grown in both Virginia and Plymouth out of necessity, due to the seeds brought from England having rotted on board ship. Maize also helped to prevent soil depletion because of its restorative properties.⁴²⁰ In St. Mary's county, Maryland, in the mid-seventeenth century, maize was the only native foodstuff to appear in any quantity on inventories, and the first settlers of Maryland had bought maize seeds in Barbados to grow for food for the first year.⁴²¹ However, it was only used as a subsistence food, and did not become a luxury food item in Europe during this period.⁴²² In Massachusetts, maize was only rarely cultivated because English seeds had been successfully brought across the Atlantic

⁴¹⁹ Anon, *A Relation of Maryland* (London, 1635), p 20.

⁴²⁰ J. Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 242, 321.

⁴²¹ H. Miller, 'An Archaeological Perspective on the Evolution of Diet in the Colonial Chesapeake', in L.G. Carr, P. Morgan, & J. Russo, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1991), p. 179; R. Menard & L. Carr, 'The Lords Baltimore and the Colonisation of Maryland', in D.B. Quinn, ed. *Early Maryland in a Wider World* (Detroit, MI., 1982), p. 170.

⁴²² This may have been because Peter Martyr's *Decades*, his well-known description of Southern America, claimed that maize could only be properly digested in hot climates: J. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier 1500-1676* (Cambridge, MA., 2001), p. 149.

and they grew well, meaning that the settlers could grow and eat more familiar cereal crops.

Labour Required to Utilise the Flora

Connected with their understanding of the fertility of the soil was the settlers' interpretation of the labour they would require to cultivate food in their colony. Many early accounts placed such emphasis on the natural fertility and plenty of America that they gave the impression that little manual labour would be needed to ensure sufficiency and prosperity. Richard Whitbourne claimed of Newfoundland, that little labour was required to cultivate the fruits of the soil, and that crops were produced naturally in her 'fruitful womb'.⁴²³ This led to a serious problem in the early years, which was exacerbated by the misunderstanding of the nature of the American seasons. Ships often arrived in late summer, and settlers at first assumed that this plenty would last throughout the year, not realising the severity of the winter season. Authors soon realised their mistake and began to temper their descriptions of the natural bounty of America with warnings that man could only enjoy it if he was prepared to labour. This change is revealed in the different emphasis found in the writings of Francis Higginson and John Winthrop. Higginson wrote of his first impressions on arriving in America and his account was full of effusive descriptions of the flora, which he compared favourably to that of England. Winthrop, by contrast, arrived a few months later and suffered a very hard winter, which made him recognise that plenty would only come with hard work and even suffering.⁴²⁴ Virginia's leaders also recognised the importance of achieving a balance in promotional literature

⁴²³ R. Whitbourne, *A Discourse and Discoverie of the New Found Land* (London, 1620), p. 6.

⁴²⁴ P. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness* (Columbia, 1969), p. 52. Later commentators on the New World followed Winthrop's lead. William Wood, though eulogising the plenty of the region in the mid 1630s also spoke of the hard work required to sustain the colony.

between spreading news of America's opportunity and preparing people for the realities of the life they would experience. In 1624 John Harvey reported to the Privy Council on the state of Virginia and recommended that literature boasting of the fertility and unbounded plenty of Virginia should no longer be published as it encouraged settlers to arrive unprepared to labour.⁴²⁵ This may explain why John Rolfe's letter to the King in 1616, on the natural plenty of Virginia, remained unpublished. In it, he claimed that conditions in Virginia were much easier than in England, where it was almost impossible for the labourer to make a decent living.⁴²⁶ But even in 1656 John Hammond could still promise that labourers in Virginia and Maryland would have to work less hard than their English counterparts.⁴²⁷

Comparing the Old World with the New

Francis Higginson was not the only author to compare the newly discovered American flora with that he knew in England. Other authors did so too, bringing the reader's attention to the wonderful nature of plant life across the Atlantic by contrasting it with the familiar situation at home. Thomas Graves, a Massachusetts Bay compatriot of Higginson, who would surely have discussed and been influenced by Higginson's writing, also enthused over the potential of the soil in the region where they landed. 'If it hath not at any time been manured and husbanded yet it is very beautiful...for everything that is here either sown or planted prospereth far better than in Old England'.⁴²⁸ Virginians, too, proudly compared their fruits and plants to those of the mother country. For example, William Strachey described some of the

⁴²⁵ 'A Briefe Declaration of the State of Virginia at my comminge from thence in February 1624', *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, vol. 9 series 4 (1871), p. 73

⁴²⁶ J. Rolfe, 'Relation of the State of Virginia' (1616) *The Virginia Historical Register*, I (1848), p. 111

⁴²⁷ L. Hammond, *Leah and Rachel: or Two Fruitfull Sisters Virginia and Maryland their Present Condition, Impartially Stated and Related* (London, 1656), p. 9

⁴²⁸ T. Graves, 'Letter written Sept 1629', in E. Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England: Massachusetts Bay Colony 1629-38* (Amherst, MA., 1976), p. 39.

fruits he had sampled, claiming that while some were too sharp for English taste, others ‘there be whose tast allowes them to be as pretious as the English Apricock’.⁴²⁹ John Smith referred to Virginia’s chestnuts and plums, which he said were as good as those found in England. He then proceeded to list many other fruits not found in England, and gave them English names and a brief commentary on their use.⁴³⁰ The historian Alfred Crosby has argued that early settlers of Virginia found that most of the flora they encountered there were alien to them.⁴³¹ However, the evidence from many authors such as Smith does not bear out this conclusion. Of course, the plant species were different from those encountered in England, but writers generally felt able to fit the fruit and trees into familiar categories by comparing the flora of the New World with that of the Old. John Rolfe’s description of the plenty of Virginia repeatedly used the rhetorical device of referring the reader to plants he knew well in England, in the hope that it would make the plants of the New World easier to visualise and appear more familiar. He claimed that the cultivation of herbs and vegetables there ‘both for pleasure and for the kitchen, [was] so good, so fruitful, so pleasant and profitable as the best made ground in England can yield’. Later he went on to praise flax and hemp, potential cash crops for the colony, by saying that one might find ‘none better in England or Holland’.⁴³²

Authors also tried to link the American and English eco-systems by recommending the growing of English seeds and plants in the New World.⁴³³ John Winthrop recorded that the settlers in Massachusetts were receiving shipments of corn

⁴²⁹ W. Strachey, *Historie of Travell into Virginia Britannia*, ed. L.B. Wright, (Hakluyt Soc., 1951), p. 120.

⁴³⁰ J. Smith, *A Map of Virginia* (Oxford, 1612), p. 11.

⁴³¹ A. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT, 1972), p. 5.

⁴³² Rolfe, ‘Relation of the State of Virginia’, p. 105.

⁴³³ Many English species such as dandelions, nightshades and stinging nettles were transported accidentally to America in the collections of seeds and fodder taken across the Atlantic. For more information on this accidental spread, see W. Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (New York, 1984), p. 193.

from England as early as 1631, when the price was very high due to ‘the dearness of corn in England’, and it is probable that soon afterwards, the settlers were cultivating English corn for themselves.⁴³⁴ This corn was not only valued as food for the settlers themselves, but was also useful for animal fodder. Winthrop had reported earlier in his journal that ‘a cow died at Plimoth and a goat at Boston with eating Indian corn’.⁴³⁵ The deliberate transportation of potentially valuable plants from Europe and South America was undertaken from an early date, as Samuel Purchas indicated in his summary of the letters he had received from Virginia in 1621. Purchas wrote that ‘orange and lemon trees, fig trees, sugar canes, cotton wooll, cassavi roots (that make very good bread), plantanes, potatoes and sundry other fruits and plants not formerly seen in Virginia’ were sent to the settlers that year for experimental planting.⁴³⁶ It was not only in Virginia that these experiments were taking place. Captain John Mason reported that, in Newfoundland, around the same time, he was attempting to cultivate several different English herbs, including ‘hysope, time, parseley, clarie, nepe, French mallows, buglosse, columbines, wormewood’.⁴³⁷ Mason thought that Newfoundland was very promising for crop cultivation and compared it to Poland, which he said was ‘one of the greatest corne countries’.⁴³⁸ This comparison reveals the extent of Mason’s ambitions; Poland was able to export grain on a vast scale to Western and Southern Europe, so, clearly, Mason had more than subsistence in mind. It was not only the crops of England that authors hoped would thrive in American soil. Robert Evelin, after listing in great detail the fruits and trees to be found native in Virginia,

⁴³⁴ J. Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649* ed. James Savage (Boston, 1825), vol. I, p. 46.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴³⁶ S. Purchas, ed. *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 151.

⁴³⁷ J. Mason, ‘A Brief Discourse of the New Found Land’, in C.W. Tuttle, & J.W. Dean eds., *The Founder of New Hampshire* (Boston, MA., 1887), p. 149.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

went on to claim that ‘almonds and other fruits of Spain will prosper in Virginia’.⁴³⁹

As recorded by William Strachey, the damage to the ships of Sir Thomas Gates’ fleet in Bermuda allowed his party to collect specimens, such as sugar cane, from that island to take on to Virginia.⁴⁴⁰ I will turn later to examine how far these hopes were fulfilled. Later, this chapter will also explore how the importation of the flora of America influenced botanical science in England through the work of such renowned experts as the Tradescants.

Native Knowledge of American Flora

As is well known, in the romanticised history of America’s early settlement, assistance did not come only from other Englishmen in the New World. Despite regular violent skirmishes in all the colonies, many Native Americans assisted the settlers by providing food and water, and by helping the settlers to adapt to their new environment, enabling them to grow crops and take advantage of the wild plant life. The need for food inspired a wider trade with local native tribes that proved culturally significant for both sides; some English products were traded at devalued prices because of settlers’ desperation, while others, mere trinkets in English eyes, became symbols of the white man’s superiority.⁴⁴¹ However, it is important not to overstate the benign nature of the Indians. They were not merely passive observers, unable to resist the Europeans and immediately resorting to trading and appeasing the invaders. Many tribes took an active stance against the English, and, as William Strachey recorded, were able to restrict the movement of early Virginians so that they were unable to collect food. He recalled how ‘our men would make out either to gather

⁴³⁹ R. Evelin, *A Direction for Adventurers with Small Stock to get Two for One and Good Land Freely* (London, 1641).

⁴⁴⁰ W. Strachey, ‘A True Repertory of the Wrack and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates Knight...’ Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 18.

⁴⁴¹ M. Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America 1576-1624* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 93-97.

strawberries or to fetch fresh water; any one of which so stragled if they could with convenience they would assault and charge with their bows and arrowes'.⁴⁴² After the Virginia Massacre, George Wyatt showed that the English, too, realised the importance of gaining control of the enemy's food supply. He described to his son, Frances, the tactic of the 'feed fight', which involved seizing and destroying the natives' crops.⁴⁴³ Even when the natives were willing to help their new neighbours, the English were not always gracious in receiving assistance. For example, although the natives taught the Virginians how to use, grow and dry tobacco, the euro-centric whites still believed that native farming techniques were misguided.⁴⁴⁴ Not that the native tribes thought much of the English agricultural methods either. The natives in the New England area encountered by William Wood believed that the English ploughmen were little better than 'jugglers'!⁴⁴⁵

Despite these cultural misunderstandings, the English relied on native help in agriculture far more than they were willing to admit.⁴⁴⁶ The Virginia Company intended to trade for food with the natives only for the first few years, but in fact remained reliant on them much longer. The Indians not only showed them the best ways to plant corn and vegetables, but also where to find minerals, how to prepare for the hurricane season and the best places to look for pelts.⁴⁴⁷ Samuel Purchas edited some notes by John Smith for his collection of travel narratives and reproduced Smith's reports on the agriculture of the natives and how the English might learn from

⁴⁴² Strachey, 'A True Repertory', p. 65.

⁴⁴³ G. Wyatt, 'A Letter of Advice to the Governor of Virginia, 1624', ed. J. F. Fausz & J. Kukla, *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 34 (1977), p. 126.

⁴⁴⁴ J. Knapp, *An Empire Nowhere*, (Berkeley, CA., 1992) p. 145.

⁴⁴⁵ Quoted in J. Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Clash of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford, 1985), p. 11.

⁴⁴⁶ Some historians are also loathe to admit the central role played by the natives in educating the English on how to find their own food. See D.B. Quinn, 'Why They Came', in Quinn, ed. *Early Maryland in a Wider World* (Detroit, MI., 1982), p. 121.

⁴⁴⁷ J. Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: Cultural Origins of North America* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 46, 239

it, for example by planting multiple crops in one field: ‘in May amongst their corne they plant pumpeons’.⁴⁴⁸ Smith also described the natives teaching him when to harvest maize, as he had thought it only half ripe when, in fact, it was ready to eat.⁴⁴⁹ One anonymous author described how the early settlers in Maryland also received assistance, of a very different kind. They bartered with a the local native chief, exchanging a few hand tools and clothes for large plots of land, land on which the Indians had already cultivated peas and beans, which the English were then able to use to support themselves until the maize they had planted ripened.⁴⁵⁰ Even when English settlers did not inherit crops in the fields, they often made use of the field systems that were once part of native villages. This was especially prevalent in the New England area where disease killed the vast majority of the natives, leading them to abandon their fields just in time for the English to claim them.⁴⁵¹ In 1619, John Pory wrote from Virginia that native assistance meant that the English could now cultivate two sorts of corn and therefore have two harvests per year. ‘In July last so soon as we had reaped this selfe-sown wheate we sett Indian corne upon the same ground’, he wrote.⁴⁵² But it was Plymouth plantation that was famously the site of the encounter that forever immortalised the friendly relations between the two cultures in the Thanksgiving celebrations. Though at first the wary Indians fired on the newcomers, it was native stores of corn and beans that sustained the English through the first difficult winter, and gave them seed to plant to raise next year’s crop. In reality, the story is not quite as benign as it sounds. William Bradford admitted that

⁴⁴⁸ ‘The Description of Virginia by Captaine John Smith enlarged out of his written notes’, in Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 437.

⁴⁴⁹ L. Paine, *Captain John Smith and the Jamestown Story* (London, 1973), p. 96.

⁴⁵⁰ *A Relation of the Successfull Beginnings of the Lord Baltemores Plantation in Maryland*, (London, 1634), p. 9.

⁴⁵¹ M. Conzen, ed., *The Making of the American Landscape* (London, 1990), p. 49.

⁴⁵² ‘John Pory to Dudley Carleton 1619’, *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, series 4, vol. 9 (1871), p. 8.

the English actually stole the natives' supplies of corn and beans, although the raiding party hoped to be able to pay for them sometime in the future.⁴⁵³ Later, they allied themselves with Squanto, an Indian familiar with English customs, who, having come 'skulking about' the settlement, proceeded to show them 'how to set their corne, wher to take fish and procure other commodities and was also their pilot to bring them to unknowne places for their profit and never left them till he dyed'.⁴⁵⁴

Another technique borrowed from local native tribes was the clearance of land by girdling trees, in which large trees were felled easily by making circular cuts in the trunk and leaving it to wither before finally bringing it down. Many Englishmen had experience of clearing woodland, which happened frequently in England during that period. But they learned from the Indians how to burn unwanted grassland areas to clear fields for cultivation. This also had the effect of removing many native grasses from coastal regions and it opened the way for the accidental importation of European strains such as daisies and dandelions and Kentucky bluegrass, actually an import from England.⁴⁵⁵ Settlers also became aware of the potential of American floral products as dyes through their early contacts with the natives. Several tribes used natural dye to colour their skin for ceremonial purposes, fascinating European observers. John Smith recalled being introduced to 'alkermes', red berries that were useful for dye.⁴⁵⁶ The English seem to have been slow to start manufacturing their own cloth in America; even in industrious New England, John Winthrop wrote begging later migrants to bring supplies of cloth with them from England, so, although they had learned to use the local flora for dyeing, the practice did not

⁴⁵³ Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation 1606-46*, p. 100.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁴⁵⁵ Crosby, *Columbian Exchange*, p. 73.

⁴⁵⁶ J. Smith, *A Description of New England* (London, 1616), p. 11.

become prevalent on a large scale during this period.⁴⁵⁷ Within a few years, the English settlers had adapted many native techniques to their own ends, whether growing crops, fishing or clearing land. However, many settlers were unwilling to spend as long in the fields every day as the native women, so they modified practices to suit their own lifestyles, using planting and fertilising techniques that would allow them to spend more time on other pursuits.⁴⁵⁸ In terms of botany and agriculture, the cultural engagement was really more of a gentle blending than an aggressive struggle.

III.

Regional Variations in Expectation and Reality

The Reverend John White made a rather grand claim, that the commodities given to the colonists by nature would unite the mother country and her empire. ‘Nature hath as much force and sounds as strong a relation betweene people and people and betweene person and person’, he wrote.⁴⁵⁹ Each region in North America contributed to this relationship, as the examples below indicate. The anonymous tract *A Perfect Description of Virginia*, published in 1649, is a good example of a work listing the plenty available to the settlers of Virginia in a totally matter-of-fact and utilitarian way. The author lists fifteen sorts of fruit, claiming that Virginia rivalled Italy in its diversity, with twenty-five sorts of trees, and roots such as ‘potatoes, asparagus, carrots, turnips, parsnips, onions and artichokes’. He also noted various ‘physick

⁴⁵⁷ ‘John Winthrop to John Winthrop Junior, March 28 1631’, in Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England*, p. 88.

⁴⁵⁸ Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: Cultural Origins of North America*, p. 322.

⁴⁵⁹ J. White, *The Planters Plea or the Grounds of Plantations Examined and Usual Objections Answered* (London, 1630), p. 25.

flowers', maize, Indian peas and indigo, remarking that the settlers would like to 'gain the trade of it from the Mogul's country and to supply all Christendom'. Of course tobacco was mentioned, but so were other cash crops such as hemp, flax, mulberry trees, vines, silk, and other drugs, gums and dyes. Those members of the colony who were instrumental in the cultivation of these crops received a special mention, such as Mr. Hough of Nausamund with his one and a half thousand fruit trees. However, despite such a store of flora for the use of Virginians, the outlook was not wholly positive. The author stressed the unrealised potential to the south of Virginia. If settlers had expanded there, their industry would have produced sugar, indigo, ginger, cotton and the like commodities'. Another several decades would pass before this dream became a reality in the Carolinas.⁴⁶⁰

Similarly, the commodities of Maryland were eulogised in 1635 by an anonymous author who described in detail many of the plants to be found in the countryside around the colony, and listed a use for each of them. He first described the medicines, snakeroot for poison, saxafras for healing wounds and another unidentified plant for helping a toothache. The trees of Maryland would be useful both to the colonists and England, he thought: not only could white oak be used for pipe staves and red oak for wainscot, but the woods themselves were useful for grazing swine which produced bacon as good as that from Westphalia. Also, many plants that appeared in the spring, such as corn-sallet, violets, sorrel and purslane, would be useful for salads and broths.⁴⁶¹ Even in isolated Newfoundland the importance of the cultivation of crops was recognised almost immediately, even though the area is more often associated with fishing for trade and subsistence. The Council for Newfoundland reminded Captain John Guy of the importance of raising

⁴⁶⁰ 'A Perfect Description of Virginia' (London, 1649), in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 9, series 2 (Boston, 1832), pp. 105-22.

⁴⁶¹ *A Relation of Maryland* (London, 1635), pp. 17-18.

crops, as well as looking for trees to make soap ash and turpentine.⁴⁶² Especially worrying to the Council was the shortage of timber that was being experienced in England and northern Europe. Woodland was rapidly disappearing as it was cleared to make way for the grazing of cattle and the cultivation of corn. Timber was in short supply because it was needed in increasing quantities in the seventeenth century for house building, domestic fuel, shipbuilding and iron works.⁴⁶³ This problem came to a head early in the 1650s during the war against the Dutch whose allies, Denmark, closed off the English timber trade in the Baltic, just at the time when the demand for timber to build a larger fleet stretched England's resources to the limit. After the restoration of Charles II, the lone voice of John Evelyn pleaded for conservation, claiming that the forests of England should be replenished as a symbol of a healthy royalist future. Evelyn thought that all English iron working should be removed to America because so much timber was available there.⁴⁶⁴ Timber was a very useful resource in the Massachusetts Bay area as in Newfoundland to the north. Settlers did not only clear areas of woodland for cultivation or pastureland, they made use of the timber resources they found in the open park-like woods that had been cleared by the Native Americans, not only for ship and house building and fuel but also for barrel making, which then contributed to the transportation of other saleable goods such as sugar from the Caribbean.⁴⁶⁵

There are obviously many intrinsic differences between the experiences of colonists in the Chesapeake and those in New England, because of the variety in soil types, indigenous plant life, native tribes and the nature of the migration. However, despite these factors, the experience of settlers in the two regions had much in

⁴⁶² 'Instructions directed by the Counsaile for the Plantation in New Found Land to John Guy', Nottingham University Library, *Middleton MSS*, Mix 1/1, f 13.

⁴⁶³ W. Haskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1988), p. 138.

⁴⁶⁴ R.H. Grove, *Green Imperialism* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 57-8.

⁴⁶⁵ Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p. 25.

common in the first years of each colony. Initially, settlers in both Virginia and New England found it very difficult to provide themselves with enough food. They were unprepared for the labour and lacked the expertise needed to grow enough for their community and often arrived in America at the end of the growing season and had to wait a further year before any seeds they planted came to fruition. During the first winter at Plymouth, residents suffered ‘famine, poverty and great mortality’, according to Thomas Dudley, writing a decade later.⁴⁶⁶ William Bradford’s account confirmed this: ‘some English seed they sew as wheat and pease but it came to no good’, so that half of the company died in the first year of settlement.⁴⁶⁷

Massachusetts Bay did not escape hardship either, though many of the commentators tried to put a brave face on the shortages of food. Winthrop himself said in a letter to his wife that though ‘our fare be but course in respect of what we formerly had (pease puddings and fish being our ordinary diet) yet He makes it sweet and wholesome to us’.⁴⁶⁸ In exceptional circumstances, for example, in the very harsh winter of 1635, the residents of Massachusetts Bay found it hard to provide enough food for themselves. John Winthrop described in his diary the welcome arrival of one of the colony’s ships from Bermuda ‘with thirty thousand weight of potatoes and store of oranges and limes, which were a great relief to our people’.⁴⁶⁹ This shows that even though the New Englanders had proclaimed their colony an early success, they were still only producing just enough food for survival and had little surplus for an emergency.

⁴⁶⁶ ‘Thomas Dudley to Lady Bridget, Countess of Lincoln, March 12 1631’, in Emerson, ed., *Letters from New England*, p. 69.

⁴⁶⁷ Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, p. 116.

⁴⁶⁸ ‘John Winthrop to Margaret Winthrop July 23 1630’, in Emerson, ed., *Letters from New England*, p. 46.

⁴⁶⁹ J. Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630-1649*, vol. I, ed. J. Savage (Boston, 1825) p. 182.

Part of the problem was the pests that attacked the crops. Winthrop and John Hull both complained of the plagues of caterpillars that decimated the crops in Massachusetts. Winthrop recalled that in July 1646 ‘great harm was done in corn, especially wheat and barley in this month by a caterpillar, like a black worm about an inch and a half long. They eat up first the blades of the stalk then they eat up the tassels whereupon the ear withered’. Winthrop had no idea where these pests came from, saying that ‘it was believed by divers good observers that they fell in a great thunder shower’.⁴⁷⁰ John Hull also connected a plague of caterpillars in 1658 with other providential signs. He wrote in his diary that ‘in the latter end of the 3d month much hurt came by the caterpillars to the fruit trees’, and that also that month a comet was seen to pass over the colony.⁴⁷¹ A poem, probably written by Edward Johnson and now thought to be New England’s first folk song, took a wry look at early colonial life and confirmed the annoyances of pests plaguing their crops: ‘our corn being planted and seed being sown, The worms destroy much before it is grown’.⁴⁷²

Within a few years, however, the English settlers were able to adapt and provide their own food. New Englanders were very resourceful and they did not have the difficulties with local natives that beset the Virginians, as the tribes were not united into a powerful alliance and European diseases had decimated their populations. Edward Johnson recalled an occasion during the first few years of settlement in Boston when settlers relying on provision ships from the sugar colonies and England were forced to eat wild onions and herbs until other provisions came, but the colonists continued to build their community with fortitude.⁴⁷³ As early as 1623, three years after the colony’s founding, a visitor to Plymouth recorded that the state of

⁴⁷⁰ Winthrop, *History of New England*, vol. II, p. 267-8.

⁴⁷¹ ‘Diary of John Hull of Boston’, Massachusetts Historical Society, Hull MSS. Copy made from the original by Nath. B. Shurtleff, Boston, March 1849.

⁴⁷² ‘New Englands Annoyances’, ed. J.A. Lemay (London, 1985), prologue.

⁴⁷³ Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence 1628-51*, p. 83.

the plantation had much improved and that it was in very good health, with domestic animals, trade with Indians and the colonists' own crops providing them with sustenance. However, he cautioned that they had learned from bitter experience that anyone considering migration should not do so unless they could provide themselves with provisions to survive for twelve months.⁴⁷⁴ After a few years, the settlers in New England also had great success in managing the resources at their disposal and they had soon cleared large areas of trees and brush and planted English grains, grasses and the indigenous maize. The importance of grain crops led to the establishment of mills in several towns, with the townspeople offering the millers a very attractive local monopoly.⁴⁷⁵

In Virginia, it was not such a promising story. The first three years of the Jamestown settlement are now well known as 'the starving time'. Ralph Hamor remarked on the 'bruit of famine', which only passed with the arrival of Sir Thomas Dale, who put the colonists to work growing and collecting food.⁴⁷⁶ William Strachey went even further, describing one Virginian's desperation: 'the tragickall historie of the man eating of his dead wife'.⁴⁷⁷ This tale of cannibalism was accompanied by accounts of members of the company eating their mastiffs when unable to gather or grow enough food, due either to incompetence or the threat from local natives. Despite early tales of plenty and fruitfulness, in 1624, a full seventeen years after the establishment of the colony, a Privy Council report claimed that though they had 'come for themselves they have noe more then sufficient to bringe the yeare about and at my comminge away they were goeng to trade for come with the savages in the

⁴⁷⁴ 'Emmanuel Altham to Sir Edward Altham Sept 1623', in *Three Early Visitors to Plymouth*, ed. S.J. James (Plymouth, 1967), pp. 23, 28.

⁴⁷⁵ Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America 1580-1845*, pp. 47-9.

⁴⁷⁶ Hamor, *A True Discourse*, p. 15.

⁴⁷⁷ Strachey, 'A True Repertory', p. 69.

[Chesapeake] Bay'.⁴⁷⁸ The reason for this failure was not simply the deterioration of relations with the local natives, or the inexperience of the migrants in providing food for themselves, but the choices made by Virginia's elite as to the priorities for the colony's agriculture.

The Search for a Staple Crop

The most lucrative yet controversial crop cultivated in North America up to the development of the cotton industry was tobacco, and Virginia was the origin and heartland of this crop. Throughout the early modern period, commentators in America and England argued over its merits; no one remained neutral. It is the one factor that made Virginian society truly distinctive from both her neighbouring colonies and from England herself. Tobacco not only influenced the landscape of the Chesapeake, but also the character of the society and its individuals.⁴⁷⁹ The colony was floundering until 1612 when John Rolfe, influenced by native cultivation and curing techniques, began experimenting with tobacco with the aim of turning it into a staple crop that would rival that of the Spanish, who marketed their South American-grown tobacco to the whole of Europe. These trials took several years, but by 1620 the crop was well established and growers were receiving an extremely good price for the commodity in the European market.⁴⁸⁰ By 1624, the crop was secure enough for Edward Bennett, a merchant of Virginia, to propose to the House of Commons that the importing of Spanish tobacco into England should be banned.⁴⁸¹ However, long before Rolfe's

⁴⁷⁸ 'A Briefe Declaration of the State of Virginia February 1624', p. 65.

⁴⁷⁹ Several important historians of early modern Virginia agree with this view including Jack Greene, Timothy Breen and Stephen Adams. Quoted in S. Adams, *The Best and Worst Country in the World* (Charlottesville, VA., 2001), p. 146.

⁴⁸⁰ Rolfe did not advocate that tobacco should become Virginia's sole staple at this stage. He also wanted to encourage silk cultivation and subsistence farming, see Rolfe, 'Relation of the State of Virginia'.

⁴⁸¹ J.B. Bodie, 'Edward Bennett of London and Virginia', *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 13 (1933), p. 120.

experiments, Englishmen had been vigorously debating the merits of the ‘noxious weed’. Some doctors thought it a panacea, the answer to all their problems. Nicolas Monardes’ work influenced English authors, including ‘A.I.’ who in 1595 edited and published comments from various European physicians on the benefits of tobacco smoking. This school of thought continued to be influential throughout the period. As late as 1659, Dr. Everard published a tract naming tobacco as ‘the universal medicine’, claiming that ‘there is no one kind of foreign commodities that yields greater advantage to the publick and there is scarce any to be compared with it’. Everard went on to claim for tobacco the honour of its use as ‘an antidote against all venome and pestilential diseases’ by all levels of society.⁴⁸²

This opinion did not go unchallenged, however. The most famous author to write of the evils of smoking tobacco was King James I in 1604. He referred to himself as the doctor of the body politic, and referred to tobacco smoking as the most ‘base and yet hurtfull corruption’. James ridiculed the authors who had sung the praises of the herb as a medicine, exclaiming sarcastically, ‘O omnipotent power of tobacco!’⁴⁸³ A few years later, John Deacon went one stage further, claiming that smoking tobacco actually caused treacherous behaviour among the King’s subjects, as well as sending honest gentlemen into debt. He also called tobacco smoking a pagan and heathen practice, referring to its origin in Native American culture, an argument often used by tobacco’s detractors.⁴⁸⁴ The debate raged throughout the seventeenth and into the eighteenth centuries as to whether the use of tobacco typified a society’s

⁴⁸² A.I., *Tobacco* (London, 1595); Dr. Everard, *Panacea, or the Universal Medicine Being a Discovery of the Wonderful Vertues of Tobacco Taken in a Pipe* (London, 1659), sig. A2.

⁴⁸³ James I, *A Counterblast to Tobacco* (London, 1604), pp. 3, 5, 14.

⁴⁸⁴ J. Deacon, *Tobacco Tortured, or The Filthie Fume of Tobacco Refined* (London, 1616), p. 81.

elegance or corruption.⁴⁸⁵ However, the opposition to tobacco had no effect and within a few years of its introduction into England and Europe, it became the staple crop of Virginia. Tobacco could have been cultivated in England successfully, and by the 1650s, it was grown on quite a large scale in Gloucestershire, but the merchants and producers of America were powerful enough to make Cromwell determined to suppress it.⁴⁸⁶ In 1655, the Corporation of the city of Gloucester, for example, had to enforce regulations preventing the cultivation of tobacco for commercial gain in England without a license. The Corporation recorded that:

‘His Highnes hath beene addressed unto by severall merchants and others relating to Virginia etc, complaining of the greate damage that hath accrewed to the English plantacions abroad by the great quantities of English tobacco...the people thereof inhabiting these plantacions impoverished.’⁴⁸⁷

In nearby Cheltenham, tobacco growers were so incensed at the loss of their livelihoods that they started a riot. John Beaman reported to his superiors that ‘we found...a rabble of men and women calling for blood for the tobacco...the soldiers stood firm and with cocked pistols bade the multitude disperse, but they would not’.⁴⁸⁸

It was not only English farmers who were upset by the choice of tobacco as the single staple crop of Virginia. Those who thought tobacco smoking was a filthy habit

⁴⁸⁵ Tobacco was not the only commodity gained from trade with the empire to be accused of corrupting its consumers. Society was ambivalent to many luxury goods during this period, including chocolate and sugar from South America and the Caribbean, as well as lavish cloths from the Middle and Far East. Luxury goods such as tobacco would characterise the economic relationship between England and her colonies throughout the imperial period.

⁴⁸⁶ As Nuala Zahediah notes, this meant that tobacco was not actually a typical mercantile commodity, because it could be grown in Northern Europe. See N. Zahediah, ‘Economy’, in Armitage & Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World 1500-1800*, p. 55.

⁴⁸⁷ HMC records series 27, *Records of the Corporation of Gloucester*, pp. 510-11.

⁴⁸⁸ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1658-9*, pp. 104-5.

suggested alternatives that could make Virginia equally prosperous. James I thought that England's silk and wine supplies might be guaranteed by adopting those as staples, though in ignorance, he did not realise that the climate in Virginia was less suited to vine growing and ideal for tobacco.⁴⁸⁹

Many of the ideas for new crops, products or growing techniques did not come to fruition or bring any monetary reward at all. On many occasions the problem was that advice came from people outside America, and who were not well informed about the conditions in the colonies. John Banoeil wrote a treatise on silk cultivation in 1622 recommending it to both Virginia and the Summer Islands. It was accompanied by a letter to the Governor and Council of Virginia from the Virginia Company, but how many of them read this work during the chaos of the Indian massacre of the same year, we cannot tell. As well as advising that mulberry bushes ought to be planted to attract the silk worms, Banoeil also encouraged the cultivation of peach trees, vines and figs, claiming that Virginia's produce would rival that of Languedoc, Persia and China.⁴⁹⁰ The tract formed part of the intellectual argument, supported by the King and some leading members of the Virginia Company, that settlers were wrong to choose tobacco as the sole staple. As late as 1652 this argument was still being waged, as Samuel Hartlib wrote encouraging Virginians to cultivate mulberry trees so that the planters would not rely so much on income from the tobacco trade. He even claimed that silk would bring a far better return than tobacco, and with less labour.⁴⁹¹ Hartlib took much of his evidence from Edward Williams'

⁴⁸⁹ Wright, *The Dream of Prosperity in Colonial America*, p. 33-6.

⁴⁹⁰ J. Banoeil, *His Majesties Gracious Letter to the Earl of Southampton, Treasurer...* (London, 1622), pp. 1, 63-5.

⁴⁹¹ S. Hartlib, 'The Reformed Virginian Silk Worm', in P. Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*, vol. III, (Washington, 1849), pp. 14, 36. Michael Braddick has argued that Hartlib also saw silk growing as good, honest labour for the deserving poor, whereas tobacco growing encouraged vice in all those who took part in it. M. Braddick, 'Civility and Authority', in D. Armitage & M. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World 1500-1800* (London, 2002), p. 101.

work of 1650 in which Williams promoted the idea of growing silk, vines, olives and almonds because tobacco was an insult to the purity of the Virginian landscape.⁴⁹²

Hartlib's circle were also involved in creating interest among members of London's Society of Apothecaries in drugs from the New World.⁴⁹³ In 1654 Francis Yardley wrote to his friend John Farrar to request 'some silke-worms eggs and materials for the making of silk and what other good fruits or plants may be proper for such a country'.⁴⁹⁴ A few settlers were willing to try to cultivate silk, though the industry did not take off, partly because tobacco farmers lacked the will to try another crop, and partly because inexperience led to a poor quality product.⁴⁹⁵

Another colonial figure interested in the development of new techniques of agriculture was John Smyth. In 1620 a friend in London wrote to him excited by the discovery of a new way of making wine in Virginia, using 'sassaphras and licoras boyled in water'.⁴⁹⁶ The letter went into great detail describing the cost of production, amounts of herbs required and the medicinal benefits of the new drink. In the same year Smyth received another letter from his friend George Thorpe of Southampton Hundred, Virginia, describing the opportunities presented by another new concoction, a drink manufactured from maize. Thorpe praised the new beverage, but said that he

⁴⁹² E. Williams, *Virginias Discovery of Silk Worms With Their Benefit* (London, 1650), sig. A3.

⁴⁹³ C. Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626-1660* (London, 1975), p. 273.

⁴⁹⁴ 'Francis Yardley to John Farrar esq. 8 May 1654', *State Papers of John Thurloe*, ed. T. Birch (London, 1742), vol. 2, p. 274.

⁴⁹⁵ Silk cultivation was still in the minds of American colonists by the 1730s, when the idea was again mooted at the founding of Georgia. The cultivation of silk was intended to provide work for London's poor as well as providing an example for the natives, though of course, this never took off as Georgian agriculture was soon dominated by slave-owning rice planters. See R. Middleton, *Colonial America: A History 1565-1776* (Oxford, 1992), p. 380. Thanks to Tim Lockley for alerting me to Georgia's interest in silk.

⁴⁹⁶ 'Letter from Mr. Russell, London, July 1620', Virginia Historical Society, Smyth of Nibley Papers, no. 30.

missed English beer very much!⁴⁹⁷ Neither the wine nor the maize drink became popular, either in the colonies or in England.

James' opposition to tobacco fell on deaf ears, and in 1651 when Arthur Wodenoth wrote his history of the Virginia colony, he acknowledged that tobacco cultivation was the best way for a planter to make money quickly, although he thought it 'a poisonous drug which the king might justifie to banish and burn'.⁴⁹⁸ John Hammond, writing about Virginia and Maryland a few years later, also thought tobacco a poor staple crop for the colonies, and he believed it would soon be forgotten in favour of silk and flax cultivation and the trading of 'biefe, porke and bacon and butter' to the Caribbean islands.⁴⁹⁹ William Bullock, although he had never been to America, also wrote against tobacco as a staple because its price was declining fast, the intensive labour in the summer caused workers to become feverish, and the once-a-year harvests delayed the sailing of ships from Jamestown. Bullock suggested numerous other crops and products that would provide the colony with both food and income: 'corn, hemp, flax, rape seed, cattle, wool and ...rice'.⁵⁰⁰ Planters in Virginia were far too engrossed in producing as much tobacco as possible and never considered flax or rice cultivation as a serious prospect. The other practical problem caused by tobacco was that it exhausted the soil after a maximum of seven years. Virginia's planters showed little interest in adopting native methods of fertilising the soil or using crop rotation to reinvigorate it, and this meant that planters needed larger and larger plots to satisfy their needs, causing the pattern of land settlement that made

⁴⁹⁷ 'Letter from George Thorpe, Dec 19 1620', Virginia Historical Society, Smyth of Nibley Papers, no. 33. New migrants to Virginia were upset to find that their colony had no way of brewing beer during the first few decades so they had to resort to drinking water, something they would never have done in England.

⁴⁹⁸ A. Wodenoth, *A Short Collection of the Most Remarkable Passages from the Originall to the Dissolution of the Virginia Company* (London, 1651), p. 14.

⁴⁹⁹ Hammond, *Leah and Rachel*, p. 18.

⁵⁰⁰ W. Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined and left to Publick View to be considered by all Iudicious and Honest Men* (London, 1649), p. 10. Members of Virginia's elite, for example John Smyth of Nibley, worried about their economic security and sometimes concurred with this view.

Virginia unique among North American colonies.⁵⁰¹ This obsession with tobacco, and the wealth it created, led to the neglect of other crops and of security, leaving the colony totally unprepared for the massacre of 1622. Throughout the seventeenth century and beyond, outsiders would constantly accuse Virginians and other southerners of neglecting the soil and the building of communities.⁵⁰²

New England had a very different experience in its search for a staple crop. In his book, *New Englands Trials* (1622), John Smith outlined the countries he saw as potential trading partners for the region: ‘Terceras, Maderas, Canaries, Spain, Portugal, Provance, Savoy, Sicilia and all Italy, Norway, Swethland, Lithuania or Germany’.⁵⁰³ However, during the first ten years of the settlement of the Massachusetts Bay area, the main export was fish, which will be discussed in the next chapter. After 1640, the New England colonists experienced a dramatic economic change that enabled them to start exporting crops for trade. When the English Civil War began, the Puritan New Englanders were less reliant on the traditional supply route for both money and provisions. Many former New England residents, for example, Henry Vane Junior, moved back to England and took part in the trans-Atlantic trade.⁵⁰⁴ Consequently, instead of using timber only for construction within the colony, settlers began exporting it at great profit to timber-starved areas in Europe. The most important part of the trade was tall pine trees, which were in very short supply in England and were needed for ships’ masts. Nehemiah Bourne successfully exported these masts for the first time in 1653, but the new commodity suffered prejudice amongst English captains such as Captain Hatsell, who said ‘I desire no more New England masts having four of white pine which I am loth to use’.

⁵⁰¹ W. Billings, J. Selby & T. Tate, eds., *Colonial Virginia* (New York, 1986), p. 67.

⁵⁰² Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America*, p. 75.

⁵⁰³ J. Smith, *New Englands Trials* (London, 1622), p. 9.

⁵⁰⁴ B. Capp, *Cromwell’s Navy: The Fleet and the English Revolution 1648-1660* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 165-6.

However, the trade continued successfully, well into the eighteenth century. New Englanders also tried to push onto the market their inferior oak trees for the manufacture of ships' hulls, even though oaks from Virginia and the Carolinas were of much higher quality.⁵⁰⁵ The settlers also began to establish other industries, such as cotton growing (which always remained on a small scale, unlike in the South later on), the products of which were exported as luxury goods to the West Indies, which enabled the settlers to import luxury items as payment, to supplement their diets.⁵⁰⁶ For example, in late 1639, a small bark arrived from the West Indies with £1400 worth of indigo and sugar to sell in Boston, and departed again immediately, full of local commodities.⁵⁰⁷ But unlike the planters of Virginia, New Englanders never neglected food production for the colonists themselves. Winthrop did record that in 1648 'corn was very scarce and so it was in all countries of Europe, adding that 'our scarcity came by occasion of our transporting much to the West Indies and the Portugal and Spanish Islands'.⁵⁰⁸ Miscalculation had led the colonists to export far more than they could spare. Even so, the contrast with Virginia is striking: it is impossible to imagine the early Virginians ever having any surplus of grain. Within ten years of the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay colony, crop failure and hunger seem to have become largely things of the past.

There were other differences between the two colonies, in terms of the division of agricultural units and the demarcation of smaller plots of land as gardens. For example, the New Englanders had smaller plots of land and personal gardens,

⁵⁰⁵ For a comprehensive survey of the role of the colonies in providing naval materials to the mother-country, see R.G. Albion, *Forests and Sea Power: The Timber Problem of the Royal Navy 1652-1862* (Annapolis, MD., 2000; original edition Cambridge, MA., 1926), p. 23.

⁵⁰⁶ M. Gottfried, 'The first depression in Massachusetts' *New England Quarterly* IX (1936), p. 659.

⁵⁰⁷ Winthrop, *The History of New England*, p. 307. By this time, Virginians too were able to indulge in the luxury food market. In 1637, the *Tristram and Jane* brought sugar, marmalade of quince, conserve of sloes, roses, barberries and almonds to Jamestown. See M. Hiden., ed., 'Accompts of the *Tristram and Jane*', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 62 (1954), p. 436.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

whereas in Virginia, landowners controlled huge tracts of land while reserving a space around the house for a private garden or orchard. In the early years, frontier life was too harsh to think of gardening for pleasure, but from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, grand plantation houses such as the Berkeley's 'Green Spring' were built and the dream of a Virginian garden became a reality.⁵⁰⁹ Crops grown in a huge field system also required a labour force larger than the planter's immediate family, whereas an individual and his kin could tend the small plots of New England. However, as shown in the previous chapter, in both colonies gardens were seen as an important way for the Englishman to conquer and control a small part of the American wilderness, endeavouring, of course, to rid his plot of weeds, which symbolised sinfulness.⁵¹⁰ It was not always a simple task. In 1639, John Winthrop, in a letter to his wife, complained 'I can get no garden enclosed or digged but I hear that in new ground it is best to begin when the weeds are sprung up for then they will be killed and grow no more that year'.⁵¹¹

IV.

Conclusion: Trans-Atlantic Exchange

The settling of North America radically changed the Englishman's knowledge of botany and agriculture. This is exemplified by the exchange of information among men of all ranks of society who, before migration to the New World, had a less active role in food production. Roger Williams, the Puritan exiled from Massachusetts to

⁵⁰⁹ P. Martin, *The Pleasure Gardens of Virginia: from Jamestown to Jefferson* (Princeton, NJ., 1991), p. 4.

⁵¹⁰ V. Harris, *All Coherence Gone: A Study of the Seventeenth Century Controversy over Disorder and Decay in the Universe* (London, 1966), p. 43.

⁵¹¹ Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, p. 394.

Rhode Island, was interested in agriculture as well as religious matters, and this influenced his political and cultural alliances with the natives. In May 1647, in one of a series of letters concerning the war in England, for a light-hearted digression he wrote to John Winthrop Junior regarding the best techniques for planting hay-seed in America: the amount to plant, the time of year and position. He instructed that the seeds should not be planted near fruit trees as they will 'steale and rob the trees'.⁵¹²

Virginia and New England were not the only regions affected by the recommending of new crops and growing methods. The settlement of North America influenced the choice of plants grown and the methods used in England. As early as 1623, Emmanuel Altham wrote that he would send his sister six ears of Indian corn and beans from the Plymouth colony 'to sow in her garden'.⁵¹³ By 1640 maize and peas were not the only American crops known to botanists in England. In his extensive herbal of 1640, John Parkinson listed sixty-two varieties of plant that had originated in Virginia, in some cases naming the person who had brought them across the Atlantic. For example, George Gibbes of Bath brought the Narrow Leafed and Later Flowered Starwort to England.⁵¹⁴ Parkinson's garden at Long Acre in London contained plants imported from Peru, Brazil, Bermuda, Virginia, New England and Canada.⁵¹⁵ By 1651, the flora of America had become so familiar to Englishmen that Robert Child directly requested, in his treatise on the improvement of English farming methods, that certain American varieties of berries and trees be brought over to England.⁵¹⁶ During this period, the most important promoters of American flora in England were the Tradescants, father and son. John Tradescant the younger visited

⁵¹² 'Letter to John Winthrop Junior 28 May 1647', *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, ed. G. Lafantasia (London, 1988), vol. I p. 234.

⁵¹³ 'Emmanuel Altham to Sir Edward Altham Sept 1623', in *Three Early Visitors to Plymouth*, p. 35.

⁵¹⁴ J. Parkinson, *Theatrum Botanicum* (London, 1640), p. 132.

⁵¹⁵ Stearns, *Science in the British Colonies of America*, p. 65.

⁵¹⁶ R. Child, *Defects and Remedies of English Husbandry* (London, 1651).

America in 1637, 1642 and 1654 and was even granted land there, though he showed no interest in settling or being a landlord, wanting only to collect new plant species.

Many of the new discoveries were installed in the Botanical Garden in Oxford, where curious visitors could view the specimens, just as today.⁵¹⁷

In conclusion, the intellectual exchange between England and America concerning botany and agriculture was always destined to be a two-way process. Early settlers took their own European Renaissance understandings of flora to America, but adapted their practices with techniques learned from natives who had experience of the American soil, weather and plant life. Tobacco was the only native plant cultivated successfully as a cash crop during this period. Many of the rest of the new American plants that had caused such excitement initially were used as food only in necessity, or on a very local level. For example, hopes that Virginians would use native mulberry trees to cultivate silk were soon dashed when trials of the crop were unsuccessful due to a lack of commitment from the Virginians themselves.⁵¹⁸ During the early years of settlement maize was a useful subsistence crop, in both Virginia and New England, but the more familiar English corn soon replaced it and maize was only used in times of crisis during the later years. Englishmen made extensive use of the timber of the New World, both for their own settlements and to send to Europe, but a shorter trade route had long since been developed in Europe with parts of Scandinavia and Russia. To meet their own needs, the colonists began to cultivate English crops and plants, such as corn and peas, as soon as they could get a steady supply of seeds, and followed the growing techniques and culinary uses with which they were more familiar.

⁵¹⁷ M. Allen, *The Tradescants: Their Plants, Gardens and Museum 1570-1662* (London, 1964), p. 163. 'Tradescant's Ark' as it was known, did not only bring back plant samples, but also Indian crafts and tools: Chaplin, *Subject Matter*, p. 234.

⁵¹⁸ See Chaplin, *Subject Matter*, p. 238, where she discusses the failure of the silk-making enterprise.

Both New England and Virginia had early difficulties in becoming self-sufficient, with Virginia especially relying on trade and theft from the natives for several years. Neither colony imported much food from England on a regular basis: the opposite was the case, as residents complained that new arrivals never brought enough provision even to feed themselves, stretching resources to breaking point. From the 1640s onwards, luxury food items reached both mainland colonies from the Caribbean, and fish from Newfoundland was traded along the coast, as shown in the next chapter. A trade network was established between North America, Europe and the Caribbean, via the Canary Islands and the Azores, which distributed luxury goods in return for cargoes of slaves. Gardens became a fashionable accessory as well as being useful for growing both food and medicine, and they represented a very English way of taming the landscape. The knowledge generated of the plants of the New World was sometimes used purely on a theoretical level by natural philosophers eager to develop the new science of botany, which would have such a strong connection to empire building in the eighteenth century.⁵¹⁹ These observations about the flora of America were eagerly passed on to a new generation of horticulturalists in England keen to catalogue the new world of plants. However, by 1660, apart from tobacco's notorious success story and the supply of timber at a time when it was most needed, few of the native species discovered on mainland America were utilised either for subsistence or trade. Even maize, important as a subsistence crop in the early years declined as the colonies became more established. The first settlers' hopes about the potential of the land proved well founded, but their predictions about the value of the native flora turned out to be wildly exaggerated.

⁵¹⁹ When the English began to explore the South Pacific region, men such as Joseph Banks, the botanist on Cook's ship, felt that to catalogue and make use of the flora of a region was a way of symbolically conquering it. See for example, D.M. Miller, ed. *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany and Representations of Nature* (Cambridge, 1996).

CHAPTER SEVEN

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FAUNA OF NORTH AMERICA

‘We also did see many squirrels, conies, black birds with crimson wings and divers other fowles and birdes of divers and sundrie colours of crimson, watchet, yellow, greene, murry and of divers other hewes naturally without any art using’.⁵²⁰ When early settlers of Virginia, such as George Percy in 1606, recorded their amazement at the richness of the animal life in America, they were beginning a long tradition of marvelling at the variety and utility of these creatures, exciting with potential as food, farm animals or for fur. Unlike their descriptions of the landscape and plant life of North America, when visitors talked about fauna they were often unable to relate it to anything they had previously known and they revealed their surprise and wonder through elaborate description. Authors also felt a need to explain whether the native fauna would be useful or dangerous, or perhaps useless but harmless. This chapter will outline how the humanist understanding of the animal kingdom influenced travellers and their perceptions of the wild animals they found in the New World. Second, it will examine how they metaphorically tamed some of these animals by defining them in terms of their usefulness to the colony. Finally, it will assess how the place of domesticated animals was defined in an American context: whether domestic animals were successfully brought over from Europe or whether American species were tamed, and the factors influencing the choice of work animal- habitat, climate or

⁵²⁰ ‘Observations gathered out of a Discourse of the Plantation of the Southerne Colony in Virginia by the English 1606 written by that Honourable Gentleman Master George Percy’, S. Purchas, ed., *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX (Glasgow, 1951), p. 412.

diseases. Representations of animals, birds and fish will also be considered, to ask whether authors' hopes and fears concerning the fauna of America were fulfilled.

I.

European Understanding of the Animal Kingdom

As explored previously, early modern man's understanding of the natural world was characterised by the assumption that God put all other life on earth for the use of mankind. This doctrine of the uniqueness of humans derived from the ideas of Aristotle and the medieval church. Not only did man have a soul, but also reason and speech.⁵²¹ Some intellectuals, known as antitheriophiles, denied that animals had any degree of feeling at all, whereas thereophiles, while they emphasised man's dominion over animals, believed that animals were sensitive and that man had a duty to care for them.⁵²² These two schools of thought were typified by two great English Renaissance thinkers, Thomas More and Francis Bacon. More wrote in *Utopia* that hunting animals was 'the vilest department of butchery', but the inhabitants created by Bacon in *New Atlantis* ate a lot of meat and used vivisection to further man's scientific knowledge. Even more radical than Thomas More was Giordano Bruno, who believed that all animals were part of the 'world soul' and as such should be treated as equal to humans.⁵²³ However, such views, while reflecting the diversity of understanding of humanist theorists, did not represent those of the majority of English men of this

⁵²¹ K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (London, 1983), p. 30.

⁵²² N. Wolloch, 'Animals, Extra Terrestrial Life and Anthropocentrism in the Seventeenth Century', *The Seventeenth Century*, vol. XVII, no 2 (Autumn 2002), p. 235.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, p. 236-7. Indeed by the seventeenth century the first origins of an animal welfare movement were emerging as people condemned the use of animals in sport and hunting. Attitudes to hunting will be explored later in the chapter.

period, although vegetarianism was practised among a few civil war radicals such as Roger Crab who claimed that 'Eating of Flesh is an Absolute Enemy to pure Nature'.⁵²⁴ Most people adopted a moderate view that animals were at the disposal of man for his own use, be it sport, food or furthering knowledge, but that man also had a duty to care for his animals.

Animal life was viewed in a subtle and discriminating way. It was thought that savage beasts were instruments of God's wrath and symbolic of the providential plan He had for mankind. These animals were especially closely linked with sexual sin and deviance, which was reflected in the punishments for bestiality, the most harshly judged of all sexual crimes.⁵²⁵ Man attempted to remove the mystery and fear surrounding the animal kingdom by characterising animals and birds in human forms. The species were categorised hierarchically with lions, eagles and whales at the top of their respective classes. Concepts relating to the ordering of human society were projected on to animal groups to bring them within the realm of human control and understanding. For example, dominant cranes were thought to be 'captains', rook flocks held 'parliaments' and ants and bees lived in monarchical communities, an understanding that still holds true today.⁵²⁶ However, seventeenth century inquiries into the animal kingdom also placed strangeness and newness at the centre of their investigations. The animal kingdom was defined not by inviolable laws but by marvels and miracles.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁴ For more information on Crab's colourful life, see C. Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (London, 1958), p. 315.

⁵²⁵ Both William Bradford and John Winthrop refer to the exile of men from their settlements on the discovery of their committing bestiality. For more on early modern understanding of bestiality, see Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, pp. 36-40.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60-62.

⁵²⁷ L. Daston, & K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750* (New York, 1998), pp. 14, 231. Daston and Park define 'curiosity' about the natural world as the opposite impulse to 'utility'. I do not agree with this dichotomy; until the mid-seventeenth century, all encounters with nature were affected by a search for the commodity's usefulness.

Symbolically, animals and birds were significant to sailors who often used birds and sea life to gauge their whereabouts. In 1602 on an early voyage to the area later named New England, Gabriel Archer reported seeing ‘cliffe pigeons and divers others as petrels, cotes, hagbuts, pengwins, murrees, gannets, cormorants, guls’. This encouraged the sailors to take depth soundings to see if they were near the coast.⁵²⁸ The sailors’ use of sea birds as good or bad omens disgusted the Puritan passengers, who thought such superstitions ungodly, often causing great conflict aboard ship. The sighting of sea animals did not necessarily bring relief to those crossing the Atlantic. For example, when in 1650 Henry Norwood’s battered ship arrived off the coast of Cape Hatteras (present day North Carolina) the sailors noted a ‘prodigious number of porpoises that did that evening appear round the ship...this the seamen would look upon as a bad portent predicting ill weather’.⁵²⁹ Sometimes sailors were proved right in their fears. John Winthrop recorded a crossing in 1640 during which a whale struck a ship carrying provisions for Boston, and the planks, timbers and beams of the ship were broken and two hogsheads of vinegar lost.⁵³⁰

II.

Fearful Descriptions of Savage Beasts

The arrival of the settlers on American soil brought about an entirely different relationship with the animal kingdom. Permanent settlers could explore their locality

⁵²⁸ ‘The relation of Captain Gosnols Voyage to the North Part of Virginia...’, Purchas, ed., *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XVIII, p. 303.

⁵²⁹ H. Norwood, ‘A Voyage to Virginia’, P. Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*, vol. 3 (Washington, 1844), p. 10.

⁵³⁰ J. Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, ed. J. Savage (Boston, MA., 1825), vol. II, p. 4.

and catalogue the animals they saw there, as well as assessing their usefulness for food, clothing or sport. Their reactions were not always positive: some wild animals engendered fear in many observers, partly because they were new species not known in England. Rumours abounded of the presence of the most dangerous animal of all: the lion. This fear was especially prevalent in New England. As the lion was not native to North America, the sightings probably refer to exaggerated stories of other wild cats, especially the puma, although Leonard Calvert claimed to have trapped and caught a lion to send home to England, the animal dying before the journey could be undertaken.⁵³¹ Thomas Pring, an explorer who visited the area in 1603 recorded that ‘some say’ there might even be ‘tygres’ in the New England region.⁵³² The threat from wolves, by contrast, was a realistic one, not so much to human safety but to the domestic animals that lived round the villages.⁵³³ There are no recorded accounts of wolves attacking the settlers themselves, but John Winthrop recorded in his diary in 1633 that ‘the wolves continue to do much hurt among our cattle’.⁵³⁴ Another wild animal that filled observers with dread, for both practical and spiritual reasons, was the snake, which had been connected symbolically by theologians for centuries with the tempting of Eve in Genesis. Francis Higginson’s almost wholly positive report of his first experiences in New England was tempered by his acknowledgement that the region ‘doth much abound with snakes and serpents of strange colours and huge greatness’.⁵³⁵ Even Thomas Lechford in 1642, primarily concerned with the qualities and shortfalls of the New England political system, found time to write a list of the animals that had endangered the colony while he was resident there, including the

⁵³¹ L. Calvert, ‘Letter of Governor Leonard Calvert to Lord Baltimore 1638’, C. Hall, ed., *Narratives of Early Maryland* (New York, 1910), p. 159.

⁵³² ‘Voyage set out from the City of Bristol...’ Purchas, ed., *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 327.

⁵³³ P. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness* (New York, 1969), p. 136.

⁵³⁴ J. Winthrop, *The History of New England*, vol. I, p. 115.

⁵³⁵ F. Higginson, ‘New Englands Plantation’, A. Young, ed., *Chronicles of the First Planters of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay from 1623-36* (Boston, MA., 1846), p. 255.

infamous lions: ‘bears, wolves, foxes, moose, lyons, rattlesnakes’.⁵³⁶ Again, the threat from poisonous snakes seems to have been exaggerated; there are no recorded tales of anyone being bitten and killed by a snake during this period. However, these creatures were obviously a source of much fascination. In 1657, the diarist John Evelyn wrote that he had gone to see Dr. Joliffe’s two Virginian rattlesnakes in London. He said they were ‘exceeding a yard in length with small heads and slender tails but in the middle nearly the size of my leg’. According to Evelyn, the rattlesnakes were not dangerous in London as he thought that, because of the climate, ‘their vigour must needs be much exhausted here’.⁵³⁷ Many observers, especially in New England, understood the animal kingdom metaphorically and felt that God was showing his purpose by placing savage beasts among the settlement; this probably instilled more fear than the animals themselves.⁵³⁸

An account edited by Samuel Purchas, concerning the early months of the Virginia settlement, recalled how a party exploring the coastline to the north of the James River found, on reaching a distance of thirty leagues, ‘the woods extreme thick full of wolves, beares, deere and other wild beasts’.⁵³⁹ Alexander Whitaker, a Church of England minister sent to Virginia in the early years of the settlement, reported his fascination with two wild animals of the region that offered no danger to the settlers but were so unusual that he felt he had to make note of them. He first listed the wild animals in the usual manner, ‘lions, bears, wolves and deare, foxes black and read, rakownes, bevers, possowns, squirrels, wildecats’, but went on to explain that female possums have a pouch and can take their young up into their belly without injury to themselves. Whitaker verified this by claiming to have seen a possum do this with his

⁵³⁶ T. Lechford, *Plain Dealing or Newes from New England* (London, 1642), p. 47.

⁵³⁷ J. Evelyn, *Memoirs Illustrative of the Life and Writings*, ed. W. Bray (London, 1871), p. 254.

⁵³⁸ See A. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999).

⁵³⁹ ‘Proceedings at Virginia’, Purchas, ed., *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 483.

own eyes. He also described another strange animal that he encountered, having never seen the like of before: the flying squirrel.⁵⁴⁰ Henry Spelman corroborated Whitaker's account, but from a different view point. As a young boy, Spelman had been sold to Powhatan by John Smith and was employed as a go-between in trade between the English and the natives. Spelman listed the animals of which he had heard in conversation with the natives: 'lions, bears, wolves, foxes, musk catts, hares, fleinge squirells and other squirells being all grey like conyes, great store of foule'.⁵⁴¹

New England residents also were troubled by wild animals living near their settlements. John Hagthorpe criticised the New Englanders for not doing enough to protect their crops from the threat of foxes which 'now they be greatly plagued with watching day and night' and for not protecting their livestock from the predatory wolves.⁵⁴² From Newfoundland in 1610, John Guy wrote a letter to friends in England describing his encounters with a bear. 'We saw a beare now and then that haunted this place, makinge accompt the fishermen were gone but beinge shott at we have not seene nor heard of any these three weeks'.⁵⁴³ Edward Johnson accused the Native Americans of Rhode Island of using wolves to harass the English cattle, though whether it would be possible to use a wild animal such as a wolf in this way is highly unlikely.⁵⁴⁴

Reassuring Readers about America's Savage Wildlife

Many authors felt the need to reassure their readers that the savage beasts of America did not pose a serious threat and should not dissuade anyone from migrating or

⁵⁴⁰ A. Whitaker, *Good Newes from Virginia* (London, 1613, facsimile edition, Amsterdam, 1937), p. 41.

⁵⁴¹ H. Spelman, 'Relation of Virginea', E. Arber, ed., *The Works of Captain John Smith*, vol. I, (Edinburgh, 1910), p. cvi.

⁵⁴² J. Hagthorpe, *Englands Exchequer* (London, 1625), p. 31.

⁵⁴³ 'Letter from John Guy', Nottingham University Library, *Middleton MSS*, Mix ½.

⁵⁴⁴ E. Johnson, *Wonder-working Providence 1628-51*, ed. J.F. Johnson (New York, 1910), p. 195.

investing. William Bullock commented that though the natives said there were lions and leopards nearby in Virginia, they stayed inland in the mountains and did not trouble humans.⁵⁴⁵ John Smith claimed his experience in many countries of the world had led him to conclude that the wild beasts in America were not dangerous. He said of Virginia that ‘their beares are verie little in comparison of those of Muscovia and Tartaria’.⁵⁴⁶ Andrew White, writing about Maryland, denied that the wild animals of America ever worried the English domestic animals, listing ‘muskrats, ciun, beavers, foxes, martens, weasels, which do not destroy hens and eggs as ours do’.⁵⁴⁷ In New England too, authors felt that reassurance was required, both to encourage a sympathetic opinion of their colony, and to reassure worried relatives in England about the safety of their loved ones across the Atlantic. Edward Browne wrote reassuringly in a letter to Sir Simonds D’Ewes, ‘our greatest enemies are our wolves but yet they flee man’.⁵⁴⁸ Other authors also dismissed the threat from wild animals as insignificant or irrelevant. Thomas Morton claimed that the New England bears were mostly vegetarian and so posed no danger: they were ‘beasts that doe no harme in those parts as they feede upon hurtle berries, nuts and fish...he will runne away from a man as fast as a little dogge’.⁵⁴⁹ William Wood, in his published account of 1635, tried to convince his readership of the placid nature of the beasts he had found in America. Wolves, he said, never troubled men or women but only worried the livestock, which they mistook for deer. They were also frightened of the Englishmen’s dogs: ‘our English mastiffs might be too hard for them...they care no

⁵⁴⁵ W. Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined* (London, 1649), p. 4.

⁵⁴⁶ ‘The Description of Virginia by Captain John Smith enlarged out of his Written Notes’, S. Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, (Glasgow, 1951), p. 433.

⁵⁴⁷ A. White, ‘An Account of the Colony of Lord Baltimore’, C.Hall, ed. *Narratives of Early Maryland* (New York, 1910), p. 9.

⁵⁴⁸ ‘Edward Browne to Sir Simonds D’Ewes 7 Sept 1638’, E. Emerson, ed., *Letters from New England: Massachusetts Bay Colony 1629-38* (Amherst, MA., 1976), p. 228.

⁵⁴⁹ T. Morton, *New English Canaan* (London, 1632), p. 80.

more for an ordinary mastiffe than a mastiffe cares for a curre'. Wood remarked that the wolves' howling was 'the greatest inconveniency that the countrey hath'.⁵⁵⁰ He was ready to admit that there were lions in the area as he had heard them roaring in the woods, but insisted that they never dared to approach the human settlement so caused no danger. However he did admit that an old lion had wandered into the plantation in Virginia.⁵⁵¹ Richard Whitbourne confirmed that the wolves of Newfoundland offered no threat to the English settler, as long as he had a faithful mastiff by his side. Whitbourne could not resist drawing a parallel between the European mastiff's subduing of the American wolf, and the anticipated submission of the Native Americans to English authority.⁵⁵² Richard Eburne, writing from the safety of his parish in England, proclaimed that it was better for the colonists that there should be wild animals in their midst rather than none at all because they might be used for labour and for food.⁵⁵³ One can only speculate whether Eburne would have held a different view had he just endured a difficult sea crossing and was struggling to find food and shelter in an unfamiliar land.

Many authors insisted too that the insects found in the New World were more of an irritation than a danger. Settlers did not realise that the mosquitoes that plagued all the colonies caused malaria, even though they may have been a significant factor in the high mortality rates in early Jamestown. The Reverend John White, who had denied that snakes were dangerous, also claimed that the 'moskitos' of America were not as bad as those in Essex or Lincolnshire.⁵⁵⁴ Edward Browne of Massachusetts

⁵⁵⁰ W. Wood, *New Englands Prospect*, (London, 1635), p. 20-21.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p 16.

⁵⁵² R. Whitbourne, *A Discourse and Discoverie of the New Found Land* (London, 1620), p. 8. Whitbourne's discourse offers a rare example of an author's appreciation for the wildlife of America not based on its savagery, its use as food or for hunting. Having described the 'fat' thrushes and partridges, he also remarked on 'filladies and nightingales and such like that sing most pleasantly', p. 9.

⁵⁵³ R. Eburne, *A Plain Pathway to Plantations*, ed. L.B. Wright (New York, 1962), p. 52.

⁵⁵⁴ J. White, *The Planters Plea*, (London, 1630), p. 29.

confirmed this, writing in 1638 to Sir Simonds D'Ewes: 'the muceta being our English gnat is exiled out of places inhabited', though he did not elaborate on the methods used by the settlers to exile the mosquitoes. By referring to them as an 'English gnat', Browne reduced his reader's fear of these insects even more, though as the historian Victor Harris has argued, some early modern Englishmen would have thought the gnat to be a symbol of man's sinfulness.⁵⁵⁵

III.

Animals as Food

Authors used several methods in attempting to catalogue the animals in North America and present them to an English reading public. As shown above, one was to define them in terms of their danger to man and his domestic animals, either by emphasising or denying the threat. However, far more common was the method employed by William Wood and Thomas Morton, for example, of commodifying the animals themselves, reducing them to mere products for man's use or entertainment. When William Wood wrote his promotional tract describing the 'state of that countrie' of New England, settlers had only been resident in Massachusetts for five years and yet Wood catalogued in four chapters a huge number of animals, birds and fish that had already been used, or had the potential for use, by the settlers. Moose hides could be used to make clothing, or the animals could be kept for domestic labour; deer might be caught for sport or food; racoons made 'as good meate as a lambe' and for those unaware of what a racoon was, Wood helpfully advised that there was one to be seen in the Tower of London menagerie. Wood was most

⁵⁵⁵ 'Edward Browne to Sir Simonds D'Ewes', Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England*, p. 228. V. Harris, *All Coherence Gone: A Study of the Seventeenth Century Controversy over Disorder and Decay in the Universe* (London, 1966), p. 44.

fascinated by the beaver, describing its behaviour and dams in great detail. He acknowledged the great wisdom of the beaver in always eluding the English who had to rely on native trappers to provide their valuable pelts.⁵⁵⁶ Thomas Morton also categorised each animal according to its usefulness to man, including numerous species of bird, each of which was ascribed a quality of flavour. The turkeys were said to be ‘by many degrees sweeter than the tame Turkeis of England’ while swans were useful both for food and decoration, an idea that may have been influenced by seeing natives ceremonially wearing birds’ feathers.⁵⁵⁷ However, Morton also encountered one animal that he confessed was of no use whatsoever, the porcupine. ‘This country hath many porcupines, but I doe not finde the beast anyway usefull or hurtfull’, he wrote.⁵⁵⁸

While writers stressed the abundance and potential of animal wildlife for food, it is clear that in the early years, there were many times when the settlers went very hungry. Meat was in short supply and they were sometimes driven, during times of great hunger, to eat food not normally considered edible. During the ‘starving time’ in Virginia, the years 1607-9, settlers resorted to eating horses, dogs, rats and snakes, as well as shoe leather and even human corpses.⁵⁵⁹ In 1609, Gabriel Archer confirmed the desperate conditions in his letter to Samuel Purchas, in which he said that he lived on nothing but oysters (ironically usually a luxury food) for eight weeks.⁵⁶⁰ In England during the same period, William Symonds, a preacher in the employ of the Virginia Company, was telling audiences in London that with ‘the plenty of fish and

⁵⁵⁶ Wood, *New Englands Prospect*, pp. 18-22.

⁵⁵⁷ Morton, *New English Canaan*, pp. 67-8.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁵⁵⁹ J. Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: Cultural Origins of North America* (Oxford, 2001), p. 246. For a first hand account of these difficulties see W. Strachey, ‘A True Repertory of the Wracke and Redemption’, Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, pp. 5-72.

⁵⁶⁰ ‘Letter of M. Gabriel Archar touching the Voyage of the Fleet of Ships which arrived at Virginia without Sir Thomas Gates’, Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 3.

fowle our mistress cannot compare', meaning that the variety and number of animals available for food in Virginia far surpassed those in England.⁵⁶¹ In Virginia and New England alike, early shortages of food, recorded by authors such as William Bradford and John Winthrop, did not tally with the reports of those who had not visited the area. Authors who wanted to promote migration to the New World often neglected to mention food shortages, or if they did, they made it clear that those difficult times had now passed. This was Samuel Purchas' intention in publishing accounts of the 'Starving Time' in Virginia. He also emphasised that it was not the commodities of the region that were lacking, but rather that a disorganised and corrupt leadership had left settlers hungry. Many commentators in England who wrote about New England also did not acknowledge that colonists often went hungry in their first few years in America. For example, in 1630, the Reverend John White wrote of the plenty of 'fish, fowle and venison' to be had in the Massachusetts Bay area, but the settlers found it very difficult to feed themselves in the first season.⁵⁶² John Smith noted on his visits to New England the existence of an animal 'larger than a stagge' called by the natives of the area 'a moos', which settlers would be able to use to provide themselves with large amounts of meat, but the settlers do not record regularly making use of it as a food source.⁵⁶³ Apparently, according to John Wilson, the pastor of Boston, Oliver Cromwell himself requested that deer or moose fawns be sent to him in England, a task which the New Englanders found initially hard to fulfil because 'none could be gott at any rate.'⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶¹ W. Symonds, *A Sermon Preached at Whitechapel in the Presence of Many Honourable and Worshipfull the Adventurers and Planters for Virginia 25 April 1609* (London, 1609), p. 27.

⁵⁶² J. White, *The Planters Plea*, p. 23.

⁵⁶³ J. Smith, *A Description of New England* (London, 1616), p. 17. The authors do not say why the moose was not utilised as a food source. Although initially present in large numbers, being shy animals, they probably retreated from the areas where large numbers of people gathered.

⁵⁶⁴ J. Wilson, 'Letter to H.W.1654', ed. Sargant Bush, Jr., *New England Quarterly*, vol. 76, no. 1 (March 2003), p. 110.

Edward Winslow, discussing the settlement at Plymouth, shed some light on why they had not been able to take advantage of such plenty. Men arrived from England with no provisions, thus exacerbating the shortages of food. While fish were present in abundance throughout New England, the English had no nets suitable for catching them. Their boats were not equipped for sea fishing either, so they were unable to feed themselves with cod and other salt-water species.⁵⁶⁵ The preconceptions of the settlers, that the commodities of the New World would be set out for them ready to sample, deeply annoyed Winslow. As he complained, ‘can any be so simple as to conceive that the fountains should streame forth wine or beare or the woods and rivers be like butchers shops or fishmongers stalles where they might have things taken to their hands?’⁵⁶⁶

Shortage of food, especially meat, was a problem that recurred for many years. As late as 1650, when Henry Norwood’s ship ran into trouble, rats, usually the bane of sailors’ lives, were turned into a blessing, and a full-grown one ‘sold for sixteen shillings as a market rate’. When Norwood’s party eventually landed, miles away from their target Jamestown, their provisions had been used up and the area seemed deserted at first, so they resorted to eating oysters and wild birds. As in the early years of the Virginia settlement, Norwood and his nineteen fellow travellers also resorted to the cannibalism of corpses, showing that despite all the reported bounty of flesh and fish, they were unable to provide themselves with enough food to survive.⁵⁶⁷ Fortunately, Norwood was offered assistance by the local natives who sailed across to the uninhabited island upon which they were shipwrecked and gave the English men and women food and shelter. Ralph Hamor recounted a similar tale earlier in

⁵⁶⁵ E. Winslow, *Good Newes from New England* (London, 1624), p. 12.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁵⁶⁷ H. Norwood, ‘A Voyage to Virginia’, P. Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*, vol. 3 (Washington, 1844), pp. 17, 23.

Virginia's history when a group of Englishmen were staying with Powhatan trying to negotiate some sort of uneasy peace. Hamor described the food that the natives gave to the English as both a symbolic token of goodwill, of sharing the resources of America, and as an especially welcome source of nourishment because, even by 1614, the English in Virginia were still not able to enjoy a full and secure diet. Powhatan gave Hamor and his party 'venison, turkies, fresh fish', all of which would have been considered by the English to be luxury foods in England, but formed an integral part of the natives' seasonal diet.⁵⁶⁸ Hamor went on to list the huge variety of species of animal, bird and fish available in the area, implying that all would be available as 'wholesome and nourishing food' for the settlers, but not explaining the restrictions of seasonal availability or difficult methods of catching the prey.⁵⁶⁹ In his history of Virginia, William Strachey noted the 'whole banckes of oysters and scallopps which ly unopened', as if to suggest that the assistance of the natives was unnecessary and it was possible to survive on foods untouched by human hands.⁵⁷⁰ By 1626 though, Virginia's leaders fully recognised the importance not only of maintaining the supply of food through trade, but also of settling in areas where a secure staple crop could be cultivated: 'for incouragement of Volunteers to people the country nothing will be more available than the safetie and plenty the forest affords them by which meanes the country growing populous divers staple commodities will be raised'.⁵⁷¹ Roger Heaman, writing about his experiences in Newfoundland, acknowledged that the settlers' diet varied according to the season. In a letter to his friend Peter Miller, which took the form of a poem, he wrote:

⁵⁶⁸ R. Hamor, *A True Discourse of the Present Estate of Virginia and the Successes of the Affaires there till the 18 of June 1614* (London, 1615), p. 15.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵⁷⁰ W. Strachey, 'Historie of Travell into Virginia Britania', ed. L.B. Wright (Hakluyt Soc., 1951), p. 40.

⁵⁷¹ 'Francis Wyatt to Privy Council, 1626', *Virginia Historical Magazine*, vol. II, (1894-5), p. 53.

You askt me once what here was our chiefe dish

In winter fowle in summer choyce of fish

Yet let me tell you sir what I love best

It's a poore-john that's cleane and neatly drest.⁵⁷²

Despite authors' initial hopes, native wild animals did not prove an abundant supply of meat. The English found them very difficult to hunt, due to the animals' waryness and the settlers' lack of knowledge of the local terrain, and they often relied on gifts of meat from the Native Americans. The animals also seemed resistant to domestication.

Animals for Trade

Fish was not only an important food source for the settlers of North America; it was also a lucrative commodity for export, as it had been before a permanent colony was established on the continent. During the sixteenth century, fishermen from England, France and Spain would sail to the waters off Newfoundland and spend a season fishing before returning to Europe with their catch.⁵⁷³ Some fishermen made their way on to land to set up fishing stations to dry their catch before transporting it across the Atlantic. These areas then became the basis of the colonial development.⁵⁷⁴ The significance of the trade is reflected in the English name for part of the coastline: Cape Cod. Once the settlements had been established, fishing became a reliable way for the migrants to make money, enabling them to trade for luxury items from Europe

⁵⁷² R. Heaman, *Quodlibets, Lately Come Over from New Britaniola, old Newfoundland* (London, 1628), p. 37.

⁵⁷³ L.B. Wright, *The Dream of Prosperity in Colonial America* (New York, 1965), p. 30.

⁵⁷⁴ F. Harrington, 'Fishing Ships and First Settlements on the Coast of New England 1600-1630', E. Baker, ed., *American Beginnings* (Lincoln, NA., 1994), p. 191.

and the wider world. John Brereton's expedition in 1602 found that the codfish off the coast of New England were far superior to those in the traditional fishing grounds of Newfoundland, saying they were 'more large and vendible for England and France than the Newland fish'.⁵⁷⁵ Emmanuel Altham, another early visitor to Plymouth, wrote that the fishing to be had there was 'beyond belief', and that a man might easily double his money by engaging in the trade.⁵⁷⁶ Two years later, Altham admitted that in fact he had not been able to make any money in the fishing trade, but he blamed this on the actions of corrupt sailors.⁵⁷⁷ Richard Saltonstall told a friend in England that the first thing he had done on arrival in Massachusetts, after building a home, was to turn to the fishing trade.⁵⁷⁸

In order to preserve the fish they wanted to export, settlers built salt works along the coast, as described by John Smith in his 1631 tract encouraging migration to New England. Smith reported that the Virginians lagged behind the New Englanders in understanding the use of fish, describing how the New Englanders also used fish as manure, 'sticking at every plant of corne a herring or two', whereas in Virginia they never manured their tired soil.⁵⁷⁹ John Pory wrote to Lord Southampton in 1622 describing the sea life at Plymouth with wonder and enthusiasm. He was amazed at the variety of fish available throughout the year. Eels were plentiful in March, and herring in early summer, along with bass and lobsters. Mussels and clams were also readily available. He ascribed the reason for the variety and quantities of seafood to

⁵⁷⁵ J. Brereton, *A Brief and True Relation of the Discoverie of the North Part of Virginia* (London, 1602), p. 17.

⁵⁷⁶ 'Emmanuel Altham to Sir Edward Altham Sept 1623', *Three Early Visitors to Plymouth*, ed. S.J. James (Plymouth, 1967), p. 25.

⁵⁷⁷ 'Emmanuel Altham to Sir Edward Altham June 10 1625', *ibid.*, p. 55.

⁵⁷⁸ 'Richard Saltonstall to Emmanuel Downing Feb 4 1632', Emerson, ed., *Letters from New England*, p. 92.

⁵⁷⁹ J. Smith, *Advertisements for the Unexperienced Planters of New England or Anywhere* (London, 1631), pp. 19, 27.

the tranquil natural harbours, guarded from extremes of wind and temperature.⁵⁸⁰ In another letter to Francis Wyatt, then governor of Virginia, Pory attempted to scotch rumours that fish could not be taken at all times. He claimed that cod might be taken by day and hake by night: ‘Cape Cod it selfe hath not that name for nought’, he wrote.⁵⁸¹ It was only fear of the man-eating natives known as the Mohawks that blotted Pory’s perfect description of Plymouth. His aim seemed to have been to persuade the elite of Virginia of the potential of the fishing trade to increase the wealth of the individual and the colony. Even though fishermen were one of the occupational groups that the Virginia Company, in a broadside of 1609, tried to attract, Virginians were never as enthusiastic about the fishing industry as their colleagues to the north.⁵⁸² The opportunities for fishing around the Virginia coast were much poorer than in New England, so the Virginian settlers engaged in a small amount of subsistence fishing, but never established drying or salting stations to preserve their catches for sale abroad.⁵⁸³ In fact, in 1627, when the supply ships from England failed to arrive in Plymouth, the settlers sent a ship full of fish to Virginia, where they sold both fish and boat and made enough money to support themselves for another year.⁵⁸⁴ George Gardyner confirmed this in his huge work, *A Description of the New World*, in which he outlined the importance of fishing to the English nation as a whole and particularly to her colonies in Plymouth and Massachusetts. He said that fish was available in Virginia, but that the residents did not tap into the resource and much of the colony’s fish was imported from New England.⁵⁸⁵ Settlers in New

⁵⁸⁰ John Pory’s *Lost Description of Plymouth Colony in the Earliest Days of the Pilgrim Fathers*, ed. C. Burrage (Boston, MA., 1918), pp. 38-41.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁵⁸² *For the Plantation in Virginia or Nova Britannia* (London, 1609)

⁵⁸³ Harrington, ‘Fishing Ships and First Settlements’, p. 198.

⁵⁸⁴ W. Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation 1606-46*, ed. W.T. Davis (New York, 1964), p. 132.

⁵⁸⁵ G. Gardyner, *A Description of the New World or America, Islands and Continents* (London, 1649), p. 101.

England, even in the early years, realised the importance of the fishing industry. Master Wells, a minister writing to his former flock in Terling, Essex, recorded as early as 1633, that ‘the plantation is now sett upon fishing for a stable commodity, store of salt I see already for the fish and a shipe to goe to the salt islands for more where are mountains of salt’.⁵⁸⁶ John Smith had already written extensively on the historic importance of the fishing industry to England’s colonies abroad. In *New Englands Trials*, he described the history of the fishing industry in America and he wrote how John Dee had encouraged it during Elizabeth’s reign and how it had benefited other European nations. Smith also felt it was important to catch up with the Dutch who had recognised the importance of the trade in fish early on.⁵⁸⁷

It was not only the fishing industry that inspired English settlers and authors. The fur trade was to prove just as lucrative and influential for both the development of English society in America and its relations with the native tribes on the North East coast. In both New England and Virginia, local Indians used animal pelts for everyday wear and ceremonial dress, and it was this that first interested the English and the French in the fur trade.⁵⁸⁸ From the turn of the seventeenth century the French were involved in trading in the area that is now southern Canada, and were making a good profit, which encouraged the English to match their success. Most of the animals caught for export were trapped by natives, as the English found it very hard to adapt to local hunting techniques, as explained later in this chapter.⁵⁸⁹ Consequently, the

⁵⁸⁶ ‘Letter from Master Wells to his congregation’, in Nehemiah Wallington’s Letterbook, British Library, Sloane MSS 922, fos. 90-92.

⁵⁸⁷ J. Smith, *New Englands Trials* (London, 1622), pp. 7-8, 21.

⁵⁸⁸ See for example John Smith’s account of native use of fur in Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 440. Later, Smith recorded acquiring over one thousand beaver pelts from New England natives in *A Description of New England* (London, 1616), p. 1. Prior to the first contact with America, Europeans had acquired a steady supply of furs from Muscovy.

⁵⁸⁹ W.P Cumming, S.E Hillier, D.B. Quinn, & G. Williams, *The Exploration of North America 1630-1776* (London, 1974), p. 22. One exception was the John Guy expedition to Newfoundland; Guy claimed to have taken four beaver pelts and some sable without native assistance: ‘A Journal of a Voyage to the New Found Land’, Nottingham University Library, Middleton MSS Mix 1/66.

trade enhanced peaceful contact between natives and Europeans, bringing economic benefit to both. The fur trade was also a useful way for the colonists to pay off their debts with the organising companies in England.⁵⁹⁰ Often an exchange involving an animal pelt was undertaken at the moment of first contact; for example, during Christopher Levett's voyage, when he first met the Sagamore on the New England coast the native gave him a beaver pelt as a gesture of friendship, which Levett reciprocated giving tobacco and *aqua vitae*.⁵⁹¹ Thomas Morton claimed later that the beaver, as well as 'very choice furre', gave flesh that was 'excellent food', though there is no evidence that it was a regular part of the settlers' diet.⁵⁹² John Winthrop recalled in his diary that the settlers in Massachusetts were offered beaver and other skins by the Sachem of the Pequot tribe as a symbol of peace in the hope of avoiding the war that would leave many of his tribe dead.⁵⁹³ Settlements sometimes grew up next door to native communication or trading posts where the Europeans could buy pelts, a notable example being the city of New York. Also, as they learned more about their hunting patterns, the English began to use native tracks and trails.⁵⁹⁴

As the seventeenth century wore on, hunting animals for fur, especially the beaver, also began to have an effect on native society. Both English and natives were drawn further west by the promise of more stocks of beaver as they had exploited the coastal supplies almost to extinction within a few decades. Native tribesmen began to hunt further away from their permanent settlements, spending more than one night away from home, putting themselves in danger and changing the fabric of their social

⁵⁹⁰ F. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, p. 88.

⁵⁹¹ C. Levett, *A Voyage into New England Begun in 1623 and ended in 1624* (London, 1628), p. 8.

⁵⁹² Morton, *New English Canaan*, p. 76.

⁵⁹³ J. Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, vol. I. ed. J. Savage (Boston, 1825), p. 148.

⁵⁹⁴ M. Conzen, *The Making of the American Landscape* (London, 1990), p. 50. It has been argued that Native Americans were far more pro-active in the fur trade than has been recognised up to now, often being discerning in their choice of goods to trade and expecting Europeans to participate in their ceremonial bartering practices. See B. Craw-Eismont, 'The Impact of European Fur Trade Goods on some aspects of North American Indian Clothing 1560-1860' (PhD thesis, St. Andrews, 1996)

lives.⁵⁹⁵ A manuscript journal written by the adventurer Henry Fleete in 1632 tells of the negotiations with the local natives necessary to secure a trade in beaver. He arrived in the Potomac River region in October 1631, but found that ‘the Indians had not preserved their Beaver but burned it as the custom whereupon I endeavoured by persuasions to alter that custom’.⁵⁹⁶ He promised to collect provisions for the natives and return with them to trade for the beaver pelts. However, the following year when he attempted to return to his native friends, he realised that the Governor of Virginia had scuppered his mission and sent someone else in his place fearing that Fleete was untrustworthy. However, later in the year, he was able to do his deal for the beaver and told the Indians that it would be most profitable for them if they spent the winter gathering pelts to sell in the Spring. Fleete’s narrative is spiced with fearful comments that the tribe he was dealing with, the Mohawks, part of the Iroquois tribal group, had a reputation as man-eaters, but his economic connections with them seem to have been more important both to the natives and to Fleete himself.⁵⁹⁷ Men such as Leonard Calvert of Maryland must have been aware of Fleete’s problems as he recommended, in a letter to Lord Baltimore in 1638, that not too many people be encouraged to take part in the beaver trade as it would lead to ‘the destruction of both the trade and the traders’.⁵⁹⁸ Ironically, as Virginia’s interest in tobacco grew, the importance of the fur trade diminished and so first hand contact with the natives became more rare. Natives’ hunting expertise was no longer needed, but rather their fertile land, which led to the tensions that caused the massacre in 1622 resulting in a

⁵⁹⁵ F. Jennings, *The Invasion of America* (Williamsburg, 1975), p. 71.

⁵⁹⁶ ‘A Briefe Journal of a Voyage made in the barque Warwick to Virginia and other Pte of ye Continent of America 1631 by Henry Fleete’, Lambeth Palace MSS 688, Part II, 19, f. 517.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 521.

⁵⁹⁸ L. Calvert, ‘Letter of Governor Leonard Calvert to Lord Baltimore 1638’, C. Hall, ed., *Narratives of Early Maryland* (New York, 1910), p. 157

complete breakdown in relations between settler and native.⁵⁹⁹ John Hammond, reflecting much later on the early history of Virginia, said that the settlers there ‘durst not hunt fowl nor fish for fear of the Indian which they stood in aw of’.⁶⁰⁰ Fleete’s expedition to trade as late as 1631 seems to have been unusual, perhaps explained by the fact that he had lived with the natives for several years trying to establish new trade links, and not as a Virginian already making money from tobacco. By 1660, the fur trade was becoming less profitable as the stocks of beaver skin in New England fell, and Virginians lost interest favouring the more lucrative tobacco export trade. Relations with native tribes had also deteriorated by this time and trade links were broken.

Animals for Sport

The importance of hunting to English settlers in North America is a controversial topic. Hunting played a very significant part in the lives of native Americans, both before and after the migration of the English. The newly arrived settlers observed the natives hunting to provide themselves with food and furs, and occasionally, symbolically, to celebrate a rite of passage. Roger Williams, always more prepared to be tolerant of native culture than his orthodox Puritan neighbours, described native hunting as an institution revealing the complex nature of their society, rather than indicative of their savagery. He metaphorically placed their hunting in the natural order of God, the strong persecuting the weak for their own advantage, hinting too, that the English were prepared to do this in less open, honourable ways.⁶⁰¹ The English, of course, had a heritage of hunting that was intrinsically bound up with their

⁵⁹⁹ Jennings, *Invasion of America*, p. 78.

⁶⁰⁰ J. Hammond, *Leah and Rachel or Two Fruitfull Sisters Virginia and Maryland* (London, 1656), p. 3.

⁶⁰¹ Quoted in T. Scanlon, *Colonial Writing and the New World 1583-1671: Allegories of Desire* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 140-2.

social hierarchy. It was deeply entrenched in common law that only people of a certain status could hunt particular animals in England, and it was almost as accepted that poachers and opportunists would violate these laws. During the early seventeenth century the royal forests and hunting grounds were maintained to the highest standards for the sport of the elite, and James I was an especially keen huntsman. But a few decades later the forests were being neglected as the acquisition of timber rather than the pursuit of sport became important.⁶⁰² This socially exclusive hunting, the norm within England, was only accessible to the upper classes while the lower classes would engage in poaching on a regular basis.⁶⁰³ The yeomen and townsfolk who made up the majority of migrants to America during this period would have had little or no experience of hunting in England, and therefore would have lacked knowledge in stalking techniques and the use of the grossly inaccurate guns. The few gentlemen in the settlements who had hunting for sport in England would not have been disposed to hunt for food for the rest of the colonists in America.⁶⁰⁴ Hunting the wild animals of America would have required specialist knowledge, gained from the natives, because each species was trailed and trapped in a different manner. As William Wood confirmed, many Englishmen tried to go fowling, but in his experience in New England, they only frightened away the birds. However, they soon returned, he claimed, so skilled marksmen could have their fill.⁶⁰⁵

There is some evidence that a small amount of hunting for sport was undertaken in America during the early decades. The anonymous tract, *A Relation of*

⁶⁰² M. Reed, *The Age of Exuberance 1550-1700* (London, 1986), p. 8.

⁶⁰³ John Mackenzie has argued that during the nineteenth century English hunting abroad became a symbol of imperial domination over wildlife and over the native societies. However, this does not seem to be reflected in contemporary attitudes of the English in seventeenth century America. See J. Mackenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester, 1988).

⁶⁰⁴ E. Bergstrom, 'English Game Laws and Colonial Food Shortages', *New England Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 4 (1939), pp. 686, 690.

⁶⁰⁵ Wood, *New Englands Prospect*, p. 27.

Maryland, explained the benefit of the gentle terrain there, ‘so that a man may travel on horseback almost anywhere or hunt for his recreation’. Later, the tract described the birds of the region, obviously with the sport of hawking in mind: ‘eagle, goshawk, falcon, lanner, sparrowhawke, merlin’.⁶⁰⁶ John Masters claimed in 1631, in a letter to Lady Barrington in England, that Massachusetts too would be suitable for ‘lords and ladies...to hunt and hawk’, if only the colonists had the time to build superior houses to attract the aristocrats.⁶⁰⁷ Alexander Whitaker wrote similarly of early Virginia that there were ‘eagles, hawkes, auspreches, fishing hauke’ available for the use of settlers, though he also alluded to the negative aspects of hawking and hunting. Migration to Virginia would be morally beneficial for the very wealthy gentlemen of England, he suggested, who often spent all their money on ‘hawks, hounds and whores’. In the frontier society of Virginia, he suggested, they could be weaned away from their addiction to whores.⁶⁰⁸

IV.

Domestic Animals

Though the wild animals of America played a large role in the subsistence and trade of the colonies, domestic animals were also significant. The only animal that natives had successfully domesticated was the dog, whereas English settlers not only had ambitions to tame and put to work some of the American species, but also brought with them cattle, oxen, pigs, horses, chickens and a few sheep. John Guy was instructed by the council of Newfoundland to take ‘a small number of domesticall creatures as goate hogges connyes hens and pigeons’ when trying to establish a

⁶⁰⁶ *A Relation of Maryland* (London, 1635), pp. 16, 18.

⁶⁰⁷ ‘John Masters to Lady Barrington’, Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England*, p. 84.

⁶⁰⁸ A. Whitaker, *Good Newes from Virginia* (London, 1613), p. 28.

colony in the New World.⁶⁰⁹ George Wyatt encouraged his son Francis, the governor of Virginia, to surround his settlement with cows as a primitive early warning system. He suggested the animals would be useful ‘when they found themselves molested in the night and by their lowings [would] warn their owners to look out for their succors if neede were’.⁶¹⁰ However, transporting domestic animals across the Atlantic proved difficult and many died during the crossing or soon after arrival. This meant that the cost of buying livestock was very high, prohibitive to all but the richest settlers. In 1637, the *Tristram and Jane* carried two oxen from England to Virginia, probably via the Caribbean, and sold them for six hundred pounds of tobacco, while three hogs cost one hundred and twenty pounds of tobacco a piece.⁶¹¹ Another problem encountered, with food in short supply during the first few years of settlement, was that many colonists could not afford to feed those animals that did survive the crossing. There were exceptions to this, however. John Masters, employed as the overseer of the Saltonstall property in Massachusetts, wrote that he already had ‘many cattle and kyne and horse and swine and some goats and poultry’ to care for by March 1631.⁶¹² Some authors hoped that skilful and patient English husbandmen could also domesticate American animals. Edward Plowden recommended that prospective migrants should choose his colony, situated between Virginia and New England, because there were ‘huge elkes to plow and work all bringing three young at once’.⁶¹³

⁶⁰⁹ ‘Instructions directed by the Counsale for the Plantation in Newfoundland to John Guy to be observed in the charge recommend to him’, Nottingham University Library, Middleton MSS, Mix 1/1, f. 12.

⁶¹⁰ G. Wyatt, ‘A Letter of Advice to the Governor of Virginia, 1624’, ed. J. F. Fausz & J. Kukla, *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 34 (1977), p. 120.

⁶¹¹ The voyage carried a variety of goods, owned by seven investors, to Virginia and returned to England with 31, 800 pounds of tobacco. The ship also carried two paying passengers and seventy four indentured servants. M. Hiden, ed., ‘Accompts of the Tristram and Jane’, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 62 (1954), p. 433.

⁶¹² ‘John Masters to Lady Joan Barrington’, *Barrington Family Letters 1628-1632*, ed. A. Searle (London, 1983), p. 183.

⁶¹³ E. Plowden, *A Description of the Province of New Albion* (London, 1650), p. 11.

There is no evidence, however, that the English ever did successfully employ elks as plough animals, reverting instead to the more traditional oxen.

The ownership of livestock caused tensions between settlers and also with the natives; when domestic animals ravaged native crops, for example, it often caused serious conflict.⁶¹⁴ The care of animals within a settlement was also controversial. Sometimes in New England animals were allowed to graze on common land, but this allowed them to roam free causing damage to neighbours' crops and gardens, and laws were passed to restrict the movement of domesticated animals. This was achieved by the widespread use of fences, so extending the boundaries of the settlements.⁶¹⁵ The importance of having good grazing land was emphasised by several authors, such as Henry Drake, who wrote from Newfoundland in 1612 that his region was 'an excellent good place both for wood and good oxen growndes'.⁶¹⁶ Oxen were imported because of their significance as plough animals, as settlers soon tired of ploughing by hand. As well as providing meat, dairy produce and their labour, cattle were central to the leather-working industry. Pigs, both imported from Europe and wild pigs discovered in America, were allowed to roam wild, and often provided the most important and inexpensive source of protein in settlers' diets. The right to roam pigs on a plot of land in England had been enshrined in medieval law and this was extended to apply to America, where pigs were allowed the run of local woods.⁶¹⁷ Domestic animals also brought disease across the Atlantic, and destroyed some native

⁶¹⁴ W. Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (New York, 1984), p. 131. Virginia DeJohn Anderson has written about another aspect of the relationship between livestock and the Native Americans, arguing that settlers saw the keeping of livestock as a way of civilising the wild Indians, reinforcing the sedentary way of life that cemented English property rights. V. DeJohn Anderson, 'Animals into the Wilderness: The Development of Livestock Husbandry in the Seventeenth Century Chesapeake', *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 2 (April 2002), p. 378.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁶¹⁶ '20 Aug 1612 from Henry Drake', Nottingham University Library, Middleton MSS Mix 1/13.

⁶¹⁷ M. Williams, *Americans and their Forests* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 67.

plant species, though these problems were only noted retrospectively.⁶¹⁸ However, these animals not only damaged their environment but suffered as a result of the American wildlife. Sheep were uncommon in all the colonies throughout the seventeenth century because of their vulnerability to predators, and even pigs, probably the most successful of the domesticated animals, could be troubled, as Roger Williams explained in a letter to John Winthrop in 1637. Williams and Winthrop, though divided by religious differences, had teamed up to buy Prudence Island from the Native Americans, and Williams wrote to Winthrop to let him know that he would be moving his home to this island to raise his swine in safety, away from the risk of wolf attack.⁶¹⁹

It is important not to overstate the role of the domestic animal in the life of the early colonies. In Virginia these animals were very rare, mostly because many of the early settlers arrived unprepared with no provisions, but also because of the different priorities of the local farmers. The scarcity of domesticated animals meant that unscrupulous settlers were tempted to steal their neighbours' livestock; in Virginia, as in England, the theft of a domesticated animal worth more than twelve pence was tried as a felony until 1647, when the penalties were reduced because of the greater livestock populations. This change in the law backfired, however, when the instances of hog stealing rose dramatically, causing the Virginia legislature to try various different punishments, including fining and branding, to deter thieves.⁶²⁰ Few people had horses, making long distance travel away from the navigable rivers almost impossible. In 1639 the Privy Council had to issue a license to encourage the supply

⁶¹⁸ A. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT, 1972), p. 111.

⁶¹⁹ 'To Governor Winthrop 28 Oct 1637', *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, ed. G. LaFantasie (London, 1988) vol. I, p. 130.

⁶²⁰ DeJohn Anderson, 'Animals into the Wilderness', p. 395.

of horses to Virginia as there were so few available in the colony.⁶²¹ By the time the author of *A Perfect Description of Virginia* wrote his inventory of the possessions of the colony in 1649, there were still only two hundred horses and mares for fifteen thousand Englishmen and three hundred Negro servants.⁶²² The author of a 1634 tract on the establishment of Maryland confirmed this problem, saying that they already had one hundred hogs and thirty cows as well as goats and hens but that they had to wait for a ship to arrive to bring them horses and sheep, as none were available to buy from Virginia, as they had expected.⁶²³ The following year, however, another anonymous author writing about Maryland claimed that the settlers had now managed to buy pigs and cows from their Virginian neighbours. He added that although Maryland had advanced more in six months than Virginia in as many years, they were still relieved to have such a friendly and supportive neighbour.⁶²⁴ This view was confirmed by a newspaper report in London in 1649 which argued that Virginia no longer experienced a shortage of livestock, and so the neighbouring plantations and proposed new settlements would be able to buy cows, oxen, horses, hogs and even sheep from the Virginians.⁶²⁵

⁶²¹ J. Perry, *The Formation of a Society on Virginia's Eastern Shore 1615-55* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1990), p. 42.

⁶²² *A Perfect Description of Virginia* (1649), Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, vol. 9, series 2 (Boston, MA., 1832), pp. 105-22.

⁶²³ *A Relation of the Successfull beginnings of the Lord Baltemore's Plantation in Maryland* (London, 1634), p. 9.

⁶²⁴ *A Relation of Maryland* (London, 1635), p. 11.

⁶²⁵ *The Moderate Intelligencer*, 215 (26 April-2 May). Thanks to Bernard Capp for this reference.

Conclusion

The practical significance and the symbolic importance of the animal kingdom obviously infiltrated the minds of authors concerned with both Virginia and New England. William Symonds, the preacher at St. Saviour's, Southwark, who was commissioned to speak before the Virginia Company in 1609, used animal imagery to justify the seizing of territory in North America to an audience who may have been hesitant about living among a heathen people. He claimed that the natives of Virginia lived 'in a waste country where the people do live but like deere in heards'. But he also stated that it was important for the colonisers not to use violence against these natives as 'wolves, lyons and tiges long famished' would do. Symonds used biblical references, describing the natives as lambs whose minds and souls the English should aim to feed rather than leave to the mercy of the Jesuits and Friars.⁶²⁶ In New England, John Winthrop also told a story about animal life within his colony to convey a religious message. He observed that in 1640, John Winthrop the younger, an enthusiastic reader, owned a library of more than one thousand books. With no purpose-built library in his house, he had to keep them in the room in which he stored his corn. Needless to say, mice invaded the store hoping for a feast and, as well as helping themselves to the corn, also nibbled the books. But they destroyed only one, the *Book of Common Prayer*! Winthrop the elder derived much entertainment, as well as a poignant lesson, from these like-minded Puritan mice.⁶²⁷

⁶²⁶ W. Symonds, *A Sermon Preached at Whitechappel in the presence of many Honourable and Worshipfull the Adventurers and Planters for Virginia 25 April 1609* (London, 1609), pp. 17-18.

⁶²⁷ J. Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, ed. J. Savage (Boston, 1832), vol. II, p. 20. An English Civil War journal reversed this story, describing mice that had been poisoned after eating Parliamentary tracts, having left royalist works, such as those by John Taylor, untouched. See B. Capp, *The World of John Taylor the Water Poet*, (Oxford, 1994), p. 180.

These stories show the important role the animal kingdom played in promoting interest in the New World. Animals were often central characters in the allegorical stories and jokes told to entertain and inform. Though deriving some of their knowledge about the animal kingdom from European writers, settlers also encountered much that was new in America. They found it difficult to categorise the new species in relation to those they had known in England, but they systematically divided the animals, birds and fish into those dangerous to man and those useful to him. Early accounts describing the frightening savage beasts of the New World often proved exaggerated, and much of the native fauna was more of a nuisance than a threat. Once this had been established, animals might potentially be used for food to subsist and for trade, especially fish or furs. However, as this chapter has shown, the English were not very successful in using European hunting techniques to catch large numbers of animals for themselves, and they also failed to domesticate any native species. With the exception of fish, the native fauna did not provide settlers with a regular supply of food or labour, except during times of desperation. It was possible, though, to transplant English domestic animals, especially pigs and cattle, to the New World and despite many dying on the voyage, once established these species flourished in their new environment, providing food, milk, labour and leather. These were to be the success stories during this period in man's attempts to utilise the animal kingdom in the American colonies.

CHAPTER EIGHT

REPRESENTATIONS OF ENGLISH SOCIETY IN VIRGINIA: INTENTIONS AND REALITIES

‘The first and last thing therefore in this Virginian argument considerable is God’.⁶²⁸

This was how Samuel Purchas, the great promoter of interest in America in the Stuart period, summarised both the motivation and validation of the Virginian enterprise. He was not alone. Theorists in England used their classical and religious training to justify England’s colonial enterprise and specifically to describe the types of settlements that should be established in Virginia. This chapter will explore the societies and the laws and the economic foundations and cultural practices that authors hoped would be built in Virginia. This will be followed with an analysis of representations of Virginia made by authors who observed the realities of the societies established in America.

⁶²⁸ S. Purchas, ‘Virginias Verger’, S. Purchas, ed., *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, (Glasgow, 1951), p. 218.

Creating a New Society: the Chesapeake

The ways that contemporary writers understood the societies they intended to build in Virginia and New England have vexed historians for many years.⁶²⁹ It is possible to identify many of the factors that influenced those seeking to establish a settlement in America. The members of the elite wanted to determine the form of religious and political authority that would be established; the leaders of Virginia, for example, communicated regularly with their colleagues in the Virginia Company in London with recommendations, and complaints about the authority, or lack of it, in the settlement.⁶³⁰ Many of the leaders and ordinary settlers were concerned about the need for security, which they felt was being neglected, and how this would affect the role of military men and martial training within the colonies.⁶³¹ Deciding who was to rule in the colonies was a key issue, and often led to political conflict with authorities in England over how the leaders should be selected. The establishment of law was also controversial, and was touched on in the work of many authors. All involved in the American enterprise, both those who remained in England and those who made the journey across the Atlantic, debated the commercial development necessary to make a profit and to pay back debts to the investors in England.⁶³² Some authors were also interested in the social make-up of the settlement, including whether women and children were needed to maintain civic stability, and if so, how to persuade them to

⁶²⁹ For information on the seventeenth century development of the society of Virginia, see W. Billings, *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, 1975) and W. Billings, J. Selby & T. Tate, eds., *Colonial Virginia: A History* (New York, 1986).

⁶³⁰ For example, D. Carleton, 'Letter to John Chamberlain', in E. Arber, ed., *Works of Captain Smith* (Edinburgh, 1910), p. 56.

⁶³¹ Sir F. Wyatt, 'Communication from the Governor of Virginia', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. II (1894-5), pp. 50-55.

⁶³² W. Alexander, *An Encouragement to the Colonies* (London, 1624) tried to deal with the awkward problem of how those who invested in the New World enterprise would recoup their money.

migrate, or whether they were surplus to requirements and thus a liability. The difficult problem of the role of servants and others from the lower echelons of society also had to be approached; authors often commented that they were concerned by the influx of poor people, even though they provided cheap labour for the larger landowners. Richard Eburne suggested shipping England's poor to labour in the wastelands of Newfoundland rather than either Virginia or New England, but this was unrealistic as many servants hoped eventually to buy land of their own and share in the riches of trade, as many promotional tracts had promised they would.⁶³³ This aspect of settlement-building also created conflict with the colonial paymasters in England because the authorities there, especially in London, wanted to get rid of their undesirable poor to Virginia and the Caribbean islands, residents of which were unsurprisingly resistant to the idea.

The distribution of the population, whether in towns, villages or individual homesteads, also concerned both those promoting the colony and the settlers themselves. Carville Earle has argued that, in the case of New England, modern commentators have been wrong to favour economic over social motives for settlement location, and that town-building was more important to seventeenth-century migrants than making a profit from colonial trade.⁶³⁴ Although historians have often acknowledged New England as the typical 'American' story, there are obvious differences between the New England and Chesapeake colonies, and it is worth examining them here as separate case-studies. Other historians, such as James Horn and Virginia DeJohn Anderson, have concentrated on social differences in the nature of migration to the two regions to explain the differences in the societies that have

⁶³³ R. Eburne, *A Plaine Way to Plantations* (London, 1624), p. 125. See J. Horn, *Adapting to a New World* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1994), pp. 258-292 for further information on the hopes and realities for indentured servants in Virginia.

⁶³⁴ C. Earle, *Geographical Inquiry and American Historical Problems* (Stanford, CA., 1992), p. 61.

developed.⁶³⁵ This thesis acknowledges the validity of these arguments while adding another explanation: that the differences in the American experience encountered in these two regions in terms of landscape, climate, flora, fauna and so on, also explain the differences in the societies that emerged. The naming of new settlements was also important; contemporaries usually gave their plantations English place-names, often the names of the towns or villages from whence they came, and in doing so, they gave an area a new identity. It can be argued that the English ‘created’ Virginia and New England as entities, by defining and mapping them.⁶³⁶ These themes will be teased out of the contemporary literature in order to answer the question: were American society and experience unique or did the colonial period see Englishmen merely replicating the settlements and societies they had known at home?

Leaders and Lawmakers

In the strictly stratified early modern social order, it was important to define who were to be the leaders of the new Virginian society and their roles within that society. The case of Virginia was further complicated by the joint control exercised by the Virginia Company in London and the Council which ran affairs from within the colony itself.⁶³⁷ Some historians have suggested that the Company had hopes of developing an aristocratic leadership in the early years of the colony, based on the traditional view that a certain class of ‘noble’ men (in both senses of the word) was set apart to rule by a natural, inherited right. However, this obviously did not come to fruition as

⁶³⁵ V. DeJohn Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1991); J. Horn, *Adapting to a New World* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1994).

⁶³⁶ J. Conforti, *Imagining New England* (Chapel Hill, NC., 2001), p. 13. For a comparison with Spanish naming practices see P. Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World* (Cambridge, 1995).

⁶³⁷ For a summary of the early history of Virginia, see R. Middleton, *Colonial America: A History 1565-1776* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 48-66.

few of Virginia's settlers were gentlemen.⁶³⁸ During the early years, Virginia's leadership came from a succession of 'soldier-governors', often from upper gentry families who were accustomed to leading the local community. Their main concerns were the defence, order and religious practice of the settlement. Men such as governors Lord De La Ware and Thomas Gates and deputy governor Thomas Dale and for a short time, John Smith, led the colonists from the front in exploring their new habitats, encouraging them to fortify their towns and also leading them to prayer both morning and evening. The rule of soldier-governors in Virginia mirrored a pattern that had unfolded in other colonies and in England itself. Soldiers gained experience of leadership overseas, and then in local garrisons such as Berwick upon Tweed and the Isle of Wight. During the Tudor period, soldiers learned domestic policy and had the first hint of American ambition, while in the seventeenth century, a stint in Ireland had taught many of them the qualities needed to supervise new agrarian settlements in potentially hostile environments.⁶³⁹ John Donne, preaching in London, urged the Virginia Company not to create an English-style elite in the New World, claiming that Christ had died for the poor man as well as the King and that it would be bad for the English settlers if the merchants and gentlemen of Virginia were constantly at each other's throats.⁶⁴⁰ Robert Johnson, writing his second tract on the history of the colony, reflected on the role of Dale and Gates without whom, he feared, the colony would have collapsed through famine, disease and disorder. Johnson instructed future governors on their duties towards the common colonists: 'let them live as free Englishmen under the government of just and equal laws and not as slaves after the will and lust of any superior...discourage them not in growing

⁶³⁸ L.B. Wright, *The First Gentlemen of Virginia* (San Marino, CA., 1940), pp. 5-7.

⁶³⁹ S. Saunders Webb, *The Governors-General* (Chapel Hill, 1979), pp. 7, 15, 436.

⁶⁴⁰ J. Donne, *A Sermon upon the VIII verse of the I Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles*, (London, 1622), p. 34. Donne's message fell on deaf ears, and the divide between rich and poor in Virginia was as great as in England.

religious nor in gathering riches'.⁶⁴¹ Historians have confirmed Johnson's analysis of the role of men such as Thomas Dale in creating a Virginia that was economically and socially viable. G.T. Surface, for example, has written that Dale abolished the 'system of industrial communism', by encouraging the ordinary settlers to build their own homes and grow enough food to support themselves before attempting to make a profit through trade.⁶⁴²

In 1612 William Strachey, secretary to the Virginia Company and resident of Jamestown for several years, recorded the laws made by these soldier-governors for the maintenance of order in the colony. The Virginia Company then published them, claiming that no one could henceforth argue 'I did not know' about any of the new rules. Strachey recorded laws concerning offences against God such as breaking the Sabbath, sodomy and adultery, laws concerning relations with natives and laws enacted for the smooth running of the English settlement. Some of these were painfully practical such as the law that forbade anyone taking 'necessities of nature' from doing so within a quarter of a mile of the fortified town.⁶⁴³ Most of the laws mirrored those of England, but they were enforced not by a dual system of church and secular courts, but by secular courts alone. Settlers perceived some of the laws as overly harsh, for example, the requirement to attend divine service daily. Over half of Strachey's *Lawes* was concerned with the military training that became a central part of the soldier-governors' regimes, defining the responsibilities for every rank from private to captain of the watch.⁶⁴⁴ It has been observed that the quick turnover of leaders in Virginia's early history caused some instability in the colony. Members of

⁶⁴¹ R. Johnson, 'The New Life of Virginia', *American Colonial Tracts Monthly*, vol. 1 (1897-8), p. 12.

⁶⁴² G.T. Surface, 'Geographic Influence on the Economic History of Virginia', *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, 39 (1907), p. 401.

⁶⁴³ W. Strachey, 'For the Colony in Virginea Britannia: Lawes Divine Morall and Martiall and c.', P. Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*, vol. III, (Washington, 1844), p. 15.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-63.

the gentry often left after a few years, so it was these men from outside the aristocracy, such as the soldier-governors and tradesmen, who filled the vacant posts in Virginia.⁶⁴⁵ Individualism and an increase in personal wealth meant that Strachey's *Lawes* were not enforced after 1618 or so, leading to a collapse in security, a problem which I will address later in this chapter. By 1619, the *Lawes* had been abandoned, and the rule of the true soldier-governor was at an end, as the Virginia Assembly was established. The governor and his council sat in the assembly, but two burgesses elected by each hundred or parish joined them.⁶⁴⁶ This assembly placed many new decrees on the statutes. Mostly these were based on the *Lawes* that had been recently abolished, although the penalties for crimes such as drunkenness and idleness were nowhere near as severe as in Dale's time.⁶⁴⁷ In 1625, this change was consolidated as governors arrived who were appointed by the King but, in law making, heavily reliant on the will of the colonists, though Charles had, in theory, given governors absolute power and did not formally recognise the assembly until 1639. These governors were more politically and economically motivated than the soldier-governors of the earlier period, but the royal government was acknowledged by all to herald a more stable and prosperous era .

The Search for Craftsmen and Women

Alongside the sermons delivered to the Company which were published to encourage investment in and migration to Virginia, the Company also published several broadsides describing the settlement they hoped to establish and the people who would be useful to it. They also published a tract in 1610 to clarify their aims, entitled

⁶⁴⁵ For confirmation of this argument see J. Horn, *Adapting to a New World* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1994), p. 28.

⁶⁴⁶ W. Billings, *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1975), pp. 37-8.

⁶⁴⁷ R. Middleton, *Colonial America: A History 1565-1776* (Oxford, 1992), p. 56

A True and Sincere Declaration of the Purposes and Ends of the Plantation Begun in Virginia. The Company emphasised the honour and ‘noble and feasible ends’ of the project, describing its aims as first, to convert the natives, second to bring honour and safety to the King, and only finally to provide private individuals with marketable commodities. The missionary factor was considered especially important because it would ensure that God remained on the side of the plantation.⁶⁴⁸ The Company then went on to list the craftsmen and tradesmen, as well as four ministers and two surgeons, who would be required if Virginia was to fulfil these ambitions.⁶⁴⁹ A broadside issued in 1609 proclaimed the same reasons for establishing a settlement in Virginia, to make it ‘pleasing to God and commodious many waies to the Commonwealth’.⁶⁵⁰ This formula was repeated in many other broadsides over the next decade, especially those trying to encourage the population of England to take part in a lottery to raise funds for Virginia. Historians often claim that Virginia offered the younger sons of the gentry an opportunity to make a new life for themselves, abandoning their old life completely. It is striking, however, that none of the Virginian promotional material is specifically targeted at the younger sons of the gentry, though William Bullock does mention in passing that migration would be profitable for ‘poor gentlemen’.⁶⁵¹

Most of the migrants in the early years were young men, and so, by 1620, the Company realised that they would have to advertise for skilled labourers and also for women to be their companions, to marry and produce another generation of Virginian settlers and to bring stability and gentleness to the rough life on the American frontier. Adventurers in England contributed large sums of money and the first shipment of

⁶⁴⁸ *A True and Sincere Declaration of the Purposes and Ends of the Plantation begun in Virginia* (London, 1610), pp. 1, 2.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁶⁵⁰ *For the Plantation in Virginia or Nova Britannia* (London, 1609).

⁶⁵¹ W. Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined* (London, 1649), p. 44.

fifty-seven women arrived late in the summer of 1621. These women, intended as wives to the planters, made the Atlantic crossing bearing character-references describing their virtues and their housekeeping skills.⁶⁵² Later, though, other women of less good repute were exported from England, and they basically became prostitutes for the sailors and settlers of Virginia's ports. As with unruly male migrants, this only served to damage further the colony's reputation, and authors worked hard to remedy this by appealing to honest women and their fathers. William Bullock, an author who inherited his father's Virginia estate, but never visited America, sought to convince gentlemen that their daughters would have good prospects in America, and Francis Wyatt even suggested that women were better suited to surviving in Virginia than men!⁶⁵³ Because of the scarcity of archival evidence, tracing the fate of these early female settlers is difficult, and most of them did not or could not leave any written record of their lives in the colony. However, some of these women did marry, and are glimpsed in the records as a planter's wife, widow or mother, thus fulfilling the Virginia Company's hopes that the presence of women in the settlement would be of both a short and long-term benefit.

The Lure of Riches and Its Shaping of Society

The honourable aims of converting the natives and bringing glory and pride to the King and the English nation, as outlined by men such as Purchas, may sometimes have been largely rhetorical, directed at the better classes to encourage them to invest in the Virginia Company, or to migrate themselves and become part of the colonial

⁶⁵² For a comprehensive study of origins and experiences of the fifty-seven women who went to Virginia in 1621, see D. Ransome, 'Wives for Virginia 1621', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 48 (1991), pp. 3-18.

⁶⁵³ W. Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined* (London, 1649), p. 54; F. Wyatt, *Letter of Sir Francis Wyatt, Governor of Virginia 1621-1626*, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd series, vol. 6, no. 2 (1926), p. 117.

elite. Many contemporaries certainly acknowledged that, in practice, it was the lure of riches that enticed investors and migrants of all social backgrounds to take part in the enterprise. In fact, some historians have claimed that the early promoters of Virginia saw it as no more than a trading post, based on the example of Mediterranean trading ports such as those used by the *Hansa* towns and the *Fondachi* of the Italian city states, from which temporary residents could make huge profits before returning to permanent homes elsewhere.⁶⁵⁴ This is not strictly true. In the *Instructions by way of advice for the Intended Voyage to Virginia* (1606), distributed for the voyage that would result in the first permanent English settlement in North America, Richard Hakluyt reminded his readers of the importance of settling in a secure position near the mouth of the river, and finding a safe place to build a storehouse. He then went on, however, to emphasise that the colony must turn its hand to planting ‘corn and roots’ immediately, hardly necessary should the colony be only a trading post, which would presumably import food from England and export American goods to trade. Hakluyt also exhorted the settlers to choose an area that was not ‘overburdened with woods’ in order that each migrant might be allowed twenty acres of his own to cultivate.⁶⁵⁵ Although those who established Jamestown did not follow these recommendations to the letter, Hakluyt’s advice still indicates that the intention of Virginia’s ‘founding fathers’ was to build more than a trading post.⁶⁵⁶

Most contemporaries did not want Virginia to develop merely into a military trading post, but conversely many of the early explorers such as John Brereton expressed no interest in establishing a new society in which families would live

⁶⁵⁴ J. O’Mara ‘Town Founding in Seventeenth Century North America: Jamestown in Virginia’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1982), p. 1.

⁶⁵⁵ R. Hakluyt, ‘Instructions by way of advice for the intended Voyage to Virginia’, E. Arber, ed., *Works of Captain Smith*, (Edinburgh, 1910), p. xxxvi.

⁶⁵⁶ I agree here with Andrew Fitzmaurice who has rescued the reputation of the Virginia Company by highlighting their attempts at civic design: see A. Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 69.

permanently, and which would eventually become self-sufficient. John Smith's *Relation* of 1608 only implicitly mentioned the idea of an English settlement as opposed to a base for trade. He wrote that Virginia was 'exceeding pleasant for habitation', but otherwise focused on listing commodities that might make a good profit for English investors. Smith envisioned a self-sufficient trading post, with men resident all year round, growing their own food.⁶⁵⁷ However, only two years later in 1610, the idea of establishing 'a Nation', as Richard Rich put it, had become commonplace in Virginian promotional literature.⁶⁵⁸ The Virginia Company elaborated on their vision for the colony in their tract published in the same year, *A True and Sincere Declaration*. As early as 1606, they claimed, Captain Newport had intended to seek an able and absolute governor to rule over a colony of families, indicating to readers that the Company's intention had always been to establish a permanent colony complete with women and children.⁶⁵⁹

Trading post or not, the hope of making one's fortune by trading New World commodities, perhaps even gold, was a significant motivation. The Jesuit priest Andrew White, who was involved in the first explorations and settlements in Maryland and who circulated a Latin manuscript tract in the mid-1630s designed to inform future settlers, might not have been the sort of man one would imagine focusing on financial gain over and above missionary potential. White's tract acknowledged that as 'most men are drawn...by pleasures, honor and riches, it was ordained by the wonderful wisdom of God that this one enterprise should offer to men every kind of inducement and reward', and he proceeded to list the commodities which could be successfully traded, concluding, 'it is also to be expected that the

⁶⁵⁷ J. Smith, *A True Relation of such occurrences and accidents...* (London, 1608), p. 35.

⁶⁵⁸ R. Rich, *The Lost Flocke Triumphant* (London, 1610), sig. B2.

⁶⁵⁹ *A True and Sincere Declaration of the Purposes and Ends of the Plantation begun in Virginia...* (London, 1610), p. 7.

provident industry and long experience of men will discover many other advantages and sources of wealth'.⁶⁶⁰ In this last sentence, White alluded to another theme often covered by authors, the need for hard work in order to make any profit. This was often accompanied by complaints that the migrants who had travelled to the New World so far were idle men, and, therefore, it was important to emphasise that profit was not attainable without hard work. This not only reflected the realities of life in the colonies, with indentured servants finding it very difficult to gain land of their own, but also formed part of a general early modern attitude towards work: it was important for maintaining order and discipline as well as having a spiritually regenerative effect on the poor.⁶⁶¹

Religious Belief and Its Shaping of Society

It has long been a fallacy that Virginia's founding fathers had no religious vision for the colony, unlike those of Plymouth and New England, who built their societies using guidelines set out by their religious beliefs. The picture is not as simple as that.⁶⁶² Virginia, too, had its Protestant inspiration, most obviously revealed in the sermons preached before the Virginia Company in London and then published to promote the colony to a wider audience. These sermons, alongside the work of Hakluyt and Purchas, reveal, in this period, the redefining of England as a Protestant

⁶⁶⁰ A. White, 'An Account of the Colony of the Lord Baron Baltimore 1633', C.Hall, ed., *Narratives of Early Maryland*, (New York, 1910), pp. 7, 10.

⁶⁶¹ For more information on the realities of work in early Virginia see J. Horn, *Adapting to a New World* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1994), pp. 253-275.

⁶⁶² One of the first people to recognise this was the New England historian: P. Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 99. Even some radical Protestants were attracted to the region. During the Interregnum, a group led by Benjamin Worsley and Samuel Hartlib hoped to establish a utopian agricultural settlement within Virginia's borders, but their ambitions were never realised. See C. Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626-1660* (London, 1975), p. 460.

nation ready for empire building.⁶⁶³ One of the earliest of these sermons was by Robert Gray, published in 1609 and intended by the Company to encourage investment in their project and to counter negative reports from Virginia of shortages of food and lack of order. Gray symbolically compared the Virginian migrants to Joshua and the Israelites, arguing that the two main purposes of this American migration would be to assist the multitudes of England by putting them to work abroad, and to ‘reduce this people [Native Americans] from brutishness to civilitie’.⁶⁶⁴ Both these aims were couched in a language that described them as primarily God’s work. However, Gray could also be highly pragmatic when it suited him. He recommended that many ministers migrate to Virginia, not, however, to save the souls of the heathen Indians or even the English, but rather to encourage order and obedience to the civic magistrates there.⁶⁶⁵ A Virginia Company broadside of 1620 also argued the need for ministers to be present in every one of Virginia’s newly formed boroughs.⁶⁶⁶ It was not only observers in England who were pleading the case for religious instruction within Virginia. Later, in 1642, a new group of migrants to Virginia who had settled in Norfolk County, wrote to the Puritan elders of the Massachusetts Bay colony asking them to send ministers to Virginia to provide the residents with spiritual guidance. Their pastor was leaving for England and they desperately wanted to replace him with a like-minded individual, and were willing to subject themselves to ‘their teaching and discipline’.⁶⁶⁷

The only minister to live in Virginia during the early period and write about his aspirations for the colony was Alexander Whitaker, preacher at Henrico. William

⁶⁶³ T. Scanlon, *Colonial Writing and the New World 1583-1671* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 94.

⁶⁶⁴ R. Gray, *A Good Speed to Virginia* (London, 1609), p. 18.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶⁶⁶ *The Treasurer, Councill and Co. for Virginia writing to the Governor and the Councill there Residing* (London, 1620).

⁶⁶⁷ ‘To the Pastors and Elders of Christ Church in New England’, *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 84 (1972), pp. 105-6.

Crashaw, writing an introduction to Whitaker's published account, emphasised that God's providence was behind the Virginia enterprise, and rejected claims that many residents wanted to return home. Many people migrated permanently and intended to spend the rest of their lives there, he said, giving examples of men who were doing this.⁶⁶⁸ Whitaker himself reiterated the importance of building a virtuous settlement rather than a profitable one, and claimed that, by the time he wrote his tract in 1613, the future of the colony was secure, though it had initially been hindered by the sending over of sinful and idle people.⁶⁶⁹ Earlier, in 1609, William Crashaw had preached his own sermon to the assembled Company, with a slightly different, more outspoken message. This sermon was published but without the minister's consent, its editor claimed. Like Andrew White, Crashaw argued that the Chesapeake colonies were suffering because colonists had gone there 'for ease or idleness', or to commit carnal sin; he suggested that all hopes of profit should be put on hold, because settlers should only be concerned at this stage with doing God's work, that is, setting up a godly commonwealth and converting the natives.⁶⁷⁰ This sermon was preached before Lord De La Ware, who was about to leave for Virginia, and on his arrival he did instigate a much harsher regime in which profit took second place to building and defending the settlement. Perhaps Crashaw's words stayed with him on his long Atlantic crossing.

In 1622 Patrick Copland preached an encouraging sermon at Bow Church, blissfully unaware of the deteriorating relations between settlers and natives that would lead to the Virginia Massacre later that year, and eventually to the dissolution

⁶⁶⁸ A. Whitaker, *Good Newes from Virginia* (London, 1613), sig. C2.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1, sig. D2.

⁶⁷⁰ W. Crashaw, *A Sermon Preached in London before the Right Honourable the Lord LaWarre* (London, 1609), pp. 41, 49. Thomas Scanlon interprets Crashaw's sermon differently, seeing it as an exhortation to acquire commodities from the natives in return for converting them to Christianity. However, I do not see this as the central thrust of Crashaw's argument. See T. Scanlon, *Colonial Writing*, p. 112.

of the Virginia Company. Copland's sermon was structured around Psalm 107, in which the dangers of crossing the oceans are discussed, clearly relevant to the gathered audience of Virginia Company members. Copland's upbeat address included the assertions that dangers of pirates or enemies at sea had abated, and that the success of the colony after such hesitant beginnings should encourage the audience to praise God.⁶⁷¹ Every aspect of the good progress of the colonial enterprise was attributed to God's satisfaction with the project. As an example, he articulated his misguided belief that God had removed Opecanough (Chief Powhatan's very hostile brother) to another region and had also encouraged the brothers to sell their land to the English. Copland hoped that the English would build a free school in Charles City, which would educate both the Native Americans and the children of the English settlers. He raised seventy pounds towards the project and was duly appointed rector of the school, but he was never called upon to use his missionary skills: the college assisted a few English labourers and then corrupt Company officials squandered the rest of the money.⁶⁷²

Copland preached that Virginia's success was due to the Almighty, and that the leaders of the colony had a duty to thank God by giving charity to the poor in London. The specific form of charity to which he referred was transportation. Unlike Crashaw, Copland thought that the poor would make useful migrants to Virginia. 'What you bestow on them in their transportation to Virginia they will repay it at present with their prayers and when they are able, with their purses'.⁶⁷³ John Donne, an avid supporter of the Virginia enterprise, gave and published a sermon later in

⁶⁷¹ P. Copland, *Virginias God be Thanked* (London, 1622), pp. 9, 11.

⁶⁷² P. Copland, *A Declaration how the Monies were Disposed...* (London, 1622); F. Jennings, *The Invasion of America* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1975), p. 55. Jennings is typically harsh in his judgement of the Company as a whole, claiming that their missionary attempts were merely a moneymaking sham. However, he does imply that Copland behaved in good faith, and that many of the ministers working for the Company truly believed in the potential of the Virginians to do good works.

⁶⁷³ Copland, *Virginias God be Thanked*, pp. 26, 35.

1622 attempting to lift the spirits of those recently disheartened by the massacre. He insisted that God was behind their colony, and compared the Company's work with the natives to that of Christ.⁶⁷⁴ These sermons employed high rhetoric to convince their listeners of the rewards of good works in America: honour, glory, profit and wealth, benefits which could never entirely be separated from one another, and on which a speaker would place a different emphasis depending on his audience.⁶⁷⁵

The establishment of Maryland also had a strong religious motive, though the leaders' covert promotion of Catholic interests often led to tensions with the English government, especially during the Interregnum. Maryland became a refuge for many Catholic priests, even Jesuits, who had been exiled from England and were keen to become missionaries in North America.⁶⁷⁶ However, it is important not to over-emphasise the religious heritage of Maryland. It is the prime example of a colony in which religious and financial motivations for colonisation were never treated separately; they were interlinked in the minds of almost all explorers, settlers and commentators. The Baltimore family were, first and foremost, interested in establishing a financially successful colony; their religious tolerance was not the driving force behind its establishment. Adventurers were offered land and profit if they paid for the passage of servants or women, whatever their religious denomination. Lord Baltimore and his brother planned a diversified agricultural colony, but, as in Virginia, tobacco soon became the most important crop.

In 1908, the historian T. Wertenbaker claimed that Virginian life was like no other on earth, but this thesis argues that seventeenth century Virginians remained

⁶⁷⁴ J. Donne, *A Sermon upon the VIII Verse of the I Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles* (London, 1622), p. 7.

⁶⁷⁵ For further information on the relationship between rhetoric and the Virginia sermons see L. Ferrell & P. McCullough, *The English Sermon Revised: Religion Literature and History 1600-1750* (Manchester, 2000) p. 32.

⁶⁷⁶ J. Bossy, 'Reluctant Colonists: English Catholics Confront the Atlantic', D.B. Quinn, ed. *Early Maryland in a Wider World* (Detroit, MI., 1982), p. 162.

Englishmen too, influenced by the beliefs, ideas and norms they had learned in England.⁶⁷⁷ The early Virginians' lack of interest in the origins of their society is substantiated if one examines the literature emanating from Virginia during the first half of the seventeenth century, during which time, no attempt was made to write a grand history of the colony's inception along the lines of Bradford's or Winthrop's journals.⁶⁷⁸ It is difficult to answer the question whether Virginian society was intended to replicate English society. The author of *A Perfect Description of Virginia* in 1649 certainly thought that it was. He claimed that the government was 'after the laws of England', with twenty counties sending men to a general assembly. He also recorded the existence of twenty churches, all modelled on the Church of England.⁶⁷⁹ However, as social historians such as Keith Wrightson have shown, society in England was not static, but ever changing, and comparisons with the volatile, unsettled colony of Virginia which also constantly evolved during the seventeenth century, are far more complex than historians have previously suggested.⁶⁸⁰ However, there is evidence that the colonial leaders of both the Virginia and Maryland settlements, as well as those of New England, attempted to create societies that would eliminate the problems of disorder they had encountered in England. For example, Lord Baltimore attempted to build an orderly seigneurial society in Maryland that would provide a refuge for his Catholic friends.⁶⁸¹ This seems a fairer assessment of what Virginia's early promoters and leaders were attempting to do, to create a new society that was influenced by all that was best in the English system while trying to

⁶⁷⁷ The Wertenbaker reference taken from T. Breen, *Puritans and Adventurers* (New York, 1980), p. 107.

⁶⁷⁸ Breen concurs with this view in *Puritans and Adventurers*, as does Stephen Adams in *The Best and Worst Country in the World* (Charlottesville, VA., 2001), p.192.

⁶⁷⁹ *A Perfect Description of Virginia* (London, 1649), *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 9, series 2 (Boston, MA., 1832), p. 115.

⁶⁸⁰ Jack Greene makes a similar argument as to why New England society cannot be assumed to be the typically English copy of society, translated to American soil, in his book *Pursuits of Happiness* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1988), p. 30.

⁶⁸¹ J. Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1993), p. 55.

make improvements to eradicate some of the problems of the old world. John Rolfe, for example, argued that the settlements in Virginia would encourage men to spend ‘not their tyme idely nor improfitably’, as was rife in England, because they would be employed in the daily business of building the towns. However, Virginians hoped to emulate the security ‘from feare of danger and treacherie as in England’, and to that end desired a lasting peace with the native tribes.⁶⁸² They were intent on maintaining the highly stratified social system of Old England, in which a leisured ruling, landowning class who had invested money in the colony would not have to work with their hands to make a living, relying instead on a large labour force.⁶⁸³

III.

Explanations of Virginia’s Problems

Despite the best intentions of the Virginia Company, with promoters like William Strachey recording the law and the soldier-governors trying to enforce it, Virginia took a very long time to develop a cohesive structure for a stable society. After the initial difficulties caused by disease, hunger and poor leadership, the colony’s social structure was left unstable because of tensions between settlers of different classes, and between the settlers and the Virginia Company in London. Samuel Purchas,

⁶⁸² J. Rolfe, ‘A True Relation of the State of Virginia’ (London, 1616), *Virginia Historical Register*, vol. I (1848), pp. 104-105.

⁶⁸³ John Rolfe outlined this plan most articulately, dividing the colonists into ‘officers’, ‘labourers’ and ‘farmers’. He recorded that ‘the generall mayne body of the planters are divided into officers, laborers, farmers’. He explained that the officers had the job of caring for the rest of the population, the labourers were divided into two sorts, the general labourer fed from the general store and the specialised craftsman fed by his own labour, and the farmers who ‘live at most ease’, who bring money to the plantation and must support themselves and their servants while also contributing to the general store. Rolfe, ‘A True Relation of the State of Virginia’, p. 107.

editing a collection of letters he had received from early Virginia for inclusion in his collection of travel narratives, noted that one settler claimed that they had no ‘use of Parliaments, Playes, Petitions, Admirals, Recorders, Interpreters, Chronologers, Courts of plea nor Justices of Peace.’ That particular author blamed the greed of the leaders of the expedition for the disorganisation of the colony, telling the apocryphal story of one of their party who wished to be buried in sand so that alchemists might make gold from his bones.⁶⁸⁴

Others felt that the disarray in the Virginia Company in London was the cause of the colony’s problems. The Company was originally designed along the lines of the East India Company, but as the Virginia Company could not use the native population as a labour force, it had to employ Englishmen, and later African slaves, to provide labour for the colony, leading to difficult situations because settlers saw themselves first and foremost as Virginian colonists and only second as employees of the Company. Another difference was that most East India Company employees intended to return home after a few years, whereas many of the Virginians thought of themselves as permanent settlers, though of course, some did return to England, either in disgrace or unable to cope with life on the frontier.⁶⁸⁵ Arthur Wodenoth, cousin to John Ferrar and a servant to John Danvers, leading supporters of the enterprise, recorded decades later some of the problems they had faced. The leaders of the Company managed to annoy James I, who called it ‘a seminary for a seditious Parliament’, and then proceeded to distribute as many other patents as he could to weaken the Virginia Company’s position. He stopped the operation of the Virginia lottery and imprisoned the Earl of Southampton and Sir Edwin Sandys, both of whom were officers in the Company and vitally important to smooth communication

⁶⁸⁴ ‘Proceedings at Virginia’, Purchas ed., *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 477.

⁶⁸⁵ S. Diamond, ‘From Organisation to Society: Virginia in the Seventeenth Century’, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 58 (1958), pp. 460-462.

between Jamestown and London.⁶⁸⁶ William Bullock, who acknowledged that he had never been to America and was attempting to write a history of Virginia derived from the writing of other men, wrote a fascinating commentary on the failures of the government of the colony. He was critical of the behaviour both of members of the elite and of the ordinary settlers. Bullock claimed that the members of the Assembly were not elected according to merit and consequently made bad laws once in office. When a stranger was sent to govern Virginia he was accused of being the sort of man who 'neither knows the people nor their customes neither they him'.⁶⁸⁷ Sir Francis Wyatt, himself governor of Virginia between 1621 and 1626, wrote a letter to the Privy Council at the end of his tenure, as the Company was dissolved and Virginia became a royal colony. Wyatt claimed that Virginia's slow development into a stable society was due to strategic errors by the Company in London. He said that the Company had tended to ignore the advice of the Council of Virginia (the governing body within the colony itself) and had heeded the contrary opinions of some of the gentlemen planters, a divisive action which caused the formation of hostile factions.⁶⁸⁸

Some historians have concurred with Bullock's view that poor leadership was to blame, citing the weak and temporary governors who ruled Virginia between its division into boroughs in 1618 and the accession of William Berkeley in 1641. Berkeley wanted to replicate English society, with its strict gradations of status, but still allow for the potential of social mobility.⁶⁸⁹ From the 1650s onwards, his ideas

⁶⁸⁶ A. Wodenoth, *A Short Collection of the Most Remarkable Passages from the Originall to the Dissolution of the Virginia Company* (London, 1651), pp. 4-10.

⁶⁸⁷ W. Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined and left to Publick View to be considered by all Ludicious and Honest Men* (London, 1649), pp. 10, 29.

⁶⁸⁸ 'Governor of Virginia to the Privy Council, 1626', *Virginia Historical Magazine*, vol. II (1894-5), p. 51.

⁶⁸⁹ W. Billings, J. Selby & T. Tate, eds., *Colonial Virginia: A History* (New York, 1986), p. 48. This point has been overemphasised in my opinion. Some of the royal governors, such as Frances Wyatt, brought a measure of stability to the struggling colony.

for a royalist state in Virginia caused conflict with others such as Francis Wyatt and George Sandys who wanted to see a free popular settlement, resistant to absolute monarchy whether in Virginia or England.⁶⁹⁰

Others felt that the massacre in 1622 was the primary cause of the confusion, and that the colony would have developed earlier without that setback. This is how Christopher Brooke characterised the state of the colony. Brooke was an English gentleman who gave himself the task writing a poem with a ‘tragicall slant’, eulogising men such as Captain Powell and Captain Berkeley, who had died in the massacre.⁶⁹¹ Brooke asked ‘Is Uniformity and Order turning to Chaos? Shall Savage Men their ignorance advance?’, and he clearly feared the massacre might cause the failure of the colony:

But live in Fame, let Time record your zeale
In propagation of Virginias weale
Yet with this blurre: your lives might still have flourisht
But for security in which yee perisht.⁶⁹²

The issue of security was contentious throughout Virginia’s early years. Many settlers were neglectful of it, over-confident that their superior intellect and firepower would overcome any enemy, and reluctant to be subjected to any sort of rigorous military discipline. John Smith, a soldier with military experience in the Levant, North Africa and even Russia, was a keen observer of foreign lands and peoples, and realised immediately that Jamestown needed strong buildings and fortifications. He had

⁶⁹⁰ L. Montague, ‘Richard Lee the Emigrant, 1613? -1664’, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 62 (1954), p. 14.

⁶⁹¹ C. Brooke, *A Poem on the Late Massacre in Virginia, with Particular Mention of those Men of Note that Suffered in the Disaster* (London, 1622), sig. A2.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, sig. B3.

conducted an early exploratory expedition in 1607, during which the natives held him prisoner, making Smith well aware of their strength.⁶⁹³ However, the colonists chose not to listen to Smith, instead waiting until the arrival of Thomas Dale and Thomas Gates three years later for the instilling of military discipline. It was not only fear of native insurgence that encouraged authors to plead for better security. Lord De La Ware reported that he was worried because the fortifications in Virginia would not withstand attack from England's colonial rivals, the Spanish, Dutch and French, but De La Ware seems to have been referring to a general threat rather than a specific imminent attack.⁶⁹⁴ In 1626, Francis Wyatt complained that Jamestown was not secure against an Indian attack despite the sense of urgency created by the 1622 massacre. He begged the Privy Council to send the settlers '£1200 in readie money for the building of the pallizado', which would form the perimeter fence with guard posts to protect the settlement. Wyatt also requested extra money to raise a troop of soldiers for an attack on the local natives, in order to dispose of the professed enemies of the settlers and force others to submit to English rule.⁶⁹⁵ Wyatt's father summarised the Virginians' new enmity as one in which everywhere would become a battlefield: 'And the Barbarians once or twice bitten and beaten...wil thinke al is a strat[agem]: hills, woodes, caves, rokes, winds, raine, haile, mistes, smokes, the sunbeames by Day and darkness of the Night.'⁶⁹⁶

These pleas appear to have fallen on deaf ears. Later, in 1638, George Donne, the brother of John, the poet and promoter of Virginia, spent a year in the colony and

⁶⁹³ L. Paine, *Captain John Smith and the Jamestown Story* (London, 1973), p. 92. In a letter to his son, George Wyatt showed that he also had the perception to appreciate the natives' courage, intelligence and good strategy. G. Wyatt, 'A Letter of Advice to the Governor of Virginia, 1624', ed. J. F. Fausz & J. Kukla, *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 34 (1977), p. 108.

⁶⁹⁴ 'A Briefe Declaration of the State of Virginia at my comminge from thence February 1624', *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, vol. 9, series 4 (1871), p. 63.

⁶⁹⁵ 'Governor of Virginia to the Privy Council, 1626', *Virginia Historical Magazine*, vol. II (1894-5), p. 52.

⁶⁹⁶ G. Wyatt, 'A Letter of Advice to the Governor of Virginia, 1624', p. 126.

wrote pleading again for stronger security in Virginia, by strict observation of the laws that already existed, and the instruction of all colonists in the bearing of arms. Donne reminded his readers in London of the spectre of the massacre, still haunting the colony fifteen years later, and encouraged them to turn their attention to the military security of England's colonies in order to prevent a similar disaster happening again.⁶⁹⁷ However, a more subtle approach was expressed in 1624 by George Wyatt, who, while appreciating the need for strong and strict military discipline, recommended to his son that military justice should not be meted out to the civilian population: 'Let severitie of justice not let blud too much that it cause not a consumption in the body too weake alreddy. Preventinge laws are best'.⁶⁹⁸ The poor network of communications was another problem highlighted by Wyatt; he recommended that beacons be used as a warning system in times of trouble, as Virginians were not yet able to make use of post horses, and boats would have to rely on the wind and the tide.⁶⁹⁹

The colony's reliance on the cultivation of tobacco was also blamed for the disorderly society that had developed. Owners of large plantations who had acquired huge tracts of land in order to grow tobacco for the export trade, necessarily lived far apart from each other and so, apart from the declining centre of Jamestown, there were few centres of habitations in the colony, merely widely scattered individual dwellings. This led early modern commentators to feel that the sense of community had broken down.⁷⁰⁰ William Bullock said that the tobacco trade encouraged migrants to feel that they could make a fast profit and neglect their civil duties. By the time his pamphlet was published in 1649, the price of tobacco was starting to fall, causing

⁶⁹⁷ T. Breen, 'George Donne's "Virginia Reviewed": A 1638 Plan to Reform Colonial Society', *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 30 (July 1973), pp. 449-466.

⁶⁹⁸ G. Wyatt, 'A Letter of Advice to the Governor of Virginia, 1624', p. 116.

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 119

⁷⁰⁰ J. Horn, *Adapting to a New World* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1994), pp. 140-142.

further uncertainty within the colony.⁷⁰¹ Francis Bacon commented that the excessive growing of tobacco in Virginia distracted settlers from the ‘main business’, which in his opinion was the establishment of a self-sufficient plantation that would endure for generations to come.⁷⁰² This theory is borne out in the report that Lord De La Ware, on his return to England because of ill health, presented to the Privy Council. He stressed that ‘the immoderate plantinge of tobacco must be restrained’, and that instead, public works must be undertaken, such as the building of a ‘guest house, bridge, storehouse, munition house, publique granary, fortifications, church’.⁷⁰³ This suggests that, even by 1624, seventeen years after the first arrival of English settlers, these buildings were still rare in the colony. The accounts of the ship *Tristram and Jane* that reached Virginia with a cargo from England and the Caribbean in 1637 reveal that a great variety of commodities were being imported into the colony and it was not yet self-sufficient, although the wealth of the planters is evident from the high prices they were able to pay for these goods. For example, handkerchiefs, candles, shoes, stockings, waistcoats, nails, vinegar and cheese were sold to various planters from the ‘generall cargazoune’, so it is probable that, even by 1637, it was not possible to produce these items in Virginia.⁷⁰⁴ However, Virginians were becoming wealthy enough to consider the purchase of non-essential items to supplement their basic diets. The ship also brought, perhaps from the Mediterranean or the Caribbean,

⁷⁰¹ W. Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined* (London, 1649), p. 13. This is confirmed by Peter Thompson in his article on ‘William Bullock’s “Strange Adventure”’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 61 (Jan 2004), p. 109.

⁷⁰² F. Bacon, ‘Of Plantations’, in *The Essays of Francis Bacon Lord Verulam*, (Everyman Edition, London, 1906), p. 105.

⁷⁰³ ‘A Briefe Declaration of the State of Virginia at my comminge from thence February 1624’, *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, vol. 9, series 4 (1871), p. 73. A broadside of 1620 had recommended that a guesthouse be built in every borough to accommodate new migrants, but this had not been implemented by 1624.

⁷⁰⁴ M. Hiden, ed., ‘Accompts of the Tristram and Jane’, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 62 (1954), p. 428. It is interesting to note that, on its return journey, the ship took on ninety nine hogsheads of tobacco at several points on Virginia’s river systems, rather than just one main port. See p. 433.

luxury items such as sugar, almonds, ‘marmalet of quinces’, ‘conserves of sloes’ and raisins.⁷⁰⁵

The poorer men of Virginia, the indentured servants and the day labourers with no land or money of their own, always occupied a precarious position in the minds of those interested in the colony. Initially, labourers were promised that the Company would support them with a good wage, and eventually, ‘a house and garden plot [they] shall have’.⁷⁰⁶ The anonymous author of *A Relation of Maryland* wrote in 1634 that anyone willing to migrate to the colony under an indenture of five years would receive food, drink and clothes throughout that time, and fifty acres and a year’s provision on the completion of their service.⁷⁰⁷ William Bullock was more realistic about the sort of life a servant should expect in the colonies. He claimed that because labour was very expensive in Virginia, planters should motivated servants with a system of rewards and punishments, giving pay bonuses for hard work and severe wage deductions if they servants fail to complete their work.⁷⁰⁸ His account of the history of Virginia was less biased than the earlier promotional material, and he acknowledged that a servant’s life was hard and that the labour involved in working on a tobacco plantation was very strenuous. Much of the work was required during the hottest summer months, so that the servant might easily become ‘over-heated, he is struck with a calenture or feaver and so perisheth. This has been the losse of divers men’.⁷⁰⁹ Bullock had some advice for the labourers of Virginia, suggesting that they move to a piece of abandoned land with soil worn out from over-planting of tobacco,

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 424-426.

⁷⁰⁶ Rich, *The Lost Flocke Triumphant*, sig. B3.

⁷⁰⁷ *A Relation of the Successful Beginnings of Lord Baltemore’s Plantation in Maryland* (London, 1634), p. 14. Interestingly, the tract of the following year, *A Relation of Maryland* (London, 1635) contains no reference to what a servant might expect on completion of his service, though it does explain how a gentleman who shipped servants to the colony would benefit.

⁷⁰⁸ Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined*, pp. 62-63.

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

and plant for themselves crops for subsistence.⁷¹⁰ Bullock also tried to warn his readers that labourers must be prepared to work hard in Virginia, and not expect a life of leisure. Authors were very keen to stress that the colony was not full of idlers and sinners after the disastrous portrayals during the early years of settlement had associated the name of Virginia with corruption.⁷¹¹

John Pory, sometime resident of Virginia, was proud that the colony's diversity meant that social mobility was possible. Writing to Dudley Carleton in 1618, he claimed that it was possible to rise steadily within Virginian society, and that most were much better off than their counterparts in England. 'Our cowekeeper here of James citty on Sundays goes accowtered all in freshe flaming silk; and a wife of one in England [who] had professed the black arte, not of a scholler but of a collier of Croydon weares her rough bever hatt with a faire perle hattband and a silken suite thereto correspondent.'⁷¹² The historian Stephen Greenblatt has argued, however, that this social fluidity was more often a source of concern than of pride. He sees indiscipline as the deepest fear among the colonists and sailors, and claims they were rarely troubled by a lack of natural or human resources. He cites the case of Henry Paine, a gentleman, who was executed for a 'linguistic crime', as Greenblatt calls it. In fact Paine was accused of rebelling against the authority of Thomas Gates, the governor, by raising a mutinous party who wanted to remain in Bermuda and not proceed to Virginia as planned. Such dissention was a heinous crime as spelled out in Strachey's *Lawes*. Greenblatt sees the martial code introduced by Thomas Dale and Thomas Gates, and recorded by William Strachey, as a symbol of a drive for control

⁷¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37

⁷¹¹ M. Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America 1576-1624* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 89.

⁷¹² 'John Pory, Secretary of Virginia, to Dudley Carleton', *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, series 4, vol. 9 (1871), pp. 9-10.

over the ordinary colonist.⁷¹³ While he is right to identify fears over social discipline, it is clear from the surviving evidence that the need for material and human resources was the over-riding concern of the majority of explorers, settlers and commentators writing about Virginia in the period to 1660.

Contemporary authors debated well into the 1650s as to whether Virginia was still troubled with undesirable men, but most concluded that the social tension between rich and poor was no longer as severe, and in hindsight, it was about to be overshadowed by racial tensions as the number of slaves in the colony grew. John Hammond believed that by the time he was writing his promotional tract in 1656, the country was no longer full of ‘rogues, whores, desolute and rooking persons’, and that improvements had been made through the martial code. Homes had been built, corn planted and cattle bred. Ironically though, in the same year, the Council of State in London ordered that rogues and vagrants could be shipped to America.⁷¹⁴ But, Hammond thought, the poor of London were ‘far below the meanest servant in Virginia’.⁷¹⁵ Edward Williams, writing in 1650 about the potential of silk manufacture in the colony, concurred with this view, claiming that the labourers of Virginia must be superior to the ‘miserable day hireling in England’ because they had made a deliberate effort to improve their lot.⁷¹⁶ John Hammond underlined this point, claiming that the success of the Virginian settlement was assured by the mid 1650s.

⁷¹³ S. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 150-154.

⁷¹⁴ J. Horn, *Adapting to a New World*, p. 64. Horn believed that this only enshrined in law a policy that had been practised unofficially for years. Throughout the 1650s, Cromwell also used the American colonies, including Virginia, as a dumping ground for political prisoners who he sent into servitude. For more information on the ways that colonial policy changed during the turbulent decades of the mid-seventeenth century, see E. Gould, ‘Revolution and Counter-Revolution’, D. Armitage, & M. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World 1500-1800* (London, 2002).

⁷¹⁵ J. Hammond, *Leah and Rachel or Two Fruitfull Sisters Virginia and Maryland: Their Present Condition Impartially Stated and Related* (London, 1656), pp. 4, 16.

⁷¹⁶ E. Williams, *Virginias Discovery of Silke Wormes with Their Benefit* (London, 1650), p. 32.

He wrote, 'those that shall blemish Virginia any more do but like the dog bark against the moon until they are blind and weary'.⁷¹⁷

Not all settlers who arrived in Virginia during the period up to 1660 stayed there permanently. Some of course returned to England, whether having failed to make their fortune, or having made enough money to return and pay off debts and settle into a comfortable English existence. However, some poorer Virginians decided to explore their new continent further and migrate to Maryland. Many went there because of its reputed religious tolerance, and there were also rumours that land was more easily available there. After all, most people who migrated within America were of the landless classes looking for better prospects of acquiring their own plot.⁷¹⁸

IV.

Conclusion

Virginia, once thought to be such an honourable enterprise, was considered by many authors writing in the first half of the century to be a failure. Its early years had been chaotic and disorderly, with high mortality decimating an already weakened labour force. This was compounded by the bitterly factionalised Company in England, out of touch with the needs of the migrants in America. Strong leadership arrived too late to enforce laws and military discipline, which meant that an undefended colony was ripe for attack by hostile natives. Later, as the tobacco industry began to make rich men of a few Virginians, many authors criticised the choice of that staple crop. But the situation, and the tone of contemporary writings, improved as the colony became

⁷¹⁷ J. Hammond, *Leah and Rachel*, p. 15.

⁷¹⁸ P. Clark, 'Migration in the Seventeenth Century Chesapeake', P. Clark & D. Souden, eds., *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (London, 1987), p. 196-7.

more settled. In 1637, Phillip Vincent, writing about the Pequot War in New England, contrasted his own settlement with Virginia, proclaiming that, already, Virginia and the Bermudas ‘are come to perfection...beyond all expectation and reason’.⁷¹⁹

Vincent claimed that these two plantations had far outclassed the Spanish, French and Dutch settlements, and that New England had a very long way to go to catch up with Virginia. Authors writing about the colony understandably encouraged their readers to look forward to a glorious future, and ignore its difficult birth-pangs.⁷²⁰ This was in direct contrast to the pessimistic tone of mid-century authors writing about New England, who looked back nostalgically on their honourable origins as a community of religious exiles. By the middle of the seventeenth century, Virginia’s plantation culture and a new hierarchy had become firmly established with grand houses, such as William Berkeley’s *Green Spring*, rising from the natural landscape. The restoration of Charles II was to further consolidate the more settled nature of colonial society.

⁷¹⁹ P. Vincent, *A True Relation of the Late Battell Fought in New England Between the English and the Salvages* (London, 1637, facsimile edition, 1961) p. 19.

⁷²⁰ S. Adams, *The Best and Worst Country in the World* (Charlottesville, VA., 2001), p. 192.

CHAPTER NINE

REPRESENTATIONS OF ENGLISH SOCIETY IN NEW ENGLAND:

INTENTIONS AND REALITIES

Creating a New Society: New and Old England

The writings produced by the settlers of New England, in the first half of the seventeenth century, have allowed historians to deduce that they were attempting to build a new religious society, based on their idea of godly discipline and freedom to worship, exiled from a repressive English church. While this picture is broadly true, other factors also have to be acknowledged, and differences between the New England settlements, their origins and aims, must be recognised. The Plymouth Pilgrims, for example, who never received a land grant or patent from the English authorities, saw themselves as wholly separate from the Church of England, having endured years of exile in Holland before coming to America, while the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay, whose colony was officially recognised, hoped eventually to remain within a reformed established church, once its attachment to the vestiges of popery had been severed.⁷²¹ Both these groups had an internal coherence; they saw themselves as a 'tribe', sharing the hardships of the crossing and the new life in the wilderness. John Winthrop's group of migrants even called each other 'brother'.

⁷²¹ In fact the Massachusetts settlers, while attempting to remove separatists from their colony, constantly had to defend themselves against accusations of separatism from England. An example of this sort of attack is to be found in Peter Heylyn's four volume *Cosmographie*, in which he accused New Englanders of being 'Brownists and Puritans': P. Heylyn, *Cosmographie in Four Books* (London, 1657), p. 1026. Roger Williams was exiled to Rhode Island because he thought people should repent for communing within the Church of England. The Reverend John White claimed that the strong magistracy in Massachusetts would lead any residents away from such a path; *The Planters Plea*, (London, 1630) p. 52. It must also be noted that 'puritanism' itself is not an unchanging entity and is, in fact, a controversial term in English historiography, though historians of early America seem to use it with impunity.

Although they did not represent such a coherent religious group, even those hoping to settle in Newfoundland, in the early seventeenth century, realised that the success of their colony was connected with the pleasure or displeasure of God. The most important writing on the hopes for the New England society were the Puritan jeremiads, spiritual biographies written in the mid-seventeenth century looking back on the efforts of the first settlers to create a religious haven. These journals detailed the idealistic hopes of the early settlers and the ways that God's displeasure with their failings gradually led to a point of chaos and collapse. They celebrated the past and regretted the changes in the society in which they lived.⁷²² John Winthrop, William Bradford and Edward Johnson are the three best-known authors of these texts. It is important to consider this retrospective, nostalgic writing style when interpreting their impressions of early New England society.

It is also true that the religious life created in the New World was intricately linked with that of the Old, reflecting English laws and customs while attempting to apply afresh the political ideas of Puritanism.⁷²³ During this period, most English Protestants had a strongly providential and millennial vision of the importance of exploration, to further Christ's work before He returned to earth, something which many believed to be imminent. John Cotton, writing a decade before he went to America, encouraged migrants to become 'trees of righteousness' and maintain their settlement's defences by allowing 'the name of God to be your strong tower'. He meditated on 2 Samuel, chapter 7, verse 10, which described God's giving of Israel to his people: 'I will plant them that they may dwell in a place of their own and move

⁷²² D. Minter, 'The Puritan Jeremiad as a Literary Form', in S. Bercovitch ed., *The American Puritan Imagination* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 52.

⁷²³ G.L Haskins, *Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts: A Study in Tradition and Design* (London, 1960), p. 2.

no more'.⁷²⁴ The idea of the Manifest Destiny of the English to settle the New World as their promised land, and take the Protestant gospel to its inhabitants, was created in English libraries rather than in the fields of North America. The Puritan attempts to convert the natives of 'Satan's territory' will be examined later in this chapter.⁷²⁵

The migrants who wrote about their experiences in New England often described their disappointment at the lack of religious reform in England and characterised it as a sinful, disorderly place from which they had sought to escape.⁷²⁶ Edward Johnson bemoaned the sad condition of his homeland, and compared the migration to Massachusetts with the glorious rousing of Caesar's army, an unusual analogy considering the biblical nature of most of the symbolic writing about the journey to New England.⁷²⁷ John Cotton described three evils to be avoided by leaving England: 'grievous sinnes [which] overspread a country', a life 'overburdened with debts and miseries', and 'persecution'.⁷²⁸ Thomas Hooker claimed that the situation was so bad that God, too, was leaving England: 'As sure as God is God, God is going from England', he wrote.⁷²⁹ The settlers in the New World wanted to establish a colony that would be a place where one could worship God without fear of persecution, and one that would be a shining example to Old England and might one day encourage her to follow the American example.⁷³⁰ They wanted to reform the Church of England's practices without separating from it, and New England offered

⁷²⁴ J. Cotton, *Gods Promise to His Plantation* (London, 1620), pp. 15, 19.

⁷²⁵ The idea of America as 'Satan's territory' is taken from Bercovitch, *The American Puritan Imagination*, p. 1.

⁷²⁶ However, Susan Hardman Moore points out that some New England ministers emphasised the affinity held by the colonists for the congregations they had left behind, reflecting the reluctance they had felt to leave in the first place. S.H. Moore, 'Popery, Purity and Providence', in A. Fletcher & P. Roberts, eds., *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (), pp. 258, 267.

⁷²⁷ E. Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence 1628-51*, ed. J. Jameson (New York, 1910), p. 23-4.

⁷²⁸ J. Cotton, *Gods Promise to His Plantation*, p. 10.

⁷²⁹ A. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), p. 300.

⁷³⁰ Historians have drawn attention to the confusing imagery; did the Puritans see themselves as poor exiles or the bold vanguard? See T. Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism*, (Chapel Hill, NC., 1988), p. 98.

the opportunity to do this. In 1645, John Winthrop recorded that many ministers, trained at Harvard, were dispatched to England to instruct the people suffering in a state of war. He also noted that, due to the war, those who would have migrated to Massachusetts to become servants or free migrants were no longer coming, and he hoped that England would soon become a godly commonwealth.⁷³¹ In 1651 the renowned preacher Hugh Peter, who had moved from Massachusetts back to England, wrote a treatise on the role of the magistrate in London and claimed that ‘lesser churches in several places may arise and communion held amongst them all according to that waie of New England set forth by Hooker and Cotton.’⁷³²

Creating a New Society: Law and Order

The maintenance of order was a high priority for the first settlers, to create internal stability and to maintain their reputation among the godly of England. One author, writing in 1622 to inform English readers of the progress of the Plymouth plantation, reported that a governor had to be nominated within a few days of arriving on American soil, as factions had already started to develop within the company.⁷³³ The Plymouth settlers felt that the best way to prevent disorder from enveloping their colony was to establish strict laws from the beginning. William Bradford portrayed his community developing from an understanding that law was the true foundation of liberty.⁷³⁴ Of course, the New England colonies were dependent to a great extent on the mother country for their laws, but a certain degree of legal autonomy was also

⁷³¹ J. Winthrop, ‘The History of New England from 1630 to 1649’, ed. J. Savage (Boston, 1825), vol. II pp. 219, 240.

⁷³² H. Peter, *Good Work for a Good Magistrate: or a Short Cut to Great Quiet* (London, 1651), p. 10.

⁷³³ ‘A Relation or Journall of a Plantation settled at Plimoth in New England and proceedings thereof: Printed 1622 and here abbreviated’, S. Purchas, ed., *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, (Glasgow, 1952) p. 312.

⁷³⁴ See D. Levin, ‘William Bradford: Value of Puritan Historiography’, E. Emerson, ed., *Major Writers of Early American Literature* (Madison, WI., 1972), p. 12.

permitted, probably because of a lack of political interest among the English rulers of the early seventeenth century. The second wave of migrants to New England, the Puritan 'great migration' to Massachusetts Bay during the 1630s, brought with it many men who had attended grammar school and university. These well-educated men had a firm idea of the role of law within the godly commonwealth which they hoped to establish. They were especially keen to prevent the moral laxity they felt had become endemic within Old English society. William Hammond proudly wrote to Sir Simonds D'Ewes in September 1633 that 'we have eight townes and villages...we have good laws here...we have few that are drunk and there is no swearing for if they be drunk or swear if it be known they are punished'.⁷³⁵ The power to formulate these laws resided with the governor and his council, having controversially been given that right by the General Court within a few months of arrival in New England.⁷³⁶ John Cotton, the minister at Boston, was chosen by those in authority to record, in print, the laws of the New England colony. As the teacher of Boston, Cotton was responsible for teaching his flock the fundamentals of the faith and explaining textual and doctrinal controversies, whereas his colleague John Wilson, the pastor, exhorted and moved the congregation to explore their own religious faith.⁷³⁷ Cotton was a well-respected Puritan minister in England, who, as early as 1620, preached a sermon promoting the colonies and wrote a large number of pamphlets relating to the theological debates taking place on both sides of the Atlantic. In his tract of 1641, Cotton explained how colonies should be protected and trade maintained, and he listed the penalties for a variety of crimes including blasphemy, witchcraft and adultery, all of which carried the death penalty. Many offences concerned with

⁷³⁵ 'William Hammond to Sir Simonds D'Ewes September 26 1633', E. Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England: Massachusetts Bay Colony 1629-38*, (Amherst, MA., 1976), p. 111.

⁷³⁶ R. Middleton, *Colonial America: A History 1565-1776* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 78-79

⁷³⁷ Introduction to J. Wilson, 'Letter to H.W.1654', ed. Sargent Bush, Jr., *New England Quarterly*, vol. 76, no. 1 (March 2003).

disorder in society, such as dishonourable behaviour towards a magistrate, would lead to the banishment of the perpetrator. A series of lesser offences carried punishments of whipping and paying compensation. Cotton justified these punishments by quoting the pertinent passage from scripture.⁷³⁸ These laws, as set down by Cotton, were re-enshrined in the 1648 legal code of Massachusetts, which described numerous capital offences based on laws recorded in the Old Testament and ranging from idolatry to the rebelliousness of a son against his parents. Although the clergy played a significant part in the design and enforcing of the laws, they were unable to overrule magistrates; the Massachusetts authorities always tried to maintain the separation between the spheres of church and state.⁷³⁹

The officers of local government and lawmaking were the free townsmen or burgesses, men who were full members of the church around which each settlement arose. To become a freeman, one had to publicly confess one's faith, becoming part of the covenant with God.⁷⁴⁰ A new church could not be established without the agreement of the magistrates and leaders of the neighbouring churches. John Winthrop wrote that large numbers of people from the local area attended town meetings, the first being held in Newtown (later Cambridge) in 1632, and the magistrates and juries were chosen by the freemen and held office for one year. Magistrates held a great deal of power, having responsibility for granting land, establishing boundaries and controlling a certain number of taxes.⁷⁴¹ The freemen also selected particularly able men to become the town judges and go to Boston to sit in

⁷³⁸ J. Cotton, *An Abstract of the Lawes of New England, as they are now established* (London, 1641), sig. B2.

⁷³⁹ Haskins, *Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts*, p. 62.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87. Although many churches appeared intolerant in their treatment of those who challenged them, some were surprisingly welcoming. In 1641, a black woman was admitted as a full member of the church in Dorchester.

⁷⁴¹ Haskins, *Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts*, p. 27.

the General Court.⁷⁴² Within a few years of the establishment of the settlement, many minor posts had to be filled, involving more members of the community in the governing process, responsible for such tasks as keeping the pound, caring for the common herds and maintaining the fences. Local government was more autonomous than the colonial government, in Massachusetts, because of the lack of central organisation.⁷⁴³ However, Winthrop's understanding of the essentially democratic nature of New England society was challenged by Israel Stoughton, who claimed, in 1635, that the people first enjoyed more say in local affairs, but that now the magistrates and governor held all the power. Stoughton claimed that Winthrop had punished him for daring to speak out.⁷⁴⁴ In 1641, Cotton's published summary reiterated the roles of the governor and his councillors, perhaps in response to the disquiet of residents like Stoughton.

Regarding the maintenance of order, the stratification of society also concerned many authors. Settlers hoped to create a social order based on godly discipline, but more flexible and less hierarchical than in England. John Cotton received an inquiry from two English noblemen wondering if the colony would be suitable for men of their rank. In 1636, Cotton wrote to Lord Say and Lord Brooke, encouraging them that gentlemen would be given a distinct rank within New England society if enough of them migrated, and that they would have precedence when it came to holding office. Cotton reassured them that the governor of the colony was always a gentleman, but he could not agree that the size of a man's estate would determine whether or not he was granted the title of freeman. In New England, he

⁷⁴² Emerson, *Letters from New England: Massachusetts Bay Colony 1629-38*, p. 7; 'John Winthrop to Sir Nathaniel Rich 22 May 1634', in *ibid.*, p. 116; 'Richard Mather to William Rathband and Mr. T June 25 1636', in *ibid.*, pp. 202-203.

⁷⁴³ D.G. Allen, *In English Ways* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1981), p. 207. Allen argues that this situation changed towards the end of the seventeenth century, when towns realised that they were unable to deal with social problems on their own, and so came to rely on colonial law.

⁷⁴⁴ 'Israel Stoughton to John Stoughton 1635', in Emerson, ed., *Letters from New England*, p. 147.

explained, all full members of the church were freemen of the town and there would be no question of allowing a skilful yet sinful man into the government in this colony.⁷⁴⁵ Those particular gentlemen did reside in New England for a few years, before returning to England to fight for Parliament during the Civil War. New Englanders also learned the lesson from Virginia that military discipline was needed to maintain a certain level of law and order. The town of Saybrook in Connecticut, founded by Lord Say and Lord Brooke, was a fortified town designed like Jamestown in Virginia, with a pallizado, to counter the threat from the Pequot tribe.⁷⁴⁶ However, as in Virginia, when the town became more firmly established, and the threat from the natives diminished due to disease and defeat, military discipline became less of a priority than godly discipline and financial gain.

Creating a Profitable Society: Rich and Poor

After his disillusionment with Virginia, John Smith turned his attention to New England and wrote several books describing a trading society that could be established there, based on the export of fish to Europe. In fact, the first settlers, under the captaincy of John Endicott, sent out by the Massachusetts Bay Company in 1629, intended to make money from the fishing trade. The Puritan hierarchy led by men such as John Winthrop and John White soon became interested and took over the project for their own purposes. John Smith did not have much respect for those he saw as religious separatists, but he could see the potential of developing their settlements into societies that would bring glory and wealth to England. In his book, *A Description of New England*, Smith reiterated the idea of redemption by hard work,

⁷⁴⁵ 'Certain Proposals made by Lord Say, Lord Brooke and other persons of quality as conditions of their removing to New England with the answers thereto', S. Bush Jr., ed., *The Correspondence of John Cotton* (Chapel Hill, NC., 2001), pp. 519-522.

⁷⁴⁶ S. S. Webb, *The Governors-General* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1979), p. 49.

saying that if the colonists would work together like the ant and the bee, for the good of the commonwealth, they would be able to make a handsome profit.⁷⁴⁷ Although, like the promoters of Virginia, Smith's aim was profit, he did not appeal directly to the reader's hunger for wealth, but rather to his desire to appear virtuous. 'If he have but the taste of virtue and magnanimitie, what to such a minde can bee more pleasant then planting and building a foundation for his posterity...erecting townes, peopling countries, informing the ignorant'? Smith's vision for the perfect colony included both gentlemen and labourers; the former would find the new land full of pleasure, while the latter would be able to subsist better than in England.⁷⁴⁸ Richard Whitbourne's tract on Newfoundland, printed in 1620, reflected Smith's intentions. Whitbourne recommended establishing a permanent settlement to take advantage of the potential profit of the fishing trade. He claimed that a permanent settlement would not only be profitable for the individual and the state, but would also be advantageous for the defence of the realm against her enemies, especially the Spanish.⁷⁴⁹ The men who hoped to establish a religious settlement were also interested in the possibilities of profit from the fishing trade; the two were not mutually exclusive. Hugh Peter emphasised the importance of New England's commodity for international trade, and encouraged the establishment of a cod fishery, in 1639 at Cape Ann and in 1641 at Nantucket.⁷⁵⁰ There were differences in emphasis in New England's towns, with some leaders more zealous and others more economic minded. In Newbury, for example, the town's founders wanted to own large plots of land and this led to a more scattered

⁷⁴⁷ J. Smith, 'A Description of New England', P. Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*, vol. II, (Washington, 1838), p. 1.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 22.

⁷⁴⁹ R. Whitbourne, *A Discourse and Discoverie of the New Found Land* (London, 1620), p. 17.

⁷⁵⁰ R.H. Stearns, *The Strenuous Puritan: Hugh Peter 1598-1660* (Urbana, IL., 1954), p. 97.

settlement pattern, comparable to the Chesapeake, rather than the nucleated townships that were the norm in New England.⁷⁵¹

Some authors worried about malign influences on members of the lower social orders. They were worried that poor people would arrive unprepared, expecting the streets to be paved with gold, and then, finding that hard work and religious discipline were not to their liking, would turn to crime.⁷⁵² In his ‘City Upon a Hill’ speech, John Winthrop tried to reassure the travellers onboard the *Arbella* that, although there would always be differences between the rich and the poor, God had chosen them all and they should share the profits and never let their poorer neighbours go hungry. ‘The riche and mighty should not eate upp the poore’, he insisted.⁷⁵³ Winthrop was probably influenced by the published sermon delivered in 1621 by Robert Cushman to the Plymouth settlers, in which he argued that the wealth of the community, not the individual, was the most significant factor in the success of the settlement. Cushman wanted to avoid a situation in which ‘gentry and beggerie be quickly the glorious ensignes of your common-wealth’, by discouraging both the greedy who sought wealth for themselves and ‘idle drones’ who should be reported immediately to the governor.⁷⁵⁴ Edward Johnson, who probably went to Massachusetts Bay in 1630, on the *Arbella* with Winthrop’s party, wrote later that hard work in the wilderness was a great social leveller, with the rich man working alongside the poor man to build the colony, sometimes having a more difficult time because he was unused to manual labour.⁷⁵⁵ William Wood confirmed this, encouraging his readers that social tensions

⁷⁵¹ Allen, *In English Ways*, p. 110.

⁷⁵² An example of this is the pamphlet written by Edward Winslow, published in 1624 entitled *Good Newes from New England*, in which Winslow guarantees not to mention the plenty of America in case immigrants arrive in Plymouth unprepared for labour.

⁷⁵³ J. Winthrop, ‘A Model of Christian Charity’ (1630), in Edmund S. Morgan, ed., *Puritan Political Ideas 1558-1794* (Indianapolis, IN., 1965), p. 76.

⁷⁵⁴ R. Cushman, *A Sermon Preached at Plimmoth in New England* (London, 1621), pp. 17-18.

⁷⁵⁵ E. Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence 1623-51*, ed. J. Jameson (New York, 1910). p. 114.

had no place in the hard-working, God-fearing society of Massachusetts, remarking that ‘all New England must be workers in some kind’. Although Wood said the average settler might be poorer than the landed English families, he argued that ‘he being once well seated and quietly settled his increase comes in double’.⁷⁵⁶ Many authors acknowledged that secular motives, as much as religious ones, drove the early migrants to New England. The hope of making a profit in trade or simply a better life for one’s family was an important factor in the creation of many towns.⁷⁵⁷ One commentator, Emmanuel Altham, a visitor from England, even claimed that the Plymouth plantation, established by a group of religious exiles known to posterity as the ‘Pilgrims’, would function better as a trading post, with no women and children to sap resources, thus totally abandoning the principles of its religious foundation.⁷⁵⁸ The Reverend John White disagreed, claiming that women and children were an important presence to maintain the desire to do hard work with moral fortitude.⁷⁵⁹

The ambitious Richard Saltonstall expressed his surprise that richer men did not pay for the poorer ones to migrate to New England, as in Virginia, and he urged that the rich should help to transport the poor.⁷⁶⁰ John Smith claimed that servants migrating to New England would be able to claim their own land within a few years.⁷⁶¹ Smith’s recommendations to the labourers were borne out in a letter, received from Plymouth in 1620 and printed by Samuel Purchas, claiming that although the country was full of very religious people, the over-riding joy was that

⁷⁵⁶ W. Wood, *New Englands Prospect* (London, 1635), p. 41.

⁷⁵⁷ D. Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World* (Cambridge, MA., 1985), p. 16.

⁷⁵⁸ ‘Emmanuel Altham to Sir Edward Altham, March 1624’, S. James, ed., *Three Early Visitors to Plymouth*, (Plymouth, 1967), p. 36.

⁷⁵⁹ J. White, *The Planters Plea, or the Grounds of Plantations Examined and Usuall Objections Answered* (London, 1630), p. 34.

⁷⁶⁰ ‘Richard Saltonstall to Emmanuel Downing Feb 4 1632’, in Emerson, *Letters from New England*, p. 92.

⁷⁶¹ J. Smith, *Advertisements for Unexperienced Planters* (London, 1631), p. 23.

‘wee are all freeholders, the rent day doth not trouble us’.⁷⁶² Edward Plowden, a settler living in the New England area in a settlement independent of Massachusetts and Plymouth, wrote a promotional tract, under the pseudonym Beauchamp Plantaganet, encouraging settlement in New Albion. Plowden was enthusiastic not only about the weather and plentiful wood in his region, but also about the fact that he did not have to pay any rent: ‘no rent to my landlord makes us merry’, he wrote.⁷⁶³ Plowden also criticised the treatment in Massachusetts of those with differing religious opinions. He thought the Dutch model of government preferable, as they offered no persecution to dissenters. However, he had to acknowledge that for ‘the politique and civill government and justice Virginia and New England is our president’.⁷⁶⁴

In conclusion, New England societies were intended to be both a break with English tradition, and in other respects, a return to it. Timothy Breen has described the New Englanders’ attempts to break free from the tyrannical control of Charles I, claiming that the towns and churches of New England were shaped by reactions to Charles’ attempts to increase royal authority.⁷⁶⁵ Many New Englanders wanted more freedom to practise their beliefs without persecution, while wanting to control more tightly the lower social orders. Other historians have stressed the continuity of the settlement with the conditions that the migrants had previously known. Their nostalgia for the English past became the basis for the new institutions as the Puritans tried to remain loyal to their English heritage by reviving ancient customs and

⁷⁶² ‘A Copie of a letter sent by this Ship’, S. Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, (Glasgow, 1951), p. 306.

⁷⁶³ E. Plowden, *A Description of the Province of New Albion* (London, 1650), p. 29. Plowden does not explain his use of such an unusual pseudonym. It must be assumed that in adopting it, he was placing himself inside the grand heritage of England’s royalty and nobility.

⁷⁶⁴ E. Plowden, *A Description of the Province of New Albion*, p. 27.

⁷⁶⁵ T. Breen, *Puritans and Adventurers* (New York, 1980), p. 4.

liberties taken away from them by the oppressive Stuart Kings.⁷⁶⁶ It is the argument of this thesis that these two views are not as diametrically opposed as one might first suppose. The experience of migrating to the New World created within everyone nostalgia for their homeland, and yet it also created a shared purpose to build a better society in the new land, one which would resist the spread of social and moral evils that were thought to have overcome England.

II

Understanding New England Society: the Early Years

Within the literature produced in the first half-century of North American settlement, there is a dialogue between the imagined society that authors hoped to see established, and descriptions of the ‘realities’ of life found in the colonies.⁷⁶⁷ It was not only settlers in the New World who commented on the development of the societies. In 1625 John Hagthorpe, writing about the benefits of colonies to England’s coffers, argued that the English colonies had made good beginnings, but that more support was needed to assist more migrants, who would then contribute to the establishment of a stable society.⁷⁶⁸ This section moves on to examine the ways that the realities of English society in the New England colonies were portrayed. Contradictory ideas

⁷⁶⁶ J. Conforti, *Imagining New England* (Chapel Hill, NC., 2001), p. 18. I think that Conforti does not place enough emphasis on the impact of the New World itself on the thinking of the settlers, although I do concur with his argument that the nostalgic tendencies of Puritan thinkers were very significant.

⁷⁶⁷ This is not to be confused with the debate concerning imagined America (that is, the America appearing in literature) and real America (the settlements ‘as they really were’). Conforti deals with this issue in *Imagining New England*, p. 6.

⁷⁶⁸ J. Hagthorpe, *Englands Exchequer or A Discourse of the Sea and Navigation with some things thereto coincident concerning Plantations* (London, 1625), p. 25.

present themselves to the historian concerning the level of planning that went into the colonial societies. Darrett Rutman has argued that Puritan New England, and all the English colonies in America, were subject to strict planning and rigorous control, though the ways in which these societies developed were not always those envisioned by the idealistic, literate authors of the early promotional tracts.⁷⁶⁹

It has also been argued that, in the first half of the seventeenth century, the settlements in North America were largely unplanned, with few cartographers and surveyors who could convert visionary planning into reality. William Penn was the first to put this into practice in the 1680s, with his detailed projections of the development of Philadelphia.⁷⁷⁰ Much contemporary writing seems to bear out this second interpretation. Authors expected a more orderly and developed settlement than those they encountered in the Chesapeake and New England. Historians have claimed that, although many settlers complained of unemployment, lack of housing, shortages of food and fuel, and disease in England, they found the situation was sometimes much worse in America. Until the mid-1630s, they were shocked at the isolated nature of life in the New World and the lack of flourishing communities.⁷⁷¹ Some contemporaries, such as Edward Winslow of Plymouth, ascribed this problem to the settlers' inability to establish a regular passage, bringing supplies from England.⁷⁷² Some of the early arrivals, in both Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, seem to have expected to find a flourishing settlement full of towns and villages replicating the English model. Winslow expressed his annoyance with the settlers who complained because 'they must drinke water and want many delectates they here [in England]

⁷⁶⁹ D. Rutman, *Small Worlds, Large Questions* (Charlottesville, VA., 1994), p. 63.

⁷⁷⁰ J. Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America 1580-1845* (New Haven, CT., 1982), p. 4.

⁷⁷¹ C. Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen* (Oxford, 1968), p. 83.

⁷⁷² E. Winslow, *Good Newes from New England* (London, 1624) sig. A3.

enjoyed'.⁷⁷³ John Smith commented, in a tract published by Samuel Purchas, that some Englishmen travelling to America were clearly not suited to the task because 'they found not English cities nor such faire houses nor at their owne wishes any of their accustomed dainties with feather beds and down pillows, Tavernes and Alehouses in every breathing place neither such plenty of Gold and Silver and dissolute libertie as they expected.'⁷⁷⁴ The importance placed by the Puritans on civic institutions and the rule of law meant that settlers made a great effort to build a community in the New England landscape as soon as they could.⁷⁷⁵ William Bradford summed up this fear and determination in his journal, describing the Pilgrims' first few days on American soil. He recalled that they had 'no friends to welcome them, nor inns to entertaine or refresh their weatherbeaten bodies, no houses or much lesse townes to repaire to, to seeke for succoure'. However, within a week, the settlers had begun planting food for themselves and seeking out a safe harbour near to which they would build the town of Plymouth.⁷⁷⁶

Understanding New England: Society Established

Some historians have claimed that, in the early years of the settlement, there was little difference between the culture of the town and the country.⁷⁷⁷ But by the mid 1630s, the New Englanders' labour had already paid off, as their colony boasted several flourishing towns. Consequently, a great number of merchants, tradesmen and

⁷⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 66.

⁷⁷⁴ J. Smith 'A Description of Virginia enlarged out of his notes', Purchas, ed., *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, p. 457.

⁷⁷⁵ P. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness* (New York, 1969), pp. 83-87.

⁷⁷⁶ W. Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation 1606-46*, ed. W. Davis (New York, 1964), pp. 96, 100.

⁷⁷⁷ C. Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness* (Oxford, 1969, 2nd edition), p. 118. Raymond Williams has claimed that by the end of the seventeenth century, there was a great difference perceived between the culture of the town and of the country, that urbanity was already associated with corruption. See R. Williams, *The Country and the City* (London, 1973), p. 43.

craftsmen were attracted to the area, especially to Boston where millers, coopers, carpenters, smiths, joiners and shipwrights flourished within a few years. In 1633, the first recorded inn was opened in Boston, and a total of fourteen opened in the next thirty years.⁷⁷⁸ The proposed migration, in 1634, to build a new community near the Connecticut River forced New Englanders to redefine their concept of society. Land now beckoned beyond the safety of their original cohesive community and they had to face their fears of the wilderness and the savage natives, who put up a considerable fight before abandoning their land after the Pequot War.⁷⁷⁹ The eight original towns formed the nucleus of a much wider settlement, in which the solidarity of the migrants would be tested to the full as they tried to build their own town on the frontier.⁷⁸⁰ By 1650, when John Eliot wrote a letter in response to a query about New England's towns, he recorded seventeen towns in Massachusetts that had resident ministers and one that did not, as well as diverse other towns in Rhode Island and Connecticut, and the already declining Plymouth Plantation. Eliot's interest in the colony, in this letter, was based around the English settlements and the religious undertakings of each town. He had no interest, for example, in the surrounding landscape or natives, an approach that tended to mirror most New Englanders' understanding of their region. However, it is surprising that Eliot should not write about the natives as he had a great interest in converting them to Christianity, as shown later in this chapter.⁷⁸¹ In 1660, Samuel Maverick provided a list of the towns in New England, now numbering thirty-eight, plus numerous others in the Plymouth and Rhode Island regions about which Maverick knew nothing. As his report was destined for Charles II's minister, Sir

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 108.

⁷⁷⁹ P. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness* (Columbia, NY., 1969), p. 145.

⁷⁸⁰ W. Haller, *The Puritan Frontier: Town Planting in New England* (New York, 1951), p. 16.

⁷⁸¹ J. Eliot, 'A Brief Description of New England Towns', Massachusetts Historical Society, Eliot MSS, (photocopy of original). The manuscript is not in Eliot's hand but historians of New England believe it to have been composed by him.

Edward Hyde, who wished to deprive New England of its self-government, Maverick concentrated on the natural resources of the region rather than its religious practices.⁷⁸²

The religious influence of the first migrants to Massachusetts and Plymouth appears to have had some effect on the colonies as they developed. In 1623, when the colony was just three years old, John Pory, visiting Plymouth from Virginia, wrote to the Earl of Southampton in London saying ‘how happy it would be for our people in the southern colony [i.e. Virginia] if they were as free from wickedness and vice as they are in this place’.⁷⁸³ New Englanders were urged, from the pulpit, not to be complacent that their society and religious freedoms would be protected forever. In a sermon preached in Concord, Massachusetts and published in London, Peter Bulkeley exhorted his fellow colonists to:

be not high minded because of thy priviledges but feare because of thy danger...take heed lest for neglect of either, God remove thy candlesticke out of the midst of thee lest being now a citie upon a hill which many seek unto, thou be left like a Beacon upon the top of a mountaine, desolate and foresaken.⁷⁸⁴

Another consequence of the success of the New England government was that, when the Civil War broke out in England, the American example was offered as something to be emulated and aspired to. Thomas Lechford, who spent four years in New England, wrote an account of the churches, their covenants and officers, and their legal practices. He outlined the procedure for public worship and lecture days as well

⁷⁸² S. Maverick, ‘A Brief Description of New England and the Severall Townes Therein’, ed. J. Dean (Boston, MA., 1885). Original MS in British Library, Egerton MS 2395, fs. 397-411.

⁷⁸³ ‘John Pory to the Earl of Southampton, Jan 13 1623’, *Three Visitors to Early Plymouth*, ed. S. James (Plymouth, 1963), p. 11 .

⁷⁸⁴ P. Bulkeley, *The Gospel Covenant or The Covenant of Grace Opened* (London, 1651), pp. 15-16.

as 'fasting, thanksgiving and prayers upon occasions'. Lechford then described the civic government, the role of freemen and governors and the holding of court sessions. However, Lechford was not a radical; he believed that New England society had many good features that should be emulated but that both places had fallen into a period of dangerous upheaval. He begged John Winthrop not to alienate the king of England, and said that he thought monarchical government was the only option for England: 'New England is a perfect model and sampler of the state of us here at this time, for all is out of joynt both in church and commonwealth and when it will be better God knoweth.'⁷⁸⁵

The godly community was not the only social model to be found in early New England. Thomas Morton established a settlement at Merrymount in 1627 where he lived the life of a country lord, hosting sporting and gaming parties at his mansion. He was explicit in his use of alcohol and festivities such as the maypole dance, considered by many Puritans to be unacceptable relics of a popish or pagan past. Surprisingly, the Puritans of New England did not object to Morton's irreligious behaviour, but rather to his trading relationships with the local natives. Winthrop recorded that Morton was exiled as early as September 1630 because of his liaisons with the natives; reportedly he had sold guns to them, but, with the assistance of his friends, Morton soon returned to Merrymount.⁷⁸⁶ He was repeatedly asked to leave because he posed a risk to the security of the English colony.⁷⁸⁷ However, by 1645, Winthrop no longer believed Morton to be a threat, writing in his journal that Morton

⁷⁸⁵ T. Lechford, *Plain Dealing or Newes from New England* (London, 1642), pp. 16, 71. Winthrop may have taken the advice of men such as Lechford, because he was very reluctant to employ preachers like Hugh Peter who was disliked by the religious authorities in England. See R.H. Stearns, *The Strenuous Puritan: Hugh Peter 1598-1660* (Urbana, IL., 1954), p. 40.

⁷⁸⁶ J. Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, ed. James Savage (Boston, 1825), vol. I, p. 34.

⁷⁸⁷ S. Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Oxford, 1930), pp. 14-16.

was now 'old and crazy' and that he should be allowed to remain in Massachusetts for the rest of his life.⁷⁸⁸ Morton died only two years later.

Other, more dangerous, radicals who publicly disagreed with the theological interpretations of the leadership were not tolerated in the settlement. The authorities felt that these competing religious believers had to be branded as heretical in order to maintain a coherent, secure society. Religious exiles were common during the first few decades, often led by Roger Williams to Rhode Island, a religious haven outside the boundaries of the Massachusetts settlement, for those with unusual religious beliefs. The notorious Hutchinson group followed shortly after, in 1638. For many years, Rhode Island was not recognised as a colony because it was thought to contain dangerous rejects from the other colonies.⁷⁸⁹ However, exiling these people did not stop the religious crisis, and throughout the 1640s and 1650s, Massachusetts' leaders had to deal with various challenges to their religious views. In 1652, John Clark published a report describing his incarceration at the hands of the Boston authorities, for supposedly being an Anabaptist. He was accused of declaring that infant baptism was false, and although he was only fined twenty pounds, John Cotton told him that he could have faced the death penalty. Clark complained that it was tragic 'to see strangers professing godliness so discourteously used for no civil transgression but merely for conscience'. Clark was eventually exiled to Rhode Island, where he was allowed to preach his beliefs without retribution.⁷⁹⁰ Another group of religious dissenters that caused trouble for the New England authorities was the Quakers, whose numbers had increased to about twenty thousand in England by the mid-

⁷⁸⁸ Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, vol. II. p. 192.

⁷⁸⁹ W. Haller, *The Puritan Frontier: Town Planning in New England* (New York, 1951), p. 80. For further information on Williams and other religious exiles and their theology and economic influence, see T. Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1988) and T.H. Breen, *Puritans and Adventurers* (New York, 1980).

⁷⁹⁰ J. Clark, *Ill Newes from New England or a Narative of New Englands Persecution* (London, 1652), p. 23.

1650s.⁷⁹¹ One ship commanded by Robert Fowler attempted to reach Boston, but due to damaged navigational equipment it deposited its cargo of Quakers in New Amsterdam, from where they went to Rhode Island to begin their ministry. They were the subject of much popular interest and were mostly well received, much to the annoyance of the New York Dutch.⁷⁹² The tendency of the Quakers to travel through the backwoods for their own safety, becoming friendly with the local native tribes, greatly disconcerted the leaders of the colony.⁷⁹³ John Hull recorded in a diary entry for 1656 that ‘this summer two women called quakers came from the Barbadoes intending to oppose the ministrey and also to breed in people contempt of magistracy’. The women were kept in prison until they could be put on a ship back to Barbados.⁷⁹⁴

John Rous, himself a Quaker, published an account detailing the treatment of the sect and their supporters by the Massachusetts Bay authorities. Any ship carrying Quakers was impounded, while Quakers themselves would be whipped or have their ears cut off, and by October 1658 they were to be banished immediately on pain of death. John Rous claimed that the authorities were alerted to the presence of dissenters by their non-attendance at the meeting house. However, not everyone in authority concurred with this hard-line view; Rous described a magistrate who was removed from his job because he had entertained Quakers at his house and refused to persecute them according to the law.⁷⁹⁵ Two Quakers were banished from Massachusetts and at least one was hanged in the period before 1660, after which some supporters of the authorities claimed that members of the sect were effectively

⁷⁹¹ J. Worrall, *The Friendly Virginians: America's First Quakers* (Atlanta, GA., 1994), p. 2.

⁷⁹² J. Cox, Jr. *Quakerism in the City of New York 1657-1930* (New York, 1930), pp. 11-12.

⁷⁹³ J. Worrall, *The Friendly Virginians*, p. 12.

⁷⁹⁴ ‘Diary of John Hull of Boston’, Massachusetts Historical Society, copy from original MS by Nath. B. Shurtleff, 1849, p. 10.

⁷⁹⁵ J. Rous, *New England: A Degenerate Plant* (London, 1659), pp. 4-14.

committing suicide by not leaving the colony when ordered to.⁷⁹⁶ A letter from Peter Pearson, a Quaker imprisoned at Plymouth, was published in London in 1660 and described how another Quaker, Mary Dyer, was reprieved while on the scaffold after refusing to stay away from Boston when she was banished in 1659.⁷⁹⁷ However, even some of those living in New England realised the awkward position of being intolerant towards certain religious sects, when the colony had been established to help people escape persecution in England. Nathaniel Ward joked that ‘all Familists, Antinomians, Anabaptists and other enthusiasts shall have free liberty to keep away from us’!⁷⁹⁸

Understanding New England: The Later Years

Once the future of New England had been assured, many of the authors became more reflective, assessing their own achievements, and attempting to judge whether the colony had fulfilled its potential or failed to live up to the hopes of the first migrants. A few writers were intensely proud of their achievements, feeling themselves to be part of a great religious community which had lived up to its early promise. After living in Massachusetts for five years, Edward Trelawny proudly wrote to his kinsman in 1636 that ‘there is such holy walking, such sweet communion and fellowship on all sides that I am persuaded...it would convince the veriest reprobate alive’.⁷⁹⁹ However, the majority of authors were unable to share this spirit of optimism, lamenting the failure to realise their original dreams. By the end of his life, William Bradford of Plymouth would look back on the early years with nostalgia and

⁷⁹⁶ E. Rawson, *A True Relation of the Proceedings Against Certain Quakers* (London, 1660).

⁷⁹⁷ M. Stephenson, *A Call from Death to Life* (London, 1660), p. 32.

⁷⁹⁸ N. Ward, ‘The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam’, P. Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*, vol. III (Washington, 1846), p. 6.

⁷⁹⁹ ‘Edward Trelawny to Robert Trelawny, 10 Jan 1636’, Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England*, p. 186.

mourn for a way of life long gone. In 1654, Bradford wrote a collection of verses in which he summarised the progress that his colony had made, lamenting Plymouth's weakness compared to flourishing Boston. Exhausted by over thirty years of conflict with the natives, and mourning the death of many of his fellow Pilgrims, Bradford sadly concluded:

For base covetousness hath got such sway

As our own safety we ourselves betray

For these fierce natives, they are now so fill'd

With guns and muskets, and in them so skill'd.⁸⁰⁰

John Winthrop echoed these sentiments in his journal, bemoaning the fate of his colony, abandoned by so many settlers during the English Civil War. Winthrop was especially concerned that these emigrants were recommending the Caribbean Islands as a more profitable and hospitable place to live than New England.⁸⁰¹ An anonymous tract, published in 1651, outlined the ways the New England authorities planned to deal with the perceived trouble-makers in their midst. Each church would have the power to 'cut off the gangren'd member that the whole body be not infected by it'.⁸⁰² Despite this, Winthrop acknowledged that the authorities' struggle against the sinfulness of the people of Massachusetts might fail, fearing that they were now unable to maintain the godly ideals with which the colony was founded. The

⁸⁰⁰ W. Bradford, 'Verses by Governor Bradford in the Year 1654', *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, vol. II (1869-70), p. 475.

⁸⁰¹ J. Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649* (ed. James Savage, Boston, 1825), vol. II, p. 332.

⁸⁰² *A Brief Narration of the Practices of the Churches in New England* (London, 1651), p. 13. It was intended that minor offences would be punished by expulsion from the church, while those perceived to be a persistent threat would be exiled.

excessive drinking of alcohol, he said, was a problem that the General Court had tried hard to overcome but might never succeed in defeating.⁸⁰³

John Eliot wrote that many of the early settlers were now troubled because the settlement was so fragmented; the colony had become divided when the first exiles moved to Rhode Island, and later, when numerous breakaway groups had left to start churches and towns of their own. Eliot felt that the settlers no longer worked together as one body, doing the work of God, but had withdrawn on to their own land, concerned mainly with their own profit.⁸⁰⁴ Ironically, writers such as Eliot, who described the variety of towns and churches in New England, probably encouraged some residents to move away from the heart of the colony in Boston and search for more autonomy and land elsewhere.⁸⁰⁵

Some members of the religious community were also able to see the humorous side of the portrayal of their settlement as both American paradise and dour Puritan community. 'New Englands Annoyances', a poem probably written by Edward Johnson, parodies both the positive and negative reports of the settlement by poking fun at the over-simplified reports created by promoters of the colonies. Mocking those who had hailed the fertility and plenty of New England's flora and fauna, the poem describes the settlers' newly planted crop being attacked by worms, birds and squirrels, and how later, when fully grown, 'it's apt to be spoil'd by hog, racoon, and deer'. The author even satirises the religious practices of the New England churches, commenting on the divisions caused by maintaining orthodoxy:

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁸⁰⁴ John Eliot 'A Brief Description of New England Towns' (1650) Massachusetts Historical Society, Eliot MSS, photocopy of original. Authors writing much earlier also expressed concern about the distribution of the settlers in America. Thomas Dudley wrote in 1631 that 'the disputation troubled us but help it we could not': 'Thomas Dudley to Lady Bridget, Countess of Lincoln, March 12 & 28, 1631', in Emerson, ed. *Letters from New England*, p. 71.

⁸⁰⁵ A. Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA., 1999), p. 170.

And we have a Covnant one with another,
Which makes a division twixt brother and brother:
For some are rejected, and others made saints,
Of those that are equal in virtues and wants.

However, the poem did conclude on a serious note:

But bring both a quiet and contented mind,
And all needful blessings you surely shall find.⁸⁰⁶

The ambitions of the founders of New England and Plymouth had not all been inward looking. Many had expressed the aim that the colony would be a shining example of the ways Englishmen could spread their Protestant faith to the heathens. The next section assesses the intentions and behaviour of those settlers with missionary ambitions.

III.

Conversion of the Native Americans: early ideas

Historians have long debated whether the intention of settlers, in both Virginia and New England, to convert the natives to Christianity, was a genuine religious mission or simply rhetoric to persuade an English audience of the moral virtue of the task of

⁸⁰⁶ J. Lemay, *'New Englands Annoyances' - America's First Folk Song* (London, 1985), prologue.

conquest that they were undertaking. This section will first examine some of the theories behind the proposed conversion of the Indians, why the English would have bothered at all, and how it fitted with their grander imperial schemes. Second, it will survey the opinions of those who lived in America, their experiences with the natives and how the language of the promotional literature in England affected the lives of the colonists and the natives in the New World. Finally, it will look at the reaction in the 1650s in England to the settlers' failure to undertake any serious missionary ventures.

As early as 1610, the Virginia Company suggested that one of the 'true and sincere... purposes and ends of the plantation begun in Virginia' was to convert the natives through preaching and baptising. The Company felt that such a lofty aim would impress the sceptics in England of the honour of their enterprise. The aim of enhancing 'private commodity' was a third consideration, after conversion and bringing honour to the King.⁸⁰⁷ Those preachers, whose sermons were published in support of the Virginia enterprise, also emphasised the importance of missionary activity in North America. However, William Symonds warned any potential migrants of the dangers of contact with the heathen natives, fearing that prolonged contact with these irreligious savages might encourage the weaker Englishmen to 'go native' and neglect their own Christian beliefs. Symonds claimed, 'Divers are the difficulties into which a man is cast when hee liveth among barbarous people'. He was especially concerned that native women would corrupt unscrupulous settlers.⁸⁰⁸ William Crashaw was more charitable towards the Indians, calling them 'our brethren' and emphasising the importance of the task of converting ten thousand souls to God. Crashaw encouraged honourable behaviour towards the natives, stating 'we will take

⁸⁰⁷ *A True and Sincere Declaration of the Purposes and Ends of the Plantation begun in Virginia* (London, 1610), p. 2.

⁸⁰⁸ W. Symonds, *A Sermon Preached at Whitchappel in the Presence of many Honourable and Worshipfull the Adventurers and Planters for Virginia 25 April 1609* (London, 1609), p. 33.

nothing from the savages by power nor pillage, by craft nor violence.’⁸⁰⁹ The subtext in Crashaw’s statement is that if the English were successful in converting the natives, then it would be possible to acquire wealth and commodities by fair means.⁸¹⁰ Many educated English readers would also have borne Machiavelli’s theories in mind, which stated that, to gain control of a country, the most useful tool was an ally within the country. Samuel Purchas also believed that although the natives were thought to live by no law and therefore have no rights to the land in America, the English must not seize the land, for ‘Virginia hath roome enough for her own (were their numbers an hundred times as many) and for others also which wanting a home, seeke habitations there in vacant places’.⁸¹¹

Robert Gray was particularly enthusiastic on this point, proclaiming ‘how happy were the man which could reduce this people from brutishness to civilitie’. Gray admitted that this would bring great financial benefit but again veered away from the language of conquest: the English did not want to ‘supplant’ the natives but rather to ‘compound them’.⁸¹² Commentators like Gray, and Richard Eburne who never went to America, believed in the humanist ideal that the natives would be keen to be educated in the ways of an English Christian and would quickly convert. This may have originated from the experiences of the earliest English traders in the New World, who found the natives enthusiastic in trading with the newcomers from Europe.⁸¹³ The importance of education in the conversion process was emphasised by

⁸⁰⁹ W. Crashaw, *A Sermon Preached in London before the Right Honourable Lord LaWarre* (London, 1610), pp. 17, 30.

⁸¹⁰ Andrew Fitzmaurice supports this argument, stating that humanist thought encouraged authors to be nervous about overstating the potential for profit and possession, preferring instead to refer to the glory of conversion. See A. Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America: An Intellectual History of English Colonisation 1500-1625* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 2.

⁸¹¹ S. Purchas ‘Virginias Verger’, S. Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, (Glasgow, 1951), p. 222.

⁸¹² R. Gray, *A Good Speed to Virginia* (London, 1609), pp. 18, 21.

⁸¹³ J. Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 131-2.

John Brinsley, who composed a tract on a grammar school education and its importance in England, as well as in the colonies of Virginia and Ireland. Brinsley addressed his epistle to the Virginia Company, claiming that he wanted ‘schools of learning to be a principall meanes to reduce a barbarous people to civilitie and thereby prepare them the better to receive the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ’.⁸¹⁴ It was not only authors who had not been to America who encouraged the propagation of the gospel. In 1621, a Mr. Arundle wrote to John Smyth of Nibley begging him to encourage anyone zealous for the spread of the gospel to augment the ‘greatness and glorie of his king and countrie’ and to set sail immediately for Virginia.⁸¹⁵ The conversion rhetoric also had a second purpose, to encourage the spread of English Protestantism in a direct challenge to the potency and missionary success of the Spanish Catholics.⁸¹⁶ In 1644, William Castell, a Northamptonshire minister writing about the Caribbean and South America as well as North America, attempted to encourage his Protestant colleagues to convert the ‘silly seduced Americans’ because though the Spanish could boast large numbers of conversions to Catholicism, in securing them, they had committed ‘monstrous cruelties’.⁸¹⁷

The early years of settlement in New England produced less enthusiasm for the conversion of natives because of the singular religious purpose held by many of the first migrants, to build their own churches, which they had been prevented from doing in England. This was despite the fact that the King’s letter granting the patent to the New England Company, a copy of which was presented to the Lieutenant for the County of Devon in 1623, argued that the main purpose for the establishment of the

⁸¹⁴ J. Brinsley, *A Consolation for Our Grammar Schools* (London, 1622), sig. A3.

⁸¹⁵ ‘Mr. Arundle to John Smyth, Jan 1621’, Virginia Historical Society, John Smyth of Nibley MSS, no. 37.

⁸¹⁶ T. Marshall, *Theatre and Empire: Great Britain on the London Stages under James VI and I* (Manchester, 2000), p. 12.

⁸¹⁷ W. Castell, *A Short Discoverie of the Coasts and Continent of America* (London, 1644), pp. 2-3.

colony would be 'the advancement of Christian Religion', although later in the letter, the possibility of gaining 'good returns of profit' was also mentioned.⁸¹⁸ The purpose was also alluded to on the Seal of the Massachusetts Bay Company, created in 1629, which bore a picture of a naked native saying 'come over and help us'.⁸¹⁹ Mary Fuller has recently suggested that such grandiose statements of intent masked the weakness the English felt in relation to the natives, though this assessment is not borne out in any of the contemporary literature.⁸²⁰

Conversion of the Native Americans: Real Experiences

Despite the rhetoric of many of the early colonial promoters, the experience of settlers in America meant that the effort to convert the natives was usually neglected. This was probably due to the harshness of the frontier existence, not expected by many migrants. It took hard work to provide food and shelter, with barely enough time to conduct their own religious worship. Another problem was the language barrier. It took considerable time and effort to communicate with the natives on a level to facilitate the discussion of theological ideas. Also, not understanding native culture and customs, many English settlers were frightened of the Indians, fearing for their own safety.⁸²¹ However, a few attempts were made to enlighten them on the message of the gospel. The anonymous author of a 1634 tract on the establishment of Maryland described how the settlers came across a party of 1500 bowmen from the Paschattowayes tribe, a fearsome sight in itself. The English held their ground and

⁸¹⁸ Exeter City Archives 'A Copie of the Kinges Letter to the Lord Lieutenant of the County of Devon and Cornwall the – of December Anno Dom 1623', (uncatalogued).

⁸¹⁹ F. Jennings, *The Invasion of America* (New York, 1975), p. 229.

⁸²⁰ M. Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America 1576-1624* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 91.

⁸²¹ Loren Pennington has argued that missionary work began in some areas because settlers on the frontiers needed a friendly relationship with the natives. See L. Pennington, 'The Amerindian in English Promotional Literature', K. Andrews, N. Canny, & P. Hair, eds., *The Westward Enterprise* (Liverpool, 1978), p.176.

told the natives that they had come to convert them and give them goods in order to civilise them. The author was very impressed with the natives, saying that ‘if these people were at once Christians...it would be a right virtuous and renowned Nation’.⁸²² The previous year, a Jesuit priest, Andrew White, had written a manuscript account of his voyage to Maryland, but he made no mention at all of converting the natives, instead concentrating on the potential for both material comfort in the colony and making profits through trade.⁸²³ This shows that, although many of the early settlers in Maryland were Catholics, who had a different history and theological basis for conversion from their Protestant neighbours in Virginia or New England, they were just as blinded by financial opportunities as other Englishmen. In Virginia, many were cynical from the start about attempts to convert the natives. Soldiers like John Smith knew the hardships involved in settling foreign lands, and could see that the rhetoric for the Virginia Company’s godly mission was just that, pure lip service. Migrants were risking their lives and money for the hope of mercantile profit, and not for saving the souls of the Indians.⁸²⁴ Their only interest in the native tribes was in finding ways to acquire their land, whether by fair means or foul. Powhatan, the tribal lord of the Chesapeake Bay area, was made a vassal of James I in order that his lands could be subsumed into the territory of the colony, not so that he might be converted to Christianity.⁸²⁵ The Virginia Massacre of 1622 meant that all hopes of converting the local natives were abandoned, and henceforth the settlers pursued a policy of destroying them.⁸²⁶

⁸²² *A Relation of the Successfull Beginnings of the Lord Baltmores Plantation in Maryland* (London, 1634), pp. 2, 8.

⁸²³ A. White, ‘An Account of the Colony of the Lord Baron Baltimore 1633’, C. Hall, ed., *Narratives of Early Maryland* (New York, 1910), pp. 3-10.

⁸²⁴ L. Paine, *Captain John Smith and the Jamestown Story* (London, 1973), p. 74.

⁸²⁵ F. Jennings, *The Invasion of America* (New York, 1975), p. 116.

⁸²⁶ L. B. Wright, *Everyday Life in Colonial America* (London, 1965), p. 160.

The English did show some enthusiasm in New England for educating and converting the natives. John Winthrop recorded in his diary that, during November 1633, many of the local Indians were stricken with smallpox, and those who did not die outright, later perished from starvation. The English took pity on some of the orphaned children and welcomed them into the community.⁸²⁷ There is no record of what happened to these children, whether they were brought up as Englishmen and women, or were used as servants or guides. Part of the purpose of Harvard College was to educate the local native population, although the impetus of this was probably to civilise rather than convert the natives, and there is little evidence that any Indian children attended the school for any length of time. When they did attend, they often became sick through contact with diseases borne by the English, to which they had no immunity, and as word spread attendance became very poor.⁸²⁸ In 1643, on Martha's Vineyard, a native apparently requested religious instruction from Thomas Mayhew, junior, who then set up a small missionary post there, but because of its secluded island position, only a few Indians were converted.⁸²⁹ Roger Williams was also interested in Indian affairs and, despite his exile to Rhode Island, tried to encourage his contemporaries to treat them with due respect as equals. He believed that the Native Americans were somehow related to the Jews, and only needed reminding of their forgotten faith to take their place in civilised society.⁸³⁰ Williams also tried to persuade the leaders of the Massachusetts settlement to live peacefully alongside the

⁸²⁷ J. Winthrop, 'The History of New England from 1630 to 1649', ed. J. Savage (Boston, 1825), vol. I, p. 115

⁸²⁸ J. Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford, 1985), p. 183.

⁸²⁹ F. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, p. 230. Ironically, the Christian tradition among the natives has survived on Martha's Vineyard where they now try to spread the gospel among the summer tourists!

⁸³⁰ R. Williams 'Letter to Thomas Thorowgood 20 Dec 1635', *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, ed. G. LaFantasie (London, 1988), vol. I, p. 30.

Indians: 'hath not the God of peace...made these natives more friendly in this wilderness then our native countrimen in our owne land to us?' he asked.⁸³¹

The only major attempt to convert the natives in New England was made by John Eliot from the late 1640s, after he had spent several years learning the local language. He established a number of 'praying towns', settlements in which Indians were encouraged to live where they would be taught the ways of a Christian life in return for food and shelter. They were also educated in the ways of civilised Englishmen, taught their farming methods and given European dress. Thomas Shepard, the minister at Cambridge, Massachusetts, wrote of this using the potent symbolism of the sun now shining over the natives, as the light of the gospel was revealed to them.⁸³² Shepard compared Eliot's success in living with the Indians and trying to stop their nomadic lifestyle as equal to the Spanish efforts to convert the Cusco and Mexican Indians. He also claimed that Eliot believed that the natives would be like the English as soon as they had received the gospel, and that they were enthusiastic pupils. Eliot also helped them 'to fence their ground with ditches, stonewalls upon the banks and promised to help them with shovels, spades, mattocks, crows of iron...the women are desirous to learn how to spin'.⁸³³ Some historians believe that even Eliot's seemingly genuine effort to convert the Indians was a sham. Francis Jennings has claimed that Eliot was attempting to encourage donations from pious Christians at home, which would go into the coffers of the Massachusetts authorities, while Joyce Chaplin has argued that, from 1640 onwards, settlers published details of their missionary aspirations as a way of claiming parity with

⁸³¹ R. Williams, 'Letter to the General Court of Massachusetts Bay, 5 Oct 1654', *Correspondence*, vol. II, p. 409.

⁸³² T. Shepard, *The Clear Sunshine of the Gospel Breaking forth upon the Indians in New England* (London, 1647), sig. A2.

⁸³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

those intellectuals they had left behind in England.⁸³⁴ Eliot himself acknowledged that he was not successful in his efforts to convert the natives in large numbers, and, by 1670 very few of the thousand or so Christianised Indians could be said to have converted voluntarily. Although in the 1680s Eliot was still promoting missionary activity throughout New England, King Philip's War of 1675 hampered his efforts, when many of the so-called praying-Indians turned on their English teachers.⁸³⁵

Conversion of the Native Americans: Responses to Failure

Although the attempts to convert the Indians to Christianity met with limited success in America, not everyone in England forgot the initial promises made by those asking for money and manpower for the colonising projects. Thomas Lechford was critical of the New Englanders amongst whom he had lived for four years. He accused them of neglecting their duty to learn the language of the natives and bring Christianity to them. Lechford claimed that the excuse of the language barrier was not acceptable, and that the task should begin at once.⁸³⁶ As early as 1641, William Castell, the minister of Courtenhall in Northamptonshire, and seventy other signatories presented a petition to Parliament encouraging them to send migrants to the New World who would undertake this great 'pious and charitable work'.⁸³⁷ Castell revived some of the Elizabethan anti-Spanish rhetoric by observing that while the Catholics had made many converts, they had used great cruelty taking the natives as slaves. This campaign was rewarded in 1649 with the establishment of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England, the first official body in England to raise

⁸³⁴ F. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, p. 244; J. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier 1500-1676* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), p. 22.

⁸³⁵ F. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, pp. 250-251.

⁸³⁶ T. Lechford, *Plain Dealing or Newes from New England* (London, 1642), p. 21.

⁸³⁷ W. Castell, *A Petition of William Castell exhibited to the High Court of Parliament now assembled for the Propagating of the Gospel in America...* (London, 1641), sig. A3.

funds for that purpose. However, during the turbulent interregnum period, many Englishmen were resistant to appeals for money for a far-off foreign land, and it was only after 1660 that the project really flourished.

Ten years later, as news of the efforts of men such as Mayhew and Eliot reached England, twelve ministers from London gathered together and printed letters they had received from those in New England, updating their readers on progress, and pleading for more money and men to undertake the task of converting the 'poore prodigals'.⁸³⁸ It was not only lack of money that caused difficulties; one letter from John Eliot himself, conceded that it was hard to persuade the natives to settle in the praying towns because they were fearful of the motives of the English. The English, too, were mistrustful of the natives, and feared they were conspiring against them. Everyone had heard of the massacre in Virginia and did not want the same thing to befall the New England colony. Eliot also complained that few ministers were arriving from England, presumably because they wanted to see how England's own godly commonwealth would develop.⁸³⁹ Some suspected that it was not only language difficulties and lack of resources causing the missionary effort to fail in New England. As early as 1624, Edward Winslow was warning that the effort to take 'possession of the savages hearts' was suffering because of the corrupt ambitions of both the men and governors, and the unsuitable migrants that were being sent over by unscrupulous promoters.⁸⁴⁰ Some of those employed to collect money for the missionary projects, including Hugh Peter and Thomas Weld, were accused of fraud. In fact, the money was more likely to have been misused in America.⁸⁴¹ Later, Edward Winslow, who was instrumental in arranging extra funding for the project to convert the natives,

⁸³⁸ *Strength out of Weaknesse: or a Glorious Manefestation of the Further Progresse of the Gospel among the Indians in New England* (London, 1652), sig. A2.

⁸³⁹ J. Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, p. 240.

⁸⁴⁰ E. Winslow, *Good Newes from New England* (London, 1624), sig. A3.

⁸⁴¹ Stearns, *The Strenuous Puritan: Hugh Peter 1598-1660*, p. 179.

bemoaned the fact that ‘seeming Christians have made Christ and Christianity stink in the nostrils of the poor infidels and so laid a stumbling block before them.’⁸⁴² In 1657, Peter Heylyn confirmed this criticism in his *Cosmographie*, claiming that the New England settlers thought ‘it sufficient if they and their houses served the Lord without caring what became of the wretched people’.⁸⁴³ It was not only commentators on New England who observed the obvious differences between the rhetoric of the promoters and the reality of the task being neglected. Lionel Gatford addressed his 1657 tract on the state of Virginia to the highest secular authority, the Lord Protector, asking for his assistance. It had been impossible to convert the natives, Gatford claimed, because of ‘the wicked lives and unjust, perfidious, cruel, bloody practises of those that call themselves Christians’. This was despite the natives apparently showing an inclination towards learning the gospel and submitting themselves to the English government.⁸⁴⁴ Following the massacre in 1622, the English in Virginia had lost all trust in the local native population, and Gatford reported that, thirty years later, Indian chiefs were still murdered after coming to the English in peace, to trade. But his strongest complaint was reserved for the ministers of Virginia who had neglected their duty to care for the Indian flock, even though some said they were descended from ‘the Israel of God’. Gatford believed that in New England the situation was not quite as bad, observing that ‘some pious soul-seeking ministers in New England... have in very few years...made a fair ingress into that worke... more than all the ministers in Virginea have done in four times as long’.⁸⁴⁵ New England’s Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, after slow beginnings, would lead the way in what

⁸⁴² Quoted in J. Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, p. 332.

⁸⁴³ Heylyn, *Cosmographie*, p. 1026

⁸⁴⁴ L. Gatford, *Publick Good Without Private Interest or a Compendious Remonstrance of the Present Sad State and Condition of the English Colonie in Virginia* (London, 1657), sig. A2 & p. 1.

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

became one of the most recognisable streams of English imperial thinking over the following two centuries.

IV.

Conclusion: Virginia and New England Compared

Much of the information about the establishment of English society in Plymouth and Massachusetts comes from the private journals of the leaders of the colonies. They described the contradictions inherent in the creation of the settlements, the rejection of the English religious system and yet, simultaneously, their dream of building a new ecclesiastical order, reminiscent of the imagined period before the Norman yoke had descended upon them. However, the idealism of those early settlers was difficult to put into effect given the realities of American life. Some felt that the wrong sort of migrant was coming to their colony, causing both disorder and religious controversy. The irony of the creation of the Rhode Island settlement was that it existed as a haven within a haven, for those whose views were unacceptable in both England and New England. The colonies seem to have flourished economically within only a few years, with the strict moral codes alongside church membership keeping order. The hard work of the colonists quickly led to the development of international trade, especially from the port of Boston. New Englanders found it very difficult to put into practice their ideas for educating and converting the local Indian population, as did their colleagues in Virginia, to the south. Although few converts were made before 1660, it was in New England that the first real efforts to convert and educate the natives were

undertaken, efforts that, from 1670 onwards, would lead to a number of Indian churches being established, near the colony's borders. In New England, towards mid-century, the nature of society began to change as many traders and merchants who were not Puritans joined the original bands of religious exiles, and soon it was not a shared religious experience that held the colony together, but rather a shared financial interest.⁸⁴⁶

These developments were paralleled by changes in the Chesapeake societies. The idealism of the early authors writing about Virginia was also impossible for the settlers to match; the colony could never become a rival to the Spanish sources of gold in Mexico or Peru. The religious ideal was also difficult to maintain. Many of the early sermon writers hoped that Virginia would develop as a missionary colony but this was not to be. And yet, in many ways, Virginia exceeded initial expectations. After the first difficult decade, when women were brought in to bring balance and a secure future, the society soon flourished. Within a few years, it became obvious that Virginia would become more than a military trading post, or a den of vice into which England's unwanted poor would be dumped. Wealthier planters began to establish a cultural life in Virginia, building their own grand houses and maintaining successful pleasure gardens. Authors were still concerned, though, about the social tensions that had been so evident at the colony's inception, fearing that the influx of labourers working on the tobacco plantations would bring disorder and chaos. The growing of tobacco was also blamed for society's ills; writers claimed that it encouraged rampant individualism among the settlers, who then neglected their Christian duties. As in New England, tough legal codes restricted the behaviour of the colonists in an attempt to reduce lawlessness and sinful tendencies; many commentators credited these codes

⁸⁴⁶ J. Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, p. 240

with securing the future of Virginian society, but it was the development of tobacco as a profitable crop that secured the future of Virginia as an important part of England's economic empire.

By 1660, at first glance, the commentators writing about Virginia were more positive about the achievements of their colony. After a difficult start, the settlement had seemingly gone from strength to strength. New England had, from the start, declared its ambitions to be a religious haven, and when it developed into a successful trading settlement with its fair share of social problems, many of the first settlers expressed disappointment that their original ideals had not been met. This picture, however, is an over-simplification. Both colonies found it impossible to live up to the ambitious plans outlined for them by the promotional literature in the early years, particularly those suggestions emanating from authors who had never visited the New World, and had no understanding of the difficulties of frontier life. Both regions then had to react to the literary backlash, which heaped criticism on the colonies, their leaders and the settlers, attacking them for not living up to the earlier plans. It was only when these two stages of development in the relationship between the colonies and representations of the colonies had been concluded, that an equilibrium could be achieved allowing commentators, both resident and non-resident, to judge the social, political, economic and religious achievements of the colonies from a more balanced viewpoint.

CHAPTER TEN

INFORMATION ON THE AMERICAN COLONIES AND ITS TRANSMISSION IN ENGLAND

‘This is therefore to intimate and give notice to al Artificers, Smiths, Carpenters, Coopers, Shipwrights, Turners, Planters, Vinears, Fowlers, Fishermen, Mettelmen of all sorts, Brickmakers, Bricklayers, Plowmen, Weavers, Shoomakers, Sawyers, Spinsters and all other labouring men and women that are willing to goe to the said plantation to inhabite there that if they repayre into *Phillpott Lane* to the house of Sir Thomas Smith treasurer for the said Colony their names shall be Registered and their persons shall be esteemed at a single share.’⁸⁴⁷

It is clear from this passage that an awareness of their target audience was vitally important to the authors writing about North America during the first half of the seventeenth century. Not every author declared his audience as explicitly as the writer of this Virginia Company broadside, and sometimes the intended readership has to be deduced. One obvious method of doing this is to examine the medium in which the text was reproduced. Another is to analyse the cost and means of production: the cheaper the product, the more widely available it would have been. After 1638, when the first American printing press was established, the choice made by authors to distribute their texts in England, and not in the colonies, is also significant. With other

⁸⁴⁷ *For the Plantation in Virginia or Nova Britannia* (London, 1609). This is the earliest of the Virginia Company broadsides that were published in the first five years of settlement, advertising for emigrants.

concerns foremost in the minds of Englishmen, many people had little interest in the New World, so it is important to examine the networks of readers who did pursue information on North America, as well as the communication connections that were utilised to spread the word. The relationship between the book and manuscript trades in London and those in the provinces must also be assessed; how did the East Anglian Puritans, for example, learn enough about New England to choose that region to build their ‘city on a hill’? Finally, questions must be asked about the readers themselves: who were they, and which texts about America were they reading? First, this chapter will examine the influence that printed and manuscript material on America had on English culture during this period.⁸⁴⁸

I.

The Significance of America in Print

Over the last thirty years, historians of early modern England and America have put forward conflicting arguments about the influence of America on Europe’s intellectual sphere. Many believe that the New World had a significant effect on European thinking, and that Englishmen did not always fit everything they encountered in America into a pre-existing cognitive universe. For example, contact with the Native Americans encouraged strands of thought that defined them as ‘noble savages’, an idea previously not prevalent in European thought. The concept of migrating to a New World, encountering strange races and establishing new societies

⁸⁴⁸ I will be examining printed material, manuscripts reproduced for multiple distribution (see Harold Love’s *Scribal Publication*) and single private manuscripts such as letters that were never intended for publication.

was exemplified in More's *Utopia* and in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.⁸⁴⁹ Although contact with the realities of the New World soon coloured European perceptions, the purpose of this chapter is to examine how these ideas filtered into the English consciousness, and the most significant medium to analyse is print culture. The elites of London and the provinces formed a highly literate readership that wanted information about English colonial enterprises in North America.⁸⁵⁰ During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, America came to be defined, for many Englishmen, through print (and occasionally manuscript), and information received orally was often derived, second hand, from a printed source. The south coast ports were an exception to this rule, where people heard orally transmitted accounts from sailors and returning colonists. For example, Hugh Peter grew up in Fowey, in Cornwall, listening to tales about the exploits of Hawkins and Drake, the pagan Indians and seizing Spanish ships and gold.⁸⁵¹ But the significance of America in the print and oral cultures of England must not be overstated. These materials did stimulate interest in colonisation, and probably persuaded some people to migrate or invest, as well as providing material for religious polemical debates between the Church of England and the Puritans. However, there was less appetite for information about America than, for example, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, the East Indies and Cathay.⁸⁵² It is also important to acknowledge that potential investors or migrants did not learn much about the geographical or cultural realities of America from any

⁸⁴⁹ W. Brandon, *New Worlds for Old* (Athens, OH, 1986), pp. 8-9, 19.

⁸⁵⁰ L. Pennington 'The Amerindian in English Promotional Literature', K. Andrews, N. Canny, & P. Hair, eds., *The Westward Enterprise* (Liverpool, 1978), p. 177.

⁸⁵¹ R.H. Stearns, *The Strenuous Puritan: Hugh Peter 1598-1660* (Urbana, IL, 1954), p. 13.

⁸⁵² M. Gilmore, 'The New World in French and English Historians of the Sixteenth Century', F. Chiapelli, ed., *The First Images of America* (Berkeley, CA., 1976), vol. I, p. 525. This appears to hold true for both larger, more expensive books and cheaper pamphlets.

individual text.⁸⁵³ A clearer impression of the New World would have been formed gradually through buying or borrowing several texts, reinforced, perhaps, by the receipt of letters.

Within eight years of the settlement of the New England colony, a printing press had been established in Boston, the equipment imported from London along with a master printer. But in the first half of the seventeenth century the vast majority of authors chose to have their material printed in London and distributed there and in the English provinces. Authors aimed their texts at a specifically English readership. Even after 1638, when a printing press was established in Boston, employed to print notices, court reports and news pamphlets, many authors still chose to send their work to London to be printed, or to return themselves and publish there hoping for distribution in England, rather than to the very limited colonial audience. Much of the material was designed to give information to investors and other interested parties in England about the progress of the settlements, or to appeal for financial or practical aid. The printing press and book-making trades in New England could offer the author only a limited readership for his work. At that time, valuable cargo space on ships could not be taken up by large numbers of books, printed in America, crossing the Atlantic for distribution in England. Choosing to publish in America meant restricting the work to a tiny colonial readership.⁸⁵⁴ This was the choice made by some authors whose material was intended for the American market. For example, the almanac writer Samuel Danforth produced texts offering American farmers astrological advice and local weather forecasts, as well as the court dates in several New England towns.

⁸⁵³ W. Cumming, S. Hillier, D. Quinn & G. Williams, *The Exploration of North America 1630-1776* (London, 1974), p. 14.

⁸⁵⁴ Just before 1622, the population of Virginia had reached 1000, but the massacre diminished this by one third. By 1640, the population had grown to 8000. In New England, the 'great' migration of the 1630s brought 20,000 settlers whose number thereafter grew slowly by natural increase. However, these small numbers meant that the colonial audience for a printed book was still very limited. See R. Middleton, *Colonial America: A History 1565-1776* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 63, 89.

An English audience would not have required this information. Theological works, such as the debates between John Cotton and Roger Williams, were more likely to be sent to England for publication. Though these often related to local disputes, their authors were always conscious of belonging to an extended religious and intellectual community, and looked for support and vindication from a wider, educated readership.⁸⁵⁵ Therefore most settlers who ventured into print chose to publish their books in England not only because the information would be more pertinent to English readers, but because the prestige of the London trade was considerably higher than that of Boston. They could also reaffirm their English identity by sending texts to England, despite the many difficulties they experienced, such as problems in corresponding with the proofreaders.⁸⁵⁶ As Pierre Bourdieu says, London was always at the heart of the colonists' cultural world during this period.⁸⁵⁷

It is also important to examine the different ways print and manuscript were employed to convey information about America, and by whom. Many different classes of migrant used the medium of manuscript to carry news to England. Private letter writers used it to reassure family and friends that they were safe and prospering, or to persuade the authorities not to abandon them.⁸⁵⁸ The leaders of the colony also communicated privately by letter, with the company or the government in England. These texts often included sensitive information they did not want to be revealed to

⁸⁵⁵ H. Boynton, *Annals of American Bookselling 1638-1850* (New York, 1932), p. 29. Occasionally other authors suggested the significance of an audience on both sides of the Atlantic. John Clark of Rhode Island wrote his epistle dedicatory to 'the Honoured Magistracy, the Presbytery and their dependency in the Mathatusets Colony in New England', while still addressing in his title the majority of his readers, who were outside New England. J. Clark, *Ill Newes from New England or a Narrative of New Englands Persecution* (London, 1652), sig. B.

⁸⁵⁶ S. Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* (New York, 1956), p. 118.

⁸⁵⁷ Quoted in P. Round, *By Nature and By Custom Cursed: Transatlantic Civil Discourse and New England Cultural Production 1620-1660* (Hanover, NH, 1999), p. 6. This is supported by David Cressy in his analysis of the communication links between New and Old England: D. Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987).

⁸⁵⁸ K. Kupperman, *Indians and English* (New York, 2000), p. 3.

the general public. The medium was also used to record private thoughts, in journals and diaries, although some of the diary writers of this period, such as John Winthrop and William Bradford, may have intended their thoughts to be converted into records for a more general readership. Some authors clearly intended their work for a wider public audience but failed to get it printed. One example is William Strachey, the secretary of the Virginia Company, whose 'Historie of Travell into Virginia Britannia', concerning the first five years of settlement, was completed in 1612 and copied into three manuscript versions at least, with which he attempted to seek patronage for publication, without success.⁸⁵⁹

The Virginia Company, based in London and made up of officials drawn from the elites, close to the king and court, initially used the medium of printed broadsides to convey information. Later, it used small promotional tracts printed in quarto or octavo format, often with less than forty pages, taking the form of a sermon preached by a supporter of the colonial cause, or a positive report from a settler in America. The Virginia Company was careful in its choice of preacher. In 1609, for example, it used Daniel Price, who had previously gained the approval of London's merchants by praising them in another sermon.⁸⁶⁰ Other manuscript materials, sometimes not intended for printing, such as an informative letter to an acquaintance, were also the staple material of the great collections of travel narratives assembled by Hakluyt and Purchas. Moreover, books or pamphlets were sometimes printed without the author's knowledge; for example, in 1608, *A True Relation* was published without any acknowledgement of John Smith, its true author. A certain I.H. declared in his preface that this oversight was unintentional, and, in a later edition, he confirmed Smith as the

⁸⁵⁹ W. Strachey, *Historie of Travell into Virginia Britannia*, ed. L. Wright & V. Freund (Hakluyt Society, 1951), p. xiii.

⁸⁶⁰ L. Wright, *Religion and Empire: The Alliance Between Piety and Commerce in English Expansion 1558-1625* (New York, 1943), p. 94.

author.⁸⁶¹ Sometimes promotional tracts took the form of a narrative account of the migrants' voyage to America and their experiences as they established a new society. Others had a more specific purpose, to record the landscape, climate, flora, fauna and native cultures of the regions, either for pseudo-scientific reasons, or to encourage trade or further settlement. Whether as part of a collection or as an individual tract, such texts were intended to reach as many readers as possible, to encourage migration and investment. Once early reports about the New World were widely distributed in England, from Elizabeth's reign onwards, many armchair enthusiasts who never went to America wrote their own tracts encouraging colonisation, sometimes using descriptions taken from eyewitness accounts, sometimes fitting the colonial enterprise into the contemporary theological and political issues in England. These tracts were also intended for wide distribution. Other commentators were critical of some aspect of the colonial enterprise and used the pamphlet medium to express their concerns. Their voices could not be silenced, and negative portrayals of the colonies and their residents were printed and distributed throughout England, much to the annoyance of the colonists themselves, who constantly railed against those spreading vicious rumours.

From the 1640s onwards, early newspapers occasionally printed stories about America, often received from correspondents in port towns who reported news from the returning sailors. This was especially prevalent during the Maryland controversy of the 1650s, when royalist and parliamentarian settlers clashed violently. This was of great interest to an English readership still living with the aftermath of the Civil War, and in many cases, still living in divided communities. However, newspaper interest in American affairs was rare, with news from the continent dominating the foreign

⁸⁶¹ J. Smith, *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Noate as hath Happened in Virginia since the first Planting of that Colony...* (London, 1608), p. 1; M. Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England* (London, 1966), p. 268.

coverage. Other, less formal, genres of print and manuscript culture also conveyed information and opinion about America. Ballads are a good example, with both positive and negative representations of the colonies evident in those that survive. The Virginia Company produced its own ballad to promote the lottery to finance the early expeditions. Later, several anonymous authors savagely parodied the New England Puritans, and later still, the Quakers, for the idealistic dreams they hoped to pursue in America. The theatre was another site in which the colonial ideal was sometimes parodied, as playwrights made reference to the latest colonial acquisitions or explored in more subtle ways the desire for expansion and the conquest of other races. These forms of representation, and the reception they received, will be explored further in chapter eleven.

II.

Networks of Transmission

As historians have recently acknowledged, the transmission of news and opinion in early modern England was mostly undertaken through oral contact. English men, women and children were able to develop an awareness of their histories and traditions, through the use of songs and narrative tales, which often paid little attention to accurate chronologies.⁸⁶² The latest news was exchanged by word of mouth, especially in the inns and taverns of London. Ballads and songs also entertained and informed both the literate and illiterate members of society.⁸⁶³ Similarly, networks of oral distribution were very significant in the dissemination of news about the latest exploits in North America, and someone in England often

⁸⁶² A. Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 213-227.

⁸⁶³ R. Cust, 'News and Politics in Seventeenth Century England', *Past and Present*, 112 (1986), pp. 65-6.

decided to record, on paper, the tale he had just heard. However, in the case of the vast majority of material with which this thesis is concerned, the author initially recorded his thoughts onto the printed or written page, and his story was only later transferred back to the oral medium when the text was read, or reported, to an audience of perhaps semi-literate and illiterate listeners. Oral and literate culture constantly overlapped, at every social level.⁸⁶⁴

Where the dichotomy between high- and low-brow cultures becomes most useful is in discussing the distribution of printed material by bookshops and travelling pedlars. While it is difficult to compile statistics on the readership of any book in the early modern period, when literacy increased a taste for the printed word rapidly developed, historians such as Peter Clark associate the increase in the number of people owning books with the development of Protestant sensibilities.⁸⁶⁵ However, travel narratives were accessible both to the educated reader and the lower status listener. The size, and therefore, the cost of the books about America is significant. Only the wealthy, elite reader would be able to afford both the small pamphlet works and the much larger books whose cost was prohibitive to everyone else.

With the exception of John Smith's *Map of Virginia*, printed and published in Oxford, and John Mason's *A Briefe Discourse of the New Found Land*, in Edinburgh, all the major printed books and pamphlets about America during the first half of the seventeenth century were printed in London. Smith's work was allegedly printed in Oxford because members of the Virginia Company put pressure on the Company of Stationers not to print and distribute it in London, although this does not seem to have

⁸⁶⁴ The recent debate on literacy in the early modern period was triggered by David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order* (Cambridge, 1980). The most recent survey of the argument is in Barry Reay's *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750* (London, 1998).

⁸⁶⁵ P. Clark, 'The Ownership of Books in England 1560-1640: The Example of Some Kentish Townsfolk', L. Stone, ed., *Schools and Schooling* (Baltimore, MD., 1976), p. 108.

affected the popularity of the book.⁸⁶⁶ Mason's work was printed in Edinburgh because he sent a manuscript copy to his friend Sir John Scott, who lived there, and he wanted to have it published.⁸⁶⁷ It would be a mistake to think of practitioners of this trade as merely printers and publishers. Many took an active role in collecting and distributing knowledge, and an active interest in overseas travel. Richard Jugge, Henry Bynneman and Edward Alde, who printed many of the travel and geographical texts during Elizabeth's reign, were also among the wealthiest printers in London. London printers and booksellers were active in commandeering manuscripts to turn into books, and they also commissioned works once it became clear that there was a market for information about English men in the New World. *The Relation of Maryland*, written in 1634, a tract encouraging gentlemen adventurers to invest money and servants in Lord Baltimore's colony, was financed and distributed in London by 'Master William Peasley at his house on the backside of Drury Lane near the Cock Pit theatre'. He was also an agent who would take money for the passage of a man and his servants, and provide information on the provisions needed to be a successful settler.⁸⁶⁸ Several members of the book-selling trade were important to the colonisation process. John Bellamy, for example, working from the 1620s to the 1640s, was close to many of those who had migrated to New England, and his bookshop became a magnet for interested readers who wanted to learn about the Puritan undertaking. In this way, as identified by Habermas, bookshops became part of a network of venues where news and opinions could be shared for the first time in the public sphere.⁸⁶⁹ The bookseller William Welby sold pamphlets and broadsides

⁸⁶⁶ W. Torrence, *A Trial Bibliography* (Richmond, VA., 1908), p. 31.

⁸⁶⁷ D.L. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland* (London, 1895), p. 102.

⁸⁶⁸ *A Relation of the Successfull Beginnings of the Lord Baltimore's Plantation in Maryland* (London, 1634), p.14.

⁸⁶⁹ P. Round, *By Nature and By Custom Cursed: Transatlantic Civil Discourse and New England Cultural Production 1620-1660* (Hanover, NH, 1999), p. 40. For more information on news and

about Virginia in the first ten years of settlement, often working in liaison with the printer Felix Kyngston. The Allde and Cotes printing families were also frequently employed to produce books relating to America. A summary of printers and booksellers and their influence on the publication of work on America is included in an appendix.

In his work, *English Books and Their Readers*, H. Bennett calculated that ten per cent of the books published in Elizabeth's reign concerned history, geography or travel, a figure that increased in the seventeenth century. Such works were among the wide variety of books sold in the London bookshops in St. Paul's Churchyard.⁸⁷⁰ Bennett thought this was not true of the provincial bookshops, which contained mostly religious and classical texts and very few contemporary works at all. However, the gulf between provision in London and the provinces was less wide than this suggests. Many provincial bookshops had accounts with London traders, as well as connections with European markets. Booksellers could order a work from London at the request of a customer, and a wealthy customer with London connections could order it himself, to be brought by the carrier.⁸⁷¹ Booksellers' inventories are a useful source in revealing individual book titles that were in the shop at the owner's death.⁸⁷² For example, as noted in the prologue to this thesis, two Elizabethan inventories reveal that John Denys of Cambridge owned four accounts of Martin Frobisher's voyages, valued at 1d each, while Roger Ward's shop in Shrewsbury owned 'one

bookshops see J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003) and B. Dooley & S. Baron, eds., *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London, 2001), though neither book discusses America!

⁸⁷⁰ H. Bennett, *English Book and their Readers 1558-1603* (Cambridge, 1965), p. 269. Unfortunately Bennett does not quantify books about America..

⁸⁷¹ F. Levy, 'How Information Spread Among the Gentry', *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2 (1982), p. 19.

⁸⁷² For more information on booksellers' inventories during this period see J. Barnard & M. Bell, *Early Seventeenth Century York book trade and John Foster's inventory of 1616*, (Leeds, 1994), pp. 25, 40.

book on the West Indias' and 'one booke in praise of Furbisher' among others.⁸⁷³

Later, works on America reached bookshops as far north as York. The inventory of John Foster's shop taken in 1616 revealed that he owned two copies of Peter Martyr's *Decades*, one of Richard Hakluyt's edited collections ('one Holcottes workes') and four copies of George Sandys' *A Relation of a Journey begun An. Dom. 1610*.⁸⁷⁴ In 1648, Robert Booth's shop in Warrington, Lancashire contained one copy of the 'Discovery of Virgine', probably either Brereton's 1602 account or Waymouth's 1605 version, published in quarto format. The item in Booth's inventory was valued at four shillings.⁸⁷⁵ Booksellers occasionally traded in other items useful to customers interested in world travel. When its inventory was compiled in 1615, the shop owned by Michael Harte in Exeter contained a globe by Mercator.⁸⁷⁶ However, we should not exaggerate the spread of travel books to provincial bookshops. Other evidence reveals shops whose owners seem to have taken no interest in books concerning America. The inventory taken in 1644 of John Audley's shop in Hull revealed that he owned no texts on America or geography, although a few small books did remain uncategorized at the end of the inventory. Audley may have owned books on America which he had already sold; after all, the inventory represents only the books left unsold. Alternatively, he may have had no interest in travel or the colonies. The customers of Hull may have had little interest in the New World, because their own overseas trading connections were with Germany and the Baltic.⁸⁷⁷ A problem frequently encountered when studying inventories is that small books were not valued

⁸⁷³ For John Denys, see T. Watt, 'Piety in the Pedlar's Pack', M. Spufford, ed., *The World of Rural Dissenters*, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 258. A. Rodger, ed., 'Roger Ward's Shrewsbury Stock', *The Library*, 5th series, 13 (1958), p. 262.

⁸⁷⁴ Barnard & Bell, *John Foster's Inventory of 1616*, pp. 56, 73, 87.

⁸⁷⁵ W.H. Rylands, 'Booksellers and Stationers in Warrington, 1639-58', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. 37 (1888), p. 87.

⁸⁷⁶ Devon County Record Office, Exeter Court of Orphans records: DRO/ECA/Book 144, p. 129-134.

⁸⁷⁷ C. Chilton, 'A Bookseller's Inventory', *The Library*, series VI, vol. 1 (1979), p. 126.

as artefacts and were not individually categorised in an inventory. Sometimes, in such cases, the historian may come tantalisingly close to seeing concrete evidence of an interest in books on America. For example, at the end of his life, the minister William Crashaw donated his library to the church, but none of his books was individually mentioned and only the monetary value was calculated. Crashaw had preached to the Virginia Company and even invested £240 of his own money in the colony, so it can be assumed that he owned books and pamphlets on America, but we have no proof.⁸⁷⁸

Book fairs were also an important way for readers to acquire new books. These were held at Oxford, Bristol, Salisbury, Nottingham, Ely, Coventry and Sturbridge near Cambridge and probably other venues. Booksellers in London often took time from running their main shops to visit these fairs to sell their wares. As well as local fairs, the wealthy book dealer and buyer had the opportunity to go to (or send an agent to) the bi-annual Frankfurt book fair.⁸⁷⁹ But very few towns established public libraries during this period, and those institutions that did exist, in towns such as Bristol, Norwich and Gloucester, were not thought a great success. Gentlemen in the English countryside might also have books brought to their doorstep. In the first recorded example of a promotional book tour, John Smith travelled the country in 1624 to advertise his new work *A Generall History*, by distributing books and maps to the local gentry. This was Smith's most important work and was given a far more elaborate, and expensive, title page than any of his other books. The engraved illustration used numerous devices and symbolic representations including images of Elizabeth I, James I and Prince Charles, as well as a map showing the coastline of

⁸⁷⁸ R. Fisher, 'William Crashaw's Library', *The Library*, series V, vol. 30 (1975), p. 116.

⁸⁷⁹ H. Aldis, *The Book Trade 1557-1625* (Cambridge, 1909), p. 408.

Virginia, and the hills and forests of America. The book also contained nine poems lauding Smith's enterprise.⁸⁸⁰

Printers and booksellers also used early forms of advertising to entice customers to buy their wares. According to some historians, the significance of literary patronage by members of the aristocracy declined in the early seventeenth century, and in order to offset this change, printers began resorting to the use of advertisements to boost their trade.⁸⁸¹ Extra copies of the title page of a book, often with intricate engraved illustrations, were pinned to the door of the bookseller's shop or to his stall where they would attract interest from passing customers.⁸⁸² Textual advertisements were also printed at the end of a book to encourage readers to return to the same printer or bookseller to buy something else. Simon Miller, who printed a tract on the benefits of tobacco smoking in 1659, took the opportunity to advertise some of his other stock at the end of the book, although none of those was related to America or her commodities.⁸⁸³ Some booksellers did relate the advertisements to the topic of the book within which they were placed. For example, Francis Cossinet, whose shop was at the Anchor and Mariner at the Mincing Lane end of Tower Street, printed an account of the voyage to America undertaken by a party of Quakers in 1659. His adverts at the end of this book included texts on navigation and on the new

⁸⁸⁰ D. Cressy, *Coming Over*, p. 6; J. Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles* (London, 1624), title page. The poems praising Smith reveal a circle of friends interested in the New World. Samuel Purchas, Thomas Macar nesse, John Donne, Edward Worsley, Robert Norton, Edward Ingham, David Wissin, William Grent and ? ?????? recorded their admiration for Smith in print.

⁸⁸¹ P. Voss, 'Books for Sale: Advertising and Patronage in late Elizabethan England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 29 (1998), p. 733. However, not all aristocrats abandoned their roles as patrons. The third Earl of Pembroke gave £400 to the Virginia Company (its second largest single benefaction), as well as acting as patron to John Smith and supporting Walter Raleigh's efforts to explore the Orinoco River. See M. Brennan, *Literary Patronage in the English Renaissance* (London, 1988), p. 149.

⁸⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 737.

⁸⁸³ Dr. Everard, *Panacea: or the universal Medicine Being a Discovery of the Wonderfull Vertues of Tobacco Taken in a Pipe* (London, 1659), p. 52.

Christian thinking espoused by Ludwick Muggleton.⁸⁸⁴ Sometimes, however, advertising was not for the financial benefit of the bookseller and author but to spread the word about the American ventures. The Corporation of London financed a tract in 1652 that eulogised the work of residents of New England in converting the natives. The text concluded by encouraging all readers to come to Coopers Hall on Saturdays where they might read further books written by settlers in New England.⁸⁸⁵ Occasionally other factors helped to boost the sale of books, such as the arrival in London of kidnapped Native Americans, which aroused great interest in the population and encouraged many to find out more about their country. Unlike his earlier books, John Smith's work, *A Description of New England* (1616), was a commercial success because its sale coincided with the arrival in London of Pocahontas, the most famous Indian visitor to England during these early years.⁸⁸⁶

Smaller books and pamphlets were carried from London to the provincial markets and fairs by itinerant pedlars, after having been hawked previously at Paul's Walk in London.⁸⁸⁷ These pedlars were often on the margins of society, prosecuted for vagrancy and sometimes suffering financial hardship. Books were not their only stock; in the 1620s, for example, a Shropshire pedlar also sold tobacco to his rural customers.⁸⁸⁸ They mostly travelled between market towns but occasionally strayed off the main routes and visited smaller villages where a few people might buy their books and read them to their friends. The pedlars would buy books in London or from packhorse carriers on the road, and would bring news of overseas travel to people

⁸⁸⁴ R. Fowler, *A Quaker's Sea Journal: Being a True Relation of a Voyage to New England* (London, 1659), p. 8.

⁸⁸⁵ *Strength out of Weaknesse: or a Glorious Manifestation of the Further Progresse of the Gospel among the Indians in New England* (London, 1652), p. 40.

⁸⁸⁶ L. Paine, *Captain John Smith and the Jamestown Story* (London, 1973), p. 192.

⁸⁸⁷ A. Fox, 'Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion', *Historical Journal*, vol. 40, no.3 (1997), p. 598.

⁸⁸⁸ M. Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 120.

who had neither the money nor the inclination to buy larger volumes. Most pedlars were actually forbidden to sell larger volumes. The level of mobility in early modern England was surprisingly high, and this facilitated the spread of news and ideas.⁸⁸⁹ In general, the further from London one travelled, the slower and more vague the information received. Throughout the seventeenth century, the pedlars' most popular product was the ballad. Seasonal almanacs also sold well, costing a few pennies, and providing information on fairs, highways, farming, posts and the calendar, to those interested who might otherwise not have become readers.⁸⁹⁰ It seems probable that pedlars provided a similar service to those of a lower status interested in the New World, not only providing the literature itself, but also throwing in a few tall tales. Broadsides, as well as pamphlets, were a means of carrying printed information to the provincial reader. They might be nailed to church doors or trees, or hung at street corners and other public places, encouraging public reading rather than private ownership of the printed word, although there is no documentary evidence of this regarding printed news from America. Peter Clark has argued that 'the adult Kentishman needed to own a book before he could read it'.⁸⁹¹ In practice, it was not always necessary to own a book in order to digest the information contained within it; members of a household often read each other's books and friends also lent and borrowed each other's books.

⁸⁸⁹ M. Frearson, 'Communications and Continuity of Dissent in the Chiltern Hundreds during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', M. Spufford, ed., *The World of Rural Dissenters*, p. 274. See also T. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 28 for more information on the routes travelled by peddlers.

⁸⁹⁰ See B. Capp, *Astrology and the Popular Press* (London, 1979) for more information about almanacs.

⁸⁹¹ P. Clark 'The Ownership of Books in England', in Stone, ed., *Schools and Schooling*, p. 96.

III.

Intended Audiences

It is possible to identify two types of audience for any printed work, the intended and the actual. The author of a text, or, occasionally, another writer who composed the preface, sometimes revealed the intended audience. At one basic level, the immediate audience for a text was those men or women to whom it was addressed in the epistle dedicatory, while a detailed study of the style and language of a text can sometimes suggest the author's wider intended readership. The actual audience of a printed work, the quantifiable numbers of people who read it, is almost impossible to discover during the early modern period. This avoids the problem of defining the rates of literacy in early modern England, a debate that has raged fiercely, for several decades, among social historians. David Cressy is a proponent of the more traditional view of literacy in changing the mental world of the seventeenth century population. He has argued that literacy opened up a new world for many of the poorer people who previously had access only to oral means of news transmission. Now, they were able to read almanacs, jest books and any other pamphlets brought by pedlars to their local fair or inn, though he acknowledges that ownership of a book does not prove that one actually read it.⁸⁹² While Cressy rightly argues that the only statistically valid indicator of literacy is the ability to sign one's name, he underestimates the number of people able to decipher a fairly simple text.⁸⁹³ Margaret Spufford has expanded the definition of literacy, showing that the ability to read was more widespread than the ability to write, because many people had attended a local school for long enough to acquire that skill, or had picked it up as an adult through exposure to written material.

⁸⁹² D. Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 7.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

There are other problems with any monolithic definition of literacy: Spufford has observed that even if it can be proved that an individual could read, it did not mean that they did read. Even if they did, the information gathered by an inexperienced reader in rural England would be very different from that gathered by a university-educated reader looking at the same text.⁸⁹⁴ Statistics showing literacy rates in England during this period are of limited value for this investigation because they do not help to define the ‘reading public’ of works on America. Elizabeth Eisenstein defined the ‘reading public’ of a work as more extensive than simply those people who had owned the book or who had the ability to read or write. Those who were able to absorb information from a printed text must also include people who were helped to read from it, either publicly, for example at an inn or fair, or privately at home.⁸⁹⁵ The literate and semi-literate people of a neighbourhood would probably read aloud, or memorise and repeat later, the contents of a broadside or pamphlet, for the benefit of the non-literate members of their household and wider community. Thus, the number of literate people does not reflect the number of people who might absorb information from a particular text.

The title page is the first place within the text where an intended audience might be indicated. When he wrote about Virginia, in 1641, one anonymous author was so explicit about his intended readers that he named them in the title of his work:

A Direction for Adventurers with small stock to get Two for One and good land

Freely: and for Gentlemen and all Servants, Labourers and Artificers to live

⁸⁹⁴ M. Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and Its Readership in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 32, 36.

⁸⁹⁵ E. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge, 1979). Kevin Sharpe argues that even readers of the highest status were often listeners as well, regularly being read to by family members or servants. See K. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, CT., 2000), p. 271.

plentifully.⁸⁹⁶ The title page is also where the name and address of the bookseller are found, so that anyone wanting to purchase the text in London knew where to find it. For example, Richard Rich's laudatory poem, *The Lost Flocke Triumphant*, printed in 1610, about the safe arrival of Thomas Gates' fleet in Virginia, was 'to be solde by John Wright at Christ Church dore'.⁸⁹⁷ Others went into more detail to ensure there was no mistake, and potential purchasers could find the shop they wanted, so John Smith's *Description of New England* printed by Humphrey Lownes was to be distributed by Robert Clarke, and 'to be sould at his house called The Lodge in Chancery Lane over against [i.e. opposite] Lincolnes Inne'.⁸⁹⁸ Not every title was held in monopoly by a single bookseller; for example, Edward Winslow's *Good Newes from New England* (1624) was distributed by both William Bladen and John Bellamie, one sited near St. Paul's, the other near the Royal Exchange.⁸⁹⁹ On the inside pages, Winslow's text is also revealing about the changing nature of an intended audience described in the epistle dedicatory. Winslow addressed his work to a general 'reader', without naming any specific individuals, but acknowledged that he had written it 'chiefly for the satisfaction of my private friends', adding that he had then been 'perswaded to publish the same'.⁹⁰⁰

As shown in chapter three, many authors did address their dedicatory epistles to particular groups of people, sometimes members of the Virginia Company or the Council of New England, who had shown particular interest in a voyage or plan for colonisation. The text, as well as the epistle, is therefore addressed specifically to them. George Gardyner almost begged Sir Henry Vane, junior, to be allowed to

⁸⁹⁶ *A Direction for Adventurers with Small Stock to get Two for One and good land freely* (London, 1641), title page.

⁸⁹⁷ R. Rich, *The Lost Flocke Triumphant* (London, 1610), title page.

⁸⁹⁸ J. Smith, 'A Description of New England' (London, 1616), in P. Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*, vol. II (Washington, 1838), p. 1.

⁸⁹⁹ E. Winslow, *Good Newes from New England* (London, 1624), title page.

⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. A1

dedicate his work to him, and meanwhile remain his humble servant. Although Vane was enthusiastic about America, and even lived in Massachusetts for a few years, there is no evidence that he ever explicitly supported Gardyner.⁹⁰¹ In 1628 Christopher Levett dedicated his account of a voyage to explore the coast of New England five years previously to ‘The Right Honourable George Duke of Buckingham his grace, Thomas Earl of Arundell and Surrey, Robert earle of Warwike, Iohn earle of Houldernes and the rest of the counsel for New England’.⁹⁰² Christopher Brooke’s tragic poem on the massacre of 1622 was addressed to the Virginia Company without mentioning any individual by name. He told them that he knew other prose accounts of the massacre had already been published, but he that felt verse would best fit the sentiment that he wanted to express.⁹⁰³ Some of those addressed in epistles dedicatory had no direct interest in the colonies, but were chosen for other reasons. Richard Eburne, who never left England, wrote his letter to the Bishops of Bath and Wells and of Bristol, because he believed the colonies could help alleviate the plight of England’s poor and he hoped the bishops would help him to promote the migration of the poor. In fact, Eburne wrote another letter at the start of his text, directing it to ‘the courteous and Christian readers especially the common people of the realm of England’.⁹⁰⁴ Other authors, such as Thomas Morton, directed their texts to higher authorities. His tome on the importance of maintaining the new colony, *New English Canaan*, contained an epistle to the Privy Council.⁹⁰⁵ William Castell, writing in 1644 to encourage interest in the Caribbean colonies, as opposed to those on mainland North America, addressed his tract to a select readership by

⁹⁰¹ G. Gardyner, *A Description of the New World or America Islands and Continent* (London, 1651), sig. A3.

⁹⁰² C. Levett, *A Voyage Into New England. Begun in 1623 and Ended in 1624* (London, 1628), sig. A3.

⁹⁰³ C. Brooke, *A Poem on the Late Massacre in Virginia with Particular mention of those men of note that suffered in the disaster* (London, 1622), sig. A2.

⁹⁰⁴ R. Eburne, *A Plaine Pathway to Plantations* (1624), ed. L. Wright (New York, 1962), pp. 4, 7.

⁹⁰⁵ T. Morton, *New English Canaan or New Canaan* (London, 1632), p. 3.

choosing to write his epistle dedicatory in Latin. Although he addressed it generally ‘*ad lectorem*’, he used a language that excluded the majority of the population from having access to his message.⁹⁰⁶

The main body of the text is also a useful source of information of the author’s intended readers, as shown by the quotation that begins this chapter. The broadsides published by the Virginia Company were addressed to certain groups of working men whom they perceived to be useful in building a colony, encouraging them to go immediately to Thomas Smith’s house and register for a place aboard ship. Broadsides of this type were issued in 1609, 1611, and then in 1612 to advertise the sailing of the ship *The Hercules* for Jamestown. Three further broadsides in 1613, 1615 and 1620 were issued to spread the word about a lottery (probably only England’s third) to raise money for Virginia. William Welby was instructed by Sir Thomas Smith to register these broadsides at Stationers’ Hall ‘intended for distribution about London and the provincial towns where people were likely to be interested either in the speculation or in the colony’.⁹⁰⁷ Welby must have taken his charge seriously and we know that the county of Devon had mobilised support for the lottery by July 1615. Richard Martyn wrote to Ferdinando Gorges, ‘I may not forget to returne unto you the humble thancks of our poore Councell and Company of Verginia for ye bountifull returne of ther lottery booke’. However, the news was not all positive; ‘the coldness and backwardness of other places and persons in returning ther books hath made us once more to defer the drawing but till November peremptorily by Gods leave’.⁹⁰⁸ In 1616 the Virginia Company wrote personally to the Mayor, Recorder and Aldermen of the city of Chester to ask them if they would

⁹⁰⁶ W. Castell, *A Short Discoverie of the Coasts and Continents of America* (London, 1644), sig. A3

⁹⁰⁷ *Three Proclamations Concerning the Lottery for Virginia 1613-21*, introduction and ed. by G.P. Winship (Providence, R.I., 1907), p. 2.

⁹⁰⁸ Exeter City Record Office, ‘Letter from Rich. Martyn 25 July 1615’, Ferdinando Gorges papers (unnumbered).

assist the company representatives, Gabriel Barber and Lott Deere, to ensure that the prize tickets were mingled with the blanks.⁹⁰⁹ In Dorchester, Thomas Blachford won a ‘fine pyramided silver salt’ in 1619, in the lottery for the benefit of the Company, though most lottery prizes were cash.⁹¹⁰ By 1622, the Virginia Company found itself overwhelmed with migrants making the Atlantic crossing and totally unprepared for the harsh realities of American life, so they issued a final broadside describing, in detail, the ‘apparell, victual, armes, tooles, household implements’ that a man would need to support himself in Virginia.⁹¹¹

Other, longer works, also contain clues to their intended audience. John Hammond’s *Leah and Rachel* (1656), which contrasted the virtues of Virginia and Maryland, was clearly aimed at many different categories of reader. The epistle dedicatory was addressed to William Stone, the beleaguered royalist governor of Maryland, and Mr. James Williamson of Virginia. In his text, Hammond offered advice to very humble potential migrants who would like to settle but could not afford to pay. He told them not to be drawn in by charlatans but to enquire about the exact destination of the voyage and demand a written contract. Hammond also reassured them that masters generally treated their servants very well in America. He concluded his text with a postscript directly addressing the Council of Virginia, instructing them not to trust William Claiborne, the Parliamentary commissioner in Maryland.⁹¹²

Another author addressing a diverse audience was Robert Johnson, whose second published tract on Virginia was printed in London in 1612. Its epistle was directed to Thomas Smith, who appears to have co-ordinated much of the investment in, and

⁹⁰⁹ ‘To our verye loveinge friends Mr Thomas Thorpe Maior and Mr Whitbee Recorder and to the rest of the Aldermen of the Citie of Chester’: Chester City Archives, M/L/6/107.

⁹¹⁰ D. Underdown, *Fire from Heaven* (London, 1992), p. 132.

⁹¹¹ *The Inconveniencies that have happened to some persons which have transported themselves from England to Virginia* (London, 1622).

⁹¹² J. Hammond, *Leah and Rachel: or Two Fruitfull Sisters Virginia and Maryland* (London, 1656), pp. 4, 7, 29.

migration to, Virginia during this period, and also the English interest in Japan and the Far East. In the text, men like Smith were encouraged to do their duty towards the common migrant, to hold them under 'just and equal laws'. But Johnson was also concerned that English readers might not want to leave their homes to move to Virginia, and spelled out the benefits that the lottery provided in terms of cash prizes.⁹¹³ By contrast, Robert Gordon, author of a Scottish tract encouraging colonisation, had no interest in the poorer people, writing explicitly for 'ministers' and 'gentlemen'. This was also implicit in his writing style, aimed at the more educated reader. Included in his justifications for migrating to the colonies were extensive references to the history of both Spanish and English exploration, as well as classical and biblical precedents.⁹¹⁴

John Smith usually aimed his books at a general audience, and sought to provide reliable eyewitness information about Virginia in order to scotch negative reports. His 1612 tract, *A Map of Virginia*, the only travel narrative to be printed at Oxford, was addressed to 'the world', which he hoped to 'best satisfie' because the book had actually been written in Virginia. William Symonds, a Doctor of Divinity at Magdalen College and author of a sermon promoting interest in Virginia, provided additional material for Smith's work. Interestingly, Smith specifically directed the text to female as well as male readers because Columbus had been patronised by Isabella of Spain.⁹¹⁵ The contrast between the intended audience and the actual audience of a book is highlighted by an examination of Smith's *Map of Virginia*. The evidence from its contents indicates that Smith intended the book to have an English readership who had an interest in foreign exploration and geography, but in fact, several copies of the

⁹¹³ R. Johnson, 'The New Life of Virginia' (1612), *American Colonial Tracts Monthly*, vol. I (1897-8), pp. 3, 12, 16.

⁹¹⁴ Lochinvar (Robert Gordon), *Encouragements for such as shall have Intention to bee undertakers in the New Plantation of New Galloway in America* (Edinburgh, 1625), sig. B3, D3.

⁹¹⁵ J. Smith, *A Map of Virginia* (Oxford, 1612), p. *2.

text returned to Virginia long after Smith himself had left after becoming disillusioned with the region. In 1638, the settler John Powell used Smith's dictionary of native words, phrases and place names to help him communicate with the local Indian population.⁹¹⁶ Settlers in America also used the map that Smith had commissioned to accompany his book, to navigate the coast and rivers of Virginia. Evidence of the readership of a book, pamphlet or broadside and how the material was interpreted, will be examined in the next chapter.

IV.

Conclusion

The significance of the written word in the transmission of information about North America is complex and varied. Throughout the period between 1607 and 1660, a steady stream of material emerged in a wide variety of formats. The quantity of written works on America did not increase overall during this period, but there were various peaks in their output: at the beginning of the Virginia enterprise, between 1607 and 1610; after the massacre of 1622; when the great migration of Puritan settlers began in New England in 1630 and during the interregnum, when the loyalty of the colonists was disputed by both the Royalists and the Parliamentarians. As appendix 2 shows, during this period the greatest number of books about North America were printed during the 1620s and 1650s, but the figure fell considerably during the 1640s, because of the over-riding domestic concerns. Almost all authors chose London as the main site for distribution of their message, even after the

⁹¹⁶ J. Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: Cultural Origins of North America* (Oxford, 2001), p. 317.

development of a printing press in Boston. The number of subsequent editions of printed texts about America reveals that some of these had a wide readership and were commercially successful. However, the importance of information and opinion about America must not be overemphasised. English readers and listeners also showed interest in travel narratives concerning other parts of the world, and for many, news from the continent of Europe and other parts of Britain was far more significant than that from distant America.

From the founding of the permanent settlements onwards, the written word was packaged in various genres of writing, for example, letters, diaries, broadside advertisements and promotional reports. Later, some authors also used the print medium to complain about the situation they encountered in the New World, and to appeal for more money or manpower to remedy the situation. Authors' reasons for turning to print may have changed over time, but the variety of forms and genres they employed to transmit their message remained unchanged throughout the period. The practical ways this news and opinion were transmitted to an English audience were diverse. Certain printers, such as John Bellamie and Felix Kyngston, particularly supported those wishing to spread the word about the colonies, although this was also to their own advantage, as they promoted their trade using advertisements within the books. Interest was also roused by the occasional appearance in London of kidnapped Native Americans. Booksellers in London, and occasionally the provinces, sold printed material on America, although it formed only a very small part of their trade. Smaller, cheaper pamphlets and single sheet broadsides were distributed by chapmen and travelling pedlars at inns and fairs, along with the ballads, jest books and almanacs that formed the staple of their trade. It was by these means that information was carried to sections of the community that one would not normally associate with

the consumption of the written word. Even semi-literate and illiterate men and women could learn about America via the texts in the pedlar's pack, through communal readings in public and private places. The text itself can yield clues as to the intended audience, on the title page, the epistle dedicatory or in the main body of the text. Sometimes these reveal multi-layered explanations of the author's intended readership, though this might not bear much relation to the people who actually read the book. The very limited evidence we have on who actually read what, and their opinions on what they read, are explored in chapter eleven.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE SPREAD OF AMERICAN NEWS AND OPINION IN ENGLAND

‘The Reflection of America in the Mirror of the Imagination’.⁹¹⁷

According to A.L. Rowse, the idea of the colonisation of America made its greatest impact on the English readership through the plays and poetry of such men as Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare and Jonson. This is but one aspect of the transmission of knowledge of the New World that this chapter will consider, along with newspapers, pamphlets and ballads. Examining these sources reveals the degree of interest in America across the entire society; by analysing cultural artefacts it is possible to assess how deeply knowledge about America had become ingrained in English culture. It is also important to seek individual readers, and to use evidence of book ownership found in diaries, commonplace books and other notes to assess the responses to the material contained in the books.

I.

A Circular Theory of Communication

As explored in the previous chapter, reading was the most important of several methods an individual might use to learn about the American colonies and to formulate his or her own opinion about them. Being told a particular story or piece of

⁹¹⁷ A. Rowse, *The Elizabethans and America* (London, 1959), p. 188.

news through an oral network was one method; another was printed and oral news combined, transmitted from the literate to the illiterate members of a community at public or private readings. However, almost all of the archive material available to historians originated from those who were fully literate. The most useful theory of communication regarding the spread of printed and manuscript knowledge blurs the distinction between the reader and the writer, acknowledging that it was usual for an individual author to be both writer and reader. Those who wrote about the colonies often did so in reaction to something they had read, reacting not only to the circumstances in America, but also to the body of opinion published on both sides of the Atlantic. Even a pioneer such as Richard Hakluyt was influenced by the books he had read, for example, works such as Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, those by apocalyptic historian, John Bale, and Richard Eden, the sixteenth-century translator of Spanish travel narratives.⁹¹⁸

The writer might use the material he had read in several different ways. He might borrow directly from the work of others, either acknowledging his source or silently incorporating the work of others, with only minimal changes. In some cases the writer had not been to America, and transmitted information gathered by eyewitnesses in order to enhance the credibility of his own text. Richard Eburne, a prime example, admitted he had not travelled to America and was obviously worried about the effect this had on his authorial integrity. He tried to compensate by quoting from several well-respected colonial promoters, including Richard Hakluyt and William Crashaw, both of whom, ironically, had never been to America either, and Alexander Whitaker, another clergyman, who had lived in Virginia for several

⁹¹⁸ D. Armitage, *Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 78.

years.⁹¹⁹ Authors who had been to America might still borrow passages from other writers they admired, to enhance their own authority and credibility. The Jesuit priest, Andrew White, who took part in the 1633 expeditionary force seeking a suitable location for Lord Baltimore's colony of Maryland wrote and distributed a Latin manuscript account of his journey, and the flora and fauna he encountered in the region, but he also referred readers to 'the very faithful account written and published by Captain Smith', meaning his *Map of Virginia* of 1612. White claimed that Smith's account is 'truly wonderful and almost incredible'.⁹²⁰ Some authors made more practical use of Smith's work. Henry Norwood, shipwrecked in 1650 some distance from the English settlement in Virginia, wrote that he remembered the native word 'werowance', meaning 'king', from his reading of Captain Smith's *Travels* and so could hesitatingly communicate with the local Indians that he encountered.⁹²¹ Even earlier, in 1623, copies of *A Map of Virginia* were sent back to the colony with new settlers to assist them in communicating with the natives, proving that the texts could be of practical, as well as intellectual, use.⁹²²

It is also possible that a writer became so familiar with another work that he almost subconsciously plagiarised from it. There were a finite number of texts about the North American colonies existing in wide circulation, and only a few could be said to be very popular. This meant that the descriptive language used in those key texts (such as Hakluyt and Purchas' edited collections, and Smith's works) became very influential, affecting other authors' descriptions of the phenomena encountered in the New World. For example, William Strachey's manuscript history of Virginia

⁹¹⁹ R. Eburne, *A Plaine Pathway to Plantations* (1624), ed. L. Wright (New York, 1962), p. 22.

⁹²⁰ A. White, 'An Account of the Colony of the Lord Baron Baltimore 1633', translated from the Latin by C. Hall, ed. *Narratives of Early Maryland* (New York, 1910), p. 6.

⁹²¹ H. Norwood, 'A Voyage to Virginia', P. Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers*, vol. 3 (Washington, 1844), p. 30.

⁹²² J. Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: Cultural Origins of North America* (Oxford, 2001), p. 317.

borrowed information from Richard Willes' *The History of Travale in the East and West Indies*, Hakluyt, Brereton's *Briefe and True Relation*, Waymouth's *A True Relation* and Smith's *Map of Virginia*.⁹²³ Smith's work was especially important in creating a language with which to describe the uncharted landscape he explored, naming the rivers and then mentally exploring their surrounding area, describing not only the flora and fauna, but also the local native cultures. Authors from New England, writing to friends back in England, began adopting this way of quickly describing a new region to those who would never see it.⁹²⁴ Migrants with a strongly spiritual motivation for travelling would have read other religious texts about the New World. For example, the similarities between Robert Cushman's sermon, delivered at Plymouth and published in London in 1621, and John Winthrop's address on the *Arbella*, in 1630, are probably not coincidental. Even if an author did not explicitly acknowledge the influence of these texts on his work, it is almost certain that the use of language had a subtle influence on subsequent authors' descriptions of the colonies. Samuel Hartlib, who wrote several texts about husbandry in both England and America, used the language of colonisation symbolically. He described a man about to construct his garden using the language of 'planting' and 'adventuring', influenced by the dual meaning of the word 'plantation', revived from classical usage since Elizabethan commentators had used it to refer to Ireland.⁹²⁵ Less well-known works were also inspirational to budding authors writing about America. For example, the anonymous author of *A Perfect Description of Virginia* of 1649 almost exactly replicated the list of commodities found in the much earlier poem, by Christopher

⁹²³ W. Strachey, *Historie of Travell into Virginia Britania* (Hakluyt Soc. 1951), ed. L. Wright & V. Freund, p. xxvii.

⁹²⁴ For example, Francis Higginson in 1629-30 and Thomas Dudley in 1631. See A. Young, *Chronicles of the First planters of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay from 1623-36* (Boston, MA., 1846); E. Emerson, ed., *Letters from New England: Massachusetts Bay Colony 1629-38* (Amherst, MA., 1976).

⁹²⁵ S. Hartlib, *The Reformed Husbandmen, or a Brief Treatise on the Errors, Defects and Inconveniencies of our English Husbandry*, (London, 1651), sig. A3

Brooke, commemorating the Virginia massacre in 1622.⁹²⁶ Less subtly, Ferdinando Gorges, grandson of the knighted Ferdinando, promoter of a colony in Maine, published much of Edward Johnson's *Wonder-Working Providence* as his grandfather's own, under the title of *America: Painted to the Life*.⁹²⁷ This unscrupulous, unacknowledged borrowing reflects the very casual attitudes of the period to intellectual property rights, and the perception of the author as insignificant in relation to his text.

II.

Other publications can be examined to show how knowledge of North America spread through society and became commonplace by the mid- seventeenth century. Texts purporting to carry news and opinion from the colonies were increasing in number, and other genres of literature referred to America to demonstrate how contemporary and 'new' they were. There are three different types to analyse: ballads; poetry, plays and masques; and the news-books and pamphlets of the 1650s.

America in English Ballads

The ballad was an extremely significant form of cultural and political expression throughout the early modern period. As a genre, ballads were very flexible and were used by different people for different purposes, crossing the barriers between oral and printed culture. Ballads were sung by musicians at private gatherings in houses, and also by the assembled company in rowdy inns and taverns, although by the

⁹²⁶ 'A Perfect Description of Virginia' (1649), *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 9, series 2 (Boston, MA., 1832), p. 122; C. Brooke, *A Poem on the Late Massacre in Virginia* (London, 1622), p. 4

⁹²⁷ F. Gorges, *America: Painted to the Life* (London, 1658), title page.

seventeenth century, the middle and upper social strata generally scorned ballads. The most popular ballads were printed in their thousands and sold for a few pennies each, but were, unfortunately for the historian, often discarded with the rubbish. However, several collectors, including Samuel Pepys, were intrigued by the cultural ambiguities of the form, and preserved many ballads for posterity. Because of the oral nature of much of the ballad culture, and the rare survival of the printed ones, it is impossible to say how many ballads were written about America. During the period up to 1660, in those that survive, the colonies were not a topic of major concern to balladeers and ballad publishers. Local and national histories, notorious criminal cases and domestic political matters were the most popular subjects. Ballads that told of the gallant deeds of English heroes were very popular, as were those that described classical and biblical figures, showing a mixture of elite and popular motifs. One of these was an example from 1626, 'A Brave Warlike Song', about the nine worthies, supplemented by brave warriors from English history, including Drake and Frobisher.⁹²⁸ This ballad was written from a historical perspective, telling the stories of Drake's and Frobisher's New World adventures forty years after they had happened, lauding the individuals rather than giving information about America itself.

Contemporary news about America impinged on ballad culture only where it had a bearing on the lives of the English people. For example, a ballad printed in 1612 promoted interest in the lottery to be held in London to raise funds for the Virginia Company's enterprises abroad. This text also referred to the heroic deeds of Drake and Gilbert, tales that would have been familiar to most of the ballad's readers or

⁹²⁸ T. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 212-213. The Nine Worthies were a collection of heroic figures from literature that often appeared together in both poetry and prose. They were: Hector of Troy, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus, Charlemagne, King Arthur and Godfrey of Boulogne.

listeners.⁹²⁹ It was printed over two pages in gothic type, with twenty-one verses of eight lines each, and was designed to be sung, so the title claimed, ‘to the tune of the Lusty Gallant’, which was presumably a very well-known ballad at the time. It included three woodcut illustrations at the top of each page, all six purporting to show scenes of Englishmen meeting Native Americans. The third of the series was a direct, if rather rough, copy of the illustration of Powhatan, sitting on a throne and wearing a crown, that had appeared in John Smith’s *Map of Virginia*, published in 1612. It took less than a year for the illustration to be adapted for the ballad format. Another ballad about Virginia survives only in a later, printed edition, but may have been available to readers and listeners in the first half of the seventeenth century. *Voyage to Virginia* was not a serious commentary on the colonial enterprise, but rather a comical love story about a soldier who had to serve in the New World, and his lover who was reluctant to let him go.⁹³⁰ Not all ballads took a positive approach towards the American adventure, and the Puritan settlers in New England were sometimes mocked for their claims that they were going to find a spiritual haven, and for their alleged greed and disloyalty. The two surviving examples exist only in manuscript format, and it is not known whether they ever reached print.⁹³¹ The Virginia enterprise was also mocked in ballads. One published in the 1650s told the story of a ‘witty fair and proud’ woman who was sold to a captain bound for Virginia. This ballad reveals more about the early modern crisis in gender relations, although its depiction of forced migration would have been familiar to many listeners, especially those in

⁹²⁹ ‘London’s Lotterie’ (1612), *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 74 (1966).

⁹³⁰ *Voyage to Virginia: The Valiant Soldiers Farewell to His Love*, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Douce MSS 2 (236b).

⁹³¹ Bodleian Library, *Ashmole MSS 26*, f. 37, ‘My Brethren all Attend Me’; Bodleian Library, Tanner MSS 306, ff. 286-7, ‘A Proper Newe Ballett called the Summons to Newe England to the Tune of the Townesmens cappe’.

London.⁹³² Occasionally, it is possible to glimpse a ballad concerning America that has survived neither in manuscript nor print. A ballad printed in 1635 entitled *Wat Williams Will* was described as being sung to the tune of ‘Then let us to Virginia Goe’, which, although now lost, must have been familiar to contemporaries. As these sources indicate, the study of the understanding of early America has many gaps, but evidence from ballads shows that both Virginia and New England had entered the Englishman’s consciousness by the mid-seventeenth century.

America in Poetry, Plays and Masques

Historians often see Jacobean literature as high culture, but it is important to consider each text individually to try to assess the audience, and the ways references to the New World would have been perceived.⁹³³ While a court masque may have had a very restricted audience, a play for public presentation would have been accessible to all sorts of people. Though the two masques performed in 1613 both contained references to America and her commodities, it is impossible to deduce whether oblique references to the Americas would have been understood in the manner intended by the author. An anonymous masque written for the marriage of Robert Carr and Frances Howard included among its characters the comic figure Kowasha, taken from Indian mythology, portraying the pleasures the natives derived from tobacco smoking. This ritual had been observed in 1590 by Thomas Hariot.⁹³⁴

Another masque, written by the playwright George Chapman and performed at the

⁹³² A. Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA., 1999), p. 81

⁹³³ William Sherman has worked on the intellectual connections between travel and the theatre, concluding that travellers were stock characters in Renaissance drama, reflecting concerns about the mercantile exchange. See W.H. Sherman, ‘Travel and Trade’, in A.F. Kinney, ed., *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, (Oxford, 2002), pp. 109-118.

⁹³⁴ T. Marshall, *Theatre and Empire: Great Britain on the London Stages under James VI and I* (Manchester, 2000), p. 128.

Middle Temple, erroneously depicted Virginia as an island and her native inhabitants sitting on mountains of gold paying homage at Princess Elizabeth's wedding.

Chapman's masque shows that some of the sixteenth century misunderstandings about America's geography and her easy riches were still current in the Stuart period.⁹³⁵

Some historians believe that publicly performed plays such as Shakespeare's *The Tempest* had a great impact, and had all London discussing the colonisation of America.⁹³⁶ Shakespeare is alleged to have seen a manuscript copy of William

Strachey's story of the tempest that blew three ships off course to Bermuda when on their way to Virginia in 1609, and was inspired to write his own *The Tempest*.⁹³⁷

Strachey's tale, printed by Purchas in 1626, did not describe his own reflections about the shipwreck, but was tempered to suit the institutional needs of the Virginia Company, who were concerned with the discipline of the settlers.

Shakespeare was not the only Jacobean playwright to include references to the New World in his work. Many were very sceptical about news from America and about the promises of riches there. Jonson's *Eastward Hoe!*, which was performed at the Blackfriars' Theatre and then printed in 1605, satirically described Virginia as a country in which 'all their dripping pans, and their chamber pottes are pure gold and...all the prisoners they take are fetterd in Gould', as well as 'temperate and full of all sorts of excellent viands'. He jested that 'you may be an alderman there and never be a scavenger, you may be a noble man and never be a slave'.⁹³⁸ It is possible, if unlikely, that Jonson's close parody of the language used in travel literature might

⁹³⁵ R. Cawley, *The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama* (Boston, 1938), pp. 337-338.

⁹³⁶ L. Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and The Pastoral Ideal in America* (Oxford, 1964), p. 34.

⁹³⁷ Strachey's account was printed for the first time as 'A True repertory of the wracke and redemption of Sir Thomas Gates Knight...' S. Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. XIX, (Glasgow, 1951), p. 5.

⁹³⁸ C. Hertford & P. Simpson, eds., *Ben Jonson* (Oxford, 1954), vol. IV p. 569. The Jonson quotation echoes a passage in More's *Utopia*. Jonson would have expected the more educated members of his audience to recognise this and appreciate it.

have led some of his audience to misunderstand his meaning and think him to be promoting colonisation. In that case, this public airing of the motives for migrating to Virginia, may even have encouraged some to travel.⁹³⁹ But another play by Jonson revealed an even more satirical view of America; *The Staple of News* depicted a colony of English cooks who migrated in order to convert the cannibals and make them ‘good eating Christians’.⁹⁴⁰ Philip Massinger’s play, *The City Madam*, performed from 1632 but not printed until 1658, drew attention to the unsavoury people who migrated to Virginia. One of the characters, Luke, suggests sending his nieces to Virginia to marry and convert the natives, but listeners are appalled by this idea:

‘Lady Frugal: How Virginia! High Heaven Forbid. Remember Sir I beseech you, what creatures are shipp’d thither.

Anne: Condemned wretches forfeited to the law

Mary: Strumpets and bawds, for the abomination of their life, spew’d out of their own country.’⁹⁴¹

Nor was Thomas Middleton optimistic about America in his play of 1612, *No Wit, No Help like a Woman’s*. In Act 2, Scene 3, Mistress Low-Water says, describing an eclipse in ‘Mexicana and California’ that ‘we have no business there’.⁹⁴² These playwrights understood the American adventure in the light of the myriad of ‘projects’ that were proposed in the early seventeenth century, some genuine, some

⁹³⁹ J. O’Mara, ‘Town Founding in Seventeenth Century North America: Jamestown, Virginia’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 8, 1 (1982), p. 3.

⁹⁴⁰ Cawley, *The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama*, p. 301.

⁹⁴¹ P. Massinger, *The City Madam*, ed. T. Craik (London, 1964), p. 76. In the editor’s notes, Craik remarks that reading John Smith’s *Map of Virginia* aroused Massinger’s interest in the region.

⁹⁴² T. Middleton, *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman’s*, in *A Mad World, Masters and Other Plays*, ed. M. Taylor (Oxford, 1995), p 251. Thanks to Tim Reinke-Williams for this reference.

unscrupulous.⁹⁴³ Plays on the whole, undermined rather than reinforced the message of the promotional material, but they do provide further evidence of awareness of America in the public mind.

Individual poems were sometimes written to commemorate specific deeds in America, such as the laudatory poems by men such as Richard Rich and Christopher Brooke.⁹⁴⁴ But writers such as Michael Drayton also wrote about America in larger collections of poems, showing once more that, in the early seventeenth century, the colonies were already a significant topic of concern. Drayton's *Ode to the Virginian Voyage*, first printed in 1619, was in the tradition of the heroic verses by Elizabethan poets such as Henry Roberts and Thomas Churchyard. Drayton used the imagery of paradise to describe Virginia and imagery of a golden age to describe the Englishman's settlement. The most significant verse is the final one, in which Drayton brought his audience's attention to the work of 'industrious' Richard Hakluyt, 'whose reading shall inflame men to seek fame'.⁹⁴⁵ It is not clear how wide the audience would have been for these poems, but Drayton was a well-known poet and his interest in Virginia shows the pervasiveness of the subject during this period. John Donne, a well known supporter of the Virginia enterprise, employs America as a vivid metaphor in his Elegy XIX, 'To His Mistress Going to Bed': 'O My America! My new found land, my kingdom', encouraging readers to imagine both an exciting conquest and the unspoilt virginity of his lover.⁹⁴⁶ The early seventeenth century also produced a satirical version of the heroic poem, *The Legend of Captain Iones*, by a

⁹⁴³ J. Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects* (Oxford, 1978) describes how these projects affected the English economy and pushed it to develop a domestic industry. It is interesting to compare the language with which these domestic projects were promoted with the language of North American promotional literature. Both claimed that the schemes would help provide the poor with work and the investor with profit and the breakdowns of the numbers of men needed and profit to be gained per head are strikingly similar in, for example, John Stratford's tract on flax, and *A Relation of Maryland* (London, 1635). See Thirsk, p. 103.

⁹⁴⁴ See pages 51-52 of this thesis.

⁹⁴⁵ M. Drayton, *Selected Poems*, ed. V. Thomas (Manchester, 1977), p. 56.

⁹⁴⁶ J. Donne, *The Poetry and The Drama*, ed. H. Fausset (London, 1931), p. 88.

little known Welsh minister, David Lloyd, which parodies the controversial exploits of Captain John Smith in America, the Middle East and Europe. The two most important sources of information for the poem, apart from Smith's own writing were the works of Hakluyt and Purchas, but its style was derived from Welsh satirical poems of the early seventeenth century. Mary Fuller suggests that Smith could be seen as a figure of fun because he subverted traditional ideas of chivalry; he was saved from death by Pocahontas, a woman, rather than heroically saving her.⁹⁴⁷

America in News-books and Pamphlet Debates 1640-1660

During the early modern period, fascination with America was associated with a desire to be considered well informed on contemporary news and ideas. Before 1642, news, concerning criminal trials or acts of God, for example, was mostly transmitted in broadsides, ballads, or pamphlets or, for a select elite audience, in manuscript news sheets. Many of these forms of news were exchanged in Paul's Walk in London, an area in the nave of St. Paul's Cathedral where people gathered to exchange oral, manuscript and printed news.⁹⁴⁸ Printed newspapers developed out of privately published pamphlets that reported on Parliamentary debates. The first paper was anti-Royalist, but it was quickly followed by an anti-Parliament one. By their very nature, the majority of English news-books were concerned with English domestic politics, though many also commented on continental affairs.⁹⁴⁹ Lists of the cargoes arriving

⁹⁴⁷ A. Vaughan, 'The Legend of Captain Iones', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 45 (1988), pp. 712-732; M. Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America 1576-1624* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 125.

⁹⁴⁸ M. Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England 1476-1622* (London, 1966), p. 234. See also B. Dooley, & S. Baron, eds., *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London, 2001) and J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003).

⁹⁴⁹ J. Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper 1620-1660* (Cambridge, MA., 1961), p. 17.

in English ports were also recorded, often including commodities from America.⁹⁵⁰

On 27 December 1652, *Mercurius Politicus* reported that a ship had arrived in Deal from New England 'laden with masts, passing safely through, though the Dutch were in the Channel'.⁹⁵¹ The news-books also contained advertisements for books on America, though most of the works they recommended were religious tracts and histories of England. In the *Mercurius Politicus* of June 1655, Samuel Hartlib's book on the Virginia Silkworm was promoted; interested parties were directed to 'Giles Calvert's shop at the Black Spread Eagle at the West End of Pauls'.⁹⁵² In 1649, an advert was placed in *The Moderate Intelligencer* describing the benefits of settling in 'Carolana', to the south of Virginia. Its weather was described as temperate, its flora and fauna as abundant and varied, and its soil was said to produce far higher corn yields than anything known in England at that time. Interested parties were directed to the merchant Edmond Thorowgood, who would direct them to William Bullock who seems to be the intended governor of Carolana.⁹⁵³

Very occasionally, the newspapers did report a substantial story from the New World, although they were usually adapted as propaganda for either royalist or parliamentary domestic interest. In October 1643, the royalist *Mercurius Aulicus*, published in Oxford, gave an account of a ship bound for New England, with an editorial comment predicting that 'his majestie [is] now growing so strong in shipping as will ere long intercept their holy persons and bring these new rebels to be tried by old lawes'.⁹⁵⁴ Early in the following year, *Aulicus* happily reported that Virginia was loyal to the King, with the settlers refusing to help finance Parliament's cause, and

⁹⁵⁰ J. Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-49* (Oxford, 1996), p. 146.

⁹⁵¹ *Mercurius Politicus*, vol. VI (Dec 23-30) p. 2128.

⁹⁵² *Mercurius Politicus*, vol. XI (June 7-14), p. 5484.

⁹⁵³ *The Moderate Intelligencer*, 215 (April 26-May 2).

⁹⁵⁴ *Mercurius Aulicus*, II (Oct 8 1643), p. 119.

complaining that Charles had ‘never used them as they are used now.’⁹⁵⁵ However, in the summer of 1644, a native revolt took place and several English settlers lost their lives. Although on a smaller scale than the massacre of 1622, this slaughter was manipulated by English newspapers for their own domestic political agendas. *A Perfect Diurnall* of June 17-24th blamed the massacre on a royalist-led plot, while *Aulicus* claimed that Sir Francis Wyatt was ‘so wrought upon by rebels at Westminster’ that he returned to Virginia and ‘stirred up the Pagans to invade the poore Christians plantation there because they would not turne rebels against ther soveraigne’.⁹⁵⁶ In the following year *Mercurius Civicus* made an even more radical claim, that the Indian attack had averted a mutiny by some settlers who opposed taking an oath of loyalty to the King.⁹⁵⁷ This is another example of the use of American news to support a partisan domestic opinion. *Mercurius Politicus* was the leading parliamentary news book between 1650 and 1660, with a circulation figure of around one thousand copies per issue. Its main aim was to bring its readers the intelligence ‘in the three nations of England Ireland and Scotland’, but it could not resist occasional barbed comments about the colonies, such as suggesting that the young Charles II and the King of France might ‘beg letters of recommendation to the tobacco planters of America’, or commenting that the Scottish rebels would ‘prove good traffick for Virginia and Barbadoes’.⁹⁵⁸ The news-book’s dislike of the Quakers also prompted it to report, in great detail, the trial in 1655, of Mary Prince at Boston, describing her as an ‘upstart heretick’ with ‘damnable doctrines’.⁹⁵⁹

However, the most pertinent news to emerge from the colonies during the 1650s, as far as the English newspapers were concerned, was the Maryland crisis.

⁹⁵⁵ *Mercurius Aulicus*, II (Jan 3 1644), p. 309.

⁹⁵⁶ Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper*, p. 67; *Mercurius Aulicus*, August 26 1644, p. 230.

⁹⁵⁷ Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper*, pp. 86-7.

⁹⁵⁸ *Mercurius Politicus*, vol. I (June 20-27), p. 41; *ibid.*, vol. I (June 27-July 4), p. 58.

⁹⁵⁹ *Mercurius Politicus*, vol. XIV, (Dec 18-24), pp. 7465-7466.

During the interregnum, tensions between the mother country and her colonies were often high. In 1650, an act was passed prohibiting trade with Barbados, Bermuda, Antigua and Virginia because they were thought to be rebellious.⁹⁶⁰ Maryland's problems were more complex. In 1649, some Parliamentary supporters had moved from Virginia into Maryland, apparently because the royalist William Berkeley was persecuting them.⁹⁶¹ Their presence immediately caused trouble for the royalist proprietor, Lord Baltimore, and his chosen representative in the colony, Governor Stone, because the newcomers refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the Catholic Baltimore. This microcosm of the English civil war enthralled readers of the news-books, and many of the protagonists also chose to publish their own version of events in what became a vicious pamphlet debate. In 1652, the situation was exacerbated by the arrival of Parliamentary commissioners from England, led by Richard Bennett and William Claiborne. Claiborne had caused trouble for the Maryland authorities since the earliest days of their settlement. The anonymous author of *A Relation of Maryland* recorded in 1635 that Claiborne had told the natives that Lord Baltimore's party were Spaniards and their professed enemy. The settlers had to abandon their work and swiftly build a fort to protect themselves from the incensed Native Americans.⁹⁶² In 1655, the captain of the Commissioners' ship, Roger Heaman, allegedly fired on ships he assumed to be in the hands of royalists. He also attempted to depose Governor Stone, claiming he was orchestrating a Catholic uprising. Stone then retaliated by ransacking the homes of the 'rebels'. The behaviour of the royalist faction was criticised by Leonard Strong in his pamphlet, *Babylons Fall*, the title of which

⁹⁶⁰ *An Act of Parliament Prohibiting Trade with the Barbada's, Virginia, Bermudas and Antego* (London, 1650).

⁹⁶¹ Few historians have shown an interest in the early political history of Maryland. Exceptions are R. Menard & L. Carr, 'The Lords Baltimore and the Colonisation of Maryland', in D.B. Quinn, ed., *Early Maryland in a Wider World* (Detroit, MI., 1982), pp. 168-203; L. Strong, *Babylons Fall* (1655), in Hall, ed., *Narratives of Early Maryland*, p. 235.

⁹⁶² *A Relation of Maryland* (London, 1635), p. 11.

suggested the overthrow of a wicked people. Strong openly described the royalist faction as ‘the enemy’ in his pamphlet.⁹⁶³ However, John Langford, who had been in Baltimore’s service for twenty years, immediately challenged this account. He denied that Maryland’s governor was a Catholic sympathiser, claiming that he had welcomed the migrants from Virginia and that it was Captain Heaman’s behaviour that was atrocious. Langford included an impassioned letter from Stone’s wife, begging for help from England against Heaman who, she claimed, was holding her country by force.⁹⁶⁴ Interestingly, *Mercurius Politicus* also argued that Stone was innocent of trying to raise rebellion, and lent its support on the grounds that he was ‘a good Protestant.’⁹⁶⁵

Two other pamphleteers also participated in the campaign against Stone and Lord Baltimore. The anonymous author of the 1655 tract, *Virginia and Maryland*, claimed that Baltimore’s patent had robbed Virginia of land that was rightfully hers, and that Dutch and Swedish settlers in Maryland were being allowed to sell arms to the Native Americans. It also published evidence from residents of Maryland, who claimed that Governor Stone was not ruling according to the laws of Parliament and that he, and Lord Baltimore, had declared the king’s son to be the rightful ruler.⁹⁶⁶ Roger Heaman endorsed this account. The captain of the *Golden Lyon*, Heaman, referred to Stone as the ‘former governor’, and accused him of fomenting a Catholic uprising during which his ship came under fire. Heaman and his men were able to gain control on behalf of the new governor and they seized ‘pictores, crucifixes and

⁹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

⁹⁶⁴ J. Langford, *Refutation of Babylons Fall* (1655), in Hall, ed., *Narratives of Early Maryland*, p. 267.

⁹⁶⁵ *Mercurius Politicus*, vol. XI, 7-14 June 1655, p. 196.

⁹⁶⁶ *Virginia and Maryland: The Lord Baltimore’s Printed Case Uncased and Answered* (London, 1655), pp. 7-8, 11, 40.

rows of beads'.⁹⁶⁷ Heaman emphasised that his eyewitness role in the conflict made him a reliable author, and also tried to create fear in his readers by describing a Catholic uprising. Both the anonymous pamphlet and that by Heaman were challenged by John Hammond, a long-term resident of Maryland, in his tract *Hammond versus Heamans*, also published in 1655. He criticised Heaman's audacity in daring to publish his text and reveal his 'villainy'. Hammond claimed that Heaman's sailors were constantly drunk and insolent towards the residents of Maryland and that the *Golden Lyon* opened fire on Governor Stone, rather than the other way round. Hammond included a copy of a deposition taken in Chancery from Henry Coursey describing the treachery of the Parliamentary Commissioners, saying that they had disobeyed the command of the Lord Protector, who had ordered that Maryland's officials be left alone.⁹⁶⁸ Hammond's case discredited the story told by Heaman, and branded him a liar and a criminal. His contribution seems to have brought to an end the flourish of pamphlets that emerged during 1655. The following year, Hammond turned his hand to a larger literary work, a promotional tract for both Virginia and Maryland in which he begged his readership not to be put off from moving to that area because of the crisis of the previous year, because 'no deceit can again ever shake it'.⁹⁶⁹

⁹⁶⁷ R. Heaman, *An Additional Brief Narrative of a Late Bloody Design against the Protestants in Ann Arundel County and Severn in Maryland in the County of Virginia* (London, 1655), pp. 6, 9.

⁹⁶⁸ J. Hammond, *Hammond versus Heamans: or An Answer to an audacious Pamphlet published by an impudent and ridiculous fellow named Roger Heamans* (London, 1655), pp. 2, 9

⁹⁶⁹ J. Hammond, *Leah and Rachel or the Two Fruitfull Sisters Virginia and Maryland: Their Present Condition Impartially Stated and Related* (London, 1656), p. 28

III.

Readers and Their Opinions of Books about America

As this thesis has shown, it is difficult to deduce what information early modern English men and women absorbed from books on America. Simultaneously, as readers learned about America from printed 'factual' sources, they were also exposed to negative rumours about life on that continent, spread by word of mouth and by satirical plays and ballads. As shown earlier, the horrors, echoed in ballads, of forced migration to the New World, were very familiar to Londoners during this period. During the 1640s and 1650s, rumours abounded of kidnap victims being taken by so-called 'spirits' to be used as slave labour in Virginia and the West Indies. These spirits were so notorious that the London mob attacked them several times. Occasionally, spirits were apprehended and prosecuted. In 1656, Ferdinand Buckley's father and employer prosecuted a spirit for selling Ferdinand to a Virginia planter, William Watts, for seventeen hundredweight of tobacco.⁹⁷⁰ Richard Lloyd was luckier, evading the spirit who attempted to kidnap him and later prosecuting his attacker in court.⁹⁷¹ The lure of a bounty for gathering labourers to be 'exported' to America was too tempting for some, such as John Sillis who appeared before the Bridewell Court in 1642 for 'runninge away from his capteyne and enticing others to goe to Virginia'.⁹⁷² Later, the fear of spirits in the city diminished as transported felons replaced kidnap victims as labour for Virginia, although petty criminals such as beggars and prostitutes were also sometimes persuaded to go there by the Bridewell Governors, which maintained America's negative associations among the residents of London. It

⁹⁷⁰ London Metropolitan Archives, Middlesex Session Rolls, 1656, MJ/SR/1154/158

⁹⁷¹ London Metropolitan Archives, Middlesex Session Rolls, 1656, MJ/SR/1154/245; thanks to Prof. Bernard Capp for the two L.M.A. references.

⁹⁷² 'Bridewell and Bethlem Court of Governors' Minutes' (1642), Guildhall Library MS, 33011/9, p. 8. Thank you to Tim Reinke-Williams for this reference.

was not only Virginia moreover that suffered from negative images among the English population. New Englanders were sometimes satirised in ballads and plays, and some non-Puritans were especially hostile to the emigrants, branding them as disloyal fanatics who were deserting their country and king. An example of this comes from the early records of the Church of Christ in Bristol, which note that there was 'a great deal of bitterness against the New England ministers...for about that time, abundance of the godly transported themselves into that part of America, for conscience' sake...and those that remain here, groaning under the same burdens, could not bear to hear their brethren spoken against.'⁹⁷³ Giles Firmin who migrated to Ipswich, Massachusetts, wrote to John Winthrop confirming the malicious rumours that were being spread in England about the godly migrants: 'I have heard a conclusion gathered against these plantations...that therefore it was not a way of God to forsake our Countrye and expose ourselves to such temptations as we have done.'⁹⁷⁴

However, though these references shed valuable light on the attitudes that English men and women might hold about the New World, it is with the opinions of readers that this thesis is primarily concerned. Archival sources give the historian a glimpse into the world of the reader, and enable us to identify an individual who owned a particular book, but only in a very few cases does the reader's opinion of the book emerge. Sometimes, institutional ownership of a book can be revealed. The Bishop of London encouraged parish churches to buy a copy of Richard Whitbourne's tract on Newfoundland, and the historian John Craig has found two parishes that followed this order: St. Neot in Cornwall, which bought the book in 1635, and Aveton

⁹⁷³ E.B. Underhill, ed. *The Records of A Church of Christ Meeting in Broadmead, Bristol 1640-1687* (London, 1847) p. 9.

⁹⁷⁴ Firmin quoted in S.H. Moore, 'Popery, Purity and Providence', in A. Fletcher & P. Roberts, eds., *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (), p. 285.

Gifford in Devon which purchased it in 1624.⁹⁷⁵ Several public libraries showed an interest in books about America. For example, the Norwich public library, established in 1608, owned full sets of the travel narratives of Hakluyt and Purchas.⁹⁷⁶ The town library of Dorchester also contained a copy of Purchas' collection, a reflection of the interest generated in emigrating to America in 1624 when the Reverend John White founded the Dorchester Company.⁹⁷⁷ James I was another owner of Purchas' book; in the introduction to the 1626 edition, Purchas claimed that James had made the book 'ordinaire of his bed chamber'. Purchas also recounted testimony from James in which he said that reading the book was 'his Nightly task' and that it summoned him to 'a better pilgrimage and a more enduring kingdome'.⁹⁷⁸ Inventories of the estates of other members of the elite reveal that Purchas' collection of narratives was the most popular work on geography and exploration in the early seventeenth century, although a survey of John Donne's library revealed no copy of Purchas, but rather a copy in quarto format of William Symonds' sermon of 1609, *Virginia...a Sermon Preached at Whitechapel*.⁹⁷⁹ Sir John Heydon owned four volumes of *Purchas, His Pilgrims* in folio format, which represented a quarter of the value of his library of sixty books. Sir John Pennington, who went to Guiana with Walter Raleigh in Elizabeth's reign, also owned copies of Hakluyt, Purchas and several texts on navigation. Sir John Harrison, a very wealthy member of Charles' court, possessed copies of Hakluyt, Purchas and Peter Martyr's *Decades*.⁹⁸⁰ Interest in Purchas' work

⁹⁷⁵ Cornwall County Record Office, St. Neot, Cornwall, churchwardens accounts: DDP 162/5/1; Devon Country Record Office, Aveton Gifford, Devon: Glebe Terriers Box. John Craig kindly informed me of these examples.

⁹⁷⁶ C. Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen* (Oxford, 1968), p. 346.

⁹⁷⁷ D. Underdown, *Fire From Heaven* (London, 1992), p. 55.

⁹⁷⁸ S. Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, (London, 1626), sig. A3.

⁹⁷⁹ G. Keynes, *A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne* (London, 1932), p. 276.

⁹⁸⁰ F. Levy, 'How Information Spread Among the Gentry 1550-1640', *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2 (1982), pp. 27-29. Other existing inventories reveal no works about America in some very large collections, for example, the library of the Earl of Essex, inventoried in 1646 contained no books

was naturally strong among those who visited the New World. Emmanuel Altham, a gentleman adventurer concerned with the heroic nature of the colonial enterprise, visited Plymouth several times in the 1620s. In 1623, he wrote asking his brother in law, Sir Edward Altham, to buy him a copy of *Purchas, His Pilgrims* when the new edition was published.⁹⁸¹ John Ferrar, the head of family of investors in Virginia, probably once owned the copy of William Bullock's *Virginia Impartially Examined* now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, because the copy is filled with his annotations and marginalia. Ferrar's notes show that he disagreed with many of Bullock's arguments, such as the suggestion that Virginia would never develop a silk industry. Ferrar wrote 'Truly he Still runs one in his Error in this thing'.⁹⁸²

In the seventeenth century, it became fashionable for aristocratic families to donate part of their libraries to the Bodleian Library on the death of their owner. For example, Thomas Sackville, who invested a lot of his wealth in books, donated two folio copies of 'Hackluits Voyages' in 1600. In 1635, William Laud gave a copy of Mandeville's *Travels*. However, apart from these examples, between 1600 and 1660, no books on America were donated to the Bodleian Library, not even by Edwin Sandys whose family had strong connections with early Virginia.⁹⁸³ This shows that despite the number of books available on travel to the New World, they were not considered books to be treasured and donated to the Bodleian. The majority of books donated were classical and medieval works, in Latin, reflecting the interests of the aristocratic reader and a library serving Oxford University.

on the New World at all, see V. Snow, 'The Devereux Library', *The Library*, 5th series, XXI, (1966), p 115.

⁹⁸¹ 'Emmanuel Altham to Sir Edward Altham Sept 1623', *Three Early Visitors to Plymouth*, ed., S. James, (Plymouth, 1967), p. 33.

⁹⁸² P. Thompson, 'William Bullock's "Strange Adventure": A Plan to Transform Seventeenth Century Virginia', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 61 (Jan 2004), pp. 111, 118.

⁹⁸³ *Register of the Benefactors of the Bodleian Library*, vol. I, 1600-1680, microfilm WH/558, pp. 4, 319

Diaries were an important way for educated men and occasionally women in early modern England to record major events in their lives and recall day-to-day occurrences. Many were not the private, confessional diaries that became popular during the nineteenth century, but rather, an official record of someone's life that might become a public document after death. Several diary owners recorded their purchase of books, or at least their intention to buy certain texts. A prominent resident of Dorchester, William Whiteway, recorded in his diary that he owned a copy of Purchas, as well as works by John Smith on Virginia and Ortelius and Peter Heylin on new developments in geography and navigation.⁹⁸⁴ Another voracious reader, interested, among other things, in the migration to New England of the 1630s, was Sir Simonds D'Ewes, who was in correspondence with many of the migrants. Despite raising money for an expedition himself, he never made the journey. D'Ewes made careful record of the books he bought and these included a 1612 copy of Peter Martyr's *History of the West Indies* bought for 2s 6d, and a quarto copy of Raleigh's *Description of Guiana* that cost 4d. He did not record the cost of his quarto version of John Brereton's *Brief and True Relation*.⁹⁸⁵ Another interested party was Nehemiah Wallington, whose best friend migrated to Connecticut in the late 1630s, and whose religion and politics encouraged him to follow the fortunes of New England with enthusiasm. Although Wallington's diary does not record him buying or reading a specific book, it reveals that he did collect information on the colonies in order to better understand his friend's situation.⁹⁸⁶ In his study of William Drake's diary and the way in which he used it to fashion his identity, Kevin Sharpe has argued that the informal circulation of books among friends was the main way in which information was distributed. However, Drake made a note to himself in his diary that he wanted to

⁹⁸⁴ Underdown, *Fire from Heaven*, p. 55.

⁹⁸⁵ A. Watson, *The Library of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (London, 1966), pp. 119, 178, 231.

⁹⁸⁶ P. Seaver, *Wallington's World* (London, 1985), p. 181.

buy his own copy of *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, along with other things.⁹⁸⁷ John Rous, the Suffolk diarist, was also a frequenter of bookshops, as revealed in a diary entry in 1630, recording his discovery of John Winthrop's *Humble Request* in a Bury bookseller's. Until his emigration, Winthrop had been an important local figure, which may account for his tract appearing in such a small bookshop as the one in Bury.⁹⁸⁸ Henry Norwood, the Royalist exile who spent a horrible year shipwrecked to the north of the English settlement in Virginia, did not, on his return, admit to reading any books on the region, although he did take advantage of his countrymen's interest in the flora of the Americas. In 1654, John Thurloe's papers showed Norwood collecting money ostensibly to send silk-making equipment to Virginia, which would have been very plausible considering the interest in silk and people's desire to break the hold that tobacco had on the Chesapeake colonies at the time. However, Norwood was relying on the authorities' knowledge about America and using it as a front for his own domestic political campaign: he was raising money to buy weapons for Charles II, in the hope that he might make a triumphant return to England.⁹⁸⁹

An alternative to the diary, during the Renaissance period, was the commonplace book, a private hand-written text created by the individual, usually to collect important passages or quotations from his reading. It was the symbol of an active reader who not only owned a book, but also read and re-interpreted it. The concept was derived from classical rhetoric, in which a commonplace was a fact used as the basis of an argument, but by the seventeenth century, commonplace books were considered to be memory aids to help with the gathering of knowledge.⁹⁹⁰ The only

⁹⁸⁷ K. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, CT., 2000), p. 82.

⁹⁸⁸ P. Round, *By Nature and By Custom Cursed* (Hanover, NH, 1999), p. 41.

⁹⁸⁹ *The State Papers of John Thurloe*, ed. T. Birch, (London, 1742) vol. III, pp. 65-66.

⁹⁹⁰ A. Moss, *Printed Commonplace Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 1, 263.

surviving example of a named reader copying and interpreting a text on early America in this way is the Simon Forman manuscript, containing notes he made after reading William Strachey's *Historie of Virginia Britania* of 1612.⁹⁹¹ Forman was an important figure in Elizabethan and Jacobean London, as a doctor, astrologer and necromancer. His notes on Virginia are part of a manuscript collection of notes including other material on mathematics and the signs of the zodiac, which he had been reading or had been told about. Forman received some of his information by word of mouth, perhaps from a nephew who visited the region, because he included details in his descriptions that were found neither in Strachey's nor John Smith's accounts of Virginia.⁹⁹² He recorded, with interest, the unusual flora and fauna around Jamestown, especially those plants that might be used in medicine; it was the alien species that interested him, rather than the varieties similar to those found in Europe, although he compared American examples to ones already familiar to him. When describing the 'muschimin', he wrote that 'it is as big as an apricock and like an apricock yt is sweet'.⁹⁹³ However, when Forman duplicated Strachey's description of Jamestown, he added his own commentary, inspired by other reading he had done on the subject. 'But where they have bulded Jamestown yt is low marsh ground very unhealthfulle', he commented.⁹⁹⁴ In describing the fauna of Virginia, Forman recorded wolves, bears, moose and snakes in language derived almost directly from Strachey's account. He also described the strange possum, which could take its young into its belly, as vividly described, in 1630, in Alexander Whitaker's tract. Forman and Whitaker were not the only people to have read and copied Strachey's tract. Another commonplace author,

⁹⁹¹ Bodleian Library, Ashmole MSS 802 fos. 171-175b. The library catalogue of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA, makes the connection between Forman and Strachey.

⁹⁹² *Oxford Bodleian Library Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts*; B.H. Traister, *The Notorious Astrological Physician of London: Work and Days of Simon Forman* (Chicago, 2001), p. 174.

⁹⁹³ Ashmole MSS 802 fos 171.

⁹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 172

whose name is lost to posterity, recorded his thoughts on English exploration in the New England region and included an identical paragraph on the possum of Virginia and her unusual way of caring for her young. This author was also fascinated by the strange moose, and felt that Richard Whitbourne's 1620 account of a mermaid was also worthy of recording in his notebook. However, the author was more interested in the fishing trade around the coast of Newfoundland, and made detailed notes about the possibilities of whale hunting and cod fishing.⁹⁹⁵

As this thesis has shown, stories of the exploits of Englishmen in the New World fascinated people at all levels of society.⁹⁹⁶ However, it is very difficult for historians to interpret what this audience thought about the news they read or heard, or their understanding of America. During the last decade or so, there has been a debate over whether the English thought the North American colonies were savage, dangerous frontier societies, or whether the horrors of the New World did not faze contemporary Europeans, for whom disease, hunger and mortality were already part of everyday life. Some believe that commentators in England were especially fearful of Virginia, the natives and the rampant tobacco trade having created a sinister, corrupt world.⁹⁹⁷ Others have argued that those Englishmen who chose to migrate, especially to New England, were willing to adapt and work alongside the natives, and perhaps this view was shared by the majority of the English people.⁹⁹⁸ The strange and wonderful tales from far away would not have seemed very intimidating to an audience used to tales, as Alexandra Walsham puts it, of 'terrible disasters, sudden

⁹⁹⁵ British Library, Harleian MSS 6494, fos. 191-208.

⁹⁹⁶ L. Wright, *Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1935), p. 508 concurs with this argument. Benjamin Schmidt has claimed that the Dutch were also enthralled by English exploits in the New World. See *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and The New World 1570-1670* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 148.

⁹⁹⁷ J. Fausz, 'Merging and Emerging Worlds', L. Carr, P. Morgan & J. Russo, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1988), p. 56.

⁹⁹⁸ J. Axtell, 'The Scholastic Philosophy of the Wilderness', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 29, (1972).

accidents and bizarre prodigies'.⁹⁹⁹ David Quinn shares this view, arguing that the news of the success of Englishmen in America would have been a great inspiration to those thinking of joining them in the New World.¹⁰⁰⁰ A more concrete impression of the understanding of English audiences can sometimes be gained from contemporary sources. Texts on America often commented on the reaction of the English to earlier information and opinions. William Bullock, writing in 1649, claimed that confusing stories emerging from the colonies had troubled many in England who had been hoping to migrate. He criticised authors whose 'onely aim is to draw all men to themselves and to further that work are liberall to abuse all other places but their own'. He wanted to clarify the situation by bringing, to his readers, the latest news from Virginia. However, Bullock was aware that reports of crises and danger in Virginia had dissuaded some interested parties; he warned his readers that many tales were 'full of losse and danger'.¹⁰⁰¹ By mid-century, authors had realised that the earlier portrayals of Virginia as a paradise had been self-defeating. Their audience in England had become cynical, demanding why, if Virginia was such a paradise, did supply ships need to be sent?¹⁰⁰² John Hammond thought that the poorer people in England had become so disillusioned with the colonial enterprise that 'many deceived souls chose rather to beg, steal, rot in prison and come to shamefull deaths then to better their being by going thither wherein is plenty of all things necessary for humane subsistence'.¹⁰⁰³ Wealthier people were also disappointed that progress made in both North America and Ireland was so slow, seeing a low return for their investments and

⁹⁹⁹ A. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), p. 37.

¹⁰⁰⁰ D.B. Quinn, 'Why They Came', in Quinn, ed., *Early Maryland in a Wider World*, p. 143.

¹⁰⁰¹ W. Bullock, *Virginia Impartially Examined*, (London, 1649), sig. A3.

¹⁰⁰² M. Allan, *The Tradescants: Their Plants, Gardens and Museum* (London, 1864), p. 159.

¹⁰⁰³ J. Hammond, *Leah and Rachel*, (London, 1656), title page.

an unsuccessful beginning to the process of assimilating the native population.¹⁰⁰⁴

However, not everyone in the country was so sceptical, as shown by the thousands of English men, women and children who made the journey across the Atlantic. Towns on the south coast, such as Dorchester, became a magnet for people from all levels of society who hoped to travel to America. Elizabeth Norman, prosecuted for vagrancy in Dorchester, in May 1630, was said to ‘give noe good accompt of her business but allegeth that she came to goe to New England’. Unfortunately for Norman, no money was available to help her on her way and she was sent back to her home parish, where she promised to ‘betak herselfe to labor’.¹⁰⁰⁵ Others who chose not to migrate were also optimistic about the future of the colonies. For example, John Ferrar, a member of a gentry family with significant financial interest in Virginia in this period, wrote in a private letter that he intended to name his daughter Virginia, ‘that [I] might dayly more and more have the memorial of it as not to cease praying for the prosperity of it’.¹⁰⁰⁶

Several authors attempted to challenge the negative views held by some readers. In 1609, in a sermon delivered at Paul’s Cross in London, Daniel Price aggressively criticised ‘the drones’ among the population who stayed at home and took no part in the colonial venture, urging that, in line with Plutarch’s advice, they should be expelled from the commonwealth. Price compared them to the people, in the fifteenth century, who had persuaded Henry VII not to support John Cabot and Columbus.¹⁰⁰⁷ William Wood considered that the problem was not only a lack of interest among the people, but also that works published by English residents

¹⁰⁰⁴ N. Canny, ‘The Permissive Frontier’, K. Andrews, N. Canny, & P. Hair, eds., *The Westward Enterprise* (Liverpool, 1978), p. 17.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Dorset Record Office, Dorchester Borough Court Book: DC/DOB 8/1.

¹⁰⁰⁶ ‘A Life of Nicholas Ferrar’, *The Ferrar Papers*, ed. B. Blackstone (Cambridge, 1938), p. 88.

Arthur Wodenoth, the author of a promotional tract concerning Virginia, was a cousin of the Ferrar family who lived in London with another kinsman with strong interests in the venture: John Danvers.

¹⁰⁰⁷ D. Price, *Sauls Prohibition Staid* (London, 1609), sig. F2.

dismissed or criticised the settlements. He begged his readers to take no notice of what he called ‘the sulphurous breath of every base ballad monger’, which suggests that several ballads criticising or satirising the colonial enterprise have now been lost.¹⁰⁰⁸ William Bradford answered criticism against the Plymouth plantation contained in a letter brought back to the colony from England, in 1624, by Edward Winslow, although his journal was not written for immediate publication. John Sherley, the writer of the letter, had claimed that the water was brackish, the ground barren, the fish rotten and the people plagued by foxes, wolves and mosquitoes. Bradford denied the objections one by one and claimed that everyone who had seen America knew them to be false. He attacked Sherley, saying that only those ‘too delicate and unfit to begin new plantations and colonies’ would make such claims.¹⁰⁰⁹

IV.

Conclusion

It is difficult to find firm evidence of how the English people, during the first half of the seventeenth century, interpreted and understood the news of America. Concrete information from the printing trade of the quantity of books printed or their distribution across the country is not available, nor is there much evidence from individual readers of these texts. However, it is possible to gather some impressions of English readers and listeners and their reactions to information and opinion from America. It is important to emphasise that all authors writing about the colonies were

¹⁰⁰⁸ W. Wood, *New Englands Prospect* (London, 1635), sig. A3.

¹⁰⁰⁹ W. Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, ed. W.T. Davis (New York, 1964), pp. 170-172.

also readers, and were interpreting and channelling the information they had digested into their own work. As well as recounting their own experiences, they also indicate trends in the literature already published or distributed, about America. There are also other genres of literature that reveal something of what English people thought of America at the time. While it is not possible to assess the audience's interpretations of what it heard or read, we can conclude that these forms of entertainment imparted a general cultural familiarity with the New World. Occasionally, diaries, letters or commonplace books reveal the identity of an owner of a travel narrative, although, of course, one cannot prove that the owner of a book had read it, or if he had, what he understood from its contents. However, glimpses of the cynicism or the enthusiasm of the English for the colonial project can sometimes be seen through the prism of other texts and other archival material. As the seventeenth century progressed, America had a more radical impact on English intellectual traditions. The discovery of the New World had been a stimulus to scientific discovery and interpretation in the fields of biology, botany, mineralogy, zoology, anthropology and climatology, and many Europeans who remained at home became fascinated with the realities of life in the Americas.¹⁰¹⁰ The idea of America also became a tool of English imperialists, who saw it as one of many colonial outposts, dependent on the mother country and existing solely for the provision of commodities for the European market. This was revealed in the attitudes of early eighteenth century historians, such as John Oldmixon in *The British Empire in America*, in which the differences between the North American colonies were blurred in favour of sharply defining their subordination to Britain.¹⁰¹¹ However, these interpretations were to follow later. The prevailing attitude in the first

¹⁰¹⁰ L. Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies 1607-1763* (London, 1957), p. 216.

¹⁰¹¹ R. Dunn, 'Seventeenth Century English Historians of America', J. Smith, ed., *Seventeenth Century America: Essays in Colonial History* (Chapel Hill, NC., 1959), p. 222.

half of the seventeenth century was a mixture of naïve optimism and cynical scepticism.

CONCLUSION

I.

It is now important to draw together the diverse strands of this thesis, which has attempted to describe and analyse the representations and reception of news from North America between 1607 and 1660. The thesis is initially located in the debates among historians of the book, over the relative significance of the text itself and the modes of production and consumption in their historical contexts. In this model, the supremacy of author and reader is challenged by the roles of editor, publisher, patron, printer and bookseller. Similar arguments follow for manuscript production, although its artefacts passed through the hands of different conduits and mediators. The texts have been analysed for what they reveal of the American world, such as climate, flora and fauna. However, my intention was not to examine what things were ‘really’ like in seventeenth century America, but to recreate the intellectual framework within which the authors worked. Over the last few decades, the cultural importance of the ‘imagined’ world has been emphasised by the work of anthropologists, sociologists and historians. By studying this construct, it has been possible to examine the techniques employed by those who used information about America, and to understand how the concept of an empire, with America at its cornerstone, was implanted in the minds of an English audience. This intellectual and cultural framework also proved significant when examining the production and distribution of the texts as it influenced the choice of format and, therefore, affected the people who would be exposed to it. These people are important subjects for study, as well as the trends and processes that, at times, threaten to obscure them from the historical

picture. We must also be aware of the continuous interchange between writers and readers of American material; most readers never became writers, but those who did clearly drew on earlier works.

Nonetheless, a contrast must be drawn between the experience of the consumers of these texts, who had never visited America, and the producers, who often had. In many cases the intellectual upbringing of each was similar, educated to grammar school level and, more rarely, to university level. However, as I have demonstrated, some of those who learned about America from written texts may well have been from the poorer classes. The experience of making the journey to the New World had a great impact on writers and led to the creation, by the late seventeenth century, of a distinctive American perception of themselves. By examining the ways residents of both England and America portrayed different aspects of American life, both in terms of the rhetoric, and the creation and distribution of their texts, it has been possible to judge the impact America had on the intellectual life of the English during this period. Comparisons between New England and the Chesapeake are not intended to rehash debates about which was more secure or 'typical', but rather to contrast an Englishman's understanding of the conditions in those regions. The long-term impact of the settlement of America on the English psyche is also significant, with regard to hopes of empire building and financial aggrandisement, and for the development of the idea that man might acquire domination over this world by his own observation and knowledge of it, rather than by divine will.

II.

The diverse ways in which an Englishman's intellectual world influenced his understanding of America, and *vice versa*, were explored in four chapters on geography and climate, landscape, flora and fauna. In the late fifteenth century, the earliest contact with the American continent aroused an interest in geography across Europe. Accounts of the geography of America were influenced by the ideas and assumptions that explorers and migrants took with them from Europe, but these were soon modified by their experience of the Atlantic crossing and the situation they found in the New World. Much of the literature regarding the first contact was partisan and overly optimistic in its description of the settlers' hopes for the potential of the new land. But migrants also took with them a fear of wild landscapes and animals, so authors used various descriptive and practical techniques to argue that nature could be safe and brought into harmony with man. Authors compared the unfamiliar landscapes, climate, flora and fauna of America to those of England and Europe to allow their readers to relate to these vast alien wildernesses.

Many authors were astonished by the plenty and fertility of the flora, and the apparent lack of hard labour needed to cultivate it. However, without the assistance of the Native Americans, it would have been difficult for the early settlers to interpret and make use of the local flora. The English took their own native species to America, so they began to change the ecology of the region even as they observed it.

Representations of fauna, too, were influenced both by the intellectual constructs with which an Englishman would have viewed the world, and by the novel conditions encountered in America. Although promoters often lauded the range of meat available, it was only in times of crisis that settlers made use of much of it. Many

animals native to the north east of America also proved hard to domesticate, so domestic animals were imported from England and provided the settlers with the sorts of meat and labour they were used to. The trade in fur became very significant for settlers attempting to push forward the boundaries of settlements, both in the Chesapeake and New England and in French territory to the North.

The obvious differences in the ways English authors represented the Chesapeake and New England colonies suggested for the following two chapters a regional rather than chronological or thematic basis. The initial ambition of the early settlers in Virginia was to build a small trading settlement, and even as the colony expanded, political authority and military authority were inextricably linked. Authors evaluating early English society in Virginia often commented on its disorganisation and instability. However, in many ways the society soon became formalised, as in England, with the development of stratification and distinctions between gentry and labourer taking place as early as the 1610s. Later, the Virginia Massacre and the continued cultivation of tobacco were both cited as reasons for the disorderly state of society. By mid-century, however, the colony's elite were settling into a prosperous, cultured existence.

The New England settlers' ambitions to build a 'city on a hill' derived from their English religious education rather than any factor unique to America. They were also obsessed with order, although for different reasons from Virginia, and both the Plymouth and Massachusetts settlements were founded on strict codes of law, even if these were not always successfully implemented. The hope of making a quick profit in trade did stimulate many non-Puritan migrants to go to New England, and also encouraged internal migration within America. Authors often expressed disappointment at the chaotic, uncivilised nature of the society, prompting others to

retort that these critics were not suited to the hardships of frontier life. The colony did not prove welcoming to all religious exiles; it was unbending in its orthodoxy. A few residents of Massachusetts attempted to take their religious message to the indigenous population, but as England descended into civil war, little money arrived to fund these projects, and their success was very limited.

The final two chapters analysed representations of North America from a different perspective. The focus changed to the reception of these texts by their audiences, intended or actual. The thirst for knowledge about America was not purely a London phenomenon, although the country's most significant arena of cultural exchange existed there. Audiences reacted variously to what they had read, perhaps influenced by the spread of news with negative connotations, such as the threat of forced migrations or the corruption of the colony's leaders. Some readers became authors themselves, incorporating information they had read into their own work. Other authors reflected public interest in the New World by bringing American references into their ballads, plays or poems, sometimes laudatory, though more often satirical. Published works, operating alongside oral networks of information transmission, reached a wide audience from diverse social backgrounds and even negative references helped to raise public awareness of English activity in North America.

III.

This thesis has commented on the theories of textual production and consumption, which are at the centre of historiographical debates in the fields of the histories of

printing and reading. Roger Chartier has argued that cultural consumption should be seen in terms of collective reader response rather than the interpretations of an individual reader, and I would concur with Tessa Watt's view that the influence of print was essentially conservative.¹⁰¹² The spread of information was gradual rather than revolutionary and, in response, readers slowly informed themselves using a variety of print, manuscript and oral sources. In fact, the lack of archival evidence assists our understanding the English perceptions of America, showing that, at times, it was not a subject that concerned them greatly.¹⁰¹³ During the early part of the seventeenth century, print did not radically change an Englishman's understanding of his world, although it began to offer him information on the new discoveries, challenges and opportunities that lay on the other side of the Atlantic. Towards the middle of the century, Baconian thinkers such as Samuel Hartlib connected America with their new concept of progress. The literature describing England's settlements in early America helped to shift European thinking in a more optimistic direction.

Manuscript and printed sources did not use very different descriptive patterns, language or conceptual frameworks. Most were based on a few 'prototypes' that had become established at the start of the seventeenth century, which included William Strachey's 'Historie of Virginia Britannia', and the works of John Smith. The choice of manuscript as a medium allowed authors to express more critical opinions of the colonies, especially in private correspondence between the Council for Virginia and the Virginia Company in London. Often, the distribution of manuscript material centred round friendship and kinship networks among migrants, especially men such as Sir Simonds D'Ewes, a powerful patron sympathetic to the New England migration

¹⁰¹² T. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 4, 330.

¹⁰¹³ For further development of this argument, see C. Bickerstaff, 'Attitudes towards Colonisation in Stuart England' (M.A. thesis, Exeter, 1986).

in the 1630s. The distribution of print emanated from the London book trade, in this period based primarily in St. Paul's churchyard, where ministers of the church, gentlemen looking to invest, and intellectuals eager to learn about the New World came into contact with the poorer classes eager to learn how they might join an expedition and make a fortune, as rumour had promised.

This thesis has confirmed Kevin Sharpe's observation that authors and their texts exist within a culture, as well as creating a new one, and it has been important to examine not only the cultural impact of these texts, but also the cultural forces that contributed to their creation.¹⁰¹⁴ Authors were certainly not representative of the majority of migrants to the New World. Very few servants in either Virginia or New England put pen to paper, and the culture from which these texts emerged was that of the leaders: the ministers, military men, adventurers and investors, all of whom had come from the educated classes in England and who would form the political elite in North America. In terms of religion, the authors represented the whole spectrum, from radical separatists at Plymouth to openly practising Catholics in Maryland. The common social background of most authors conceals the fact that their motives for writing about the colonies were diverse. Some wanted to promote investment by wealthy landowners and merchants of England, or to encourage poorer people to advance themselves. Others were worried about the shortage of labourers, skilled or otherwise, and wanted to encourage poor people to migrate as indentured servants if they were not already trained in a skill useful to the settlers. Others were writing to influence those already involved in the colonial enterprise, to change the policy of the English government, or to make that government understand conditions in the New World. Some authors simply hoped to contribute to the spread of geographical

¹⁰¹⁴ K. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions, The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, CT., 2000), p. 34

knowledge, to observe and record the coastline and interior of this barely known region. Some writers believed that by encouraging participation in the enterprise, they would further the cause of God and make Him pleased with their work of converting the natives, while others realised the political expediency of building an overseas empire at a time when the Spanish, French and Dutch had already begun to do so. Central to this last motivation was the understanding that trade would allow England to take her rightful place among the most powerful nations in the world. A few authors also hoped to change the behaviour of the settlers in America, or to offer them encouragement and support, but the vast majority of texts purported to inform or persuade an English audience. Authors also chose very varied narrative methods. Many decided simply to tell the stories of their own experiences in the New World, using their eyewitness status as a signifier of the authority of their texts. Writers who had not made the journey to America told similar stories using the experiences of others. As well as describing personal anecdotes, these texts attempted systematically to categorise, catalogue and control the places and commodities encountered in North America, making a verbal map of the region that would define it as exclusively Protestant. This was done by borrowing imagery and descriptive styles from the Bible and classical literature, as well as by placing the exploration and settlement in the context of the history of England. In this way, America and her commodities were compared to those in England or Europe, allowing audiences to relate this unknown world to one which was familiar to them.

The common threads running through the narratives are the subjects that authors chose to describe: their Atlantic journey, the climate, rivers, forests, mountains, islands, coasts, plants, trees, soil, wild and domesticated animals, the settlements they hoped to establish and how these settlements evolved. Many texts

also commented on the relationship between the settlers and the Native Americans, although this issue has been omitted here as other scholars have explored it in depth. Writers had their own agenda and depicted the colonies accordingly. The Plymouth plantation was established in 1620 as a separatist haven and never advertised for new settlers, so it soon became politically weak in relation to its neighbour, Massachusetts, and was eventually subsumed into New England. Little literature of note emerged from Plymouth during this period, with the exception of William Bradford's diary, which remained in manuscript, and Edward Winslow's *Good News from New England*, of 1624. Differences in the literature about the Chesapeake and New England were rooted in the authors' initial intentions. Virginians and their supporters in England wanted the enterprise to make money, and once tobacco had been chosen as a staple crop, thought that the best way to do this was to encourage investment and migration. By contrast, New Englanders were not short of labour because a steady supply of enthusiastic migrants arrived on their shores, so their literature reveals a more reflective mood encouraging the godly few in America and England to be strong in their convictions. Many of the texts were defensive of the way New Englanders had chosen to live, as if justifying the choices they had made. The format used to carry the texts also varied according to the colony they were promoting. Authors writing about Virginia turned more readily to printed material, including pamphlets, sermons and broadsides aimed at a large audience. Even private reports were sometimes printed as long as they did not portray the colony too negatively. Authors writing about New England sometimes resorted to print, especially where a theological debate was involved, but less frequently. More often letters and diaries intended for a private, small audience of friends and family were used to spread the word.

English audiences received information about the two regions in different ways, although news from both regions did feature in the larger, multi-volume edited collections such as *Purchas, His Pilgrims*. Information from Virginia appealed to a wider audience at all social levels, perhaps because it was the first successful colony and so, for a time at least, was a novelty to the English reader. It was also initially associated with images of treasure, and then of quick riches to be made from tobacco. News about New England was initially received by a smaller audience, made up of relatives or friends of the author, those who would be sympathetic to the New England cause. New England was linked in the public mind with unpopular images, images of Puritans, hard work and austerity. Attempts were made in the mid-seventeenth century to publicise the colony and ask for financial support for missionary work and the expansion of Harvard College, but ironically, the English public had by then pressing concerns at home and did not worry about the fate of the colony thousands of miles away.

The content of texts differed depending on whether or not an author had visited the New World, although either might give a positive or a negative slant on the colonial enterprise. As expected, more detail about the perceived realities of life was usually offered by authors who had seen the continent. Both sets of authors seem to have defended the behaviour of the English, and indeed their right to settle in the first place, but to have criticised the financiers and organisers in England for misunderstanding or neglecting the American situation. No one ever questioned the moral right of the English to colonise the continent. Often authors who had never been to the New World encouraged colonisation in a strangely timeless world. With no personal knowledge of the situation in America, they were unable to give current information about the settlements, and resorted to repeating the geographical areas

explored and the lists of commodities to be found. They placed their emphasis on the benefits of the colonies to the English nation, rather than arguing how successful or sophisticated the colonies had become. Every text naturally reflected the author's education and status in England, but those who had been to America were able to add a personal understanding and their empirical observations. But not all who went to America actually experienced the landscapes, flora and fauna they described. For example, few of them hunted wild animals for food or went on expeditions to explore new rivers. It was not only authors who remained in England who used the language and style of the early travel narratives to describe a world that was unknown to them. Later American residents adopted the same language and style. This was not simply plagiarism. Writers still felt a sense of cultural identity with the old country, and placed their new experiences within that context.¹⁰¹⁵ During the period 1607-1660, almost all texts were intended for an English audience and there is little difference in content and style between works authored in England and America.

Representations of the Chesapeake and New England regions naturally changed over the period. With a few notable exceptions, much of the literature fits into two distinct patterns. The first, covering Virginia and Maryland, is a complex shift between positive and negative depictions of the colony interacting with, and reacting to, each other. Initial over-enthusiasm gave way to disappointment and disorganisation, although by the late 1620s, settlement building and economic expansion in Virginia had led to a period of relative stability and measured confidence in the literature. Gradually over the following three decades, English Virginia built an identity for herself in print and manuscript. New England's literary output followed a

¹⁰¹⁵ Linda Colley has also found this in exploring a later period, in her recent work on colonial captives. She writes that those who resided in America continued to describe their experiences using British analogies and points of reference when they were writing for an English audience. L. Colley, *Captives: Britain, The Empire and The World 1600-1850* (London, 2002), p. 176.

much simpler route from extremes of fear and hope in the first few years of settlement, through a period of disappointment and concern with the identity of the colony and finally, as the English civil war forced New Englanders to survive without labour and money from the old world, a period of self-definition and self-reliance. The literature was very ambivalent in its reaction to America, neither wholly positive nor negative. Much of it was, in fact, responding to negative reports, although authors realised that portraying their colony in unrealistically positive terms would also be damaging. The common denominator in both models of literary development was the desire to catalogue America, her place and her people. Authors and editors interpreted this catalogue in many ways, but the desire to observe, define and control the newly settled lands was universal.¹⁰¹⁶ John Winthrop Junior embraced this enthusiasm felt by early travellers and made it his life's work to discover every benefit that the American landscape had to offer him and his fellow settlers. In 1661, his work was rewarded when he became the first American member of the Royal Society. At the same time physicists, botanists and geographers also worked in a trans-Atlantic context to increase the body of knowledge gained by man about his world, attempting to follow the Baconian precept that scientific enquiry should be free from dogmatic religious constraints.¹⁰¹⁷

In later seventeenth century England, both intellectual and economic interest shifted from the Americas to the East, as ecologically rich islands such as Mauritius became lauded as island paradises.¹⁰¹⁸ England defined herself as an empire-building sea-power, and her authority and power derived from her strength in relation to her

¹⁰¹⁶ See, for example, M. Bowen, *Empiricism and Geographical Thought* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 53.

¹⁰¹⁷ In their influential history of scientific inquiry, Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park argue that the strange discoveries in the New World lowered 'the scientific threshold of acceptability', in other words, no one knew which stories to believe. L. Daston & K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750* (New York, 1998), p. 219.

¹⁰¹⁸ R. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 42.

European neighbours as much as from the commodities that she gained from her American colonies. This was also reflected in a change in North America, with particularly New England looking to trade with the Caribbean and Virginia, and even with other European powers. Carolina, established in the latter years of the seventeenth century, always had a closer economic and intellectual connection with Barbados than with London. Although Pierre Bourdieu defined early New England as part of a cultural field with London at its heart, this was gradually changing by the mid-seventeenth century as the colony became more economically independent and assured of its own identity.¹⁰¹⁹ Of course, this point must not be overstated. As Louis Wright has shown, the elites of all English colonies still learned most of their cultural *mores* from England, possibly more so in the eighteenth century than the late seventeenth, so this thesis is not arguing for a continuous, gradual intellectual split between centre and periphery.¹⁰²⁰ The situation remained far more complex, with the interplay of folk memories of England amongst the older families and news from recently arrived migrants, with the truly *American* experiences of those settlers. This is shown in the work of Anne Bradstreet of Boston, who wrote as a resident of an entirely different society, giving advice from New England to Old England in its time of civil war. A few years previously, however, she had written a pastoral, *The Four Seasons*, which described her American home but was still coloured by memories of old England, such as the frolicking lambs that were not a common sight in New England in the 1640s.¹⁰²¹ These intellectual developments show that there is room for an exploration of the ways America was represented in print and manuscript culture at a later period than is covered by this study. This would be very pertinent considering

¹⁰¹⁹ P. Round, *By Nature and By Custom Cursed: Transatlantic Civil Discourse and New England Cultural Production 1620-1660* (Hanover, NH, 1999), p. 6.

¹⁰²⁰ L. Wright, *The First Gentlemen of Virginia* (San Marino, CA, 1940), p. 349.

¹⁰²¹ J. Hensley, ed., *The Works of Anne Bradstreet* (Cambridge, MA., 1967), pp. 28, 179.

the current academic interest in the wider Atlantic world over the *longue durée* of the colonial period, led by scholars such as David Armitage. However, other potential avenues of research also arise from this project, such as a worldwide survey of early modern English perceptions of other places and their commodities, to take in areas as diverse as Russia, Japan and the Caribbean. Samuel Purchas' collection of narratives could be a starting point for such a study, which would, again, fit comfortably into the current historiographical trend away from euro-centric history.

To summarise, this project has attempted to take a fresh look at early American history in the context of the Atlantic world. Many scholars have already examined this from a social, political and economic point of view and my thesis advances this understanding by bringing a new cultural and intellectual perspective to the debates over the ways residents of England and America negotiated relationships with each other and with the new land they explored, settled and claimed as their own. It is distinctive in placing equal importance on the authors' ambitions and intentions for the colonies, some never realised, and their reactions to the realities of life they experienced. This thesis has modified the history of early America by highlighting the importance of diverse cultural connections, rather than claiming that understanding was influenced *either* from Europe *or* America. I believe these connections were forged by the communication and circulation of print and manuscript news relating to the 'place' and 'potential' of the New World.

APPENDIX ONE.

**PATRONS AND DEDICATEES OF FIFTY-EIGHT PRINTED BOOKS
ABOUT NORTH AMERICA: 1607-1660.**

INDIVIDUALS:

| Royalty | Religious Figures | Aristocracy | Gentry and Middling Status |
|-----------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| King Charles x4 | George Abbott, Archbishop of Canterbury x2 ¹⁰²² | Earl of Arundel and Surrey x2 | Thomas Smith x3 ¹⁰²³ |
| King James x3 | Samuel Harsnett, Archbishop of York | Lord Baltimore | Oliver St John x2 ¹⁰²⁴ |
| Prince Henry | Arthur Lake, Bishop of Bath & Wells | Earl of Warwick | Samuel Hartlib |
| | Robert Wright, Bishop of Bristol | Earl of Houlderness | John Wild |
| | | Thomas, Lord Ellesmere | Sir Henry Vane Jr ¹⁰²⁵ |
| | | Duchess of Richmond | William Stone |
| | | Ralph, Lord Ure, President of Wales | James Williamson |
| | | Duke of Buckingham | Humphrey King ¹⁰²⁶ |

¹⁰²² Abbott himself wrote a tract promoting English exploration and trade in the New World.

¹⁰²³ Member of the Virginia Company and Treasurer of the East India Company.

¹⁰²⁴ Chief Justice who was involved in the Company for the colony on Providence Island.

¹⁰²⁵ Henry Vane Jr. had, against his fathers wishes, migrated to Massachusetts and got caught up in the Antinomian controversy. However, by the time Gardyner's book was dedicated to him in 1649, Vane had returned to England to take an active part in Civil War politics.

¹⁰²⁶ Verse writer and tobacconist who had the anonymous 1595 treatise *Tobacco* dedicated to him.

| | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | Earl of Pembroke ¹⁰²⁷ | William Alexander ¹⁰²⁸ |
| | | | Sir William Armyne ¹⁰²⁹ |
| | | | Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector |

GROUPS:

| English Government | Colonial Government | Adventurers |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Privy Council x2 | Virginia Company x2 | Adventurers and well-willers of New England x4 |
| Parliament | Council of Virginia | Knights, planters and adventurers for Virginia x3 |
| Lords and Commons | Magistracy of Massachusetts | Adventurers for Summer Isles |
| Lords in England | Congregation of Concord, Massachusetts | Adventurers for New Galloway |
| | | Merchants and Planters of Tobacco |
| | | The Ployden Family |

¹⁰²⁷ Invested £400 in Virginia Company: M. Brennan, *Literary Patronage in the English Renaissance* (New York, 1988), p. 149.

¹⁰²⁸ Scottish friend of James I, very enthusiastic about the colonial enterprise.

¹⁰²⁹ Parliamentarian heavily involved in Civil War politics, especially finance committees.

APPENDIX TWO.

THE NUMBERS OF PRINTED NON-FICTION WORKS ABOUT AMERICA PRINTED IN ENGLAND IN EACH DECADE BETWEEN 1610 AND 1660.

1610-1620: 18 printed of which 15 were new works,

1621-1630: 26 printed of which 17 were new works,

1631-1640: 16 printed of which 8 were new works

1641-1650: 9 printed, all of which were new works

1651-1660: 22 printed of which 19 were new works

NB Thomas Morton's *New English Canaan* was also published in Amsterdam in 1637; I have not included it in the calculations above.

George Abbott's *A Brief Description of the Whole World*, reissued ten times during the Stuart period, was first published in 1599 and has thus been excluded from this list.

APPENDIX THREE.

THE PRINTERS AND BOOKSELLERS OF WORKS ABOUT NORTH AMERICA 1607-1660.

All in London unless otherwise stated.

PRINTERS.

Felix Kyngston 8
William Iones 4
John Windet 2
Edward Husband 2
Richard Field 2
Matthew Simmons 2
Tho. Cotes 2
Thomas Harper
Robert Baker
Geor. Bishop
John Hammond
Henry Hills
John Bill
John Field
A. Mat
Robert Leybourne
E. Brudenell
John Streater
T. Mabb
John Beale
Elizabeth All-de
John Wreietoun (Edinburgh)
Andro Hart (Edinburgh)
G. Eld
William Du Gard
James Moxon
William Stansby
Edward Alde

BOOKSELLERS.

John Bellamie 6
William Welby 5
Nath. Butter 3
Robert Mylbourne 2
Nicholas Bourne 2
John Stephenson 2
Richard Marriott
Richard Wodenoth
William Barlow
Thomas Man
John Hammond
Henry Hills
F. Coules
W.Ley
William Sheffard
William Peasley
John Blague
Samuel Howes
Thomas Iones
Simon Miller
Francis Cossinet
Thomas Pirrepoint
Henry Marsh
Nathaniel Brook
Livewell Chapman
Giles Calvert
William Sheares
Roger Mitchell

R. Cotes

Joseph Barnes (Oxford)

John Haviland

Humfrey Lownes

Samuel Macham

Tho: Robinson

Edward Brewster

Charles Greene

Matthew Law

Henrie Fetherstone

John Wright

John Tappe

Michael Sparke

Robert Clarke

Eleazar Edgar

Peter Cole

I. Stepneth

William Barret

William Bladon

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